

Seminar in US Foreign Policy
Meeting Three:
The Context of USFP Goals & IR
Theory – Setting Up Cold War Bipolarity
& Theories of Decision-making

Dave McCuan
Masaryk University &
Sonoma State University
Fall 2009

Int'l System, cont'd

- American Hegemony
 - Imperialism? Exceptionalism? (Does it matter???)
 - Good or bad for the world? For the United States?
- International Stability (good, bad, or contextual?)
- Review of Grand Strategy (Weeks 1, 2)

Grand Strategy

- Grand Strategy: The use of all the instruments of power, or tools, at the disposal of the nation, in pursuit of the national interests
 - Political (diplomacy, official international relations)
 - Economic (trade, finance, technology)
 - Military (force: threatened or actual)
 - Cultural (value propagation: information, literature, media, music)

Grand Strategy

- Grand Strategy: A comprehensive, long-term guide to meeting particular interests (establishing objectives)
- Strategy: A means to an end; the link between resources (tools) & how they will be used; but it implies active opposition & thus must reflect dynamism
- Policies: Detailed plans implementing a strategy (*similar to tactics*)

Dimensions of Strategy

- Forces do not have inherent strategic effect; rather it is the purpose for which forces are used that provides strategic effect.
- Strategy involves elements of interaction; when implementing a preferred strategy, an actor must take into account the adversary's probable reactions.

Problems with Grand Strategy?

- Difficulty in defining the national interest
 - Who is in power?
 - What is the environment?
- Difficulty in developing policy, absent identification of national interests and articulation of objectives
- Are there consistent, continuous aspects of U.S. foreign policy?
 - Geography
 - Liberalism

Problems, cont'd

- US cannot do all things; limited resources
 - Cannot put out all fires, must distribute resources according to interests; thus, must prioritize
- US leaders must identify national interests & persuade US public on necessity of protecting these (US public historically indifferent to foreign policy)
 - Note failure of US to obtain public support for foreign policy in Vietnam; inconsistent approach re Iraq today

Strategic Diplomacy

1. Determine objectives in light of available power
2. Determine objectives of others & the power they have
3. Determine extent to which these objectives are compatible
4. Employ the means best suited to the pursuit of objectives

Tools of Statecraft

- Appeasement (Munich Conference)
- Accommodation (Panama Canal)
- Deterrence (Taiwan)
- Coercion (Libya)
- Force (Iraq)
- What else?

Foreign Policy Influences (From Wittkopf, 2008, 2009)

- Societal / Macro Level
 - Democracy, capitalism, liberalism (interests of the individual over interests of the collective, pursuant to the belief this is the best way to advance the collective interest)
- Institutional / Actors & Process Level
 - Congressional, Executive, Bureaucratic
- Individual / Micro Level
 - Psychological traits of policymakers & leaders;
Conscious choices (statesmen vs. politicians)

Posen & Ross

- 4 Grand Strategies in US History:
 - Neo-Isolationism
 - Selective Engagement
 - Cooperative Security
 - Primacy / Pre-Emption

- Where would “Containment” fall?

Table 1. Competing Grand Strategy Visions.

	Neo-Isolationism	Selective Engagement	Cooperative Security	Primacy
Analytical Anchor	Minimal, defensive realism	Traditional balance of power realism	Liberalism	Maximal realism/unilateralism
Major Problem of Int'l Politics	Avoiding entanglement in the affairs of others	Peace among the major powers	The indivisibility of peace	The rise of a peer competitor
Preferred World Order	Distant balance of power	Balance of power	Interdependence	Hegemonic
Nuclear Dynamics	Supports status quo	Supports status quo	Supports aggression	Supports aggression
Conception of National Interests	Narrow	Restricted	Transnational	Broad
Regional Priorities	North America	Industrial Eurasia	Global	Industrial Eurasia & the home of any potential peer competitor
Nuclear Proliferation	Not our problem	Discriminate prevention	Indiscriminate prevention	Indiscriminate prevention
NATO	Withdraw	Maintain	Transform & expand	Expand
Regional Conflict	Abstain	Contain; discriminate intervention	Intervene	Contain; discriminate intervention
Ethnic Conflict	Abstain	Contain	Nearly indiscriminate intervention	Contain
Humanitarian Intervention	Abstain	Discriminate intervention	Nearly indiscriminate intervention	Discriminate intervention
Use of Force	Self-defense	Discriminate	Frequent	At will
Force Posture	Minimal self-defense force	Two-MRC force	Reconnaissance strike complex for multilateral action	A two-power-standard force

