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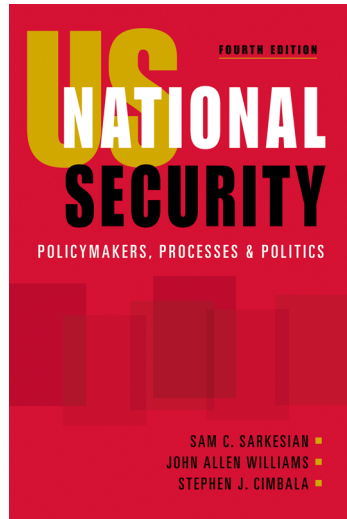
US National Security:  
Policymakers,  
Processes & Politics

FOURTH EDITION

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# 1

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## National Interests and National Security

THE INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE OF THE TWENTY-first century is shaped by complex and contradictory forces. The world is characterized by turmoil, and changing patterns of state-to-state relationships as well as conflicts within states caused by ethnic, religious, and nationalistic differences have become commonplace. International terrorism, drug cartels, and threats created by information-age technology add to the turmoil. Earlier, there was a widespread sense of optimism about peace, but that was all shattered on September 11, 2001, by the terrorist attacks on the United States and the long war against international terrorism. A United States at war against terrorism and the notion of a new concept of war have become intermixed with globalization, economic expansion, homeland security, and the attempt to pursue US values peacefully.

In this new environment, US national security policy and priorities have become complicated, often ambiguous, and even inconsistent—not because of immediate threat of major conventional war but rather the unpredictable, uncertain, and confusing characteristics of the international arena. Disagreements and disputes within the national security establishment, Congress, and the public were muted temporarily in response to the September 11 attacks and the resulting war in Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> But now the US involvement in Iraq and the continuing concerns about Iran and North Korea magnify the challenges to US national security policy and have caused a great degree of turmoil in the US political system and in US foreign relations. Although questions have been raised about national interests, national security, and the US role around the world, the terrorist threat and the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology seem to have overshadowed much of the traditional perspectives also, at least for the foreseeable future.

## National Security

The international security landscape of the initial years of the twenty-first century has clouded the concept and meaning of US national security. The integration of national interests into meaningful national security policy has become more difficult. Recognizing the problems of defining and conceptualizing national security, we offer a preliminary definition that includes both objective capability and perception: *US national security is the ability of national institutions to prevent adversaries from using force to harm Americans or their national interests and the confidence of Americans in this capability.*

There are two dimensions of this definition: physical and psychological. The first is an objective measure based on the strength and military capacity of the nation to challenge adversaries successfully, including going to war if necessary. This also includes a more prominent role for intelligence, economics, and other nonmilitary measures as well as the ability to use them as political-military levers in dealings with other states. The psychological dimension is subjective, reflecting the opinion and attitudes of Americans on the nation's ability to remain secure relative to the external world. It affects the people's willingness to support government efforts to achieve national security goals. Underpinning this is that the majority of people have the knowledge and political will to support clear policies to achieve clear national security goals.

### *National Security, Foreign Policy, and Domestic Policy*

National security must be analyzed in the context of foreign policy, defined as the policies of a nation that encompass all official relations with other countries. The purposes of foreign policy are multidimensional. For the United States, the purpose is to prevent conditions detrimental to the United States and maintain relations with other countries to enhance conditions favorable to US national interests. The instruments of foreign policy are primarily diplomatic and political and include a variety of psychological and economic measures.

In the immediate past, national security differed from foreign policy in at least two respects: national security purposes were more narrow and focused on security and safety, and national security was primarily concerned with actual and potential adversaries and their use of force, whether overt or covert. This means there was a military emphasis, which usually is not the case in foreign policy. National security policy now overlaps with foreign policy, however, sometimes blurring any distinction. But much of foreign policy requires compromise and negotiations—the dynamics of give-and-take—as well as all of the techniques and subtleties associated with traditional diplomacy. This kind of work is primarily a matter for the

US Department of State, with long-range implications for national security policy. These relationships are shown in Figure 1.1.

Until recently, most Americans felt that US values could not be imposed on other states unless survival was at stake. National security is now seen by many to include the projection of US values abroad (see Chapter 2). This adds to the confusion and highlights the interrelationship among foreign, domestic, and national security policies. “America’s concept of national security today is infinitely more complex than at any time in its history. The same is true for the relationship between the foreign and domestic components of national security.”<sup>2</sup> Although this observation was made a decade ago, it remains relevant today.

