

PS 0500: Leader(s) Matter(s)

William Spaniel

<https://williamspaniel.com/classes/worldpolitics>



Midterm

- A week from Tuesday
- Consists of:
 - 6 IDs (pick 4, 10 points each)
 - 3 quotes (pick 2, 10 points each)
 - 3 short answers (pick 2, 20 points each)

Outline

- Information
- Principal-agent problems
- Diversionary war
- Gambling for resurrection
- Democratic accountability
- Leader retirement
- Peace through instability
- Bargaining and leaders
- Pandering

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Uncertainty and Conflict

- What is the relationship between uncertainty and conflict?

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- How do new leaders impact this?

Uncertainty and Conflict

- What is the relationship between uncertainty and conflict?
- How do new leaders impact this?
 - “Private information is introduced each time a new leader enters office”
 - Intelligence information on previous leader’s resolve is thrown out
 - Process begins anew



Historical Overview of CMC

- USSR places intermediate range nuclear missiles in Cuba
- US blockades Cuba
- US pledges Cuban sovereignty and removes Jupiter missiles in Turkey; USSR removes missiles
- Charles Xavier paralyzed

Rough Statistical Overview

- Newer leaders are correlated with
 - Arms races
 - Sanctions
 - Longer militarized interstate disputes

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Previously on PS 0500

- Wars are bad. Why do they happen anyway?
 1. Bargaining problems prohibit negotiated agreements
 2. Regime types (democracy, capitalism) affect prevalence of war

Previously on PS 0500

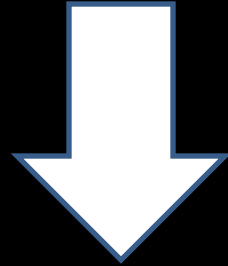
- Wars are bad. Why do they happen anyway?
 1. Bargaining problems prohibit negotiated agreements
 2. Regime types (democracy, capitalism) affect prevalence of war
 3. Poor leadership oversight

Principal-Agent Problem

- We can't always do everything we want to do
 - Solution: Hire someone to do things for you
 - Problem: That person might not want to do things just like you want them to

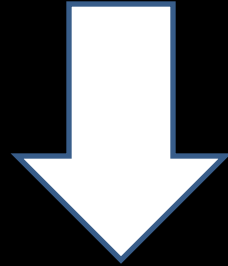
Government

**“please shoot to kill
the other side”**



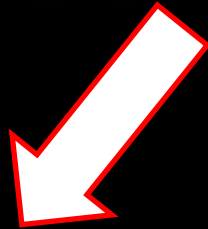
Government

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Soldiers

shoot to kill

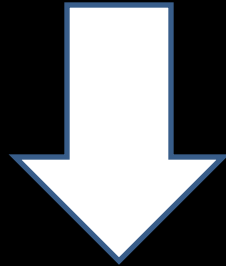


cooperate



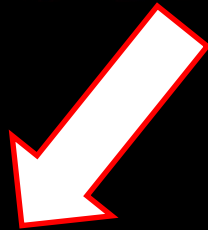
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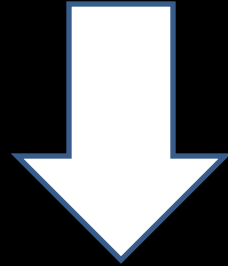


cooperate



Professor

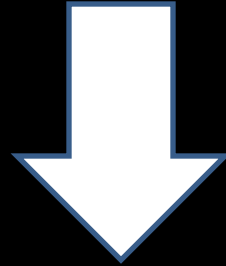
**“spend 20 minutes
grading each essay”**



TA

Professor

**“spend 20 minutes
grading each essay”**



TA

spend 20 minutes

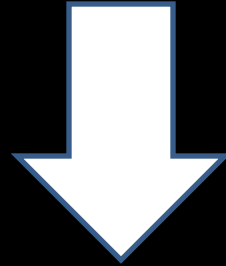


spend 10 minutes



Professor

“spend 20 minutes
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TA

spend 20 minutes



spend 10 minutes



Principal-Agent Vulnerability

1. Preferences are not aligned
2. Monitoring problems
3. Future rewards unavailable

Trench Warfare

- Was government's preferences aligned with soldiers'?
- How easily can governments monitor whether soldiers are shooting to kill?
- How do you materially reward “good” soldiers?

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Leaders

- Governments are better informed about international affairs than their citizens
 - Do you know what the CIA knows?
- It is advantageous to keep secret information...secret
 - But this can lead to exploitation

A Diversion?

- Imagine your economy is really screwed or you are terrible at crafting domestic policy
- Might as well create an international crisis to distract everyone from this
 - If things go well, great!
 - If things go poorly...you were screwed anyway

Falklands War



Iraq War



Diversionary war: a war fought to divert attention from a politically unpopular area to the international arena

How Can This Work?

- Why can't people see right through the diversion?
- Information asymmetries
 - People in a country might want to support the war if the conditions are favorable
 - But only the leader knows this
 - Thus, the leader can exploit the asymmetry

How Can This Work?

- Even if the war turns out to be a disaster, this might not be so bad for the leader
 - Bush was reelected in 2004
 - ...but Argentina's military government fell after losing the Falklands War

Monitoring Problem

- Recall that the principal's inability to monitor the agent leads to P-A problems
- Diversionary war highlights the tradeoff between needing government secrecy and requiring government accountability

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War!

- Imagine a leader starts a war because he honestly believed it was the right thing to do
- The war goes poorly
 - The leader knows he should negotiate peace
- Information gap
 - Citizens don't know whether the leader was doing the right thing or was incompetent or self-interested

The Leader's Options

1. Continue fighting the war

- If you lose, big deal—you were probably going to be kicked out of office anyway
- If you win, you confirm your original brilliance

2. Negotiate peace

- It is in the best interest of the country
- But you are screwed

EXTRA

THE STARS AND STRIPES

EXTRA

Vol. 1—No. 229

1 C.

1 C.

Wednesday, May 2, 1945

HITLER DEAD

**Fuehrer Fell at CP, German Radio Says;
Doenitz at Helm, Vows War Will Continue**

German radio announced last night that Adolf Hitler had died. When Karl Doenitz, former commander-in-chief of the German Navy, has succeeded him as ruler of the Reich, the radio announcer went on.

Doenitz made a radio speech immediately after the announcement, Hitler said, and declared that Germany would continue to wage war. His statement ended years of events which had been prevalent for more than a week in all world capitals.

The announcement did not give any details of how the Reich Fuehrer died. The news was broadcast after solemn Wagnerian music, including "Fidèle of the Gods," was played.

