Making American Foreign Policy

Ole R. Holsti

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To Alex George, Jim Rosenau,
and the memory of Bob North
and
all my students

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Preface

The chapters in this book touch upon interests that developed during graduate school at Stanford University: American foreign policy and the role of ideas in policy making. The first result of those interests was a dissertation on John Foster Dulles's images of the Soviet Union. Although several research projects during the intervening years have taken me in somewhat different directions, like the swallows at San Juan Capistrano, in one way or another I keep returning to those enduring core interests.

In the course of that journey of well over four decades, I have had more than my share of good fortune in a great many respects. As a faculty member at Stanford (1962–67), the University of British Columbia (1967–74), and Duke (since 1974), three world class institutions, I have enjoyed the support, stimulation, and friendship of many exceptionally congenial colleagues. Those faculty positions have also brought me into contact with almost two generations of outstanding students, some of whom are now among my most cherished friends. As the introductory chapter makes clear, several of my research projects have developed directly from pondering how best to stimulate student analysis of some concepts and topics. I continue to teach well past the usual retirement time in order to benefit from contact with such first-rate students. In the light of my many debts to them, it is wholly appropriate that all of my students collectively appear on the dedication page.

I have also been exceptionally fortunate in having collaborated in research with three giants among scholars of international relations and foreign policy. The late Bob North, my dissertation mentor, later became a collaborator on a study of the pre-World War I crisis. Although Alex George joined the Stanford faculty after my departure, we worked together on projects focusing on the effects of stress on decision making and on the "operational code" approach to foreign policy making. Jim Rosenau, who appears as the coauthor of two chapters in this

book, has been a close "colleague at a distance" for more than three decades. Bob, Alex, and Jim have contributed to my education in more ways than I can describe. They have also proved that Leo Durocher, the feisty, acid-tongued major league baseball player and manager, was absolutely wrong when he asserted, "nice guys finish last." In light of my many debts to Bob, Alex, and Jim, I am delighted to include them on the dedication page.

Several of the chapters in this book emerged from my Foreign Policy Leadership Project with Jim Rosenau. Five generous grants from the National Science Foundation made possible surveys of American opinion leaders in 1980, 1984, 1988, 1992, and 1996.

Robert Tempio of Routledge who initiated this project, provided some exceptionally useful advice in shaping it, and has been an ideal editor in all respects. Working with Lynn Goeller and her team at EvS Communications was a wonderful experience. The entire process of turning a manuscript into a book was exceptionally pleasant because of their skills and dedication to the project.

Anne Marie Boyd, my part-time research secretary, has worked with me on this and several other projects during the past five years. She has consistently demonstrated outstanding skills and enthusiastic dedication far beyond the call of duty. She is also an exceptionally pleasant and cheerful person with whom it is always a pleasure to work.

All of the above have my everlasting gratitude.

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1

Introduction

Beliefs, Perceptions, and Opinions in Policy Making

[2005]

Friends who know that our father was a political scientist and Finnish diplomat sometimes say that my brother Kal and I must have been predestined to become political scientists. My earliest recollection of political activity was standing in front of the German Legation in Geneva, next door to our residence in the Finnish Legation, singing a popular song of the time: "We'll hang our washing on the Siegfried Line" (the German fortifications on the Western front). However, this was hardly the kind of undiplomatic behavior that received parental approval, even though father despised the Nazis. Moreover, we were only ten and eleven years old when father died and, at least in my own case, the path leading to an academic career in political science was highly circuitous.

Virtually everyone who attended Mr. Fuller's wonderful chemistry class at Palo Alto High School went on to college with the intention of becoming a chemist. I was no exception, but a general chemistry curriculum at Stanford that included only a single elective over four years gradually raised doubts about my commitment to that discipline. A year-long required freshman course on the history of Western civilization had whetted by appetite for more history, but a chemistry major would not have allowed that. A poorly taught quantitative analysis course during my sophomore year that included four-hour laboratories six days a week—in those prehistoric days Stanford still had Saturday classes—encouraged me to look for another major.

Two majors later I enrolled in a comparative government class taught by a vivacious visiting lecturer whose anecdotes were enough to keep even the sleepiest student awake. Faced with a deadline to declare a major, I thus elected

political science on the basis of rather limited evidence and with little genuine understanding of the discipline. My last two years at Stanford were heavily focused on political science, combined with as many history courses as could be crammed into my schedule. Stanford's history department featured a number of distinguished scholars, including Thomas A. Bailey, Claude Buss, Gordon Wright, and H. Stuart Hughes, who were also noted for their eloquent lectures. A senior seminar with Martin Travis introduced me to Hans Morgenthau, Quincy Wright, and others, and for the first time gave me some sense of what international relations theory was all about.

During my senior year I happened to see a brochure about a new Master of Arts in Teaching program at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. A two-year program that included full-time teaching at a local high school during the second year, this appeared to be an ideal way to prepare for a teaching career. A fellowship award made it an easy choice. The first year at Wesleyan included courses in political science and history, along with seminars in educational philosophy and psychology.

Full-time teaching during the second year at Wethersfield High School was both enjoyable and discouraging. Despite four daily preparations for classes in history and government, the experience reinforced my interest in a teaching career. However, I was also discouraged by the low morale of many on the faculty. They seemed to be spending too much time on virtually meaningless paperwork and bureaucratic requirements, and their enthusiasm for the classroom appeared to be inversely correlated to age. Although I understood that the material rewards of teaching were, at best, modest, it was still a shock to learn that every male teacher save one at Wethersfield, part of a school district with the fifth highest per-capita income in the country, held another part-time job in order to made ends meet.

Upon leaving Wesleyan with an M.A.T. degree, I preempted my draft board by volunteering for a two-year stint in the army. I had joined the army reserves while in Middletown, rising to the exalted rank of sergeant. The enlistment promise that I could also select my branch of service was overridden by the urgent need of the infantry for my services even though the infantry competed with the artillery for last place on my list of preferences. Two years at Fort Lewis gave me more than ample time to think about my post-military career. Having decided that teaching in a college would be preferable to doing so in a high school, I naively applied to only a single graduate school, and was subsequently admitted to the Ph.D. program at Stanford.

By this time Kal was starting his third year of graduate work at Stanford and getting ready to take his comprehensive examinations. It was immensely helpful to have his wise counsel on how to survive in graduate school. At that time the Stanford political science department was a long way from the nationally renowned department that it was to become. Much of the curriculum consisted

of undergraduate courses with added reading or writing assignments for graduate students.

A remarkable feature of the political science department during that time was the immensely talented and congenial pool of graduate students. Those with a primary interest in international relations included Kal Holsti, Dick Fagen, George Zaninovich, Dina Zinnes, Howard Koch, David Clarke, and Dave Finlay, and those in other fields also contributed to an atmosphere that was highly conducive to learning. Three of the international relations students of that period, 1958–62, later served as presidents of the International Studies Association.

The choice of a dissertation was a turning point in my own developing interest in foreign policy decision making. It is often difficult to recall the stimulus that ultimately led to a specific research project, but I have a clear recollection of the circumstances that first awakened a persisting interest in the beliefs, perceptions, and images of decision makers. As a second-year graduate student I was awarded a teaching assistantship for Political Science 1, American public policy. The last two weeks of the quarter were devoted to foreign and defense policy issues, including the doctrine of "massive retaliation" that had been made public by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in 1954. I had known of the doctrine and the controversies it had generated, and I had some familiarity with critiques by Henry Kissinger and others.[1] But the process of preparing for discussion sections drove home how significantly the concept of massive retaliation was based not only on considerations of geopolitics, weapons characteristics, and the like but, even more importantly, on assumptions about the nature of international politics, as well as images of the Soviet Union and its leaders, their motivations, and decision processes. This raised a central question: What if those assumptions and images were only partially valid? More generally, in a world of nuclear weapons it seemed increasingly likely that the dangers of war arise less from clearly calculated decisions to launch a war—for example, Hitler's invasion of Poland in September 1939 or the Pearl Harbor attack two years later—and more from decisions and processes that cannot wholly be understood through the unitary rational actor model that seemed to underlie massive retaliation.

