



CHAPTER 19

Foreign and Military Policy

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 19-1** Summarize the different types of politics involved in American foreign policy.
- 19-2** Discuss the constitutional and legal context for making American foreign policy.
- 19-3** Explain how political elites and public opinion influence American foreign policy.
- 19-4** Explain the key challenges that the United States faces in foreign affairs and defense politics today.

Every American knows we struggle against terrorists—that is, against private groups that attack unarmed civilians. But this is not a recent development.

THEN

Between 1801 and 1805, President Thomas Jefferson sent our navy to fight the Barbary Pirates who operated out of various North African countries against merchant shipping in the Mediterranean. They were sponsored by the Ottoman Empire, a Muslim regime based in Turkey. In the 19th century, American warships did battle with pirates in the Caribbean and along our Atlantic coast. Some terrorists operated inside the country. John Brown fought against slavery by raiding the supplies of the American military at Harper's Ferry. One might sympathize with his antislavery views, but he and his followers killed innocent civilians. He was caught and hanged.

After the Civil War, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was formed to block the emancipation of blacks by lynching them and shooting into their homes as well as those of sympathetic whites. The first KKK, created in the 19th century, was replaced by a second one created in the 20th; each of them enrolled several million members and continued the policy of harassment and murder. Although a KKK still exists, it only has a few thousand members and rarely commits an illegal act. To defeat the Klan, in 1871 Congress passed the "Klan Act," which gave the president the power to suspend the writ of habeas corpus in any state where ordinary law enforcement procedures were unavailable, and afforded people the right to sue officials who violated their rights.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Weather Underground, a radical leftist organization, bombed police stations, the Pentagon, and a townhouse; threw Molotov cocktails through a judge's window; and robbed a Brink's armored car. Though several of its leaders have abandoned radical action and taken respectable jobs, they denounce conservatives in and out of government in the strongest language.

NOW

The 9/11 attacks by hijacked aircraft against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon ushered in a new phase and represented a much more deadly form of terrorism than what we have encountered in the past. This attack, as well as the 1998 bombing of two American embassies and the 2000 attack on the USS *Cole*, were carried out by al Qaeda, a radical Islamic group founded by Osama bin Laden and his colleagues. ("Al Qaeda" means "the base.") But these attacks were different from that on Pearl Harbor: the latter attack had, so to speak, a return address—we knew who did it and where they lived. But 9/11 had no return address; it was a terrorist attack waged by small groups that could be located anywhere.

In response, the United States launched an attack on Afghanistan, where the ruling party, the Taliban, had supported and helped train al Qaeda, and passed the Patriot Act, which improved cooperation among intelligence and law enforcement agencies. The federal government amended the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) that makes it possible for the government to eavesdrop on communications that cross our national



Aamir Qureshi/AFP/Getty Images

In May 2011 Osama bin Laden was killed by U.S. special forces in the house behind this wall, located in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

borders. In 2011, Osama bin Laden, the founder of al Qaeda, was found in Pakistan and killed by American special forces operatives.

Such choices must be made in a democracy, and some observers think democratic politics make managing foreign and military policy harder. Tocqueville said the conduct of foreign affairs requires precisely those qualities most lacking in a democratic nation: “A democracy can only with great difficulty regulate the details of an important undertaking, persevere in a fixed design, and work out its execution in spite of serious obstacles. It cannot combine its measures with secrecy or await their consequences with patience.”¹ In plain language, a democracy is forced to play foreign policy poker with its cards turned up. As a result, aggressors from Adolf Hitler to Saddam Hussein can bluff a democracy, but the reverse is far more difficult.

Other writers, however, disagree with Tocqueville. To them, the strength of democracy is that, though it rarely if ever wages an unjustified war on another country, its people, when mobilized by the president, will support our overseas engagements even when many deaths occur.²

19-1 Kinds of Foreign Policy

The majoritarian component of foreign policy includes those decisions (and nondecisions) perceived to confer widely distributed benefits and impose widely distributed costs. The decision to go to war is an obvious example of this. So, too, are the establishment of military alliances with Western Europe, the negotiation of a nuclear test ban treaty or a strategic arms limitation agreement, the response to the placement of Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba, and the opening of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. These may be good or bad policies, but the benefits and costs accrue to the nation generally.

Some argue that the costs of many of these policies are in fact highly concentrated—for example, soldiers bear the burden of a military operation—but that turns out, on closer inspection, not to shape the positions that people take on issues of war and peace. Though soldiers and their immediate families bear the costs of war to an especially high degree, public opinion surveys taken during the Vietnam War showed that having a family member in the armed forces did not significantly affect how people evaluated the war.³ There is a sense that, during wartime, we are all in this together.

Foreign policy decisions may also reflect interest-group politics. Tariff decisions confer benefits on certain business firms and labor unions and impose costs on other firms and unions. If the price of Japanese steel imported into this country is increased by tariffs,

quotas, or other devices, this helps the American steel industry and the United Steel Workers of America. On the other hand, it hurts those firms (and associated unions) that had been purchasing the once-cheap Japanese steel.

Examples of client politics also occur in foreign affairs. Washington often provides aid to American corporations doing business abroad because the aid helps those firms directly without imposing any apparent costs on an equally distinct group in society. Americans support Israel partly because Jewish organizations back them and partly because they admire that embattled democracy. Arab Americans have begun to organize and to press concerns on the government that are very different from the pro-Israel arguments.

Who has power in foreign policy depends very much on what kind of foreign policy we have in mind. Where it is of a majoritarian nature, the president is clearly the dominant figure, and much, if not everything, depends on the president's beliefs and skills, as well as those of top advisers. Public opinion will ordinarily support, but not guide, this presidential leadership. Woe to the president who forfeits that trust through questionable actions.

When interest group or client politics is involved, Congress plays a much larger role. Although Congress has a subsidiary role in the conduct of foreign diplomacy, the decision to send troops overseas, or the direction of intelligence operations, it has a large one in decisions involving foreign economic aid, the structure of the tariff system, the shipment of weapons to foreign allies, the creation of new weapons systems, and the support of Israel.

And Congress is the central political arena on those occasions when entrepreneurial politics shapes foreign policy. If a multinational corporation is caught in a scandal, congressional investigations shake the usual indifference of politicians to the foreign conduct of such corporations. If presidential policies abroad lead to reversals, as when in 1986 presidential aides sought to trade arms for U.S. hostages in Iran and then use some profits from the arms sales to support the anti-Marxist contras fighting in Nicaragua, Congress becomes the forum for investigations and criticism. At such moments Congress often seeks to expand its power over foreign affairs.

In this chapter, we are chiefly concerned with foreign policy insofar as it displays the characteristics of majoritarian politics. Limiting the discussion in this way permits us to focus on the grand issues of foreign affairs—war, peace, and global diplomacy. It allows us to see how choices are made in a situation in which public majorities support but do not direct policy, in which opinion tends to react to events, and in which interest groups are relatively unimportant.



Mohsen Shandiz/Corbis News/Corbis

A nuclear power plant in Iran raises concerns for the United States about potential threats to regional and international security.

19-2 The Constitutional and Legal Context

The Constitution defines the authority of the president and of Congress in foreign affairs in a way that, as Edward Corwin put it, is an “invitation to struggle.”⁴ The president is commander-in-chief of the armed forces, but Congress must authorize and appropriate money for those forces. The president appoints ambassadors, but they must be confirmed by the Senate. The president may negotiate treaties, but the Senate must ratify these by a two-thirds vote. Only Congress may regulate commerce with other nations and “declare” war. (In an early draft of the Constitution, the Framers gave Congress the power to “make” war but changed this to “declare” so that the president, acting without Congress, could take military measures to repel a sudden attack.) Because power over foreign affairs is shared by the president and Congress, conflict between them is to be expected.

Yet almost every American thinks instinctively that the president is in charge of foreign affairs, and what popular opinion supposes, the historical record confirms. Presidents have asserted the right to send troops abroad on their own authority in more than 125 instances. Only five of the more than one dozen major wars that this country has fought have followed a formal declaration of war by Congress.⁵ The State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Agency are almost entirely “presidential” agencies, with only modest congressional control. The Defense Department, though

keenly sensitive to congressional views on weapons procurement and the location of military bases, is very much under the control of the president on matters of military strategy. While the Senate has since 1789 ratified well over 1,000 treaties signed by the president, the president during this period also has signed around 7,000 executive agreements with other countries that did not require Senate ratification and yet have the force of law.⁶

Presidential Box Score

When the president seeks congressional approval for foreign policy matters, he tends to win more often than when he asks for support on domestic matters. One student of the presidency, Aaron Wildavsky, concluded that the American political system has “two presidencies”—one in domestic affairs that is relatively weak and closely checked, and another in foreign affairs that is quite powerful.⁷ As we shall see, this view considerably overstates presidential power in certain areas.

When it comes to international diplomacy and the use of American troops, the president is indeed strong, much stronger than the Framers may have intended and certainly stronger than many members of Congress would prefer. Examples abound:

- 1861: Abraham Lincoln blockaded southern ports and declared martial law.
- 1940: Franklin D. Roosevelt sent 50 destroyers to England to be used against Germany, with which we were then technically at peace.



CONSTITUTIONAL CONNECTIONS

Sending U.S. Troops Abroad

The Constitution divides responsibility for sending U.S. forces abroad between Congress and the president. Article I, Section 8, states, “The Congress shall have Power . . . To declare War,” while Article II, Section 2, says, “The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States.” In *Federalist* No. 69, Alexander Hamilton contrasted this power with that of the British king, saying the executive power would “be much inferior. . . . It would amount to nothing more than the supreme command and direction of the military and naval forces.”

In practice, though, American presidents have sent troops abroad on many occasions without a declaration of war (which Congress has issued in just five cases—the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War of 1848, the Spanish-American War of 1898, World War I, and World War II). After the undeclared wars of Korea and Vietnam, Congress passed the War Powers Resolution over President Richard M. Nixon’s veto to ensure that

the president would not send troops abroad indefinitely without legislative approval. But every president has said the War Powers Resolution is unconstitutional, and the issue almost certainly will not be decided in the courts, as that would require an actual test of the law with Congress ordering the president to bring troops home from a conflict or cutting off funding (both of which would risk danger on the battlefield).

Since the ending of the Cold War, presidents have secured joint resolutions of support from Congress for the use of military force in some, though not all, conflicts. But the Framers of the Constitution called for a much more active congressional role in deciding when to send troops abroad than has happened in practice. Achieving the Framers’ vision likely will require political will from both the legislative and executive branches.

Sources: Alexander Hamilton, *The Federalist Papers*: No. 69, “The Real Character of the Executive,” March 14, 1788; Louis Fisher, *Presidential War Power*, 3rd rev. ed. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013).

- 1950: Harry Truman sent American troops into South Korea to help repel a North Korean attack on that country.
- 1960s: John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson sent American forces into South Vietnam without a declaration of war.
- 1983: Ronald Reagan sent troops to overthrow a pro-Castro regime in Grenada.
- 1989: George H. W. Bush ordered the U.S. invasion of Panama to depose dictator Manuel Noriega.
- 1990: Bush ordered troops to Saudi Arabia in response to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait.
- 1999: Bill Clinton ordered the military to attack, with bombs and cruise missiles, Serbian forces that were trying to control Kosovo.
- 2001: George W. Bush sent U.S. troops to liberate Afghanistan from the Taliban, a regime supportive of Osama bin Laden, the architect of the September 11 terrorist attacks.
- 2003: Bush, with some allies, invaded Iraq.
- 2011: Barack Obama secured a UN Security Council resolution (but not congressional authorization) to give

military support to rebels in Libya, who successfully overthrown the repressive regime of Muammar Gaddafi.

However, by the standards of other nations, even other democratic ones, the ability of an American president to act decisively often appears rather modest. The United Kingdom was dismayed at the inability of Woodrow Wilson in 1914–1915 and Franklin Roosevelt in 1939–1940 to enter into an alliance when the Britons were engaged in a major war with Germany. Wilson was unable to bring the United States into the League of Nations. Gerald Ford could not intervene covertly in Angola in support of an anti-Marxist faction. Ronald Reagan was heavily criticized in Congress for sending 55 military advisers to El Salvador and a few hundred Marines to Lebanon. After George H. W. Bush sent U.S. troops to the Persian Gulf in 1990, he began a long debate with Congress over whether he would need a formal declaration of war before the troops were sent into combat. George W. Bush’s decision to invade Iraq in 2003 became bitterly controversial in the 2004, 2006, and 2008 elections.

Furthermore, a treaty signed by the president is little more than his promise to try to get the Senate to go along. He can sign executive agreements without Senate consent, but most of these are authorized in advance by Congress.⁸



HOW THINGS WORK

Shifting Patterns of Leadership in Foreign Policy

Depending on the personalities, skills, and interests of those involved, leadership in making American foreign policy may be found centered in the White House (the president and national security adviser) or in the State Department (the secretary of state).

