

Continuity and Change
in
American Foreign Policy

March of History in U.S. Foreign Policy

Pre-World War I

- Isolationist
- Eurocentric world
- U.S. protected by oceans and technologies of the day
- U.S. sparsely populated and focused on its own internal destiny
- U.S. had trading partners, but did not exert influence globally

March of History in U.S. Foreign Policy

- The Thirty Years Wars
 - Ended America's period of isolation
 - U.S. was the last player standing
 - Europe and Japan were physically, financially and emotionally devastated
 - Russia was financially destroyed and suffered severe losses of life
 - China, India and most of Asia were isolated peasant, colonial or post-colonial states

March of History in U.S. Foreign Policy

- Cold War
 - The Soviet Union emerged as a superpower challenger to the U.S.
 - In most of the world, America enjoyed an almost universal hegemony

March of History in U.S. Foreign Policy

- The Fall of the Iron Curtain
 - America remained as the world's only superpower
 - America enjoyed world hegemony
 - Became the world's police
 - Became the world's deep pocket
 - Became the world's protector of the liberal world order
 - Pax Americana came into full flower

March of History in U.S. Foreign Policy

- September 11, 2001
 - War on Terror
 - Two Wars in the Middle East
 - Global Recession
 - Expense of the Global Hegemony
 - Domestic Financial Demands
 - Rise of Other World Powers—China, Germany, European Union, Russia, India, Japan, South Asia

March of History in U.S. Foreign Policy

- 2016/2017
 - Election of Donald Trump
 - Brexit
 - Rise of Nativism, Nationalism and Isolationism in European politics
 - The threats of terrorism
 - Worldwide movement of displaced people, economically disadvantaged people and people fleeing oppression and war

Evolution of American Foreign Policy

- Cold War
 - Containment of Communist States
 - Symmetric Response
 - Matching adversaries at every level
 - Asymmetric Response
 - Applying American strengths against opponents' weaknesses
 - Truman Doctrine
 - 1947 speech arguing that U.S. must come to the aid of countries threatened by totalitarianism. E.g. aid to Greece and Turkey, the Marshall Plan, Berlin airlift, formation of NATO, the Korean conflict

Evolution of American Foreign Policy

– Eisenhower

- Asymmetrical response—stable economy, balanced budget, nuclear superiority
- Communist aggression anywhere will be met with massive retaliation

– Kennedy/Johnson

- Symmetrical Response—Flexible response; conventional and unconventional military build-up, expanding economy to support military spending, renewed emphasis on diplomacy, engagement with allies

Evolution of American Foreign Policy

– Nixon/Kissinger

- Détente
- Realist concept of containment, emphasizing negotiations and compromise while awaiting the Soviet collapse

– Carter

- Carter Doctrine: Persian Gulf and oil reserves declared to be of vital interest to the U.S.

Evolution of American Foreign Policy

- Post-Cold War
 - Reagan/Bush
 - Peace through strength
 - Military build-up
 - Clinton
 - Asymmetry
 - Focused on the domestic economy—“It’s the economy, stupid”
 - Emphasis on the Peace Dividend
 - Strengthen the Liberal International Order
 - Spread democratic forms of government
 - Expand the military budget
 - Selective Engagement
 - Engagement in the Balkans
 - Retreat from engagement in Africa

- Post September 11, 2001
 - Bush
 - Symmetry
 - Oceans no longer inoculated U.S.
 - September 11 Terrorist Attacks dramatically informed Bush Era Foreign Policy
 - War on Terror
 - Neo-Conservative foreign policy
 - Regime change
 - Pre-emptive use of force
 - Conventional warfare
 - Unconventional warfare
 - War linked with the spread of democracy

Evolution of American Foreign Policy

– Obama

- Diplomatic engagement, internationalism and soft power
- Appease an international community feeling alienated by Bush policy
- Dedication to liberal international order and American foreign policy since World War II
- Military Disengagement, but use of special operations, clandestine operations and drones
- Shackled by 2008 Recession and Difficulty in Disengaging from Iran and Afghanistan
- Asian pivot
- Arab Spring
- Retreat from foreign interventions, potentially creating power vacuums filled by newly aggressive state actors and extremist terrorist organizations

Evolution of American Foreign Policy

- Trump
 - Asymmetric?
 - Flexible Response?
 - “America First”
 - Nationalism
 - Nativism
 - Isolationism
 - De-emphasis of Soft Power and Emphasis of Hard Power

Evolution of American Foreign Policy

- Post-Cold War Policy Models
 - U.S. International Primacy
 - Liberal Internationalism
 - Selective Engagement
 - Retreat from Global Leadership

Evolution of American Foreign Policy

It is the dominance of economic factors and campaign promises to restore or expand the American economy that has led to shifts in strategies of containment.