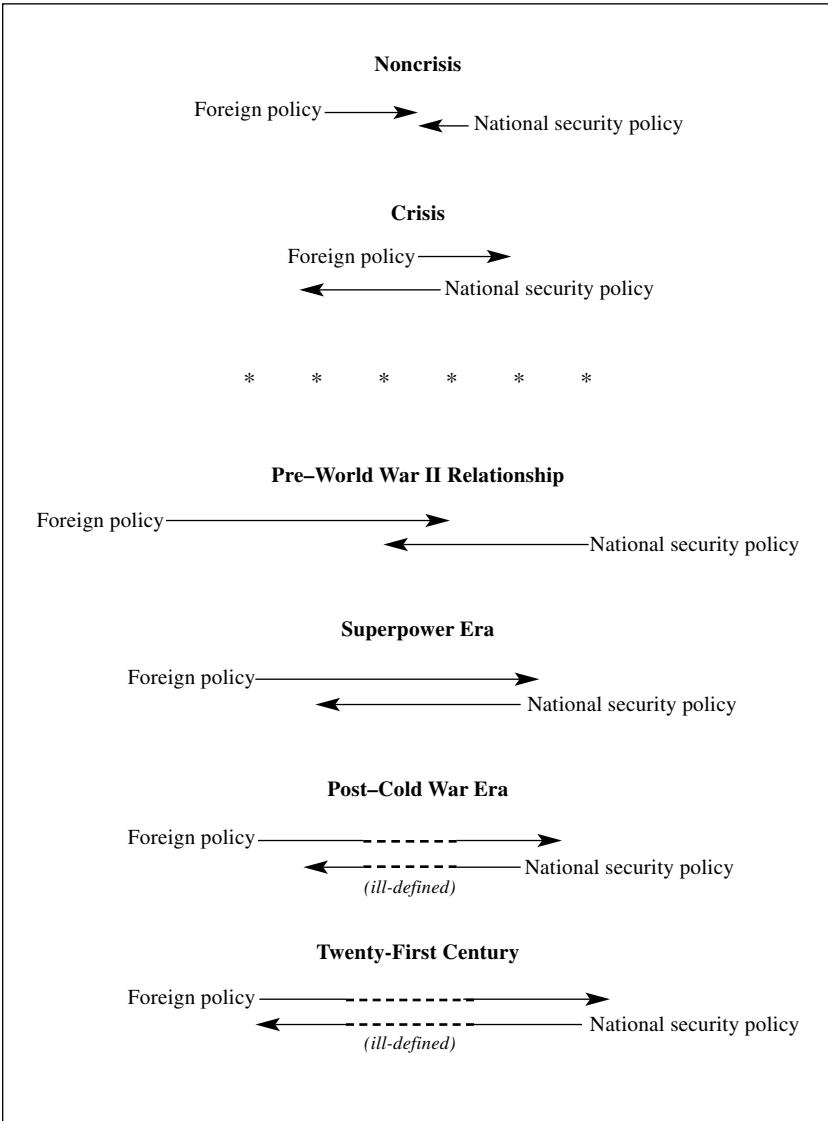
The difficulties of determining US national interests and establishing national security priorities are compounded by the increasing linkages between a number of national security and domestic policies. The domestic economic impact of certain national security policies links US domestic interests and policies to the international security arena. This is seen in economic sanctions, embargos on agriculture exports to adversaries or potential adversaries, diminished foreign oil sources, border security, and the export of technologically advanced industrial products. And in a dramatic way, September 11 obscured dramatically the distinction between domestic and national security policy.

Owing to the special characteristics of our democratic system and political culture, it is increasingly difficult to isolate national security issues from domestic policy. Besides the relationship and link between foreign and national security policies, domestic interests are important in establishing national security priorities and interests. Some scholars call these “inter-mestic” politics and policies.<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, national security policy by definition involves military force. Distinctions must be made between foreign and domestic policy and national security. The primary distinction rests in the likelihood of military force as well as in use of the military as the primary instrument for implementing national security policy. Although many other matters are important in the overall notion of national interests, they are best incorporated into foreign policy and the overlap between such policy and national security.<sup>4</sup>

These observations are the basis for defining national security policy, expanding on the concept of national security: *National security policy is primarily concerned with formulating and implementing national strategy involving the threat or use of force to create a favorable environment for US national interests.* An integral part of this is to prevent the effective use of military force and/or covert operations by adversaries or potential adversaries to obstruct or deny the ability of the United States to pursue national interests.

**Figure 1.1 National Security and Foreign Policy**



*Source:* Adapted from Col. William J. Taylor Jr., “Interdependence, Specialization, and National Security: Problems for Diplomats, Soldiers, and Scholars,” *Air University Review* 30, no. 5 (July–August 1979): 17–26.

*Note:* The gap between foreign policy and national policy indicates the relative degree of “closeness” between foreign and national security policy. The arrows indicate the relative degree of overlap. As shown, during times of crisis, the gap between foreign and national security policy is minimal and virtually nonexistent. In the twenty-first century it is often difficult to clearly separate foreign policy and national security because the use of force has become closely connected with a variety of peacekeeping missions, humanitarian crises, operations of war, and operations other than war; many such missions are extensions of foreign policy or a combination of national security and foreign policy, particularly in combating international terrorism.

National security means more than the capacity to conduct international wars. In light of the characteristics of the international arena and contemporary conflicts, challenges to US national security might take any number of nontraditional forms, from economics to unconventional operations. Of course, the capacity to deter nuclear war and wage conventional conflicts remains essential for the conduct of US national security policy, even in the twenty-first century. In this new era, international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) (including chemical and biological warfare), and information warfare have become increasingly important dimensions of national security.

National security policy must be carefully developed and implemented according to priorities distinguishing survival (i.e., vital) interests from others. Too often, national security is used synonymously with any interest, suggesting that all interests are survival priorities. Taking a page from Sun-tzu, if almost everything is a matter of national security, then the concept of national security becomes virtually meaningless.<sup>5</sup> If national security policy and strategy followed such a pattern, the United States would have to defend everything everywhere; as a result it would be unable to defend anything. Resources and personnel would be scattered across the globe and rarely be in a position to bring sufficient force to bear, even if survival were at stake.

Short of clear threats to US territory, Americans often disagree over priorities. Even when there is agreement on priorities, there is disagreement on resource commitment and strategy. Yet a system of priorities provides a way to identify levels of threats and helps in the design of strategies. But all this must be guided by the meaning of national security and its conceptual dimensions.

