

Foreign Policy as a Means Driven activity

And the Continuity of US Foreign Policy

Our Approach is not Traditional

- We argue that US foreign policy is marked by **continuity** rather than discontinuity – cycling between active and non active (isolationist) periods
- We argue that policy is **means** driven rather than goal driven – its not really a product of striving to achieve democracy, economic growth and access, stability, that drives US policy – though we acknowledge these goals exist
- We argue that the US is not a benign Hegemonic superpower, nor a traditional imperial empire- Rather over time the US has established what we call an **informal empire of client states**

The Basic Argument

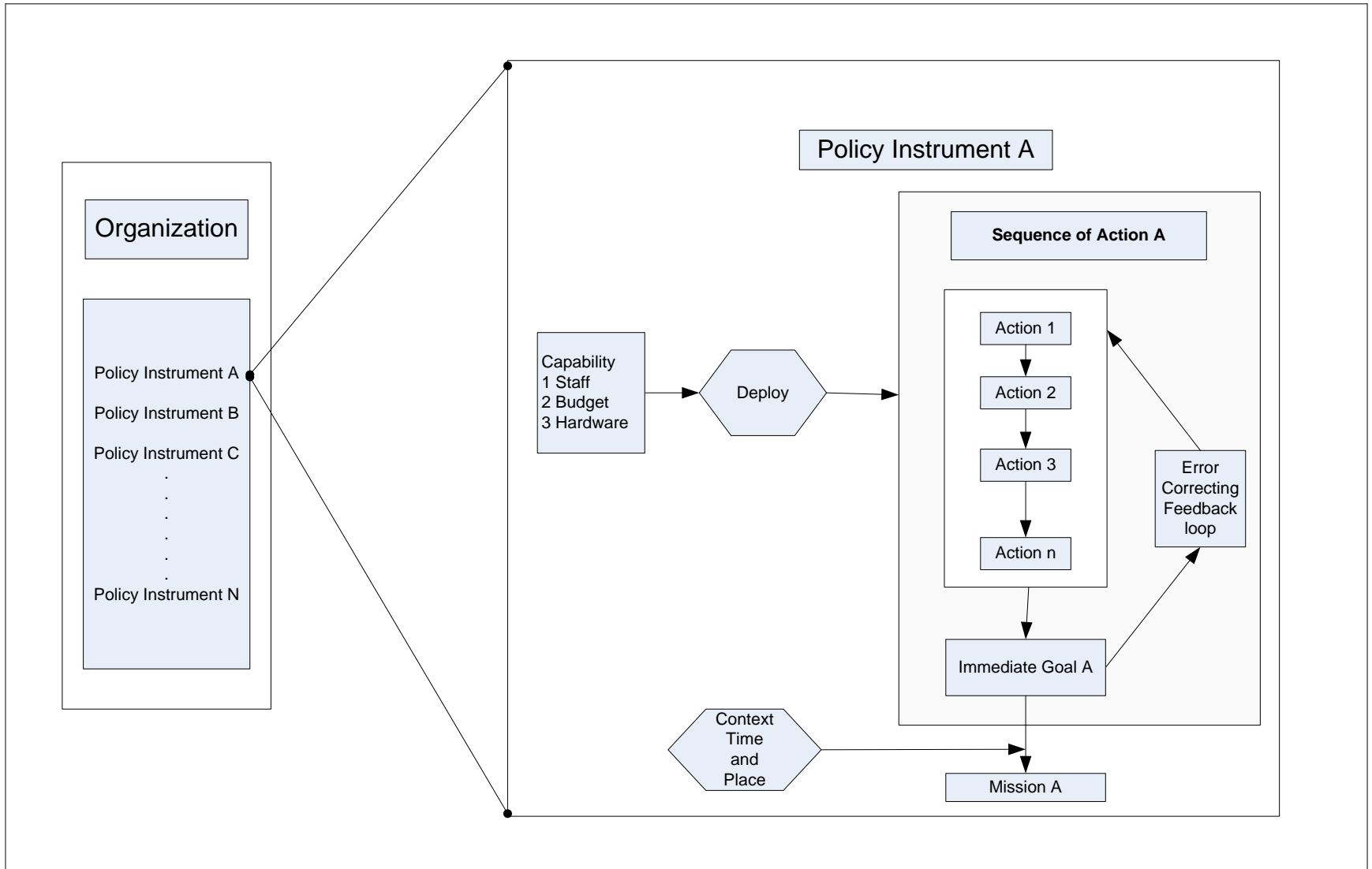
- **Policy making** is instrument-driven: the U.S. spends much of its time devising programs to aid clients and hinder enemies because those are the competences it has. In this sense, policy is not driven by any **overarching goals** over and beyond those of helping clients and hurting enemies; instead, it is driven by the relatively limited set of **means** the U.S. has at its disposal. Policy making, as a process, is not a matter of trying to achieve long-term or structural goals by various means but of choosing a particular means that corresponds to whatever the immediate problem is faced by a client or presented by an enemy
- So when we say that there is **continuity** in U.S. foreign policy over a century, what we mean is that U.S. officials continue, decade after decade, to engage in the same **types of missions** to maintain clients and act in a hostile fashion against enemies by **deploying the same small set of policy instruments** (capabilities that have a bureaucratic home with an organization whose implementation generate a sequence of activities)

