




War is more likely when...

-  . leaders effectively communicate their resolve to their opponents.
-  . there are rapid changes in the military balance between two countries.
-  . military technology makes defensive fortifications extremely effective against attack.

We've been assuming that states are "unitary actors". However,

National interest is hard to define, requires a high degree of consensus

Costs and benefits of war are distributed unevenly.

Therefore, we must consider what narrow or particularistic interests are at play.


Core of the Analysis


- ◆ There are actors within the state who may benefit from war:
 - ◆ These actors may have institutional and organizational advantages
 - ◆ Their main effect is to increase the aggressiveness of the state's foreign policy
 - ◆ Democratic political institutions can reduce their influence


National Vs. Particularistic Interests

- ◆ An example: The US has had a consistent interest in oil and the Middle East.
- ◆ Nationally, oil is vital to the US's military power and economy
- ◆ Particularly, oil companies benefit from selling oil
- ◆ War may sometimes arise because it furthers the narrow interests of particular actors.

Which of the following is the best example of using the unitary state assumption?

. supposing Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941 because Hitler hated Slavic people.

. supposing El Salvador attacked Honduras in 1969 because the Salvadoran public was at risk.

. supposing that Japan attacked China in 1931 because of the aggressive Japanese military leadership.

Interactions, Institutions, and Influence

- ◆ Without the unitary actor assumption, individuals and groups with different interests come into play.
 - ◆ Institutions determine which actors and interests have influence
- ◆ Some actors may have strategic advantages.
 - ◆ Due to the collective action problem, small groups may have more effective influence

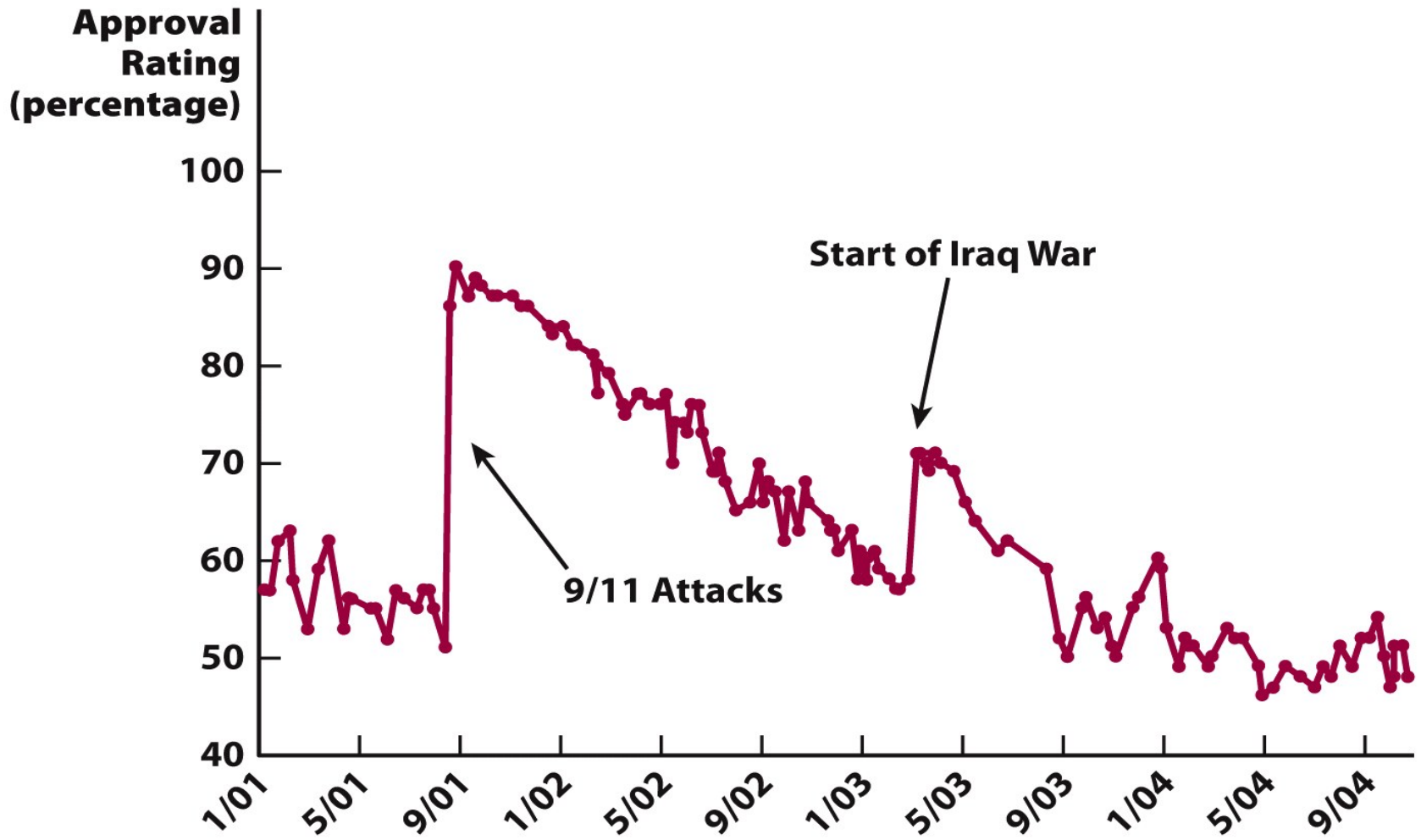
Interactions, Institutions, and Influence