During my graduate school years, fears of crises spiraling out of control were not merely the stuff of science fiction or such movies as "Dr. Strangelove." The Soviet Union successfully tested a hydrogen bomb in 1957 and later that year it leaped ahead of the U.S. in the "space race" by placing a small satellite into earth orbit. Sputnik shattered some stereotypes about Soviet science but mostly it raised exaggerated military fears—the so-called missile gap—arising from a combination of Soviet atomic weapons and long range missiles with accurate guidance systems. A brief détente in 1955–56 had given way to a resumption of periodic crises arising, for example, from the Soviet invasion of Hungary, the status of Berlin, the downing of an American U-2 spy plane inside the USSR,

and other issues. In October 1962, U-2 flights over Cuba confirmed rumors that the Soviet Union was erecting missile bases in Cuba, thereby triggering the most serious Cold War crisis. For almost two weeks the possibility of nuclear exchanges between the U.S. and USSR could not be ruled out.

This teaching experience was the immediate stimulus that pointed my interests in a particular direction, but other factors also sustained them. A number of books and articles published during the preceding half decade seemed to offer fruitful new ways of thinking about foreign policy and international politics. The Snyder-Bruck-Sapin monograph on decision making, although not yet available in book form was widely read and discussed by graduate students.[2] Of special relevance was its core premise that foreign policy choices could usefully be analyzed from the decision makers' perspectives and their "definitions of the situation;" these might or might not conform to reality but they had a powerful impact on decision processes. More generally, the decision-making approach forced analysts to consider the domestic political arena as well as external factors. Kenneth Boulding's *The Image*, followed by an article that stressed the importance of images in international politics, was another important influence, as were the works of Herbert Simon and James March on the cognitive limits on rationality and organizational decision making.[3] A lively new interdisciplinary publication, the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, provided an outlet for articles by a broad range of social scientists whose work in various ways seemed to challenge the assumption, widespread in traditional realist theories as well as in foreign offices and defense ministries, that foreign and defense policies could best be understood through reference to the prevailing realist theories.

Belief Systems and Foreign Policy

These interests led to a dissertation on John Foster Dulles that analyzed his belief system and his images of the Soviet Union, and the manner in which these served as filters through which he processed and interpreted new information about the USSR. The sudden departure from Stanford of my original dissertation chairman led me to ask Robert C. North, who had recently joined the department following reorganization of the Hoover Institution, to serve on my committee. I was also fortunate to have enlisted the distinguished diplomatic historian Thomas A. Bailey. Whereas North left his students on a long leash, Bailey was an exacting taskmaster. Careless choice of a word or a poorly constructed paragraph would also result in a firm but friendly reminder that loose writing has no place in scholarship. Bailey could not transfer his immense gifts for written and oral eloquence, but he did leave an indelible impression about the importance of repeated rewriting in the quest for clarity and precision. Another of his aphorisms—"Write a page a day and you'll have a book a year"—was also easier said than done.

Upon Dulles's death in 1959, his papers were donated to his alma mater, Princeton University, but they would not be available in time for my dissertation project. In any case even when they were opened for research, more senior scholars would, quite properly, be given first access to them. A seemingly workable alternative research strategy involved a quantitative content analysis of every publicly available word from Dulles during his years as Secretary of State, including speeches, press conferences, congressional testimony, and other such materials. Two books, several articles and many speeches from his pre-1953 years provided useful background information, but they were not included in the content analysis.

I also sent a questionnaire to the State Department and other officials who worked with Dulles. Although the questionnaire has all the earmarks of a novice effort, some of the responses, including accompanying letters, revealed useful information. One point that came through from several of them, including Eleanor Lansing Dulles, his sister and herself a State Department official, was that Dulles wrote all his own speeches with great care. Thus, a careful reading of those speeches would provide the best guides to his thinking about world affairs in general and specifically about the Soviet Union.

My central hypothesis was that Dulles would interpret information about the Soviet Union in a way that reinforced rather than challenged preexisting theories. The period in question (1953–59) encompassed substantial changes, beginning with Josef Stalin's death less than five weeks after the Eisenhower administration took office. Dulles had come to the State Department with an exceptional background in foreign affairs, beginning with attendance at the Versailles Peace Conference with his uncle, Secretary of State Robert Lansing. His work as a lawyer for the venerable firm of Cromwell and Sullivan involved extensive international travel and contacts. In addition, he had served as chief foreign policy adviser to Republican presidential candidate Thomas Dewey in 1948, headed the team that negotiated the Japanese Peace Treaty, and had written two books on foreign affairs.

Dulles's reading of works by Lenin and strongly held beliefs about the nature of the Soviet system convinced him that he also possessed unique insight into Moscow's international behavior. This conviction, combined with a distaste for any bureaucratic competition, may account for his decision to force the dean of America's Russian experts, George F. Kennan, into retirement. Kennan, widely acknowledged as the intellectual father of the postwar policy of containing the Soviet Union, developed his deep interest in Russia as a Princeton undergraduate and had spent several tours of duty in the Soviet Union as a diplomat.

Dulles was especially fearful that the Western alliance might misinterpret such events as the death of Stalin, some reductions of armed forces, and the Austrian Peace Treaty of 1955 as signs of a permanent change in long-term Soviet goals for global domination rather than as tactical maneuvers designed to lull

the West into a false sense of complacency. Chapter 2, a very brief summary of some findings from my study, reveals how Dulles interpreted Moscow's actions in ways that sustained his theory. In fairness, it should also be pointed out that in such actions as the invasion of Hungary in 1956, the Soviet Union often acted in ways that reinforced an "inherent bad faith" theory.[4]

As a graduate student I had known of the existence of a path-breaking project at Stanford—unofficially known as the "conflict project"—directed by Bob North. Its focus was on conflict dynamics, with considerable attention to the role of perceptions in conflict processes. Among the project's varied activities was an intensive study of the processes by which the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28 June 1914, led to outbreak of a general European war within six weeks.

Having already started my research on Dulles's images of the Soviet Union, I was not among the graduate students who had been associated with the 1914 study since its inception, but I joined this project upon completion of my dissertation. This was a magnificent opportunity to extend my own education well beyond the bounds of my graduate program, to pursue my interest in the role of beliefs and perceptions in decision making within the context of a data-based project, and to share in the reformulation of important parts of the 1914 project. Most importantly, it gave me a chance to work closely with Bob North, a gentle and wise scholar who always encouraged his colleagues and students to pursue new ideas.[5]

Research on my dissertation and the 1914 crisis permitted me to combine interests in three disciplines: political science, history, and psychology. It also forced me to fill yawning gaps in areas that were largely neglected in most courses and seminars at that time at Stanford, including systematic research methods such as content analysis, statistics, and the like. The joys and challenges of research reached a peak in projects that combined the materials of history, theories adduced from political science and psychology, and systematic evidence, some of which could be expressed quantitatively. "Playing" with the data in various ways, searching for patterns and unexpected results, trying out alternative hypotheses and theories, and similar processes constituted the most interesting and enjoyable parts of the endeavor. The textbook research paradigm—hypotheses adduced from theories, tests, and reassessment of theories in light of the findings—doesn't begin to describe fully the iterative process of working back and forth between theories and data.

