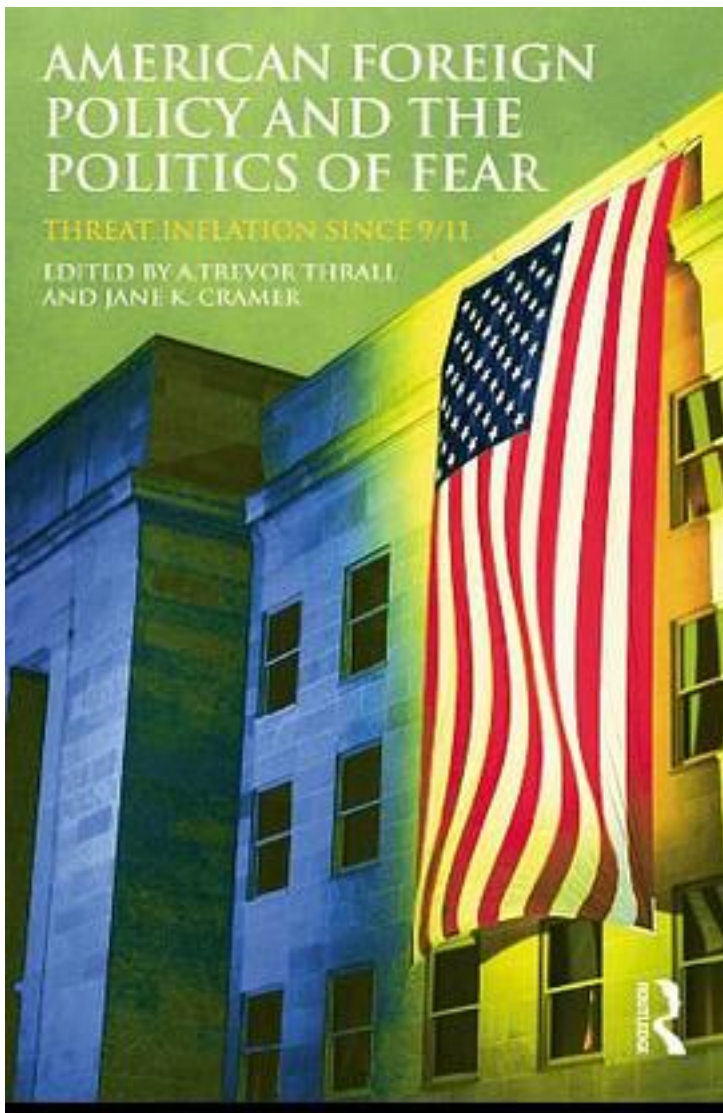


American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear



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This volume is a compilation of essays addressing the issue of threat inflation in American foreign policy and domestic politics. Simply defined, threat inflation is the effort by elites to create concern for a threat that goes beyond the scope and urgency that disinterested analysis would justify, such as in the build up to the Iraq war and over Iran's nuclear ambitions since mid-2007. More broadly, the threat inflation process concerns how elites view threats, the political uses of threat inflation, the politics of threat framing among competing elites, and how the public interprets and perceives threats via the news media. This edited volume engages three key themes, all of which are the subject of intense practical and theoretical concern today. First, what are the causes of threat inflation and at what level (individuals, groups, institutions, polities, international system) do the key factors operate? Second, under what conditions is threat inflation likely to be successful? Third, how serious a problem is threat inflation and how likely is it to affect the US in the future as it confronts terrorism and other potential and emerging threats? In both its theoretical contributions and its case studies, this book showcases work from each of the three major approaches to explaining threat inflation: realist, psychological, and constructivist. This book will be of much interests to students of US foreign and national security policy, international security, strategic studies and IR in general.

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