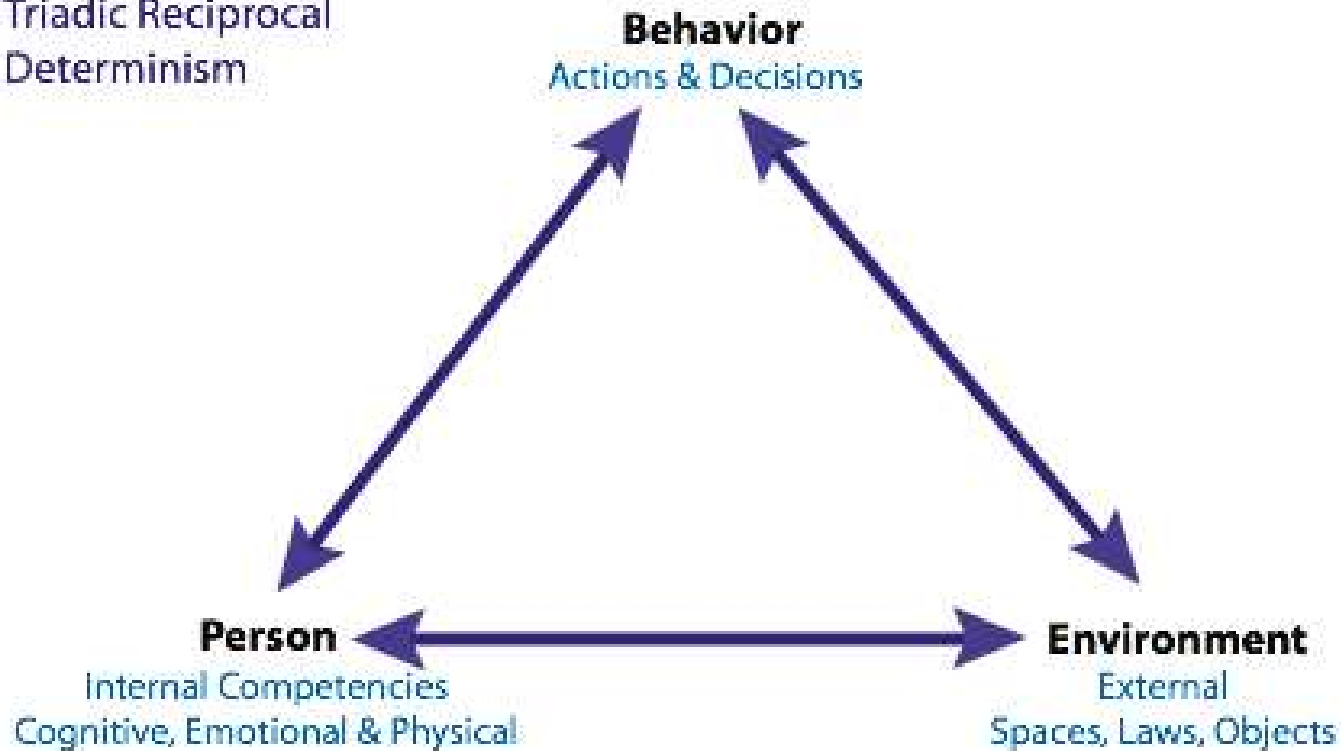


## INDIVIDUAL LEVEL THEORY # 2

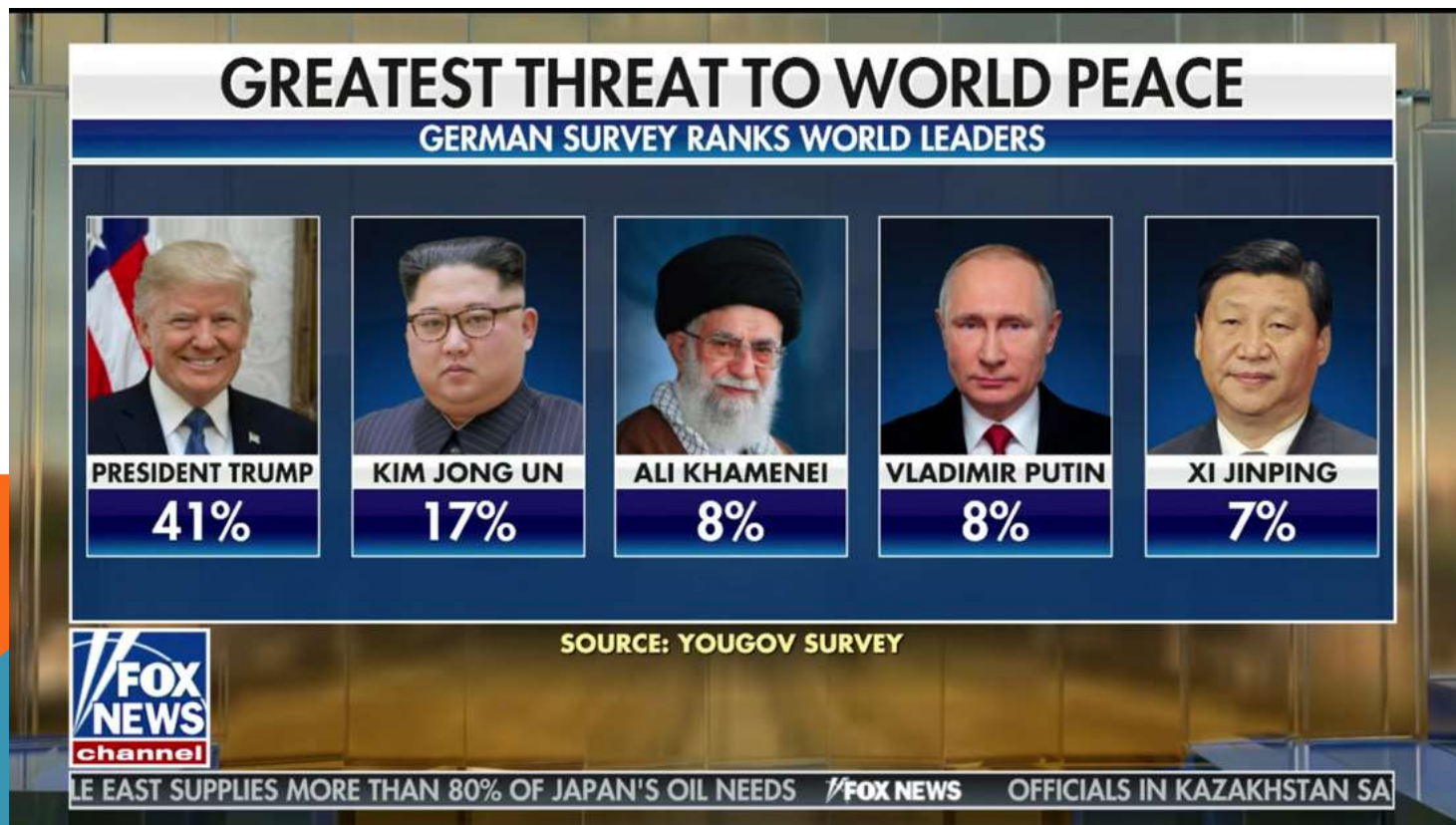
# Cognitive Theory

Triadic Reciprocal  
Determinism



# COGNITIVE THEORY

Unlike **human nature theory** which posits that *all* humans share innate traits that lead to conflict, **cognitive theorists** suggest that it is a *leader's specific personality* that guides not only his or her own actions but the destiny of the state and its relations with other countries.



# COGNITIVE THEORY

We can define **personality** as the package of behavior, temperament, and other individualistic qualities that uniquely identifies each of us.



# COGNITIVE THEORY

Cognition is one element of this personality package. **Cognition** is what an individual comes to know as a result of learning and reasoning or, on a more instinctual level, intuition and perception.



**I killed  
Saddam Hussein**



**I killed  
Osama Bin Laden**



**I killed  
Qassem Soleimani**



**I killed  
your economy**

# COGNITIVE THEORY

**Cognitive theorists** believe that the personality traits of leaders can often define both the agenda and specific features of a state's foreign policy.



# COGNITIVE THEORY

With this theory, a leader's individual perception of reality is naturally conditioned by emotional attachments and aversions that he or she has formed in life.

