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19

Foreign and Defense Policy

WHEN THE UNITED STATES launched its war against Saddam Hussein's Iraqi government in March 2003, it signaled a dramatic break in American policy. In most past conflicts of this magnitude, the United States had intervened militarily in response to a direct attack (such as Pearl Harbor), or to defend other countries that had been invaded (such as South Korea or Kuwait). The 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq was part of a new strategy that sought to promote American security through aggressive new tactics, including preemptive strikes against potentially dangerous nations. Believing that the Hussein regime had been violating international law by secretly developing weapons of mass destruction, the United States government was willing to act even though the United Nations Security Council refused to endorse the recourse to war, and even without the support of key allies such as France and Germany. This bold but controversial U.S. strategy is part of something called the "Bush Doctrine."

Like other presidents before him, George W. Bush was putting his distinctive stamp on how the country should address threats to national security. Particularly after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Bush and his foreign policy team concluded that a more ambitious, "muscular" posture was needed to fight global threats to U.S. interests. By attacking Hussein's forces in Iraq, American resolve would provide an object lesson to other countries that were not behaving as the United States wanted. According to Richard Perle, a senior adviser to the Bush administration, "It's always been at the heart of the Bush Doctrine that a more robust policy would permit us to elicit greater cooperation from adversaries."[1] When Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi indicated his willingness to abandon the development of weapons of mass destruction in late 2003, some viewed this as proof that the Bush Doctrine worked.

Critics, however, believe the Bush Doctrine is misguided for several reasons. First, they point to the frightening precedent of launching preemptive wars, and the dangerous lesson that might teach other countries (for instance, Pakistan and India) who fear and hate their adversaries. Second, they question the morality of invading another country based solely on what it *might* do. Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia, a staunch opponent of the

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Iraq War, referred to the U.S. action as "an unprovoked invasion of a sovereign nation."[2] Third, they question whether such an aggressive strategy might create lasting problems with allies (the governments of Canada, Mexico, France, Germany, and Russia, for example, were among those who opposed the invasion of Iraq), and a deepening hatred of the United States by adversaries. By attacking an Arab government in Iraq, was the United States creating, as Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak warned, many more Osama bin Ladens?

Following the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, U.S. foreign policy began a period of transition. What role would the United States play in a very different post–Cold War world? Was China the next major adversary, or would the world be a safer one in the new millennium? After September 11, 2001, however, the United States had a new adversary: terrorism. More Americans began to pay attention to foreign policy and defense issues. Many wondered how the United States, the last surviving superpower, could be susceptible to a devastating series of terrorist attacks on one fateful day.

To explore the most important elements of U.S. foreign and defense policy, this chapter will cover six major topics:

- First, we will trace *the roots of U.S. foreign and defense policy* in the years before it became a world power.
- Second, we will detail U.S. policy during and after the Cold War, examining *the United States as a world power*.
- Third, we will study *the executive branch and foreign policy making*.
- Fourth, we will discuss *groups that influence foreign policy.*
- Fifth, we will examine *twenty-first–century challenges* in foreign and defense policy, including the global war on terrorism and the war in Iraq.
- Finally, we will focus on *building a grand strategy* for the twenty-first century.

THE ROOTS OF U.S. FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY

LIKE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY, U.S. foreign and defense policy has evolved. Today, the United States is the most powerful and influential country in the world. No other country has as large an economy, as powerful a military, or plays as influential a role in world affairs as the United States. American culture, though often criticized, has swept the world, from music to movies to clothes to food. It was not always this way. When the United States was founded, it was a weak country on the margins of world affairs, with an uncertain future.

isolationism
A national policy of avoiding participation in foreign affairs.

unilateralism
A national policy of acting without consulting others.

moralism
The policy of emphasizing morality in foreign affairs.

pragmatism
The policy of taking advantage of a situation for national gain.