John Lewis Gaddis

The United States is now engaged in a great foreign policy debate between a besieged traditional internationalism and an energized new isolationism.

Richard Haas

2017—Year of Transition

- Accession to power in the U.S. of nationalist, nativist, anti-global administration
- Departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union
- Rise of authoritarianism worldwide
 - Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia, China, Turkey, Syria, Egypt
- Accelerated Emergence of China
 - 19th Party Congress
 - One Belt, One Road Initiative
 - Consolidation of Power under Xi Jinping

2017—Year of Transition

- Key Elections in Europe
 - Emergence of Macron in France
 - Rise of the alt-right in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Poland
- Rise to Power of Crown Prince ibn Salman in Saudi Arabia
- Realignment of Power in the Middle East
- Proxy Wars in Yemen and Syria (and Lebanon?)
- Rise of Separatism—Brexit, Catalonia, Kurdistan, Crimea
- Consolidation of Power under Vladimir Putin
- Aggressiveness of Russia

Pax Americana

- What is it?
- Is it over? Is it Moribund? Is it Thriving in a Different Guise
- How is America Best Served?
- How is the World Best Served?

Pax Americana

- Old Man at the Whorehouse: “America will lose the war. And Italy will win it.”
- Nately: “America is the strongest and most prosperous nation on earth, and the American fighting man is second to none.”
- Old Man: “Exactly, Italy, on the other hand, is one of the least prosperous nations on earth. And the Italian fighting man is probably second to all. And that’s exactly why my country is doing so well in this war while your country is doing so poorly.... Yes, I am quite certain that Italy will survive this war and still be in existence long after your own country has been destroyed.”
- Nately: “You talk like a madman.”
- Old Man: “But I live like a sane one.”

Joseph Heller, Catch-22

Pax Americana

- What is Pax Americana?
 - At particular points in history there has been one unusually strong power and that power has made many of the rules for what passes for an international world system, e.g. Pax Romana and Pax Britanica
 - “We are present at the creation of a new world order” —Dean Acheson, U.S. Secretary of State, 1949-1953

Pax Americana

- Pax Americana generally describes the world since the end of World War II. The role of the United States in that 70+ year period is generally described as one of global leadership and significant engagement in international affairs. A key aim has been to promote and defend the liberal international order the U.S., with the support of its allies, created following WWII.

Source: Congressional Research Service Report, 2017

Pax Americana

- In addition to promoting and defending the liberal international order, the overall U.S. role is generally described as having been one of promoting freedom, democracy, and human rights, while criticizing and resisting authoritarianism where possible and opposing the emergence of a spheres-of-influence world or the rise of regional hegemons in Eurasia.

Source: Congressional Research Service Report, 2017

Pax Americana

- What is the Liberal International Order?
 - Key Elements
 - Respect for the territorial integrity of countries and unacceptability of changing international borders by force or coercion
 - Preference for resolving disputes between countries peacefully without force or coercion
 - Strong international institutions
 - United Nations
 - World Bank
 - International Monetary Fund
 - North Atlantic Treaty Organization
 - World Trade Organization

Pax Americana

- Respect for international law, global rules and norms, and universal values, including respect for human rights
- Liberal international trading and investment systems to advance open, rules-based economic engagement, development, growth, and prosperity
- Treatment of international waters, international air space, outer space and cyberspace as international commons

Pax Americana

- Are we at an inflection point?
 - Rise of other world powers, such as China
 - Emergence of other economic models
 - Eurasian democracies have matured and can be self-regulating in prevention of the emergence of regional hegemons
 - U.S. budget deficits and debt, both current and projected

Pax Americana

Are we at an inflection point?

- Increasing domestic needs, such as infrastructure repair and maintenance, health care, and caring for an aging population
- Costliness of wars and maintaining an international military presence
- The rest of the world has become aware of the limits of U.S. military power
- American fatigue with foreign wars and internationalism

A New World Order?

- Arguments for Retrenchment
 - U.S. should acknowledge the changing global distribution of power and with these powers define a new international order
 - Eurasia can be self-regulating in preventing the emergence of regional hegemons
 - Emergence of one or more regional hegemons would not pose an unacceptable threat to U.S. interests
 - The U.S. can no longer afford to be the enforcer of the liberal international order
 - The U.S. needs to devote more resources to domestic needs without crippling the country economically

A New World Order?