"Fuehrer, adieu," a voice said. "In a few minutes you will hear a solemn and important message to the German people. We are now going to play a movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony." Finally, the report of Hitler's death was given.

Hitler's death came three days after his last known sighting. He was killed by British bombers near the village of Dornum on Lake Tann.

Doenitz, in his speech, said that Hitler "had fallen at his command post," while fighting a battle and that he died in the Reich Chancellery in Berlin yesterday afternoon. He said that the Fuehrer was killed by British bombers.

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(Continued on Page A)

Churchill Hints Peace Is at Hand

Winston Churchill, British prime minister, said today that the war was "nearly over" and that "peace is at hand." He said that the British people should be prepared for the possibility of a long and hard peace conference.



Karl Doenitz, former commander-in-chief of the German Navy, is shown in a military uniform and cap. He is the man who succeeded Hitler as the ruler of Germany after his death.



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Autocrats appear to find war more attractive since they do not pay the costs.

Resolving a P-A Problem

1. Find an agent with aligned preferences
2. Monitor rogue agents
3. Create incentive structure to keep rogue agents in line

Resolving a P-A Problem

1. Find an agent with aligned preferences
 - There is no “search” step in autocracies
2. Monitor rogue agents
3. Create incentive structure to keep rogue agents in line

Resolving a P-A Problem

1. Find an agent with aligned preferences
2. Monitor rogue agents
 - Oversight only goes so far if agent doesn't care
3. Create incentive structure to keep rogue agents in line

Resolving a P-A Problem

1. Find an agent with aligned preferences
2. Monitor rogue agents
3. Create incentive structure to keep rogue agents in line
 - Big difference between democratic and autocratic incentive structures

Fighting a Bad War

Democratic Leader

- Will face reelection at some point

Autocratic Leader

- Will be unlikely to face (real) reelection at any point

Fighting a Bad War

Democratic Leader

- Will face reelection at some point
- Has party officials pressuring him to do the right thing
- Will be less likely to win reelection if he fights a bad war

Autocratic Leader

- Will be unlikely to face (real) reelection at any point
- Has cronies encouraging him to do the selfish thing so they share the benefits
- Doesn't have to care about vote counts

Takeaway point: Autocrats in firm control have little reason to appease their citizens

Takeaway point: Democratic leaders
face electoral accountability and
have reason to appease their citizens

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Case Study: Iraq War





George W. Bush
democratically elected leader



George W. Bush
loser of the Iraq War



...spent the next four years chilling on
an 18 acre estate



...will spend the next few decades
chilling on a 1,583 acre estate



...and charges \$100,000+ for
appearance fees.



Saddam Hussein
everyone's favorite jovial dictator



Saddam Hussein
father to many



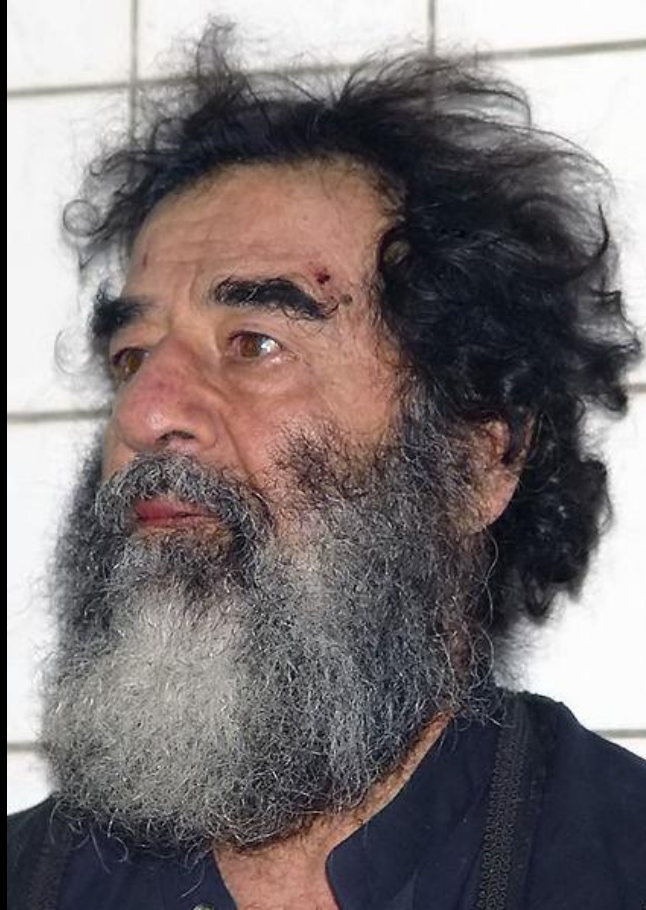
Saddam Hussein
and all-around (not-so) good guy



Saddam Hussein
the **real** loser of the Iraq War



Saddam Hussein
spent half a year living in a spider hole



Saddam Hussein
went on trial, hanged



Question 1: What percentage of democratic leaders are not exiled, jailed, or killed at the end of their term?

Question 1: What percentage of democratic leaders are not exiled, jailed, or killed at the end of their term?

Question 2: What percentage of non-democratic leaders are not exiled, jailed, or killed at the end of their term?

Leader Fates

Democratic Leader

- Okay: 93%

Non-Democratic Leader

- Okay: 59%

Leader Fates

Democratic Leader

- Okay: 93%
- Exiled: 3%

Non-Democratic Leader

- Okay: 59%
- Exiled: 23%

Leader Fates

Democratic Leader

- Okay: 93%
- Exiled: 3%
- Jailed: 3%

Non-Democratic Leader

- Okay: 59%
- Exiled: 23%
- Jailed: 12%

Leader Fates

Democratic Leader

- Okay: 93%
- Exiled: 3%
- Jailed: 3%
- Killed: 1%

Non-Democratic Leader

- Okay: 59%
- Exiled: 23%
- Jailed: 12%
- Killed: 7%

Leader Fates

Democratic Leader

- Okay: 93%
- Exiled: 3%
- Jailed: 3%
- Killed: 1%
- Bad outcomes: 7%

Non-Democratic Leader

- Okay: 59%
- Exiled: 23%
- Jailed: 12%
- Killed: 7%
- Bad outcomes: 41%

Leader Fates

Democratic Leader

- Okay: 93%
- Exiled: 3%
- Jailed: 3%
- Killed: 1%
- Bad outcomes: 7%

Non-Democratic Leader

- Okay: 59%
- Exiled: 23%
- Jailed: 12%
- Killed: 7%
- Bad outcomes: 41%

Takeaway: If you are a non-democratic leader, you *really* don't want to get kicked out of office

Outcome Matters

- Previously, we have only talked about “good” or “bad” outcomes and the incentive of war
- Clearly, the *extent* of bad outcomes matters
- Non-democratic leaders have incentive to avoid randomly fighting wars

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Leader Fates

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- Okay: 93%
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- Killed: 1%

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- Okay: 59%
- Exiled: 23%
- Jailed: 12%
- Killed: 7%

Leader Fates

Non-Democratic Leader

- Okay: 59%
- Exiled: 23%
- Jailed: 12%
- Killed: 7%

Imagine you are a dictator facing
a legitimate security threat

Peace through Instability

War?

