

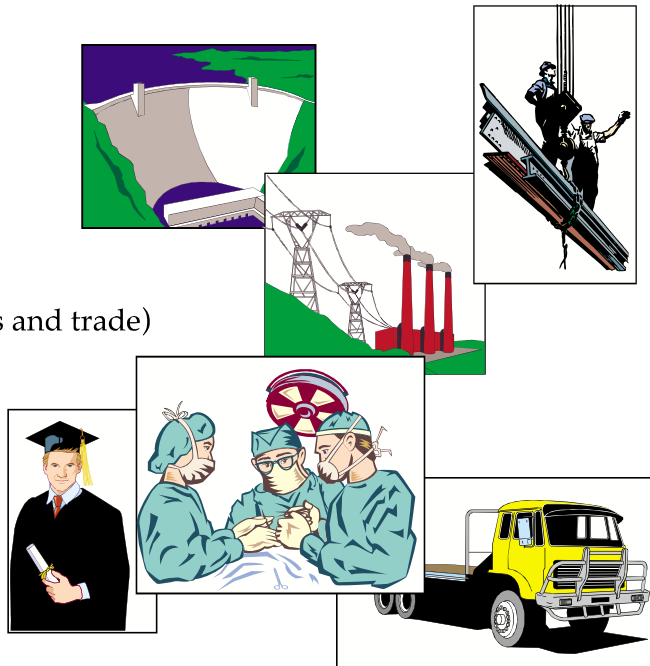
Domestic Policy and Foreign Affairs

Issues that concern the United States government can be put into two categories—**domestic** and **foreign**. Domestic issues are those which exist within the United States itself. Foreign affairs are concerns which involve other nations. Much about domestic policy has been discussed in earlier units. In this unit, there is a brief section on domestic policy, followed by a section on foreign policy.

Domestic Policy

Domestic policy is a plan for dealing with issues or problem areas within the United States itself. Domestic policy is set by Congress, the Supreme Court, and the President. It is carried out by the executive departments and the executive agencies (special offices set up to deal with areas of concern to the government). Some of these departments and agencies were discussed in Unit 3. Below is a list of major areas of domestic concern.

- natural resources
- environment
- health
- population growth
- transportation
- civil rights
- commerce (business and trade)
- education
- Social Security
- employment
- agriculture
- housing
- taxation



Domestic Policy Powers

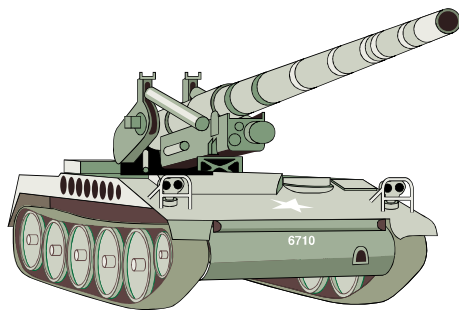
The President and Congress have a number of important powers concerning domestic policies.

DOMESTIC POLICY POWERS	
President	Congress
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the power to appoint cabinet officers• the power to appoint heads of executive agencies• the power to recommend legislation to Congress• the power to issue executive orders• the power to prepare the budget• the power to enforce laws• the power to veto bills (laws)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the power to pass bills (laws)• the power to approve appointments• the power to approve the budget• the power to investigate the activities of the executive agencies

Foreign Policy

Foreign policy concerns strategies that our nation develops for dealing with other nations. In general, foreign policy is established to maintain peace, friendship, and trade with other countries. In dealing with foreign countries, the United States has many long-range goals. These include the following:

Maintaining Peace in the World. The United States tries to promote world peace through its membership in the **United Nations** and by signing treaties with other countries to reduce arms. Interestingly, however, one other means of promoting peace is by displaying the military power of the United States. Many people believe that a strong military is a **deterrent** (discouraging factor) to war. Deterrence is achieved



by letting other countries know that any acts of aggression will be met with retaliation. **Alliances** between countries, which are agreements to help each other in times of war, also help maintain a **balance of power** that discourages war. Alliances do this by making the two sides relatively equal in strength.

Promoting American Interests Abroad. The **economic system** of the United States, which is our method of managing resources to meet our needs, is **capitalism**. In a capitalist economy, individuals decide what to produce and how to produce it in order to make a profit. Because profit is so important to businesses, international trade is a major foreign policy concern. Some of our foreign policy is aimed at promoting a **balance of trade**. Balance of trade is achieved when the value of our **imports** (goods being bought from other countries) equals the value of our **exports** (goods sold to other countries). For many years, the United States has had an unfavorable balance of trade because we import more goods than we export. The United States continues to work toward increasing sales of American-made products to other countries.