The Dulles and 1914 studies on decision making led to several invitations to review and assess the strengths and limitations of "cognitive process" approaches to foreign policy, one of which appears as chapter 3 here.[6] By the mid-1960s there were a number of important challenges to the prevailing realist theories that typically depicted the nation state as a unitary rational actor. They argued the need to look within "the black box" of the state in order to understand foreign

policy making. The previously mentioned Snyder-Bruck-Sapin monograph was an important stimulus in this respect. Another landmark study emerged from the "May Group" at Harvard University. Graham Allison analyzed the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 from three theoretical perspectives: The unitary rational actor (Model I), bureaucratic politics (Model II), and organizational processes (Model III).[7] The cognitive process approach, analyzed in chapter 3 of this volume, could be considered as a Model IV. Studies by Robert Jervis, Alexander George, John Steinbruner, Robert Axelrod and others made important contributions to the cognitive process approach.[8]

Public Opinion, Opinion Leaders, and Foreign Policy

My interest in public opinion developed despite never having taken a course on public opinion as an undergraduate or graduate student. For students of international relations and foreign policy, in contrast to those who were studying voting behavior, there did not seem to be compelling reasons for doing so. The dominant realist approach depicted a poorly informed public that could rarely make a constructive contribution to the quality of American foreign policy. Political scientist Gabriel Almond, syndicated columnist Walter Lippmann, historian Thomas A. Bailey, and diplomat-historian George F. Kennan were among the most influential authors on American diplomacy during the early Cold War years. Whatever their differences, they fully agreed with the conclusion of the distinguished realist, Hans Morgenthau: "The rational requirements of good foreign policy cannot from the outset count upon the support of a public opinion whose preferences are emotional rather than rational."[9] The task of effective leaders was to thus overcome the constraints that public opinion might present. A few years later a study of the State Department indicated that public opinion was not really an important factor in the foreign policy making. As one official told Bernard Cohen, "To hell with public opinion. We should lead, not follow."[10]

Young academics are often told that they must excel in both the classroom and in research, but it is also made clear that tenure decisions and promotions will depend far more heavily on excellence in the latter; that is, that they can be expected to face an uneven trade-off between teaching and research. My own experience has been that the two activities are complementary. As noted earlier, my choice of dissertation topic arose very directly from trying to figure out how to stimulate students in an introductory class to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the "massive retaliation" policy announced by Secretary of State Dulles in 1954. The direct link between teaching and research also emerged many years later after having been engaged in public opinion research for almost two decades. While teaching a large lecture course on American foreign policy, the specific challenge was how best to summarize the enormous normative literature on the role that public opinion should play, and the empirical findings

on the nature and impact of public opinion on foreign policy. The result was a pair of lectures, the first of which examined the foundations of the realist view that dominated some of the classic works during the decade following World War II—"the Almond-Lippmann consensus." The second lecture focused on the growing research literature, partly stimulated by controversies surrounding the Vietnam War, which raised some fundamental questions about the doleful realist view of public opinion as volatile, unstructured, but in the final analysis, irrelevant to the conduct of American foreign affairs.

With further work, those lectures eventually led to a long review article on public opinion and American foreign policy (chapter 4 of this volume). My colleague John Aldrich kindly shared his expertise on public opinion by providing useful comments on an earlier draft. He also suggested that it should be expanded into a book in order to deal with the topic in much fuller depth.[11]

My path to public opinion research had developed somewhat indirectly. It was an outgrowth of a long interest the role and beliefs; specifically in how policy makers use—or misuse—history as a source of lessons to guide their decision making. World War I, arguably the most consequential and disastrous war of the past several centuries, clearly cast a deep shadow on policy making in many countries during the 1930s, including Germany, France, and Great Britain. "Neutrality legislation" in the United States was an effort to apply the putative lessons of World War I so that the country would not again be dragged into a war to save the interests of bankers, holders of British bonds, arms merchants, and others who had been identified as culprits by the Nye Committee and various isolationist individuals and groups.

The outbreak of World War II brought forth a quite different set of lessons. During the ensuing Cold War, "the lessons of Munich," which emphasized the importance of standing up to rather than appeasing such aggressive dictatorships as Nazi Germany, came to play an important role in defining American policy toward the Soviet Union and its allies. The "domino theory," a variant of the Munich analogy according to which a failure to protect all one's allies would result in challenges to and loss of others, was frequently invoked by supporters of American policy in Vietnam.

The failed American intervention in Vietnam, climaxed by the collapse of the South Vietnamese regime in the face of an invasion by North Vietnam, came to dominate increasingly bitter debates about the proper U.S. role in the world, the nature of threats that the country faced, and the appropriate tactics and strategies for dealing with them. It appeared possible that the Vietnam experience might well dominate future debates about American foreign policy. Thus, just as the two world wars had given rise to lessons about the appropriate conduct of foreign affairs, the traumatic failure in Vietnam seemed likely to live on as a set of cautionary guidelines long after evacuation of the last Americans from Saigon.

The strident postwar debates about Vietnam in Washington, on editorial

pages, and elsewhere suggested that almost all participants believed that the United States should look back at the war in Southeast Asia in order to learn how to avoid such a debacle in the future, but there were some exceptions. As the South Vietnamese regime was collapsing before a full-scale invasion by North Vietnam in the spring of 1975, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger asserted: "The Vietnam debate has now run its course."[12] A few weeks later, at a news conference, President Gerald Ford was asked about the lessons that Americans should draw from the experience in Vietnam. He replied that there was little point in pursuing the matter in detail because: "The lessons of the past in Vietnam have been learned—learned by Presidents, learned by Congress, learned by the American people." At other times the President stated that the war "is finished as far as America is concerned," and that the final withdrawal from the besieged city of Saigon "closes a chapter in the American experience."[13]

These assertions may have seemed startling in the light of many earlier predictions by the president and secretary of state that American acquiescence in the conquest of South Vietnam would give rise to disastrous consequences, both abroad, in accordance with predictions of the domino theory, and at home, in the form of a right-wing backlash against all who were deemed responsible. Also evident in these assertions were some premises about the impact of the past on the present and future; for example, that Americans would feel no compulsion to look back at the Vietnam War—the longest in the nation's history and the most divisive since the Civil War—to ask some basic questions: "How did we become involved?" "Why?" "What went wrong?" "How can we avoid such disasters in the future?" Alternatively, they were assuming that those who could not resist the temptation to conduct postmortems on the war would find that the answers to such questions were sufficiently self-evident to promote agreement rather than to prolong dissensus. Thus, both Ford and Kissinger seemed to be predicting that, after a decade of deep domestic divisions, a new foreign policy consensus would emerge, either from collective amnesia about the war, or from a broadly shared understanding of the "lessons of Vietnam."

Were these realistic premises? Is it possible to wipe the slate clean on a long and traumatic experience, or is there a powerful tendency to look back at it, sifting through the evidence with a view to averting a repetition of its mistakes? Do complex events so readily yield lessons that most reasonable persons will agree on their substance and scope, or is history a grab-bag in which one may readily find evidence to buttress virtually any preferred policy?

Even a casual survey of the postwar debates suggested that President Ford was excessively optimistic in suggesting that a new foreign policy consensus would emerge from the Vietnam War. There was indeed a strong propensity to believe that the United States should look back at the Vietnam experience in order to avoid repeating it, but the substance of those lessons seemed to range across a very side spectrum, from "use all-out force, perhaps even nuclear weapons, to

win a quick, decisive victory" to "never again undertake interventions in the Third World." If such divergent views were also linked to other fundamental questions about U.S. foreign policy, it suggested that the manner in which Americans framed the Vietnam experience might well create deep and possibly enduring cleavages on fundamental questions about the country's proper role in the world.

One way to test hypotheses about the possible impact of the Vietnam War was to undertake a survey study focusing on opinion leaders rather than the general public. Opinion leaders were by definition more likely to be influential than members of the general public, and such a study could be undertaken with limited resources. Moreover, in one of the apparent anomalies of public opinion research, opinion leaders had rarely been studied as a group by such established polling organizations as Gallup or Harris, and thus the existing leadership surveys had provided only a scattered smattering of systematic evidence.[14]

In a chance conversation with a longtime friend, Jim Rosenau, I mentioned the project and, because he had had experience in undertaking surveys, I asked what advice he might have to offer a neophyte. Our conversation led to a continuing collaboration of some three decades that has been both professionally and personally satisfying.

The first of our Foreign Policy Leadership Project (FPLP) surveys went into the mail in 1976 and we were pleasantly surprised with a response rate of over 50 percent, yielding well over two thousand responses to a rather long questionnaire. Drawing upon the heated postwar debates about the Vietnam debacle, the questionnaire included clusters of items on three central questions: Why did the United States fail in Vietnam? What are the likely consequences of that failure? What lessons should the United States learn from the Vietnam undertaking?

My International Studies Association presidential address, chapter 5 in this volume, provided an opportunity to identify some of the major cleavages among American opinion leaders that had developed in the wake of the Vietnam War. The metaphor of the "three headed eagle" described and explored how the Cold War consensus on foreign affairs had fractured and given rise to three quite different visions of the appropriate American international role. The post-Vietnam debates had seriously eroded key elements in the Cold War consensus that had emerged from World War II and had more or less served as the underpinnings of American foreign policy during both Democratic (Truman, Kennedy, Johnson) and Republican (Eisenhower, Nixon) administrations.

