

POLITICAL PROCESSES AND CITIZENSHIP



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How are government decisions and international issues shaped by different points of view?



DECISION MAKING PROCESSES AND GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Governments frequently have to make important decisions affecting thousands of even millions of people. What would you do?



DECISION MAKING PROCESSES AND GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Should taxes be increased to help reduce the national debt?

Should oil companies be allowed to drill in the Gulf of Mexico?

Should American troops be kept in Iraq or Afghanistan to fight terrorism?

The Decision-Making Process

1

- Identify the problem

2

- Gather information about the problem

3

- Consider options to solve the problem

4

- Weigh the advantages & disadvantages of each option

5

- Select the best option and implement

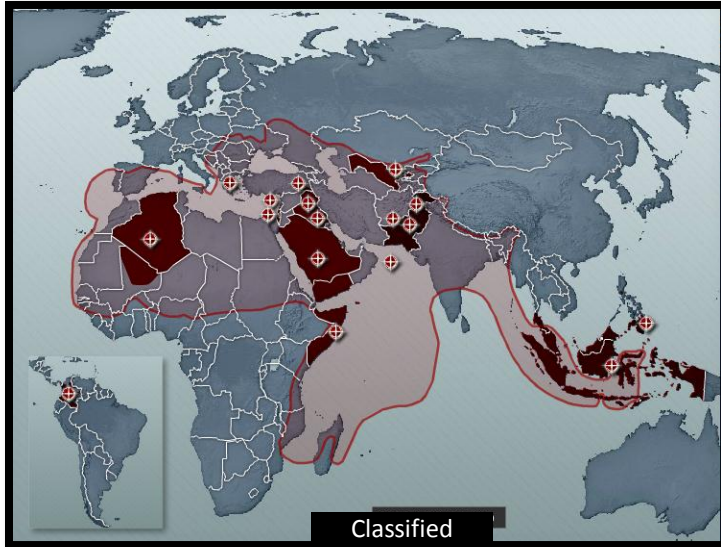
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- Evaluate the effectiveness of the solution

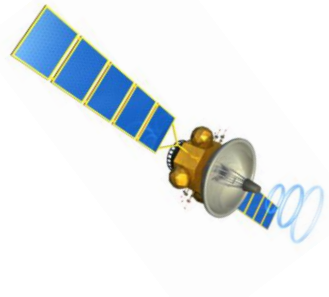
1. IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM



First, government officials identify a need or a problem. For example, the government may need to protect citizens against acts of terrorism.



2. GATHER INFORMATION



Next, government officials must gather and analyze information. They could look at terrorist acts committed in the United States and elsewhere. They could make a list of known terrorist leaders and organizations.

A government might use satellites surveillance, undercover agents, exchanges of information with foreign governments, and similar steps to obtain information – including their leaders, their goals and activities, and their strengths and weaknesses.



3. CONSIDER OPTIONS



Next, government officials will consider different ways of meeting the need or solving the problem. They will think of all their options for dealing with terrorists.

At one extreme, they could attack countries where terrorists reside. At the other extreme, they could do nothing and hope the problem will eventually resolve itself. Usually, government leaders can think of a number of policy options between these two extremes.

Do nothing

Politely ask other countries to expel terrorists

Economic sanctions: Refuse to trade with countries supporting terrorists

Eavesdrop on conversations of suspected terrorists; freeze their bank accounts in the U.S.

Supply military assistance to foreign governments actively fighting terrorists

Launch attacks against countries where terrorists are operating

4. ADVANTAGES VS DISADVANTAGES

Government officials consider the advantages and disadvantages of each option. Every option usually has both benefits and costs. For example eavesdropping on telephones and e-mails of suspected terrorists may yield valuable information about the next possible terrorist threat, potentially saving thousands of innocent lives.



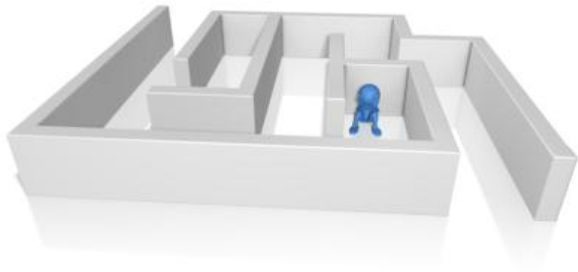
On the other hand, this practice may infringe on traditional liberties of American citizens, specifically protected in the U.S. Constitution.