In this new environment, US national security and national interests have become complicated, often ambiguous, and even inconsistent—not because of an immediate threat of major conventional war but rather because of the unpredictable, uncertain, and confusing characteristics of the international arena.

The relationship between national interests and national security is particularly important in this new era. Yet, more than three decades ago, Henry A. Kissinger wrote, “What is it in our interest to prevent? What should we seek to accomplish?”<sup>6</sup> This was written before Kissinger became assistant to President Richard Nixon for national security affairs (a position that is known widely as national security advisor) and then secretary of state. The same questions continue to challenge policymakers, scholars, and elected officials. The answers were elusive at the start of the post-Cold War period and became even more complicated after September 2001.

Although the US war against terrorism became the dominant theme in 2001, spelled out in the Bush Doctrine of President George W. Bush, such matters now are magnified and complicated by the US involvement in Iraq



and Afghanistan and the troubling issues with Iran and North Korea, among others, and a variety of issues linked to homeland security.<sup>7</sup> All of these issues go beyond the new kind of war. Why? Do Americans not know what is in their national interest? At first glance the answer seems relatively simple. The US national interest is to promote US values and objectives. To promote these means to protect them by establishing and implementing effective national security policies.

Upon closer examination, however, these answers are inadequate, and they raise additional questions. What are US values? How are they reflected in national interests? What is the relationship between national security and national interests? What is national security? How should US national security policy be implemented? For the past three decades these questions have been addressed by many US politicians and scholars. If they agree on anything, it is that there is no agreement.

Each generation of Americans seeks to interpret national values, national interests, and national security in terms of its own perspective and mindset. Although there is agreement about core elements such as protection of the US homeland, interpretations differ about the meaning of national security, the nature of external threats, and the best course of conduct for security policy. Combined with changes in the world environment, the answers to the dynamics of Kissinger's questions are even more elusive today. To be sure, the war against terrorism became the key focus of national interests beginning in September 2001 and has been magnified with the US involvement in Iraq. But such interests encompass a wide range of elements that underpin an open system and society such as the United States.

It is to be expected that in a country with multiple power centers and shifting focal points there will be different interpretations as well as outright differences. Recognizing that these matters are rarely resolved by onetime solutions and that they are, at best, ambiguous, we explore the concepts of national security, national values, and national interest. In the process, we design a framework for analyzing national security policy.

In any case, the United States is in the world to stay. Whether Americans like it or not, they can neither withdraw from external responsibilities nor retreat to isolation. Regardless of the policies of any administration, the United States has links to most parts of the world: politically, economically, culturally, and psychologically. What the United States does or does not do has a significant impact on international politics.

## **National Interests**

US national interests are expressions of US values projected into the international and domestic arenas. The purpose of interests includes the creation

and perpetuation of an international environment that is most favorable to the peaceful pursuit of US values. It follows that interests nurture and expand democracy and open systems. Similarly, the United States wishes to prevent the expansion of closed systems by their use of force or indirect aggression. In the twenty-first century, the domestic arena has become an important consideration in pursuing national interests because of asymmetrical threats, the information age, and international terrorism.<sup>8</sup> Such concerns were heightened by the September 11 terrorist attacks and increased with the US involvement in Iraq.

Three statements serve as reference points. First, US values as they apply to the external world are at the core of national interests. Second, pursuing national interests does not mean that US national security strategy is limited to the homeland. This may require power projection into various parts of the world, especially when combating international terrorism. Third, the president is the focal point in defining and articulating US national interests.

National interests can be categorized in order of priorities as follows:

*First Order: vital interests.* This requires protection of the homeland and areas and issues directly affecting this interest. This may require total military mobilization and resource commitment. In homeland defense, this also may require a coordinated effort of all agencies of government, especially in defense against terrorist attacks and information warfare. The homeland focus was highlighted by the creation of a new cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security by President George W. Bush following September 11. The purpose is to coordinate the efforts of a number of agencies in countering terrorism in the United States.

*Second Order: critical interests.* These are areas and issues that do not directly affect the survival of the United States or pose a threat to the homeland but in the long run have a high propensity for becoming First Order priorities. Critical interests are measured primarily by the degree to which they maintain, nurture, and expand open systems. Many also argue that moral imperatives are important in shaping national interests.

*Third Order: serious interests.* These are issues that do not critically affect First and Second Order interests yet cast some shadow over such interests. US efforts are focused on creating favorable conditions to preclude Third Order interests from developing into higher-order ones.

All other interests are peripheral in that they have no immediate impact on any order of interests but must be watched in case events transform these

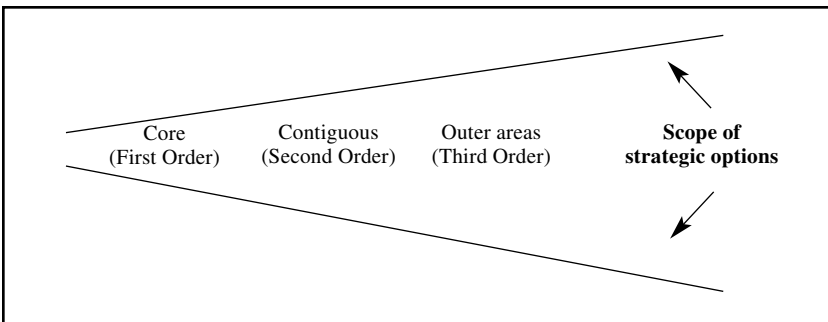
interests. In the meantime, peripheral interests require few, if any, US resources.