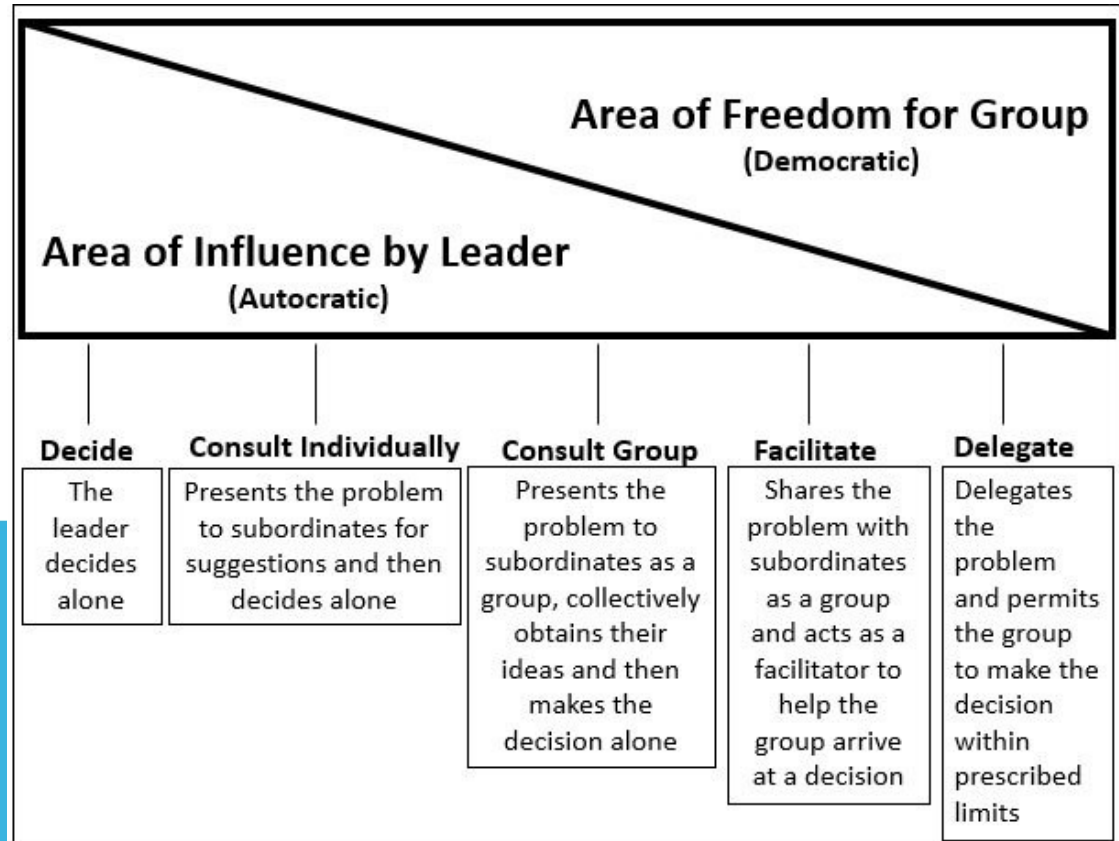


Donald Trump talks about his military experience

# COGNITIVE THEORY

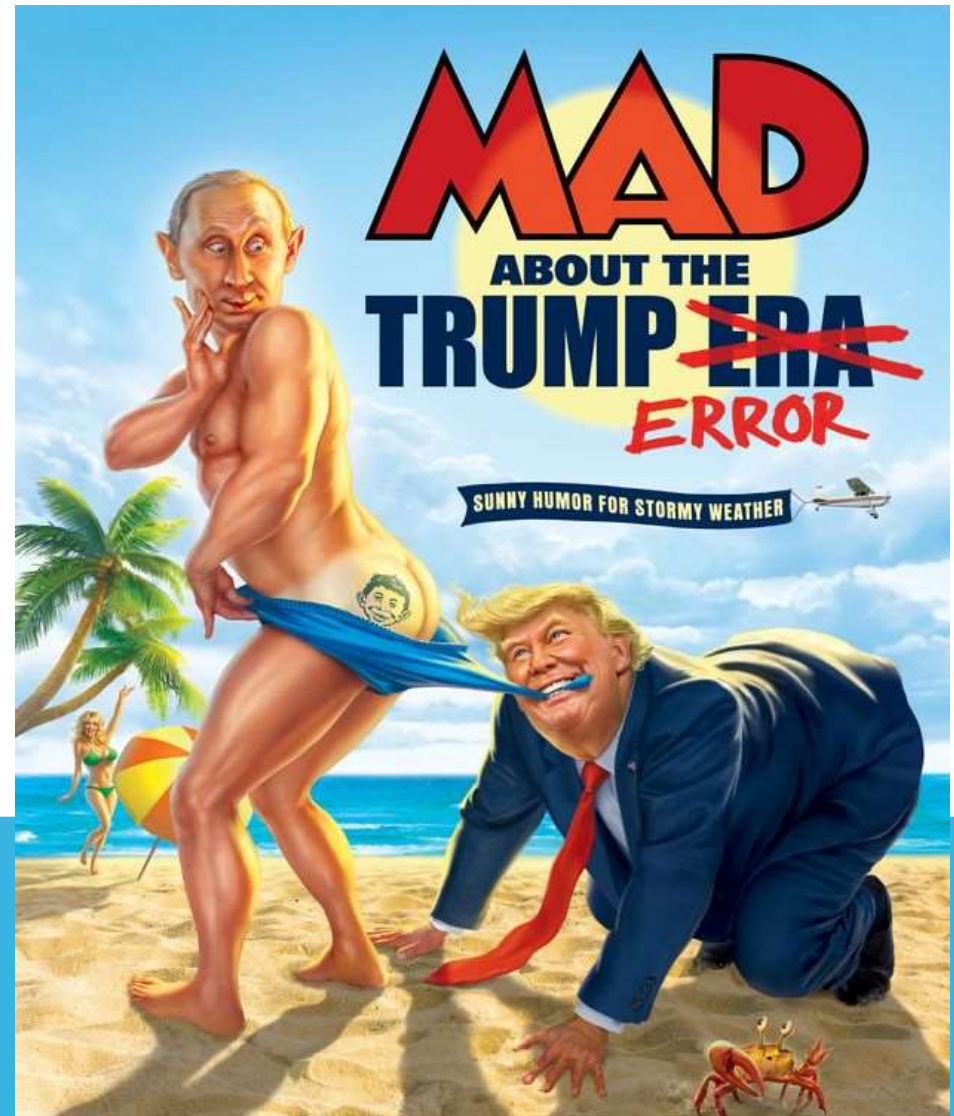
Margaret Hermann provides a structure for analyzing the individual traits that might affect a leader's decisions and policy making. She concludes that leaders generally have one of two orientations toward foreign affairs:

1. Independent
2. Participatory



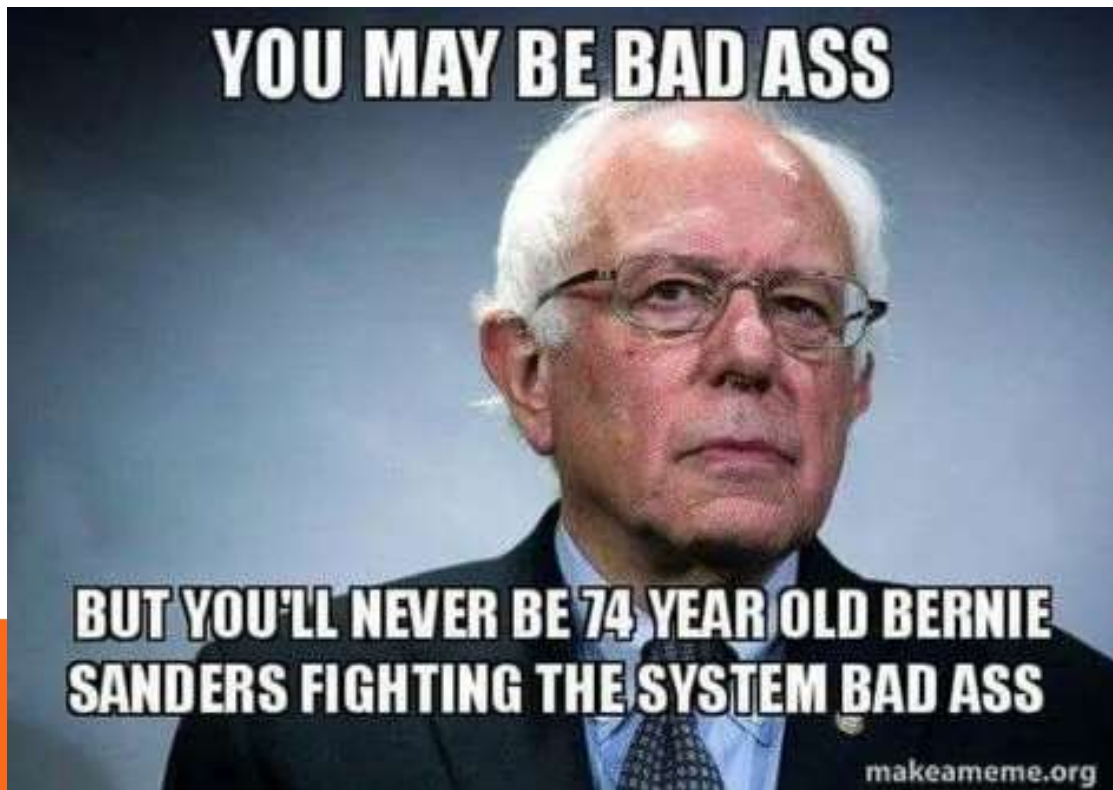
# COGNITIVE THEORY

An independent leader tends to be aggressive, with a limited capacity to consider different alternatives, and is willing to be the first to take action over a perceived threat.






# COGNITIVE THEORY

A **participatory leader** is generally conciliatory, with an inclusive nature that encourages relationships with other countries, considers various alternatives in problem solving, and rarely seeks to initiate action.



# COGNITIVE THEORY

**Cognitive theorists** argue that a leader's perception of policy, the state, and the system will be conditioned by these same features. **Operational reality** refers to the picture of the environment held by an individual (usually a leader) as it is modified by his or her personality, perceptions, and misperceptions.


KIM	ERDOGAN	EL-SISI	PUTIN	DUTERTE
				
"A SMART COOKIE"	"I GIVE HIM GREAT CREDIT"	"FANTASTIC GUY"	"BETTER THAN OBAMA"	"VERY FRIENDLY TALK"

**DEVELOPING STORY**

**TRUMP: I'D BE "HONORED" TO MEET KIM JONG UN**

Says meeting would have to be "under right circumstances"

**LIVE**



9:06 AM ET

AWAY FROM THE OFFICERS -- NOT REVERSING TOWARD THEM AS HE ORIG NEWSROOM

# COGNITIVE THEORY



Cognitive theory is about individual personalities and perceptions and how they can affect the behavior of states in the international system.

