CHAPTER 1

LEADERSHIP IN FOREIGN POLICY

Introduction

The higher a man stands on the social ladder, the more people he is connected with and the more power he has over others, the more evident is the predestination and inevitability of his every action. . . . In historic events, the so-called great men are labels giving names to events, and like labels they have but the smallest connection with the event itself. Every act of theirs, which appears to them an act of their own will, is in an historical sense involuntary and is related to the whole course of history and predestined from eternity.

Leo Tolstoy, War and Peace

Leo Tolstoy was a magnificent author, and perhaps it could be argued that his aforementioned words portray accurately the world of his time. However, in the contemporary setting of international politics, Tolstoy could not be more wrong. The following pages explore the idea that leaders matter in international politics, and the cases in this book compare that significance in systematic ways.

Exposure to events in world politics, whether through news media or observations of political pundits, gives the clear impression that leaders are active players in international relations and the making of foreign policy. However, many scholarly analyses give greater weight to aspects of the domestic and international environments that constrain leaders and push them in particular directions. Especially in a world of great uncertainty and ambiguity, as opposed to the rigid Cold War environment, individual leaders make a difference. This book offers readers a way of looking at how elites adjust to and change their environment and do not simply get pushed around by grand forces of history. Whether in a democracy or authoritarian system, or in a Western, Islamic, or African culture, leaders are constantly engaged in a game of marshaling support to pursue their political goals. All leaders face the challenge of trying to match their agenda to their environment and of getting their constituencies to buy into their perspective. Meeting such challenges is by no means a passive process and goes beyond making decisions in a world with little room to maneuver.

This book is about the games these actors play, and will show that leadership strategies transcend different types of governments, different cultures, and different types of issues. Further, regardless of context, skillful leaders do not limit their use

A. K. Grove, Political Leadership in Foreign Policy
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of resources and alliances exclusively to the domestic or international arena; their strategies incorporate tools from both. Exploring leaders’ strategic moves in comparative case studies of Pakistan and the “war on terror,” the Persian Gulf War, the Northern Ireland conflict, the transition from apartheid in South Africa, and Zimbabwe’s current crisis demonstrates the shared dynamics of the policy process. The cases are written so that each works well as a stand-alone tool for understanding the facts of the case and the policy process at the nexus of international relations and domestic politics. To this end, the chapters tell the story of a single case and the role of leaders’ strategies within that story. As the cases in this book reveal, leaders not only interpret the situation in which they find themselves but often manipulate it, framing elements of the domestic and international environments to their audiences, drawing attention, involving new actors, instigating issue linkage.

The remainder of this introductory chapter presents the general approach to understanding the role of leadership in the policymaking process. The framework is situated within the literature on international relations, foreign policy, and political leadership, highlighting the view of leaders as poised between the domestic and external environments proactively using various tools. The tools are called strategies, and how they are used is part of the leadership process in policymaking. Four strategies, broadening audience, buying off, tying hands, and framing threat, are described here, and then the case studies and method of analysis are introduced.

**Leaders in International Politics**

The lines between domestic and international politics are increasingly blurred in the contemporary world. “Intermestic,” a combination of the words “international” and “domestic,” communicates the idea that domestic and foreign issues are linked together. Often the term “intermestic” connotes issues “that occur in the international environment but are reacted to as if they are domestic policy issues.” Also significant are issues occurring in the domestic environment, reacted to as if they are international policy issues. As President in 1995, Bill Clinton said, “The more time I spend on foreign policy . . . the more I become convinced that there is no longer a clear distinction between what is foreign and domestic.” The words and actions of those in power are crucial to the way in which issues get defined. In all of the cases explored in this study, from the 1991 Persian Gulf War of George H.W. Bush’s administration to Robert Mugabe’s current efforts to stay in power in Zimbabwe, connections between the two arenas are emphasized by the behavior of the leaders. These individuals actually play a crucial role in creating and/or using these linkages, when it will help them achieve their policy goals. As the world becomes more and more interconnected, the dearth of knowledge about this area is increasingly detrimental.

Traditional approaches to international relations minimize the role of the individual. Instead, these explanations emphasize a few factors about the international system such as the lack of international government (a situation referred to as the condition of anarchy), the balance of power, or the distribution of economic wealth. No matter who is in power in a state or what kind of government is in place, structural variables (aspects of the international system’s structure) are presumed