Policy Instruments and problem solving

Policy instruments have been constructed to solve two interrelated types of foreign policy problems

1. Those designed to help solve US client problems
 2. Those designed to punish and sometimes eliminate US Enemies
- Policymaking is **concrete, practical, and place specific**. It amounts to “fitting” ready at hand policy instruments to deal with specific problems that are occurring in specific places (typically clients or where enemies or their proxies are located) – existing policies are assessed (error correction feedback) and adjusted as required

Figure 1.1 Organizations and Policy Instruments



Policy making as an instrument driven process – A cybernetic Approach

- government agencies are purposeful arrangements of purposeful activities
- Any purposeful system is purposeful precisely because the recurring sequence of its activities – what it does, i.e., its means – incorporates and is governed by an **error-correcting feedback mechanism**. The system's immediate goals, in other words, operate through its means
- the **capabilities** for generating specific **recurring sequences of purposeful activities** are given a bureaucratic home within an **organization**; those capabilities, are what we mean by **policy instruments**, such that the deployment of the instrument generates the corresponding sequences
- the immediate goal being pursued by the use of a specific policy instrument at a given time and place the **mission** of the policy.
- **So when we say that there is continuity in U.S. foreign policy over a century, what we mean is that U.S. officials continue, decade after decade, to engage in the same types of missions to maintain clients and act in a hostile fashion against enemies**

Programmatic Policy-making

With the creation of specialized policymaking shifts away from ad hoc interactions to programmatic interactions – engaging in recurring sequences of interlocking activities (organizations deploying policy instruments)

Examples

military training

financial sanctions

Examples of Means Driven Policy

- The lap bomber incident

Organizations involved – Homeland Security, State, TSA, CIA
and a number of other agencies

Policy was in place – deemed to be “systematic failure”

Why – driven by the specifics of the case

Policy response – not Global assessment, not about goals

Rather about means and capabilities – immediate goals and
sequences of actions adjusted

