

Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process on the Example of Psychological Characters of U.S. Presidents

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Abstract

Formation of the internal politics is a difficult process. Its key element consists of the formulation and adoption of foreign policy decisions, and their character depends on many factors. These include geographical position of the country, existence of military and economic power, cultural, historical traditions, as well as the type of the political system, social structure of the society, and individual features of political leaders.

Acceptation of foreign policy decisions may reflect critically not only on the country where it was accepted, but on the fate of humanity as well. It became more evident after the Cuban crisis in the year of 1962, when Soviet strategic missiles were placed in Cuba, and USA replied by blockading the island. At the time, decisions of both American or Soviet leaders on the nuclear attack could lead to an irreparable mistake. Along with increased awareness about the process, the acceptance of foreign policy decisions, especially in the situation of conflict and crisis, became one of the most important topics of scientific research.

At present, several scientific directions and schools have been created, which are working on the problems of decision-making and findings the ways for the process optimization. These types of schools and directions are “overlapping,” thus it is difficult to classify those one by one. In such situation, consideration of the directions, which would be more interesting for researchers, looks as more justified.

Keywords: Political Psychology, Decision-making, Psychoanalysis, behaviorism, cognitivism, US Presidents

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Introduction

The problem of foreign policy decision-making has attracted its attention since the 1950s. The study of this problem begins within the modernist direction. This is the direction that sought to apply the theoretical and methodological approaches of the natural and social sciences to the analysis of international relations. Political psychology has a special place in the given sciences. Since politics, including foreign policy, is the work of human beings, it is very important to analyze the motives by which they are guided.

Psychoanalysis and Behaviorist Approach

In political psychology, several approaches to the foreign policy decision-making process have been formed. Historically the first of such approaches based on psychoanalysis and ideas were presented by S. Freud and his followers. One of the founders of American political science, Harold Dwight Lasswell, by revealing the pathological qualities of various political leaders, sought to explain the root causes of their behavior and the decisions they made in foreign policy (Yale University Library, 2020). In the years of World War II, when on the one hand there was a great demand for knowledge of what further steps the Nazi German leadership would take, and on the other hand - there was a shortage of such information, the American psychologist W. Langer, according to the assignment of the intelligence services, has conducted a special study of Hitler's personality. Based on the study of the biography of the Nazi dictator, with the help of Freudian methodology, his relations with both mother and father were studied and a corresponding conclusion was made about the possible decisions that would be made by the "Führer" in this or that situation (Langer, 1953).

Other Directions of Psychology – Operational Code

As critics of this field have pointed out, the tendency towards the study of psychoanalysis methodology over-psychologizes political processes and events, while at the same time ignoring non-psychological factors that influence one's own decision-making in foreign policy. That is why the use of psychoanalysis in international politics has become increasingly rare over time. Representatives of other areas of American political psychology focused on the personal qualities of political leaders, primarily presidents, and the conditions under which these or those personal qualities influenced the foreign policy decision-making process. They believed that in the context of a defined international-political situation, especially in times of crisis, the personal qualities of state leaders are of particular importance.

Within the framework of this direction as part of the foreign policy decision-making process, the concept of "Operational Code", which has been gradually recognized and widely used at the present stage, has been gradually developed. From the general point of view, it includes a system of basic principles that guide political leaders in defining foreign policy strategy.

According to the opinion of famous American specialists in this field A. George and O. Holst, the code of conduct primarily sets out the rules that allow political leaders to overcome obstacles within the making of rational decisions. Such limitations include: Incomplete information about the situation in which the decision is made, insufficient information about the relationship between the goal and the means, which in its turn reduces the predictability of the outcome of the decision (Chitadze, 2016). Significant difficulties arise within the definition of the choice criterion among the alternative presented solutions. The operational code also includes an understanding of what politics is and what its goals should be, common views on political conflicts and ways to resolve them, awareness of

regularities in the development of international political processes, knowledge of policy strategy and tactics, as well as recognition the potential political opponents and partners. Existence of the operational code also includes the personal qualities of political leaders, their psychological characteristics, such as willingness to take risks, a propensity for adventurism or, conversely, increased caution and timidity.

