

Week 7: Domestic Politics, The Rise of China, and War Reading Questions

FLS, Chapter 4: Domestic Politics and War

Preliminaries

1. What is the unitary state assumption? Why is it problematic?
2. What is the distinction between national vs. particularistic interests?
3. What are the three groups of domestic actors that FLS identifies? How much power do these actors yield over the decision-making process? Why?

Diversionsary War

4. What is the rally around the flag effect? Example? Where does the rally effect come from?
5. What is the link between the rally effect and the diversionsary incentive for war? Why might diversionsary incentives create conditions for a bargaining failure?
6. Does the historical record support diversionsary war theory? What are the possible explanations for why leaders have not systematically used war for diversionsary purposes?

Organized Interests and War

7. What is the military-industrial complex? Why might the military be prone to favor war than the general population?
8. Why might economic interest groups have an interest in war? Against war?
9. How are small, organized groups able to have such a big influence on foreign policy?
10. How do hawkish vs. dovish domestic interests affect the bargaining range?

Democratic Peace Theory

11. What is the democratic peace?
12. Why might democracies have different interests than non-democracies? What mechanisms in democracies "put the brakes on war"?
13. What are two reasons why democracies are less likely to go to war with other democracies but are just as war prone in their dealings with autocracies?
14. What are the two mechanisms by which democratic institutions ease the information problems that lead to war?
15. What is a plausible alternative explanation for the correlation between democracies and peace?

FLS, Chapter 13: Rise of China

1. What tends to be the underlying mechanism driving changes in the global distribution of power?
2. How do expected changes in the distribution of power affect the bargaining interactions between states? What will the rising power want to do in the future? What incentives does this create for the state facing relative decline?
3. What two factors affect the likelihood of preventive war? Why aren't preventive wars inevitable?
4. What are the two main ways the United States may seek to engage with China in the future? How do those that view China's rise as inherently dangerous suggest the United States engage with China? How about those who are more optimistic about a peaceful rise?
5. What are the two prongs of the containment strategy, supported by those that view China's rise as dangerous? How does this strategy seek to deter war with China?
6. What do those who are more optimistic suggest? How do these strategies reduce the likelihood of conflict with China?
7. What are the two major domestic political interest groups competing for influence on U.S. policy towards China? Why do they have an interest in how the United States engages with China in the future?

Glaser, "Will China's Rise Lead to War?"

1. How does Glaser think defense dominance will affect China's rise?
2. Why does Glaser believe that it is unlikely that China will pursue regional hegemony?
3. Why does Glaser think Taiwan is a particularly risky issue for the prospects of a peaceful rise of China?

Mearsheimer, "Can China Rise Peacefully?"

1. Summarize Mearsheimer's offensive realism theory.
2. Why does Mearsheimer believe China is likely to pursue regional hegemony?
3. How does Mearsheimer think the security dilemma is likely to affect US-China relations?
4. What are the key components of the containment policy Mearsheimer advocates?
5. Why does Mearsheimer think that war is more likely between the United States and China than the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War?