

Study Guide for Midterm I
INR 3303 — Foreign Policymaking

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1. Expected Utility
 - Know definitions of (instrumental & value) rationality, utility, parametric & strategic choice.
 - Given specific utilities with associated probabilities, calculate expected utility.
2. National Interest and Policy
 - What is a nation-state?
 - Give examples of realist or liberal assumptions about the national interest (utility).
 - How can rational pursuit of the national interest (national expected utility) explain war?
 - Explain international conflicts (over territory, security, trade, etc.) and other specific foreign policy decisions in terms of these interests.
3. Domestic Interests
 - Offer plausible interpretation of the interests of national leaders. Explain how these interests affect foreign policy.
 - Compare the (foreign policy) interests of leaders in different countries (with strong vs. weak states, for example).
 - What is spatial voting theory, and what does it explain? How, if at all, does it constrain the positions of candidates for public office?
 - What are some general objectives of the US president?
 - Define groupthink and explain how it can affect foreign policymaking.
 - Explain how competition among political "players" within the government (representing different agencies or outside interests, for example) can affect foreign policymaking.
 - What are the general objectives of all large bureaucracies? Explain how bureaucratic interests can affect foreign policymaking.
4. Study specific historical illustrations of the above.
 - With reference to political calculations of national interest, as well as the interests of particular leaders and advisors, be prepared to explain specific foreign policy decisions in conflicts such as the Vietnam War, the Iraq War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and so on.
 - Be prepared to compare the relative merits of different explanations or models.