

# **Historical Timeline of U.S. Foreign Policy**

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## INTRODUCTION

The changing conditions at home and abroad made U.S. participation in world affairs after the Civil War (1861-1865) not only more extensive but vastly more significant. The question of when the United States first became a great power is open to debate. That status may date from the Spanish-American War (1898) or from the U.S entry into World War I (1917).

## 1899-1913

### **Defending U.S. International Interests**

Following the defeat of Spain in the Spanish-American War of 1898, the United States acquired overseas colonies in the Caribbean and the Pacific. In its new status as an imperial power, the United States pursued a series of policies designed to protect American territories and aggressively expand its international commercial interests. These policies included the promotion of the "Open Door" policy in China and the attachment of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine that formally announced the intention to use military force to defend the Western Hemisphere against European incursions. At the same time, President Theodore Roosevelt oversaw the construction of the Panama Canal, which would have profound economic implications for American trade, and engaged in great power diplomacy in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War. In just over a decade, the United States had redefined its national and international interests to include a large overseas military presence, overseas possessions, and direct engagement in setting priorities in international affairs.

## 1914-1920

### **World War One and Wilsonian Diplomacy**

During his tenure as president, Woodrow Wilson encouraged Americans to look beyond their economic interests and to define and set foreign policy in terms of ideals, morality, and the spread of democracy abroad. The United States continued its efforts to become an active player on the international scene and engaged in action both in its traditional "sphere of influence" in the Western Hemisphere and in Europe during the First World War. The Wilsonian vision for collective security through American leadership in international organizations, like the newly established League of Nations, appealed to the American public, but the United States ultimately declined membership in the League due to Article X of its charter that committed the United States to defending any League member in the event of an attack. In voting down American participation, however, Congress challenged the informal tradition of the executive branch determining U.S. foreign policy.

## **Wilson's Fourteen Points**

The immediate cause of America's entry into World War I in April 1917 was the German announcement of unrestricted submarine warfare, and the subsequent sinking of ships with Americans on board. But President Wilson's war aims went beyond the defense of U.S. maritime interests. In his War Message to Congress he declared "our object is to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world." Wilson used several speeches earlier in the year to sketch out his vision of an end to the war that would bring a "just and secure peace," and not merely "a new balance of power." He then appointed a committee of experts known as The Inquiry to help him refine his ideas for peace. In December 1917 he asked The Inquiry to draw up specific recommendations for a comprehensive peace settlement. Using these recommendations, Wilson presented a program of fourteen points to a joint session of Congress on January 8, 1918. Eight of the fourteen points treated specific territorial issues among the combatant nations. Five of the other six concerned general principles for a peaceful world: open covenants (i.e. treaties or agreements), openly arrived at; freedom of the seas; free trade; reduction of armaments; and adjustment of colonial claims based on the principles of self-determination. The fourteenth point proposed what was to become the League of Nations to guarantee the "political independence and territorial integrity [of] great and small states alike." The League of Nations was an international organization, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, created after the First World War to provide a forum for resolving international disputes. It was first proposed by President Woodrow Wilson as part of his Fourteen Points plan for an equitable peace in Europe, but the United States was never a member. The idea of the League was grounded in the broad, international revulsion against the unprecedented destruction of the First World War and the contemporary understanding of its origins. This was reflected in all of Wilson's Fourteen Points, which were themselves based on theories of collective security and international organization debated amongst academics, jurists and utopians before and during the war. The Fourteen Points still stand as the most powerful expression of the idealist strain in U.S. diplomacy.

## **1921-1936**

### **Interwar Diplomacy**

Disillusionment with the war, international commitments that could lead to war, and economic uncertainty discouraged ambitious U.S. involvement in global affairs during the interwar period. The United States, however, did not retreat into complete isolation as the necessities of commercial growth dictated continued government support for overseas private investment that drove both American engagement with Latin America and the rebuilding of Europe in the 1920s. The United States also played an important role in international negotiations to set arms limitations and create pacts that aimed at securing a lasting peace. By the mid-1920s, however, a general feeling of economic uncertainty reinforced isolationist tendencies and encouraged new legislation that placed severe limits on immigration to the United States, particularly from Asia. During the 1930s, the rise of fascism as a threat to international peace sparked concern in the United States, but the severe economic depression curtailed

American willingness to act. In this environment, keeping the nation out of the brewing tension in Europe and Asia became an important foreign policy goal.

