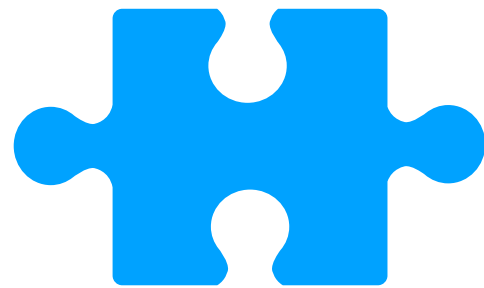


Section #5

Bureaucratic politics in US foreign policy

**Why does the U.S. select
one foreign policy option
over another?**



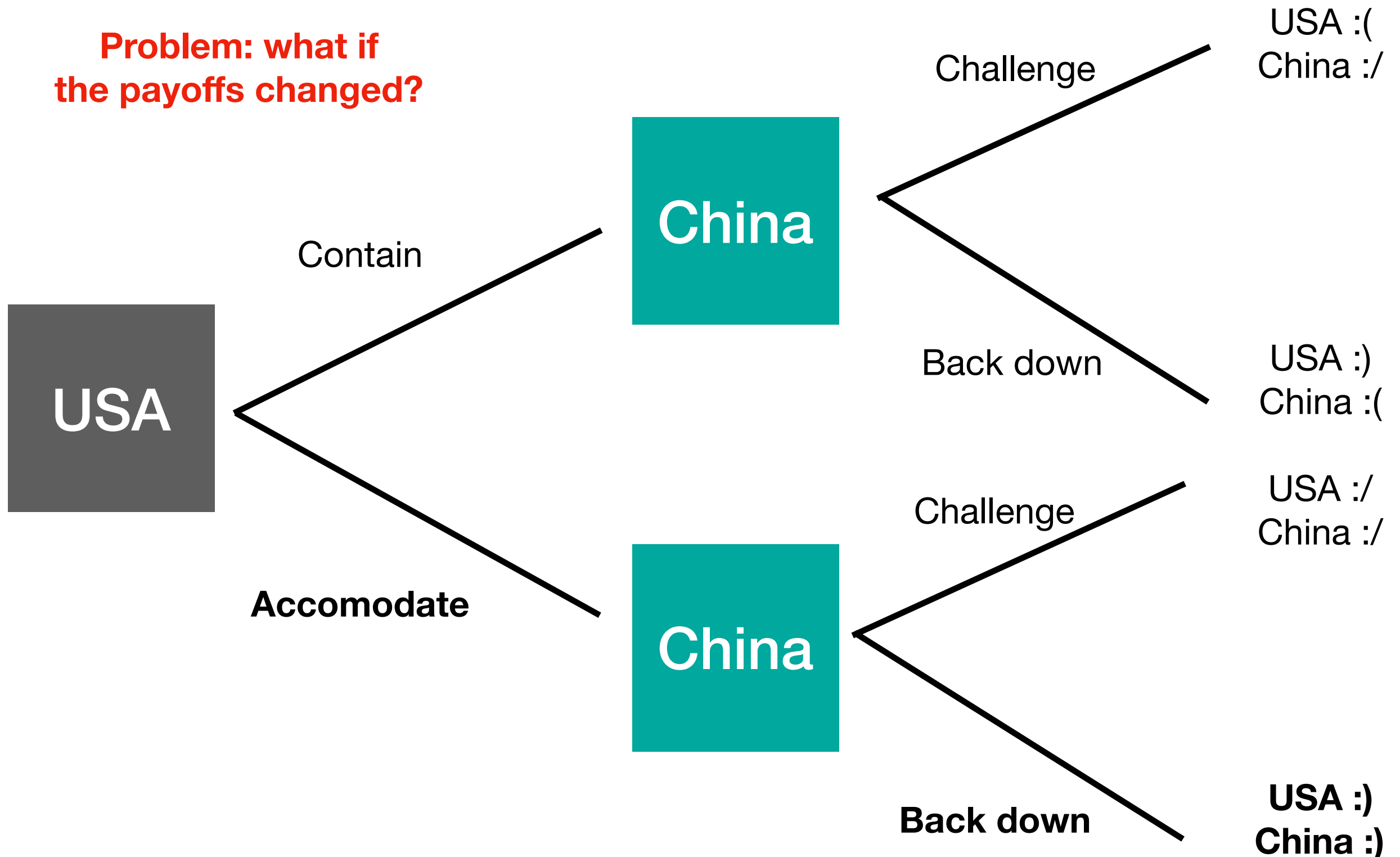
Will the U.S. choose to contain or accommodate China's economic rise?