Periods of White House Dominance

President	Secretary of State
Franklin D. Roosevelt	Cordell Hull (1933–1944)
John F. Kennedy (and National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy)	Dean Rusk (1961–1969)
Richard M. Nixon (and National Security Adviser Henry A. Kissinger)	William P. Rogers (1969–1973)

Periods of Leadership by the Secretary of State

Secretary of State	President
George C. Marshall (1947–1949) and Dean Acheson (1949–1953)	Harry S. Truman

John Foster Dulles (1953–1959)	Dwight D. Eisenhower
Henry A. Kissinger (1973–1977)	Gerald R. Ford
Warren Christopher (1993–1996)	Bill Clinton
Condoleezza Rice (2005–2009)	George W. Bush (and National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley)
Hillary Rodham Clinton (2009–2013)	Barack Obama (and National Security Adviser James Jones)

Periods of Tension between the White House and Secretary of State

President	Secretary of State
Jimmy Carter	Cyrus Vance (1977–1980)
Ronald Reagan	George Shultz (1982–1989)
George W. Bush	Colin Powell (2001–2005)

By contrast, the leaders of other democratic nations (to say nothing of totalitarian ones) often are able to act with much greater freedom. While Reagan was arguing with Congress over whether we should assign any military advisers to El Salvador, the president of France, François Mitterrand, ordered 2,500 combat troops to Chad with scarcely a ripple of opposition. A predecessor of Mitterrand, Charles de Gaulle, brought France into the European Common Market over the explicit opposition of the French Assembly and granted independence to Algeria, then a French colony, without seriously consulting the Assembly.⁹ British prime minister Edward Heath brought his country into the Common Market despite popular opposition, and the prime minister can declare war without the consent of Parliament.¹⁰

Evaluating the Power of the President

Whether one thinks the president is too strong or too weak in foreign affairs depends not only on whether one holds a domestic or international point of view but also on whether one agrees or disagrees with his policies. Historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., thought that President Kennedy exercised commendable presidential vigor when he made a unilateral decision to impose a naval blockade on Cuba to induce the Soviets to remove missiles installed there.

However, he viewed President Nixon’s decision to extend U.S. military action in Vietnam into neighboring Cambodia as a deplorable example of the “imperial presidency.”¹¹ To be sure, there were important differences between these two actions, but that is precisely the point: An office strong enough to do something that one thinks proper is also strong enough to do something that one finds wrong. The Supreme Court has fairly consistently supported the view that the federal government has powers in the conduct of foreign and military policy beyond those specifically mentioned in the Constitution. The leading decision, rendered in 1936, holds that the right to carry out foreign policy is an inherent attribute of any sovereign nation:

*The power to declare and wage war, to conclude peace, to make treaties, to maintain diplomatic relations with other sovereignties, if they had never been mentioned in the Constitution, would have vested in the Federal Government as necessary concomitants of nationality.*¹²

The individual states have few rights in foreign affairs. Moreover, the Supreme Court has been reluctant to intervene in disputes over the conduct of foreign affairs. When various members of Congress brought suit



In 1962 President Kennedy forced the Soviet Union to withdraw the missiles it had placed in Cuba after their presence was revealed by aerial photography.

challenging the right of President Nixon to enlarge the war in Vietnam without congressional approval, the court of appeals handled the issue, as one scholar was later to describe it, “with all the care of porcupines making love.” The Court said it was a matter for the president and Congress to decide and that if Congress was unwilling to cut off the money to pay for the war, it should not expect the courts to do the job for it.¹³

The Supreme Court upheld the extraordinary measures taken by President Lincoln during the Civil War and refused to interfere with the conduct of the Vietnam War by Presidents Johnson and Nixon.¹⁴ After Iran seized American hostages in 1979, President Carter froze Iranian assets in this country. To win the hostages’ freedom, the president later agreed to return some of these assets and to nullify claims on them by American companies. The Court upheld the nullification because it was necessary for the resolution of a foreign policy dispute.¹⁵

How great the deference to presidential power may be is vividly illustrated by the actions of President Franklin Roosevelt in ordering the army to move more than 100,000 Japanese Americans—the great majority of them born in this country and citizens of the United States—from their homes on the West Coast to inland “relocation centers” for the duration of World War II. Though this action was a wholesale violation of the constitutional rights of U.S. citizens and was unprecedented in American history, the Supreme Court decided that with the West Coast vulnerable to attack by Japan, the president was within his rights to declare that people of Japanese ancestry might pose a threat to internal security; thus the relocation order was upheld.¹⁶ (No Japanese American was ever found guilty of espionage or sabotage.) One of the few cases in which the Court denied the president broad war-time powers occurred in 1952, when it decided, 6-3, to

reverse President Truman’s seizure of the steel mills—a move that he had made in order to avert a strike that, in his view, would have imperiled the war effort in Korea.¹⁷

Checks on Presidential Power

If there is a check on the powers of the federal government or the president in foreign affairs, it is chiefly political rather than constitutional. The most important check is Congress’s control of the purse strings. In addition, Congress has imposed three important kinds of restrictions on the president’s freedom of action, all since Vietnam.

Limitations on the President’s Ability to Give Military or Economic Aid to Other Countries

Between 1974 and 1978, the president could not sell arms to Turkey because of a dispute between Turkey and Greece over control of the island of Cyprus. The pressure on Congress from groups supporting Greece was much stronger than that from groups supporting Turkey. In 1976, Congress prevented President Ford from giving aid to the pro-Western faction in the Angolan civil war. Until the method was declared unconstitutional, Congress for many years could use a legislative veto, a resolution disapproving of an executive decision (see Chapter 15), to block the sale by the president of arms worth more than \$25 million to another country.

The War Powers Act

Passed in 1973 over a presidential veto, this law placed the following restrictions on the president’s ability to use military force:

- The president must report in writing to Congress within 48 hours after introducing U.S. troops into areas where hostilities have occurred or are imminent.
- Within 60 days after troops are sent into hostile situations, Congress must, by declaration of war or other specific statutory authorization, provide for the continuation of hostile action by U.S. troops.
- If Congress fails to provide such authorization, the president must withdraw the troops (unless Congress has been prevented from meeting as a result of an armed attack).
- If Congress passes a concurrent resolution (which the president may not veto) directing the removal of U.S. troops, the president must comply.

Until recently the War Powers Act has had very little influence on American military actions. Since its passage, every president—Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush (41), Clinton, Bush (43), and Obama—has sent American forces abroad without any explicit congressional authorization.



National Archives and Records Administration

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, in 1942 President Roosevelt ordered that all Japanese Americans living on the West Coast be interned in prison camps.

(Bush (41) asked for that support when he attacked Iraq and, by a narrow margin, received it.) No president has acknowledged that the War Powers Act is constitutional. In its 1983 decision in the *Chadha* case, the Supreme Court struck down the legislative veto, which means that this section of the act is already in constitutional trouble.¹⁸

Even if the act is constitutional, politically it is all but impossible to use. Few members of Congress would challenge a president who carried out a successful military operation (e.g., those in Grenada, Panama, and at least initially in Afghanistan). More might challenge the president if, after a while, the military action were in trouble, but the easiest way to do that would be to cut off funding for the operation. But even during the Vietnam War, a conflict that preceded the War Powers Act, Congress, though it contained many critics of U.S. policy, never stopped military appropriations.

In 2011, however, after the United States, working with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), used military resources in support of rebels attacking the despotic regime of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, Republicans in Congress (who in the past had shown little interest in the War Powers Act) attacked President Obama over his failure to comply with it. Then in 2013, after Syria used chemical weapons against opposition rebel forces, President Obama said he would not authorize military action without congressional support, but Congress demurred.

Intelligence Oversight

Owing to the low political stock of President Nixon during the Watergate scandal and the revelations of illegal operations by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) within the United States, Congress required that the CIA notify appropriate congressional committees about any proposed covert action (between 1974 and 1980 it had to notify *eight* different committees). Today it must keep two groups, the House and the Senate Intelligence Committees, “fully and currently informed” of all intelligence activities, including covert actions. The committees do not have the authority to disapprove such actions.

However, from time to time Congress will pass a bill blocking particular covert actions. This happened when the Boland Amendment (named after its sponsor, Representative Edward Boland) was passed on several occasions between 1982 and 1985. Each version of the amendment prevented, for specifically stated periods, intelligence agencies from supplying military aid to the Nicaraguan contras.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks left everyone wondering why our intelligence agencies had not foreseen them. After the attacks, there was an investigation to find out why the CIA had not warned the country of this risk. In an effort to improve matters, Congress passed and President Bush signed a law creating the Office of the Director of National



HOW THINGS WORK

Rivalry versus Cooperation: The President and the Senate

Because the Senate must ratify treaties and consent to the appointment of ambassadors and other high foreign policy officials, it has the opportunity to play a large role in the conduct of foreign affairs. The key figure in the Senate is usually the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Depending on personalities and circumstances, the president and the committee chair have sometimes been able to work together closely, but at other times have been bitter, outspoken rivals. In general, cooperation occurs when there is a widely shared foreign policy worldview; rivalry erupts when worldviews diverge.

Periods of Shared Worldviews and Political Cooperation

<i>President</i>	<i>Chair of Foreign Relations Committee</i>
Franklin D. Roosevelt	Tom Connally (1941–1947, 1949–1953)

<i>President</i>	<i>Chair of Foreign Relations Committee</i>
Harry S. Truman	Arthur H. Vandenberg (1947–1949)

Periods of Competing Worldviews and Political Rivalry

<i>President</i>	<i>Chair of Foreign Relations Committee</i>
Woodrow Wilson	Henry Cabot Lodge (1919–1924)
Lyndon B. Johnson	J. William Fulbright (1959–1975)
Richard M. Nixon	J. William Fulbright (1959–1975)
Bill Clinton	Jesse Helms (1995–1999)

Intelligence (DNI). It was designed to coordinate the work of the CIA, the FBI, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and the intelligence units of several other government agencies. The DNI replaced the director of the CIA as the president's chief adviser. It is too early to tell how much real coordination will occur; the DNI's office is another large bureaucracy placed on top of other big ones.

19-3 Making Foreign Policy

From the time that Thomas Jefferson took the job in Washington's first administration until well into the 20th century, foreign policy was often made and almost always carried out by the secretary of state. No more. When America became a major world power during and after World War II, our commitments overseas expanded dramatically. With that expansion two things happened. First, presidents began to put foreign policy at the top of their agenda and to play a larger role in directing it. Second, that policy was shaped by the scores of agencies (some brand new) that had acquired overseas activities. While presidents and executive agencies now set the direction for American foreign policy, public opinion also shapes the broad outlines of American interests and priorities.

Political Elites

Today, Washington, D.C., has not one State Department but many. The Defense Department has military bases and

military advisers abroad. The Central Intelligence Agency has intelligence officers abroad, most of them assigned to "stations" that are part of the American embassy but not under the full control of the American ambassador there. The Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor have missions abroad. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Drug Enforcement Administration have agents abroad. The Agency for International Development has offices to dispense foreign aid in host countries. The U.S. Information Agency runs libraries, radio stations, and educational programs abroad.

Every new secretary of state bravely announces he or she is going to "coordinate" and "direct" this enormous foreign policy establishment. He or she never does. The reason is partly that the job is too big for any one person and partly that most of these agencies owe no political or bureaucratic loyalty to the secretary of state. If anyone is to coordinate them, it will have to be the president. But the president cannot keep track of what all these organizations are doing in the more than 190 nations and 50 international organizations where we have representatives, or in the more than 800 international conferences that we attend each year.

So the president now has a staff to coordinate foreign policy. That staff is part of the National Security Council (NSC), a committee created by statute and chaired by the president, whose members include by law the vice president and the secretaries of state and defense, by custom



LANDMARK CASES

Foreign Affairs

- ***Curtiss-Wright Export Corp. v. United States (1936)***: American foreign policy is vested entirely in the federal government, where the president has plenary power.
- ***Korematsu v. United States (1944)***: Sending Japanese Americans to relocation centers during World War II was based on an acceptable military justification.
- ***Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. v. Sawyer (1952)***: The president may not seize factories during war-time without explicit congressional authority even when they are threatened by a strike.
- ***Hamdi v. Rumsfeld (2004)***: An American citizen in jail because he allegedly joined the Taliban extremist group should have access to a “neutral decision maker.”
- ***Rasul v. Bush (2004)***: Foreign nationals held at Guantanamo Bay because they are believed to be terrorists have a right to bring their cases before an American court.
- ***Hamdan v. Rumsfeld (2006)***: The executive branch cannot unilaterally set up military commissions to try suspected terrorists; Congress must authorize their creation.
- ***Boumediene v. Bush (2008)***: Congress may not suspend the writ of habeas corpus for suspected terrorists held at Guantanamo Bay.

the director of national intelligence (DNI), the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and often the attorney general. Depending on the president, the NSC can be an important body in which to hammer out foreign policy. Attached to it is a staff headed by the national security adviser. That staff, which usually numbers a few dozen men and women, can be (again, depending on the president) an enormously powerful instrument for formulating and directing foreign policy.

Presidents Truman and Eisenhower made only limited use of the NSC staff, but beginning with President Kennedy it has grown greatly in influence. Its head, the national security adviser, has come to rival the secretary of state for foreign policy leadership, especially when the adviser is a powerful personality such as Henry Kissinger. President Reagan attempted to downgrade the importance of the national security adviser, but ironically it was one of his relatively low-visibility advisers, Admiral John Poindexter, and his subordinate, Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, who precipitated the worst crisis of the

Reagan presidency when, allegedly without informing the president, they tried to use cash realized from the secret sale of arms to Iran to finance guerrillas fighting against the Marxist government of Nicaragua. The sale and the diversion became known, North was fired, a congressional investigation ensued, criminal charges were filed against Poindexter and North, and the president’s political position was weakened. But even in ordinary times the NSC staff has been the rival of the secretary of state, except during that period in the Ford administration when Henry Kissinger held *both* jobs.

The way in which the machinery of foreign policymaking operates has two major consequences for the substance of that policy. First, as former secretary of state George Shultz asserted, “It’s never over.” Foreign policy issues are endlessly agitated, rarely settled. The reason is that the rivalries *within* the executive branch intensify the rivalries *between* that branch and Congress. In ways already described, Congress has steadily increased its influence over the conduct of foreign policy. Anybody in the executive branch who loses out in a struggle over foreign policy can take his or her case (usually by means of a well-timed leak) to a sympathetic member of Congress, who then can make a speech, hold a hearing, or introduce a bill.