Lap bomber continued

- Organizational policy instruments adjusted

Stay in seat, nothing in lap last hour

More screening for all international passengers coming to US

More screening for passengers from 14 specific countries

Possibly deploy more body revealing scanners

State dept shares information about US visas to other agencies

And others we don't know about

The Traditional Unitary Rational Actor Approach

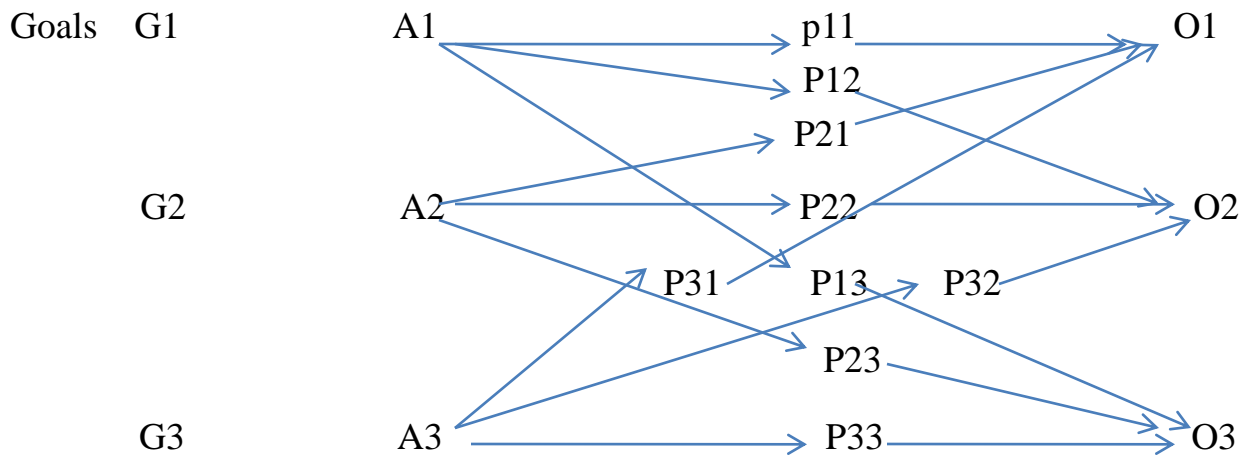
- This approach is an outgrowth of the “realist” school of IR – where states are presumed to act strategically to survive in an anarchic world and to act to wisely (optimize) in a hyper competitive world – to act otherwise likely would lead to non survival – and so “smart” actors who take actions that optimize survival and growth stick around (are not conquered, or overthrown by coup or by insurgent group) and others imitate them
- As a result most nation states and actors acting on behalf of nation-states end up having similar goals, see the world and how it works in similar ways, and make choices in quite similar ways – making culture, psychology, and organizational structure nearly irrelevant
- In such a context a rather abstract rational choice (cost/benefit) approach is sensible

The Rational Choice Approach

- Assumptions – behavior is purposive, goal directed, and consistent and decisions if not made by individuals are assumed to be made as-if by a “unitary” rational actor --- which is to say all actors involved in the decision are assumed to have the same set of preferences across goals and assess alternative courses of action in the same fashion and have one set of perceived courses of action
- The component parts -- Goals and objectives, alternatives, consequences, and choice
- Goals – preferences over possible outcomes or consequences – win rather than lose a war, get a preferred trade deal in bargaining with another party, etc)
- Alternatives – courses of action (or policies) available to the actor to take

Continued

consequences – for each alternative – a set of possible outcomes can follow – that is different things can happen and with different probabilities



Continued

- $EV[A1] = p11[VO1] + p12[VO2] + p13[VO3]$
- $EV[A2] = p21[VO1] + p22[VO2] + p23[VO3]$
- $EV[A3] = p31[VO1] + p32[VO2] + p33[VO3]$
- **The Alternative choice with the highest expected value (EV) -- which depends on how the value of the various outcomes are ranked and/or scaled which in turn depends on a similar ranking and/or scaled difference across Goals 1,2 and 3 is chosen**

The Cuban Missile Crisis Example

- **Goals /Outcomes** O1 Avoid Nuclear war
- O2 Remove Missiles from Cuba
- O 3 Win Political battle with Soviet Union (look tough)

- **Alternatives** A1 Do nothing
- A2 Negotiate
- A3 Blockade
- A4 Surgical Air strike
- A 5 Bomb and Invade

- **Let's suppose that the following preferences for outcomes holds**

- **O1 > O2 >O3**

Continued

	O1 Avoid war	O2 Remove M	O3 Win P	
•				
•	A1 (DN)	HP	LP	LP
•	A2 (NE)	HP	HP	LP **
•	A3 (B)	MP	MP	MP
•	A4 (SA)	LP	HP	HP
•	A5 (I)	LP	HP	HP

continued

- **So A2 should have been chosen – But we know that A3 was the actual first choice so we made one of two mistakes in our analysis**
- **1 we ranked the preference across outcomes incorrectly -- maybe O3 is more important than O2 OR O1 is valued far far more than O2 or O3**
- **2 we misrepresented the policymakers understanding of the probabilities of various outcomes given the alternatives chosen –**