Diplomatic delegations from the U.S. and China in Alaska (2021)

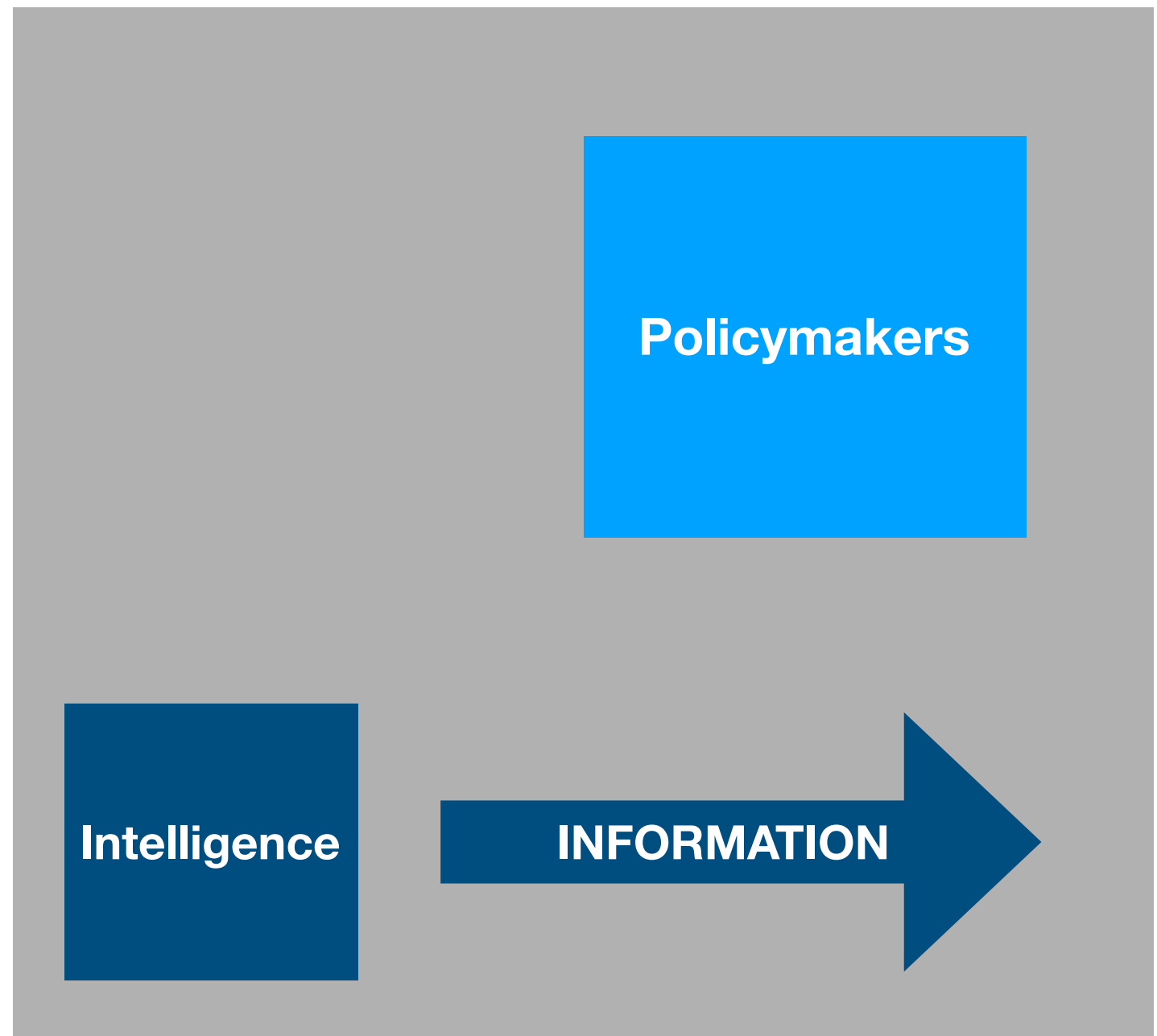
Model 1: Rational Actor

**Problem: what if
the payoffs changed?**



The role of intelligence

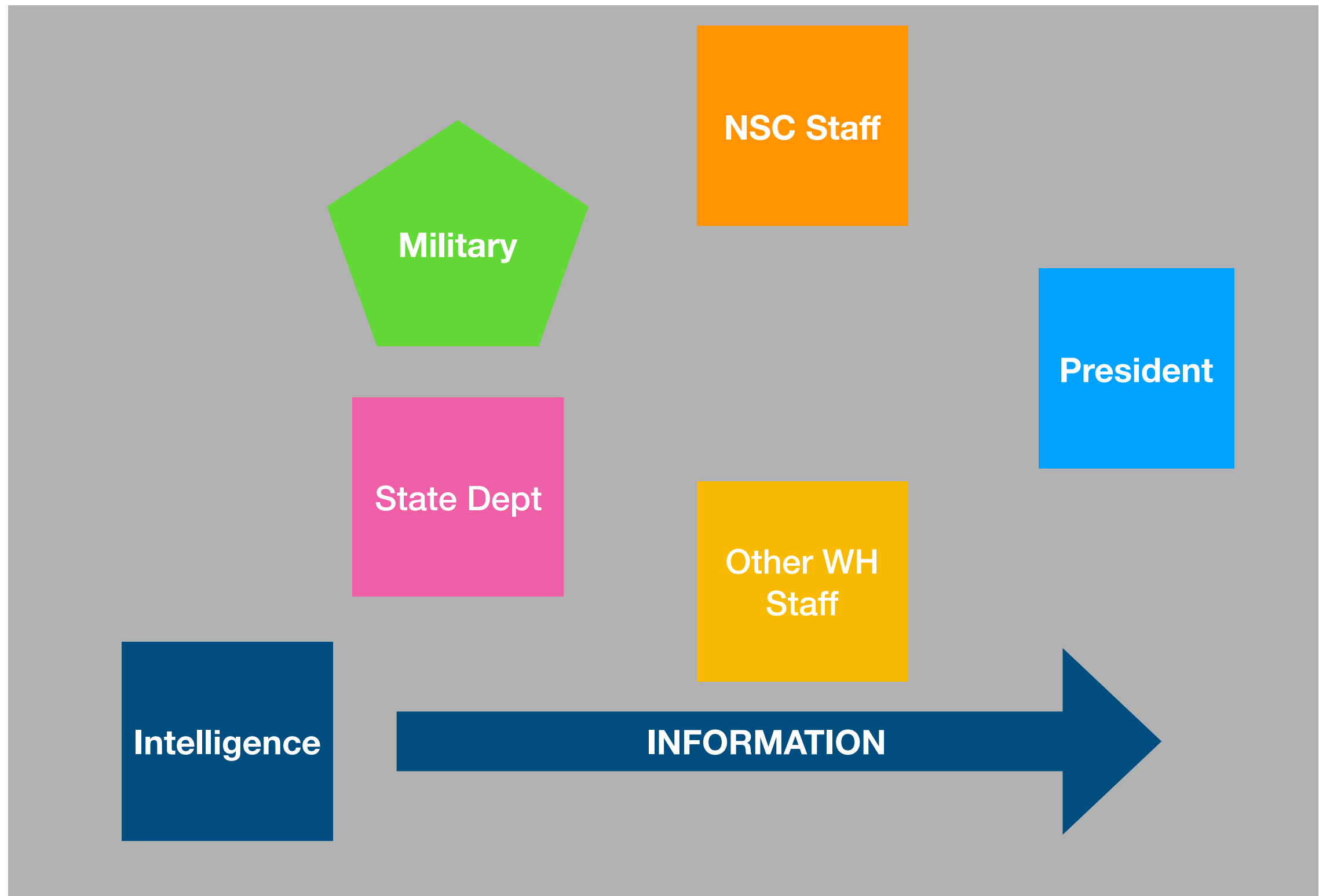
- Intelligence analysts are professionals with the aim of providing objective analysis for policymakers
 - Account for uncertainty in changing world
- Crucial because how actors perceive a given situation can depend on the informational input



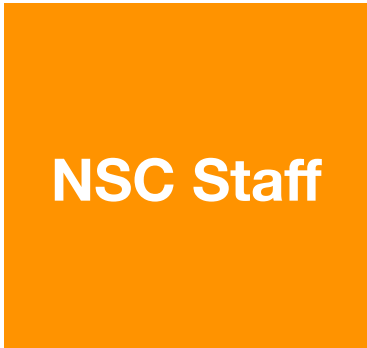
Sources of friction between intelligence and policymakers (Rovner)

Pathologies	Definition	Why?	Consequences
Neglect	Policymakers ignoring intelligence analyses	Confirmation bias and motivated reasoning	Distancing and irrelevance of intelligence
Excessive harmony	Policymakers uncritically accepting intelligence analyses	Policymakers overly reverential; intelligence defers to charismatic policymakers	Strategic tunnel vision
Politicization	“Manipulation of intelligence to reflect policy preferences” (Rovner p. 29)	Policy oversell: domestic political incentives to pressure intelligence to reach preferred conclusions	Demoralization of intelligence analysts; misperception; misleading public