Demonstrating that there were important differences among groups of opinion leaders in 1976 did not, however, necessarily indicate that the cleavages could be attributed to the Vietnam War. After all, consensus on foreign policy is not the normal state of affairs in the United States. Strong partisan differences have reemerged after every war in which the country had taken part. The sole exception was World War II, when postwar Soviet international

behavior in Eastern Europe and elsewhere stimulated centrist elements in both political parties to agree on an active U.S. role in world affairs, containment of the Soviet Union, abandonment of the traditional opposition to participation in permanent entangling alliances, leadership in creating many international organizations, and the like.

In an effort to tease out the effects of Vietnam, we developed a typology in which leaders were classified into seven categories (Supporters, Converted Supporters, Ambivalent Supporters, Ambivalents, Ambivalent Critics, Converted Critics, and Critics), based on their answers to two questions: Where did they stand on Vietnam when the war first became an issue? Where did they stand toward the end of U.S. involvement? The Vietnam classification scheme, described in chapter 6, proved to be a potent predictor of responses to a wide array of questions, not only on Vietnam (Why did the U.S. fail in Vietnam? What are the likely consequences of that failure? What are the "lessons of Vietnam?"), but also on other foreign policy issues.

Encouraged by the results of the 1976 survey, which had been funded by our universities—Duke and the University of Southern California—we applied for a National Science Foundation grant for a follow up study in 1980. With generous NSF support that later included additional leadership surveys in 1984, 1988, 1992, and 1996, we developed the largest data set of American opinion leaders, ultimately encompassing almost fourteen thousand respondents.[15]

Still another question about belief structures concerns the relationship between attitudes on domestic and foreign policy issues. Are preferences on domestic issues systematically linked to those international ones, or are the two areas largely independent of each other? As on many questions relating to public opinion, the evidence was mixed. Much of it was derived from analyses generated either by panel studies of the electorate or Gallup and other surveys of the general public. Comparable data about opinion leaders were in much shorter supply.

In order to explore this question, we developed typologies of foreign and domestic policy beliefs. The former was patterned on important parallel research by Eugene Wittkopf on what he called "the faces of internationalism": militant (MI) and cooperative (CI) internationalism.[16] Respondents were classified as *Internationalists* (support both MI and CI), *Hard-liners* (support MI, oppose CI), *Accommodationists* (oppose MI, support CI), *Isolationists* (oppose both MI and CI).

The first two FPLP surveys unfortunately included few questions on domestic policy, but that omission was rectified in the 1984 and later studies. Just as foreign policy questions enabled us to develop the MI/CI typology, we used the answers to fourteen domestic policy questions to develop a four-fold typology of *Conservatives* (conservative on both social and economic issues), *Libertarians* (social liberals, economic conservatives), *Populists* (social conservatives, economic liberals), and *Liberals* (liberal on both clusters of issues).[17]

These two typologies enabled us to explore an important issue on which the literature included divergent findings: To what extent do foreign policy and domestic issues create cross cutting cleavages? Overlapping ones? Cross-cutting cleavages indicate that even those with strong ideological and/or partisan convictions on foreign affairs will often need to reach out across party or ideological lines in order to create effective coalitions to achieve domestic policy goals, and vice versa. In contrast, overlapping cleavages are likely to result in groupings of like-minded persons on both domestic and foreign policy issues. When both clusters of issues give rise to virtually identical coalitions, the nature of political discourse is likely to take on a much harsher tone.

The 1984, 1988, and 1992 FPLP data provided an opportunity to explore questions about cross-cutting and overlapping cleavages. As indicated in chapter 7, the evidence revealed a high correlation between views on the two clusters of issues; for example, foreign policy Hard-liners also had a strong tendency to be domestic Conservatives, whereas Accommodationists were most likely to be Liberals. Moreover, these views were closely linked to party identification. The results provided at least some insight into the strident character of American political debates, even as the Cold War was winding down. A later analysis of the issue included the 1996 FPLP data. Although by that time the Berlin Wall had come down and the Soviet Union had disintegrated, the strong links between opinions on domestic and foreign policy persisted.[18]

The first Bush and Clinton administrations placed expanding the "zone of democracy" high on their foreign policy agendas. In several of their State of the Union addresses during the 1990s, both presidents stated that expansion of democracy would serve as one of the foundations of American policy for the post-Cold War era. While the number of democratic countries increased during the period, most of the changes were the result of local efforts, especially as the Soviet empire crumbled in Eastern Europe. Controversial interventions in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo and elsewhere yielded both successes and failures.

During the 2000 presidential election campaign, Republican candidate George W. Bush and his closest advisers made it clear that, if elected, they would enact a fundamental transformation of American policy as it had developed under President Clinton. Military power would be used to defend and promote vital national interests rather than what one critic derisively called "international social work."[19] The military would no longer be used to escort little Bosnian girls to school. Indeed, Condoleezza Rice, perhaps Bush's closest foreign policy adviser, suggested that American forces in Bosnia would be withdrawn.

The administration that came to office in January 2001 had thus emitted clear signals that promotion of democracy abroad was, at best, far down on its foreign policy agenda. There is no reason to believe that, in their disdain of democracy promotion, President Bush and his advisers were responding to public opinion polls, but their views in fact coincided with overwhelming evidence that both

opinion leaders and the general public had consistently maintained very skeptical opinions about that goal. As summarized in chapter 8, surveys by various organizations over a period of a quarter century revealed that the goal of "bringing a democratic form of government to other nations" repeatedly ranked at or near the bottom of public priorities—at least through the end of the 1990s.

According to some analysts, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks "changed everything" with respect to American foreign affairs. Did it also do so with respect to democracy promotion? The American invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq were initially framed as responses to al Qaeda and the terrorist attacks. The case was clear-cut in the case of Afghanistan and increasingly less so with respect to Iraq. Claims that the Saddam Hussein regime in Baghdad possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and was linked to the September 11 attacks by virtue of its ties to al Qaeda, never persuasive in the eyes of much of the world, proved to be wholly lacking in supporting evidence. As report after report discounted the WMD and al Qaeda claims, Washington's stated war aims increasingly came to emphasize the goal of creating a democratic regime in Iraq, with the expectation that success in that respect would have a transforming impact on the entire Middle East region.[20] Its earlier derisive rhetoric notwithstanding, the Bush administration had thus come to place democracy promotion at the very pinnacle of its foreign policy agenda.

Because Saddam Hussein had long been the enemy that virtually all Americans loved to hate, few tears were shed when he was overthrown and, later, captured. Nevertheless, public enthusiasm for promoting democratic governments abroad remained tepid at best. Chicago Council on Foreign Relations' surveys conducted after the data summarized in chapter 8 revealed that "bringing a democratic form of government to other nations" ranked next to last among eighteen goals in 2002—only "helping to improve the standard of living of less developed nations" ranked lower—and in 2004 the democracy promotion goal was last among the fourteen that respondents were asked to rate, as only 14 percent of them judged it as "very important."[21] More recent surveys about the developing situation in Iraq reflect similar skepticism about America's ability to effect a lasting regime change in there. A Gallup poll in July 2005 found that only 37 percent of the respondents believed that the United States will "be able to establish a stable democratic government in Iraq."

A Civil-Military Gap?

Analyses of the six FPLP surveys tended to focus on the sources of divisions among American opinion leaders. Most of them revealed that the "Vietnam policy position" variable (described in chapter 6), the "militant internationalism/cooperative internationalism" classification scheme (described in chapter 7), political party and ideology were closely linked and that they defined the deepest

cleavages. Other studies also examined two "gaps" that had achieved some prominence—the "gender gap" and the "generation gap." Some gender differences did in fact emerge from the FPLP data, but they tended to weaken when subjected to multivariate analyses, and generational cleavages were generally less potent than suggested by depictions of the political landscape as dominated by "the Munich generation versus the Vietnam generation."[22]

Lest this narrative makes it appear that this research has all been part of a well-laid out plan, it is important to acknowledge the role of chance. A gift subscription to the *Atlantic Monthly* from my brother led me to an essay by a Washington journalist which described another significant cleavage in American society—between the professional military and the society that it is trained and pledged to protect. In that seminal article *Wall Street Journal* defense reporter Thomas Ricks warned, "The military appears to be becoming politically less representative of society" in a number of important respects, including its open identification with the right wing of the Republican Party. In his article, and subsequently in a generally sympathetic book on Marine Corps training, Ricks described the growing sense among the military that their culture and values are far superior to those of the society they have pledged to defend.[23] The evidence was largely anecdotal and confined to the U.S. Marines. Because each of the six FPLP surveys included military leaders at the Pentagon and the National War College, those data provided an opportunity to test some of the concerns expressed by Ricks. When I contacted him for reactions to the preliminary results of my analyses, he summarized the findings in a long *Wall Street Journal* article.[24] The full analysis of the 1976–96 FPLP surveys appears here in chapter 9.

