










Selected Cognitive Biases in Foreign Policy Decision-Making

	Bias	Example in everyday decision-making	Example in foreign policy decision-making
	Groupthink: The practice of thinking or making decisions as a group in a way that discourages creativity or individual responsibility.	?	?
	Anchoring bias: The common human tendency to rely too heavily on the first piece of information offered (the 'anchor') when making decisions.	?	?
	Representative bias: We like patterns and if we can see a way that something can fit into a convenient category, or conform to a story line, we are likely to give that interpretation more credit than the evidence merits.	?	?
	Availability bias: Our thinking is strongly influenced by what is personally most relevant, recent, or dramatic! They bias our perception of risk, because they are more available to our intuition than counter examples.	?	?
	Affect bias: The emotional impact of a potential threat contaminates our assessment of that threat, leading us to fear it more than we should. "Affect" refers to our emotional response.	?	?
	Sunk cost bias: Once we have made an investment—of time, money, emotion, or reputation—in an idea, we are loath to give it up. That investment makes us feel it is important to continue, long after its ultimate value has been shown to be diminished or even wiped out.	?	?
	Precision bias: We mistake the precision of our calculations and the detail of our plans for accuracy and we place too much faith in them. Polished PowerPoint presentations are responsible for many bad decisions.	?	?
	Overconfidence bias: Overconfidence is the unwarranted faith in one's intuitive reasoning, judgments, and cognitive abilities. The dangers of over-confidence are numerous.	?	?
	Confirmation bias: The tendency to accept evidence that confirms our pre-existing beliefs, opinions, or assumptions, and to reject evidence that contradicts them.	?	?