Second, the interests of the various organizations making up the foreign policy establishment profoundly affect the positions that they take. Because the State Department has a stake in diplomacy, it tends to resist bold or controversial new policies that might upset established relationships with other countries. Part of the CIA has a stake in gathering and analyzing information; that part tends to be skeptical of the claims of other agencies that their overseas operations are succeeding. Another part of the CIA conducts covert operations abroad; it tends to resent or ignore the skepticism of the intelligence analysts. The air force flies airplanes and so tends to be optimistic about what can be accomplished through the use of air power in particular and military power in general; the army, on the other hand, which must fight in the trenches, is often dubious about the prospects for military success. During the American war in Iraq, the conflict between the CIA and the Defense Department was great, with each side leaking information to the press.

Americans often worry that their government is keeping secrets from them. In fact, there are no secrets in Washington—at least not for long.

Public Opinion

World War II was the great watershed event in American foreign policy. Before that time, a clear majority of the American public opposed active involvement in world affairs. The public saw the costs of such involvement as being substantially in excess of the benefits, and only

determined, skillful leaders were able, as was President Roosevelt during 1939–1940, to affect in even a limited fashion the diplomatic and military struggles then convulsing Europe and Asia.

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.” In 1939, after World War II had begun in Europe but before Pearl Harbor was attacked, only 13 percent of Americans polled thought that we should enter the war against Germany. Just a month before Pearl Harbor, only 19 percent felt that the United States should take steps, at the risk of war, to prevent Japan from becoming too powerful.¹⁹ Congress reflected the noninterventionist mood of the country: in the summer of 1941, with war breaking out almost everywhere, the proposal to continue the draft passed the House of Representatives by only one vote.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7 changed all that. Not only was the American war effort supported almost unanimously, not only did Congress approve the declaration of war with only one dissenting vote, but World War II—unlike World War I—produced popular support for an active assumption of international responsibilities that continued after the war had ended.²⁰ Whereas after World War I a majority opposed U.S. entry into the League of Nations, after World War II a clear majority favored our entry into the United Nations.²¹

This willingness to see the United States remain a world force persisted. Even during the Vietnam War, the number of people thinking that we should “keep independent” in world affairs as opposed to “working closely with other nations” rose from 10 percent in 1963 to only 22 percent in 1969.²² In 1967, after more than two years of war in Vietnam, 44 percent of Americans believed that this country had an obligation to “defend other Vietnams if they are threatened by communism.”²³

Before 9/11, hardly any American thought we should fight a war in Afghanistan, but after that attack we fought exactly that war in order to get rid of the Taliban regime. The Taliban, a group of radical young Muslims, had taken control of that country and allowed Osama bin Laden, the head of al Qaeda, to use the nation as a place to train and direct terrorists. Though al Qaeda designed and carried out the 9/11 attacks on America, it is not a single organization located in one place and is therefore very difficult to defeat. It is instead a network of terrorist cells found all over the world that is allied with other terrorist groups. Even after its leader was killed in 2011, al Qaeda continues to operate in many nations around the world (though arguably its power has been reduced).

But the support for an internationalist American foreign policy was, and is, highly general and heavily

dependent on the phrasing of poll questions, the opinions expressed by popular leaders, and the impact of world events. Public opinion, while more internationalist than once was the case, is both mushy and volatile. Just prior to President Nixon’s decision to send troops into Cambodia, only 7 percent of the people said they supported such a move. After the troops were sent and Nixon made a speech explaining his move, 50 percent of the public said they supported it.²⁴ Similarly, only 49 percent of the people favored halting the American bombing of North Vietnam before President Johnson ordered such a halt in 1968; afterward 60 percent of the people said they supported such a policy.²⁵

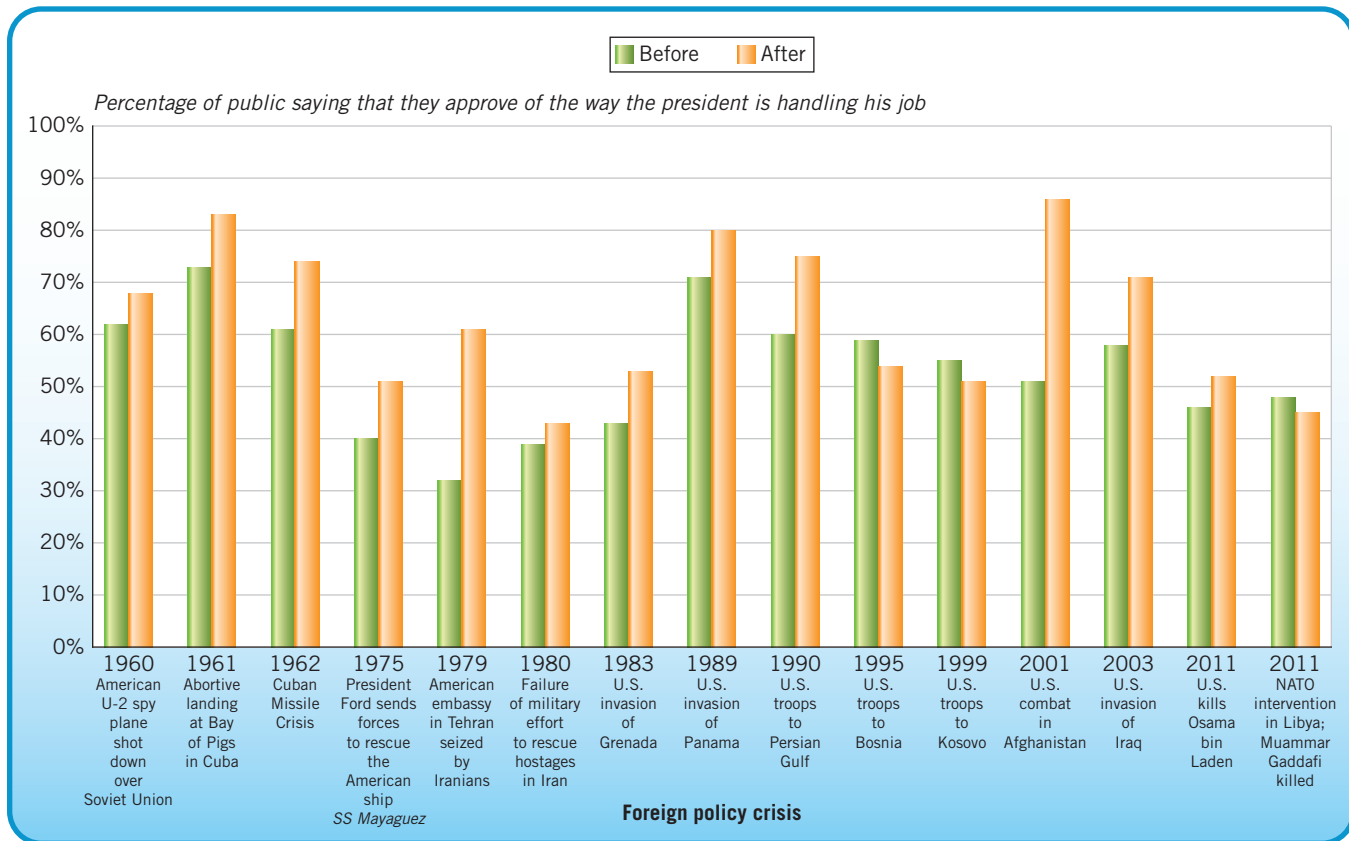
Backing the President

Much of this volatility in specific opinions (as opposed to general mood) reflects the already mentioned deference to the “commander-in-chief” and a desire to support the United States when it confronts other nations. Figure 19.1 shows the proportion of people who said that they approved of the way the president was doing his job before and after various major foreign policy events. Almost every foreign crisis increased the level of public approval of the president, often dramatically. The most vivid illustration of this was the Bay of Pigs fiasco: An American-supported, American-directed invasion of Cuba by anti-Castro Cuban émigrés was driven back into the sea. President Kennedy accepted responsibility for the aborted project. His popularity rose. (Comparable data for domestic crises tend to show no similar effect.)

This tendency to “rally round the flag” operates for some but not all foreign military crises.²⁶ The rally not only helped Kennedy after the Bay of Pigs, but it also helped Ronald Reagan when he invaded Grenada and George Bush (41) when he sent troops to fight Iraq. But it did not help Bill Clinton when he sent forces to Bosnia or launched bombing attacks on Iraq. If there is an attack on America, then the public typically unites in support of the president. Just before September 11, 2001, George W. Bush’s favorability rating was 51 percent; just after the attack, it was 86 percent.

Sometimes people argue that whatever support a president gets during a military crisis will disappear when American soldiers are killed in battle. But a close study of how casualty rates affect public opinion showed that although deaths tend to reduce how “favorable” people are toward a war, what they then support is not withdrawal but an *escalation* in the fighting so as to defeat the enemy more quickly. This was true during Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf War.²⁷

In sum, people tend to be leery of overseas military expeditions by the United States—until they start. Then

FIGURE 19.1 Popular Reactions to Foreign Policy Crises

Source: Updated from Theodore J. Lowi, *The End of Liberalism* (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 184. Poll data are from Gallup poll and *realclearpolitics.com*. Time lapse between “before” and “after” samplings of opinion was in no case more than one month.

they support them and want to win, even if it means more intense fighting. When Americans began to dislike our involvement in Korea and Vietnam,²⁸ they did not conclude that we should pull out; they concluded instead that we should do whatever was necessary to win. The invasion of Iraq did not raise large questions for many Americans until terrorist attacks on the American military continued after the Iraqi army had been defeated.

Despite the tendency for most Americans to rally round the flag, there has been for many decades some public opposition to almost any war in which the United States participates. About one-fifth of Americans opposed our invading Iraq, about the same level of opposition to our wars in Korea and Vietnam. Opposition has generally been highest among Democrats, African Americans, and people with a postgraduate degree.²⁹ For the U.S. intervention in Libya in 2011, just 47 percent of Americans approved of this military action, with 37 percent in opposition.³⁰

Mass Versus Elite Opinion

The public is poorly informed about foreign affairs. It probably has only a vague idea where Kosovo is, how far

it is from Baghdad to Kuwait, or why the Palestinians and the Jews disagree about the future of Israel. But that is to be expected. Foreign affairs are, well, foreign. They do not have much to do with the daily lives of American citizens, except during wartime. But the public, since World War II, has consistently felt that the United States should play an important international role.³¹ And if our troops go abroad, it is a foolish politician who will try to talk the public out of supporting them.

Political elites, however, have a different perspective. They are better informed about foreign policy issues, but their opinions are more likely to change rapidly. Initially, college-educated people gave *more* support to the war in Vietnam than those without college training; by the end of the war, however, that support had decreased dramatically. Whereas the average citizen was upset when the United States seemed to be on the *defensive* in Vietnam, college-educated voters tended to be more upset when the United States was on the *offensive*.³²

Though the average citizen did not want our military in Vietnam in the first place, he or she felt that we should support our troops once they were there. The average person also was deeply opposed to the antiwar protests taking place on college campuses. When the Chicago

police roughed up antiwar demonstrators at the 1968 Democratic Convention, public sentiment was overwhelmingly on the side of the police.³³ Contrary to myths much accepted at the time, younger people were *not* more opposed to the war than older ones. There was no “generation gap.”

By contrast, college-educated citizens, thinking at first that troops should be involved, soon changed their minds, decided that the war was wrong, and grew increasingly upset when the United States seemed to be enlarging the war (by invading Cambodia, for example). College students protested against the war largely on moral grounds, and their protests received more support from college-educated adults than from other citizens.

Elite opinion changes more rapidly than public opinion. During the Vietnam War, upper-middle-class people who regularly read several magazines and newspapers underwent a dramatic change in opinion between 1964 (when they supported the war) and 1968 (when they opposed it). But the views of blue-collar workers scarcely changed at all.³⁴

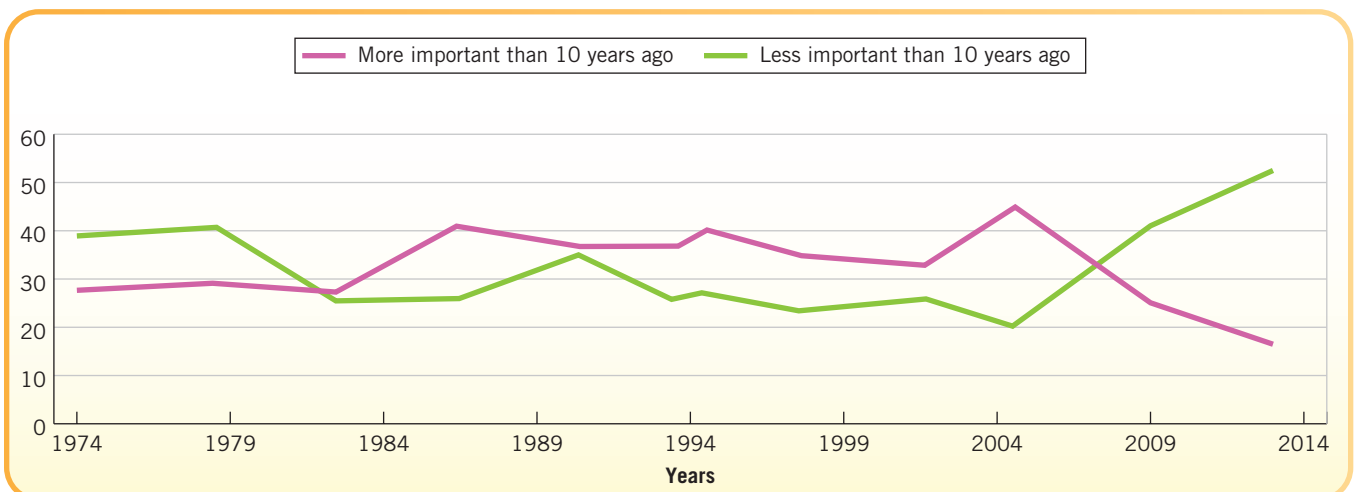
In general the leaders have a more liberal and internationalist outlook than the public: they are more likely to favor giving economic aid to other countries and defending our allies. The public, on the other hand, wants the United States to be less active overseas and worries about protecting the jobs of American workers. Accordingly, it wants the United States to protect American jobs from foreign competition and give less economic aid to other nations. As Figure 19.2 shows, from 2004 to 2014, the percentage of Americans who think the United States is less important and powerful as a world leader than it was a decade ago more than doubled.