# COGNITIVE THEORY

## The Components of Cognitive Theory



# COGNITIVE THEORY

## Focus of Analysis

Personality and cognitive experience of leaders



# COGNITIVE THEORY

## Major Actors

Individuals

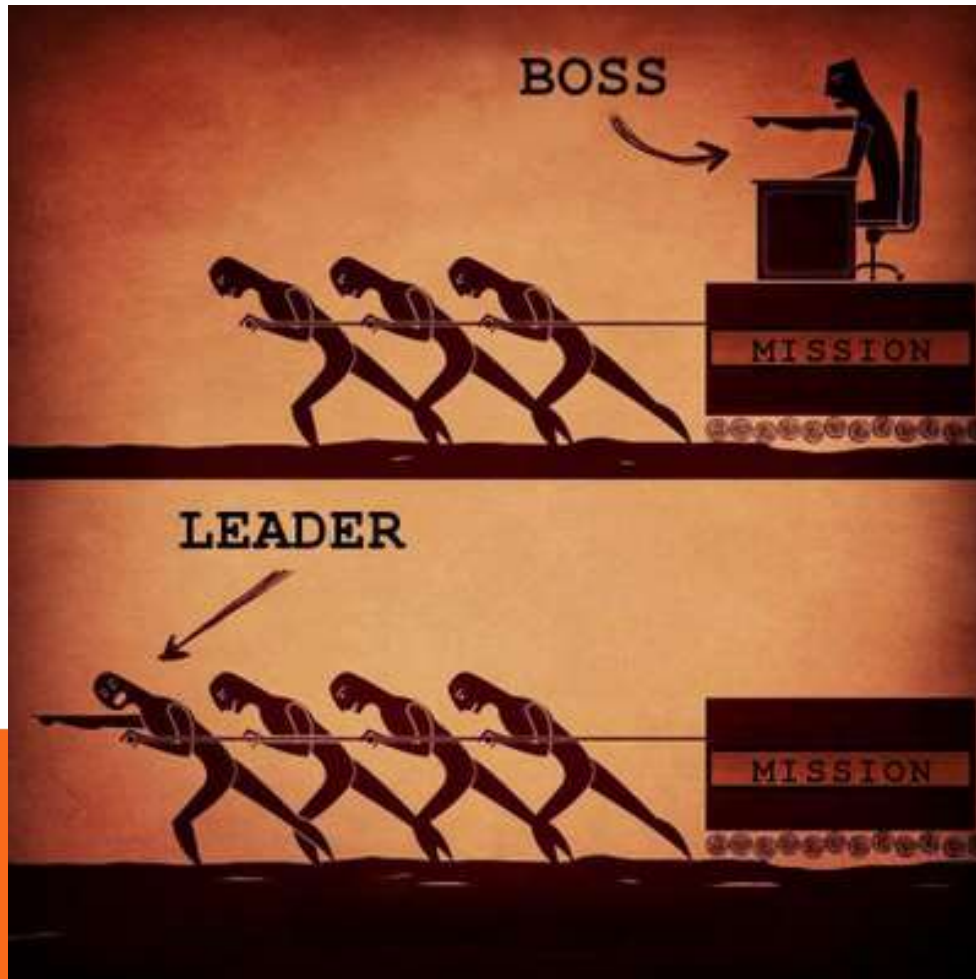


murica

# COGNITIVE THEORY

## Behavior of States

Guided by experience, preconceptions, background, and personality of leader(s)



# COGNITIVE THEORY

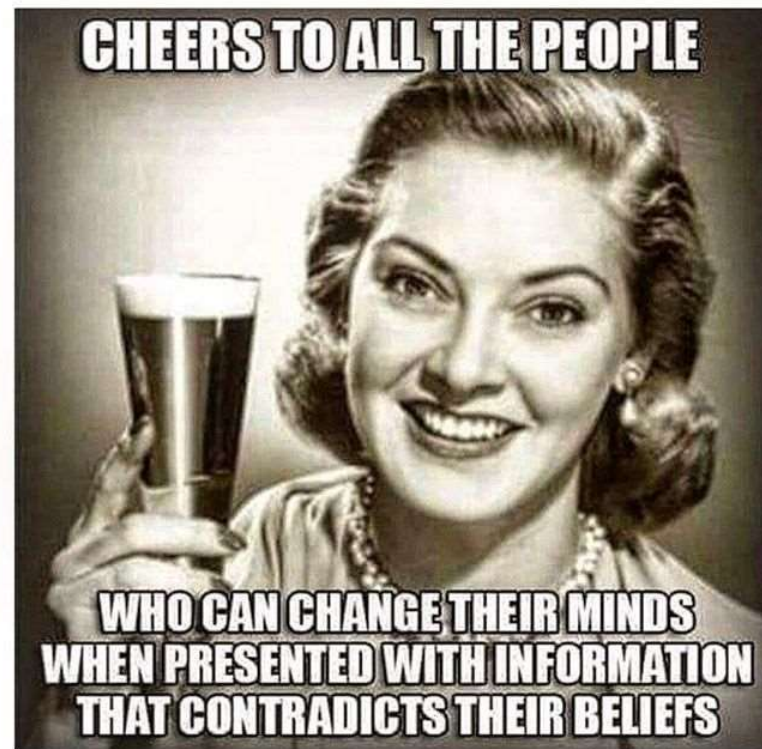
## Basis of a State's Foreign Policy

Driven by operational reality of elites



## COGNITIVE THEORY

# Key Concepts

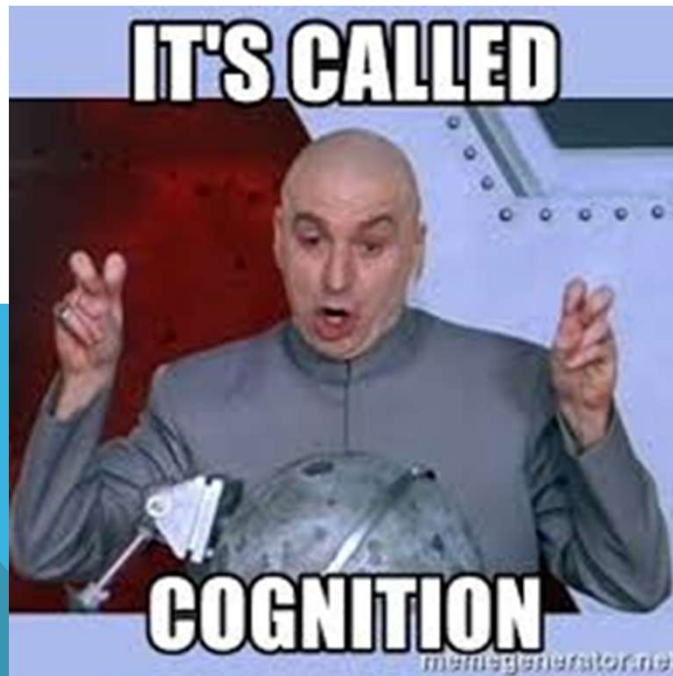


# COGNITIVE THEORY

## Key Concepts

### Cognition

An individual's knowing as a result of learning and reasoning or, on a more instinctual level, intuiting and perceiving. All of these components combine to form a person's cognitive faculty.



