

CONCLUSION

foreign and defense
POLICYMAKING

International events are the most important environmental factors affecting foreign and defense policymaking. During the Cold War, American foreign and defense policies were adopted and evaluated in light of the perceived threat of international communism. The Cold War shaped international diplomacy, alliances, defense budgets, and defense strategy. Today, the most important event shaping American foreign and defense policy are the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Survey research shows that the general public is more cautious about American involvement abroad than are foreign policy leaders in government, the media, business, and academia. For example, the general public is less supportive of foreign aid and immigration than are policy leaders. The public is also less willing to endorse the use of the American military to defend U.S. interests abroad.²⁸

Agenda Building

Events, public opinion, the media, interest groups, Congress, and the president all play a role in setting the agenda for foreign and defense policymaking. Some issues become important items on the policy agenda because of media coverage, such as the bombing of Pearl Harbor, or the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Events affect the agenda for foreign and defense policymaking because of their impact on elite and mass public opinion.

Many interest groups participate in foreign and defense policymaking. Dozens of corporations and their employee unions lobby on behalf of weapons systems in which they have a financial interest. Cor-

porate and trade groups focus on trade policy, seeking protection from foreign competition or working against restrictive trade policies that threaten their businesses. Environmental groups emphasize international environmental issues. Ethnic groups—Cuban Americans, Arab Americans, and Jewish Americans—take an interest in foreign policies affecting regions of the world that are of particular interest to them. The American Jewish community, for example, is concerned about policy toward Israel. Cuban Americans focus on United States policy toward Cuba.

Historically, the president has taken the lead in foreign and defense policy matters.²⁹ During the 1960s and 1970s, a series of presidents worked to persuade Congress and the nation of the importance of American intervention in Vietnam. After September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush announced a new American policy of preemption and focused on disarming Iraq. Bush used his second inaugural address to focus attention on democratization as a principal goal of American foreign policy.

During the Cold War, presidents could generally count on bipartisan support for foreign policy issues. **Bipartisanship** is the close cooperation and general agreement between the two major political parties in dealing with foreign policy matters. Democrats and Republicans alike agreed that Soviet expansion was the primary threat to American interests and that deterrence and containment were the appropriate strategy to counter the threat. Congressional consensus on foreign policy and defense policy issues has become much less frequent

since the war in Vietnam.³⁰ Since 9/11, there has been consensus on the importance of eliminating al-Qaeda, but disagreement over how best to deal with rogue states.³¹ When the president ordered the U.S. military to invade Iraq to overthrow Saddam Hussein, Congress offered support and voted to provide additional money to fund the war and to help rebuild Iraq. As the situation in Iraq worsened and public opinion began to turn against the war, individual members of Congress spoke out against administration policies and Congressional committees initiated investigations.

Policy Formulation and Adoption

The president and Congress share constitutional authority to formulate and adopt foreign and defense policy. The president negotiates treaties, but the Senate must ratify them. The president has the power of diplomatic recognition, but the Senate must confirm ambassadorial appointments. The president can request money for foreign aid and defense, but Congress must appropriate the funds. The president is commander in chief of the Armed Forces, but Congress declares war. Congress also has the constitutional authority to raise and support armies and a navy.

The president often initiates foreign and defense policies, with Congress acting to modify or, occasionally, reject policies formulated in the executive branch. This divi-

bipartisanship the close cooperation and general agreement between the two major political parties in dealing with foreign policy matters.

sion of labor has developed for a number of reasons. First, the executive branch is better equipped to deal with international crises. The executive branch is unitary, under the authority of a single person, the president. Congress is a bicameral institution that often seems to speak with 535 separate voices. While the president can respond quickly to international events, Congress often reacts slowly and without unity.

Second, the president has an advantage in that secret national security information from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), military, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and diplomatic corps flows directly to the White House. The president can keep Congress in the dark about foreign and defense developments or can release information selectively to justify policies.

Third, the general public expects the president to lead in foreign and defense policymaking. As a rule, the public is neither well-informed nor particularly attentive to foreign affairs. In times of international crisis, Americans tend to rally around the president. Presidents typically enjoy a surge of popularity for roughly a 30-day period following the visible use of military force.³² Immediately after September 11, 2001, for example, the percentage of Americans who told survey researchers that they approved of President Bush's performance in office leaped from 51 percent in early September to 90 percent later in the month. Bush's approval rating stayed well above the 60-percent level for more than a year, significantly strengthening the president's hand on foreign and defense policy issues.³³

Finally, the president has often had considerable influence on foreign and defense policymaking because Congress has allowed it. Many members of Congress are not interested in overall foreign policy and defense strategy. Congress as an institution is decentralized, focusing on the parts of policy but seldom the big picture. Individual members focus primarily on the big issues

that gain national attention, or with issues of primary importance to their constituents.