Categories of priorities such as these can be used not only as a framework for systematic assessment of national interests and national security but also as a way to distinguish immediate from long-range security issues. Such a framework can provide a basis for rational and systematic debate within the national security establishment regarding the US national security posture and is useful in studying national security. Today there is rarely a clear line, however, between categories of interests. Many changes have expanded the concept of national interests to include several moral and humanitarian dimensions, among others. As some argue, where can the line be drawn among categories of interests?

A realistic assignment of priorities can be better understood by looking at geopolitical boundaries of core, contiguous, and outer areas (see Figure 1.2). In specific terms, at the core of US national interests is the survival of the homeland and political order. But survival cannot be limited to the “final” defense of the homeland. In light of international terrorism and today’s weapons technology, weapons proliferation, and chemical/biological warfare, homeland survival means more than retreating to the borders and threatening anyone who might attack with total destruction. By then it is too late for national security policy to do much good, and in the new war, the attacker can be difficult to identify.

If national interest is invoked only when the homeland is directly threatened and survival is at stake, then the concept may be of little use, too late to overcome the peril. If the concept is to have any meaning for policy and strategy, then it must be something more. The interpretation and application of this broader view spark a great deal of debate and disagreement between the executive and legislative branches of government and within the US political arena. The media also become involved frequently with their own agendas.

**Figure 1.2 US National Security Priorities**



The national security establishment and policymakers rarely have the luxury of endless debate, however; neither do they have unlimited time or all necessary facts in a given situation. Yet policy must be made and strategy options examined, chosen, and implemented regardless of conditions, even while debates and disagreements remain intense.

The fact is that policy must be determined and implemented at some point. Before that, national interests for the particular situation must be identified and articulated. At the same time, national interests over the long range must be considered. Custom, usage, and constitutional powers give the president a basis for articulating their meaning. And though some Americans might challenge this notion today, initiatives in foreign and national security policy usually rest with the president as the commander in chief of US armed forces, the chief diplomat, and the singular expositor and standard-bearer of the US national will.

To be sure, Congress has an important role, but the president must take the lead and is the country's only legal representative with respect to foreign relations. For better or for worse, the president articulates the national interests, and Congress responds. The same holds true with respect to the president and the variety of interest groups in the government bureaucracy and public arena. Members of Congress find it very difficult to force a president to change direction in national security policies if he is sufficiently committed to a course of action—even in the case of the long war that has become unpopular.

## **US Values and National Interests**

US values are based on what is required for the philosophical, legal, and moral basis for the continuation of the US system. These attributes are deeply engrained in our political system and domestic environment; they also apply to the way in which the public perceives justice in the international system and “just cause” in the conduct of war. In other words, values are principles that give the US political system and social order their innate character; they provide substance to US culture and create further principles upon which to base national interests.

### *The Value System*

Modern US values derive from the Judeo-Christian heritage, the Anglo-Saxon legacy (including the Reformation, the Renaissance, the philosophies of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, among others, and the principles rooted in the American Revolution), the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution. From among these many historical reference points, we identify at least six fundamental values that define the United States and its role in the international world.<sup>9</sup>

First, there is the right of self-determination, a dual concept in this context: it applies not only to the nation-state but also to people within that state. It is presumed that each nation-state has the right to determine its own policy and to govern in any way it chooses as long as it does not threaten neighbors or oppress its own people. At the same time, people within that nation-state also have the right of self-determination. From the US perspective, this means that through free and fair elections people in a nation-state have the right to determine how and by whom they will be ruled, with the option to replace rulers as they see fit.

There is another dimension, however: an emerging right claimed by minority groups to demand autonomy as a matter of self-determination. This duality of self-determination and state sovereignty creates serious problems in determining appropriate and legitimate action on the part of the United Nations (UN), regional organizations, and the United States. This duality also has important implications for US military strategy. Moreover, this duality can lead to a dangerous confrontation between minority groups within a state demanding self-determination and the state itself, as occurred in the former Yugoslavia (i.e., between Albanians and Serbians in Kosovo, a province in Serbia) and is occurring in Iraq, among other states. The United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervened on behalf of the Albanian majority in Kosovo at the expense of the sovereignty of Serbia.<sup>10</sup> Ideally, self-determination is accomplished within a system of laws and peaceful change. The peaceful partition of the former Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and Slovakia offers a reasonable notion of self-determination, but it is the rare exception.

Second, it follows that there is an inherent worth to any single individual in his/her relationship to others, to the political system, and to the social order. What does this mean? Put simply, every person is intrinsically a moral, legal, and political entity to which the system must respond. Each individual has the right to achieve all that he or she can, without encumbrances other than protection of fellow citizens as well as homeland protection and survival. Individual worth must therefore be reflected in economic, political, and legal systems.

Third, rulers owe their power and accountability to the people, which is the essence of democratic political legitimacy. The people are the final authority: there is a continuing responsibility by elected and appointed officials to rule and function according to the moral and legal principles, and the right of the people to change leaders is absolute. In this respect, no consuming power can dominate government or establish its own rationale for rule. Furthermore, individual worth necessitates limited government with no absolute and permanent focal point of power. To ensure this, rule and governance must be open: decisions and policies must be undertaken in full public view, with input from a variety of formal and informal groups. The

system of rule must be accessible to the people and their representatives. This is the essence of what are called “open systems.”

Fourth, policies and changes in the international environment must be based on the first three values outlined above. Thus peaceful change brought about by rational discourse among nation-states is a fundamental value. Resort to war can be acceptable only if it is clearly based on homeland protection and survival or other core values, and only if all other means have failed. In this respect, diplomacy and state-to-state relationships must be based on mutually acceptable rules of the game.