- Victory: You've done a good thing for your country

Peace?

Peace through Instability

War?

- Victory: You've done a good thing for your country
- Defeat: You tried to do a good thing for your country, but things went poorly
 - Opens up coup opportunities
 - Good chance you wind up exiled, jailed, or dead

Peace?

Peace through Instability

War?

- Victory: You've done a good thing for your country
- Defeat: You tried to do a good thing for your country, but things went poorly
 - Opens up coup opportunities
 - Good chance you wind up exiled, jailed, or dead

Peace?

- You did a bad thing for your country
- But you are alive and still the dictator. Congrats!

Principal-agent problems can
cause peace!

ABSA

BAROKA FC 0

95:12

PIRATES 1

+5



Truncated Punishment

- When someone internalizes equally sized losses at a progressively lower rate
 - A 2-0 loss is only marginally worse than a 1-0 loss
 - So goalies get pulled—even though the *expected* goal differential is negative

Imagine you are a dictator and
you suspect some of your military
brass is plotting a coup

Fighting for Survival

War?

Peace?

- You're screwed!

Fighting for Survival

War?

- Victory: You did a bad thing for your country, but it worked out well
 - Coup unlikely to muster support

Peace?

- You're screwed!

Fighting for Survival

War?

- Victory: You did a bad thing for your country, but it worked out well
 - Coup unlikely to muster support
- Defeat: You did a terrible thing for your country
 - But coup plotters are dead or had to attempt the coup before they were ready
 - Or you were dead anyway

Peace?

- You're screwed!

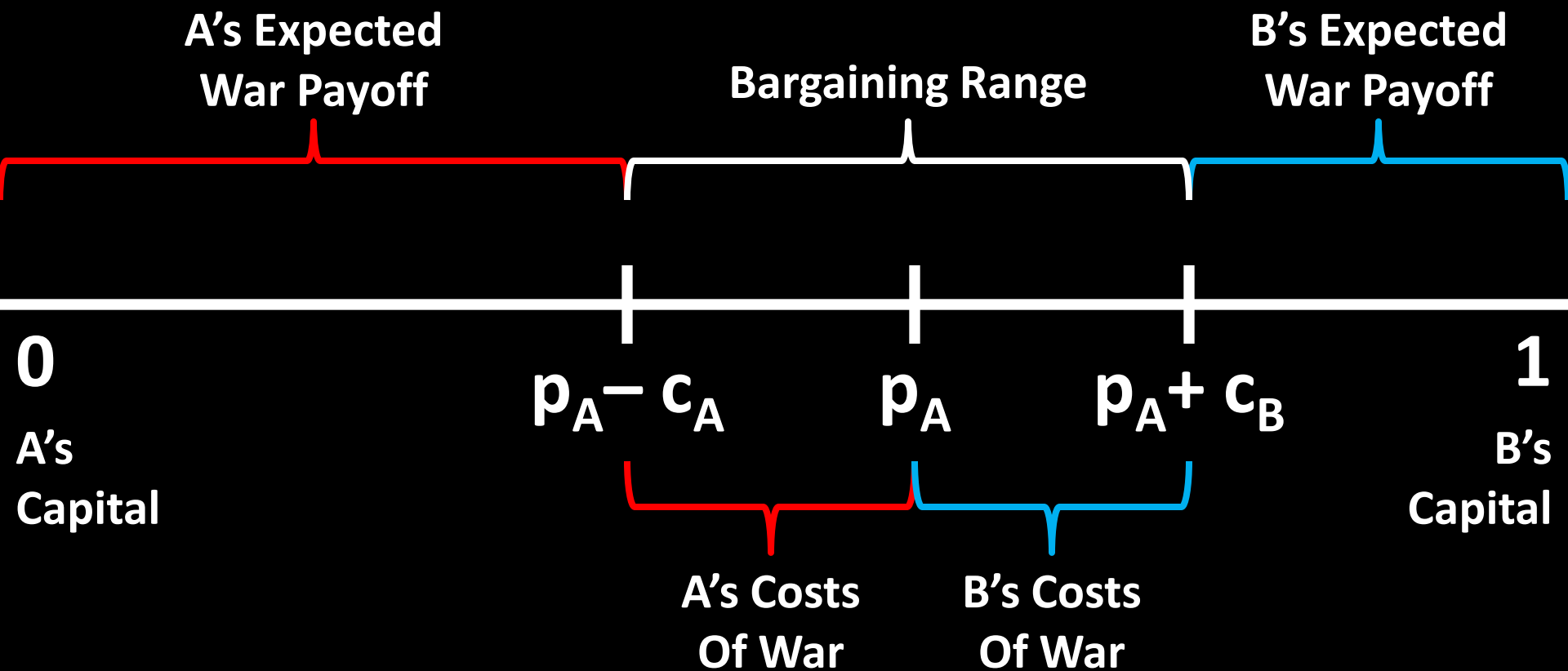
Principal-agent problems can cause dictators to fight, but only when they believe they are in trouble otherwise