Philosophical Reasoning on the Examples of Stereotypes of Two American Presidents J. Carter and R. Reagan

In the existing system of persuasion within the framework of foreign policy problems related to the operational code, A. George distinguishes between two groups: the first group of beliefs is conventionally called "philosophical", the second "instrumental" (Walker, 1990).

"Philosophical reasoning" includes: an affirmation of the fundamental nature of foreign policy and international conflicts; Perception of opponents' stereotypes; The existence of ideas about the prospects for achieving various common foreign policy goals, etc.

The "instrumental" group includes discussions on the correct strategy and tactics of political leaders, the most effective means of achieving foreign policy goals. Relevant research on the peculiarities of foreign policy decisions has been conducted by several American scientists in American political psychology over the past decades. Particular attention was paid to the figures of Ronald Reagan and his predecessor, Jimmy Carter. In assessing Carter's personality, political scientists and psychologists noted his high intelligence, phenomenal memory, and outstanding diligence. However, such positive human qualities did not help Carter to carry out his presidential duties well in the end. In making important foreign policy decisions, for the interests of the United States, he made significant mistakes. Political psychologists

noted that during his presidency, Carter demonstrated high self-confidence and self-esteem. Eventually, this led to illusions in it, including in the field of foreign policy. In addition, Carter had a very rigid mindset, when making any conclusions or assessments, he found it very difficult to change his own views, even when it was clear that he was not right. During Carter's tenure as President of the United States, experts predicted that his personal qualities and the various fantasies having been created in his mind could cause the serious difficulties in American foreign policy. In the end, it happened. In the recent period of Carter's presidency, the United States has been involved in resolving issues related to the hostage-taking of American diplomats in Iran and the USSR intervention in Afghanistan.

Unlike Carter, Ronald Reagan was not distinguished by high diligence. Prior to coming to the White House, he had little knowledge of international politics, and his vision was narrow-minded. Reagan even boasted that he had never read a book except the Bible. Nevertheless, it is believed that R. Reagan became one of the most successful presidents in U.S. history. During his presidency, the United States overcame the economic crisis and the United States achieved significant foreign policy successes, which played a crucial role in ending of the Cold War. It is clear that R. Reagan's personal qualities proved to be the most adequate for the situation in which the US President had to carry out his activities. Well-known American political psychologist Margaret Herman believed that R. Reagan, unlike the leaders of other states, was characterized by hypertrophied nationalism, a strong need for power, a high ability to concentrate on the concrete task. Herman believed that for this president the so-called "The builder of the empire" syndrome was the main characteristic because the pursuit of power and low self-esteem were at the same time associated with a weakly expressed demand for support from other peoples and states.

M. Herman and other scholars noted Reagan's tendency toward stereotyping, which was

reflected in his black-and-white, primitive perception of the outside world (Chitadze, 2016). Nationalism, ethnocentrism, anti-communism became essential features of his personality. Naturally, the prelude to Reagan's success was his desire to concentrate power in his own hands, to make the most important domestic and foreign policy decisions alone.

The Role of Neo-behavioral Methodology in Political Psychology

The third direction of political psychology was related to the use of neo-behavioral methodology. Its purpose was to model the personalities of political figures who made political decisions. An example of the use of the traditional behaviorist formula is the principle of "stimulus-reaction", the main purpose of which is to explain foreign policy decisions. In this regard, it is worth considering the views of such an authoritative scientist as James Rosenau in the field of international relations theory. In the field of foreign policy decisions, the scientist distinguishes three phases. The first phase is related to the leader's reaction to the challenges in the field of foreign policy and the existence of an incentive to influence the international situation in it. The second phase is the decision-making phase. The third phase involves the response of objects that were affected by the previous phase. According to Rosenau, the third phase indicates the existence of reciprocal links in foreign policy decision-making and implementation.

Three Types of Decision-Making Process on the Example of Several U.S. Presidents

During the creation of the typology of the personality of political leaders, the followers of one more direction were focused on the typology of political leaders, who were responsible for the foreign-policy decision process. One of the examples of such researches can be considered the works of S. Walker. He presented

his own concept of political leaders, who were adopting the concrete decisions during the concrete political crisis.