Fifth, any system professing such values and trying to function according to their principles must be protected and nurtured. Nation-states whose values are compatible with US values are thought to be best served by an international order based on those same values.

Sixth, US values are grounded in the Judeo-Christian heritage that predated the founding of the republic in the late eighteenth century. For many Americans, this instills a sense of humanity, a sensitivity to the plight and status of individuals, and a search for divine guidance. These precepts add a dimension to what is seen to be proper and just in the minds of many Americans and are considered by many to be beyond the legal definition of government.

We do not suggest that these values are perfectly embodied in the US system. There are many historical examples of value distortions and their misuse to disguise other purposes. But these values are esteemed in their own right by most Americans and are embodied in the political-social system. Furthermore, the system of rule and the character of the political system have institutionalized these values, albeit imperfectly. The expectations of most Americans and their assessment of other states are, in no small measure, based on these values.

### *American Values: Into the Twenty-First Century and Beyond*

The collapse of the old order in Europe following World War I set the stage for the continental evolution of both democratic and tyrannical Marxist-Leninist and Fascist systems. Until that time, Pax Britannica had provided a sense of stability and order to European affairs as well as a security umbrella for the United States in its relationships with Europe. But for many Americans, involvement in a world conflict to save Europe seemed like a mistake. The United States withdrew into isolationism with a failure to join the League of Nations and the Back to Normalcy policy of President Warren Harding in 1920, which ended only with the start of World War II.

Even in the aftermath of World War I, Americans were accustomed to a world dominated by a European order compatible with the general nature of US values and national interests. Although an imperfect order, it did not offend the US value system. At the beginning of the twentieth century, US

values were expressed by progressivism, by Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, and later by Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and the Four Freedoms, focusing on individuals and the government's responsibility to them.

There was little need to translate values into the external world, as the interest of the United States rarely extended beyond its own shores. Yet it was during this time that the United States became a great power, partly as the result of acquiring territory in the Spanish American War. Within two decades, US involvement in World War I was seen as a way to make the world safe for democracy and subdue a tyrannical Old World power.

In the aftermath of World War I, most Americans were glad to distance themselves from the Old World and focus on domestic matters. "It's their problem, not ours," was a common US attitude with respect to Europe and the outside world. US isolationism and demilitarization during the 1920s and 1930s are recognized historical facts, typified by the US failure to join the League of Nations following World War I and thereby renouncing, in effect, President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points for a new world order.<sup>11</sup> World War II changed all that, even though most Americans wanted no part of the "European War" (which started in 1939) until the surprise Japanese bombing of the US Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Between the two world wars, Americans presumed that US interests were also world interests. US values were viewed as morally unassailable and therefore were to be sought after by the rest of the world. In this context, then, US national security was primarily a narrow focus on the protection of the homeland, which required few armed forces and a simple military strategy. Furthermore, there was little need to struggle with issues over US values and how to protect them in the external world, except occasionally for the sake of international economics. We passed to others, primarily Britain and France, responsibility for keeping the democratic peace.

Regardless of the US desire to return to isolation following World War II, US interests were increasingly threatened. Parts of Europe and Asia were smoldering from the war, and it soon became clear that US responsibilities extended beyond the nation's borders. In addition, it was perceived that democracy and US values could not be nurtured and expanded if we simply stayed at home; if democracy was the demand, then it required our presence in all parts of the world. Beyond protection of the US homeland, then, what did the United States stand for? And how did it intend to achieve its goals—whatever they were?

These questions were easier to answer in the negative: the United States was against Marxist-Leninist and other authoritarian political systems determined to subvert or overthrow the international order based on self-determination. The policy of containment reflected a US policy consensus to prevent the expansion of the Soviet Union and its Communist system. Positive responses to such questions were seen in the US role in rebuilding Europe,

especially the economic recovery program known as the Marshall Plan. All of this placed the United States in the leadership role of the West and was consistent with the earlier Puritan view of Americans as a chosen people.<sup>12</sup> For many, the second half of the twentieth century was the “American Century”; such a notion would provide the moral basis for involvement in the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

But the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a new security landscape caused many Americans to focus on domestic issues. There was a turning inward, reinforced by the conviction that the United States had won the Cold War and the danger of a major war had diminished considerably. But this new landscape was muddled and obscured by the fog of peace. Indeed, some experts even argued that the United States would miss the Cold War, with its moral certainties and predictable (if difficult) responsibilities.<sup>13</sup>

Turning inward, Americans faced issues of diversity, gender, race, sexual orientation, and the integration of various groups with non-Western linkages. Critics argued that the United States might never have been a true melting pot of culture, yet it had benefited from the waves of immigrants who brought along their rich heritage. But that heritage, according to others, was promoted (as it is today) at the expense of “Americanism.” They would argue that US cultural heritage and Western tradition—the bedrock of democracy—risk erosion by an increasing prominence of other cultures, whose loyalties may be rooted in countries other than the United States.<sup>14</sup> An ongoing democratic culture may not be compatible with some versions of multiculturalism, in their view.