Cleavages Among Foreign Policy Elites

As we have seen, public opinion on foreign policy is permissive and a bit mushy: It supports presidential action without giving it much direction. Elite opinion therefore acquires extraordinary importance. Of course events and world realities are also important, but since events have no meaning except as they are perceived and interpreted by people who must react to them, the attitudes and beliefs of those people in and out of government who are actively involved in shaping foreign policy often assume decisive importance.

Contrary to the views of people who think that some shadowy, conspiratorial group of insiders runs our foreign policy, the foreign policy elite in this country is deeply divided. That elite consists not only of those people with administrative positions in the foreign policy field—the senior officials of the State Department and the staff of the National Security Council—but also the members and staffs of the key congressional committees concerned with foreign affairs (chiefly the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House International Relations Committee) and various private organizations that help shape elite opinion, such as the members of the Council on Foreign Relations and the editors of two important publications, *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy*. To these must be added influential columnists and editorial writers whose work appears regularly in the national press. One could extend the list by adding ever-wider circles of people with some influence (lobbyists, professors, leaders of veterans’ organizations); this would complicate without changing the central point: Elite beliefs are probably more important in explaining foreign policy than in accounting for decisions in other policy areas.

FIGURE 19.2 Public’s View of America as a World Leader



Source: Andrew Kohut, “Americans: Disengaged, Feeling Less Respected, But Still See U.S. As World’s Military Superpower,” *Pew Research Center*, April 1, 2014.

worldviews

A comprehensive opinion of how the United States should respond to world problems.

isolationism The belief that the United States should withdraw from world affairs.

containment The belief that the United States should resist the expansion of aggressive nations, especially the former Soviet Union.

How a Worldview Shapes Foreign Policy

These beliefs can be described in simplified terms as **worldviews** (or, as some social scientists put it, as *paradigms*)—more or less comprehensive mental pictures of the critical problems facing the United States in the world and of the appropriate and inappropriate ways of responding to these problems. The

clearest, most concise, and perhaps most influential statement of one worldview that held sway for many years was in an article published in 1947 in *Foreign Affairs*, titled “The Sources of Soviet Conduct.”³⁵ Written by a “Mr. X” (later revealed to be George F. Kennan, director of the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department and thereafter ambassador to Moscow), the article argued that the Russians were pursuing a policy of expansion that could only be met by the United States’ applying “unalterable counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world.” This he called the strategy of “containment,” and it became the governing principle of American foreign policy for at least two decades.

There were critics of the containment policy at the time—Walter Lippmann, in his book *The Cold War*, argued against it in 1947³⁶—but the criticisms were less influential than the doctrine. A dominant worldview is important precisely because it prevails over alternative views. One reason why it prevails is that it is broadly consistent with the public’s mood. In 1947, when Kennan wrote, popular attitudes toward the Soviet Union—favorable during World War II when Russia and America were allies—had turned quite hostile. In 1946, less than one-fourth of the American people believed Russia could be trusted to cooperate with this country,³⁷ and by 1948 over three-fourths were convinced the Soviet Union was trying not simply to defend itself, but to become the dominant world power.³⁸

Such a worldview was also influential because it was consistent with events at the time: Russia had occupied most of the previously independent countries of Eastern Europe and was turning them into puppet regimes. When governments independent of both the United States and the Soviet Union attempted to rule in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, they were overthrown by Soviet-backed coups. A worldview also becomes

dominant when it is consistent with the prior experiences of the people holding it.

Four Worldviews

Every generation of political leaders comes to power with a foreign policy worldview shaped, in large measure, by the real or apparent mistakes of the previous generation.³⁹ This pattern can be traced back, some have argued, to the very beginnings of the nation. Frank L. Klingberg traces the alteration since 1776 between two national “moods” that favored first “extroversion” (or an active, internationalist policy) and then “introversion” (a less active, even isolationist, posture).⁴⁰

Since the 1920s, American elite opinion has moved through four dominant worldviews: isolationism, containment (or antiappeasement), disengagement, and human rights. **Isolationism** was the view adopted as a result of our unhappy experience in World War I. Our efforts to help European allies had turned sour: Thousands of American troops had been killed in a war that had seemed to accomplish little and certainly had not made the world, in Woodrow Wilson’s words, “safe for democracy.” As a result, in the 1920s and 1930s elite opinion (and popular opinion) opposed U.S. involvement in European wars.

The **containment** (or antiappeasement) paradigm was the result of World War II. Pearl Harbor was the death knell for isolationism. Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg of Michigan, a staunch isolationist before the attack, became an ardent internationalist not only during but after the war. He later wrote of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, “that day ended isolationism for any realist.”⁴¹ At a conference in Munich, efforts of British and French leaders to satisfy Hitler’s territorial demands in Europe had led not to “peace in our time,” as British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had claimed, but to ever-greater territorial demands and ultimately to world war. This crisis brought to power men determined not to repeat their predecessors’ mistakes: “Munich” became a synonym for weakness, and leaders such as Winston Churchill made anti-appeasement the basis of their postwar policy of resisting Soviet expansionism. Churchill summed up the worldview that he had acquired from the Munich era in a famous speech delivered in 1946 in Fulton, Missouri, in which he coined the term *iron curtain* to describe Soviet policy in Eastern Europe.

The events leading up to World War II were the formative experiences of those leaders who came to power in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. What they took to be the lessons of Pearl Harbor and Munich were applied repeatedly—in building a network of defensive alliances in Europe and Asia during the late 1940s and 1950s, in operating an airlift to aid West Berlin when road access



Corbis

A meeting that named an era: In Munich in 1938, British prime minister Neville Chamberlain attempted to appease the territorial ambitions of Hitler. Chamberlain's failure brought World War II closer.

to it was cut off by the Russians, in coming to the aid of South Korea, and finally in intervening in Vietnam. Most of these applications of the containment worldview were successful in the sense that they did not harm American interests, they proved welcome to allies, or they prevented a military conquest.

The **disengagement** (or “Vietnam”) view resulted from the experience of the younger foreign policy elite that came to power in the 1970s. Unlike previous applications of the anti-appeasement view, our entry into Vietnam had led to a military defeat and a domestic political disaster. There were three ways of interpreting that crisis: (1) we applied the correct worldview in the right place but did not try hard enough; (2) we had the correct worldview but tried to apply it in the wrong place under the wrong circumstances; or (3) the worldview itself was wrong. By and large, the critics of our Vietnam policy tended toward the third conclusion, and thus when they supplanted in office the architects of our Vietnam policy, they inclined toward a worldview based on the slogan “no more Vietnams.” Critics of this view called it the “new isolationism,” arguing that it would encourage Soviet expansion.

The debates over the Vietnam War colored many subsequent discussions of foreign policy. Almost every military initiative since then has been debated in terms of whether it would lead us into “another Vietnam”: sending

the Marines to Lebanon, invading Grenada, dispatching military advisers to El Salvador, supporting the contras in Nicaragua, helping South American countries fight drug producers, and sending troops to invade Iraq.

How elites thought about Vietnam affected their foreign policy views for many years. If they thought the war was “immoral,” they were reluctant to see American military involvement elsewhere. These elites played a large role in the Carter administration, but were replaced by rival elites—those more inclined to a containment view—during the Reagan presidency.⁴² When George H. W. Bush sought to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait, the congressional debate pitted those committed to containment against those who believed in disengagement. The Senate vote on Bush’s request for permission to use troops was narrowly carried by containment advocates.

When Clinton became president in 1992, he brought to office a lack of interest in foreign policy coupled with advisers who were drawn from the ranks of those who believed in disengagement. His strongest congressional supporters were those who had argued against the Gulf War. But then a remarkable change occurred. When Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbian leader, sent troops into neighboring Kosovo to suppress the ethnic Albanians living there, the strongest voices for American military intervention came from those who once advocated disengagement. During the Gulf War, 47 Senate Democrats voted to oppose U.S. participation. A few years later, 42 Senate Democrats voted to support our role in Kosovo.

What had happened? The change was inspired by the view that helping the Albanians was required by the doctrine of **human rights**. Liberal supporters of U.S. air attacks on Serbian forces believed that we were helping Albanians escape mass killing. By contrast, many conservative members of Congress who had followed a containment policy in the Gulf War now felt that disengagement ought to be followed in Kosovo. Of course, politics also mattered. Clinton was a Democratic president; Bush had been a Republican one.

But politics was not the whole story. Advocates of intervention declared that the attack in Kosovo resembled the genocide—that is, the mass murder of people because of their race or ethnicity—that the Jews had suffered in Nazi Germany. They held that we must “never again” permit a whole people to be killed. Anti-interventionists said if American foreign policy

disengagement The belief that the United States was harmed by its war in Vietnam and so should avoid supposedly similar events.

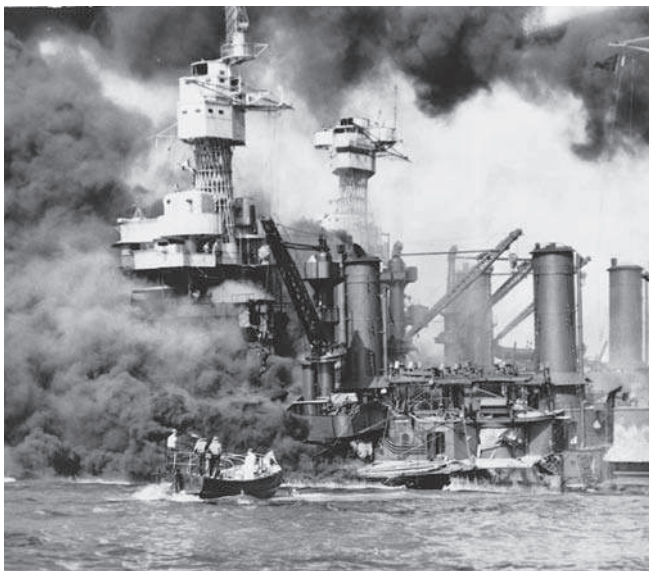
human rights The belief that we should try to improve the lives of people in other countries.

were guided by human rights, then the United States would have to send troops to many places. How would military action resolve a conflict that had gone on for centuries?

Policymakers wrestled with bringing together American principles and American interests, a challenge that became especially pressing after mass atrocities in ethnic conflicts around the globe in the 1990s. In Rwanda, a civil war between ethnic Hutus and Tutsis resulted in the deaths of 800,000 people in just a few months in 1994. The Canadian government subsequently convened an international commission in 2001 to develop guidelines for states to prevent such crimes against humanity in the future. The panel's report, "Responsibility to Protect," declared that state sovereignty includes an affirmative responsibility to protect citizens from large-scale human-rights violations, such as genocide or war crimes, and that states may take action (political or economic, with military force as a last resort) to ensure that other states uphold that responsibility. The United Nations adopted the "R2P" doctrine in 2005, though states differ sharply on where and how implementation is needed.⁴³

Political Polarization

For as long as we have records, public opinion has been slow to favor our military actions overseas in the abstract but quick to support them once they occur. However, that pattern ended with our invasion of Iraq in 2003. Public opinion became deeply divided about that war, with most Democrats strongly opposing it and most Republicans favoring it.



U.S. Navy

The battleship USS West Virginia burns after being hit by Japanese warplanes at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.



HOW WE COMPARE

Public Attitudes on America in the World

With the ending of the Cold War, the United States became the world's sole superpower, and it continues to be viewed as such in the 21st century. Both American and international public opinion show ambivalence about that role and U.S. responsibilities in the world in the twenty-first century.

A 2013 survey on "America's Place in the World" found that a majority of Americans, for the first time in almost 40 years, said the United States was a less important and powerful leader than it was 10 years earlier. Fifty-three percent of people surveyed held this view, more than double the percentage of 20 percent from 2004. The survey, sponsored by the Pew Research Center and the Council on Foreign Relations, also found that 70 percent of Americans viewed international respect for the United States as in decline, and that just over half of Americans thought the United States "should mind its own business internationally."⁴⁴ One year later, with the rise of Islamic extremists in Iraq and Syria, and intervention by Russia in the Ukraine, the percentage of Americans who said the United States was less important and powerful than 10 years earlier had dropped to 48 percent. And the percentage of Americans saying the United States did too little to address global problems had increased from 17 percent in 2013 to 31 percent.

Globally, majorities in 30 of 43 nations surveyed held positive views of the United States in 2014. Favorable views of the United States were high in Africa, Europe, Asia, and Latin America, but much lower in the Middle East. Young people in other countries were more likely than older people to view the United States positively. People in other countries also were strongly opposed to U.S. electronic surveillance programs and use of drones to attack terrorists. In the United States, half of Americans said drone strikes had made the United States safer, but just 39 percent said the same about government surveillance programs, and 31 percent said the same about the war in Afghanistan.

