

# Foreign Policy Analysis: crisis and foreign policy

Dr Chris Alden

LSE

# Aims and Learning Objectives

- Identify the key features of crisis and their impact on foreign policy
- Describe and define the importance of cognitive, psychological & heuristic factors in foreign policy decision making during crises
- Analyse the role of motivation in crises and their resolution

# Crisis and Foreign Policy

## I The Beginning of a Crisis

- What is a foreign policy crisis?
- Hermann: crises exist when the system declares that they do.
  - Threat to core values (survival, territory)
  - Elements consist of a convergence of time pressures, increased threat perception and genuine surprise

# Crisis and Foreign Policy

## II Impact of crisis on FP decision making

Janis & Mann: decision makers as emotional beings seeking to resolve internal decision conflict

- Leads to stress, increased tendency towards aggressive behaviour, fixation on singular solutions ('tunnel vision')
- Propensity to over-react to provocations (Holsti)

# Crisis and Foreign Policy

- Time pressures & int'l ramifications
  - Crisis highlights information shortage and overload as time does not allow for effective collection and processing
- Problems of communication & rationality
  - Resolution of conflict depends on contact with opponent
- Enforced choices
  - Sense of urgency & uncertainties translate into FP decision makers perceiving there are fewer options

# Crisis and Foreign Policy

## III The End of a Crisis

- Possible outcomes: conquest, submission, compromise, award or passive settlement
- Instruments & procedures:
  - Direct negotiations between parties
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> party mediation
  - Adjudication & arbitration

# Resolving Crisis and Foreign Policy

- Key issue about crisis management: is it about ‘winning’ or ‘preventing conflict’?
  - ‘Crisis management must address the tension between the two goals...the dilemmas of choice are glossed over by the use of the term “management” with its overtones of technical rationality and efficiency.’ (Richardson)

# Conclusion