## **Disarmament Efforts**

Despite its lack of participation in the League of Nations, the United States was at the forefront of extensive efforts at disarmament during the 1920s and 1930s especially to restrict the growth of naval tonnage, considered to be a key measure of military strength. It helped that the major naval powers--Britain, the United States, and Japan--recognized the crushing financial costs of a naval arms race. Organized and hosted by Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes, the first naval disarmament conference was held in Washington the winter of 1921-1922 with eight nations in attendance. Other treaties signed at Washington abolished the two decade old Anglo-Japanese Alliance, endorsed the Open Door policy in China, compelled Japanese withdrawal from Siberia, and allowed the United States access to the Island of Yap. Tensions in the Pacific preceding World War II caused a second conference held in London in 1935-1936, but it failed when Japan abrogated the earlier pacts. In addition to naval disarmament, Secretary of State Frank Kellogg and French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand engineered a pact at the 1927 Geneva conference to outlawed war entirely. This was the high point of interwar disarmament. The Kellogg-Briand Pact, like the Washington and London conferences, failed to prevent the outbreak of another general war. Although American support for these conferences was evidence of a new American internationalism, disarmament itself would not overcome the forces leading to World War II.

## **Stimson Doctrine**

In the 1920s and 1930s, the United States had a number of interests in the Far East. The United States engaged in trade and investment in China. The U.S. defended its interests in the region through a three-pronged Far Eastern policy: it included the principle of the Open Door for guaranteeing equal access to commercial opportunities in China, a belief in the importance of maintaining the territorial integrity of China, and a commitment to cooperation with other powers with interests in the region. The policy of expansionism in China pursued by the autonomous Kwangtung Army of Japan accelerated in the late 1920s and early 1930s and became a major concern of the U.S. government. On September 18, 1931, an explosion destroyed a section of railway track near the Chinese city of Mukden. The Japanese, who owned the railway, blamed Chinese nationalists for the incident and used the opportunity to retaliate and invade Manchuria. Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson reacted to what he regarded as a violation of international law as well as treaties that the Japanese Government had signed. Since calls for a cessation of hostilities between China and Japan failed and President Herbert Hoover had rejected economic sanctions in principle, Stimson declared in January 1932 that the U.S. Government would not recognize any territorial or administrative changes the Japanese might impose upon China. The Stimson Doctrine was echoed in March 1932 by the Assembly of the League of Nations, which unanimously adopted an anti-Japanese resolution incorporating virtually verbatim the Stimson Doctrine of nonrecognition. This Doctrine stated that the United States would not recognize any treaty or agreement between Japan and China that violated U.S. rights or agreements to which the United

States subscribed. In short order, Japanese representatives simply walked out of the League, and the Kwangtung Army formalized its conquest of Manchuria.

When war between Japan and China broke out following a minor clash between military units at the Marco Polo Bridge in 1937, the impotence of the "Stimson Doctrine" became even more apparent.

## **Good Neighbor Policy**

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt took office determined to improve relations with the nations of Central and South America. Under his leadership the United States emphasized cooperation and trade rather than military force to maintain stability in the hemisphere. In his inaugural address on March 4, 1933, Roosevelt stated: "In the field of world policy I would dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor--the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others." Roosevelt's Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, participated in the Montevideo Conference of December 1933, where he backed a declaration favored by most nations of the Western Hemisphere: "No state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another". In December Roosevelt stated, "The definite policy of the United States from now on is one opposed to armed intervention." In 1934 at Roosevelt's direction the 1903 treaty with Cuba (based on the Platt amendment) that gave the United States the right to intervene to preserve internal stability or independence was abrogated. Although domestic economic problems and World War II diverted attention from the Western Hemisphere, Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy represented an attempt to distance the United States from earlier interventionist policies.

## **1937-1945**

### **Diplomacy and the Road to another War**

By the late 1930s, the United States continued its efforts to stay out of the wars in Europe and Asia. As the failure of disarmament, the peace movement, and the doctrine of appeasement became clear, Congress passed a series of neutrality acts designed to prevent the United States from being drawn into the widespread international conflict that the U.S. Government believed to be inevitable. In 1940, U.S. policy slowly began to shift from neutrality to non-belligerency by providing aid to the nations at war with the Axis Powers--Germany, Italy and Japan. In response to the growing emergency, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called upon the U.S. people to prepare for war. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked the U.S. naval installation at Pearl Harbor, and the United States formally entered the Second World War. Meetings between those powers allied in the war against the Axis powers provided the framework for the postwar world. Two major issues would become of major importance to postwar foreign policy, the prevention of another global conflict and the influence of nuclear weapons on the international balance of power.

