THIRD EDITION

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

PATTERN AND PROCESS

Charles W. Kegley, Jr.
Eugene R. Wittkopf

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For Pamela and Barbara

PREFACE

Has American foreign policy changed since 1945? If so, how, and with what consequences? What are the sources of American foreign policy? Do these sources promote policy change or inhibit it? These are the principal questions we seek to answer in *American Foreign Policy: Pattern and Process*.

The years since publication of the first edition of this book in 1979 have been turbulent ones for the United States. Many of the challenges the nation has faced seemed to call into question the wisdom of the conventional assumptions that have governed America's approach to the world since World War II. Yet, despite these challenges and the policy debates and adjustments they have stimulated, American foreign policy continues to be characterized by continuity. The thesis of the first edition of the book—that both the ends sought by American foreign policy makers and the means through which they have been pursued have become deeply entrenched patterns that have undergone only remedial adjustments over the course of several decades—remains a compelling interpretation. Indeed, time continues to deal generously with it.

How does one account for such policy continuity? To probe this question, we continue in this edition of *American Foreign Policy: Pattern and Process* to utilize the pre-theoretical framework of the previous editions, which maintains that five factors—international, societal, governmental, role, and individual—collectively influence foreign policy objectives and the means chosen to realize them. The pre-theoretical framework organizes examination of both the international and domestic sources of American action abroad, and explores the linkages between political institutions and policy formulation processes, on the one hand, and policy outcomes, on the other. The framework thus facilitates an examination of the past diplomatic record and provides a basis for anticipating the future. In speculating about the future in the concluding chapter of the book, we are encouraged by the fact that many of the predictions advanced in the first and second editions have proven accurate, including especially the evidence that the foreign policy of the Reagan administration has reaffirmed the postwar pattern of American foreign policy rather than deviating from it. Indeed, the events of the past decade have lent credence to the book's

thesis and attest to the utility of the theoretical framework which structures and informs the analysis.

Although the thematic thrust and organizational framework of the earlier editions have been preserved, numerous changes have been made in this edition. The evidence has been thoroughly updated and new literature incorporated, and the coverage of several topics has been revised and expanded, while that of others has been shortened or dropped. Readers familiar with the first two editions of the book will quickly notice that the discussion of the instruments of American foreign policy has been expanded with the addition of a new chapter focused on national security policy (chapter five). We continue to maintain the sixteen chapter format by merging into a single chapter (thirteen) the treatment of role sources of American foreign policy. Other changes are spread throughout the book. They include examination of the challenge of international terrorism; the American foreign policy response to the Third World debt crisis; and treatment of the impact of the electronic media on public attitudes toward foreign policy. The role of the United States in the global food regime has been elaborated, while the coverage of its role and stake in the global oil regime, so prevalent an issue demanding of detailed analysis when the previous editions of the book were published, has been reduced. The retreat from multilateralism evident in the policies of the Reagan administration is addressed in a variety of contexts, and the discussion of alternative interpretations of American foreign policy patterns has been sharpened and focused more clearly. Other changes are evident throughout, but undiminished is our commitment to relate the five sources of American foreign policy to its durable tenets captured in the themes of globalism, anticommunism, containment, military strength, and interventionism.

Many people have contributed to the development of the book and its evolution over nearly a decade. As the list of those to whom we are indebted continues to grow beyond those who were explicitly acknowledged in the first and second editions, we run the risk of slighting some in our desire to thank all. William A. Clark, Mark J. DeHaven, Lucia Wren Rawls, and Barry Rich deserve special thanks for their contributions to the onerous technical tasks associated with production of this edition. Others who have contributed in some special way to our thinking or who have otherwise made important contributions to the book as it has evolved over a decade now number in the dozens. We thank you collectively. Our appreciation is in no way diminished by this impersonal expression of our gratitude.

We also express our appreciation to Jean Smith, Peter Dougherty, Richard Steins, and Emily Berleth, our taskmasters at St. Martin's Press, for their continued enthusiasm for the book; to James B. Holderman and Alfred B. Clubok, our valued colleagues and friends at our respective institutions, for their personal support for our scholarly endeavors; and to our wives, Pamela and Barbara, to whom the book is dedicated.

