

the 54 percent who opposed the war when polled in 2006. This growing disapproval inspired renewed calls by opponents to bring the troops home.

President Barack Obama answered these calls in 2010 when he announced that all U.S. troops would leave Iraq by the end of the following year. While some soldiers stayed as transitional forces, the war was officially declared over in December 2011.

■ 17.6 How Worldviews Shape Foreign Policy

The way Americans think about foreign policy is strongly affected by their view of the world and its impact on their lives. Our foreign policy worldviews are influenced by the times in which we live. In turn, these worldviews shape how we view our relations with other countries. In the 1900s, four worldviews dominated debates about foreign policy. Since September 11, 2001, a fifth worldview has emerged that may affect U.S. foreign policy for many years to come.

Isolationism: Withdrawing from World Affairs

The view that the United States should withdraw from world affairs is called **isolationism**. People who hold this view do not favor helping other nations with foreign aid. Most of all, they believe that the United States should stay out of the conflicts of other countries.

This worldview gained a wider following after World War I. Americans entered that war with idealistic hopes of “making the world safe for democracy.” They ended it deeply disillusioned. Thousands of U.S. troops had died while fighting in Europe, but little else had been accomplished. Certainly, the world seemed no safer for democracy when the war ended than when it began. For most Americans, the lesson of the war was this: stay out of other nations’ affairs.

Containment: Controlling Aggressive Nations

The view that the United States should contain, or control, aggressive nations that threaten world peace is called **containment**. This view came out of World War II. Looking back, many Americans came to believe that this war could have been avoided, but only if the world’s democracies had stood fast against the aggression that first erupted in Germany, Italy, and Japan. Instead, the democracies tried to appease

the aggressors, opting for peace at any price. This only encouraged Germany, Italy, and Japan to act even more aggressively, plunging the world into a global war.

After World War II, Americans became alarmed by the Soviet Union’s aggressive efforts to spread communism around the world. For the next 45 years in a period known as the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy was directed at containing communism. During that time, the United States went to war in Korea and later in Vietnam to halt what it saw as communist aggression.

Disengagement: Avoiding Military Involvements

The view that the United States should avoid military actions in other parts of the world is called **disengagement**. This worldview has been called the “new isolationism.” However, although the people who believe in disengagement want to avoid military actions, they may not be against foreign aid or trade relations.

The disengagement worldview reflects the experience of Americans during the Vietnam War. When that war began, most people supported U.S. involvement in Vietnam as part of containment. But as the struggle dragged on, attitudes changed, especially among young people. Many rejected containment as a reason for going to war. Some even came to see the war as immoral. As they moved into adulthood, their motto was “no more Vietnams.”

Human Rights: Using U.S. Power to Protect Others

By 1991, the Cold War was over and the Soviet Union had collapsed. With that change, containment gave way to a new worldview that was based on protecting human rights. Those who adopted this view held that the United States should use its power to protect the rights and well-being of people around the world.

President George H. W. Bush’s decision to send U.S. troops to Somalia in 1992 was a response to this worldview. So was President Clinton’s call for NATO air strikes in 1999 to protect ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

Antiterrorism: Protecting the Homeland

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, brought a new worldview to the forefront of foreign policy: **antiterrorism**. People holding this worldview believe that the greatest threat to the United States comes

from terrorist groups such as al Qaeda. In their view, U.S. power should be used to seek out and destroy terrorist networks. It should also be used to keep **weapons of mass destruction**, particularly nuclear weapons, out of the hands of terrorists.

This worldview shaped the Bush administration's foreign policy. In his first State of the Union address after the 9/11 attacks, President Bush singled out Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as particular threats:

States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred.

—George W. Bush, 2002

Americans who hold different foreign policy worldviews often disagree on how best to protect our nation's vital interests. At any point in time, one worldview may dominate over the others. But as

conditions in the world change, new foreign policy worldviews may emerge and shape how the United States interacts with the rest of the world.



This cartoon was drawn in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. That event shifted the country's foreign policy from a focus on human rights to a war on terrorism. In preparation for that long struggle, the American eagle is seen here sharpening its claws.

Summary

Foreign policy determines how the United States interacts with the rest of the world. Foreign policy decisions are based on what Americans and their leaders see as the nation's vital interests.

Foreign policy goals The most important goals of U.S. foreign policy are to protect national security, promote U.S. economic interests, preserve global peace, and pursue American ideals.

"Soft power" tools Soft power involves the use of persuasion to achieve foreign policy goals. Soft power tools include diplomacy, summits, trade relations, foreign aid, and cultural exchanges.

"Hard power" tools Hard power involves the threat or use of more forceful measures to achieve foreign policy goals. Hard power tools include covert action, boycotts, sanctions, military alliances, and armed force.

Foreign policymakers The president, Congress, the foreign policy bureaucracy, and public opinion all play a role in shaping foreign policy.

Foreign policy worldviews Five major American worldviews— isolationism, containment, disengagement, human rights, and antiterrorism—also influence American foreign policy.