The data provided strong confirmation for two core concerns in the Ricks studies: significant partisan and ideological gaps appeared in the 1976, and they grew apace through the 1996 study, to the point that liberals and Democrats were virtually endangered species among military leaders. As might be expected, the *Wall Street Journal* and *International Security* articles brought forth a flurry of vigorous responses, both favorable and unfavorable. Some critics quite appropriately pointed to the obvious limitations of a study that was limited to senior officers. Moreover, the FPLP questionnaires were not designed for a fuller probe of civilian and military cultures.

The findings and limitations of the FPLP study stimulated a grant application by my Triangle Institute of Strategic Studies (TISS) colleagues Peter Feaver and Richard Kohn to undertake a more extensive study of civil-military relations in the United States, including an expanded survey of military officers. The TISS survey replicated the sampling design of the FPLP surveys for civilian leaders, but the military sample was expanded to included younger officers at various stages of their careers.

Despite differences in the military sample, the TISS survey conducted in 1998–99 reinforced those that had emerged from the FPLP data, not only on

significant partisan and ideological differences between civilian and military leaders, but also on many other values. For example, the TISS survey included several items that asked respondents to make some judgments on civilian and military culture. Table 1.1 summarizes the results.

It is not especially surprising that military respondents judged their own institution and culture in exceptionally favorable terms; we would also expect physicians, lawyers, educators, journalists and the like to provide laudatory descriptions of their own professions. As revealed in the left hand column of Table 1.1, overwhelming majorities of military respondents viewed military culture as disciplined, loyal, honest, and emphasizing hard work. They also judged it to be free of materialism, corruption, and self-indulgent tendencies. Somewhat smaller numbers also rated it as tolerant, generous, and appropriately cautious. Only on creativity and rigidity did a majority of the military seem to harbor some doubts. However, it is not clear in this context whether "rigid" is an unfavorable trait (as in knowing only a single way to tackle a wide range of complex problems) or a favorable one (as in a unwillingness to compromise one's core values and beliefs for personal gain).

In sharp contrast, the military view of civilian culture ranged from moderately favorable to abysmal. The officers taking part in the survey conceded that Americans work hard, are creative, and are not overly cautious. They denied that Americans are intolerant or rigid. Military responses to the remaining list of traits painted a very dismal picture indeed. Civilian culture was viewed as materialistic, self-indulgent, undisciplined, dishonest, for the most part ungenerous and, worst of all from the perspective of core military values, disloyal. That only about one military officer in eight regarded civilian culture as loyal is a stunning

Table 1.1 Assessments by Military Officers of Military Culture and Civilian Culture in the TISS Surveys, 1998–99

"This question asks you to make some judgments about military (civilian) culture in this country. Please indicate all terms that you believe apply to military (civilian) culture."

	Percent of military officers checking each term	
	Military culture	**Civilian culture**
Disciplined	98	3
Loyal	97	13
Hard-working	96	65
Honest	94	38
Generous	53	42
Rigid	52	5
Creative	44	79
Overly cautious	31	16
Intolerant	30	22
Materialistic	9	93
Self-indulgent	9	77
Corrupt	3	35

indictment that, perhaps more than any of the other responses, indicates that there is indeed a serious gap between the two cultures.[25]

In the light of broader controversies about the Iraq war, expectations that the civil-military gap issue would at least temporarily be eclipsed have not materialized. Captain Russell Burgos, a returned Iraq veteran, described a military culture that echoed the Ricks thesis of a "private loathing for public America."[26] The issue also resurfaced when a military chaplain at the Air Force Academy was dismissed for revealing that cadets are targets of extensive proselytizing by Evangelical Protestants. They were, for example, provided materials from James Dobson's highly partisan organization, Focus on the Family. Evangelicals, who generally take a very dim view of contemporary civilian society and are overwhelmingly Republican, constitute an increasing proportion of the chaplain corps as the number of mainline Protestants and Catholics has declined.[27] The fullest airing of the topic emerged in a brilliant appraisal of contemporary civil-military relations and a host of related issues by Andrew J. Bacevich, a former career military officer and self-described conservative Republican. He painted a sobering picture in which basic American values and institutions are at risk because the country is moving toward a state of perpetual war.[28]

What might be done to bridge the civil-military gap? One obvious answer—to restore the draft or at least to invoke a national service requirement including military service among several options—could provide more Americans with an opportunity to experience and perhaps better appreciate both civilian and military cultures. Suffice it to say that although the postwar chaos in Iraq and a growing sense that the American military are stretched too thinly have generated a few calls to rethink the issue, legislation to institute conscription or national service has the same chance of enactment as a bill to eliminate Thanksgiving, Mother's Day, and Valentine's Day.

The Impact of the End of the Cold War and September 11

Scientific public opinion polling was in its infancy when carrier-based Japanese aircraft struck at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, destroying much of the U.S. Pacific fleet. It is nevertheless clear that the deeply divided public of December 6 had been transformed into a united one. As Arthur Vandenberg, a leading isolationist senator, summarized his epiphany, "In my own mind, my convictions regarding international cooperation and collective security took form on the afternoon of the Pearl Harbor attack. That day ended isolationism for any realist."[29] The question that had the greatest potential to divide Americans was whether to concentrate initial military efforts to defeat Imperial Japan or Nazi Germany. By declaring war on the United States just days after Pearl Harbor, Adolf Hitler largely spared Washington and the country a potentially divisive debate.

The end of the Cold War and the September 11 terrorist attacks constituted

dramatic events with the potential to elicit a sea change in American public opinion comparable to that of Pearl Harbor. A few years after the disintegration of the Soviet Union removed all doubts about the end of the Cold War, the distinguished historian and former presidential adviser, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., wrote an obituary for American internationalism and "the magnificent dream" of collective security. Based on his reading of some public opinion polls and other harbingers of change, he foresaw the return to a pre-World War II isolationism under the new guise of unilateralism.[30]

In a detailed analysis of surveys involving both opinion leaders and the general public, chapter 10 concludes that a decade after the Cold War ended there are many more signs of continuity than change in opinions about the country's proper role in the world, important foreign policy goals, and strategies for pursuing national interests. To be sure, the general public expressed skepticism about exporting American institutions abroad, some aspects of globalization, and immigration policy, but these opinions represented continuity of views that had existed before the Berlin Wall came down and the USSR disintegrated.[31] The overall findings largely reinforce the conclusion that those who believe in the resurgence of a "new isolationism" are in fact "misreading the public."[32]

Chapter 10 was completed shortly after the Bush administration came to office in 2001 and thus it did not assess the impact of the September 11 terrorist attacks. The concluding chapter on public opinion addresses briefly one aspect of the claim that "September 11 changed everything": Did the terrorist attacks and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq fundamentally alter public preferences about America's proper role in the world? Did they serve to bring Americans together in the same manner as the Pearl Harbor attack six decades earlier and, more specifically, did they bridge the deep partisan chasms that have characterized the American political landscape since the bitter Vietnam experience?

Chapter 11 reveals that, whatever the other consequences of the September 11 terrorist attacks, they had only a limited impact on the core tenets of American public opinion. Just as the end of the Cold War did not confirm Arthur Schlesinger's fears of a mindless public retreat into isolationism and unilateralism (chapter 10), public preferences for an active international role, conditioned upon burden sharing with NATO allies and others, survived the terrorist attack. The evidence also indicates that, as of late 2005, the Iraq war has widened rather than narrowed partisan cleavages. Those differences also extend to many domestic issues, not only on such hot button questions as abortion, school prayer, gun control and the like, but also to Social Security, tax policy and others on which economic self-interests might be expected to be dominant. Moreover, the overlapping cleavages on domestic and foreign policy, described in chapter 7, have persisted, thus contributing to the incendiary tone of political discourse in recent years.