Enduring National Interests

- Geopolitics
 - Relation between physical surroundings & political behavior
- How does this change or what are emerging elements?
 - Is space the successor to sea power?

Geography

- Geography is but one of many factors, among the variety of permanent, temporary, structural, & personal influences on foreign policy
- Because war / conflict is the instrument used in the struggle for power, & because geography is key to war, geography is vitally important to foreign policy

Strategic Geography

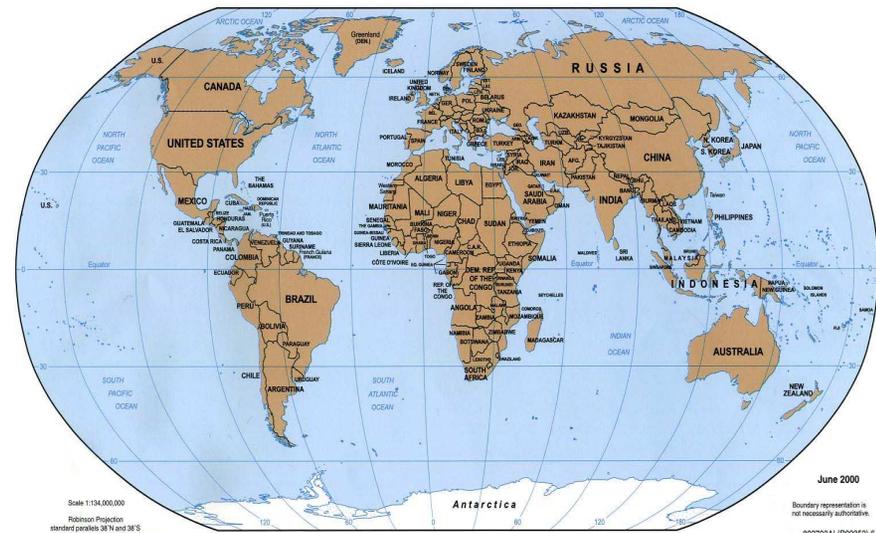
- Size
 - Manpower
 - Diverse & abundant natural resources
 - Depth (space)
- Terrain
 - Topographical features
 - Ability to traverse (roads or waterways)
 - Effect on “shape” of the state (SLOCs)
- Location
 - To geographical features (water, SLOCs)
 - To other powers
 - Climate

Strategic Geography

- Expansion
 - Line of least resistance
 - Attempts to dissuade will or dissuade actions (economic easement?)
 - Frontiers (equal pressures)
 - Natural Barriers (terrain features)
 - Artificial Barriers (buffer states)