5/6. SELECT, IMPLEMENT, AND EVALUATE THE BEST OPTION

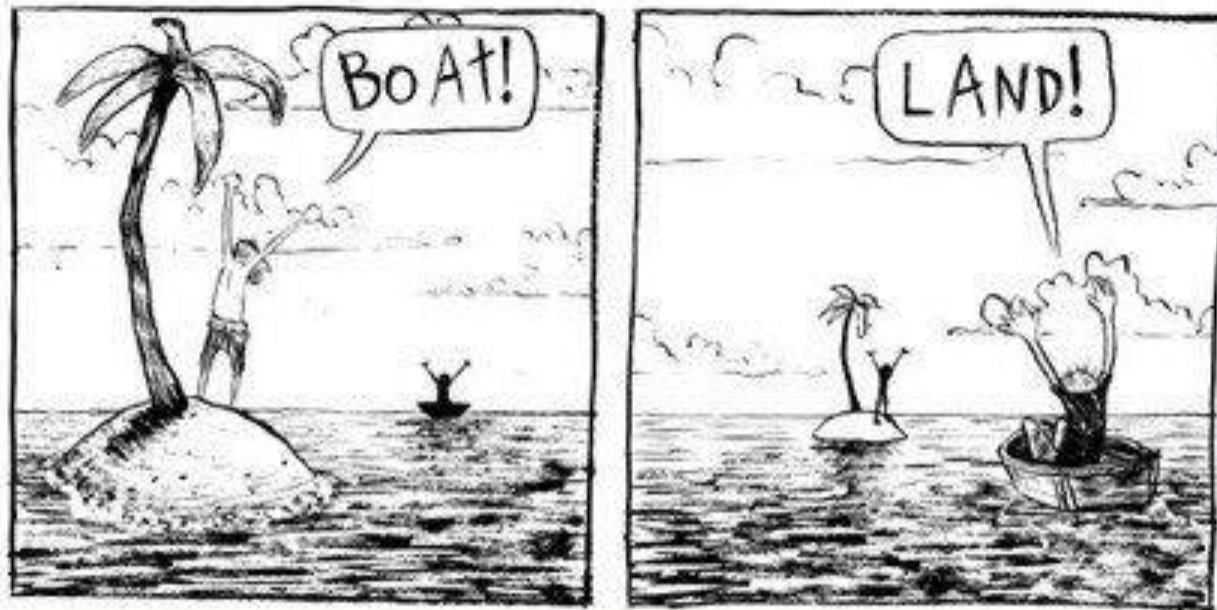


Finally, officials select one policy option or combination of options. Then they apply this approach to the problem and evaluate its effectiveness. They assess whether this proposed solution works and whether it creates new problems of its own.



**WHICH APPROACH DO YOU
THINK IS BEST FOR DEALING
WITH GLOBAL TERRORISM
AND WHY?**

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW



Perspective...

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW

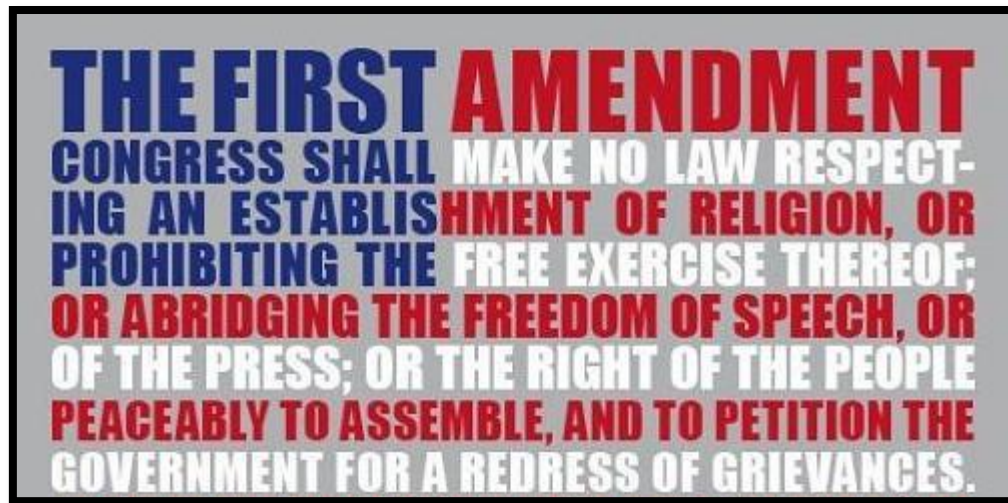


Government officials will usually consult different advisors and experts on the subject. For example, to decide how to deal with global terrorism, U.S. leaders might interview specialists who have studied terrorism. U.S. leaders might further ask for advice from close allies and other countries.