Sources: Pew Research Center, "Public Sees U.S. Power Declining as Support for Global Engagement Slips," December 3, 2013; Pew Research Center, "As New Dangers Loom, Most Think the U.S. Does 'Too Little' To Solve World Problems," August 28, 2014; Susan Page, "Poll: Amid Foreign Crises, More Americans Support U.S. Action," *USA Today*, August 28, 2014; Pew Research Center, "Global Opposition to U.S. Surveillance and Drones, But Limited Harm to America's Image," July 14, 2014; Pew Research Center, "Americans Divided on Whether Drones Make U.S. Safer," December 3, 2013.

That was not how things worked out during our wars in Korea and Vietnam. The war in Korea produced angry divisions in Congress, especially after General Douglas MacArthur, the allied commander in Korea, was fired in 1951 for having disobeyed the president. He received a hero's welcome when he returned to this country and gave an emotional speech to a joint session of Congress. Many Republicans demanded that President Truman be impeached. Despite this public support for MacArthur and these angry congressional words, the country was not split along partisan lines. Slightly more Republicans than Democrats said the war was a mistake (roughly half of each party), but the differences between these voters was not great.

The war in Vietnam split American political elites even more deeply. Journalists and members of Congress took sharply opposing sides, and some Americans traveled to North Vietnam to express their support for the Communist cause. When the North Vietnamese launched a major offensive to destroy American and South Vietnamese troops during the Tet holidays in 1968, it failed, but the American press reported it as a Communist victory, and demands to bring our troops home were heard during the presidential campaign that year. But public opinion did not divide along party lines; in 1968, Democratic and Republican voters had just about the same views (a little over half thought the war was a mistake, about a third thought it wasn't).

Our invasion of Iraq was a different story. From the very first, Democratic voters strongly opposed it and Republican ones favored it. By 2006, 76 percent of Democrats said we should have stayed out of Iraq, while 71 percent of Republicans said that the invasion was the right thing to do.⁴⁵

American public opinion has become more polarized by our foreign policy. **Polarization** means a deep and wide conflict, usually along party lines, over some government policy (recall our discussion in Chapter 7). It has replaced the bipartisan foreign policy of World War II and the modest differences in public opinion during Korea and Vietnam.⁴⁶

It is clear from Figure 19.3 that what political party we belong to is strongly linked to our views on foreign policy. The public is deeply divided about these matters, and so, we think, will be the people for whom they vote.

But, we would emphasize that this does not mean the American public has deeply divided views about foreign policy aims. All Americans—Democrats and Republicans alike—want peace, prosperity, and security, and they support troops that are deployed.⁴⁷ Americans tend to divide along party lines on conflicts like Iraq when elites divide along party lines. As we saw in Chapter 7, ordinary voters are taking their cues from elites from their political party, and divisions on foreign policy reflect divisions among

Congressional elites. While elites were divided on Vietnam, that division existed within both parties in Congress, and so public opinion was less polarized by party during those conflicts.⁴⁸

Whether the public is divided along party lines in future conflicts depends a great deal on how elites divide on those conflicts.

polarization A deep and wide conflict over some government policy.

military-industrial complex An alleged alliance between military leaders and corporate leaders.

19-4 The Politics of Foreign Affairs: Military Action, Defense Policy, and the Future

There are two views about the role of the military in American life. One is majoritarian: The military exists to defend the country or to help other nations defend themselves. When troops are used, almost all Americans benefit and almost all pay the bill. (Some Americans, such as those who lose a loved one in war, pay much more than the rest of us.) The president is the commander-in-chief, and Congress plays a largely supportive role.

Although the other view does not deny that the armed forces are useful, it focuses on the extent to which the military is a large and powerful client. The real beneficiaries of military spending are the generals and admirals, as well as the big corporations and members of Congress whose districts get fat defense contracts. Everyone pays, but these clients get most of the benefits. What we spend on defense is shaped by the **military-industrial complex**, a supposedly unified bloc of Defense Department leaders and military manufacturers. From this perspective, there are two key issues in national defense: how much money we spend and how it is divided up. The first reflects majoritarian politics, the second, interest-group bargaining.

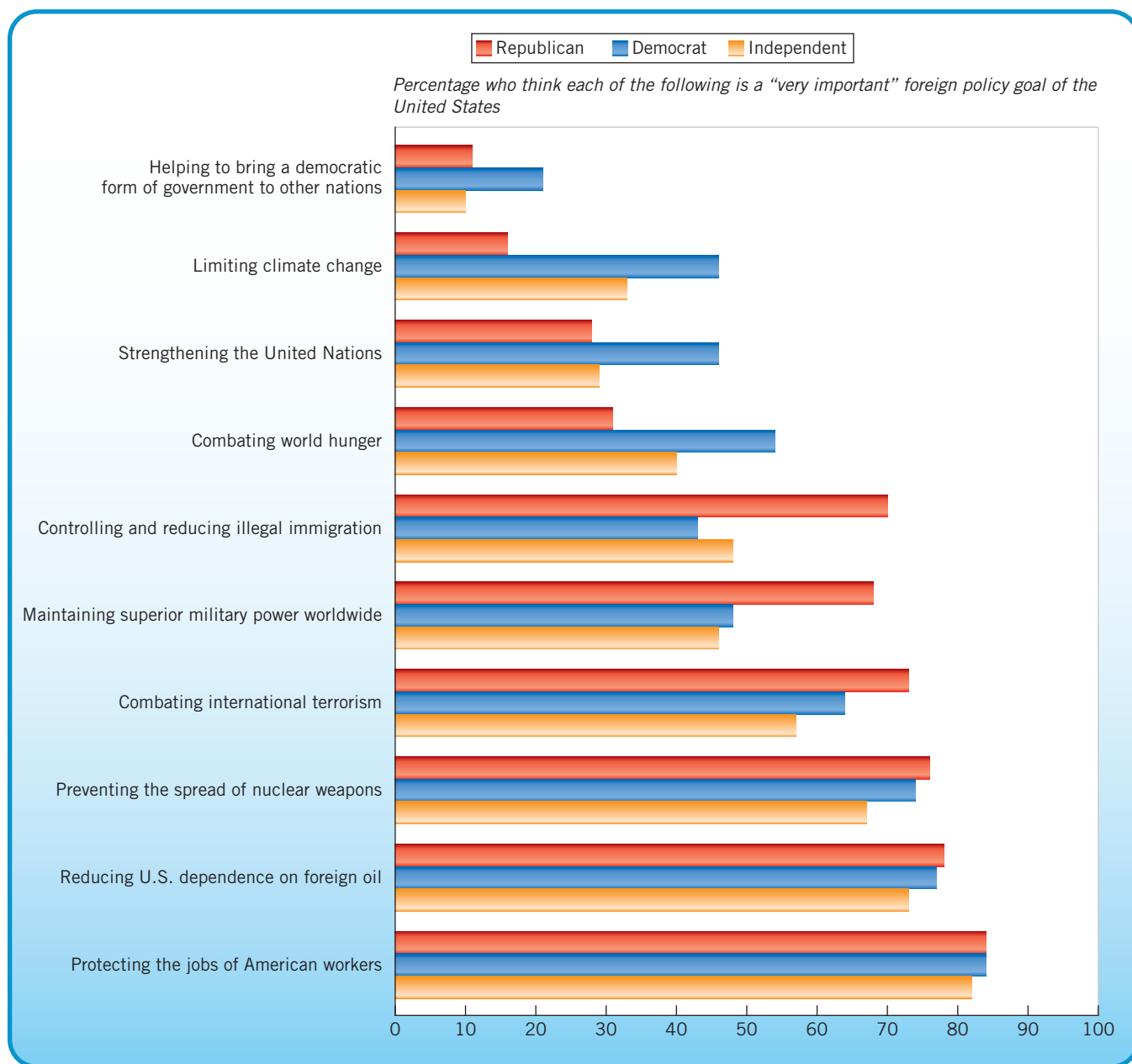
Military Action

Foreign policy takes many forms—discussions are held, treaties are signed, organizations are joined—but in many cases it depends on the ability to use military force. Troops, ships, and aircraft are not the only ways of influencing other countries; international trade and foreign aid are also useful. But in modern times, as in the past, the nations of the world know the difference between a “great power” (i.e., a heavily armed one) and a weak nation.

During the Cold War, distinctions between nations were relatively easy. For a half century, each American president, operating through the National Security Council, made it clear that our chief goal was to prevent the Soviet

FIGURE 19.3 Foreign Policy Goals

Percentage who think each of the following is a “very important” foreign policy goal of the United States.



Source: Chicago Council on Global Affairs, “Foreign Policy in the New Millennium: Results of the 2012 Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy,” Table 5.2, “Foreign Policy Goals,” p. 43.

bipolar world A political landscape with two superpowers.

unipolar world A political landscape with one superpower.

Union from overrunning Western Europe, bombing the United States, or invading other nations. But since the Soviet Union has disappeared, no other nation has acquired the power to

take its place. During the Cold War, we lived in a **bipolar world** made up of two superpowers. Now we live in a

unipolar world made up of the United States as the only superpower.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, one might think that military power would become less important. But in fact it remains as important as ever. Since the Soviet Union was dissolved and the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, the United States has used military force to attack Iraq, maintain order in Bosnia, defend Kosovo, and go to war in Afghanistan. Various rogue nations, such as Iran and North Korea,

have acquired or are about to acquire long-range rockets and weapons of mass destruction (i.e., nuclear, chemical, and biological arms). Many nations that feel threatened by their neighbors, such as China, India, Pakistan, and Israel, have nuclear bombs. And Russia still has many of the nuclear weapons that the old Soviet Union built. As the events of the 1990s and early 21st century make clear, by no means has the end of the Cold War meant the end of war.

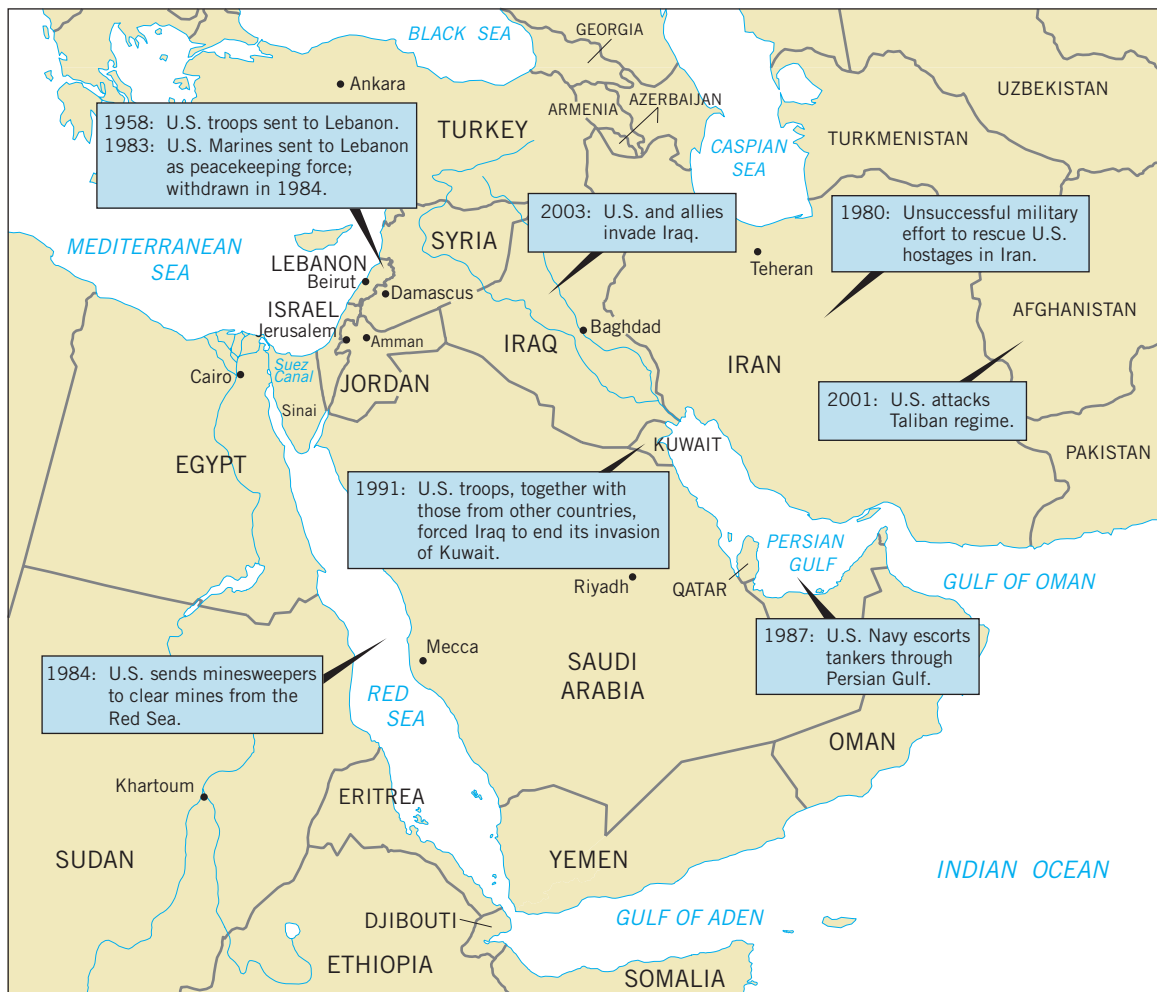
The Post-Cold War Era and the Persian Gulf War

Although the Soviet Union did not formally dissolve until the end of 1991, the ending of the Cold War became clear when the two superpowers worked together to resolve an international conflict. In the summer of 1990, the Iraqi army under Saddam Hussein invaded neighboring Kuwait. Calling for Iraq to withdraw, President George H. W. Bush declared that nations uniting to oppose the invasion were creating a “new world order. . . A world where the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle. . . A world

where the strong respect the rights of the weak.”⁴⁹ The United Nations Security Council subsequently passed a resolution demanding that Iraq withdraw and authorizing force to expel it. In January 1991, the United States led a coalition of forces from several nations that attacked Iraq; within 100 days, the Iraqi army had retreated from Kuwait and fled home. The U.S.-led military forces ended their attack, allowing Saddam to remain in power in Baghdad, the Iraqi capital.