Within this division, there are different approaches in the selection principles and criteria. The first type of leaders received the name of "accelerator". They are independent political leaders who will be able to respond quickly to any action, if it serves to the national interest.

The second ideal type - "restless". These are the political figures who make the decisions and implement the action till the end.

The third type was called "dreamers". These people only serve to international standards and support the use of time in foreign policy decisions and respects the norms of international law and morality.

The described scheme makes it possible, for example, to typify US political leaders. Perhaps it would be right for US President Harry Truman, who used atomic bomb against Japan to be called "accelerator." It is well known that this military action – nuclear attack having been implemented against Japan on August 6 and 9 of 1945, "accelerated" the capitulation of Japan and the end of World War II.

At the same time, Woodrow Wilson`s and Barack Obama`s own peace initiatives during their presidency (W. Wilson - 14 principles of the division of Europe, creation of the League of Nations; B. Obama - "reset policy" with Russia) are in the category to be called "dreamers".

With regard to Ronald Reagan, father-son George W. Bush, because of using the force in Libya, Grenada, Panama, Iraq and Afghanistan, they more likely to be called "restless" leaders.

Game Theory

Game theory has become popular among the theories of the modernist direction. The purpose of the theory is

to develop a line of behavior in a modeled political or economic experience. According to this theory, as formulated by J. Von Neuman and Morgenstern in the book, "Game Theory and Economic Behavior", it is underlined that each state that takes or uses certain foreign policy actions, intends to defeat other state (a "zero-sum game" equals the other party's defeat) or, conversely, a state Aspires to cooperate with the other side ("zero-sum game" - no one wins and no one loses).

This strategy should, on the one hand, preserve the legacy, but, on the other hand, may not be permanently established within all future situations.

Opinions about the Decision-making Process during the Political Crisis

In the process of creating the personality typology of political leaders, supporters of another direction focused their attention on the process of creating the personality typology of political leaders who were responsible for decision-making in the foreign policy sphere. An example of such studies can be considered Walker's works. He proposed his own concept of political leaders who made decisions during a particular international crisis. The basis of such a typology is the motives used by political figures: the demand for power; The need to achieve a goal; The need to achieve a goal; The need to support the activities of a particular political figure. The ratio of such needs determines the foreign policy positions, respectively - the variants of political behavior within a specific international crisis (Walker, 1990).

For political leaders who have a strong need to justify their actions, but at the same time, for the same politician who has a weak need to seek power and achieve a goal, the following positions are typical: Conflict in international relations - a temporary phenomenon, the source of conflict is human nature itself Represents.

With the knowledge and appropriate approaches in the relationship process at the time, it would be much easier to escape from conflicts. Conflicts, in their turn, are a zero-sum game, their role in the development of society as a whole is negative, so conflicts should be avoided as much as possible.

For political leaders who have a high demand for power and achievement, and at the same time a low demand for justification for their actions, the following positions are typical: Conflict - this is a temporary phenomenon, because peace must always be maintained between democracies and peace-loving states; The main source of conflict is the aggressive policies of anti-democratic, dictatorial states, so the main precondition for peace is to impose influence on such states.

Conflict - this is a zero-sum game, at the same time, the role of conflict is somewhat functional. All great dangers are warfare that begins as a result of pursuing a policy of balancing missed peace capabilities, mistakes made, or the actions of a potential aggressor. In times of crisis, it is typical for these types of political leaders to exert forceful pressure on other states, that is, to make their own choices to resolve the conflict by military means. It is not difficult to see that in recent years, this approach has become a priority in Russian political circles when making foreign policy decisions and actions in the international arena.

Cognitive Factors during Defining Foreign Policy Decisions

During defining the foreign policy decisions, political psychologists also study cognitive factors. On the one hand, the already mentioned cognitive planning method is actively used, and on the other hand, cognitive decision-making strategies will be studied. American political psychologists A. Etzioni, E. Janis and L. Mann distinguishes five such strategies:

The "satisfaction strategy" is that the decision-maker usually dwells on the very first option that he or she considers to be a good enough opportunity, although he or she is not reluctant to seek additional information and consider alternatives. It is enough for him to improve the situation by any means. This strategy is based on a simple rule: "Do what you have done in the past if you have achieved a positive result and act against the result if the result was negative before."