Some foreign and defense policies can be adopted in the executive branch alone, but most require congressional action as well. Foreign aid and defense budgets must journey through the regular appropriations process. The Senate must ratify treaties and confirm presidential appointments. In practice, Congress more frequently modifies than blocks executive-branch initiatives in foreign and defense policy. In the 1970s, for example, the Senate ratified the Panama Canal

from an atmosphere of international crisis and strong public support on foreign and defense policy issues. Furthermore, the Republican Party controlled the House and the Senate during the first few months of 2000, and then again after the 2002 election. As a result, Bush won congressional support for his proposals. Congress also granted the president authority to negotiate trade agreements that would not be subject to congressional amendment. Even after public opinion began to turn against administration policy, congressional criticism of the administration was muted because Republi-



Certain groups of Americans, based on their ethnicity or religion, get involved in American foreign policy regarding nations that are of special interest to them. In this photo, a rabbi leads a pro-Israeli demonstration before a speech given by President George W. Bush.

Treaty after tacking on 24 amendments, reservations, conditions, and understandings.

In general, Congress is more likely to support presidential initiatives in foreign and defense policy when the president's party controls Congress, when the president enjoys a relatively high approval rating, and during times of international crisis. President Clinton, for example, had to contend with a Congress controlled by the Republican Party for the last six years of his presidency. In contrast, after September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush benefited

can leaders did not want to challenge a president from their own party.

The controversy over gay men and lesbians serving in the armed forces illustrates the dynamic political nature of foreign and defense policy formulation. When President Clinton announced shortly after taking office that he was preparing an executive order to end the Pentagon's ban on gay men and lesbians in the military, he was taking a principled stand and fulfilling a campaign promise as well. Clinton argued that men and women who are serving their country honorably

should be judged on the basis of their behavior rather than their sexual orientation. People who play by the rules should be allowed to serve without discrimination. Clinton's



President Bush stands strong with a NYC firefighter at the ruins of the World Trade Center.

promise to end the ban also fulfilled a campaign promise to a key group of political supporters. Gay men and lesbians are an important voter bloc, especially in the large states of California and New York. Furthermore, gay and lesbian rights groups raised millions of dollars for the Clinton campaign during the 1992 election season.

President Clinton's proposal generated a firestorm of controversy. The **Joint Chiefs of Staff**, a group of military advisors composed of the chiefs of staff of the U.S. Army and Air Force, the chief of naval operations, and sometimes the commandant of the Marine Corps, strongly disagreed with the president's plan. The Joint Chiefs warned that allowing openly gay men and lesbians to serve in the armed forces would undermine morale and threaten unit cohesion.

Democratic Senator Sam Nunn, who was then the chair of the Armed Services Committee, was the most effective opponent of the president's proposal. Nunn's committee

staged televised hearings on the issue, allowing critics of the president's proposal a public forum to attack the plan while giving groups and individuals who favored the president's position little opportunity to make their case. Nunn even took the committee on a fact-finding tour of an aircraft carrier, showing television reporters the close quarters where service men and women live and work.

Clinton eventually compromised on the issue because he recognized that had he signed an executive order lifting the ban, Congress would have quickly passed legislation writing the original policy into law. The compromise, which pleased few, was called the "don't ask, don't tell policy." The military would not ask new recruits about their sexual orientation and would stop conducting investigations aimed at identifying and discharging homosexuals, but it would discharge service members who revealed their sexual orientation. Gay men and women who stayed "in the closet" could continue their service.

Policy Implementation and Evaluation

The executive branch is primarily responsible for the implementation of foreign policy. The Department of State, Department of Defense, and CIA are prominently involved, but many other agencies and departments play a role as well. The Department of Agriculture, for example, promotes the sale of American agricultural products abroad. The Department of Education administers student-exchange programs.

Foreign and defense policies may not always be implemented the way the president and Congress originally intended or expected. Bureaucrats sometimes have priorities of their own. Also, large bureaucracies

tend to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) that they follow in performing their tasks.