THE INFLUENCE OF A VARIETY VIEWPOINTS

Democratic governments like the United States are generally very open to different points of view. Because democratic leaders are elected, they need to be able to explain their policy choices to the public. Leaders also have their own viewpoints based on their backgrounds and interests.



THE FIRST AMENDMENT
CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW RESPECT-
ING AN ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION, OR
PROHIBITING THE FREE EXERCISE THEREOF;
OR ABRIDGING THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, OR
OF THE PRESS; OR THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE
PEACEABLY TO ASSEMBLE, AND TO PETITION THE
GOVERNMENT FOR A REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES.

THE INFLUENCE OF A VARIETY VIEWPOINTS

Leaders are also subject to a range of influences. Such influences include direct lobbying efforts, political action groups, advertising, and pressure from their home district.



THE INFLUENCE OF A VARIETY VIEWPOINTS

Some members of Congress have been elected by farmers or farm equipment manufacturers. They often see issues from the farmer's point of view. Other Congressional members may have been supported by oil companies, labor unions, or other groups. Each representative will look at issues in part from these particular points of view.



WHAT DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS DO YOU THINK INFLUENCED THE LAW AGAINST TEXTING AND DRIVING IN CALIFORNIA?



PATRIOTISM AND NATIONALISM

Patriotism is loyalty and support for one's country. It is the belief that citizens should obey their countries laws and rally to its defense.

Nationalism is the belief that each people or ethnic group, should have its own government and nation-state. Nationalism is often the belief that one's country is among the very best in the world. Some nationalists feel their nation is so superior that they have the right to take territory from or to rule over others.



**GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF
PATRIOTISM OR
NATIONALISM?**

DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

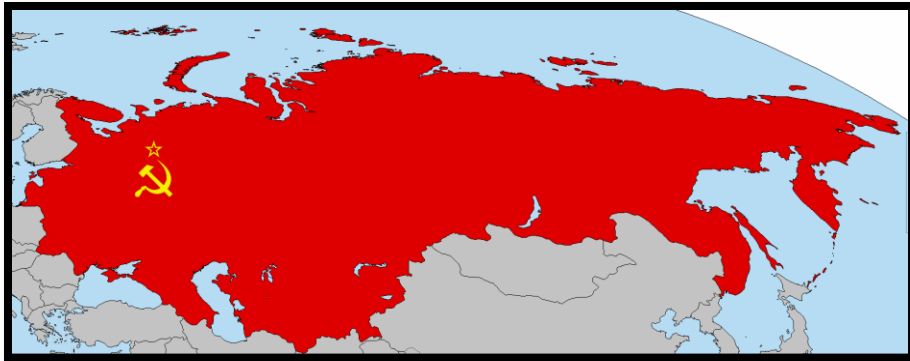
In dealing with international issues, it is especially important for government leaders to consider other viewpoints. Each side is often influenced by its own cultural beliefs, individual interests, and history. It's difficult to reach a compromise or a solution if the different sides do not understand each other's points of view.



INTERNATIONAL HOT SPOTS

RUSSIA AND CHECHNYA

The Soviet Union was formed after the Russian Revolution in 1917. In 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved into several independent states. The largest of these was Russia. Within Russia, there are still ethnic minorities.



INTERNATIONAL HOT SPOTS

RUSSIA AND CHECHNYA

One such ethnic minority are the Chechens, who live in the region of the southern Caucasus Mountains. Many Chechens sought independence from Russia. In 1991, Chechen separatists declared their independence from Russia. This was followed by a series of terrorist bombings. These terrorist acts led the Russian army to enter Chechnya to restore Russian rule by force in 1999.