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The Old Model

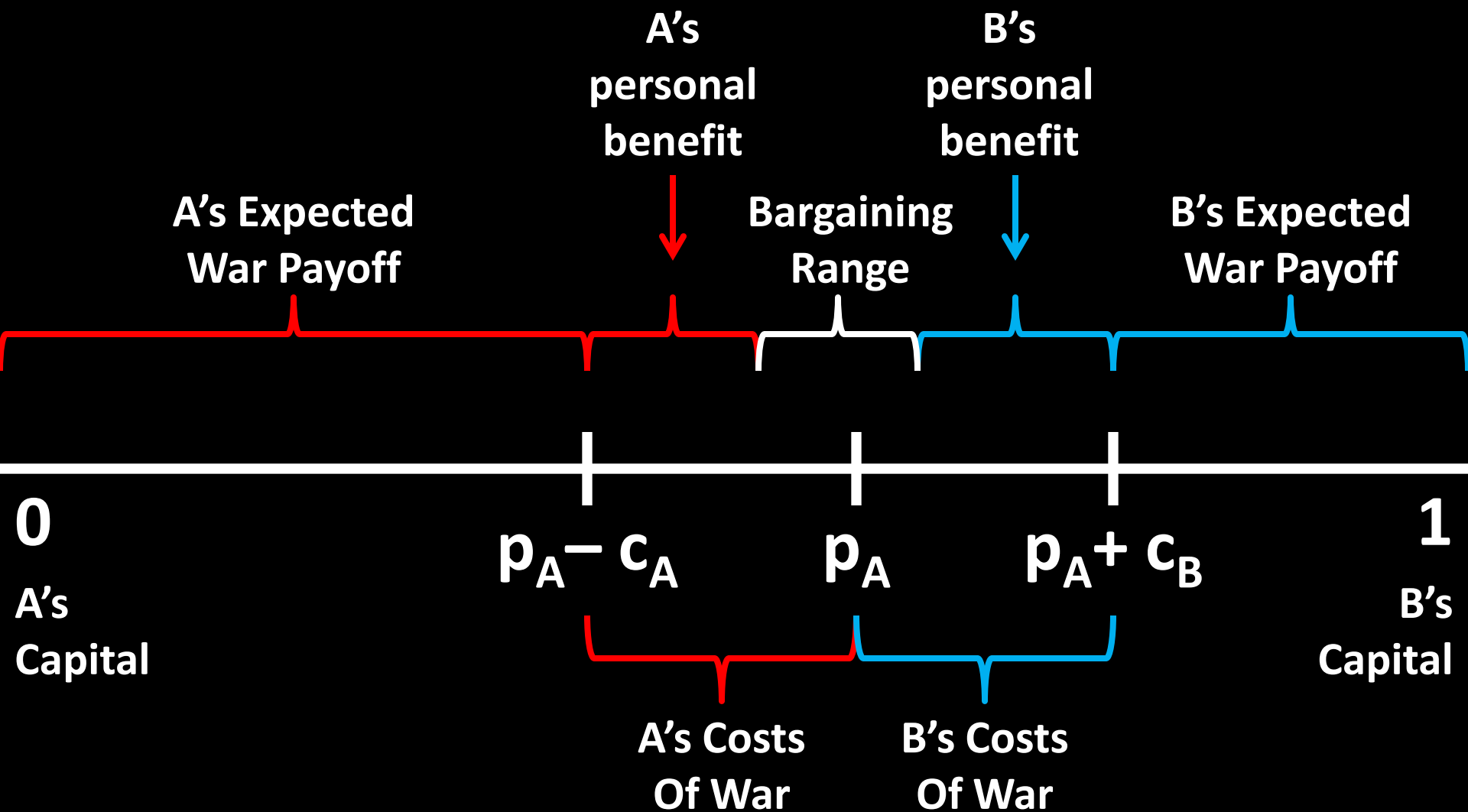
- Two states: A and B
- Bargain over an object worth 1
- p_A is the probability A wins a war
- $1 - p_A$ is the probability B wins a war
- States pay costs $c_A, c_B > 0$ if they fight