Even so, the United States was fortunate. Separated from Europe and Asia by vast oceans, it had abundant resources and industrious people. The United States often stood apart from world engagements, following a policy of **isolationism,** that is, avoiding participation in foreign affairs. However, isolationism was rarely total. Even in its early years, the United States engaged in foreign affairs, and it always was a trading nation. Another consistent hallmark of U.S. policy was **unilateralism,** that is, acting without consulting others. **Moralism** was also central to U.S. self-image in foreign policy, with most Americans believing their country had higher moral standards than European and other countries. Many Americans were also proud of their **pragmatism**—their ability to find ways to take advantage of a situation. Thus, when Europe was at war, Americans sold goods to both sides and profited handsomely. When land became available in North America, Americans found a way to get it.

To understand how and why the United States emphasized isolationism, unilateralism, moralism, and pragmatism, we must examine the roots of U.S. foreign policy from the Constitution until the beginning of World War II.

Photo courtesy: Kathy Willens/AP/Wide World Photos

■ In early 2003, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell argued strenuously to the UN Security Council that there was proof Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Powell failed to convince the Security Council to support a war against Iraq and later had to admit that the claims about weapons of mass destruction were based on faulty intelligence.

The Constitution

When the Framers of the U.S. Constitution met in Philadelphia in 1789 to write a new governing document for the thirteen states, they wanted the stronger national government to keep the United States out of European affairs and to keep Europe out of American affairs. As a result, the power to formulate and implement foreign policy was given to the national government rather than the states. In addition, many foreign and military powers not enumerated in the Constitution are generally accorded to the national government (see The Living Constitution).

The Framers of the Constitution divided authority for many foreign and military policy functions between the president and Congress. The Framers named the president commander in chief of the armed forces but gave Congress power to fund the army and navy and to declare war. The president has authority to negotiate and sign treaties, but treaties only take effect after the Senate ratifies them by a two-thirds majority. Similarly, the president appoints ambassadors and other key foreign and military affairs officials, but the Senate grants advice and consent on the appointments.

This division of responsibility for foreign and military policy was in marked contrast to the way the European powers of the eighteenth century made foreign policy. In Great Britain and France, the ability to formulate and implement foreign policy resided almost exclusively with the king or queen and his or her advisers.

The Early History of U.S. Foreign and Defense Policy

Following the creation of the Constitution, the United States delved gingerly into foreign affairs. As the United States took its place among the family of nations, it remained hesitant about engaging with other countries. George Washington emphasized this in his 1796 **Farewell Address** when he asserted that it was the United States' "true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." Washington, however, was not an isolationist. While he believed that U.S. democracy and security depended on remaining apart from Europe, he accepted the need for trade, and trade the United States did. Throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, American ships plied the world's sea lanes, bringing large profits to U.S. merchants, especially during the Napoleonic Wars, when the United States provided raw materials and war supplies to both sides.

Trade led to conflicts. In the 1790s, the United States fought an undeclared naval war with France because France seized U.S. ships trading with France's enemies. Shortly thereafter, the United States fought the **Barbary Wars** against North African Barbary states, which since the 1780s had captured American and other ships, holding the sailors for ransom.

The roots of the War of 1812 lay in the British naval practice of **impressment,** that is, stopping ships to seize suspected deserters of the Royal Navy who were working as merchant sailors. Impressment aroused the American public, but Great Britain refused to end the practice. Thus, in 1807, Congress passed the **Embargo Act,** which prevented U.S. ships from leaving for foreign ports without the approval of the federal government. President Thomas Jefferson believed that European states, embroiled in the con-

Washington's Farewell Address
Washington's 1796 final address as president in which he declared that the United States should avoid becoming involved in foreign alliances.

Barbary Wars
Conflicts the United States fought in the early eighteenth century with North African states against their piracy.

impressment
The British practice in the early eighteenth century of stopping ships at sea to seize sailors suspected of having deserted the Royal Navy.

Embargo Act
Passed by Congress in 1807 to prevent U.S. ships from leaving U.S. ports for foreign ports without the approval of the federal government.