Chapter 12, "Theories of International Relations," attempts to place the study of foreign policy within a broader context. An earlier version of the essay was commissioned by Michael Hogan, then editor of *Diplomatic History*, in order to provide historians with an overview of how their political science brethren were approaching the large terrain of international affairs. Practitioners of the two neighboring disciplines share a great many overlapping concerns but intellectual cooperation between them has been sporadic at best, at least in part because most universities are organized in ways that impede rather than facilitate scholarly collaboration across departmental lines. After an analysis of several prominent systems level theories, the essay examines some of foreign policy decision-making approaches, including those that focus on bureaucratic politics, small group dynamics, and individual decision makers.

Although the book in which chapter 12 originally appeared had a 2004 copyright date, it actually went to press prior to September 11, 2001. Consequently it does not consider the implications of those attacks for theories of international relations. It is too early to offer definitive judgments barely past the fourth anniversary of those events, but it may nevertheless be worth at least a preliminary effort. Aside from a firm sense that the approaches labeled "Global Society, Interdependence, Institutionalism" and "Foreign Policy Analysis" will grow rather than diminish in importance, several observations may be useful at least to generate further debate.[33]

- Idea, beliefs, perceptions, and opinions—a central theme of many preceding chapters—are likely to take on heightened importance. Osama bin Laden's many pronouncements exhorting his followers and justifying the *jihad* against the West, and most especially against the American "crusaders," provide only the most dramatic recent example of ideas driving action. The world has witnessed a resurgence of various fundamentalist groups, not only within Islam but within other faiths as well, some of which invoke theological justifications for violence against "infidels" or other enemies. Samuel Huntington's thesis of a "clash of civilizations" has aroused criticism on several grounds, most notably because some of the bloodiest recent wars have taken place within civilizations—for example, the eight-year war triggered by Iraq's invasion of Iran.[34] Nevertheless, the core concept that ideas, including those rooted in religion, can have an important role in shaping global relations seems valid. More generally, an increasing role for ideas and beliefs also suggests that "constructivist" approaches to global politics are likely to prove increasingly fruitful.
- Structural realism, a theory grounded in power relations among major state actors, seems less likely to be helpful in explaining global politics in the post-September 11 era. The point is *not* that globalization, whether of trade, finance, culture, or terrorism, has eroded the importance of the

state as the central actor in the global system. Traditional great powers such as nuclear-armed United States, China, Russia, France, and Great Britain, non-nuclear Japan, and as well as emerging great powers such as India (also nuclear) and Brazil, will certainly persist as the major actors, but the September 11 terrorist attacks also highlighted the impact of two other types of actors that tend to get short shrift in theories focused on traditional power structures. Terrorist groups such as al Qaeda possess only very limited capabilities but they are clearly capable of inflicting immense destruction. Even should Osama bin Laden and his associates be captured or killed, the use of terror by the politically disaffected is unfortunately not likely to disappear. "Failed states" are unable even to maintain order within their borders but they may provide inviting havens for terrorist groups, drug lords, and the like. Failed states may also be targets for interventions from abroad. Kenneth Waltz, the most important and articulate proponent of structural realism, has argued that it cannot be combined with a theory of foreign policy. If that is the case, it is not likely to strengthen the case for structural realism as *the* theory of international politics.[35] System structures are and will remain important, but that core insight needs to be combined and synthesized with those of other theoretical approaches.

- Traditional realism seems likely to enjoy at least a modest bull market in coming years. Versions of the theory that are firmly rooted in a conception of human nature—for example, man's sinfulness or power-lust—will continue to face the difficulty that, if human nature is used to explaining everything, it ends up explaining nothing. The limitations of human nature as an explanation for political behavior can be illustrated by the careers of Nelson Mandela and Robert Mugabe, African leaders of the same generation who came of age successfully fighting white racist regimes in neighboring countries. The former deservedly won the Nobel Peace Prize for his enlightened leadership of post-apartheid South Africa, whereas the latter became a brutal tyrant who has victimized his own people in order to maintain power in Zimbabwe. But even if it is less than fully satisfying as a full-blown analytic theory, traditional realism appears increasingly attractive as a prescriptive theory because of its insistence on a sound balance between goals and capabilities, its opposition to international crusades, and its thesis that caution and humility are virtues in realist statecraft. According to Hans Morgenthau, dean of American realist theorist, "Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe. . . . There is a world of difference between the belief that all nations stand under the judgment of God, inscrutable to the human mind, and the blasphemous conviction that God is always on one's side and that what one wills oneself cannot fail to be willed by God also."[36] Morgenthau's words are a welcome reminder

at a time when leaders of some terrorist groups, as well as of some major national actors, directly or indirectly invoke God to justify their policies.

- Although a few post-modern critiques of existing international relations theories may have some validity, the strongly anti-empirical foundations of most post-modern approaches render their contributions to understanding global politics highly suspect in either the pre- or post-September 11 worlds. A passionate disdain for generally accepted rules of evidence and inference, even if driven by noble purposes, is unlikely to move us closer to understanding and dealing with the most important issues of global relations—peace and justice—any more than a creationist approach to biology is likely to prove useful in finding a cure for cancer.

The concluding chapter (chapter 13), a very brief appraisal of American foreign relations in late 2005, takes its theme from the opening words of Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." The United States is universally recognized as the world's only superpower but, paradoxically, even some of its closest allies are increasingly unwilling to follow Washington's lead on foreign policy issues. The difficulties arise not from a dearth of "hard power"—military and economic resources—but from deficits in "soft power." The problems are compounded by striking partisan differences on the foreign policy. In line with the central themes of this book—the importance of ideas in foreign affairs—the essay suggests that many of this country's current difficulties stem from an almost obsessive adherence to beliefs about the Iraq war and its aftermath that have proved, at best, to be highly questionable.

I

Foreign Policy Leaders

Beliefs and Cognitive Processes

2

The Belief System and National Images

A Case Study[1]

[1962]

I. The Belief System and National Images

Even a cursory survey of the relevant literature reveals that in recent years—particularly in the decade and a half since the end of World War II—students of international politics have taken a growing interest in psycho-attitudinal approaches to the study of the international system. It has been proposed, in fact, that psychology belongs at the "core" of the discipline (Wright, 1955, p. 506). Two related problems within this area have become particular foci of attention.

1. A number of studies have shown that the relationship between "belief system," perceptions, and decision-making is a vital one (Rokeach, 1960; Smith *et al.,* 1956; Snyder *et al.*, 1954).[2] A decision-maker acts upon his "image" of the situation rather than upon "objective" reality, and it has been demonstrated that the belief system—its structure as well as its content—plays an integral role in the cognitive process (Boulding, 1956; Festinger, 1957; Ray, 1961).

2. Within the broader scope of the belief-system-perception-decision-making relationship there has been a heightened concern for the problem of stereotyped national images as a significant factor in the dynamics of the international system (Bauer, 1961; Boulding, 1959; Osgood, 1959b; Wheeler, 1960; Wright, 1957). Kenneth Boulding, for example, has written that, "The national image, however, is the last great stronghold of unsophistication. . . . Nations are divided into 'good' and 'bad'—the enemy is all bad, one's own nation is of spotless virtue" (Boulding, 1959, p. 130).

The relationship of national images to international conflict is clear: decision-makers act upon their definition of the situation and their images of states—others

as well as their own. These images are in turn dependent upon the decision-maker's belief system, and these may or may not be accurate representations of "reality." Thus it has been suggested that international conflict frequently is not between states, but rather between distorted images of states (Wright, 1957, p. 266).

The purpose of this paper is to report the findings of a case study dealing with the relationship between the belief system, national images, and decision-making. The study centers upon one decision-maker of unquestioned influence, John Foster Dulles, and the connection between his belief system and his perceptions of the Soviet Union.