CONTENTS

I

ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVES ON AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

1

PERSISTENCE AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY: A THEMATIC INTRODUCTION

> I know of no change in policy, only of circumstances.
>
> *Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, 1823*

> It is quite true that the central themes of American foreign policy are more or less constant. They derive from the kind of people we are . . . and from the shape of the world situation.
>
> *Former Secretary of State Dean Rusk, 1983*

Throughout history, major wars have led to transformations of the international political system and to changes in the position of states within it. World War II, by far the most destructive and far-reaching global war in the twentieth century, was no exception. From it the United States emerged a superpower, acquiring capabilities unparalleled in history that made it unquestionably preponderant in world affairs. The British author Harold J. Laski described the circumstances that came into being thus:

> America bestrides the world like a colossus; neither Rome at the height of its power nor Great Britain in the period of its economic supremacy enjoyed an influence so direct, so profound, or so pervasive. It has half the wealth of the world today in its hands, it has rather more than half of the world's productive capacity, and it exports more than twice as much as it imports. Today literally hundreds of millions of Europeans and Asiatics know that both the quality and the rhythm of their lives depend upon decisions made in Washington. On the wisdom of those decisions hangs the fate of the next generation. (Laski, 1947: 641)

From this advantageous position the leaders of the United States forged a new vision of the role the U.S. was to play in world affairs, predicated on assumptions derived from the experience in world war which had catapulted the United States to the apex of the international hierarchy. A new foreign policy cloaked in internationalism was given shape and put into place, as the United States confidently approached the world with a clarity of vision and a consistency of purpose.

It has now been more than forty years since international involvement became the guidepost of American foreign policy. Over the course of those four decades, global circumstances have changed dramatically. The supremacy of the United States has been challenged. Its ability to influence others has eroded. Its position in and command over the international political economy have deteriorated. It faces unprecedented threats to its physical survival as its ability to prevent a military attack has been thrown into question. The world has changed.

The world has changed, but the basic tenets of American foreign policy have not. On the contrary, America's approach to the world has been governed by persistence, not by creativity. Indeed, perhaps the most distinctive feature of postwar American foreign behavior has been its remarkable continuity. Adaptations to changing international and domestic circumstances are discernible; but the same guiding principles and ultimate goals have persisted. The policy that was framed in the immediate aftermath of World War II has endured.

The theme of persistence and continuity which pervades this book derives from our definition of foreign policy: American foreign policy comprises the goals that the nation's officials[1] seek to attain abroad, the values that give rise to those objectives, and the means or instruments through which they are pursued. We maintain that continuity has tended to characterize American goals and values since World War II, while discontinuity, or, perhaps preferably, adaptation, has been largely confined to the use of various tactics in order to achieve these consistent goals. In other words, we posit that the goals or ends of American foreign policy have remained relatively constant in comparison with the more variable methods or means employed to realize them. Tactics have changed; objectives have not.

Clearly it would be misleading to exaggerate the contrast between an invariant foreign policy "vision" and a set of rapidly changing policy instruments. More often than not, the means to policy ends have evolved slowly in response to varying domestic and international developments. It would be equally misleading to characterize the making of foreign policy as occurring in the absence of debate about its ends. Questioning of the conventional vision is constant, and the prevailing consensus is always fragile and under challenge. Some would say that it is fragmented (Holsti and Rosenau, 1984), even "lost"

[1]Although important, the transnational contacts that U.S. nongovernmental actors (for example, businesspeople) maintain abroad do not constitute a primary focus of our inquiry.

(Quester, 1982). Thus, it would be mistaken to assume that the interpretation of American foreign policy elaborated in this book is the only possible one or that it is consistent with what American leaders themselves have perceived about the policies they engineered. Yet, whatever one's interpretation of these issues, we find it useful to think of American foreign policy in terms of persistent goals and somewhat more variable tactics. This task requires an analytical perspective which focuses on recurrent behaviors rather than transient events.