"Parameter elimination strategy" in its turn means excluding parameters when making decisions that do not initially suit the leader himself. The "growth strategy" is characterized by the absence of any predetermined goals. The deterioration of the international situation is a major motivating factor for decision-making in the foreign policy sphere. As soon as the situation improves, the incentive to act disappears. An "optimized strategy" is characterized by an increase in the number of alternatives considered. At the same time, according to its views and position, the political leader seeks to change the international situation as much as possible.

Instead, a "mixed scan strategy" developed by renowned political scientist A. Janis and Constructed by L. Mann, has presented own foreign policy decision-making strategy. This strategy includes seven stages. In the first stage, the decision-maker considers the possibility of all alternative actions; In the second stage, it takes into account all the goals that need to be achieved; In the third stage, it deeply weighs the negative and positive consequences of any decision; In the fourth stage, for a more complete and accurate evaluation of possible initiatives, he actively seeks new information; Fifth stage - incorporates this information into its own analysis, as well as the opinions of experts, including those who oppose the methods of action that were previously considered the best and even used in practice; In the sixth stage, the leader returns to the positive and negative consequences of alternative decisions, including, if necessary, considering decisions that are

unacceptable in the first stage; Finally, in the seventh stage, all the options for the realization of the selected actions take place, and at the same time, in case of creating a predetermined situation, spare options are provided. According to E. Janis and L. Mann, even the omission of one of the stages could have a negative impact on the decision-making process (Janis, Mann, 1988).

Perceptual Factors

Specialists who study the foreign policy decision-making process take into account not only cognitive but also perceptual factors. This is especially true in the relations with possible errors that can be caused by distorting the presented information. American political psychologist R. Jervis in his foreign policy decision-making process sought to identify the causes and consequences of inadequate covenants stemming from errors of a perceptual nature (Jervis, 2004).

Within the framework of the foreign policy process, during the formation of the characteristics of all participants in the field of political beliefs and "examples" of the outside world, as well as in the process of formation of procedures by political leaders based on available information, researcher paid great attention to the formation of foreign policy changes while receiving new information.

American researcher L. Falkowski sought to predict the "flexible behavior" of presidents. Under these behaviors he sought to understand what opportunities each president had to change in his own political behavior as a result of the influence of receiving new information. He carried out a comparative analysis of the decision-making behavior of various US presidents in the context of international crises (Chitadze, 2016). A key indicator of each president's flexibility was their ability to respond when receiving new information.

The unsuccessful development of the crisis for the United States has marked a sharp influx of

negative information to the leadership of this country. Consequently, the reaction to this information depended on the "flexibility" of the leaders. If their behavior did not change, it would mean the existence of so-called perceptual filters, which carried only the information that supported the already formed position of the leader, and prevented the absorption of "unfavorable" information that indicated the real situation.'

The Phases of the Foreign Policy Decisions

Within modern conditions, the process of making foreign policy decisions is not related to the activities of individuals, including high officials. H. Laswell indicated that this process would go through several phases. In the first phase - obtaining information, then - developing specific analysis and recommendations based on the received information, in the third phase specific recommendations are formulated, which enter into force in the fourth phase.

Then comes the fifth phase - the decision implementation phase, the evaluation of the results of the decisions implemented in the sixth phase, the seventh phase - the final phase of the cycle, which summarizes the results, what can be the starting point for new decisions and therefore the beginning of a new cycle (Laswell, 1965).

Main Characters of Foreign Policy Group Decision-making Process

Of course, the decisive word and full responsibility lies to the political leader. He is able to read the whole volume of information independently, and especially to analyze this information in depth and work out in detail the possible options for decisions and actions. Thus, foreign policy decision-making is a collective process. It is attended by several people, up to a hundred and even a thousand people. There is often talk about small groups - who are considered to be the closest associates of political leaders etc. That is why, foreign

policy specialists study the decision-making process in small groups.