The analytical framework for this study can be stated briefly. The belief system, composed of a number of "images" of the past, present, and future, includes "all the accumulated, organized knowledge that the organism has about itself and the world" (Miller *et al.,* 1960, p. 16). It may be thought of as the set of lenses through which information concerning the physical and social environment is received. It orients the individual to his environment, defining it for him and identifying for him its salient characteristics. National images may be denoted as subparts of the belief system. Like the belief system itself, these are "models" which order for the observer what will otherwise be an unmanageable amount of information (Bauer, 1961).

In addition to organizing perceptions into a meaningful guide for behavior, the belief system has the function of the establishment of goals and the ordering of preferences. Thus it actually has a dual connection with decision-making. The direct relationship is found in that aspect of the belief system which tells us "what ought to be," acting as a direct guide in the establishment of goals. The indirect link—the role that the belief system plays in the process of "scanning, selecting, filtering, linking, reordering, organizing, and reporting" (McClelland, 1962, p. 456)—arises from the tendency of the individual to assimilate new perceptions to familiar ones, and to distort what is seen in such a way as to minimize the clash with previous expectations (Bronfenbrenner, 1961; Ray, 1961; Rokeach, 1960). Like the blind men, each describing the elephant on the basis of the part he touches, different individuals may describe the same object or situation in terms of what they have been conditioned to see. This may be particularly true in a crisis situation: "Controversial issues tend to be polarized not only because commitments have been made but also because certain perceptions are actively excluded from consciousness if they do not fit the chosen world image" (Rapoport, 1960, p. 258). These relationships are presented in figure 2.1.

The belief system and its component images are, however, dynamic rather than static; they are in continual interaction with new information. The impact of this information depends upon the degree to which the structure of the belief system is "open" or "closed." According to Rokeach,

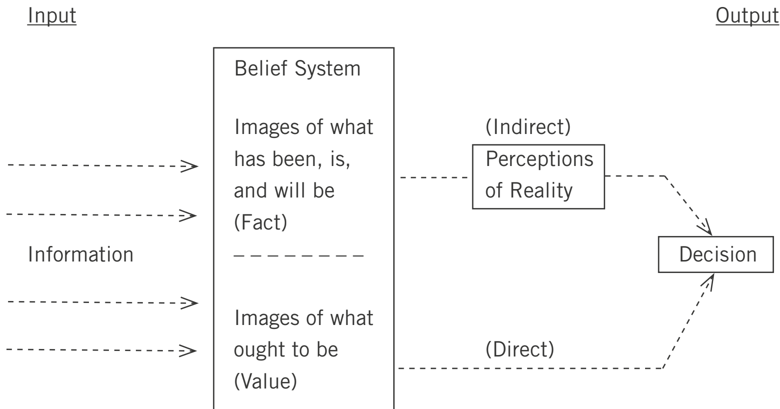

Figure 2.1 The dual relationship between belief system and decision-making.

> At the closed extreme, it is new information that must be tampered with—by narrowing it out, altering it, or constraining it within isolated bounds. In this way, the belief-disbelief system is left intact. At the open extreme, it is the other way around: New information is assimilated *as is*... thereby producing "genuine" (as contrasted with "party-line") changes in the whole belief-disbelief system [Rokeach, 1960, p. 50].

Thus while national images perform an important function in the cognitive process, they may also become dysfunctional. Unless they coincide in some way with commonly-perceived reality, decisions based on these images are not likely to fulfill expectations. Erroneous images may also prove to have a distorting effect by encouraging the reinterpretation of information that does not fit the image; this is most probable with rigid "models" such as "totalitarian communism" or "monopolistic capitalism" which exclude the very types of information that might lead to a modification of the models themselves (Bauer, 1961; Wheeler, 1960).

II. John Foster Dulles and the Soviet Union

The selection of John Foster Dulles as the central figure for my study fulfilled a number of historical and research requirements for the testing of hypotheses concerning the relationship between the belief system and perceptions of other nations. He was acknowledged as a decision-maker of first-rate importance, and he held office during a period of dramatic changes in Soviet elites, capabilities, and tactics. In addition, he left voluminous public pronouncements and writings on both the Soviet Union and on the theoretical aspects of international politics,

thus facilitating a reconstruction of salient aspects of both his belief system and his perceptions of the Soviet Union.

The sources used in this study included all of Dulles' publicly available statements concerning the Soviet Union during the 1953–1959 period, derived from a content analysis of 434 documents, including Congressional testimony, press conferences, and addresses.[3] These statements were transcribed, masked, and quantified according to the "evaluative assertion analysis" technique devised by Charles E. Osgood and his associates (Osgood *et al.,* 1956; Osgood, 1959a).[4]

All of Dulles' statements concerning the Soviet Union were translated into 3,584 "evaluative assertions" and placed into one of four categories:

1. *Soviet Policy:* assessed on a friendship-hostility continuum (2,246 statements).
2. *Soviet Capabilities:* assessed on a strength-weakness continuum (732 statements).
3. *Soviet Success:* assessed on a satisfaction-frustration continuum (290 statements).
4. *General Evaluation of the Soviet Union:* assessed on a good-bad continuum (316 statements).

The resulting figures, when aggregated into time periods, provide a record of the way in which Dulles' perceptions of each dimension varied. From this record inferences can be made of the perceived relationship between the dimensions.

Dulles' image of the Soviet Union was built on the trinity of atheism, totalitarianism, and communism, capped by a deep belief that no enduring social order could be erected upon such foundations.[5] He had written in 1950, for example, that: "Soviet Communism starts with an atheistic, Godless premise. Everything else flows from that premise" (Dulles, 1950, p. 8). Upon these characteristics—the negation of values at or near the core of his belief system—he superimposed three dichotomies.

1. The "good" Russian people versus the "bad" Soviet leaders.[6]
2. The "good" Russian national interest versus "bad" international communism.[7]
3. The "good" Russian state versus the "bad" Communist Party.[8]

That image of the Soviet Union—which has been called the "inherent bad faith of the Communists" model (Kissinger, 1962, p. 201)—was sustained in large part by his heavy reliance on the study of classical Marxist writings, particularly those of Lenin, to find the keys to all Soviet policies (Dulles, 1958b).

In order to test the general hypothesis that information concerning the Soviet Union tended to be perceived and interpreted in a manner consistent with the belief system, the analysis was focused upon the relationship Dulles perceived between Soviet hostility and Soviet success, capabilities, and general evaluation

of the Soviet Union. Specifically, it was hypothesized that Dulles' image of the Soviet Union would be preserved by associating decreases in perceived hostility with:

1. Increasing Soviet frustration in the conduct of its foreign policy.
2. Decreasing Soviet capabilities.
3. No significant change in the general evaluation of the Soviet Union.

Similarly, it was hypothesized that increasing Soviet hostility would be correlated with success and strength.

The results derived through the content analysis of Dulles' statements bear out the validity of the hypotheses. These strongly suggest that he attributed decreasing Soviet hostility to the necessity of adversity rather than to any genuine change of character.

In a short paper it is impossible to include all of the evidence and illustrative material found in the full-length study from which this paper is derived. A few examples may, however, illuminate the perceived relationship presented in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1

Period		Hostility	Success	Capabilities	General Evaluation
1953:	Jan-Jun	+2.01	−1.06	+0.33	−2.81
	Jul-Dec	+1.82	−0.40	−0.30	−2.92
1954:	Jan-Jun	+2.45	+0.46	+2.00	−2.69
	Jul-Dec	+1.85	−0.25	+1.93	−3.00
1955:	Jan-Jun	+0.74	−1.81	−0.80	−2.83
	Jul-Dec	+0.96	−1.91	−0.20	−2.33
1956:	Jan-Jun	+1.05	−1.68	+0.37	−2.91
	Jul-Dec	+1.72	−2.11	−0.22	−3.00
1957:	Jan-Jun	+1.71	−2.10	−0.28	−2.79
	Jul-Dec	+2.09	−1.01	+0.60	−2.93
1958–	Jan-Jun	+2.03	+0.02	+1.47	−2.86
1959	Jul-Feb	+2.10	−1.20	+1.71	−2.90

Correlations[9]	*N*	*r*	*P*
Hostility–Success (Friendship-Failure):			
6 Month Periods (Table Above)	12	+0.71	0.01
12 Month Periods	6	+0.94	0.01
3 Month Periods	25	+0.58	0.01
Hostility–Strength (Friendship-Weakness):			
6 Month Periods (Table Above)	12	+0.76	0.01
12 Month Periods	6	+0.94	0.01
3 Month Periods	25	+0.55	0.01
Hostility–Bad (Friendship-Good):			
6 Month Periods (Table Above)	12	+0.03	n.s.
12 Month Periods	6	+0.10	n.s.
3 Month Periods	25	+0.10	n.s.