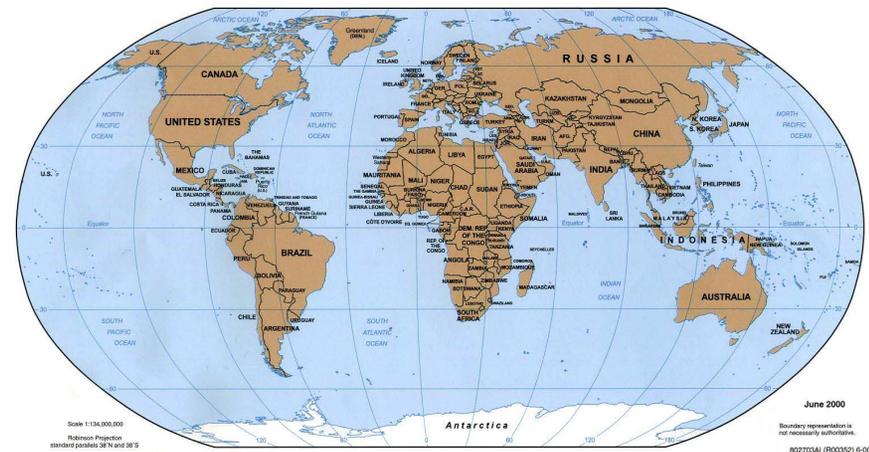
Geopolitics – Halford Mackinder

- Lack of rainfall in interior
- Concentration of population along littorals
- Land mass of Euro-Asia from Atlantic-Polar Regions-Gobi Desert-Himalayas-Sahara constitutes the heartland
- Sea power can control access to regions