- Interventions have not always been cost-effective and they have a threat of drawing the U.S. into conflicts that are vital to national interests
- The U.S. lacks sufficient moral standing to impose its values on other countries
- American value systems do not always translate to the cultures of these emerging state powers throughout the world
- The role of the U.S. in the last 70 years is an aberration when viewed against the U.S. historical record dating to the founding of the republic, which is a history more characterized by periods of restraint than by engagement

A New World Order?

- Arguments for Continuity of Engagement
 - A renegotiated international order incorporating ideas from authoritarian countries such as China would produce a world less conducive to U.S. interests abroad
 - Eurasia historically has not been successful in self-regulating and there is no reason to believe that will change
 - A regional hegemon in Eurasia would have enough economic and other power to be able to threaten vital U.S. interests
 - A spheres-of-influence world would be prone to war because regional hegemons historically are never satisfied with the extent of their hegemonic domains
 - Leaders of regional hegemons are prone to misjudgment and miscalculation regarding where their spheres collide.

A New World Order?

- The U.S. role, including interventions in the security affairs of Eurasia, has been successful in preventing wars between major state players thus protecting U.S. interests abroad
- The U.S. retains ample moral authority and responsibility to act as a world leader
- The historical context of the 18th and 19th centuries is not instructive to the role of the U.S. in the world today
- A restrained U.S. foreign policy would be more risky and more costly over the long run than an engaged U.S. foreign policy
- A retreat from global leadership could lead to instability damaging to U.S. interests or a vacuum that could be filled by other major powers, such as China

Trump Foreign Policy

- Four Pillars
 - Protect the homeland, the American people and the American way of life
 - Promote American prosperity
 - Preserve peace through strength
 - Advance American influence

Source: National Security Strategy, December, 2017

Trump Foreign Policy

- A nation that does not protect prosperity at home cannot protect its interests abroad. A nation that is not prepared to win a war is a nation not capable of preventing a war. A nation that is not proud of its history cannot be confident in its future. And a nation that is not certain of its values cannot summon the will to defend them.”

Donald J. Trump, December 18, 2017

- The theme of the NSS is “principled realism” of an “ever-competitive world,” where the question of “how we advance our goals is more critical than ever.”

Trump Administration, December 17, 2017

Trump Foreign Policy

- Departures from Bush and Obama NSS
 - No mention of global warming as a national security threat
 - No pledge to expand free trade
 - No commitment to promote American values abroad
 - Emphasis on American sovereignty and diminished emphasis on international cooperation

Trump Foreign Policy

- Contrasts between NSS and Administration Actions
 - NSS praises international institutions and U.S. alliances, but the President has repeatedly denigrated both
 - NSS speaks of Russia as a dangerous adversary, but the President has not acknowledged Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election, speaks highly of Vladimir Putin, and has been reluctant to impose sanctions on Russia
 - NSS says diplomacy is indispensable to resolve problems, but the President has cut the State Department budget by a third and a mass exodus of career diplomats has occurred
 - NSS seems to promote nation-building, but the president bashes foreign aid and nation-building as boondoggles

A New World Order?

- To what extent should the promotion of narrowly defined U.S. interests be balanced against the goal of defending and promoting U.S. values of democracy, individual freedoms, and human rights?
- What balance should be struck between pursuing U.S. foreign policy through hard power, primarily military power, and soft power, that is, diplomacy, developmental assistance, support for international organizations, educational and cultural exchanges and free trade

A New World Order?

- Public Opinion

- Has the U.S. public now come to believe that U.S. leaders have broken a tacit social contract under which the U. S. public has supported the costs of U.S. global leadership in return for the promise of receiving certain benefits, particularly steady increases in real incomes and the standard of living?

A New World Order?