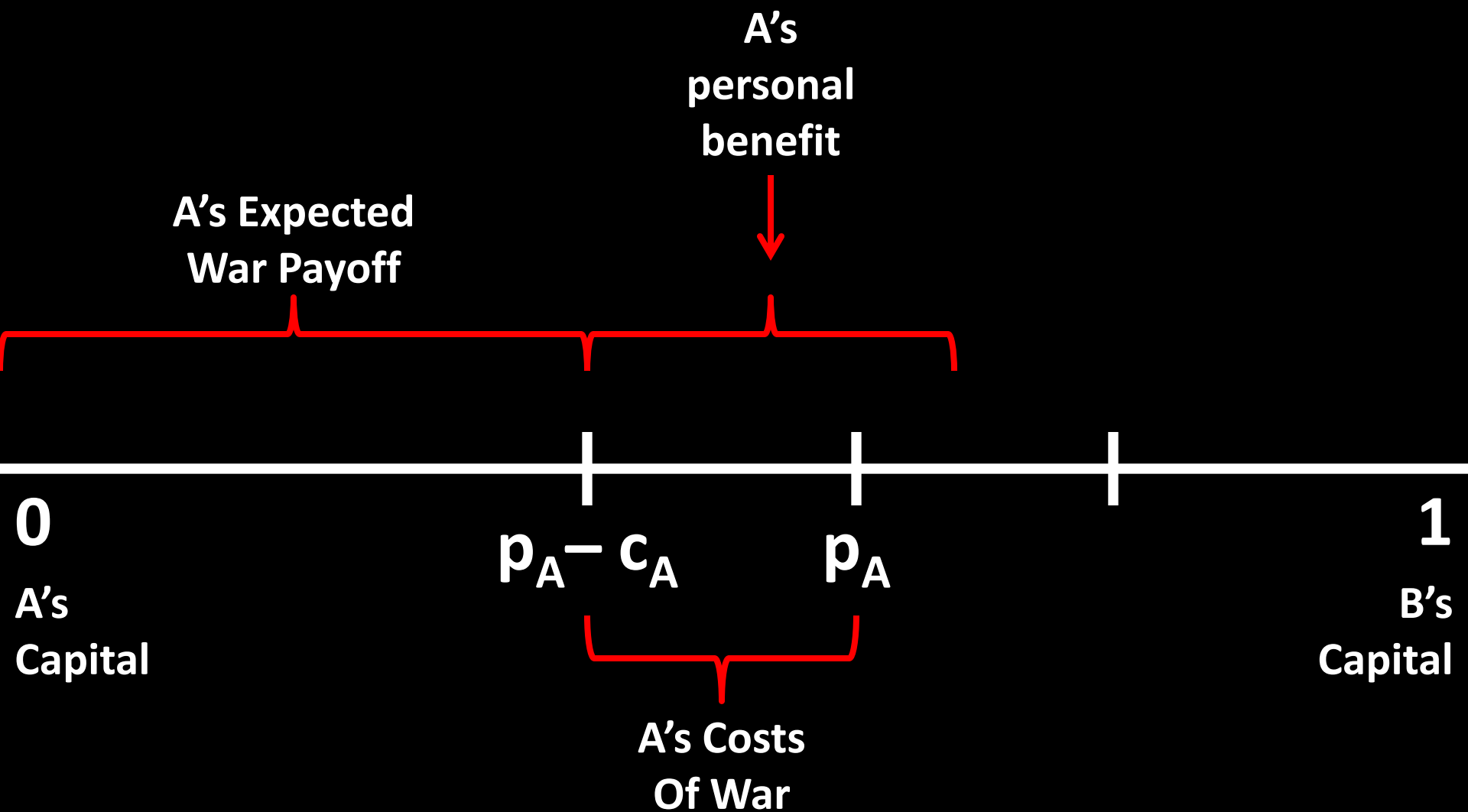
Adding Leaders

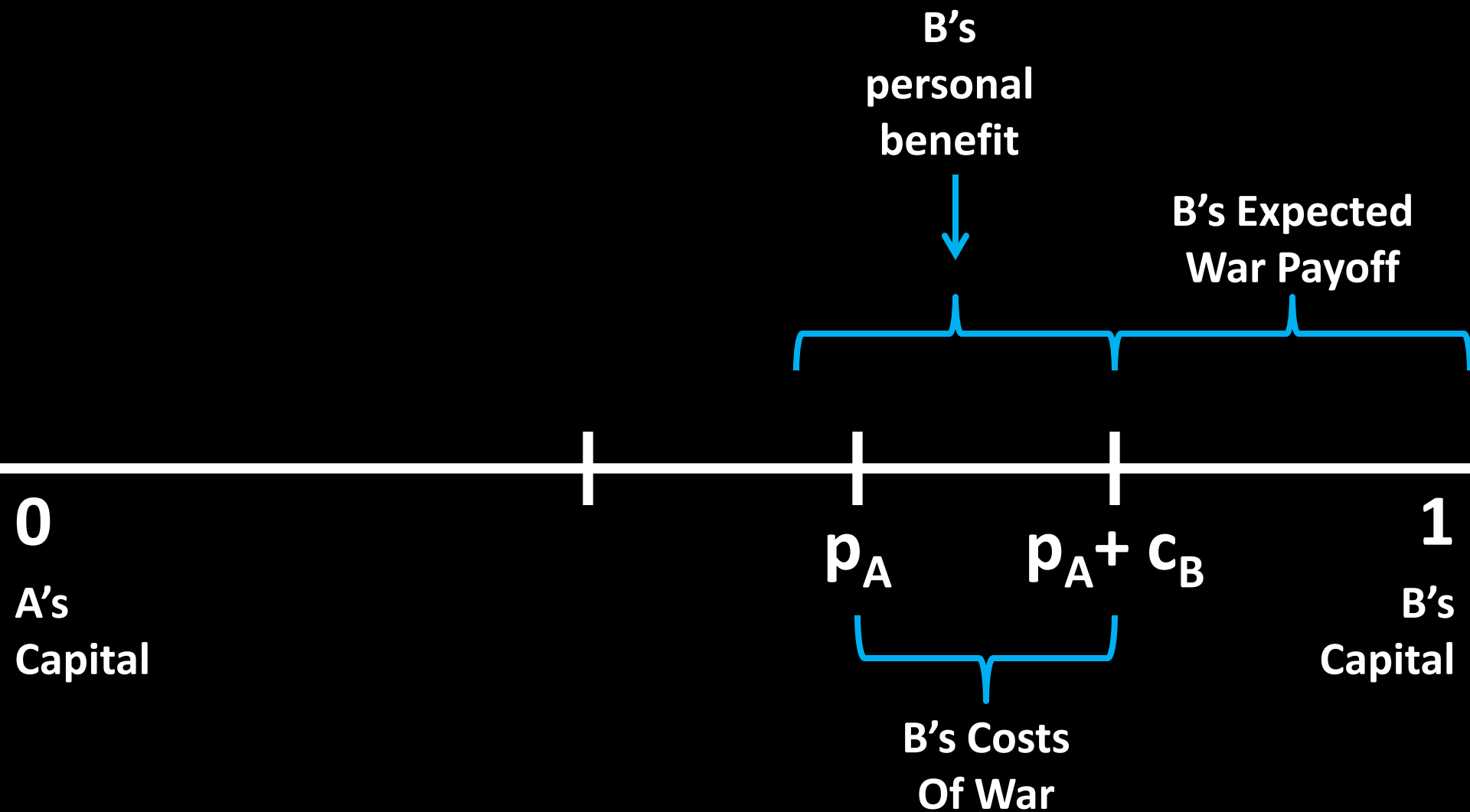
- Two states: A and B
- Bargain over an object worth 1
- p_A is the probability A wins a war
- $1 - p_A$ is the probability B wins a war
- States pay costs $c_A, c_B > 0$ if they fight
- Leaders receive personal utility u_A, u_B
 - Could be positive or negative

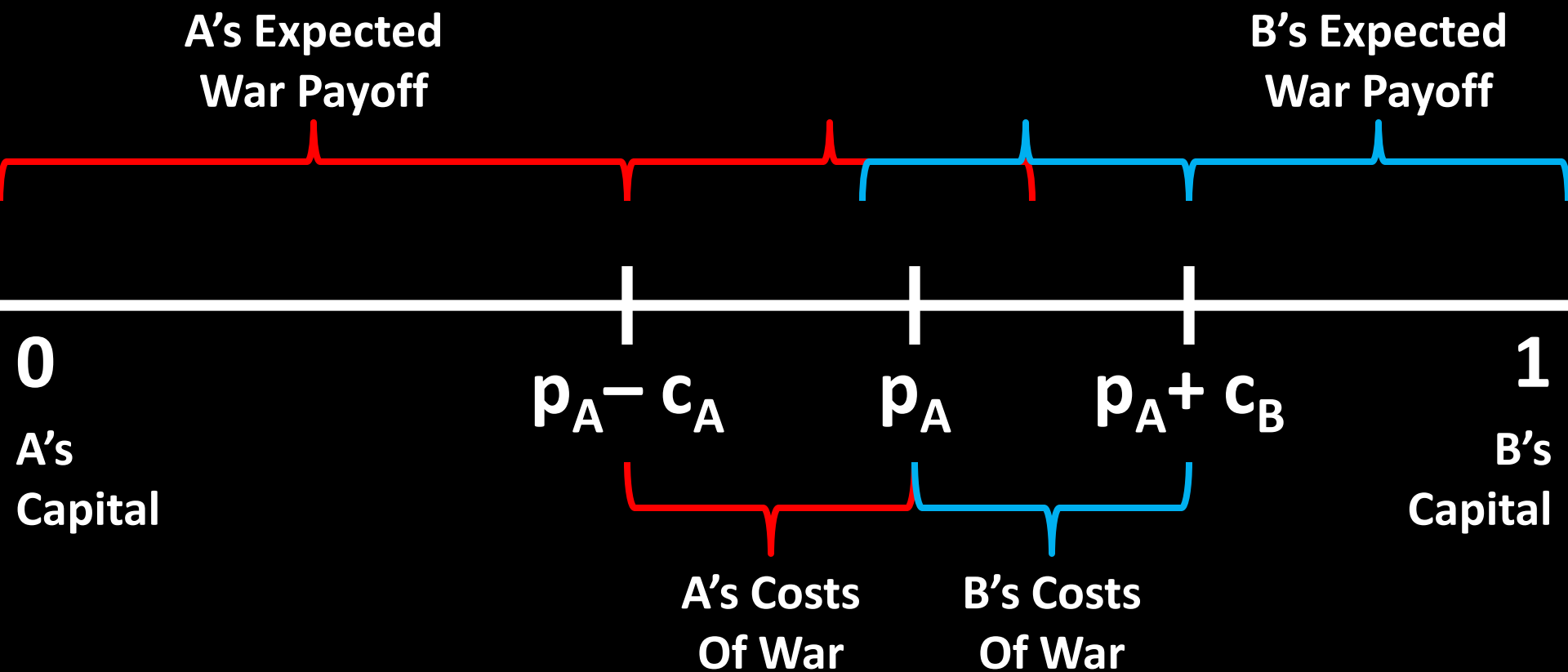
If $c_A + c_B > u_A + u_B$, a bargaining
range still exists