## **Wartime Conferences**

The first involvement of the United States in the wartime conferences between the Allied nations opposing the Axis powers actually occurred before the U.S. formally entered World War II. In August 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met secretly and devised an eight-point statement of war aims known as the Atlantic Charter, which included a pledge that the Allies would not accept territorial changes resulting from the war in Europe. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the wartime conferences focused on establishing a second front. At Casablanca in January 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to fight until the Axis powers surrendered unconditionally. In a November 1943 meeting in Egypt with Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to a pre-eminent role for China in postwar Asia. The next major wartime conference included Roosevelt, Churchill, and the leader of the Soviet Union, Josef Stalin. Meeting at Tehran following the Cairo Conference, the "Big Three" secured confirmation on the launching of the cross-channel invasion and a promise from Stalin that the Soviet Union would eventually enter the war against Japan. In 1944, conferences at Bretton Woods and Dumbarton Oaks created the framework for international cooperation in the postwar world. In February 1945, the "Big Three" met at the former Russian czar's summer palace in the Crimea. Yalta was the most important and by far the most controversial of the wartime meetings. Recognizing the strong position that the Soviet Army possessed on the ground, Churchill and an ailing Roosevelt agreed to a number of compromises with Stalin that allowed Soviet hegemony to remain in Poland and other Eastern European countries, granted territorial concessions to the Soviet Union, and outlined punitive measures against Germany, including an occupation and reparations in principle. Stalin did guarantee that the Soviet Union would declare war on Japan within six months. The last meeting of the "Big Three" occurred at Potsdam in July 1945, where the tension that would erupt into the cold war was evident. Despite the end of the war in Europe and the revelation of the existence of the atomic bomb to the Allies, neither President Harry Truman, Roosevelt's successor, nor Clement Atlee, who mid-way through the conference replaced Churchill, could come to agreement with Stalin on any but the most minor issues. The most significant agreement was the issuance of the Potsdam Declaration to Japan demanding an immediate and unconditional surrender and threatening Japan with destruction if they did not comply. With the Axis forces defeated, the wartime alliance soon devolved into suspicion and bitterness on both sides.

## **United Nations**

The impetus to establish the United Nations stemmed in large part from the inability of its predecessor, the League of Nations, to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War. Once World War II began, President Franklin D. Roosevelt determined that U.S. leadership was essential for the creation of another international organization aimed at preserving peace, and his administration engaged in international diplomacy in pursuit of that goal. He also worked to build domestic support for the concept of the United Nations. President Roosevelt recognized the inherent weaknesses of the League of Nations, but faced with the reality of another world war also saw the value of planning for the creation of an

international organization to maintain peace in the post-World War II era. He felt that this time, the United States needed to play a leading role both in the creation of the organization, and in the organization itself. Moreover, in contrast to the League, the new organization needed the power to enforce key decisions. The first wartime meeting between British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Roosevelt, the Atlantic Conference held off the coast of Newfoundland in August 1941, took place before the United States had formally entered the war as a combatant. Despite its official position of neutrality, the United States joined Britain in issuing a joint declaration that became known as the Atlantic Charter. This pronouncement outlined a vision for a postwar order supported, in part, by an effective international organization that would replace the struggling League of Nations.

The governments of the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and China formalized the Atlantic Charter proposals in January 1942, shortly after the United States entered the war. In the Declaration of the United Nations, these major Allied nations, along with 22 other states, agreed to work together against the Axis powers (Germany, Japan, and Italy), and committed in principle to the establishment of the United Nations after the war. At the Quebec Conference in August 1943, Secretary of State Cordell Hull and British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden agreed to draft a declaration that included a call for "a general international organization, based on the principle sovereign equality of all nations." An agreed declaration was issued after a Foreign Ministers Conference in Moscow in October 1943. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt met with Soviet Premier Josef Stalin in Tehran, Iran, in November 1943, he proposed an international organization comprising an assembly of all member states and a 10-member executive committee to discuss social and economic issues. The United States, Great Britain, Soviet Union, and China would enforce peace as "the four policemen." Meanwhile Allied representatives founded a set of task-oriented organizations: the Food and Agricultural Organization (May 1943), the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (November 1943), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (April 1944), the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (July 1944), and the International Civil Aviation Organization (November 1944).

U.S., British, Soviet, and Chinese representatives met at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington in August and September of 1944 to draft the charter of a postwar international organization based on the principle of collective security. They recommended a General Assembly of all member states and a Security Council consisting of the Big Four plus six members chosen by the Assembly. Voting procedures and the veto power of permanent members of the Security Council were finalized at the Yalta Conference in 1945 when Roosevelt and Stalin agreed that the veto would not prevent discussions by the Security Council.

Representatives of 50 nations met in San Francisco April-June 1945 to complete the Charter of the United Nations. In addition to the General Assembly of all member states and a Security Council of 5 permanent and 6 non-permanent members, the Charter provided for an 18-member Economic and Social Council, an International Court of Justice, a Trusteeship Council to oversee certain colonial territories, and a Secretariat under a Secretary General. The Roosevelt administration sought bipartisan support and in September 1943 the Republican

Party endorsed U.S. participation in a postwar international organization, after which both houses of Congress overwhelmingly endorsed participation. Roosevelt also sought to convince the public that an international organization was the best means to prevent future wars. The Senate approved the UN Charter on July 28, 1945, by a vote of 89 to 2. The United Nations came into existence on October 24, 1945, after 29 nations had ratified the Charter.