Model 3: Bureaucratic Politics



Model 3: Bureaucratic Politics



NSC Staff

- Concerned most about protecting the president's foreign policy and domestic political standing
- Bring own preferences to the table



Military

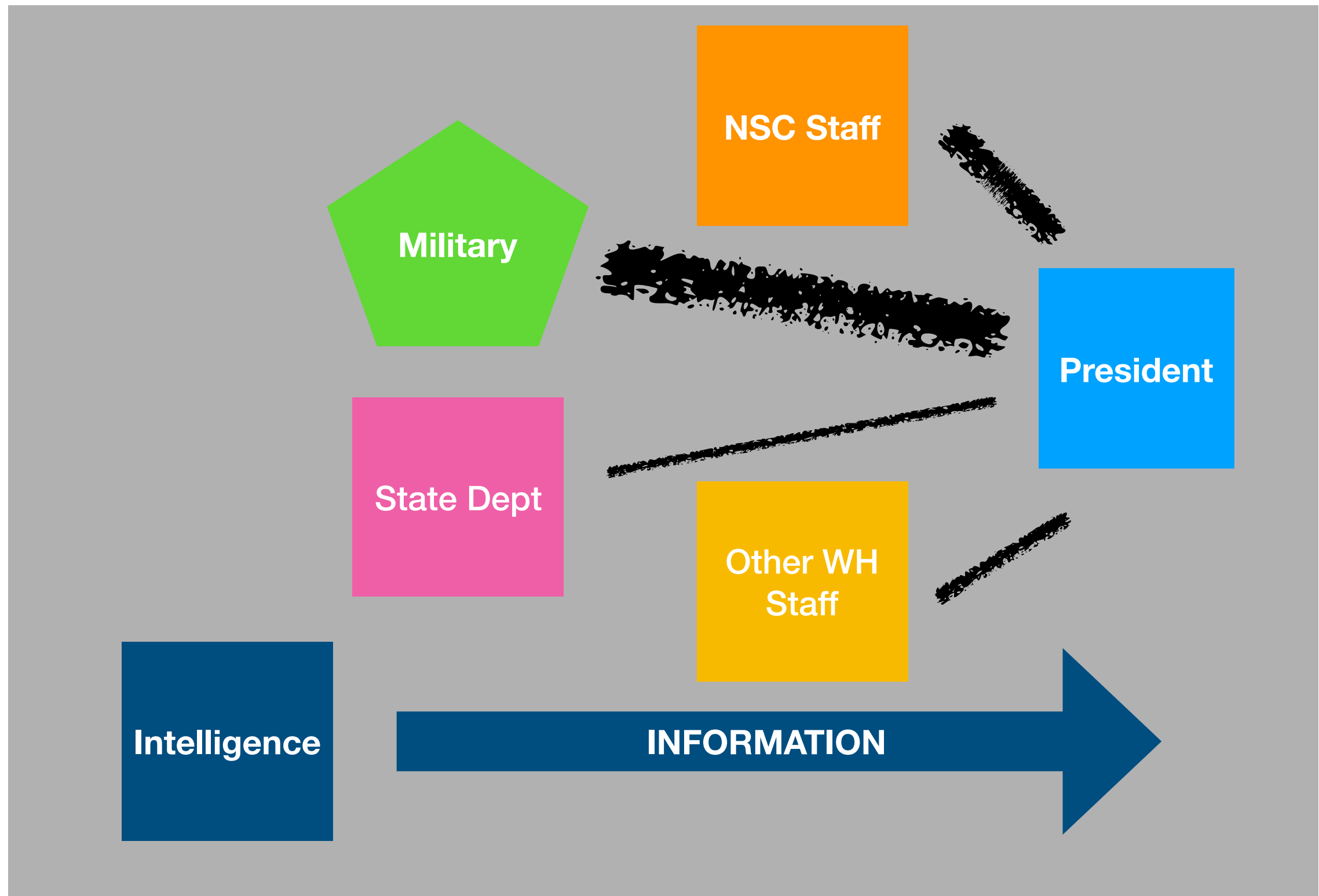
- Interest in accruing additional resources because held accountable for any military outcomes
- Interest in being prepared for war and preventing war through strength



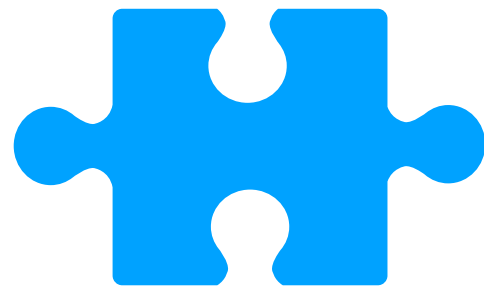
State Dept

- Coordinates and implements civilian diplomacy
- Interest in generating opportunities for cooperation and using non-military tools to prevent war

Model 3: Bureaucratic Politics



Why do some bureaucratic actors have more influence over U.S. foreign policy than others?