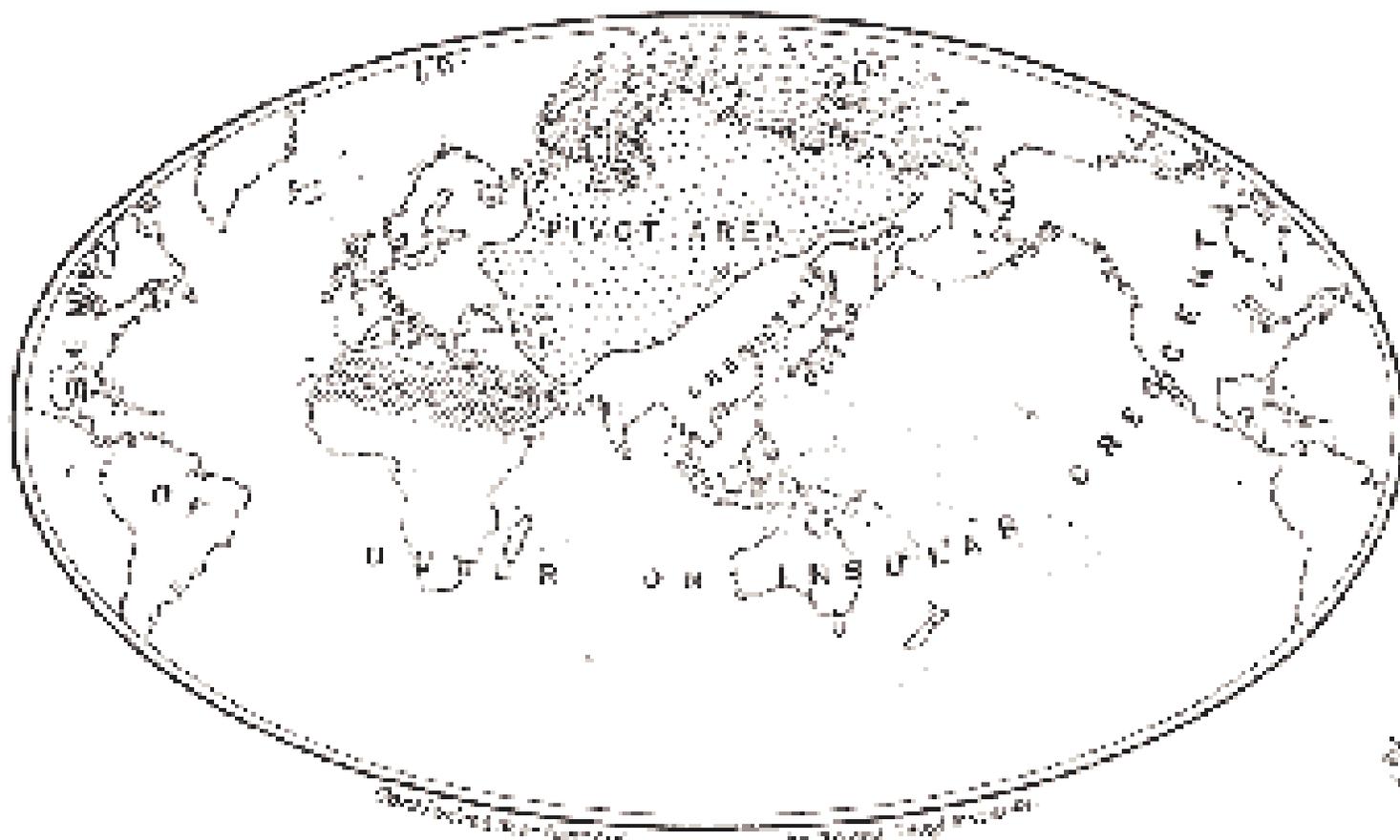
Geopolitics - Halford Mackinder

- Surrounding this “Heartland” are 4 “marginal regions” arranged in a crescent
- Coincide with 4 religions
 - Buddhism (E Asia)
 - Hinduism (India)
 - Islam (Near East)
 - Christianity (W Europe)



Geopolitics – Halford Mackinder

- Marginal areas depend on maritime mobility
- Development of trans-oceanic mobility provided maritime states with ability to press continental power from multiple fronts
- Reversed relations of Europe & Asia by making European states more powerful
- Created new “outer crescent” of Americas, Sub-Saharan Africa, Australia & Japan inaccessible to I&-power of Eurasia



THE NATURAL SEATS OF POWER.

*In almost all cases. Government—stable exists. Other centers—only potential, partly covered.

Geopolitics – Halford Mackinder

- Russia able to consolidate much of Eurasian landmass
- Development of railways provided land power with superior mobility once again
 - Commercial
 - Military

Geopolitics – Halford Mackinder

- The resources available to whoever controls the Eurasian l& mass are sufficient for self-sustainment
- Can operate along interior lines of communication against the interior crescent
- If land power gains control over the inner crescent, can exercise maritime capability & effectively threaten world domination
- Key to power is thus control over the Heartland

Geopolitics

“Who rules East Europe controls the
heartland;

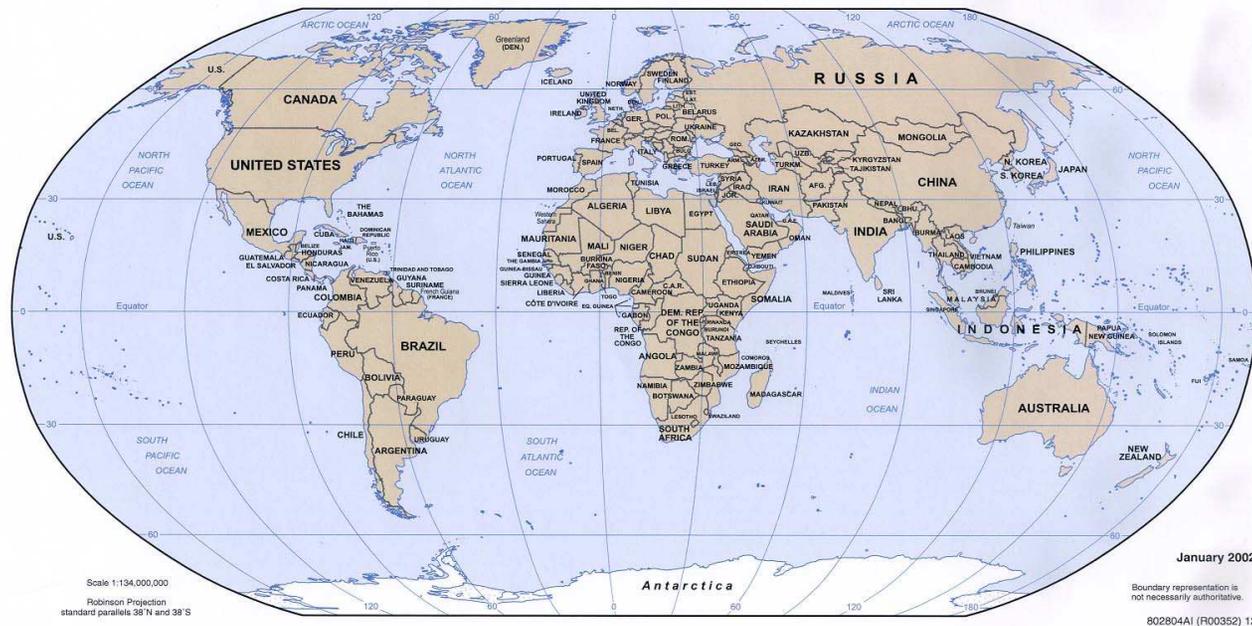
Who rules the heartland controls the World-
Islands;