## 1945-1952

### **The Early Cold War**

The United States emerged from World War II as one of the foremost economic, political, and military powers in the world. Wartime production pulled the economy out of depression and propelled it to great profits. In the interest of avoiding another global war, for the first time the United States began to use economic assistance as a strategic element of its foreign policy and offered significant assistance to countries in Europe and Asia struggling to rebuild their shattered economies. In contrast to U.S. unwillingness to politically or militarily entangle itself in the League of Nations, the United States became one of the first members of the international organization designed to promote international security, commerce, and law, the United Nations. The United States also took an active interest in the fate of the colonies the European powers were having difficulty maintaining. In addition to these challenges, the United States faced increasing resistance from the Soviet Union which had rescinded on a number of wartime promises. As the Soviets demonstrated a keen interest in dominating Eastern Europe, the United States took the lead in forming a Western alliance to counterbalance the communist superpower to contain the spread of communism. At the same time, the United States restructured its military and intelligence forces, both of which would have a significant influence in U.S. Cold War policy.

### **National Security Act of 1947**

The National Security Act of 1947 mandated a major reorganization of the foreign policy and military establishments of the U.S. Government. The act also established the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which grew out of World War II era Office of Strategic Services and small post-war intelligence organizations. The CIA served as the primary civilian intelligence-gathering organization in the government. Later, the Defense Intelligence Agency became the main military intelligence body. The 1947 law also caused far-reaching changes in the military establishment. The War Department and Navy Department merged into a single Department of Defense under the Secretary of Defense, who also directed the newly created Department of the Air Force.

### **The Truman Doctrine**

With the Truman Doctrine, arose from a speech delivered by President Truman before a joint session of Congress on March 12, 1947, President Harry S. Truman established that the United States would provide political, military and economic assistance to all democratic nations under threat from external or internal authoritarian forces. The Truman Doctrine effectively reoriented U.S. foreign



policy, away from its usual stance of withdrawal from regional conflicts not directly involving the United States, to one of possible intervention in far away conflicts.

## **Kennan and Containment**

George F. Kennan, a career Foreign Service Officer, formulated the policy of "containment," the basic United States strategy for fighting the cold war (1947-1989) with the Soviet Union. Kennan's ideas, which became the basis of the Truman administration's foreign policy, first came to public attention in 1947 in the form of an anonymous contribution to the journal *Foreign Affairs*, the so-called "X-Article." "The main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union," Kennan wrote, "must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies." To that end, he called for countering "Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the Western world" through the "adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy." Such a policy, Kennan predicted, would "promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power."

Kennan's policy was controversial from the very beginning. After much debate, the National Security Council prepared NSC 68, a policy document signed by Truman, calling for a drastic expansion of the U.S. military budget. The paper also expanded containment's scope beyond the defense of major centers of industrial power to encompass the entire world. "In the context of the present polarization of power," it read, "a defeat of free institutions anywhere is a defeat everywhere." Containment in the more general sense of blocking the expansion of Soviet influence remained the basic strategy of the United States throughout the cold war.

## **Marshall Plan**

In the immediate post-World War II period, Europe remained ravaged by war and thus susceptible to exploitation by an internal and external Communist threat. In a June 5, 1947, speech to the graduating class at Harvard University, Secretary of State George C. Marshall issued a call for a comprehensive program to rebuild Europe. Fanned by the fear of Communist expansion and the rapid deterioration of European economies in the winter of 1946-1947, Congress passed the Economic Cooperation Act in March 1948 and approved funding that would eventually rise to over \$12 billion for the rebuilding of Western Europe. The Marshall Plan generated a resurgence of European industrialization and brought extensive investment into the region. The Marshall Plan was applied solely to Western Europe, precluding any measure of Soviet Bloc cooperation. The Marshall Plan also institutionalized and legitimized the concept of U.S. foreign aid programs, which have become an integral part of U.S. foreign policy.

## **North Atlantic Treaty Organization**

Signed in 1949, the treaty, one of the major Western countermeasures against the threat of aggression by the Soviet Union during the cold war, was aimed at safeguarding the freedom of the North Atlantic community. Considering an armed attack on any member an attack against all, the treaty provided for collective self-defense in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The treaty was also designed to encourage political, economic, and social cooperation.

## **Korean War and Japan's Recovery**

As the cold war came to dominate U.S. foreign policy, America extended security commitments to two nations in Northeast Asia—the Republic of Korea and Japan. The Department of State under Secretary Dean Acheson forged a series of agreements to build a permanent American presence in the region and support these two nations, creating alliances that have lasted to today. After Japan's surrender to the Allied Powers in August 1945, the United States military occupied the defeated nation and began a series of far-reaching reforms designed to build a peaceful and democratic Japan by reducing the power of the military and breaking up the largest Japanese business conglomerates. However, growing concern over Communist power in East Asia, particularly the success of the Chinese Communist Party in its struggle against Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist forces, led the United States to halt reforms in 1947 and 1948 in order to focus on the economic recovery and political rehabilitation of Japan.