After the war, a no-fly zone was established under which Iraqi flights in certain areas were prohibited. This ban was enforced for 12 years by U.S., British, and French planes that shot down Iraqi aircraft violating the rule. Throughout this time, United Nations (UN) inspectors were sent to Iraq to look for weapons of mass destruction (WMDs): chemical, biological, and nuclear materials that could be used to attack others. There was no doubt Iraq could produce such weapons, as Saddam had dropped chemical weapons on people living in his own country. The UN inspectors found evidence of such a program, but in 1997 Saddam expelled them from his country, only to allow them to return

MAP 19.1 U.S. Military Intervention in the Middle East



What Would You Do?

NEWS

Memorandum

To: President Grace Smith

From: National security adviser Arjun Luce

Subject: Hostages

The six Americans held hostage in the Middle East are beginning their second year of captivity. One, a CIA officer, is undergoing torture. It has been the policy of this administration not to negotiate with terrorists. Criticism of this refusal is being heard from hostage families and their sympathizers. The terrorist groups are demanding that we end our support of Israel. A government in the region has secretly indicated

> American Hostages Begin Second Year of Captivity: Families Urge President to Negotiate Freedom

The families of the six American hostages held captive in the Middle East today criticized the president for failing to win their release.

that, in exchange for military supplies, it may be able to help win the release of "some" hostages.

Your options:

1. Maintain the "no-negotiations" policy but use quiet diplomacy with friendly nations in the region to see whether they can intercede with the terrorist groups on behalf of the hostages.

Advantages: (a) Our "no-negotiations" policy remains credible, and this will deter other terrorist groups from thinking that they can win concessions by capturing Americans. (b) This policy is consistent with our insistence that U.S. allies not negotiate with terrorists.

Disadvantages: (a) There is no evidence that our traditional policy will get the hostages released. (b) Public sympathy for the hostages may increase, and this will lead to more criticism of this administration for failing to free captive Americans.

2. Secretly exchange arms for the release of Americans.

Advantages: (a) Some or all hostages may be released. (b) We may earn the goodwill of more moderate elements in the area and thereby increase our influence there.

Disadvantages: (a) We may deliver arms and no hostages will be released. (b) If secret arms deliveries become public, we will be heavily criticized for abandoning our "no-negotiations" policy.

3. Use military units to find and free the hostages.

Advantage: The hostages may be freed without our having to make any concessions.

Disadvantages: (a) The military is not optimistic that it can find and free the hostages, who are being kept in hidden, scattered sites. (b) The hostages may be killed during the rescue effort.

Your decision

☐ Option 1

☐ Option 2

☐ Option 3

a few years later. Many U.S. political leaders began to conclude that the Iraq regime was a threat to peace. In 1998, President Bill Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act, which called for new leadership in Iraq. How this change would be achieved, however, was unclear.

Combating Terrorism After 9/11

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, U.S. foreign and military policy have focused on how to combat the perpetrators of terrorism and what to do with nations we have conquered that harbored terrorists. President George W. Bush in September 2002 issued a document that emphasized a new view of our policies. Instead of waiting to be attacked, the president said America “will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed” because we “cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best.” We will identify and destroy a terrorist threat “before it reaches our borders” and “we will not hesitate to act alone.”⁵⁰ In the case of Iraq, this meant a commitment to “regime change”; that is, getting rid of a hostile government, even if the United Nations did not support us.

This has been called a doctrine of preemption; that is, of attacking a determined enemy before it can launch an attack against us or an ally. In fact, it is not really new.

President Bill Clinton launched cruise missile strikes against training camps that followers of Osama bin Laden were using in the aftermath of their bombing of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. President George W. Bush elevated the policy of preemption into a clearly stated national doctrine.

Afghanistan and Iraq

The United States did not employ preemption in Afghanistan in 2001, as Congress’s September 18 joint resolution authorized the use of military force against the perpetrators of the 9/11 terrorist attacks as well as nations that had aided or harbored them.⁵⁴ The United States and Great Britain commenced air strikes in Afghanistan in October 2001 and quickly forced the Taliban from power. The escape of terrorist leader Osama bin Laden, though, became a major point of contention for critics of the war. U.S. troops remained in Afghanistan, and in 2003, NATO sent peacekeeping forces to the country.⁵⁵

Congress also passed a joint resolution in October 2002 authorizing the use of force in Iraq if Saddam Hussein did not comply with weapons inspections. The following month, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed a resolution that gave Iraq one final opportunity



POLICY DYNAMICS: INSIDE/OUTSIDE THE BOX

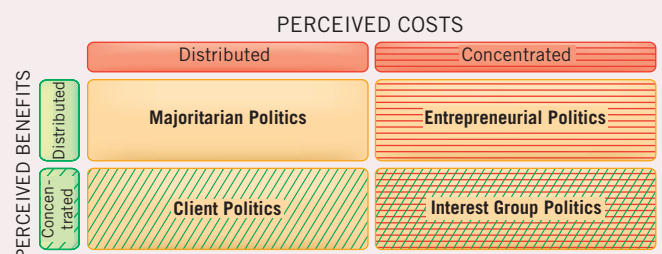
The Iraq War: Majoritarian or Client Politics?

The George W. Bush administration sent U.S. forces into Iraq in the spring of 2003 to depose Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, who had failed repeatedly to comply with United Nations inspections of Iraq facilities to ensure that Iraq was no longer producing weapons of mass destruction (WMD). President Bush declared that the Iraq invasion was necessary to keep the United States and the world safe from potential attack, making his case through majoritarian politics—everyone would bear the cost of war to ensure global security. As he said at the outset of the invasion in March 2003, “The people of the United States and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder.”⁵¹

The United States succeeded quickly in toppling Saddam Hussein’s regime, but did not find the expected WMD stockpiles in Iraq.⁵² Nevertheless, the Bush White House said the possible existence of these programs justified intervention. Furthermore, on humanitarian grounds, removing from power a brutal dictator who had committed atrocities against his own people provided strong justification for intervention, as did the prospect of bringing democracy to Iraq. President Bush provided a strong defense of the war

in his memoirs: “America is safer without a homicidal dictator pursuing WMD and supporting terror at the heart of the Middle East. The region is more hopeful with a young democracy setting an example for others to follow. And the Iraqi people are better off with a government that answers to them instead of torturing and murdering them.”⁵³

But humanitarian intervention and democracy promotion often are viewed as client politics—Americans as a whole pay for people in another nation to benefit—and making a case for the legitimacy of such interventions is more difficult than with majoritarian politics. How history will evaluate the Iraq war and its consequences for the United States and the world remains to be seen.



to provide a full accounting of its WMD programs, or face “serious consequences.” But when Iraq did not comply, the Security Council lacked consensus on whether the November 2002 resolution authorized military force, and U.S. efforts to secure another resolution explicitly granting that authorization were unsuccessful.⁵⁶

Unable to convince the United Nations to support a war, America, the United Kingdom, and other countries decided to act alone. On March 30, 2003, they invaded Iraq in a campaign called Operation Iraqi Freedom; within about six weeks, the Iraqi army was defeated and the American-led coalition occupied all of the country. After the war, a large group of inspectors toured Iraq looking for WMDs, but they found virtually none. Later, a bipartisan commission concluded that Saddam had apparently cancelled his WMD program, but had told hardly any of his own military leaders about this.⁵⁷

The newly freed Iraqi people voted first for an interim parliament, then for a new constitution, and finally for a regular government. But this process was offset by the terrorist activities of various insurgents, first aimed at American troops and later at Iraqi civilians, killing several tens of thousands of them. The situation in Iraq became a major American political issue, contributing to the loss of the Republican congressional majority in the 2006 elections.

After conquering Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States faced the problem of rebuilding these nations. The United States has had a lot of experience, some good and some bad, with this problem. We helped put Germany and Japan back on their feet after World War II. From 1992 to 1994, we tried to bring peace among warring factions to Somalia. From 1994 to 1996, we worked to install a democratically elected president and

rebuild the local police force in the Caribbean country of Haiti. Starting in 1995, we worked with European allies to restore order to Bosnia and Kosovo, located in what used to be Yugoslavia. In 2001, we began helping Afghans create a new government and economy, and in 2003 we started doing the same thing in Iraq. We succeeded in Germany and Japan, failed in Somalia and Haiti, and made progress in Bosnia and Kosovo.⁵⁸

After easily defeating the Iraqi army in 2003, we tried to bring stability and democracy to the country in mistaken ways. We abolished the Iraqi army (and so had no native defense force), relied on too few American troops (and so could not pacify the country), and kept these troops when they were not fighting in American compounds (thus leaving Iraqi civilians unprotected). Iran funneled arms and terrorists into the country to help attack American soldiers. Public opinion in this country, though deeply divided along party lines, became hostile to our efforts there.

To deal with this problem, President Bush (over the objections of many subordinates) announced a new strategy. We would send another 30,000 troops to Iraq (the “surge”) and instruct these troops to work in Iraqi neighborhoods and build alliances with local groups. He assigned General David Petraeus to be the military leader.

The surge worked. Deaths of American forces and Iraqi civilians fell dramatically, an elected Iraqi government began to function effectively, and new Iraqi elections in 2009 were held peacefully. The American government negotiated an agreement with Iraqi leaders that called for withdrawing most American troops from the country by 2011. Because of this progress and because our economy went into a recession, American public opinion began to lose interest in Iraq.



HOW THINGS WORK

The Paradoxes of Fighting Insurgents

The U.S. Army Field Manual lists some paradoxes of fighting terrorists and insurgents. It was the manual used during the Iraq War.

Sometimes, the more you protect your force, the less secure you are.

You may be safe staying barricaded in compounds, but you lose contact with the people.

Some of the best weapons for fighting insurgents do not shoot.

Diplomacy, communications, and economic development can be more effective than guns.

Many important decisions are not made by generals.

Teaching lower-ranking personnel how to think and adapt is more important than teaching them what to think.

Sometimes the more force is used, the less effective it is.

Using too much force can hurt civilians and generate sympathy for insurgents.

Afghanistan is a more difficult problem. Unlike Iraq, it has never been a unified nation and lacks a large middle class or many populous cities. We easily defeated the Taliban regime and managed to put in office a moderate leader. Troops from other nations arrived to help out. But creating an effective central government in a country that has rarely had one and ending terrorist attacks have proved to be difficult assignments. During the 2008 presidential campaign, Barack Obama promised to send more forces to that country, and beginning in 2009 he did so. By the middle of the year we had 60,000 troops there, but they were not enough.

In 2009, the general leading U.S. forces in Afghanistan asked President Obama for another 40,000 troops; the president sent 30,000. In 2011, the Obama administration began to draw down its “surge” in Afghanistan, with fewer than 10,000 troops there in 2015, and plans to withdraw all U.S. forces by the end of the president’s second term.⁵⁹ But the prospects for long-term stability in the country and region remained uncertain.

Building Support for U.S. Military Action

Supporters of Bush’s preemption strategy hailed it as a positive step to defeat terrorists abroad before they could attack us at home. Critics attacked the argument as justifying preemptive and possibly unjust wars and abandoning the United Nations. This debate has divided Congress in a way that puts an end to the old adage that partisanship ends at the water’s edge.

Since the end of the Cold War, we have not had a common enemy that, in the opinion of critics of our overseas efforts, should justify a nonpartisan view. As noted earlier (see pp. 495–497), most liberal Democrats opposed both our effort to get Iraq out of Kuwait in 1991 and our invasion of Iraq in 2003; most Republicans supported both efforts.⁶⁰ But when President Clinton launched attacks on hostile forces in Kosovo, he was supported by many liberal Democrats and opposed by many conservative Republicans.⁶¹ Party differences and political ideology now make a big difference in foreign policy.

In the 20th century, the United States sometimes sought and obtained United Nations support, as with going to war in Korea (1950) and in launching the military effort to force Iraqi troops out of Kuwait (1991). The United States did not have UN authorization to fight against North Vietnam (in the 1960s), occupy Haiti (1994), or assist friendly forces in Bosnia (1994) or Kosovo (1999). In the aftermath of 9/11, policymakers are divided over whether the United States should “go it alone” against its enemies abroad, or do so only on the basis of a broad coalition of supporting nations. The first President Bush assembled just such a coalition to force Iraq out of Kuwait, but

the second President Bush acted without UN support in invading Afghanistan and later Iraq, though he received crucial support from the United Kingdom, Australia, and Poland.