Who rules the World-Islands controls the
World.”

-Mackinder (1919)

Globalization Link

- Does geography matter today, or has technology rendered it irrelevant in foreign policy?



Part II – Is IR Theory Useful for Understanding USFP?

Part II: IR Theory

- According to former diplomat David Newsom, “much of today’s scholarship [on international issues] is either irrelevant or inaccessible to policymakers. . . .much remains locked within the circle of esoteric scholarly discussion.”
- Although academics often like to be obscure (because incomprehensibility can both make scholarship seem more profound and make it harder to tell when a particular argument is wrong), opacity impedes scientific progress and is not a virtue in theoretical work.

Part II: IR Theory, cont'd

- Unfortunately, these [ideal] conditions are often absent in the realm of foreign policy, where actors' preferences are frequently unknown, where each participant has many strategies available, and where the costs and benefits of different outcomes are uncertain.

Part II: IR Theory, cont'd

$$(1) \quad P(\text{value of gain}) + (1-P)(\text{value of loss}) = \text{Expected value}$$

In an attempt to include subjective valuation in this mechanical process, the concept of *utility* as distinct from *value* is introduced. Utility is defined as an individual decision-maker's "intensity of preferences."⁴ Thus, a decision-maker may have a different utility for different sections of the range of values. In other words, we might represent value as a simple linear function unaffected by whether the value is high or low, positive or negative. In contrast, utility could be a non-linear function such that it varies dependent on whether the absolute value is either high or low. Unfortunately, the theory provides no guidance as to assessing when utility differs from value. Preference identification, ordering, and intensity (utility) all must be provided from exogenous data sources and fed into the model. Thus, in essence if we tell the model what goals are preferred, in what order, and whether and how much a particular goal is valued relative to other goals, the model will tell us what policy choice will be made. I argue that this is an unremarkable feat.

Part II: What is a Theory?

- A theory is a causal explanation— it identifies recurring relations between two or more phenomena and explains why that relationship obtains. By providing us with a picture of the central forces that determine real-world behavior, theories invariably simplify reality in order to render it comprehensible.
 - IR theories at all three levels of analysis (system, state, individual)
- [T]here are at least four ways that theoretical scholarship can help policy makers: diagnosis; prediction; prescription; and evaluation.

Part II: IR Theory, cont'd

- 3 Main Theories Concern Us:
 - Realism (Focus on Power Relations)
 - States are most important entities
 - States act in own interests; self-help world
 - Relative gains are key
 - Classic (Human Nature) / Offensive / Defensive (Structural Realism)
 - Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Morgenthau
 - Mearsheimer (Offensive, Defensive Realism)
 - Liberalism (Focus on Cooperation)
 - States, IGOs, NGOs are all important (institutionalism)
 - States can cooperate; establish understanding
 - Absolute gains are key
 - Kant, Wilson, Nye
 - Constructivism (Focus on Identity)
 - How we define ourselves is key; is subject to change
 - Organization and interests can be adjusted
 - Consciously molding new identity is key

Part II: IR Theory, cont'd

- Realism
 - Claim that no balance of power is forming – but what of EU? Of NATO vs. Warsaw Pact?
 - Realist theory does not foreclose asymmetric warfare (actually predicts it)
 - Realism recognizes limits – tied to power – and thus promotes prudence; tempers against unfettered idealism
 - Typically associated with political conservatism
 - Note neo-conservatism breaks with realism (mixture of realism and Wilsonian idealism)

