

# Grand Strategy

MVZ248 Week3

# Definitions

Traditional idea of strategy and builds upon it in 3 ways.

Includes diplomatic, economic, informational means

Instruments of internal policies and external forces/variables

Includes periods of peacetime and wartime

Murray, et.al The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War. Cambridge University Press, pp.1-23

# Terminology

Academia

Yale and Duke and Herzliya

Collection of plans and policies of a nation state.

Grand strategy is reconciling ends and means.

Purposeful action

What leaders think and want

Constraints and limitations (internal and external)

# Thought-process

## Theory

Leader's theories about how the world works and what is role of their nation-state

## Policy and Practice

Government action and reaction in response to real (perceived) threats and opportunities.

U.S.A = Iraq

Israel = Iran

# Blending

Disciplines of history, political science, public policy, and economics

What happened and why; underlying patterns; how did it work/better; national resources produced and protected?

Improvement of understanding in key areas

History is more relevant; Pol.Sci is more concrete, public policy is contextualized, and economics is security-oriented.

# Issues

Primary versus secondary theaters, distribution of resources, international alliances best fit for national goals.

Grand strategy overlaps with foreign policy.

Political leadership directs grand strategy with input from military and policy officials.

NSC/ Pentagon or Chief of General Staff (Israeli Defense Staff)

Grand strategy develops over years, perhaps multiple generations

Israel (Cabinet/politicians)

USA (Kennan) = ??

# Views

Neo-isolationism

Selective engagement

US (Middle East) Israel (Sinai) (Lebanon)

Cooperative security

Primacy

(Arms)

# Neo-Isolationism

No active participation in international politics to maintain national security.

No threats to American homeland, no need to intervene abroad

Nuclear weapons assure political sovereignty and territorial integrity of U.S.; while proliferation prevents emergence of competing hegemon.

This follows strictly speaking a defensive realist understanding of international politics.



# Selective Engagement

Focus is on powers with significant industrial and military to prevent war.

Europe, Asia and the Middle East matter most to the United States

Europe and Asia = great powers, economic impact on IP

Middle East primary source of oil.

Prevents nuclear proliferation with strong nuclear deterrent.

At issue: differentiate necessary versus unnecessary engagement & whether strategy represents a shift?

# Collective Security (CS)

Is inspired by liberalism NOT realism in approach to IR.

CS considers nuclear proliferation, regional conflicts and humanitarian crisis to be major interests of the United States

Grand strategy involves support for international institutions, agreements, use of force for humanitarian purposes.

Overcome security dilemma and deter interstate conflict.

However, collective action problems such as international institutions, public opinion, limitations of arms control are ALL criticisms.

# Hegemon--USA

Preponderance of power ensures peace i.e. U.S.A

Pursue hegemony and dominate international system

U.S. foreign policy focus on maintaining U.S. power and prevent other powers from becoming serious challengers.

Only intervene when direct impact on national security occurs.

Military forces at similar levels as during Cold War

Undermines valuable multilateral institutions, the feasibility of preventing war and imperial overstretch

# Hegemon--Israel

## Arms

Conventional

Nuclear

## Territory

Buffer-zones by war and peace

## Alliances

Arab and Western

# Primacy + Selective Engagement--USA

Primacy ensures peace (US power as primacy ensures peace)

Dominate the international system; reject bipolar or multipolar world.

Foreign policy focus is on maintenance of power and prevention of competitor

Contain rivals rather than engage them.

China and Russia

Only intervene when national security (selective engagement) is directly impacted

R2P; regional conflicts

# Primacy + Selective Engagement--Israel

Egypt and Jordan

Gaza

Territory under control from 1967-2005

Terrorism + buffer-zone

Lebanon

Terrorism (1982; 2006) + Buffer zone

Regional stability (1982)

# Post 2010

Barry Posen advocates US abandon hegemonic strategy. Replace with restraint.

Focus on security challenges: powerful rival(s); terrorism; limiting nuclear proliferation

Don't shape world to U.S. values, instead advocate vital national interests

Obama administration arguably exercised this view

Large troop contingents downsized in peaceful regions (Europe)

Preserve country's prosperity and security.

# Arguments

Ikenberry, Brooks, and Wohlforth not convinced with Posen.

U.S. has no powerful rivals, no need to balance; U.S. military is prime

U.S. domination of military technology allows for trade of access. Allies agree not to transfer key military tech. to competitors.

Brooks, Ikenberry, Wohlforth (January-February, 2013). "Lean Forward: In Defense of American Engagement" *Foreign Affairs*. 92. (1).



# Arguments

Ted Carpenter argues further that major power needs to preserve its strategic insolvency.

Overextension and national exhaustion

Off-loading security responsibility must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Moral indignation rather than calculated assessment of national interest then murky conflict involvement will occur.

Carpenter (March-April 2013). "Delusions of Indispensability" (124): 47-55.

# Analysis

In Israel cycles and status quo

Overextension and national exhaustion (Intifada);(Gaza); (Oslo Accords)

Off-loading security responsibility must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

(Gaza withdrawal in 2005; security fence)

Moral indignation rather than calculated assessment of national interest then murky conflict involvement will occur.

(Terrorism -kidnapping + public outcry = Lebanon)

# Criticism

Difficult to organize resources for effective grand strategy

Tendency to see actions of states as coherent and purposeful...or assume actions and choices are more decisive.

Fallacy of coherence

Tendency of policymakers to believe they can greater influence events.

Fallacy of control

Richard Betts (2012). *American Force: Dangers, Delusions, and Dilemmas in National Security*. Columbia University Press.

# Criticism

Richard Betts details skeptics critiques regarding feasibility and practicability of strategy.

“To skeptics, effective strategy is often an illusion because what happens in the gap between objectives and war outcomes is too complex and unpredictable to be manipulated to a specific end ”

USA in Iraq (2003-2007)

Israel in Gaza and Lebanon

Israel for Oslo Accords

Betts (Autumn 2000). “Is Strategy an Illusion”. *International Security*. 25 (2): 5-20