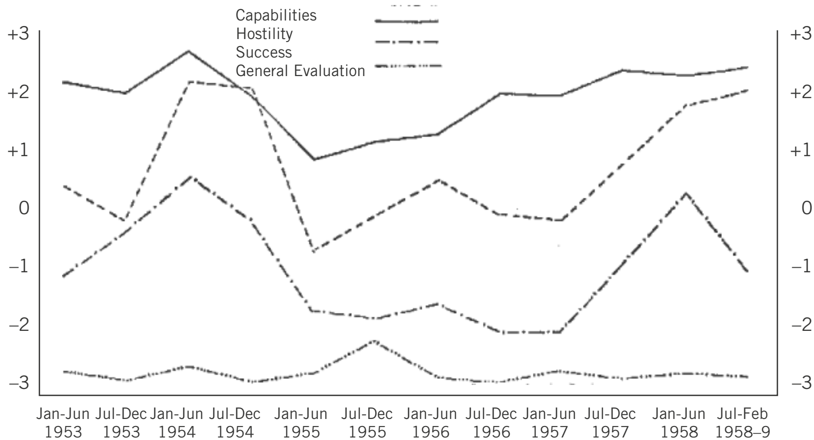

Figure 2.2 Dulles' perceptions of the Soviet Union, 1953–1959.

The 1955–1956 period, beginning with the signing of the Austrian State Treaty and ending with the dual crises in Egypt and Hungary, is of particular interest. As shown in Figure 2.2, Dulles clearly perceived Soviet hostility to be declining. At the same time, he regarded that decline to be symptomatic of a regime whose foreign policy had been an abysmal failure and whose declining strength was forcing Soviet decision-makers to seek a respite in the Cold War. That he felt there was a causal connection between these factors can be suggested by numerous statements made during the period.[10]

The process of how Soviet actions were reinterpreted so as to preserve the model of "the inherent bad faith of the Communists" can also be illustrated by specific examples. Dulles clearly attributed Soviet actions which led up to the Geneva "Summit" Conference—notably the signing of the Austrian State Treaty—to factors other than good faith. He proclaimed that a thaw in the Cold War had come about because, "the policy of the Soviet Union with reference to Western Europe has failed" (U.S. Senate, 1955, p. 15), subsequently adding that, "it has been their [Soviet] system that is on the point of collapsing" (U.S. House of Representatives, 1955, p. 10).

A year later, when questioned about the Soviet plan to reduce their armed forces by 1,200,000 men, he quickly invoked the theme of the bad faith of the Soviet leadership. After several rounds of questions, in which each reply increasingly deprecated the value of the Soviet move in lowering world tensions, he was asked, "Isn't it a fair conclusion from what you have said this morning that you would prefer to have the Soviet Union keep these men in their armed forces?" He replied, "Well, it's a fair conclusion that I would rather have them standing around doing guard duty than making atomic bombs." In any case, he claimed, the reduction was forced by industrial and agricultural weakness: "I think, however,

that what is happening can be explained primarily by economic factors rather than by a shift in foreign policy intentions" (Dulles, 1956, pp. 884–5).

There is strong evidence, then, that Dulles "interpreted the very data which would lead one to change one's model in such a way as to preserve that model" (Bauer, 1961, p. 227). Contrary information (a general decrease in Soviet hostility, specific non-hostile acts) were reinterpreted in a manner which did not do violence to the original image. In the case of the Soviet manpower cuts, these were attributed to necessity (particularly economic weakness), and bad faith (the assumption that the released men would be put to work on more lethal weapons). In the case of the Austrian State Treaty, he explained the Soviet agreement in terms of frustration (the failure of its policy in Europe), and weakness (the system was on the point of collapse).

The extent to which Dulles' image of the Soviet Union affected American decision-making during the period cannot be stated with certainty. There is considerable evidence, however, that he was the primary, if not the sole architect of American policy *vis à vis* the Soviet bloc (Adams, 1961; Morgenthau, 1961; Davis, 1961). Moreover, as Sidney Verba has pointed out, the more ambiguous the cognitive and evaluative aspects of a decision-making situation, and the less a group context is used in decision-making, the more likely are personality variables to assert themselves (Verba, 1961, pp. 102–3). Both the ambiguity of information concerning Soviet intentions and Dulles' *modus operandi* appear to have increased the importance of his image of the Soviet Union.[11]

III. Conclusion

These findings have somewhat sobering implications for the general problem of resolving international conflict. They suggest the fallacy of thinking that peaceful settlement of outstanding international issues is simply a problem of

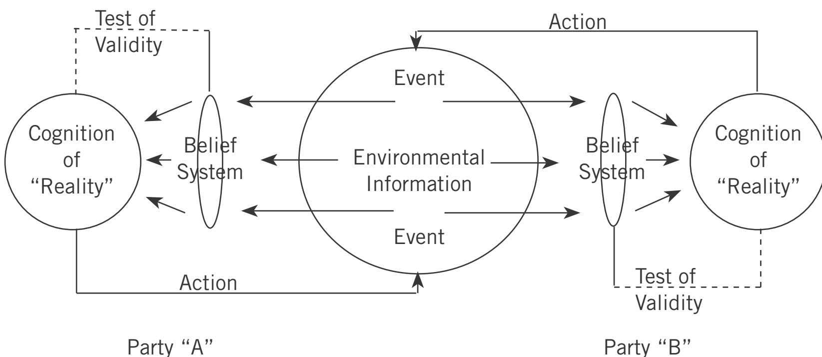

Figure 2.3 The indirect relationship between belief system and action. Source: Ray, 1961, p. 21.

devising "good plans." Clearly as long as decision-makers on either side of the Cold War adhere to rigid images of the other party, there is little likelihood that even genuine "bids" (North *et al.,* 1960, p. 357) to decrease tensions will have the desired effect. Like Dulles, the Soviet decision-makers possess a relatively all-encompassing set of lenses through which they perceive their environment. Owing to their image of "monopoly capitalism," they are also pre-conditioned to view the actions of the West within a framework of "inherent bad faith."

To the extent that each side undeviatingly interprets new information, even friendly bids, in a manner calculated to preserve the original image, the two-nation system is a closed one with small prospect for achieving even a desired reduction of tensions. If decreasing hostility is assumed to arise from weakness and frustration, and the other party is defined as inherently evil, there is little cause to reciprocate. Rather, there is every reason to press further, believing that added pressure will at least insure the continued good conduct of the adversary, and perhaps even cause its collapse. As a result, perceptions of low hostility are self-liquidating and perceptions of high hostility are self-fulfilling. The former, being associated with weakness and frustration, do not invite reciprocation; the latter, assumed to derive from strength and success, are likely to result in reactions which will increase rather than decrease tensions.

There is also another danger: to assume that the decreasing hostility of an adversary is caused by weakness (rather than, for example, the sense of confidence that often attends growing strength), may be to invite a wholly unrealistic sense of complacency about the other state's capabilities.

In such a closed system—dominated by what has been called the "mirror image"— misperceptions and erroneous interpretations of the other party's intentions feed back into the system, confirming the original error (Ray, 1961).[12]

If this accurately represents the interaction between two hostile states, it appears that the probability of making effective bids to break the cycle would depend upon at least two variables:

1. The degree to which the decision-makers on both sides approach the "open" end of Rokeach's scale of personality types (Rokeach, 1960).
2. The degree to which the social systems approach the "pluralistic" end of the pluralistic-monolithic continuum. The closer the systems come to the monolithic end, the more they appear to require the institutionalization of an "external enemy" in order to maintain internal cohesion (North, 1962, p. 41; Wheeler, 1960).

The testing of these and other hypotheses concerning the function of belief systems in international politics must, however, await further research. Certainly this looms as a high priority task given the current state of the international system. As Charles E. Osgood has so cogently said,