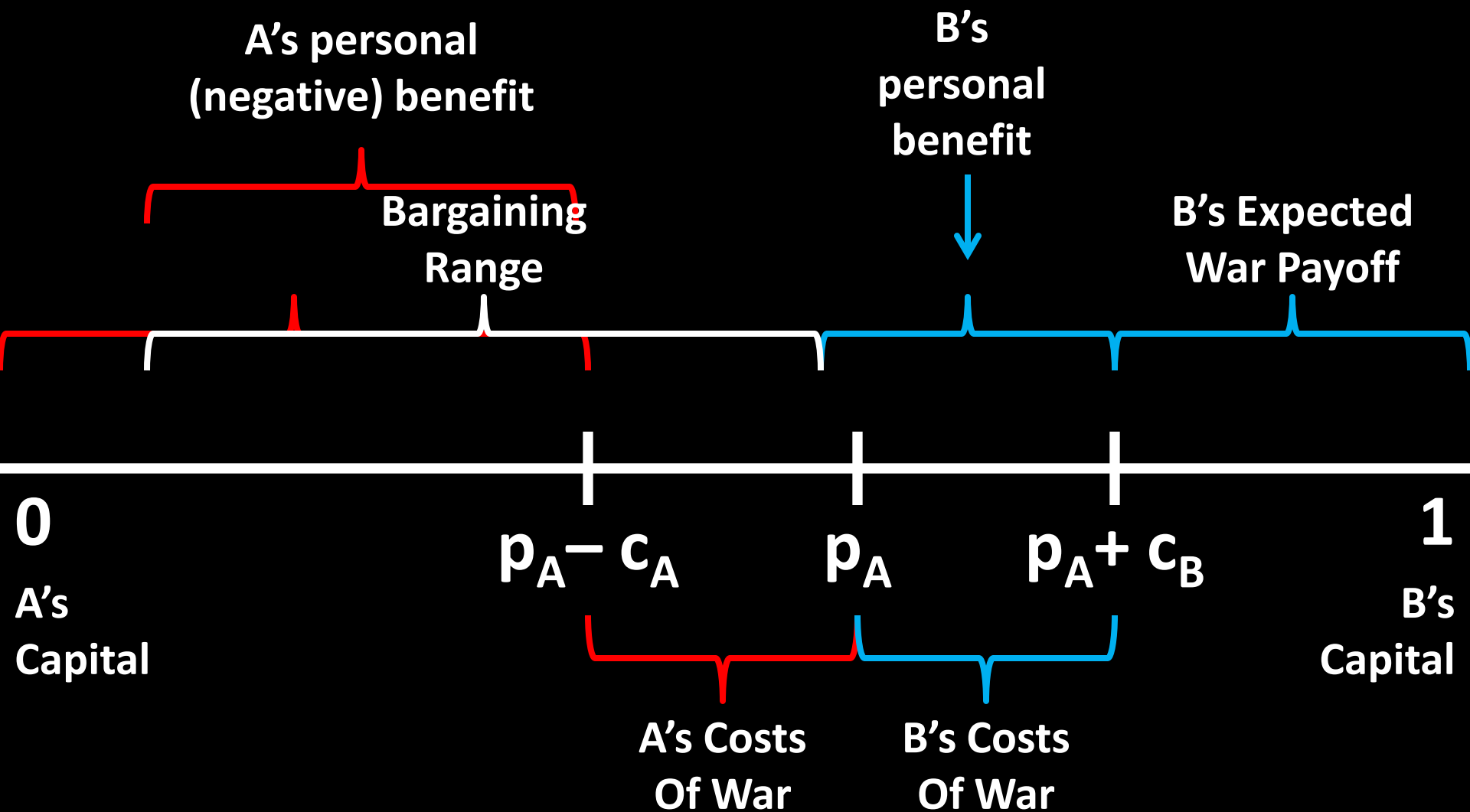
If $c_A + c_B < u_A + u_B$, no bargained
settlement exists







If $u_A + u_B < 0$, bargaining range
becomes bigger (peace through
instability)



Takeaway Points

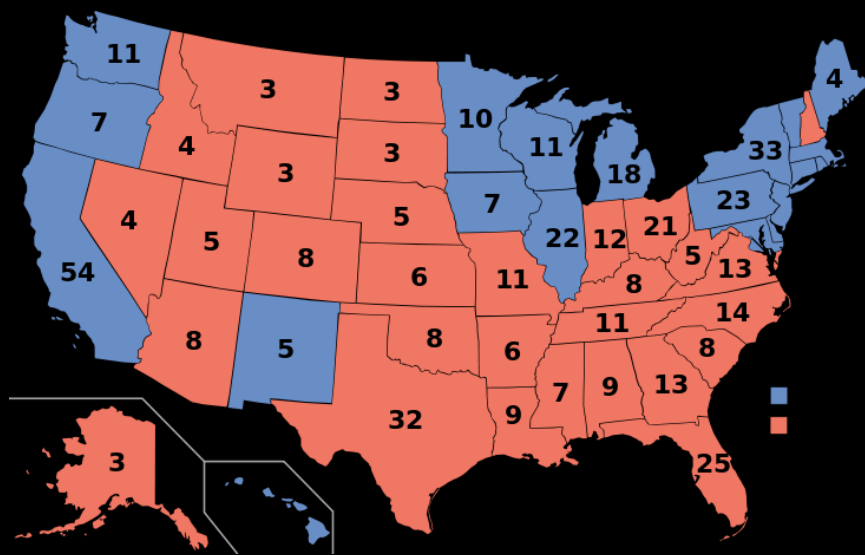
- Leaders are important to our study of conflict
- Unitary actor assumption isn't a very big deal
 - Every unitary actor explanation for war still exists with leaders in the model if $c_A + c_B > u_A + u_B$