The Living Constitution

To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

—Article I, Section 8

With the Constitution's Article I militia clauses, a significant defect of the Articles of Confederation was corrected. A fundamental weakness of the earlier document was that it did not grant the central government adequate means for national defense, and this defect was understood to hamper the Revolutionary War effort. In the view of the Framers, a government without the force to administer its laws or to defend its citizens was either a weak government or no government at all, and these clauses consequently give the federal government authority to call up the state militias in times of national emergency or distress.

Joseph Story, an associate justice of the Supreme Court from 1812 to 1845, commented that the militia clauses passed the Constitutional Convention "by a declared majority" because the delegates understood that the power to call up the militia would be necessary in providing for the common defense and in securing domestic peace. The clauses address the understanding that military training, proficiency, and organization should be uniform across state and national forces so as to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in military operations.

Many Anti-Federalists, however, were concerned that the federal government could call together the state militias for unjust ends. They held the position that state governments should control their militias in order to prevent any perfidy on the part of the federal government. To this end, the states were given authority to name militia officers and train their forces. During the War of 1812—to the consternation of President James Madison—two state governments withheld their militias, because they believed it was the purview of the state to set the terms for the use of its guards. The Supreme Court has since held that, except for constitutional prohibitions, the Congress has "unlimited" authority over the state militias, and the National Defense Act of 1916 brought the state militias under the control of the national government.

Throughout U.S. history, the National Guard has proved effective and essential in defending the United States. With the extensive use of the National Guard to assist American efforts in Iraq and in the struggle against terrorism, its role has expanded. The militia clauses ensure the unity, effectiveness, and strength of the United States military not only during wartime, but also during other national emergencies.

tinuing Napoleonic Wars, depended so much on U.S.-provided supplies and raw materials that Great Britain would stop impressment.

Jefferson was wrong. U.S. exports fell, the economy suffered, and inflation soared. U.S.-British relations continued to deteriorate, fueled by impressments and by U.S. designs

on Canada. These conditions led to the **War of 1812.** Peace talks began even before the first battles were fought, but the war ended only after Great Britain decided to concentrate on defeating Napoleon. The 1814 Treaty of Ghent ended the war, with Great Britain and the United States accepting the prewar borders and treaty obligations.

As Europe fought the Napoleonic Wars and the United States struggled with Britain, Latin American countries won independence from their European colonial masters. In 1815, Napoleon was defeated, and Europe was at peace for the first time in almost two decades. Europeans celebrated, but the United States feared that European powers, especially France in Latin America and Russia in Alaska and the Northwest, would try to expand their control in the Western Hemisphere. To prevent these actions, President James Monroe in 1823 declared that "the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power." This declaration became known as the **Monroe Doctrine.**

Courtesy of the architect of the Capitol/Mural by Allyn Cox

■ During the War of 1812, the British set fire to many buildings in Washington, D.C., including the U.S. Capitol and the White House. Both buildings were repaired and refurbished shortly after the war.

In reality, the Monroe Doctrine was a preference more than a policy, since the United States had little capability to enforce it. However, Great Britain also wanted to keep other European powers out of the Americas. The Royal Navy thus protected British interests and promoted U.S. preferences. Although Great Britain expanded its small colonial presence in Latin America several times after 1823, the United States never invoked the Monroe Doctrine.

War of 1812
Fought between the United States and Great Britain over impressment and U.S. territorial designs on Canada.

Monroe Doctrine
President James Monroe's 1823 pledge that the United States would oppose attempts by European states to extend their political control into the Western Hemisphere.

The United States as an Emerging Power

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, the United States gained territory, developed economically, and began to emerge as a world power. This process centered on three areas: trade policy and commerce, continental expansion and manifest destiny, and during the last half of the century, interests beyond the Western Hemisphere.

Trade Policy and Commerce. As early as 1791, Alexander Hamilton in his *Report on Manufactures* urged Congress to protect domestic industries from foreign competition. However, Hamilton's advice was often ignored as the U.S. government relied on the principles of trade reciprocity and most favored nations (MFN) status. Reciprocity meant that the United States would treat foreign traders in the same way that foreign countries treated U.S. traders, and MFN status meant that U.S. exports would face the lowest **tariffs,** or taxes on imports, offered to any other country.

tariffs
Taxes on imports used to raise government revenue and to protect infant industries.