Aiding Foreign Countries. Because we rely on foreign countries for their raw materials and finished goods, as well as for a marketplace for American goods, it is in the best interests of the United States to help developing nations. This is accomplished through such things as technical assistance, sharing ideas, and financial aid.



Promoting Human Rights. The American **human rights** policy recommends that all people, regardless of the country they live in, should be entitled to certain basic rights. These include freedom from hunger, the right to humane treatment, and the right to participate in the governmental process. In order to achieve these goals, the United States provides some assistance to countries in need, such as relief for starving people or victims of natural disasters.

The government also speaks out when it feels other countries are violating their citizens' human rights. In some cases, the United States will place economic **sanctions** (trade restrictions) on a country that is violating human rights. These sanctions may include trade restrictions, such as refusal to trade until certain conditions are met. In other cases, the United States may provide military support to help in such situations.

Foreign Policy Powers

How does our government establish foreign policy? The President and Congress both have power in the area of foreign policy, but the President has perhaps the greatest power in that area. The President is responsible for conducting the nation's foreign policy. The President is assisted by officials of the Department of State and many agencies and advisers, but the Constitution gives the President power to make recommendations concerning military, treaty-making, and diplomatic affairs. In our system of checks and balances, the Senate or Congress must approve these recommendations.

FOREIGN POLICY POWERS	
President	Congress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the power to appoint the Secretary of State • the power to appoint ambassadors and other diplomats to foreign countries • the power to prepare the budget of the United States • the power to command the military • the power to sign executive agreements • the power to make treaties with the advise of the Senate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the power to approve or reject appointments • the power to approve the budget • the power to withdraw troops • the power to approve or reject treaties • the power to declare war

Carrying Out Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is decided by the President and is carried out at various times by many departments, agencies, and organizations. Maintaining peace in the world is the primary goal of our foreign policy. The importance of this goal is shown by the amount of time spent and the involvement of so many different officials, departments, organizations, and agencies.

The United Nations

One organization which was established to maintain peace and cooperation among all nations is the United Nations (UN). The UN has many of the same goals as the United States' foreign policy, such as maintaining peace and promoting basic and equal human rights around the world.

The United Nations was formed in 1945 at the end of World War II. The United States is an important member of this international organization, which now has more than 150 permanent members. Almost every nation in the world is a member.

The United Nations is organized into six parts—the **General Assembly**, the **Security Council**, the International Court of Justice, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, and the Secretariat. Two of these will be discussed here.

The main body of the United Nations is the General Assembly. All member nations belong and each nation has one vote. Members of the General Assembly discuss world problems and make suggestions for solving them. The General Assembly makes its own rules, elects its president, and meets annually.

The Security Council consists of five permanent member countries: the United States, France, Great Britain, The People's Republic of China, and the Russian Federation (formerly Soviet Union). Ten other countries are chosen by the General Assembly for two-year terms. The main duty of the Security Council is to maintain world peace. The council may do this by acting as a **mediator** (an agency or person who settles disagreements), by suggesting economic sanctions, or by sending UN peacekeeping or military forces into a troubled area.

During Washington's presidency, the French peasants and working class rebelled against an absolute monarchy. The French expected the United States to send troops to help since they had helped us in our fight against the British in the American Revolution. Washington managed to keep the United States out of war by taking a position of **neutrality**—a statement that the United States would support neither side in the conflict. Many Americans came to agree with Washington. They believed the United States should focus on the pressing domestic issues of the day such as paying off the Revolutionary War debt.

The idea of staying out of foreign affairs was reinforced during the presidency of James Monroe (1816-1824) by John Quincy Adams, Monroe's Secretary of State. John Quincy Adams was guided by a strong belief in **nationalism**. Nationalism is a belief that national interests and national unity should be placed ahead of regional concerns and that foreign affairs should be guided by national self-interest. Accordingly, in 1823, President Monroe sent a message to the world. He wanted all European powers to stay out of the Western Hemisphere. At the same time, the United States would not involve itself with existing European affairs or interfere with existing colonies in the Western Hemisphere. These principles became known as the Monroe Doctrine.

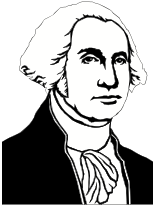
In the late 1880s, the drive to acquire new territories to secure foreign markets for trade began a trend of **imperialism**. Imperialism is a policy in which stronger nations extend their economic, political, or military control over weaker territories. The United States joined in the world competition for territory by annexing Hawaii and gaining control of Puerto Rico and Cuba by declaring war on Spain. Also, in 1900, the United States created an open door policy, which established trading rights in China. The period of isolationism created under Washington and Monroe was officially over.

President Theodore Roosevelt and President Woodrow Wilson did much to overturn Monroe's policy of isolationism. President Theodore Roosevelt based his Latin American policy on a West African proverb that said, "speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far." Therefore, he became famous for his "big stick" diplomacy.