# COGNITIVE THEORY

## Key Concepts

### Independent Leader

One of the two major orientations of leaders (Hermann). They tend to be aggressive, have a limited capacity to consider different alternatives, and are willing to be the first to take action over a perceived threat.

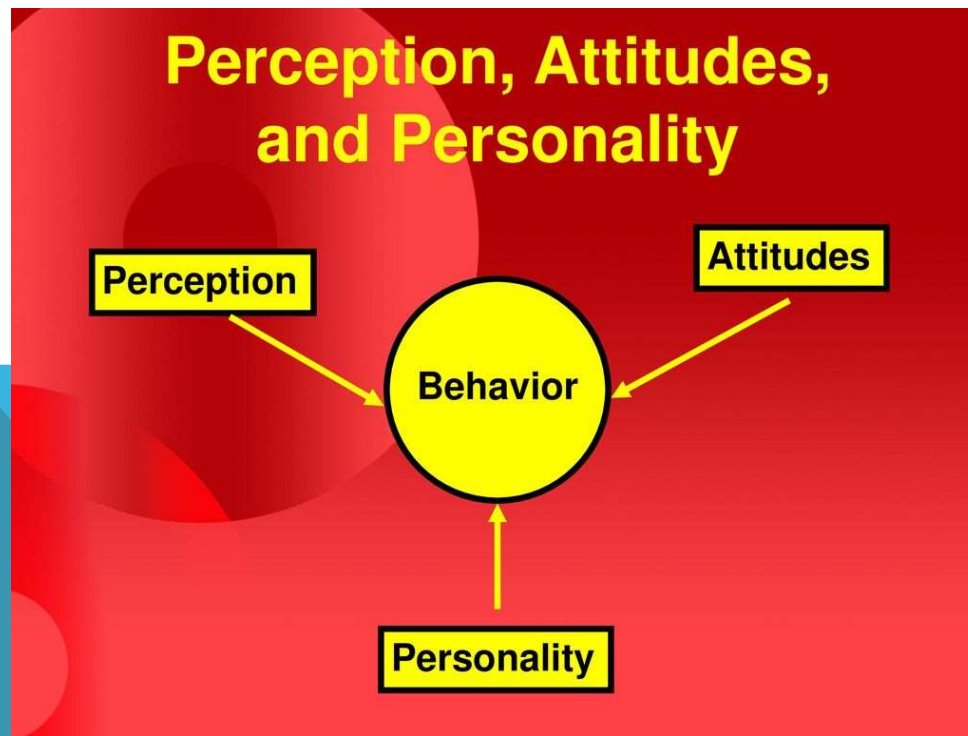


# COGNITIVE THEORY

## Key Concepts

### Operational Reality

Refers to the picture of the environment held by an individual as it is modified by his or her personality, perceptions, and misperceptions.