Takeaway Points

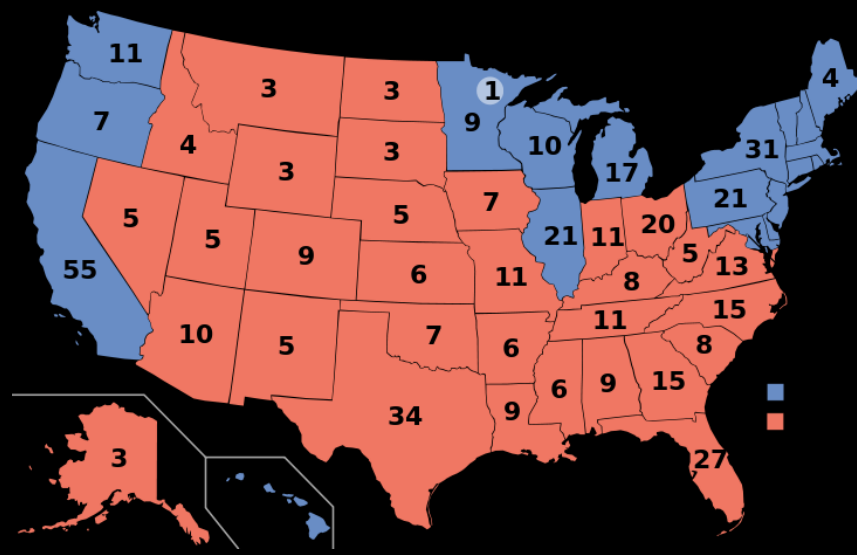
- Leaders are important to our study of conflict
- Unitary actor assumption isn't a very big deal
 - Every unitary actor explanation for war still exists with leaders in the model if $c_A + c_B > u_A + u_B$
- Use the simplest model you can to illustrate your point
 - Need leaders for your explanation? Include them
 - Don't need leaders? Don't include them

Outline

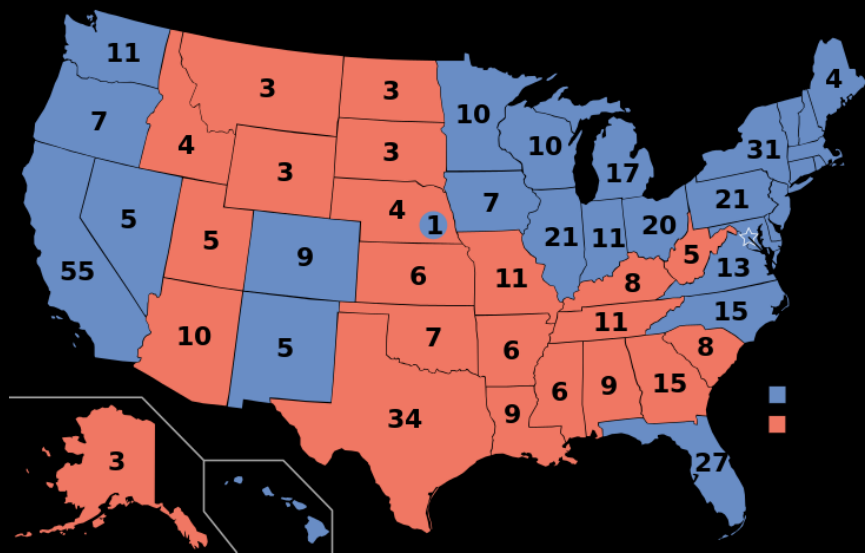
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- **Pandering**