During World War II the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to temporarily divide Korea at the 38th parallel in order to oversee the removal of Japanese forces. It soon became clear, however, that neither of the cold war antagonists would permit its Korea ally to be threatened by unification. The Soviets supported Kim Il Song in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north; the United States backed Syngman Rhee in the Republic of Korea in the south. Nevertheless the United States did not make Korea a key part of its defensive strategy for East Asia, and U.S. forces withdrew from the south in the late 1940s. Assuming that the United States did not consider South Korea of vital interest, Kim's army attacked the South in June 1950 almost conquering the entire peninsula. The U.S. military returned, leading a United Nations-authorized force to push the North's army back above the 38th parallel and beyond. Only in 1953 did the two sides reach an uneasy truce, thus crystallizing the division between North and South that exists today. In 1953 the United States and South Korea signed a mutual security treaty designed to protect this new nation from its neighbor to the north.

U.S. efforts to save South Korea from Communist invasion accelerated Department of State attempts to restore Japan to a respected international position, and make that country a prosperous ally of the United States. Treaty of San Francisco ended the state of war between Japan and 47 of the Allies (most nations allied with the Soviet Union refused to sign), concluded the U.S. Occupation, and excused the Japanese from reparations for the war. On that same day the US and Japan signed the United States-Japanese Security Treaty,

allowing the United States to station troops in Japan, and making the Japanese islands into an important facet of America's global containment structure.

## 1953-1960

### **Entrenchment of a Bi-Polar Foreign Policy**

Concerns about the international spread of communism and the growing power of the Soviet Union dominated most foreign policy decisions during the administration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. U.S. foreign policymakers observed with concern as the Soviets tightened their hold on Eastern Europe. In Africa and Asia nationalist movements challenged colonial governments. U.S. officials suspected that communists dominated these movements and received support directly from the Soviet Union. In order to counterbalance the Soviet threat, President Eisenhower supported a doctrine of massive retaliation, which called for the development of technology necessary to match and even surpass Soviet nuclear capability. Recognizing that nuclear war was a last resort, U.S. officials supported engaging in conventional limited wars. In an effort to prepare for potential military conflicts, President Eisenhower exercised unprecedented executive authority in deploying the U.S. military abroad, without specific authorization from the U.S. Congress. These Cold War policies served to increase the foreign policymaking power of the presidency and to expand U.S. international obligations.

### **The Eisenhower Doctrine**

President Dwight D. Eisenhower announced the Eisenhower Doctrine in January 1957, and Congress approved it in March of the same year. Under the Eisenhower Doctrine, a country could request American economic assistance and/or aid from U.S. military forces if it was being threatened by armed aggression from another state. Eisenhower singled out the Soviet threat in his doctrine by authorizing the commitment of U.S. forces "to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations, requesting such aid against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by international communism."

## 1961-1968

### **Entangling Alliances**

Mounting tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, and war in Vietnam determined U.S. foreign policy in the 1960s. In 1961, the Soviet Union erected the most iconic image of the Cold War, the Berlin Wall, which physically divided the Western and Eastern Blocs of Germany's city of Berlin. The following year, the Cuban Missile Crisis brought the United States and the Soviet Union to the brink of armed conflict, as U.S. ships blockaded Cuba preventing Soviet attempts to deliver nuclear warheads to the island. On the other side of the world, burgeoning conflict in Vietnam created a major dilemma for U.S. foreign policymakers. Determined not to lose either the nation of South Vietnam or the

broader region of Southeast Asia to communism, U.S. officials committed the United States to military action to stop North Vietnamese nationalist Ho Chi Minh. After President John F. Kennedy's assassination on November 22, 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson continued to commit significant military expenditures to the conflict in Vietnam, particularly after a 1964 Congressional resolution that gave the President unprecedented power to increase the U.S. presence in Southeast Asia. This costly foreign policy eventually influenced domestic politics as the war in Vietnam grew increasingly unpopular with the U.S. public.

### **The Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile Crisis**

In early 1961 President John F. Kennedy concluded that Fidel Castro was a Soviet client working to subvert Latin America. After much debate in his administration, Kennedy authorized a clandestine invasion of Cuba by a brigade of Cuban exiles. The brigade hit the beach at the Bay of Pigs on April 17, 1961, but the operation failed within 2 days. On October 22 1961, Kennedy informs the nation there are Russian-built missile sites in Cuba and imposes on October 24 a naval quarantine on all missile equipment being shipped to Cuba; after a U.S. pledge not to invade Cuba and to remove missiles from Turkey, on October 28 the Soviets agree to remove the missiles. Exactly how close the United States and the Soviet Union came to nuclear war over Cuba remains one of the most keenly discussed issues of the cold war.