For most of the early years of the United States' existence, this worked well. One reason was that European nations fighting in the Napoleonic Wars needed U.S. raw materials and products. However, this changed at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Global peace meant increased competition, and the United States adopted protectionist tariffs designed to keep the home market for domestic producers, as Hamilton had suggested years before. Congress passed the first protectionist tariff in 1816.

Over the next eight years, Congress adopted the "American System" of trade protection by increasingly higher tariffs. Tariffs often were 20 to 30 percent of the value of an import, sometimes as high as 100 percent.[3] High protectionist tariffs were the American norm well into the twentieth century. While high tariffs protected the U.S. market for American producers, they also cut off foreign markets for American producers as foreign countries retaliated with their own high tariffs.

Continental Expansion and Manifest Destiny. In 1800, the United States consisted of the original thirteen states and a few others that had just joined the Union. During the nineteenth century, the United States acquired immense quantities of land in various ways. It took land from Native Americans in wars against the Creek, Seminole, Sioux, Comanche, Apache, and other tribes. It bought territory from the French, Spanish, and Russians. It fought the 1846 Mexican War, acquiring a large expanse of Mexican territory in the American southwest and California. By the end of the century, the United States stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

manifest destiny
Theory that the United States was divinely mandated to expand across North America to the Pacific Ocean.

Some called this expansion **manifest destiny,** believing the United States had a divinely mandated obligation to expand across North America to the Pacific and "overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our multiplying millions."[4] Manifest destiny permitted Americans to rationalize expansion as legitimate and moral. Even though most Americans criticized the overseas expansionism of others as colonialism, most did not consider the United States' expansion in North America as colonialism. The acquired territory was connected to the United States, and therefore viewed as different from colonialism.

Interests Beyond the Western Hemisphere. The United States did not limit its economic ambitions to North America. By the mid-nineteenth century, the United States concluded a commercial treaty with China, limited Europe's ability to restrict U.S. trade with China, and opened Japan to Western trade. U.S. trade with China and Japan expanded as clipper ships plied the sea lanes in record time between Asia and the United States. The U.S. Civil War reduced American trade in the Pacific for a time, but soon the United States was once again trading with Asian nations. As American economic interests in the Pacific expanded, so, too, did U.S. interest in acquiring Pacific islands to support expansion. Thus, in the 1890s, the United States acquired the Hawaiian Islands, Midway Island, Wake Island, and part of Samoa.

Spanish-American War
Brief 1898 war against Spain because of Spanish brutality in Cuba and U.S. desire to attain overseas territory.

The 1898 **Spanish-American War** made the world take note of the United States as a rising power as the United States and Spain fought over Spanish policy and presence in Cuba. The United States won an easy victory, in the process acquiring Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Guam, and, for a few years, Cuba. Not only had the United States defeated an established European power, albeit one in decline, but it also acquired heavily populated overseas territory. The United States had clearly become a colonial power.

This did not sit well with all Americans. Throughout most of the post–Civil War era, Americans did not agree on the U.S. role in world affairs. Both major political parties were generally against colonialism but divided on free trade and whether to intervene overseas. Disagreement became even more heated in 1899 when Filipinos revolted against U.S. rule. The United States sent nearly 200,000 troops to the islands over the next three years. When fighting finally ended in 1903, tens of thousands of Filipinos had died, along with five thousand Americans. The costs of empire were considerable.

The Roosevelt Corollary

In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt sent a naval squadron to Panama to help it win independence from Colombia. The following year, the United States initiated construction of the Panama Canal, which opened in 1914. The canal helped trade and enabled the navy to move ships quickly from the Atlantic to the Pacific and back again. Roosevelt's legacy also included the **Roosevelt Corollary** to the Monroe Doctrine, which stated:

Roosevelt Corollary
Concept developed by President Theodore Roosevelt early in the twentieth century that it was the U.S. responsibility to assure stability in Latin America and the Caribbean.

> Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in the general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States…to the exercise of an international police power.[5]

Under the Roosevelt Corollary, the United States intervened in the Caribbean and Latin America many times as Roosevelt and subsequent U.S. presidents sent U.S. troops

into Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nicaragua, Panama, Mexico, and elsewhere. During this era, many Latin Americans came to regard the United States as "the Colossus of the North," intervening in Latin American affairs whenever it wanted.

Photo courtesy: Bettmann/CORBIS

■ A cartoon depicting President Theodore Roosevelt's support of building the Panama Canal to strengthen the U.S. naval presence in the world.

World War I

When World War I broke out in Europe in 1914, the United States at first stayed out. It was a European war, according to most Americans, and no U.S. interests were involved. In addition, because the United States is a nation of British, French, Irish, German, and other immigrants, Americans were deeply divided on whom to support. It thus made sense for both foreign policy and domestic political reasons to stay out of the war. Indeed, when President Woodrow Wilson ran for a second term in 1916, he used the slogan "He kept us out of war" to win reelection.

Nevertheless, several events, especially Germany's policy of unrestricted submarine warfare, under which German subs sank U.S. ships carrying cargo to Great Britain and France, caused immense problems in U.S.-German relations. Finally, declaring that the United States was fighting "a war to end all wars," Wilson in 1917 led the nation into the conflict. American troops and supplies began to arrive just when the human and material resources of the United States' main allies, Great Britain and France, were nearly exhausted. Even though the United States entered the war late, its armed forces and economic assistance swung the tide of victory to the Allies' side.

After World War I, Wilson put great faith in **collective security** to maintain the peace. To Wilson, collective security was based on the premise that if one country attacked another, then other countries in the international community should all unite against the attacking country. Countries would thus ensure their security collectively.

collective security
The concept that peace would be secured if all countries collectively opposed any country that invaded another.

At the Paris Peace Conference following the war, Wilson was instrumental in creating a new international organization, the **League of Nations,** to implement collective security. However, he failed to build support for the League in the United States. A Democratic president with a Senate controlled by Republicans, Wilson failed to include GOP senators among the U.S. delegates to the Peace Conference. Besides partisan reasons, many senators believed that U.S. membership in the League of Nations would fly in the face of traditional U.S. isolationism and unilateralism. The Senate thus refused to give the necessary two-thirds vote to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, and the United States never joined the League.

League of Nations
Created in the peace treaty that ended World War I, it was an international governmental organization dedicated to preserving peace.

The Inter-War Years

Following rejection of the Treaty of Versailles, most Americans thought that U.S. interests were best served by isolationism and unilateralism. Nonetheless, new U.S. industries sought more raw materials from foreign countries and American businesses sought new markets overseas. During the 1920s, the United States became the world's leading source of credit and goods as the American economy prospered.

As Europeans rebuilt their economies, they presented a challenge to U.S. industry. Consequently, the Republican-controlled Congress during the 1920s raised tariffs to protect U.S. industry from foreign competition. In 1930, Congress passed the extremely high Smoot-Hawley Tariff, and other countries responded by raising their tariffs. The impact that higher tariffs had on world trade, in conjunction with the Great Depression, was dramatic. By 1932, trade dropped to about one-third its former level.[6]

As the Great Depression of the 1930s worsened, some Americans concluded that isolationism and unilateralism were wrong. They argued that the Depression was worse than it may have been because of the decline in trade brought about by high tariffs. Some also attributed the rise of Adolf Hitler and Japanese and Italian leaders bent on world domination to the economic turmoil of the times. In addition, they argued that without the United States, the League of Nations had proven incapable of preserving peace.

The United States and the rest of the world did little to oppose German, Japanese, and Italian aggression in the 1930s and the world slid toward war. Congress was particularly isolationist, passing Neutrality Acts to keep the United States from becoming involved in foreign conflicts. President Franklin Roosevelt occasionally warned against this mentality, but he also knew that the American people and Congress were unwilling to get pulled into another world war without a more direct threat to America itself.