Cuban Missile Crisis from a means based perspective

- **Policy was in place with regard to Cuba -- covert efforts to assassinate Castro and to destabilize the regime**
- **Also policy decision was “taken” but not implemented to dismantle and remove antiquated and dangerous US missiles in Turkey**
- **Then Soviet Missiles discovered in Cuba – by “routine” air force surveillance**

Policy cobbled together around means at hand as hardly agreement among policymakers about goals – all wanted to avoid a war and also to remove the soviet missiles but disagreed about much else

“surgical” air strikes -- derived from on the shelf plan to invade Cuba

Plan to invade Cuba dusted off and put ramped up

Blockade or quarantine provided as a means to address aspects of the problem by the Navy

Secret diplomacy with Soviets re possible and then actual secret missile trade

Stated and some unstated US goals in Afghanistan

- Deny Haven to Al Qaeda to rebuilt terrorist threat
- Spread democracy
- Support stability for crucial US client Pakistan
- Support woman's rights
- Protect US credibility
- Maintain US influence in Central Asia
- Continue access to Central Asia Pipeline
- Protect Presidency for midterm and 2012 elections
- Build stable Afghan state
- Control and reduce drug trade

Why is some form of military escalation the only policy option?

Why is not “losing” the only acceptable mission (or short term goal)?

Options 20,000 more US troops
30,000 more US troops
40,000 more US troops

Current policy in place the mission -- build Afghan government and counterinsurgency

Problem – policy is failing

Why failing? Growing strength of the Taliban, Afghan troops and police not up to the task --- not enough US and NATO troops to blunt the growing insurgency so

More US troops -- this will prevent a disaster but it will not achieve success –

Micro Continuity – the recurring use of particular policy instruments in a given context, year-in, year-out; Routine Maintenance of Clients (Ch.4)

An Example: Routine Economic Instruments

The only policy instrument of this type up through the early 1930s was the employment of U.S. experts to run parts or all of a country's financial bureaucracy.

The first real means of providing ongoing financial resources came about in the early days of the New Deal, with the creation of the Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im)

After WW II World Bank, IMF -- later a number of regional development banks were created

Foreign assistance -- Marshall Plan late 1940s

Micro Continuity – Routine Maintenance of Clients - continued

- **Mutual Security Act of 1951. This opened up the possibility of providing economic aid and technical assistance (the provision of equipment and advice) to any country in the world, provided that the president certify that this would “strengthen the security of the United States”**
- **Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. mandated the creation of a new organization for economic development assistance, the Agency for International Development (AID) which set up machinery for providing annual economic assistance “on a basis of long-range continuity” to countries anywhere, irrespective of the nature of those countries’ military ties with the U.S.**

So today there are an array of instruments to provide bilateral and multilateral aid and resource flows

Meso-continuity

The issue of meso-continuity is the recurring deployment of particular policy instruments in contexts where they had not previously, or at least for a long time, been used.

Certain kinds of threats to regimes are always responded to by the U.S. deploying specific kinds of policy instruments and that certain kinds of situations involving enemy states evoke analogous responses from the U.S. This predictable connection between the type of situation in other countries and the type of U.S. response in fact holds for over a century

Intervention involves any policy in which an activity by a regime, essential to its survival, is taken over by an outside actor Recurring deployment of policy instruments to solve problems and accomplish missions is taken up in Chapters 5 and 6 --

Macro-Continuity

Macro-continuity is the recurring resort to particular policy instruments in very different historical settings

The same policy instruments that started to be employed in the post Spanish American war period, we also employed at two critical junctures – the post World War II era (to many more states across the globe), and post Cold War/Post 9/11era (to new clients and against new enemies) -- across supposedly critical junctures (or so-called new eras)
Chapter 7

Other Structural Continuity explanations

Unchanging Long term goals – democracy, open markets, stability

Political culture - exceptionalism, moral mission as political leader

Imperial expansion -- shear growth in power

All Structural Explanations– main problems are ones of precedence and translation

When and why are some clients acquired and other not and why are specific policies employed to deal with particular problems rather than others