The implementation of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy demonstrates that official policy changes do not always lead to changes in policy implementation; in fact, the military has actually become more diligent at discharging suspected homosexuals from the armed services. The military dismissed 1,227 people in 2001 for being gay or lesbian, far more people than were discharged for homosexuality in 1993. The number of people forced out of the military because of their sexual orientation fell significantly in subsequent years, but most observers believed that the decline reflected the military's need to hold onto qualified personnel.³⁴

The government has no systematic, ongoing mechanism for evaluating foreign and defense policies. Congress monitors expenditures, but often limits its policy oversight to high-profile issues, or issues that affect members' home districts. Scandals also receive considerable attention. Other efforts at evaluation take place in the executive branch, in academia, and by the news media.

In general, foreign and defense policies are probably more difficult to evaluate than policies in other areas. It is not always possible to determine whether policy goals have been met. In the absence of war, for example, any evaluation of the effectiveness of particular defense strategies has to be at least somewhat speculative. Another problem is that many of the details of policy implementation are secret. Only now is information available so that historians can begin to evaluate American foreign policy in the years following World War II.

Joint Chiefs of Staff a military advisory body that is composed of the chiefs of staff of the U.S. Army and Air Force, the chief of naval operations, and sometimes the commandant of the Marine Corps.

Study: Congress Should Repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"

Associated Press

MONDAY, JULY 07, 2008

CONGRESS SHOULD REPEAL THE "DON'T ASK, don't tell" law because the presence of gays in the military is unlikely to undermine the ability to fight and win, according to a new study released by a California-based research center.

The study was conducted by four retired military officers, including the three-star Air Force lieutenant general who in early 1993 was tasked with implementing President Clinton's policy that the military stop questioning recruits on their sexual orientation.

"Evidence shows that allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly is unlikely to pose any significant risk to morale, good order, discipline or cohesion," the officers stated.

To support its contention, the panel points to the British and Israeli militaries, where it says gay people serve openly without hurting the effectiveness of combat operations.

Undermining unit cohesion was a determining factor when Congress passed the 1993 law, intended to keep the military from asking recruits their sexual orientation. In turn, service members can't say they are gay or bisexual, engage in homosexual activity or marry a member of the same sex.

Supporters of the ban contend there is still no empirical evidence that allowing gays to serve openly won't hurt combat effectiveness.

"The issue is trust and confidence" among members of a unit, said Lt. Col. Robert Maginnis, who retired in 1993 after working on the issue for the Army. When some people with a different sexual orientation are "in a close combat environment, it results in a lack of trust," he said.

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The study was sponsored by the Michael D. Palm Center at the University of California at Santa Barbara, which said it picked the panel members to portray a bipartisan representation of the different service branches. According to its Web site, the Palm Center "is committed to keeping researchers, journalists and the general public informed of the latest developments in the 'don't ask, don't tell' policy debate." Palm himself was "a staunch supporter of civil rights in the gay community," the site says.

Navy Vice Adm. Jack Shanahan said he had no opinion on the issue when he joined the panel, having never confronted it in his 35-year military career. A self-described Republican who opposes the Bush administration's handling of the Iraq war, Shanahan said he was struck by the loss of personal integrity required by individuals to carry out "don't ask, don't tell."

"Everyone was living a big lie—the homosexuals were trying to hide their sexual orientation and the commanders were looking the other way because they didn't want to disrupt operations by trying to enforce the law," he said.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

- Have societal attitudes about gay men and lesbians changed since Congress adopted the "don't ask, don't tell" policy in 1993? Why do you think there has been a change?
- Do you think most members of the armed forces today would have a difficult time serving with someone with a different sexual orientation? Why or why not?
- Do you expect Congress and the president to change the law to allow gay men and lesbians to serve openly in the armed forces?