### **Alliance for Progress Initiative**

Growing out of the fear of increased Soviet and Cuban influence in Latin America, the 1961-1969 Alliance for Progress was in essence a Marshall Plan for Latin America. The United States pledged \$20 billion in assistance (grants and loans) and called upon the Latin American governments to provide \$80 billion in investment funds for their economies. It was the biggest U.S. aid program toward the developing world up to that point—and called for substantial reform of Latin American institutions. A key element of the Alliance was U.S. military assistance to friendly regimes in the region. The Alliance did not achieve all its lofty goals. According to one study, only 2 percent of economic growth in 1960s Latin America directly benefited the poor; and there was a general deterioration of United States-Latin American relations by the end of the 1960s.

### **Tonkin Gulf Resolution**

On August 7 1964, U.S. Congress approves the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution authorizing military action in Southeast Asia. The resolution drafted by the administration authorized “all necessary measures” to repel attacks against U.S. forces and all steps necessary for the defense of U.S. allies in Southeast Asia. In March 1965, President Johnson sent the first U.S. combat forces to Vietnam and in 1969 the U.S. military had a force of 534,000 men in Vietnam.

## 1969-1989

### **Détente and Arms Control**

Between the late 1960s and the late 1970s, there was a thawing of the ongoing Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. This détente took several forms, including increased discussion on arms control. Although the decade began with vast improvements in bilateral relations, by the end of the decade events had brought the two superpowers back to the brink of confrontation. In practical terms, détente led to formal agreements on arms control and the security of Europe. A clear sign that a détente was emerging was found in the signing of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 1968. The breakdown of détente in the late 1970s stalled progress on arms control. Ultimately, the United States and the Soviet Union had different visions of what détente meant and what its pursuit would entail. Overblown expectations that the warming of relations in the era of détente would translate into an end to the Cold War also created public dissatisfaction with the increasing manifestations of continued competition and the interventions in the Third World.

### **Ending the Vietnam War**

Although, newly elected President Richard M. Nixon declared in 1969 that he would continue the American involvement in the Vietnam War in order to end the conflict and secure "peace with honor" for the United States and for its ally, South Vietnam. In January 1969, the United States, governments of South and North Vietnam, and the Viet Cong met for the first plenary session of peace talks in Paris, France. These talks, which began with much hope, moved slowly. They finally concluded with the signing of a peace agreement, the Paris Accords, on January 27, 1973. As a result, the south was divided into a patchwork of zones controlled by the South Vietnamese Government and the Viet Cong. The United States withdrew its forces, although U.S. military advisers remained. The January accords, titled the "Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam," neither ended the war (except for the United States) nor restored the peace. A little over 2 years later, 30 North Vietnamese divisions conquered the South and restored peace in Vietnam. The American commitment to defend South Vietnam, described as unequivocal by Nixon and Kissinger, had been vitiated by the Watergate scandal and Nixon's subsequent resignation. By that time, the Paris Accords seemed memorable only as the vehicle on which the United States rode out of Southeast Asia.

### **Carter and the Camp David Accords**

The premiere foreign policy achievement of the Carter administration was the signing of the Camp David peace accords. The peace process in the Middle East that began with Henry Kissinger accelerated after President Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt undertook the unprecedented step of traveling to Jerusalem in November 1977. There, he extended an olive branch to the Israeli Government in the form of a peace proposal: the return of occupied lands in exchange for a guarantee of security. Picking up on the initiative, President Jimmy Carter invited Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Begin to the presidential retreat in the Catskill mountains

of Maryland for a series of meetings in September 1978. Two agreements in principle arose from the Camp David meetings. The first included a statement on eventual self-government for the West Bank and Gaza Strip areas as well as the inclusion of Jordanian and Palestinian representatives in future talks. The second agreement consisted of diplomatic recognition of Israel by Egypt in exchange for the return of territories occupied since 1967. As negotiations toward a formal treaty ensued, Carter continued his personal involvement in the process. On March 26, 1979, Sadat, Carter, and Begin signed the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty, which formalized the specific details of the arrangements agreed to at Camp David. However, the Camp David Accords and the subsequent treaty did not include a comprehensive settlement of the problems in the Middle East. A substantive peace framework among Israel, its other Arab neighbors, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization would not emerge until the 1990s.

### **Panama Canal Treaty**

The Panama Canal Treaties of 1977-1978 meant to rectify a long-term, contentious issue in United States-Latin American relations. In 1903 U.S. military force supported Panamanian revolutionaries in their quest for independence from Colombia, and ensured U.S. control, for a century, of a strip of land in the center of Panama for the Canal. By the 1960s, Panamanian calls for sovereignty over the Canal Zone had reached high pitch, and United States relations with Panama deteriorated. President Carter saw returning the Panama Canal as key to improving U.S. relations in the hemisphere and the developing world. Although opponents of the Treaty returning the Canal to Panama by 2000 criticized Carter's efforts on the basis of "We Built it, We Paid for it, It's Ours," the Treaties narrowly passed the Senate in April 1978.