INTERNATIONAL HOT SPOTS

CHECHEN VIEWPOINT

The Chechen people have their own language and traditions. They have a long history of fighting against foreign rule. The Chechen population numbers over a million people. Many Chechens are Muslims. Chechen separatists feel that Chechnya has the right to be independent. Chechens accuse the Russian army of committing human rights violations against their people. Thousands of Chechens have been killed or have lost their homes under brutal Russian treatment.



INTERNATIONAL HOT SPOTS

RUSSIAN VIEWPOINT

Russians point out that every modern nation has some minorities that would like to be independent. Each ethnic minority cannot be given its own state (country) or modern nations will all disintegrate into a world of mini-states. Even the United States once used force against the seceding Southern States to preserve its unity. Russians further point out that Chechens have used terrorism in their efforts at independence.



**HOW IS AN UNDERSTANDING
OF BOTH SIDES OF THIS
CONFLICT IMPORTANT FOR
WORKING TOWARDS A
SOLUTION? WHAT SOLUTION
WOULD YOU PROPOSE?**

INTERNATIONAL HOT SPOTS

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

The modern state of Israel traces back its roots to biblical times. However, it was not until 1948 that Israel was established by the United Nations as a permanent homeland for the Jewish people.



Many Arab Palestinians were also living in that area. Arab Nations refused to recognize the creation of Israel and attacked them. The Arabs were defeated and an estimated 725,000 fled Israel to neighboring Arab countries or were expelled from their homes.



INTERNATIONAL HOT SPOTS

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

War erupted again in 1967. Israel defeated its enemies in six days and acquired the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the West Bank from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria. Egypt and Syria launched another surprise attack on Israel in 1973. Israel again repelled Arab forces.



INTERNATIONAL HOT SPOTS

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

The West Bank and Gaza Strip were later established as a home for Palestinians. Palestinian uprisings in these territories were followed by Israeli military occupations. Both sides accuse the other of atrocities. Some Palestinians refuse to accept the existence of Israel, while Israel has repeatedly occupied Palestinian territory. Israelis and Palestinians also disagree on many specific issues such as the future of Jerusalem.



ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

ISRAELI VIEWPOINT

Many Israelis feel that Israel cannot be secure so long as some Palestinian groups continue to fire missiles at **civilian** Israeli targets. They believe that only a strong military defense can insure their survival against future attacks. Some Israelis further fear that an independent Palestinian state might be hostile to Israel and provide a home to terrorist or even someday invade Israel. Other Israelis feel that some compromise with **moderate** Palestinians is vital to Israel's future and is the only way to achieve secure borders.




ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

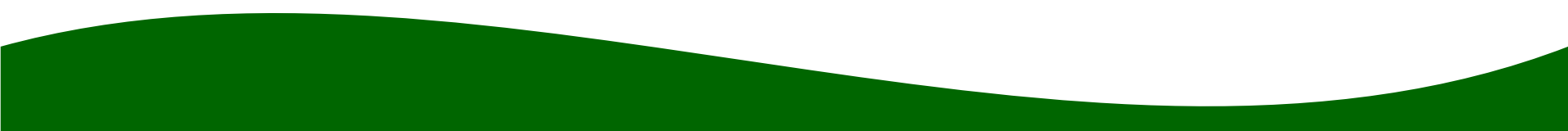
PALESTINIAN VIEWPOINT

Palestinians feel that they were forced to move from Israel in 1948. They contend that this was their land and the United Nations had no right to give this land to Israel. Most Palestinians are now willing to accept the independence of Israel, but they oppose continued expansion of Jewish settlements in Palestinian areas. They resent the Israeli occupations and feel that they have not made a genuine effort to achieve peace. Some Palestinians justify acts of terrorism as the only effective way to resist Israel's superior and highly mechanized military force.





**NOW THAT YOU UNDERSTAND
BOTH SIDES OF THIS CONFLICT,
WHAT SOLUTION WOULD YOU
PROPOSE?**



INTERNATIONAL HOT SPOTS

IRAN AND NUCLEAR ENERGY

Many world leaders suspect that Iran is developing nuclear weapons under the pretext of building nuclear power plants to supply their nation with electricity. The U.S. and the United Nations (UN) have imposed severe economic and political **sanctions** (restrictions) against Iran for refusing to halt its nuclear enrichment program. For example, an economic sanction might impose a ban on trade with that country.