PATTERNS IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

To the extent that consistencies exist over time in foreign policy objectives, we may contend that *patterns* are characteristic of American foreign policy behavior. Patterns are historical generalizations that capture the overall thrust and direction of foreign policy. As generalizations, however, they do not necessarily describe accurately every foreign policy decision and the reasons behind it. Thus, when we make generalizations, we risk distorting history and committing occasional errors of interpretation. But what is gained by generalization is the ability to differentiate the common and perpetual from the infrequent and ephemeral.

To contend that American foreign policy has been patterned since 1945 does not suggest a historical determinism that denies the possibility of policy change nor an interpretation that sees policy as necessarily paralyzed by the past. Indeed, American foreign policy has shown a capacity for adaptation to changing conditions and, on occasion, for experimental innovation in pursuit of established objectives. Containment of the Soviet Union, for example, has been one of the most enduring themes in postwar American foreign policy. It first took the form of isolation of the Soviet Union under Truman, then emphasized threatening rhetoric with the associated tactic of "brinkmanship" (escalation to the brink of nuclear war) under Eisenhower. Competitive coexistence was emphasized under Kennedy and Johnson, with a shift from brinkmanship to deterrence based on the recognition of what policy makers called "mutual assured destruction." Under Nixon, Ford, and Carter, détente became the watchword, with the containment strategy pursued by seduction and rewards for compliant behavior rather than coercion and force. Most recently, the Reagan administration's focus on strains in East-West relations and its choice of a confrontational posture toward the Soviet Union resurrected a militant orientation toward the long-standing goal of containing Soviet expansionism.

The containment theme, in short, has evolved rather dramatically in response to altered circumstances. Yet it has endured. Every time that containment has appeared to be fading or to be undergoing a metamorphosis, the illusion has been shattered as the premises of containment logic have reasserted their hold on American foreign policy thinking. Thus, containment has remained one of the guiding principles of American foreign policy for

eight successive administrations, despite extraordinary changes in the foreign and domestic environment of the United States.

The hypothesis that the basic underlying objectives and values of postwar American foreign policy have remained fundamentally unaltered, despite some significant evolutionary challenges and adaptations, is thus an inviting one. A new occupant of the Oval Office often seems to perceive himself, at least initially, to be devising an innovative policy leading to a new era in American foreign relations. In fact, though, sharp departures or meaningful deviations from the established direction of policy have been rare. When they have occurred, they have seldom proved permanent. More typically, intermittent, sudden shifts have eventually given way to a resumption of prevailing assumptions with only modest deviations from ongoing courses of action. Why? Consider the view of Joseph A. Califano, formerly an adviser to Lyndon Johnson and a member of Jimmy Carter's cabinet:

> Presidents since Roosevelt have pursued essentially similar foreign policy objectives on the major issues that face this nation abroad. Where change has come . . . it has often been dramatically expressed. But it has invariably evolved through broad, bipartisan consensus. . . . The . . . international policies of most administrations are founded in a more substantial and nonpartisan ideological consensus than the rhetorical idiosyncracies and disparate styles and means most presidents tend to reveal. . . . To some extent, a president is a prisoner of historical forces that will demand his attention whatever his preference in policy objectives. . . . Every president is a victim as well as molder of events. (Califano, 1975: 238; 245)

From this perspective the president's ability to change foreign policy is constrained by powerful circumstances that promote constancy and inhibit change. Furthermore, continuity is reinforced by the tendency of presidents to value consistency for its own sake, for there is both logic and reward to the stable pursuit of a continuous set of policy preferences: "Serious nations do not redefine their national interests every few years. . . . Foreign accomplishments generally come about because a nation has been able to sustain a course of action over a long period of time" (Destler, Gelb, and Lake, 1984). "A consistent and dependable national course must have a base broader than the particular beliefs of those who from time to time hold office," Secretary of State John Foster Dulles argued. This inclination to retain, not revise, existing national objectives is illustrated as well by Harry Truman's advice to his successor, Dwight D. Eisenhower: "What I've always had in mind was and is a continuing foreign policy."

Alternatively, continuity in American foreign policy may be characterized, not as the absence of change, but as movement forward that occurs only *incrementally*, that is by slow accommodation to emergent realities. Accordingly, although there is stability, there is also fluidity and evolution, with policy innovation constrained by the past but not prevented by it. This view of change is consistent with the characterization advanced by Roger Hilsman, a principal adviser in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations: