

PLURALIST DECISION/POLICY MAKING (I)

I. DECISIONS OF ANY GOVERNMENT ARE THE RESULT OF A **COMPLEX INTERACTION** AMONG THE INVOLVED INSTITUTIONS, AGENCIES, AND INDIVIDUALS.

ALTHOUGH MUCH OF WHAT FOLLOWS IS TAILORED FOR THE U.S., THE PLURALIST PROCESS IS APPLICABLE TO ALL STATES.

◆ EACH INSTITUTION, AGENCY, AND INDIVIDUAL HAS ITS **OWN PERCEPTION** OF THE NATIONAL INTEREST AND THE BEST WAY TO ACHIEVE THAT INTEREST -- **WHAT OUGHT TO BE DONE AND HOW.**

◆ EACH HAS ITS OWN ABILITY TO INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME -- **ITS OWN ABILITY TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN.**

◆ EACH HAS ITS **OWN BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS AND INTERESTS.**

◆ EACH HAS ITS **OWN TIES** TO THE PUBLIC AND INTEREST GROUPS AND ITS OWN RELATIONSHIP TO THE POLITICAL CULTURE.

THUS WHAT WE SEE AS OUTCOMES ARE NOT THE FULLY REASONED SOLUTIONS OF PROBLEMS, BUT ARE **THE RESULTANTS OF THE BEHAVIOR OF THE PARTICIPANTS** (INVOLVED INSTITUTIONS, AGENCIES, AND INDIVIDUALS), EACH TRYING TO INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME.

PLURALIST DECISION/POLICY MAKING (II)

II. THE COMPLEX INTERACTION IS STRUCTURED BY A PROCESS OR ONE COULD SAY THAT POLICY IS DEVELOPED THROUGH A PROCESS.

◆ THE PROCESS IS DETERMINED BY:

- ❶ SITUATION -- CRISIS, ROUTINE, etc.**
- ❷ ISSUE -- USE OF FORCE, BUDGET, DOMESTIC, ECONOMIC, etc.**
- ❸ INDIVIDUALS, INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES INVOLVED. ESPECIALLY:**
 - The Constitution
 - Structure of the Executive Branch
 - Management Style of the Leader
 - Interests -- who wants to be involved
- ❹ INVOLVEMENT OF THE PUBLIC**
- ❺ INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER STATES AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**
- ❻ POLICY-MAKING SEQUENCE -- where are we?**

THEREFORE, NO ONE DECISION-MAKING MODEL DESCRIBES THE PROCESS FULLY. EACH ACADEMIC MODEL FOCUSES ON SPECIFIC ELEMENTS.

MOREOVER, THE PROCESS MAY CHANGE AS THE SITUATION DEVELOPS.

PLURALIST DECISION/POLICY MAKING (III)

DECISION-MAKING SITUATIONS:

◆ CRISIS --

Cuban Missile Crisis, 9/11, Katrina

◆ CRITICAL ISSUE WITH LIMITED TIME --

Invasion of Afghanistan, Invasion of Iraq,

◆ TIME SENSITIVE ISSUES (Actions of Others) --

Korea, Kosovo, Rwanda, Haitian Refugees

◆ MAJOR ISSUES OF POLICY--

Relationship with China, France, etc.; NATO's strategic concept;
Policy toward environment, trade, human rights, etc.

◆ MINOR ISSUES OF POLICY --

Situations that require senior level involvement, but not
the President or perhaps not even the secretaries of State
and Defense.

Decisions related to implementation.

◆ ROUTINE MANAGEMENT OF POLICIES AND ISSUES --

Actions and operations of agencies within known limits and
policies

Decisions made at the level of the implementing agency.

SMALL GROUP DECISION MAKING

A PARTICULAR WAY TO MAKE A DECISION.