- Where do we go from here?
 - Realities
 - Rise of China economically, militarily and internationally
 - Aggressiveness of Russia
 - India—a quiet giant
 - American limitations
 - Values and cultures clash
 - Rise of authoritarianism
 - Creeping acceptance of a new model, symbolized by China, of the co-existence of economic openness and a closed, authoritarian political system

Strategies

- Restoration of American dominance
 - Military superiority
 - Domestic middle-class prosperity
 - Political and electoral reform
 - Diplomatic renaissance
 - Restore international trust
 - Commit to the traditional liberal international order
 - Restore a willingness to trade short-term benefits for long-term influence

Strategies

- Play a waiting game (Kennon containment hypothesis: Contain until communism falls of its own weight)
 - Wait for democratic forces to emerge in China, Russia and other developing states
 - Cultivate democratic values abroad and make democratic reforms at home
 - Push back when Russian or Chinese defiance of international norms becomes intolerable

Strategies

- Create a New Global Order
 - U.S. goes from dominance to leadership
 - Power sharing, for example expand the number of permanent members of the security council; engage the G20
 - Accommodate to values of others
 - Paris Climate Accord, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action for Iran, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Transpacific Partnership, global health responses

Strategies

- Power Sharing—Bipolar or Multipolar World
 - Recognize China as hegemon of Asia
 - Cede Asia to China, including the South China Sea, Taiwan, Tibet, and the Belt and Road countries
 - Cede to other regional hegemonies, such as Russia, India, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Brazil
 - Turn a blind eye to denigration of democratic, liberal ideals

Strategies

- Divide and Conquer
 - Play off China against Russia
 - Play off India and Japan against China
 - Engage but hedge

Strategies

- Undermine
- Out-compete emerging power centers, i.e. “Make America Great Again”
- Flex military muscle
- War

Implications of Change

- Allies and Alliances
 - What do alliances contribute in maintaining a liberal international order?
 - Are U.S. allies appropriately contributing their fair share to the alliance?
 - Do alliances entangle the U.S. unnecessarily in conflicts over issues not vital to U.S. interests?

Implications of Change

- U.S. Department of State
 - De-emphasis, diminished funding, re-organization
 - How will these affect the ability of the U.S. role in the world?
- International Organizations
 - How will diminished funding for international organizations affect the U.S. role in the world?
- Foreign Assistance
 - What function do foreign assistance programs play in maintaining U.S. relations with other countries and otherwise shaping the international political, economic and security environment?

Implications of Change

- Trade and International Economic Policy
 - Is the U.S. better served by bilateral trade agreements versus participation in multilateral trade organizations, such as WTO, TPP, NAFTA?
 - Has the U.S. been disadvantaged in global markets by its current trade policy? Has the U.S. been advantaged?
 - What are the advantages and disadvantages of protectionist trade policy?
 - What are the implications for national security and U.S. foreign policy of a change in trade policy?
 - To what extent is economic anxiety in the U.S. driven by trade imbalances compared to other economic forces?
 - Will a more protectionist, bilateral trade policy diminish America's leadership role in international economics with potential affects on the U.S. economy and leave an opening for others, such as China, to gain economic primacy

Implications of Change

- Defense Strategy and Organization
 - The U.S. military is structured to patrol the world with the goal of preventing the emergence of regional hegemons throughout the world, with a strategic nuclear arsenal, strategic conventional force and elements that are intended to enable the military to cross broad expanses of land, ocean and air space and conduct sustained large-scale military operations upon arrival. Under a more restrained approach to foreign policy, are these capabilities needed any more.

Implications of Change

- Homeland Security
 - What should be the balance between spending for national defense and homeland security?
 - Where does national defense end and homeland security begin?
 - What are the relative roles of the Defense Department and the Department of Homeland Security
- Border Security
 - What are the appropriate roles of national policing of the border and state and local policing
 - What should be the balance between spending for national defense and border security?
- Immigration and Refugees
 - What are the implication for visas, including those associated with cultural exchanges, foreign students who wish to attend U.S. schools and H-1 and H-2 temporary visas for workers?
 - What are the implications for foreign investment in the United States?

Sources

- Burrows, Mathew J., “Western Options in a Multipolar World”, Issue Brief, Atlantic Council, November, 2017
- Congressional Research Service, “U.S. Role in the World: Background and Issues for Congress”, July 12, 2017-October 20, 2017
- National Security Strategy of the United States, December, 2017
- Boot, Max, “Trump Security Strategy a Study in Contrasts”, Council on Foreign Relations, December 18, 2017
- Schreck, Carl, “We’re in Trouble: Rancor Rules at Munich Security Conference”, Radio Free Europe, February 18, 2018
- European Council on Foreign Relations, “Five Take-Aways from the Munich Security Conference”, February 20, 2018
- Sullivan, Jake, “The World After Trump: How the System Can Endure”, Foreign Affairs, Vol 97, No 2, March/April, 2018
- Allison, Graham, Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides’ Trap, 2017