



Explaining Foreign Policy: U.S. Decision-Making in the Gulf Wars

Steve A. Yetiv

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Steve A. Yetiv has developed an interdisciplinary, integrated approach to studying foreign policy decisions, which he applies here to understand better how and why the United States went to war in the Persian Gulf in 1991 and 2003. Yetiv's innovative method employs the rational actor, cognitive, domestic politics, groupthink, and bureaucratic politics models to explain the foreign policy behavior of governments. Drawing on the widest set of primary sources to date -- including a trove of recently declassified documents -- and on interviews with key actors, he applies these models to illuminate the decision-making process in the two Gulf Wars and to develop theoretical notions about foreign policy. What Yetiv discovers, in addition to empirical evidence about the Persian Gulf and Iraq wars, is that no one approach provides the best explanation, but when all five are used, a fuller and more complete understanding emerges. Thoroughly updated with a new preface and a chapter on the 2003 Iraq War, *Explaining Foreign Policy*, already widely used in courses, will continue to be of interest to students and scholars of foreign policy, international relations, and related fields. Critical acclaim for the first edition of *Explaining Foreign Policy* "Rarely does one find a book that both thoroughly presents a theoretical framework and then actually tests that framework against reality by the rigorous use of history. Steve Yetiv... has done a remarkably good job of balancing both elements in a new study of U.S. decision-making in the first Persian Gulf War." -- *Perspectives on Political Science* "Whether or not *Explaining Foreign Policy* ultimately takes its place beside *Essence of Decision* as a seminal work in the field, the book serves the same function in challenging analysts to question conventional models and accommodate complexity in the scholarly study of foreign policy." -- *Perspectives on Politics* "An important approach to analyzing complex foreign policy decision-making." -- *Comparative Strategy* "An impressive foreign-policy analysis of U.S. decision-making in the Persian Gulf War... A well-researched and highly readable book." -- *Political Studies Review* "Using the Persian Gulf crisis of 1991 as a case study, Steve Yetiv examines how important foreign policy decisions are made. His fresh and interesting contribution brings together competing decision-making theories to produce a rich interpretation of the event. It is also novel in considering both U.S. and Iraqi decision-making processes. Intriguing, accessible, and useful, this book will appeal to students, experts, and general readers." -- Richard Herrmann, Director of the Mershon Center at the Ohio State University

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