### **Reagan Doctrine**

The "Reagan Doctrine" was used to characterize the Reagan administration's (1981-1988) policy of supporting anti-Communist insurgents wherever they might be. In his 1985 State of the Union address, President Ronald Reagan called upon Congress and the American people to stand up to the Soviet Union, what he had previously called the "Evil Empire": "We must stand by all our democratic allies. And we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives—on every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua—to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth."

Breaking with the doctrine of "Containment," established during the Truman administration—President Ronald Reagan's foreign policy was based on John Foster Dulles' "Roll-Back" strategy from the 1950s in which the United States would actively push back the influence of the Soviet Union. To that end, the Reagan administration focused much of its energy on supporting proxy armies to curtail Soviet influence. Among the more prominent examples of the Reagan Doctrine's application, in Nicaragua, the United States sponsored the contra movement in an effort to force the leftist Sandinista government from power. And in Afghanistan, the United States provided material support to Afghan rebels—known as the mujahadeen—helping them end Soviet occupation of their country.

## **Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe**

On the night of November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall—the most potent symbol of the cold-war division of Europe—came down. The collapse of the Berlin Wall was the culminating point of the revolutionary changes sweeping East Central Europe in 1989. The collapse of communism in East Central Europe and the Soviet Union marked the end of the cold war. The U.S. long-term policies before the fall of communism, were containing Soviet expansion while encouraging democratic reform in Central and Eastern Europe through scientific and cultural exchanges and the information policy (e.g., Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty).

## **1989-2000**

### **The Post-Cold War Era**

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 created a massive shift in the international balance of power and left the United States as the sole remaining superpower. Early conflicts like the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait that led to the Gulf War and clashes in the newly independent Balkan states brought the United States together with new allies to solve international problems. President George H. W. Bush defined the shift as a "New World Order," and for the first time since World War II, the United States and Russia fought together on the same side of a conflict. The administrations of President William J. Clinton during the 1990s were shaped by attempts by American foreign policymakers to redefine what constituted a "threat" and what foreign policy would serve the "national interest" in the post-Cold War era. Some experts argued that the United States should work toward preventing ethnic conflict and genocide in places such as Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Kosovo. Others maintained that U.S. foreign policy should focus instead on preserving U.S. economic and trade interests.

### **Gulf War Coalition**

In August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait. The United Nations, led by the U.S. and with the backing of other UN members, condemned the invasion, demanded Iraq's withdrawal, and imposed an economic blockade. A U.S.-dominated coalition including Arab nations and traditional U.S. allies gave Iraq an ultimatum to withdraw from Kuwait. When Iraq refused, large-scale bombing campaign began in January 1991, followed by a March invasion that quickly liberated Kuwait.

### **The Oslo Accords**

The Oslo Accords (officially the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements) were signed by Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in Washington, DC, on September 13, 1993, after months of secret negotiations. This agreement established an important new approach for achieving a peaceful resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by initiating open, direct talks between Israel and the PLO. At the end of the first Gulf War in 1991, the international context for negotiating peace in the Middle East had

changed dramatically. Iraq's defeat by a coalition of European and Arab countries allayed Israel's fears of future Iraqi attacks. Because of its support for Iraq in the war, the PLO was isolated by several Middle Eastern countries. The United States Government believed that the recent political changes in the Middle East presented an opportunity to advance the Arab-Israeli peace process. Although the peacemaking efforts launched by the Oslo Accords did not produce a permanent agreement, the Oslo agreements achieved several breakthroughs. The Palestinians made a significant advance toward self-government with the creation of the Palestinian National Authority, composed of a democratically elected Council with Arafat as its head. For the first time, the PLO's status was legitimized internationally. The Oslo approach to Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking efforts effectively came to an end with the failure of the Camp David Summit in 2000 and the subsequent outbreak of the second Palestinian Intifada.

### **Dayton Peace Accords**

The 1992-95 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended with the U.S. crucial participation in brokering the 1995 Dayton Accords. After leading the diplomatic and military effort to secure the Dayton agreement, the United States has continued to lead the effort to ensure its implementation. U.S. troops participate in the Bosnia Peacekeeping force (SFOR), and the United States has donated hundreds of millions of dollars to help with reconstruction, humanitarian assistance, economic development, and military reconstruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **NATO Expansion**

Europe ranked high on Clinton's second-term agenda, with the focus on European security and unity, especially through the expansion of NATO. On May 14 1997, Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) came to an historic agreement, paving the way for NATO expansion. "[T]he fundamental goal of [expanding NATO] is to build, for the first time, a peaceful, free and undivided trans-Atlantic community," said Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright. "It is to extend eastward to Central Europe and the former Soviet Union the peace and prosperity that Western Europe has enjoyed for the last 50 years." NATO approved membership for Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, made effective in 1999. At the April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, members agreed to extend invitations to Albania and Croatia to join the organization. After formal accession talks, on July 9, 2008, the foreign ministers of Albania and Croatia and the permanent representatives of the 26 NATO allies signed accession protocols amending the North Atlantic Treaty to permit Albania and Croatia's.