## The New Era

In the new era—beyond the war against terrorism—it is difficult to agree on the principles of US values as they apply to the international order. Issues of multiculturalism and diversity have called into question the very meaning of Americanism and the US value system. For example, in viewing the US domestic system, former chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff and later secretary of state Colin Powell wrote:

And Lord help anyone who strays from accepted ideas of political correctness. The slightest suggestion of offense toward any group . . . will be met with cries that the offender be fired or forced to undergo sensitivity training, or threats of legal action. Ironically for all the present sensitivity over correctness, we seem to have lost our shame as a society. Nothing seems to embarrass us; nothing shocks us anymore.<sup>15</sup>

In citing the “balkanization” of the United States, Georgie Anne Geyer argued that we must return to the idea of US “citizenship.” She criticized



the notion of globalization and the presumed decline of the nation-state as the focus of loyalty.<sup>16</sup> She concluded, “I remain convinced that the nation will rally at this important moment in a Renaissance to preserve the best of the past and to mate it with the best of the present and the future—so that we can and will be *Americans once again*.”<sup>17</sup> Others argue, however, that most Americans are in the middle of the political spectrum and embrace God, family, and country. As Alan Wolfe contended, we are “one nation, after all.”<sup>18</sup> These disagreements remain unresolved and affect US responses to national security challenges.

As some critics point out, spokespersons for various groups in the United States often use terms such as “our people” or “my people” in referring to their particular racial, ethnic, or religious group to the exclusion of others. This tends to distinguish and separate one group from Americans in general. But as President Franklin D. Roosevelt is credited with saying in 1943, “Americanism is a matter of heart and mind; Americanism is not a matter of race or ethnicity.”

Nonetheless, US involvement in foreign lands and non-Western cultures can cause domestic problems because one group within the United States can support a like-minded group in a foreign land regardless of US policy interests. The greatest charge is that such a development can increase balkanization here. But as noted earlier, a number of Americans and policy elites gravitate toward the middle of the spectrum, preferring an inclusive instead of an exclusive definition of Americanism. Clearly, demographics and cultural issues have an impact on US national security policy and strategy. When the national interest is clear and the political objectives are closely aligned with that interest, there is likely to be strong support by Americans for US actions. But US involvement in cultures and religions abroad can have domestic repercussions, such as the conflict in the Middle East between Israel and the Palestinians and US involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. This makes it more difficult to project US values into the international arena. In sum, the commitment of the US military in foreign areas will not draw support from the public unless it is convinced that such matters are part of the vital interests of the United States.

## **The Study of National Security**

The exploration of national security and all its dimensions—including policy and priorities—leads to some basic questions. How can national security be studied? What fundamental principles provide the bases for US national security policy and strategy?

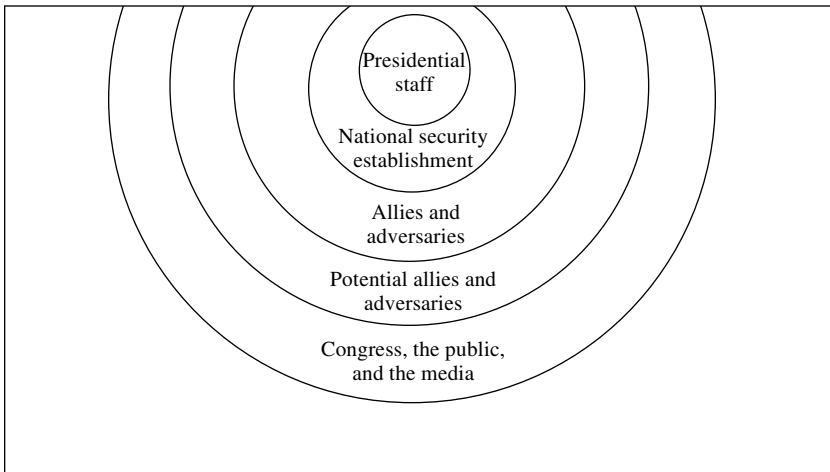
There are three major approaches to the study of national security: the concentric-circle, the elite-versus-participatory policymaking, and the sys-

tems analysis; all concentrate on the way in which policy is made. They should be distinguished from studies that examine national security issues, such as US nuclear strategy or US policy in the Middle East. The three approaches should be further distinguished from studies of government institutions.

The concentric-circle approach places the president at the center of the national security policy process (see Figure 1.3). The president’s staff and the national security establishment provide advice and implement national security policy. This approach shows the degree of importance of various groups as the “primary objects” of national security policy. For example, a major objective is to influence the behavior and policies of allies as well as adversaries. At the same time, Congress, the public, and the media have important roles in the national security policy process. But they are not the objects of policy, and so the more distant circles represent government structures and agencies, constituencies, and the media. The farther the institutions are from the center, the less their importance as objects of national security policy. The problem with this approach is its oversimplification of the national security policy process and its presumption of rationality in decisionmaking.

The elite-versus-participatory policymaking approach is based on the view that democracy’s basic dilemma is that the policy process is dominated by elites (see Figure 1.4). National security policy is undertaken by elites within the national security establishment, but that elite group must in turn develop support in the broader public. On the one hand, the elites have the

**Figure 1.3 Concentric Circle Approach**

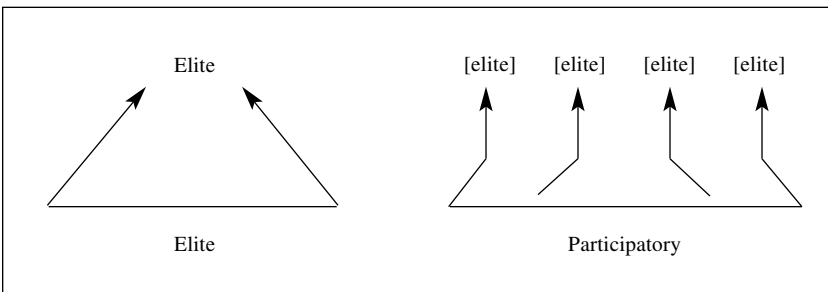


skill and access to information to formulate national security policy, in contrast to an uninformed public. On the other hand, for national security policy to be successful in the long run, there must be some degree of participation by the public and political will within the body politic. The elite model sees national security policy as being made by a small circle that includes the president, his staff, key members of Congress, high-ranking military officers, and influential members of the business community. The assumption is that this is a cohesive elite whose own interests override other concerns. The participatory model assumes the existence of a variety of elites who represent various segments of the public, interest groups, and officials. In this model, the same elites rarely control all aspects of national security policy. Coalitions are formed for particular issues, then reformed for other issues. This approach struggles to reconcile the skill and power of the elite with the demands of participatory democracy.