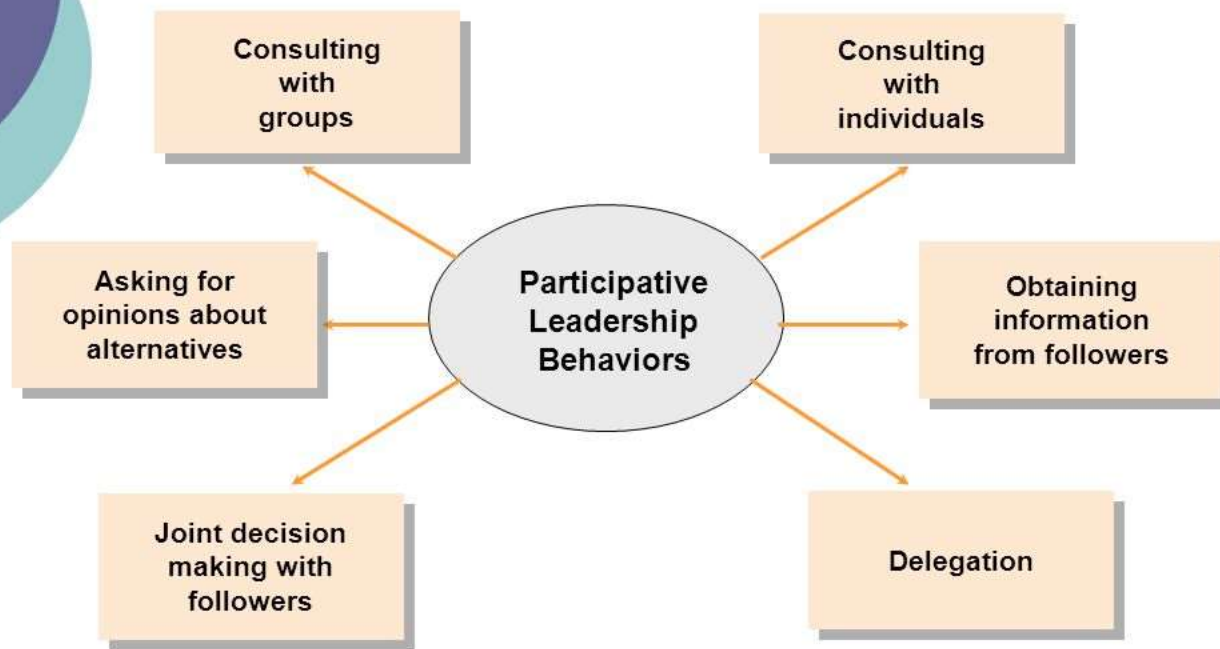


# COGNITIVE THEORY

## Key Concepts

### Participatory Leader

#### Types of Participative Leadership Behavior

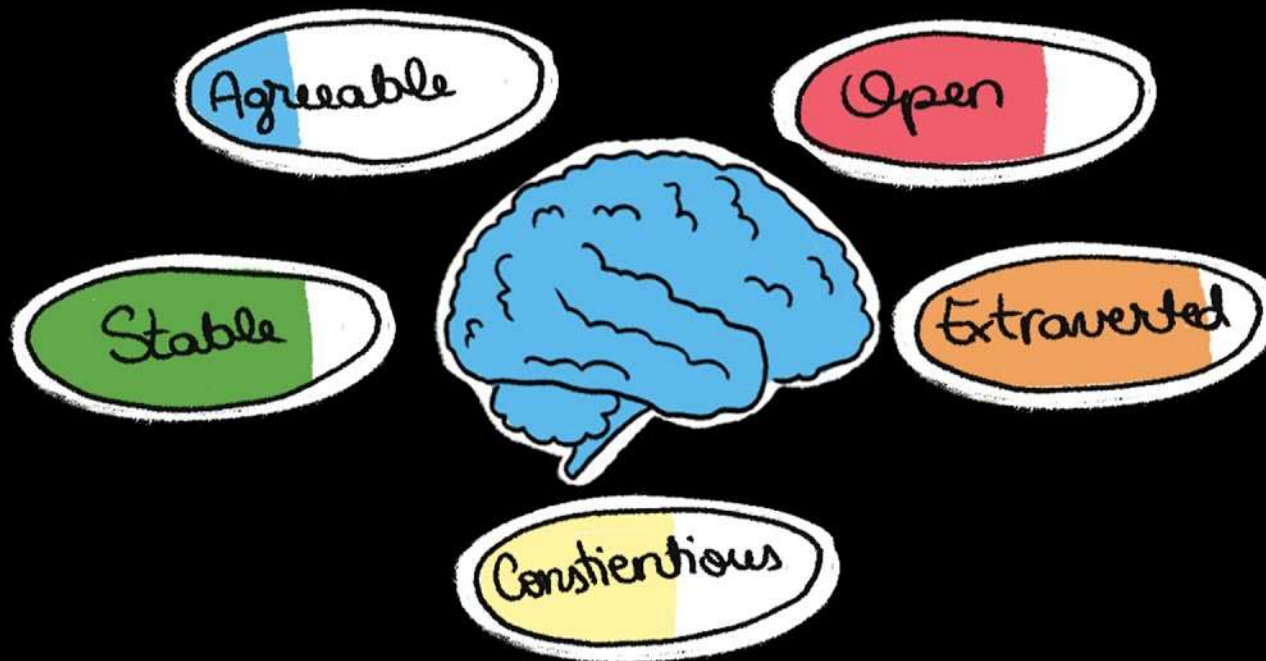


# COGNITIVE THEORY

Key Concepts

Personality

## THE BIG FIVE



# COGNITIVE THEORY

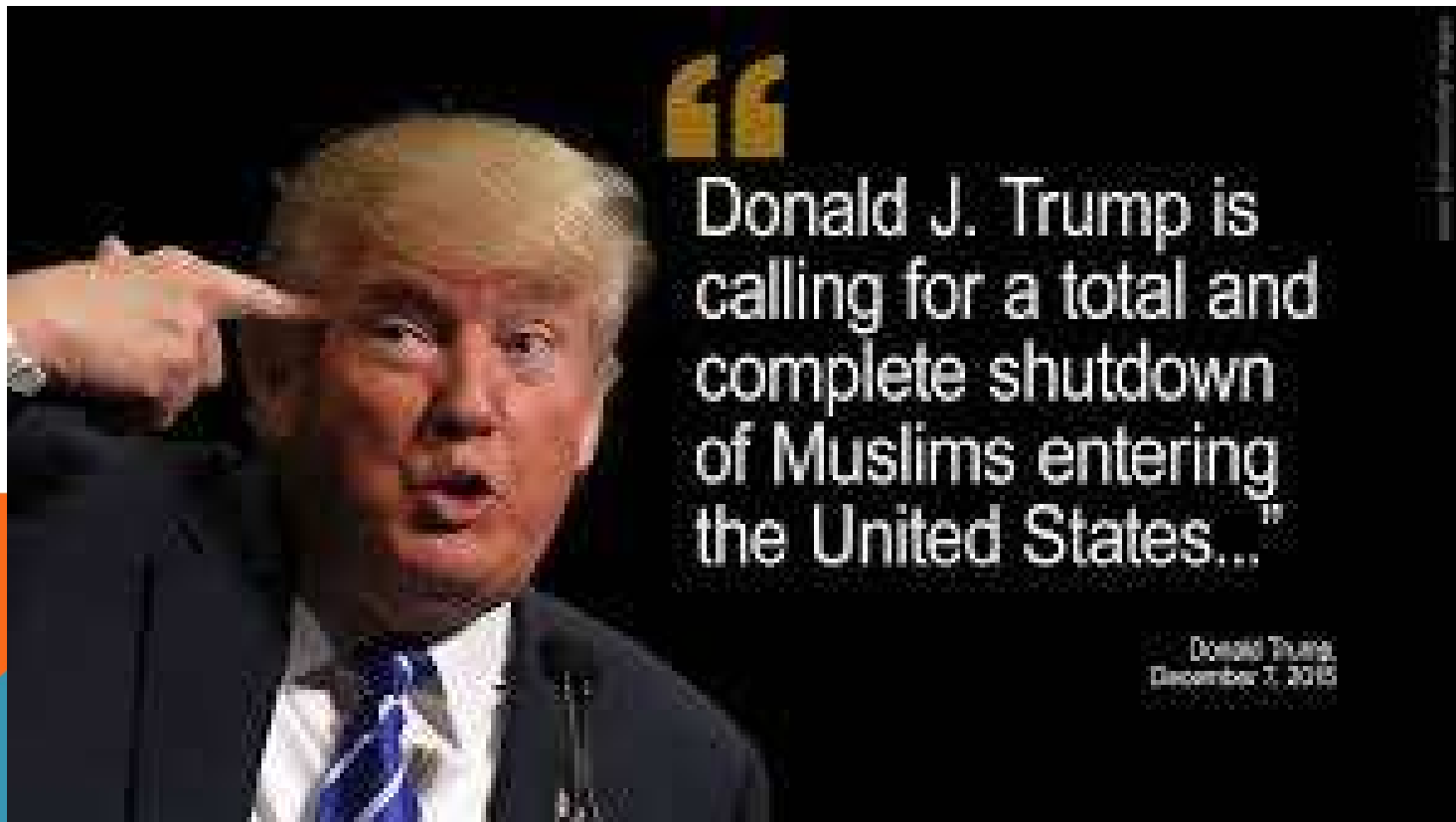
## Critiques of Cognitive Theory



# COGNITIVE THEORY

## Critiques of Cognitive Theory

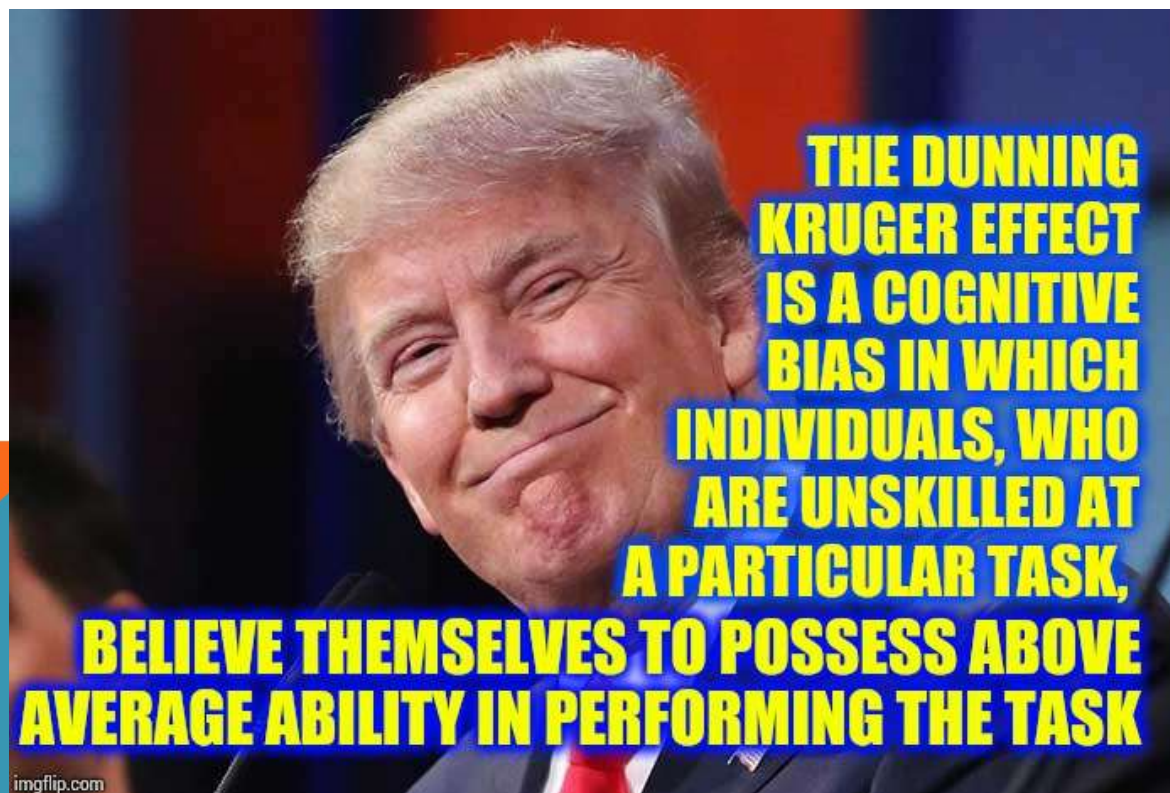