INTERNATIONAL HOT SPOTS

IRANIAN POINT OF VIEW

Iranians claim they are a major power in the Middle East. They say they need to enrich uranium to build nuclear reactors for peaceful purposes: for example, as a source of future energy, and for radiation therapy to treat cancer patients. Iran's religious leaders have issued a decree banning nuclear weapons. Iran further claims that it is hypocritical for countries like the U.S. to actually have nuclear weapons and then to citizen Iran for supposedly seeking to develop them.



INTERNATIONAL HOT SPOTS

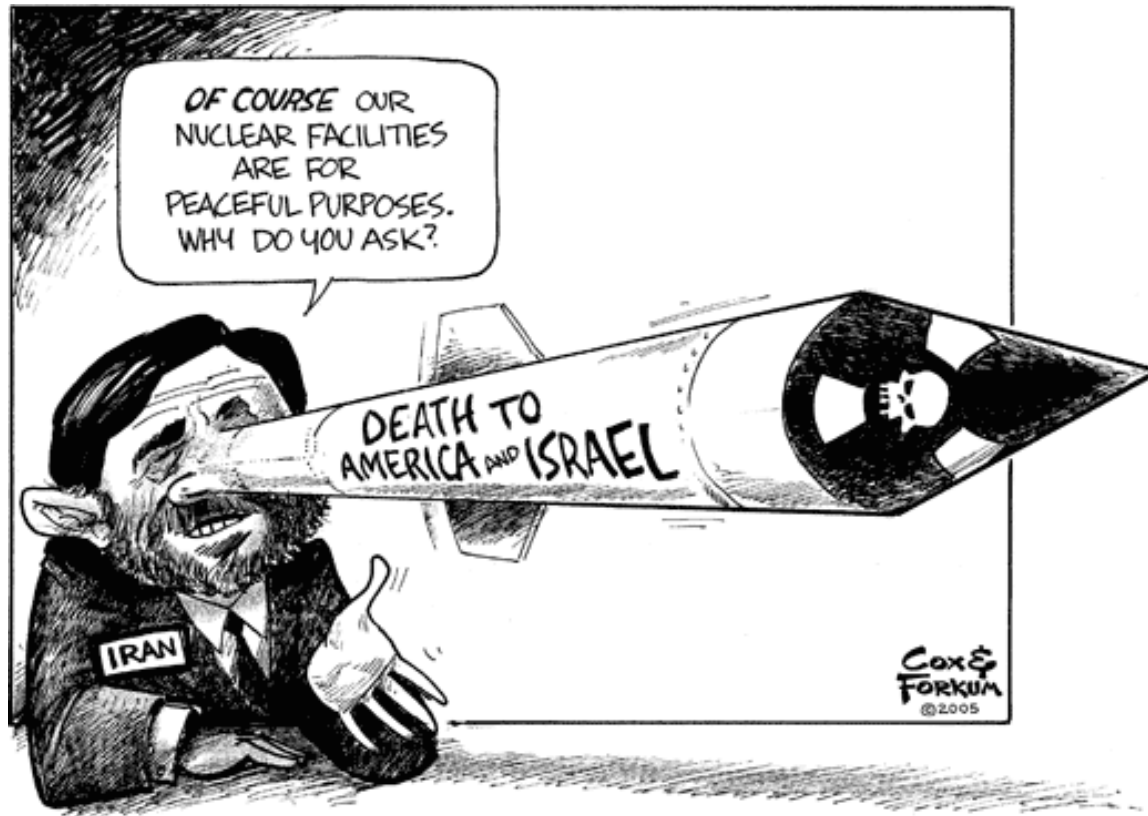
VIEW OF IRAN'S CRITICS

Critics say Iran is stockpiling refined uranium in order to conceal its plans to develop nuclear weapons. They say as a major producer of oil, Iran does not need to develop nuclear energy at this time. Critics fear Iran's government might threaten Israel with its nuclear bombs, or sell nuclear weapons to Islamic terrorists, further destabilizing the region. Furthermore, if Iran does acquire nuclear weapons, this would pressure its neighbors in the region to do the same. Other countries would feel compelled to obtain nuclear arms to prevent Iran from upsetting the current **"balance of power"** in the Middle East.




INTERNATIONAL HOT SPOTS

IRAN AND NUCLEAR ENERGY



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**NOW THAT YOU UNDERSTAND
BOTH SIDES OF THIS CONFLICT,
WHAT SOLUTION WOULD YOU
PROPOSE?**