Increasing the number of people involved in the decision-making process, on the one hand, has a positive effect, which serves to increase competence in the process of evaluating and analyzing information, as well as developing various decision options, but on the other hand, decision-making within the group has its disadvantages. In this regard, the American political psychologist Janis due to the practice of decision-making in the field of foreign policy of USA, has noted that the quality of intellectual activity is characterized by a decline in group thinking. In the process of analyzing failures in American foreign policy, Janis singled out the major defects that were characterized the decisions having been made by affiliated groups within the state apparatus. In particular, among these defects he singled out: a reduction in the number of possible alternatives; Towards a course that is supported by the majority of group members - uncritical attitude, ignoring the information of experts - when the information provided by them could rationally assess the positive and negative consequences of negative decisions and actions; Wasting time by discussing issues on which a general consensus was initially formed; Ignoring facts and opinions that contradicted the positions of the group members.

A. Janis noted that in the context of foreign policy group decision-making, there is a collective non-assessment of actual risks. Insufficient vigilance and unprovoked willingness to take risks is, by his view, a peculiar form of group psychological disorder toward which the group has no immunity. The scholar has come to the conclusion that there is always a danger in the group that independent critical thinking will be replaced by group thinking, which may lead to mistakes and the risk of making irrational decisions and actions in foreign policy.

Taking into account the conclusion of American psychologist Semel, he has experimentally proven that groups tend to make more dangerous decisions based on their results than the individual

decisions of most group members (Chitadze, 2016). But in order to avoid such a negative impact, it is necessary to achieve the interaction of the participants within the right organization and within a small group, as well as to develop optimal interaction procedures.

This aspect of the problem was discussed by another well-known political psychologist Ch. Herman. He proposed his own typology of small groups making within foreign policy decisions. The following criteria are considered on the basis of this typology: number of groups; Redistribution of power; Functional role of group members. According to his own internal structure, Herman singled out the following possible types of small groups: a group-headed by a leader; A group with an autonomous leader; Group with leader-delegate; Autonomous Group; A group of delegates; Autonomous Assembly; Assembly of Delegates; Advisory Autonomous Assembly; An advisory assembly of delegates. The term "delegate" belongs to a member of a group that represents the interests of some of the structures that exist outside the group and therefore has a limited opportunity to express its personal views. The autonomous members of the group are free to choose their position.

Ch. Herman notes that groups differ in the amount of time it takes to make a decision, they also differ in the methods of developing a common position, as well as in their willingness to for innovation or conservatism.

In the United States, where the president plays a key role in foreign policy decision-making, the head of state's methods of interacting with his advisers and aides are of particular importance (Drujinin, 2009).

Based on the comparative analysis of the activities of several administrations of the President within the framework of international politics, A. George has outlined several theoretical models of foreign policy decision-making that address the means of dealing with subordinates of U.S. presidents.

The "formal model" is, in its turn, a balanced method of foreign policy implementation, with strictly defined procedures and a hierarchical system of

communication. Free expression of different opinions is not supported. Such a model was typical of Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, and Richard Nixon and all other subsequent presidents. However, within the formal model, it is possible to find some differences in its implementation options that are characterized for either administration. In the Truman administration, the president himself had direct contact with ministers and close advisers on the basis of the presented alternatives, and based on that he made independent decisions in favor of or against this or that alternative proposal. Other presidents have assigned the duties of "chief of staff" to one of the closest circles, and it has been given broad powers in the field of foreign policy decisions (George, 1986).

The expression of different opinions is supported within the framework of the "competitiveness model", so, it is possible to establish free communication both horizontally and vertically. Such a model was characterized for Roosevelt. He specially encouraged competitions between his assistants, and was ready to establish direct contact with subordinates in order to obtain interesting information and advice.

The "collegial model" was in place during the John F. Kennedy administration, when the US president was at the center of his own communications system, which consisted of the president's direct assistants and advisers. Their task was not to filter the received information, but to analyze different positions in accordance with the instructions of the President. The President expressed his readiness to interact with all participants in the foreign policy decision-making process when he took into account the most unconventional approaches and expressions.

Conclusion

It is clear that each of the given typologies has its strengths and weaknesses. The "formal model" raises bureaucratic barriers to the implementation of original

and bold proposals. The models of "competition" and "collegiality" can disorganize the work of the state apparatus, at the same time there are high demands on the personal qualities of political leaders. However, for a number of reasons, most research on foreign

policy decision-making is based on American material, and the findings may be used in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy in other countries as well.

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