Critics of cognitive theory might argue that focusing on personality profiles of individual leaders to determine an analytical framework for studying international relations is limiting.



# COGNITIVE THEORY

## Critiques of Cognitive Theory

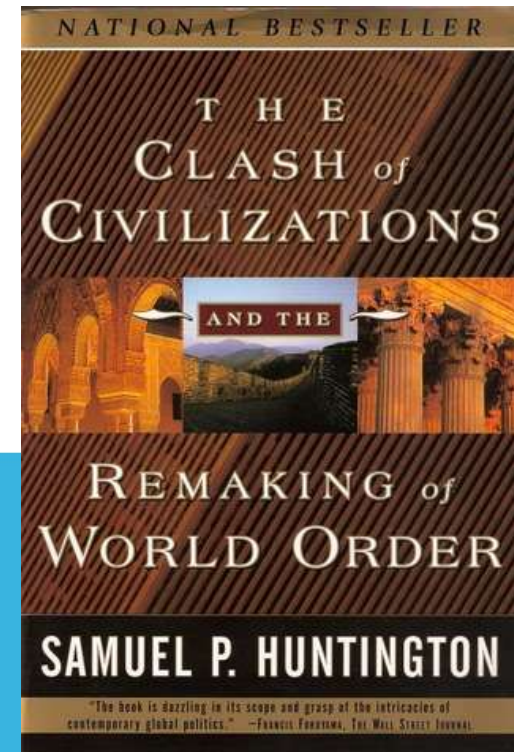
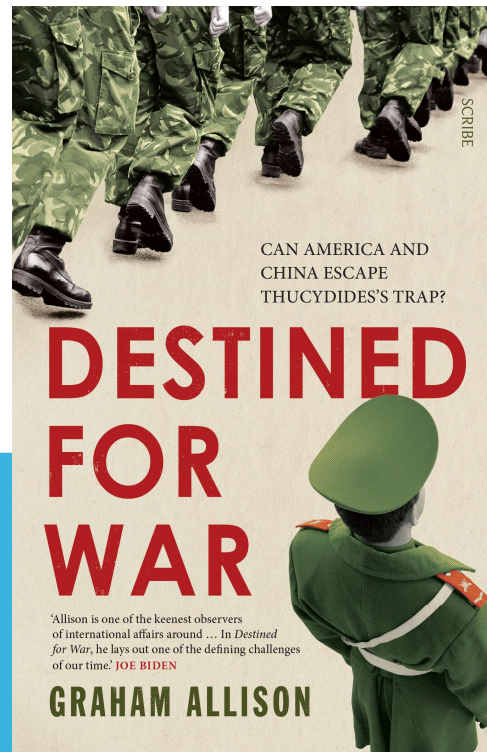
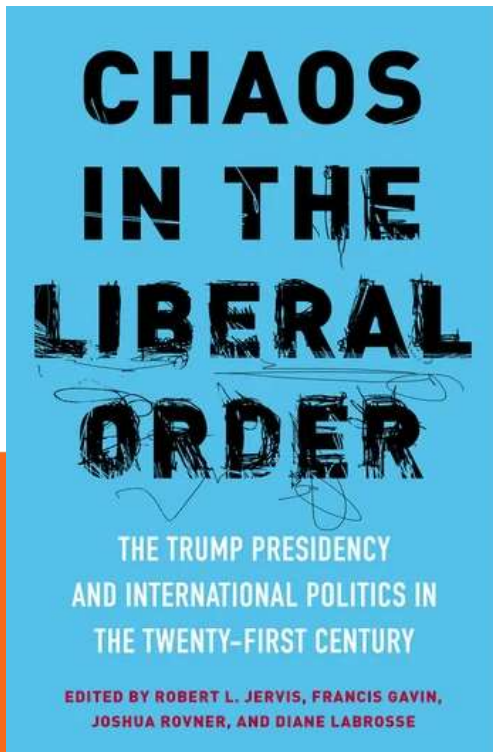
One problem: Assessment of any leader should be based on a sophisticated and complete psychoanalysis. Such a scenario is improbable since most leaders have not subjected and would not likely subject themselves to this type of scrutiny.