- ◆ Three kinds of actors:
 - ◆ Leaders who make foreign policy decisions
 - ◆ Organized groups within the country
(bureaucratic actors and interests groups)
 - ◆ The general public

Do Politicians Spark Wars Abroad in Order to Hold On to Power at Home?

- ◆ In 1982, Argentina sparked war with Britain when it invaded the Falkland Islands.
- ◆ The territory was not especially valuable and Britain had a far superior naval force
- ◆ Both governments had domestic problems:
 - ◆ Both economies were in severe recessions

The Rally Effect and the Diversionary Incentive



The Rally Effect and the Diversionary Incentive

- ◆ At times, political leaders may face a **diversionary incentive**:
 - ◆ A temptation to spark an international crisis in order to rally public support at home
- ◆ Gambling for resurrection:
 - ◆ Taking a risky action, such as starting a war, when the alternative is certain to be very bad

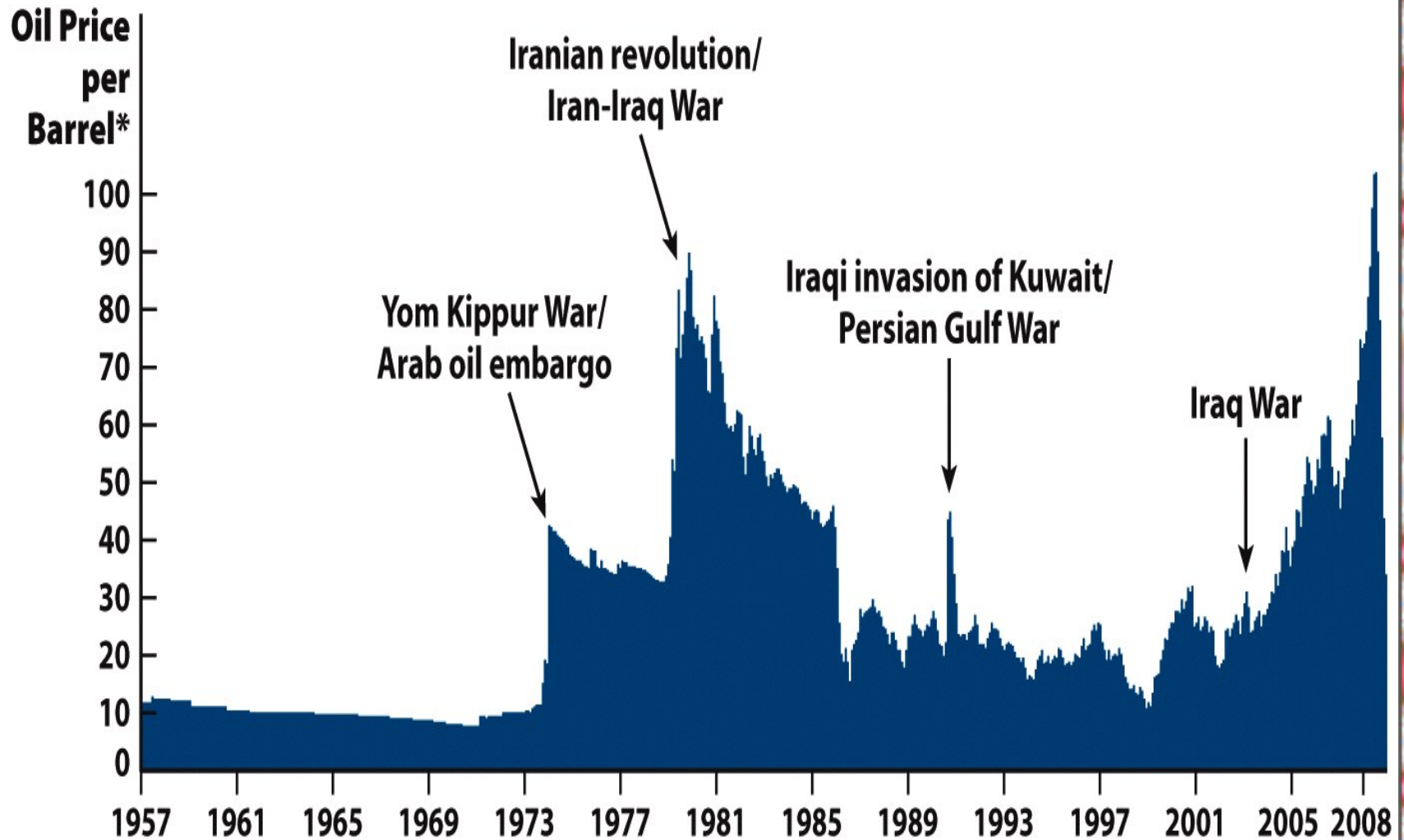
Do Leaders “Wag the Dog”?