>> END

WORLD | U.S. | BUSINESS | SCIENCE | OPINIONS

TEST *yourself*

- 1 Why does the United States oppose the development of nuclear weapons in Iran?
A. Iran could provide a nuclear weapon to a terrorist group.
B. Iran could use nuclear weapons against American interests in the Middle East or against allies of the United States.
C. Iran could use its possession of nuclear weapons to bully its neighbors.
D. All of the above.
- 2 Nations that threaten world peace by sponsoring international terrorism and promoting the spread of weapons of mass destruction are known as which of the following?
A. Rogue states
B. Nongovernmental organizations
C. United Nations
D. Postindustrial societies
- 3 Which of the following is an international organization created to promote economic stability worldwide?
A. NATO
B. United Nations
C. WHO
D. IMF
- 4 Which of the following organizations would be involved in international efforts to control avian influenza (bird flu)?
A. NATO
B. United Nations
C. WHO
D. IMF
- 5 Which of the following is a defense alliance?
A. NATO
B. United Nations
C. WHO
D. IMF
- 6 Which of the following organizations would be most likely to mediate a trade dispute?
A. NATO
B. WTO
C. WHO
D. IMF
- 7 Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, World Wide Fund for Nature, and the Nature Conservancy are all examples of which of the following?
A. Nation-states
B. Rogue states
C. Nongovernmental organizations
D. All of the above
- 8 Which of the following statements about foreign aid is *not* true?
A. Foreign aid makes up about 10 percent of the federal budget.
B. Israel is a major beneficiary of American foreign aid.
C. Egypt is a major beneficiary of American foreign aid.
D. The United States has increased aid to countries whose assistance it needs in the war on terror.
- 9 Which of the following is an argument offered by those people who believe that the United States should take an internationalist approach to foreign policy?
A. The United States should act in its own best interests rather than compromising with other nations.
B. As the world's most powerful nation, the United States does not have to accommodate the interests of other countries.
C. The United States needs the support of other nations if it hopes to accomplish its foreign policy goals.
D. All of the above.
- 10 Which of the following statements is true about American defense spending?
A. In general, defense spending rises during wartime and falls during peacetime.
B. As a percentage of GDP, defense spending is much less today than it was in the 1960s.
C. Defense spending has been rising in recent years because of the war on terror and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.
D. All of the above.
- 11 "The Soviet leaders did not dare to launch a nuclear attack against the United States because the American counterattack would have destroyed the Soviet Union and vice versa." This statement is an expression of which of the following?
A. Preemption
B. Democratic peace
C. Mutual assured destruction (MAD)
D. "Don't ask, don't tell" policy
- 12 The capacity of a nation to absorb an initial nuclear attack and retain sufficient nuclear firepower to inflict unacceptable damage on its adversary is known as which of the following?
A. Second-strike capability
B. Mutual assured destruction (MAD)
C. Deterrence
D. Preemption

- 13 Why did Pakistan develop nuclear weapons?
A. To prevent the United States from attacking it
B. To sell weapons to other countries, including North Korea and Iran
C. To threaten surrounding countries in order to spread Islam throughout the region
D. To counter the development of nuclear weapons by neighboring India
- 14 "The North Koreans would not be a threat to the United States, even if they acquired nuclear weapons, because they are not suicidal. They realize that the United States would easily be able to wipe them off the face of the Earth." This statement is an expression of which of the following concepts?
A. Second-strike capability
B. Mutual assured destruction (MAD)
C. Deterrence
D. Preemption
- 15 "The United States needs to attack Iran to eliminate its nuclear capacity before it has the opportunity to attack us or to provide weapons of mass destruction to terrorists." This statement is an expression of which of the following concepts?
A. Second-strike capability
B. Mutual assured destruction (MAD)
C. Deterrence
D. Preemption
- 16 Which president is most closely associated with the concept of preemption?
A. Richard Nixon
B. George W. Bush
C. Bill Clinton
D. Ronald Reagan
- 17 Which of the following statements best summarizes Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's approach to conventional forces?
A. Rumsfeld believed that U.S. Armed Forces could best accomplish their goals by relying on speed, mobility, and firepower.
B. Rumsfeld favored relying on nuclear weapons for the defense of the United States while depending on the conventional forces of allies to achieve defense goals.
C. Rumsfeld favored reintroducing the military draft because the volunteer army was not large enough to accomplish defense goals.
D. Rumsfeld believed that the United States should reduce its presence abroad so that its forces would not be exposed to terrorist attack.
- 18 Which of the following officials historically has taken the lead in foreign and defense policymaking?
A. Secretary of defense
B. Speaker of the House
C. Chief justice of the Supreme Court
D. President
- 19 The "don't ask, don't tell" policy deals with which of the following issues?
A. The interrogation of terror suspects held in American custody
B. Gay men and lesbians serving in the U.S. Armed Forces
C. The ability of the armed forces to attract enough volunteers to staff the volunteer army
D. Intelligence leaks over American policy in the war on terror

KNOW *the score*

18–19 correct: Congratulations! You are well informed!

15–17 correct: Your political knowledge is a bit low—be sure to review the key terms and visit TheThinkSpot.

<14 correct: Reread the chapter more thoroughly.

1. D; 2. A; 3. D; 4. C; 5. A; 6. B; 7. C; 8. A; 9. C; 10. D; 11. C; 12. A; 13. D; 14. C; 15. D; 16. B; 17. A; 18. D; 19. B

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