Part II: IR Theory, cont'd

- Liberalism
 - Belief in universal values; establishing international institutions to reflect these
 - Desire to spread democracy (rejection of alternative values)
 - Emphasizes benefits of globalization (economic (and cultural?) improvements)
 - Multilateralism works!
 - Can fade into extremist idealism; discounts the temptation of power and overstates the efficacy of bureaucracy

Part II: IR Theory, cont'd

- Constructivism
 - Nothing is set in stone; all reality is subject to adjustment if humans work to do so
 - Often rejects the notion of the Westphalian system
 - Often overstate “common” human identity and interest
 - Creating new “norms” (often via international institutions, then using them to advocate for domestic application)

Part II: IR Theory, cont'd

- “Soft Power”
 - The ability to get what you want through attraction rather than through coercion or payments
 - Emanates from attractiveness of our culture, political ideals, and policies
 - To what degree should popularity abroad influence U.S. policies?
 - “We need to adopt policies that appeal to moderate [Muslims]...” Is this right? Shouldn't we focus on persuading them to support our policies, rather than adjusting our policies to accommodate them?
 - Emphasizes role of international institutions
 - Psychology of appealing to ego (asking for support, legitimacy)

Part II: IR Theory, cont'd

- Did the failure to obtain UN authorization for the war in Iraq cause anti-Americanism, or was it a reflection thereof?
 - Do our policies cause resentment, or does resentment of US cause disagreement with our policies?
- Says majority in European states believe US does not take their interests into account (or the converse – it means a majority do!)
 - This is strikingly large in number of people; Do you believe Austria or Latvia takes US interests into account?
 - All states are governed in relation to their own interests (state interests / regime interests)
 - Germany and opposition to US invasion of Iraq (Germany had significant trade with Iraq; economic benefits of Saddam staying in power)

Part II: IR Theory, cont'd

- When U.S. takes actions, does it establish a precedent for other states?
 - Doesn't power, rather than "norms," dictate the availability of policy options?
- We must "share intelligence and capabilities with others"
 - Doesn't this result in a diffusion of power? Is not power relative?

Part II: IR Theory, cont'd

- American Primacy versus American Empire (words matter here for Exceptionalism angle)
 - Control versus influence
 - Domestic public opinion opposed to empire; unwilling to devote resources to empire (i.e. creation of policing force)
- Public Diplomacy (Propaganda & Rally Effects)
 - Joseph Nye advocates greater transnational technocratic relations (neo-functionalism)
 - Direct resources through private cutouts

Cook & Moos on IR & USFP

- **“Until a world state which embraces all persons is achieved-when the problem disappears-the nation cannot be unconcerned with the aspirations and the welfare of other peoples. If, however, under existing conditions it is thus un-concerned, it is ultimately unconcerned with its own well-being also.”**
- Is this accurate?

Cook & Moos, cont'd

- **“Effectively to pursue its own interests, the nation has to profess to be universal in interest, and to accept the equality of persons and peoples. Indeed, the utilization of a national interest concept based upon a moral appeal as the firmament of our foreign policy, holds out the greatest promise for meeting the challenge of events that lie ahead.”**
- True?

Cook & Moos, cont'd

- [A foreign policy] must be based on a long-term parallelism of interests. It must possess an awareness that universalist moral insight is requisite also from the point of view of technology and communication and must envisage the ultimate creation of corresponding world political institutions. Such institutions, not possible at present, must yet be held desiderata which can be achieved in a foreseeable future.
- It is necessary to reject the dogma that diversity of political and social philosophy is incompatible with fundamental universality.

Neo-Conservatives in USFP

- GW Bush
 - Idealism & Realism (neo-conservatism)
 - Pursuing liberal ideas, via unilateral force if necessary, for idealistic ends (realism's emphasis on power)
 - Democratic peace
 - Universal values

Mazaar's Bushian Triangle