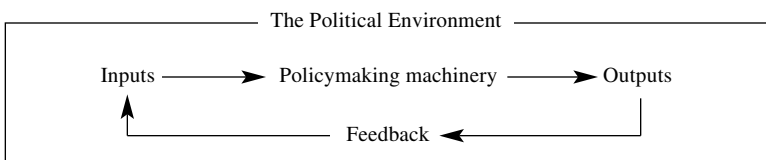
The systems-analysis approach emphasizes the dynamic interrelationships among variables at all stages of the security decisionmaking process (see Figure 1.5). Many inputs go into the policy process. The policymaking machinery must reconcile competing interests and design a policy acceptable to most. In turn, the impact of policy must be measured by feedback on policy effectiveness and how it is perceived by those affected.

All three approaches, as well as variations, are useful in the study of national security policy; this book incorporates something from each. We

**Figure 1.4 Elite and Participatory Models**



**Figure 1.5 Systems-Analysis Approach**



examine the formal national security establishment on the assumption that the president and government entities established by law form that establishment and are at the center of the policy process—the concentric-circle approach. We examine the National Security Council (NSC) and the Department of Defense from the concentric-circle approach and partly from the elite-versus-participatory approach. Finally, as for the formal policy process, most attention is given to the national security network—a systems-analysis approach that considers many power clusters within the governmental structure, the political system, and the international environment that have an impact on the national security establishment and the policymaking process.

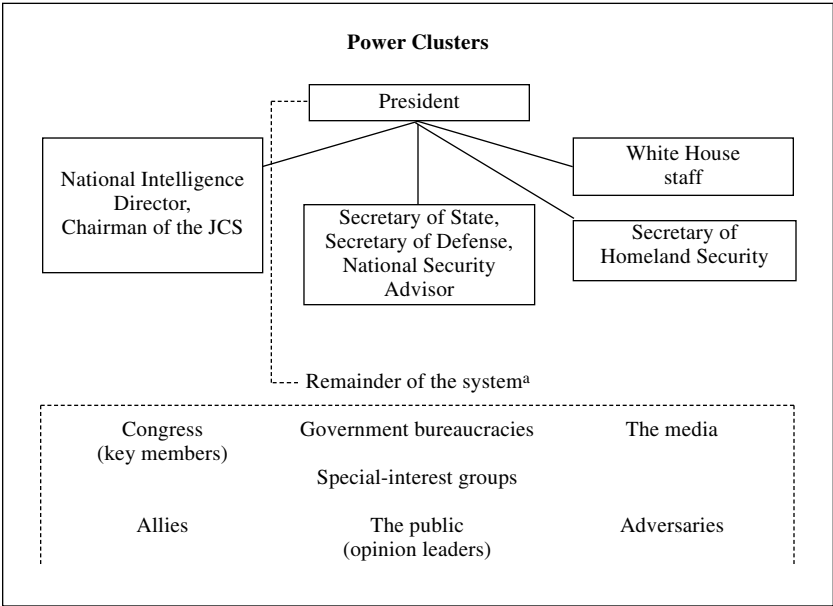
*National security establishment* is a normative-analytical term referring to those responsible for national security decisionmaking as well as a descriptive term that identifies a set of actors and processes that actually produce security policy outcomes. Often, however, the character and personality of the president lead to the creation of informal and parallel structures and processes for developing national security policy. This sets up a series of policy power clusters that form a national security network that drives the national security establishment and the formal policymaking process. The relationships among and within these power clusters and their actual powers are dependent upon the way the president exercises his leadership and views on how the national security establishment should function.

There are four major power clusters within the US command structure, whose powers vary according to presidential leadership and preferences: (1) the policy triad, consisting of the secretary of state, the secretary of defense, and the national security advisor; (2) the director of national intelligence and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and (3) the president's closest White House advisers, such as the White House chief of staff and the counselor to the president; and (4) the secretary of Homeland Security.

These four power clusters are extremely important in shaping national security policy (see Figure 1.6). They represent critical parts of the national security establishment but operate in ways that reflect presidential leadership style and the mind-sets of those within the three power clusters. As such, they may or may not be compatible with the formal national security establishment. Put another way, the national security establishment is fluid and dynamic, and the policymaking process is not as rational and systematic as one is led to believe.

The defense planning process . . . is beset with multiple dilemmas. Assessing the threat and acquiring the force structure to meet that threat require an efficient crystal ball—not only in the sense of defining the future in the here and now in terms of events and dangers; the process also requires accurately estimating the national mood years before the critical event.<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 1.6 Policy Power Clusters and the National Security System**



*Note:* a. Objects of national security policy and inputs into national security policy.