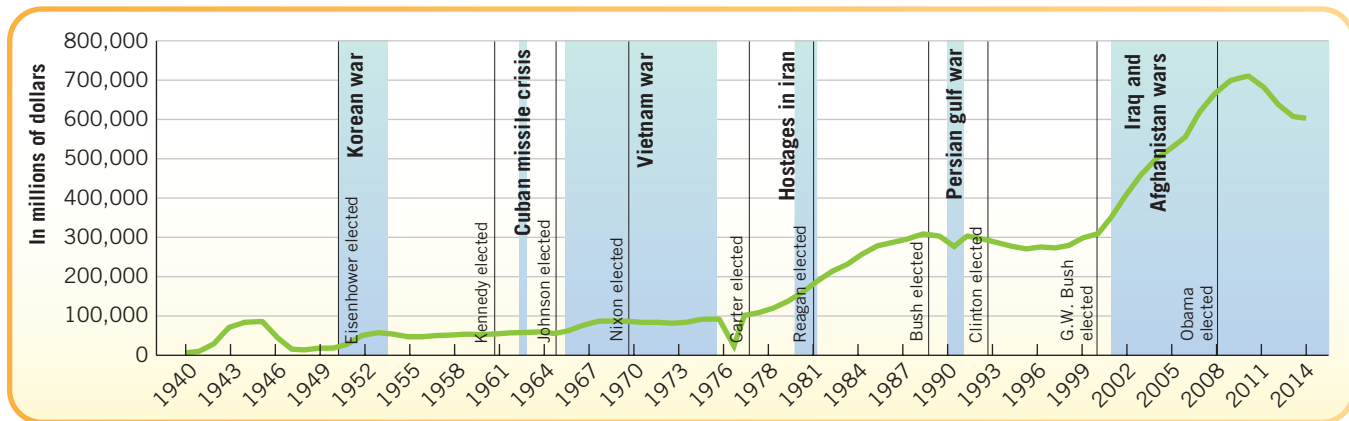
The Obama administration has had many disputes with Congress in foreign affairs. In 2012, Obama said use of chemical weapons by Syria would cross a “red line” that could prompt military intervention, but when Syria gassed its own people one year later, the president said he would act only with legislative authorization, which Congress did not grant.⁶² (The United States and Russia ultimately negotiated a deal with Syria to destroy its chemical weapons.)

In the summer of 2014, Obama approved air strikes against Islamic militants in the Middle East (known as ISIS—the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria—or ISIL—the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) without congressional approval. He did request a resolution afterward authorizing the use of force, saying it was not necessary for him to act, but would demonstrate American unity.⁶³ The Obama administration also pursued discussions with Iran to end its nuclear program, but in the face of strong legislative opposition, the president agreed in the spring of 2015 that Congress would have a formal say in any accord.⁶⁴ When the administration announced an agreement a few months later, many legislators - primarily Republicans, but also some Democrats - declared that the deal would endanger U.S. national security.⁶⁵ These strong public conflicts between the executive and legislative branches in the 21st century make clear that the Cold War consensus in foreign affairs (though certainly not as cohesive as sometimes suggested) no longer guides decision making.

Defense Policy

Throughout most of our history the United States has not maintained large military forces during peacetime. For instance, the percentage of the gross national product (GNP) spent on defense in 1935, on the eve of World War II, was about the same as it was in 1870, when we were on the eve of nothing in particular. We armed when a war broke out, then we disarmed when the war ended.

But all of that changed after World War II, when defense spending declined sharply but did not return to its prewar levels. And in 1950, our defense expenditures soared again. In that year, we rearmed to fight a war in Korea, but when it was over, we did not completely disarm. The reason was our containment policy toward the Soviet Union. For about 40 years—from the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991—American military spending was driven by our desire to contain the Soviet Union and its allies. The Soviet Union had brought under its control most of Eastern Europe; would it also invade Western Europe?

FIGURE 19.4 Trends in Military Spending

Source: The White House, Office of Management and Budget, *Historical Tables*, Table 3.1—Outlays by Superfunction and Function, 1945–2020.

Russia had always wanted access to the oil and warm-water ports of the Middle East; would the Soviets someday invade or subvert Iran or Turkey? The Soviet Union was willing to help North Korea invade South Korea and North Vietnam to invade South Vietnam; would it next use an ally to threaten the United States? Soviet leaders supported “wars of national liberation” in Africa and Latin America; would they succeed in turning more and more nations against the United States?

To meet these threats, the United States built up a military system designed to repel a Soviet invasion of Western

Europe and at the same time help allies resist smaller-scale invasions or domestic uprisings. Figure 19.4 shows U.S. military spending from World War II to the present. It illustrates that even after we decided to keep a large military force after World War II, there have been many ups and downs in the actual level of spending. After the Korean War was over, we spent less; when we became involved in Vietnam, we spent more; when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and we invaded Iraq, we spent more again. These changes in spending tended to reflect changes in public opinion about the defense budget.

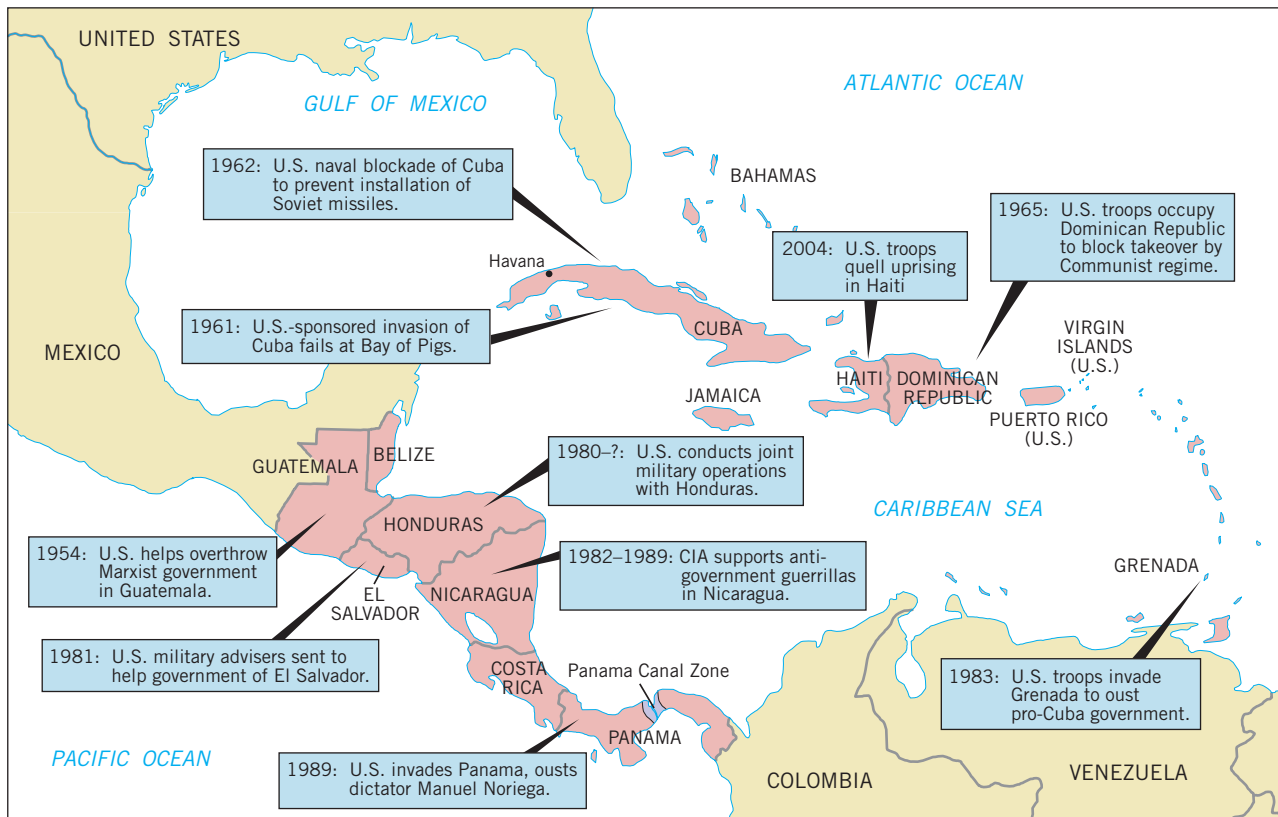
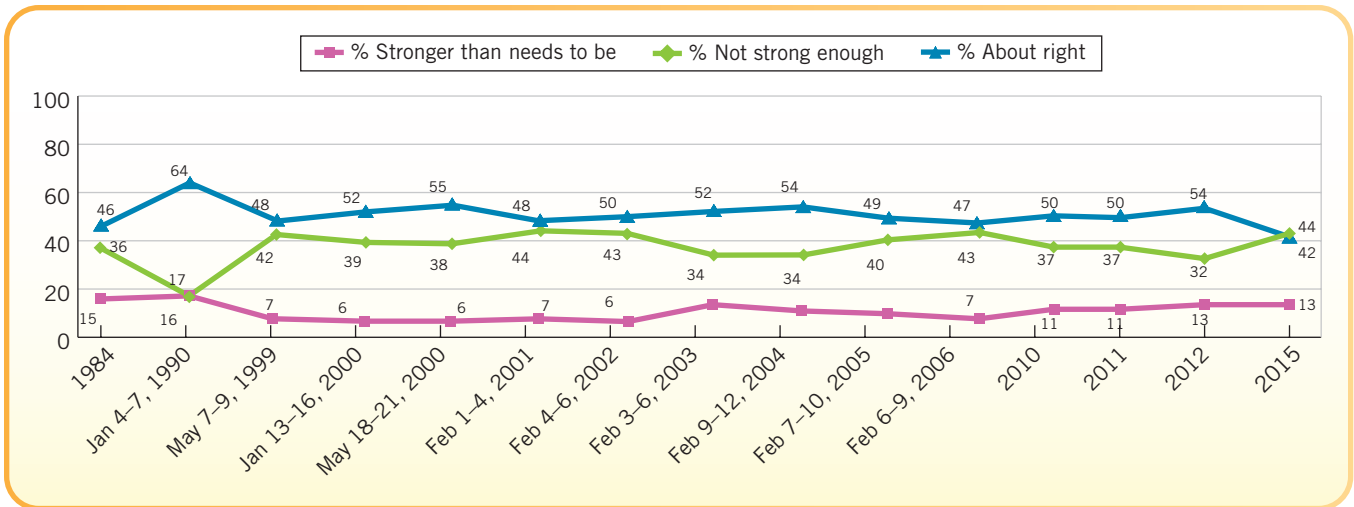
MAP 19.2 U.S. Military Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean Since 1950

FIGURE 19.5 Most Americans Think National Defense Is Either “About Right” or “Not Strong Enough”

Source: Justin McCarthy, “Americans Split on Defense Spending,” *Gallup, Inc.*, February 20, 2015.

As Figure 19.5 shows, a majority of Americans have said that our defense program is either “about right” or “not strong enough,” but other studies show that popular support for spending more money on defense changes from year to year.

The collapse of the Soviet Union ushered in a major debate about U.S. defense strategy. Liberals demanded sharp cuts in defense spending, weapons procurement, and military personnel, arguing that with the Soviet threat ended, it was time to collect our “peace dividend” and divert funds from the military to domestic social programs. Conservatives agreed that some military cuts were in order, but they argued that the world was still a dangerous place and therefore that a strong (and well-funded) military remained essential to the nation’s defense. This disagreement reflected different predictions about what the future would be like. Many liberals (and some conservatives, such as Pat Buchanan, who believed that America should “stay at home”) argued that we could not afford to be the “world’s policeman.” Many conservatives (and some liberals) responded by saying that Russia was still a military powerhouse that might once again fall under the control of ruthless leaders and that many other nations hostile to the United States (such as North Korea, Iran, and Iraq) were becoming potential adversaries as they tried to build or acquire nuclear weapons and missile systems.

American campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq made clear that whether or not the United States was the “world’s police officer,” there was no escaping its need to use military force. They also made clear that the United States had reduced its armed forces so sharply since Desert Storm (there were half a million fewer people in the military in 1996 than in 1991) that it was hard-pressed to carry out any sustained military campaign (see

Table 19.1). When the national budget deficit was eliminated in 1999, both President Clinton and the Republican Congress called for more military spending.

But that increase did not pay for what the military had been authorized to buy, and did little to get us ready for the war in Afghanistan against Osama bin Laden. Once the battle began, however, the federal purse strings loosened and the defense budget grew.

TABLE 19.1 U.S. Military Forces Before and After the Breakup of the Soviet Union

Service	Before 1991	End FY 1998
Army		
Active divisions	18	10
National Guard divisions	10	8
Navy		
Aircraft carriers	15	11
Training carriers	1	2
Ships	546	346
Air Force		
Active fighter wings	24	13
Reserve fighter wings	12	7
Marine Corps		
Active divisions	3	3
Reserve divisions	1	1
Strategic Nuclear Forces		
Ballistic missile submarines	31	18
Strategic bombers	324	182
ICBMs	1,000	550

Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1998, 363.

What do we get with our money? We get people, of course—soldiers, sailors, airmen, and airwomen. They are the most expensive part of the defense budget. Then we get hardware of roughly two kinds: big-ticket items, like aircraft carriers and bombers, and small-ticket items, like hammers and screwdrivers. Each of these kinds of hardware has its own politics. Finally, we get “readiness”: training, supplies, munitions, fuel, and food.

Personnel

Efforts to develop our military forces before World War II reflected the considerable American discomfort with a strong central government. The United States did not institute a peacetime draft until 1940, when the rest of the world was already at war, and the draft was renewed the following year (only a few months before Pearl Harbor) by only a one-vote margin in the House. Until 1973, the United States relied on the draft to obtain military personnel. Then, at the end of the Vietnam War, it replaced the draft with the all-volunteer force (AVF). After getting off to a rocky start, the AVF began to improve thanks to increases in military pay and rising civilian unemployment. Abolishing the draft had been politically popular: nobody likes being drafted, and even in congressional districts that otherwise are staunch supporters of a strong defense, voters tell their representatives that they do not want to return to the draft (and many military leaders agree).