# COGNITIVE THEORY

## Critiques of Cognitive Theory

There is also the question of scope. The emphasis of the theory (personality/cognition) is so narrow that it seems inappropriate to attempt a broad, all-encompassing application to international relations as a whole.

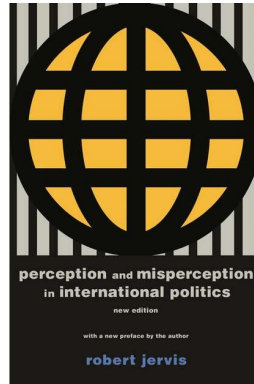


# COGNITIVE THEORY

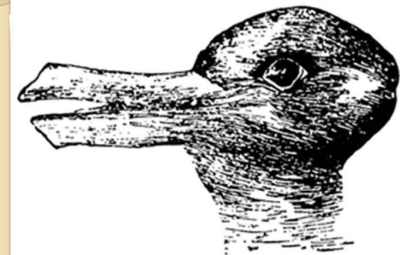
## Critiques of Cognitive Theory

In addition, the principles of **cognitive theory** might lead us to believe that all wars are simply the result of misperceptions or misunderstandings between individual leaders.

Examples of Misperception



Examples of Misperception



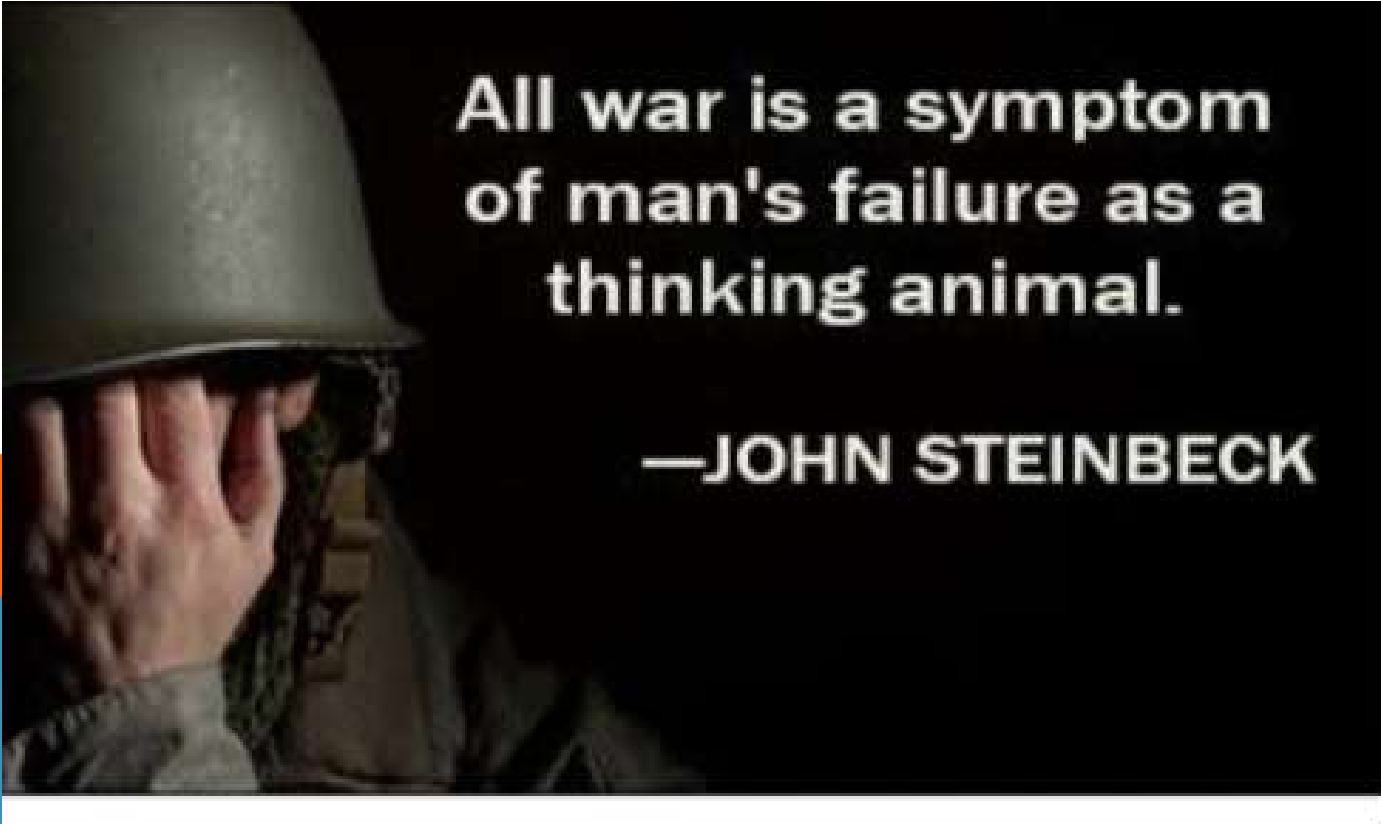
Robert Jervis

**HYPOTHESES ON MISPERCEPTION**

# COGNITIVE THEORY

## Critiques of Cognitive Theory

**Cognitive theorists** ignore the fact that wars often result from fundamental conflicting interests between states on larger issues, such as national security, competition over scarce resources, or dozens of other factors that affect global politics.



All war is a symptom  
of man's failure as a  
thinking animal.

—JOHN STEINBECK