## Conclusion

There is a set of boundaries, constraints, and limitations that cannot be separated from the operations of the US national security establishment. The policy process cannot be viewed separately from these considerations. As a result (and aside from real threats to the homeland), there is likely to be internal disagreement and debate within the national security establishment, between the establishment and other branches and agencies of government, and between all of these and the public. The intensity of the disagreement increases in direct proportion to the size of the gap between policies and strategies, on the one hand, and well-established perspectives and the US political-military posture, on the other. When we add the differing views of allies and adversaries and their national security efforts—especially in the new era—it is clear that simply examining the establishment or the policy process does not do justice to the complexities and complications inherent in US national security.

All of this is exacerbated by the diffusion and decentralization of power within the US political system, within and among the branches of govern-

ment, and also within the general population. Participatory politics and single-issue politics, the erosion of political party cohesion, changing domestic demographics, the policy role of the media, and internal power problems within government have made it almost impossible for the president to undertake any foreign policy or national security initiatives that are perceived as outside the mainstream or as requiring a new kind of military posture or preparedness. The exception may be the war on international terrorism. But even in such cases, disagreements abound regarding the approach and nature of adversaries. To induce changes and to place his stamp on national security policy, the president must build a political base within the government and activate the general public as well as convince the media of the appropriateness of new policies and strategies. This usually means that the matter must be seen as a major national security issue, with the US position clearly proper and morally correct, and must involve acceptable risk and a high expectation of success.

The US fear of concentration of power is engrained in the constitutional principles of separation of powers and checks and balances; these have provided clear limits to the exercise of power of any one branch of government. Yet these restraints can also prevent effective response to challenges that require concentration of power to succeed. Thus the problem is self-contradictory, and the legal niceties of US constitutional practice can have little influence in the international security setting, where power and politics are often inextricable. It is in this context that the US national security establishment and the process by which security policy is formulated and implemented meet their greatest test. Such a test is evident in the struggles between the president and Congress over war power resolutions.

In this book our primary concern is the US national security establishment and the security policy process. In addition, we examine the international security setting, the factors that affect the substance of US national security policy, and the presidential mandate (see Part 2). All of these matters have become exceedingly complicated by the disagreements within the United States over involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan and troublesome issues regarding Iran, North Korea, and nuclear proliferation generally. The chapters on the establishment and the national security process are focused on these issues.

## Notes

1. See, for example, "Under Siege," *US News and World Report*, September 24, 2001. The entire issue reports on the September 11 attacks and the US response. Needless to say, there are a variety of reports and assessments of this event in virtually all elements of the media. For example, see Steven Emerson, *Jihad Incorporated: A Guide to Militant Islam in the US* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus

Books, 2006), and Thomas R. Mockaitis and Paul B. Rich, eds., *Grand Strategy in the War Against Terrorism* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003).

2. David Jablonsky, "The State of the National Security State," in David Jablonsky, Ronald Steel, Lawrence Korb, Morton H. Halperin, and Robert Ellsworth, *US National Security: Beyond the Cold War* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, July 26, 1997), pp. 39–40.

3. Charles W. Kegley Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, *World Politics: Trend and Transformation*, 11th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006).

4. Carnes Lord, "Strategy and Organization at the National Level," in James C. Gaston, ed., *Grand Strategy and the Decisionmaking Process* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1994), pp. 141–159.

5. *Sun Tzu: The Art of War*, translated and with an introduction by Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

6. Henry A. Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy: Three Essays* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), p. 92.

7. There are a number of publications and reports regarding the US involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. See, for example, Lawrence F. Kaplan and William Kristol, *The War over Iraq: Saddam's Tyranny and America's Mission* (San Francisco, CA: Encounter Books, 2003); Lee H. Hamilton, Lawrence S. Eagleburger, and James A. Baker III, *Iraq Study Group Report* (2006); Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006); David C. Hendrickson and Robert W. Tucker, *Revisions in Need of Revising: What Went Wrong in the Iraq War* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, December 2005).

8. See, e.g., Thomas E. Copeland, ed., *The Information Revolution and National Security* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, August 2000).

9. For a useful study, see Eugene R. Wittkopf, ed., *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's, 1994).

10. David Scheffer concluded, "I propose that we are witnessing the end of sovereignty as it has been traditionally understood in international law and in state practice. In its place we are seeing a new form of national integrity emerging." David Scheffer, "Humanitarian Intervention Versus State Sovereignty," in United States Institute of Peace, *Peacemaking and Peacekeeping Implications for the United States Military* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, May 1993), p. 9.

11. See James M. McCormick, *American Foreign Policy and Process*, 4th ed. (Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock, 2004), pp. 28–30.

12. See, for example, Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, 5th ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2006). Also see Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, eds., *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

13. See, e.g., John Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War," *Atlantic*, August 1990, pp. 35–50.

14. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996). See also Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 22–49. For a critique of the Huntington thesis, see Shireen T. Hunter, *The Future of Islam and the West: Clash of Civilizations or Peaceful Coexistence?* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998).

15. Colin Powell, with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 610.

16. Georgie Anne Geyer, *Americans No More: The Death of Citizenship* (New York: Atlantic Monthly, 1996).

17. *Ibid.*, p. 339.

18. Alan Wolfe, *One Nation, After All: What Americans Really Think About God, the Right, the Left and Each Other* (New York: Viking, 1999). See also David Gergen, "One Nation, After All," *US News and World Report*, March 16, 2000, p. 84, and James MacGregor Burns and Georgia J. Sorenson, with Robin Gerber and Scott W. Webster, *Dead Center: Clinton-Gore Leadership and the Perils of Moderation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

19. Frederick H. Hartmann and Robert L. Wendzel, *Defending America's Security* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988), p. 146.