Pulling and hauling

Term	Definition	Example (Marsh)
Coalition building	Actors with like policy preferences ally with one another to outmaneuver opposing views	Gates/Mullen/Clinton alliance and military bloc vs. anti-surge advocates
Logrolling	Trading favors to secure support for one's own preferred policy	Obama insisting on withdrawal deadline to assuage anti-surge opponents
Compromise	Settlement in which sides make concessions on preferred policy to accommodate other interests	Surge was 30K not 40K troops and withdrawal timeline
Bargaining advantages	Control over implementation, control over key info, &/or ability to manipulate political costs	Military leaks and public testimony

Principal-Agent Problem

- Problem 1: So much to do in U.S. foreign policy but scarcity of time and resources for principals (e.g., the president)
- Solution A: Hire professionals (agents) and delegate responsibilities
 - Example: Civilians direct the use of force but delegate the implementation to the military
- Problem 2: The agents may not do everything the principal wants or in the way that they want
- Solution B: Monitoring, punishment, and rewards
 - Nevertheless, there are limits to this solution...

Using the principal-agent model to identify sources of bureaucratic influence

- 2 applications:
 1. Avant: source of military (agent) influence over civilians (principals) is disagreement among civilians (principals) over strategy
 2. Saunders: advisers (agents), broadly speaking, have more influence over the president (principal) when president is inexperienced

Let's Play a Game

- Each of you will be one version of a president (principal)
 - You will be provided a profile with your “type”
- We will walk through a number of decision points that the principal faces as it relates to their advisers (agents)
 - Write down on a piece of paper what you decide along with the associated point value
 - Adhere to what you think your “type” would do
- At the end, calculate your risk profile (i.e., the chance of danger associated with policy options during wartime)

Selection



The George W. Bush administration (Vanity Fair)

- Where do you draw your national security advisers from? (Can choose two)
- Colleagues from the business world = 0.5
- Your campaign = 1
- Renowned experts from academia = 2
- Renowned experts from the policy world and academia = 3

Monitoring



Obama and his advisers in the Oval Office

- You learned that the ODNI prepared a memo on the future of AI-enabled military capabilities. Do you read it? (No = 0, Yes = 1)
- You requested three policy recommendations from the NSC regarding rising tensions between China and Taiwan. Do you (a) trust your advisers' preferred guidance, or (b) engage in debate with advisers then make a decision?
 - (a) 0 if no policy experts on national security team; 1 if have policy experts or academics
 - (b) 1 if no policy experts; 2 if have policy experts or academics

Delegation

“Over the horizon” strikes against militant groups are continuing in Afghanistan. Regarding the scale, frequency, and scope of these strikes, do you delegate none, some, or all of these decisions to the Pentagon? (All = 0, Some = 1, None = 0.5)



Former Secretary of Defense James Mattis visits U.S. forces in Afghanistan

Risk profile

[1 - 4]

[4-8]

[8-10]

“Incompetent
risk”

“Excess
risk”

“Centralized
risk”

“Controlled
risk”

Low experience
(principal
& advisers)

Low experience
(principal)
High experience
(advisers)

High experience
(principal)
Low experience
(advisers)

High experience
(principal
& advisers)

Summary: Readings on bureaucratic politics

Principal-agent models

Interagency
at-large

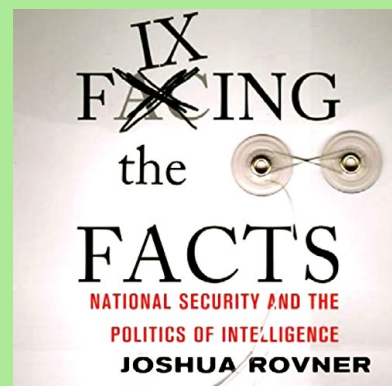
**Obama's Surge: A Bureaucratic Politics
Analysis of the Decision to Order a Troop
Surge in the Afghanistan War**

KEVIN MARSH
Wabash College

**No Substitute for Experience:
Presidents, Advisers, and Information
in Group Decision Making**

Elizabeth N. Saunders

Professional
pathologies



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WHY THE U.S. MILITARY IS AVERSE TO RESPONDING
TO POST-COLD WAR LOW-LEVEL THREATS

DEBORAH D. AVANT