There has been a steady increase in the percentage of women in the military (in 2011, they constituted 14.5 percent of the total). For a long time, however, women were barred by law from serving in combat roles. (What constitutes a “combat role” is a bit difficult to say, since even personnel far from the main fighting can be hit by an enemy bomb or artillery shell.) In 1993 Congress ended the legal ban on assigning women to navy combat ships and air force fighter jets, and soon women were serving on three aircraft carriers. Twenty years later, the Pentagon lifted its official ban on women serving in combat. The military’s rules on sexual orientation and military service also have changed significantly in the past two decades. Until 1993, it was the long-standing policy of the U.S. armed forces to bar gay and lesbian soldiers from entering the military and to discharge them if they were discovered when serving. Gay and lesbian rights organizations had long protested this exclusion. In 1993, a gay soldier won a lawsuit against the army for having discharged him; he settled for back pay and retirement benefits in exchange for a promise not to re-enlist. In 1993, a judge ordered the navy to reinstate a discharged sailor who had revealed on national television that he was gay.



Vanderberg Air Force Base

The United States has tried to decide whether to build interceptors like this one to shoot down incoming missiles from enemies.

In 1992, presidential candidate Bill Clinton had promised to lift the official ban on gays and lesbians serving in the military if he were elected to office. Once in office, he discovered that it was not that easy. Many members of the armed forces believed that knowingly serving alongside and living in close quarters with gays and lesbians would create unnecessary tension and harm military morale and troop solidarity. The Joint Chiefs of Staff opposed lifting the ban, and several key members of Congress said they would try to pass a law reaffirming it. President Clinton was forced to settle for a compromise: “Don’t ask, don’t tell.” Under this policy, persons entering or serving in the military would not be asked to reveal their sexual orientation and would be allowed to serve, provided they did not engage in homosexual conduct. If a person stated that he or she was gay, that would not have been automatic grounds for discharge, but it may have been grounds for launching an investigation to determine whether rules against homosexual conduct had been violated.

In 1994, the new Pentagon rules designed to implement “don’t ask, don’t tell” went into effect, but the challenges of implementation soon prompted calls for ending altogether the prohibition on soldiers revealing their sexual orientation. President Obama signed a law repealing “don’t ask, don’t tell” in 2010 with the strong support of his secretary of defense and chairman of the Joint Chiefs, who said this would not harm military readiness.

Big-Ticket Items

Whenever the Pentagon buys a new submarine, airplane, or missile, we hear about **cost overruns**. In the 1950s, actual costs were three times greater than estimated costs; by the 1960s, things were only slightly better—actual costs were twice estimated costs.

There are five main reasons for these overruns. First, it is hard to know in advance what something that has never existed before will cost once you build it. People who have remodeled their homes know this all too well. So do government officials who build new subways or congressional office buildings. It is no different with a B-2 bomber.

Second, people who want to persuade Congress to appropriate money for a new airplane or submarine have an incentive to underestimate the cost. To get the weapon approved, its sponsors tell Congress how little it will cost; once the weapon is under construction, the sponsors go back to Congress for additional money to cover “unexpected” cost increases.

Third, the Pentagon officials who decide what kind of new aircraft they want are drawn from the ranks of those who will fly it. These officers naturally want the best airplane (or ship or tank) that money can buy. As air force General Carl “Tooe” Spaatz once put it, “A second-best aircraft is like a second-best poker hand. No damn good.”⁶⁶ But what exactly is the “best” airplane? Is it the fastest one? Or the most maneuverable one? Or the most reliable one? Or the one with the longest range? Pentagon officials have a tendency to answer, “All of the above.” Of course, trying to produce all of the above is incredibly expensive (and sometimes impossible). But asking for the expensive (or the impossible) is understandable, given that the air force officers who buy it will also fly it. This tendency to ask for everything at once is called **gold plating**.

Fourth, many new weapons are purchased from a single contractor. This is called sole-sourcing. A contractor is hired to design, develop, and build an airplane. As a result there is no competition, and so the manufacturer has no strong incentive to control costs. And if the sole manufacturer gets into financial trouble, the government, seeking to avoid a shutdown of all production, has an incentive to bail the company out.

Fifth, when Congress wants to cut the military budget, it often does so not by canceling a new weapons system but by stretching out the number of years during which it is purchased. Say that Congress wants to buy 100 F-22s, 25 a year for four years. To give the appearance of cutting the budget, it will decide to buy only 15 the first year and take five years to buy the rest. Or it will authorize the construction of 20 now and then ask again next year for the authority to build more. But start-and-stop production decisions and stretching out production

over more years drives up the cost of building each unit. If Toyota built cars this way, it would go broke.

There are ways to cope with four of these five problems. You cannot do much about the first, ignorance, but you can do something

about low estimates, gold plating, sole-sourcing, and stretch-outs. If the Pentagon would give realistic cost estimates initially (perhaps verified by another agency); if it would ask for weapons that meet a few critical performance requirements instead of every requirement that can be thought of; if two or more manufacturers were to compete in designing, developing, and manufacturing new weapons; and if Congress were to stop trying to “cut” the budget using the smoke-and-mirrors technique of stretch-outs, then we would hear a lot less about cost overruns.

Some of these things are being done. There is more competition and less sole-sourcing in weapons

cost overruns When the money actually paid to military suppliers exceeds the estimated costs.

gold plating The tendency of Pentagon officials to ask weapons contractors to meet excessively high requirements.



A U.S. Marine goes on patrol in Afghanistan.

ADEK BERRY/AFP/Getty Images



Paul Chin/San Francisco Chronicle/Corbis News/Corbis

Retired Navy commander Zoe Dunning (second from left) and her friends celebrate the end of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in San Francisco.

procurement today than once was the case. But the political incentives to avoid other changes are very powerful. Pentagon officers will always want "the best." They will always have an incentive to understate costs. Congress will always be tempted to use stretch-outs as a way of avoiding hard budget choices.

Readiness

Presumably, we have a peacetime military so that we will be ready for wartime. Presumably, therefore, the peacetime forces will devote a lot of their time and money to improving their readiness.

Not necessarily. The politics of defense spending is such that readiness often is given a very low priority. Here is why.

Client politics influences the decision. In 1990, Congress was willing to cut almost anything, provided it wasn't built or stationed in some member's district. That doesn't leave much. Plans to stop producing F-14 fighters for the navy were opposed by members from Long Island, where the Grumman manufacturing plant was located. Plans to kill the Osprey aircraft for the Marines were opposed by members from the places where it was to be built. Plans to close bases were opposed by every member with a base in his or her district.

That leaves training and readiness. These things, essential to military effectiveness, have no constituencies and hence few congressional defenders. When forced to choose, the services themselves often prefer to allocate scarce dollars to developing and buying new weapons than to spending for readiness. Moreover, the savings from buying less fuel or having fewer exercises shows up right away, while the savings from canceling an aircraft carrier may not show up for years. Not surprisingly, training and readiness are usually what get the ax.

Bases

At one time, the opening and closing of military bases was pure client politics, which meant that a lot of bases were opened and hardly any were closed. Almost every member of Congress fought to get a base in his or her district, and every member fought to keep an existing base open. Even the biggest congressional critics of the U.S. military, people who would vote to take a gun out of a soldier's hand, would fight hard to keep bases in their districts open and operating.

In 1988, Congress finally concluded that no base would ever be closed unless the system for making decisions was changed. It created a Commission on Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), consisting of private citizens (originally 12, later 8) who would consider recommendations from the secretary of defense. By law Congress would have to vote within 45 days for or against the commission's list as a whole, without having a chance to amend it. Since 1988, there have been five BRAC reports. Congress approved each one, resulting in the closing of more than 350 bases.

Congress, it appears, has finally figured out how to make some decisions that most members know are right but that each member individually finds it politically necessary to oppose.

The Structure of Defense Decision Making

The formal structure within which decisions about national defense are made was in large part created after World War II, but it reflects concerns that go back at least to the time of the Founding. Chief among these is the persistent desire by citizens to ensure civilian control over the military.

The National Security Act of 1947 and its subsequent amendments created the Department of Defense. It is headed by the secretary of defense, under whom serve the secretaries of the army, the air force, and the navy as well as the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The secretary of defense, who must be a civilian (though one former general, George C. Marshall, was allowed by Congress to be the secretary), exercises, on behalf of the president, command authority over the defense establishment. The secretary of the army, the secretary of the navy,* and the secretary of the air force also are civilians and are subordinate to the secretary of defense. Unlike their boss, they do not attend cabinet meetings or sit on the National Security Council. In essence, they manage the "housekeeping" functions of the various armed services, under the general direction of the secretary of defense and deputy and assistant secretaries of defense.

* The secretary of the Navy manages two services, the navy and the Marine Corps.

The four armed services are separate entities; by law, they cannot be merged or commanded by a single military officer, and each has the right to communicate directly with Congress. There are two reasons for having separate uniformed services functioning within a single department: the fear of many citizens that a unified military force might become too powerful politically, and the desire of each service to preserve its traditional independence and autonomy. The result, of course, is a good deal of interservice rivalry and bickering, but this is precisely what Congress intended when it created the Department of Defense. Rivalry and bickering, it was felt, would ensure that Congress would receive the maximum amount of information about military affairs and would enjoy the largest opportunity to affect military decisions.

Since the end of World War II, Congress has aimed both to retain a significant measure of control over the military's decision making and to ensure the adequacy of the nation's defenses. Congress does not want a single military command headed by an all-powerful general or admiral, but neither does it want the services to be so autonomous or their heads so equal that coordination and efficiency suffer. In 1986, Congress passed and the president signed a defense reorganization plan known as the Goldwater-Nichols Act, which increased the power of the officers who coordinate the activities of the different services. The 1947 structure was left in place, but with revised procedures.

Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) is a committee consisting of the uniformed heads of each of the military services (the army, navy, air force, and Marine Corps), plus a chairman and a (nonvoting) vice chairman, also military officers, who are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. The JCS does not have command authority over troops, but it plays a key role in national defense planning. Since 1986, the chairman of the joint chiefs has been designated the president's principal military adviser, in an effort to foster more influence over the JCS.

Assisting the JCS is the Joint Staff, consisting of several hundred officers from each of the four services. The staff draws up plans for various military contingencies. Before 1986, each staff member was loyal to the service whose uniform he or she wore. As a result, the staff was often "joint" in name only, since few members were willing to take a position opposed by their service for fear of being passed over for promotion. The 1986 law changed this in two ways. First, it gave the chairman of the JCS control over the Joint Staff; now it works for the chairman, not for the JCS as a group. Second, it required the secretary of defense to establish guidelines to ensure that officers assigned to the Joint Staff (or to other interservice

bodies) are promoted at the same rate as officers whose careers are spent entirely with their own services.

The Services

Each military service is headed by a civilian secretary—one for the army, the navy (including the Marine Corps), and the air force—plus a senior military officer: the chief of staff of the army, the chief of naval operations, the commandant of the Marine Corps, and the chief of staff of the air force. The civilian secretaries are in charge of purchasing, auditing, congressional relations, and public affairs. The military chiefs oversee the discipline and training of their uniformed forces and in addition represent their services on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Chain of Command

Under the Constitution the president is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The chain of command runs from the president to the secretary of defense (also a civilian), and then to the various unified and specified commands. These orders may be transmitted through the Joint Chiefs of Staff or its chairman, but by law the chairman of the JCS does not have command authority over the combat forces. Civilians are in charge at the top to protect against excessive concentration of power.

Analysts debate the effects of the 1986 changes, though many viewed the quick victory in the 1991 Persian Gulf War as evidence of their success. Critics of the Pentagon have been urging changes along these lines at least since 1947. But others say that unless the armed services are actually merged, interservice rivalry will continue. Still others argue that even the coordination achieved by the 1986 act is excessive. The country, in their view, is better served by having wholly autonomous services. What is striking is that so many members of Congress who once would have insisted on the antcoordination view voted for the 1986 law, thereby indicating a greater willingness to permit some degree of central military leadership.

The Future of American Foreign Policy

In the 21st century, American foreign policy continues to be dominated by broad questions about the U.S. role in the world as well as more specific debates about defense programs, spending, and decision making. Politically, the president leads foreign policy making, but the Constitution divides power between Congress and the president, and in recent years, some members of Congress have become more assertive in criticizing executive actions abroad. As the United States determines how it will engage with other nations, and where it will seek to exercise influence abroad, executive-legislative cooperation—with some guidance from public opinion—will be essential for pursuing American goals and interests.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

19-1 Summarize the different types of politics involved in American foreign policy.

American foreign policy typically involves majoritarian, interest-group, or client politics. Decisions about going to war largely raise questions about majoritarian politics; trade and defense spending issues often incorporate interest-group politics; and foreign-aid debates usually bring in client politics.

19-2 Discuss the constitutional and legal context for making American foreign policy.

The Constitution states that the president is commander-in-chief of the military, and the Supreme Court generally has endorsed broad executive power in foreign affairs, particularly for military intervention. The president often has sent troops to fight without a declaration of war, but Congress invariably supports. Technically, the president should get Congress's approval under the War Powers Act, but if Americans are already fighting, it becomes very difficult for Congress to say no.

19-3 Explain how political elites and public opinion influence American foreign policy.

Elite views matter greatly because most Americans pay little attention to foreign affairs most of the time. And on many key issues, the public disagrees with elites. But when the president sends troops overseas to fight, the public will rally in support.

19-4 Explain the key challenges that the United States faces in foreign affairs and defense politics today.

In the 21st century, the United States faces the challenges of protecting American national security, combating terrorism, and exercising global leadership to advance American ideals and interests. To achieve these goals, the United States must maintain a sufficient defense budget and a well-organized decision-making structure for military choices.

TO LEARN MORE

U.S. Army: www.army.mil

U.S. Air Force: www.af.mil

U.S. Navy: www.navy.mil

Central Intelligence Agency: www.cia.gov

Department of State: www.state.gov

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