President Wilson believed the United States had a moral responsibility to deny recognition to any Latin American government it viewed as oppressive, undemocratic, or hostile to United States interests. Until that time, the United States recognized any government that controlled a

nation, regardless of its policies or how it had come to power. Wilson's policy pressured nations in the Western Hemisphere to establish democratic governments.

Isolationism → Imperialism



President Washington took a position of neutrality when French peasants rebelled against an absolute monarchy.



President Monroe reinforced the idea of staying out of foreign affairs.



Monroe's Secretary of State John Quincy Adams was guided by a belief in nationalism.



President Theodore Roosevelt did much to overturn the policy of isolationism. He became famous for his "big stick" diplomacy.



President Woodrow Wilson worked at overturning isolationism and pressured nations in the Western Hemisphere to establish democratic governments.

For better or worse, imperialism drew the United States out of isolationism. At the same time, imperialism pushed Europeans toward the most destructive war they had yet experienced—a war the United States could not avoid—World War I.

In 1914, most Americans, including President Woodrow Wilson, saw no reason to join a struggle 3,000 miles away. War did not threaten American lives or property. However, by 1917, Americans mobilized for war against the Central Powers (Austria, Germany, Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire) for two reasons

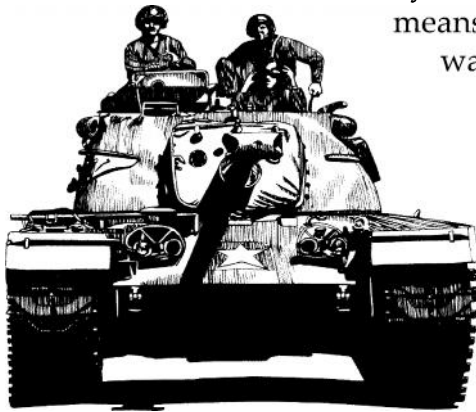
- to ensure that the Allies (France, Great Britain, and Russia) repaid the money they had borrowed and
- to prevent the Germans from threatening United States shipping

At the conclusion of the war, President Wilson helped to create a League of Nations to prevent world war from happening again. Americans did not stand behind President Wilson on this issue. They had lost many good men in a foreign war, and they did not care about the future of Europe. The war had strengthened their desire to stay out of European affairs and encouraged a return to isolationism.

The United States managed to stay out of world affairs until December 7, 1941. On that day, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. The United States joined the war against Germany and Japan. Our participation in World War II produced a dramatic shift in popular opinion for an internationalist foreign policy. World War II had this enormous effect for the following reasons.

- World War II was the only war to be universally popular, and there were no negative consequences after the war for the United States.
- The Nazi regime was seen as evil and a real enemy and was destroyed.
- An attack on Pearl Harbor was avenged by dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan.
- The war ended with the United States being recognized as the dominant power on Earth.

In 1937, 94 percent of the American public preferred the policy of doing “everything possible to keep out of foreign wars” to the policy of doing “everything possible to prevent war even if it means threatening to fight countries that fight wars.” World War II, unlike World War I, produced popular support for our involvement. After World War I, a majority of Americans were opposed to entry into the League of Nations. However, after World War II, a clear majority favored our entry into the United Nations.



The Cold War

Following World War II, we entered into a *Cold War* with the former Soviet Union. A cold war is a war without direct conflict. Both the United States and the Soviet Union invested heavily in nuclear weapons. Throughout the 1950s, people lived in fear of nuclear destruction. Another part of the Cold War was to stop the threat of communism and expand

democracy. This led to the involvement in the Korean War in the 1950s and the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 70s. Both wars were unpopular. The Korean War cost us 54,000 lives and approximately \$20 million dollars. The Vietnam War was the nation's longest war and left a lasting impact on United States foreign policy and society. The Vietnam War significantly altered America's views on foreign policy. As a result of what has been labeled the Vietnam Syndrome, Americans now consider possible risks to their own interests before deciding whether to interfere in the affairs of other nations.



Changes in World Politics

The big changes in world policies began in March of 1985 when Mikhail Gorbachev became the leader of the Communist party in the Soviet Union and unveiled a series of peace talks with President Ronald Reagan. The end of the Cold War soon followed under President Bush's presidency in 1991. The United States was faced with altering its foreign policy toward the once-powerful Soviet Union, which collapsed in 1991. However, on the other fronts, the United States continued to pursue an aggressive foreign policy of intervention peaking with the Gulf War (Operation Desert Storm) in 1991.

With the passing of the Cold War have come new debates over foreign policy goals. What will the 21st century bring? Much will depend on you—the decision-makers and voters of the future.