- ◆ The 1997 movie *Wag the Dog* depicted a leader hiring a movie director to produce a fake war in order to boost his ratings.
- ◆ But there is little evidence that leaders systematically resort to force when they are in trouble domestically.
- ◆ International conflict is more often initiated by leaders who are politically secure

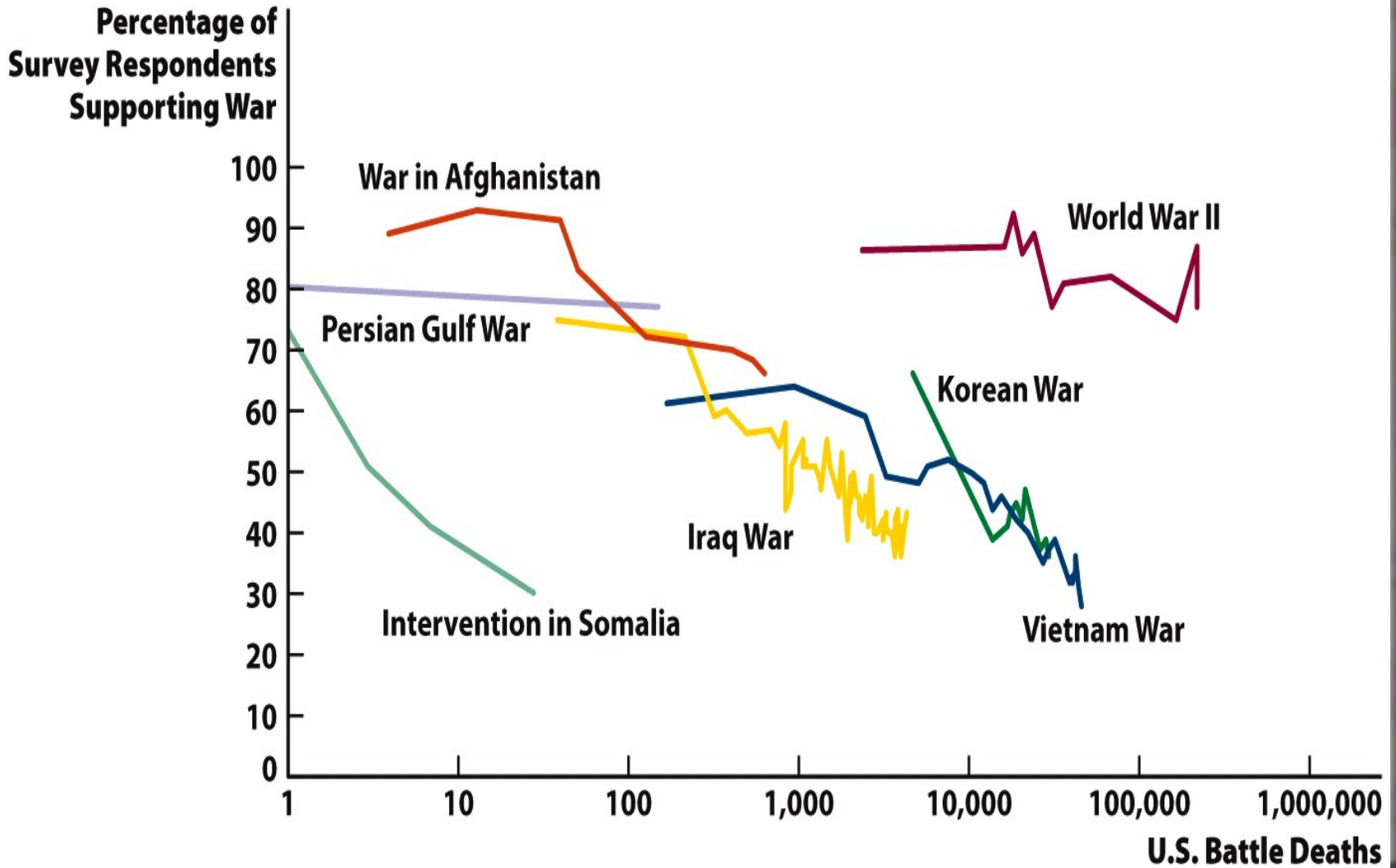
Discussion Question

Why are diversionary wars ***NOT*** systematically used by leaders facing domestic discontent at home?

Some Economic Costs of War



The Political Costs of War



Discussion Question

Why do the costs of war **not** affect public opinion in a uniform way?