AD HOC GROUP FORMED TO DEAL WITH A SPECIFIC PROBLEM -- USUALLY AN INFORMAL GROUP W/O INSTITUTIONAL BASE. MOST PRESIDENTIAL DECISIONS EMERGE FROM SUCH A GROUP

FORMAL, PERMANENT GROUP, WITH INSTITUTIONAL BASE, WITH SPECIFIC TASKS. MOST BUREAUCRATIC PROCESSES ARE BASED ON SUCH GROUPS. PRESIDENTIAL DECISIONS ARE OFTEN BASED ON THE WORK OF THESE GROUP.

INFORMAL GROUP THAT MEETS REGULARLY W/O INSTITUTIONAL BASE -- NOT USUALLY DECISION MAKING, USUALLY INFORMATIVE

GROUP THINK SYNDROME

A PROBLEM -- NOT A MODEL

CHARACTERISTICS:

– OVERESTIMATION OF THE POWER AND
RIGHTNESS OF THE GROUP

– CLOSED-MINDEDNESS.

– OFTEN WITH THE DECISION ALREADY FRAMED,
USUALLY FOCUSED ON WHAT NOT DO AND NOT WHY
TO DO IT.

– SELECTIVE OF INFORMATION
NEW INFORMATION INTO CURRENT PATTERN

PRESSURE TOWARD UNIFORMITY

SELF-CENSORSHIP

INDIVIDUALS and DECISION-MAKING

- ◆ **PEOPLE IN AND FROM INSTITUTIONS MAKE DECISIONS. THEY ARE PRODUCTS OF THEIR INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE, WHICH IN TURN IS A PRODUCT OF THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CULTURES.**
- ◆ **THEIR DECISIONS AND BEHAVIOR REFLECT A MULTITUDE OF INFLUENCES THAT CAN BE SUMMED UP AS COMING FROM -- INDIVIDUAL INTERESTS, INSTITUTIONAL INTERESTS, NATIONAL INTERESTS, AND ETHICAL/BROADER INTERESTS. OR MORE BROADLY FROM THE SEVEN LEVELS OF INFLUENCE.**
- ◆ **THEY WILL BEHAVE TO ACHIEVE WHAT THEY SEE AS THE APPROPRIATE INTERESTS USING WHATEVER POWER THEY HAVE.**

THE PUBLIC/NATIONAL INTEREST

The public/national interest is a fundamental building block of rational decision making in a democratic society. The purpose of policy **should be** to pursue what is best for the state and its people. Therefore, the first step should be to decide what is the goal. Next, the task is to design policies to achieve these ends. The interests (the ends) become the focus for allocating resources (the means or the instruments of power). Then, implementation of the policies, the use of the means, should be aimed at achieving the stated goals

The public/national interest can also be the basis for comparing what a government seeks with what it ought to seek.

Some believe there are interests that are irreducible and immutable. In other words, there are North Stars to guide national policies and behavior. Even if this were true, the problem remains how to find these North Stars. In reality, public/national interests emerge from the rough and tumble of policy development, from the pluralist process discussed above.

Even when a clearly defined, accepted by most, public/national interest arises, it will not be legitimate to all and may prove to be a poor guide to action. Usually there are many competing statements of the public/national interest -- all deserving consideration, some requiring close scrutiny. As the situation develops, what is accepted as the public/national interest might change. How a country defines its public/national interests depends on its political system, which determines who participates, what is considered, and how decisions are made. This is a political, therefore very subjective, process.

A WAY TO LOOK AT THE SEQUENCE OF POLICY-MAKING

IDENTIFY THE ISSUE

DEVELOP & CONSIDER THE ISSUE

DEVELOP THE POLICY

GOALS -- WHY? INTERESTS

POLICY OPTIONS -- HOW? WHO? WHEN? POWER

DECIDE -- EXECUTIVE DECISION AND POLICY
ADOPTION

DEVELOP SUPPORT FOR THE POLICY

IMPLEMENTATION & MAINTAIN SUPPORT

EVALUATE THE RESULTS & ADJUST

Most processes are not completely sequential. Some stages run in parallel. Others are require iterative actions.