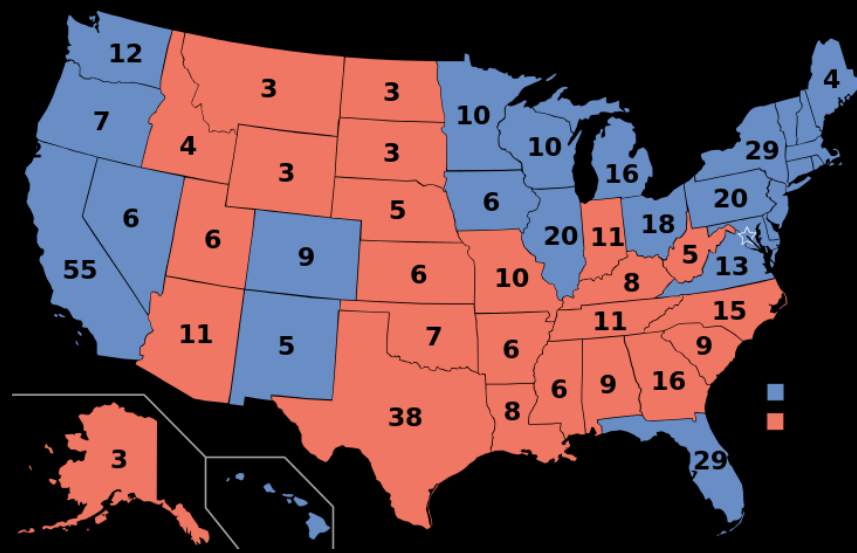
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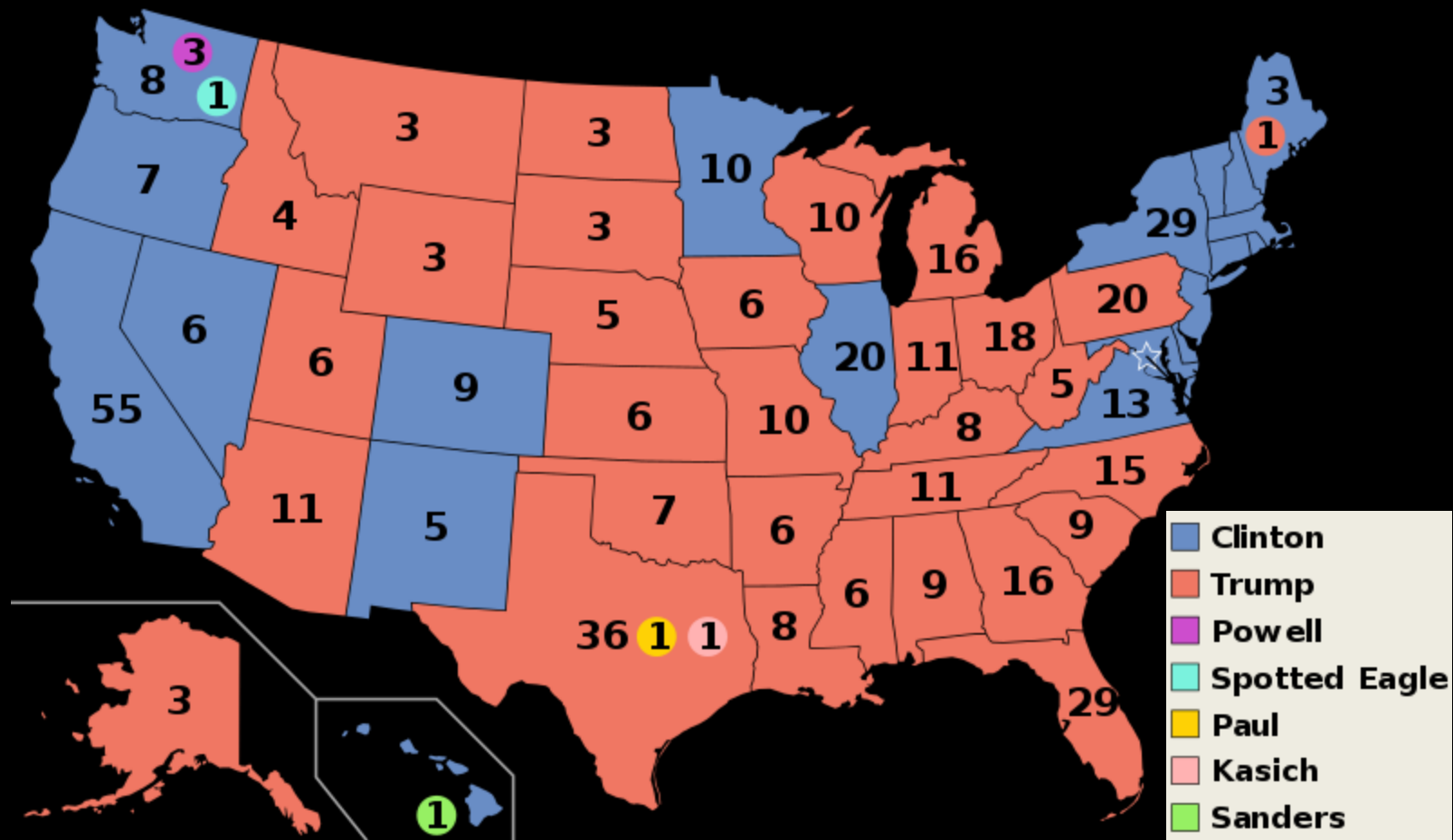
2004



2008



2012



From the Declaration...

- “All men are created equal.”

From the Declaration...

- “All men are created equal.”
- Should say: “All men are created equal. But voters living in Ohio and Florida are more equal than others.”

Thinking Strategically

- Voters in California are voting for the Democrat
- Voters in Texas are voting for the Republican

Thinking Strategically

- Voters in Ohio and Florida are up in the air
 - Candidates must therefore be more responsive to their desires

Do you think the United States
should reestablish diplomatic and
trade relations with Cuba?

Do you think the United States
should reestablish diplomatic and
trade relations with Cuba?

Yes: 67%

No: 20%

Unsure: 13%

Pandering

- Most people don't have particularly strong feelings about this
- ...but older Cuban immigrants do



Trade Relations

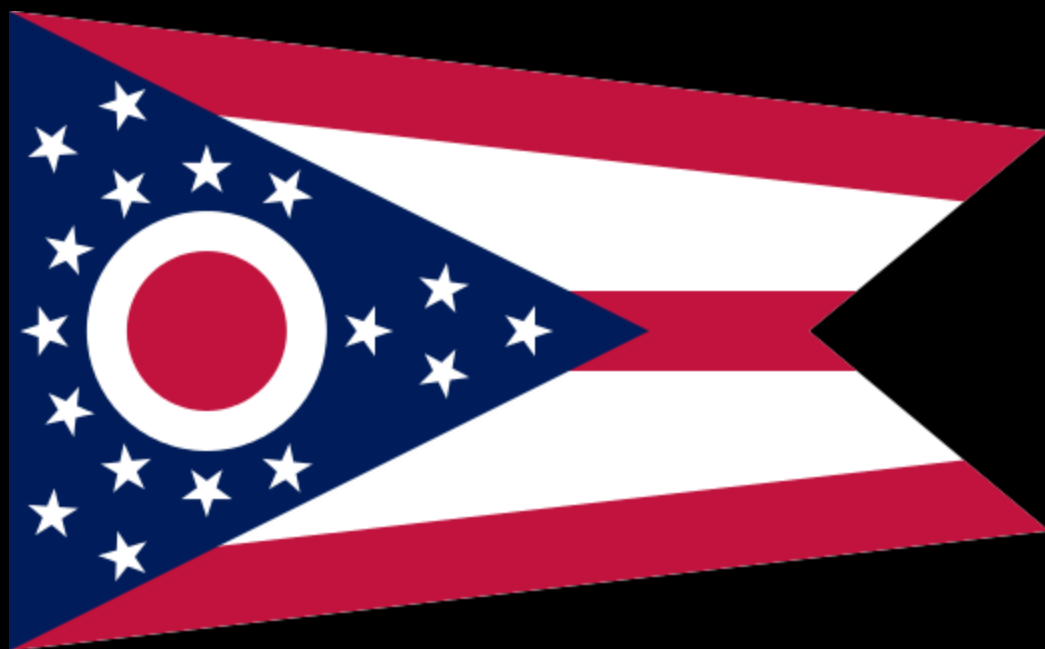
- On the whole, states are better off eliminating tariffs than engaging in trade wars

Trade Relations

- On the whole, states are better off eliminating tariffs than engaging in trade wars
- But there are winners and losers

Trade Relations

- A steel company in the United States wants tariffs on imported steel
 - Makes steel more expensive for US consumers but increases US steel producers' profits



Trade Relations

- Steel exporters took Bush to WTO dispute resolution
- United States lost; Bush didn't back down
- Importers threaten to sanction orange juice
 - Bush backs down. Why?

Takeaway: Electoral rules can distort international outcomes