## **2001-2008**

### **War on Terrorism**

September 11 marked the start of a new era in U.S. strategic thinking. Before September 11, the Bush administration had been in the process of developing a new national security strategy. During the years from 1989 to 2001, a



multiplicity of lesser dangers existed -- for example, ethnic conflict, weapons proliferation, terrorism, political and financial instability, the impact of climate changes, infectious diseases, and poverty. While no one danger proved dominant, the United States did find itself drawn into a number of military interventions in response to local or regional conflicts, as in the case of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait (1990-91), Somalia (1991-92), Haiti (1994), Bosnia (1995), and Kosovo (1999). Since September 11 all this changed. Terrorism was no longer one among a number of assorted dangers to the United States, but a fundamental threat to the U.S., its way of life, and its vital interests. In the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the Bush administration turned its attention to a war against terrorism. In response, the United States under the Bush Administration launched large-scale military attacks against Al Qaeda terrorist camps and the Taliban government in Afghanistan.

## **Afghanistan**

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in order to end the ability of the Taliban regime to provide safe haven to al Qaeda and to put a stop to al Qaeda's use of the territory of Afghanistan as a base of operations for terrorist activities. With Afghanistan devastated after more than 20 years of warfare, the fall of the Taliban paved the way for the success of a long-stalled U.N. effort to form a broad-based Afghan government and for a U.S.-led coalition to begin building legitimate governing institutions. Afghan factions opposed to the Taliban met at a United Nations-sponsored conference in Germany in December 2001 and agreed to restore stability and governance to Afghanistan--creating an interim government and establishing a process to move toward a permanent government. Under the "Bonn Agreement," an Afghan Interim Authority (TISA) was formed and took office in Kabul on December 22, 2001 with Hamid Karzai as Chairman. One of the TISA's primary achievements was the drafting of a constitution that was ratified by a Constitutional Loya Jirga on January 4, 2004. Security conditions precluded the holding of all elections simultaneously. On October 9, 2004, Afghanistan held its first national democratic presidential election. Hamid Karzai was announced as the official winner on November 3 and inaugurated on December 7 for a five-year term.

## **Middle East Initiatives**

The Roadmap for peace, developed by the United States, in cooperation with Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations (the Quartet), was presented to Israel and the Palestinian Authority on April 30, 2003. The plan is a performance-based, goal-driven plan, with clear phases, timelines, and benchmarks. It involves reciprocal steps by the two parties in the political, security, economic, and humanitarian fields. The destination is a final and comprehensive settlement of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. U.S. Middle East policy comprises basically four elements: a Israeli-Palestinian peace, a free Iraq, the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and the establishment of a Free Trade Area in this region.

In June 2004, President Bush led the G-8 in establishing the "Partnership for Progress and a Common Future with the Region of the Broader Middle East and North Africa" to support political, economic, and social reform in the region. The Plan of Support also committed the G-8 to work in partnership with the region's governments, business leaders, and civil society to "intensify and expand" existing programs, focusing on promoting democracy, improving education and creating jobs and economic growth.

## **Iraq**

After the Gulf War, the UN Security Council required the regime to surrender its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and submit to UN inspections. When the Ba'ath regime refused to fully cooperate with the UN inspections, the Security Council employed sanctions to prevent further WMD development and compel Iraqi adherence to international obligations. Coalition forces enforced no-fly zones in southern and northern Iraq to protect Iraqi citizens from attack by the regime and a no-drive zone in southern Iraq to prevent the regime from massing forces to threaten or again invade Kuwait. Citing the possession of weapons of mass destruction, links to terrorism, and Saddam Hussein's despotism, a U.S.-led coalition removed the Ba'ath regime in March and April 2003. In May 1, 2003, President Bush declared an end to major combat operations.

The coalition formed the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to provide for the administration of Iraq during the period of transitional administration and restore the conditions of security and stability in the country. The CPA was disbanded on June 28, 2004 transferring sovereign authority for governing Iraq to the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG). In May 2005, the Iraqi Transitional Government appointed a multi-ethnic committee to draft a new Iraqi Constitution. The new constitution was ratified in a nationwide referendum on October 15, 2005. On December 15, 2005, Iraqis again went to the polls to participate in the first legislative elections as laid out by the new constitution. The new four-year, constitutionally based government took office in March 2006, and the new cabinet was approved and installed in May 2006. The emergency relief and reconstruction aid delivered to Iraq during the 12 months since the fall of Saddam Hussein was the biggest U.S. foreign aid program since the Marshall Plan.

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