

Theories and Priorities in US Foreign Policy

Key Question: What are the major theories and historic priorities of American Foreign Policy? What does the CATO (American Think Tank) report on Millennials suggest about future priorities in US FP?

OVERVIEW:

1. Foreign Policy Ideas
2. Historical events
3. Interplay between these two things

POTUS DOCTRINES:

1. Bush Doctrine: '*Pre-emptive Strike*' => Attack the enemy before it attacks the U.S. [Unilateral]
 - i. Reacting to the overreach of the Clinton administration (A humble approach to foreign policy)
2. Obama Doctrine: Emphasis on international cooperation (Less willingness to engage with conflicts) [Multilateral]

Note: Presidents draw, often consciously, from the ideas and experiences of their predecessors

- *Presidents have advisors/experts that identify with a specific school of thought*

Three Constituents of a Foreign Policy 'DOCTRINE' - **Bush Nukes Russians:**

1. **Balance of Priorities:**
 - i. How aggressively should US advance interests of American businesses?
 - ii. Strategic usefulness vs. moral standing of allies
 - iii. Impact of political conditions of other nations to America's national interests
2. **National interests (What constitutes as a threat)**
 - i. Basic assumption of many theories in IR (particularly realist ones)
 - ii. Where there are interests everywhere, there are threats everywhere
 - iii. "National interest" is often invoked as a rebuke to foreign policy ideas (too preoccupied with the politics of other nations)
 - i. "National interest is a function of national identity" -Huntington
3. **Repertoire of Actions:**
 - i. When should military force be used? How hard should you retaliate?
 - ii. Should the US act unilaterally or with assistance of allies?
 - iii. What forms of diplomacy are appropriate or desirable?

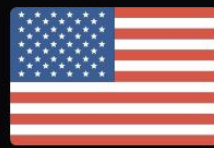
US FOREIGN POLICY

3 Constituents of Foreign Policy



1. Balance of Priorities

- i) How aggressively should the US advance interests of American businesses?
- ii) Strategic Usefulness vs. Moral Standing of Allies
- iii) Impact of political conditions of other nations to U.S. interests



2. National Interests

- i) Basic assumption of predominant IR theories (esp. Realism)
- ii) Where there are interests, there are threats
- ii) Rebuke against FP & maintain National Identity



3. Repertoire of Actions

- i) When should military force be used?
- ii) Unilateralism or Multilateralism?
- iii) What forms of diplomacy are appropriate or desirable?

ACRONYM:
Balance National Reputation

Classical European Foreign Policy:

1. PROXIMITY: Shaped by proximity of major powers to each other (Constant ward over territory and populations)
2. ELITE: Conducted by highly skilled experts at court (Removed from conception of 'the people')
3. BOP: Concern with 'Balance of Power'

American Break from European Foreign Policy:

1. Geography: Oceans on both sides (Not concerned with 'chessboard' politics)
2. Morality > Political expedience
3. DEMOCRACY - Branch of government closest to the people given ultimate say over war and peace
4. Not a complete break:
 - i. Monroe Doctrine: US involved itself in European balancing politics while asserting dominance in Latin America
 - i. US will remain neutral in European affairs
 - ii. US would not interfere with European colonies in Western Hemisphere
 - iii. No European nation can establish new colony in Western Hemisphere
 - iv. If a European nation attempted to interfere in Western Hemisphere, U.S. would view it as a hostile act
 - ii. Alliances of pure strategic expedience
 - iii. Balance of power concepts returned with Cold War & Doctrine of Containment
5. Some still supported 'Chessboard Politics'!
 - Henry Kissinger: Secretary of State under Nixon (Major proponent of European-style *Realpolitik*)
6. Proponents:
 - i. Jefferson: Multifaceted Liberal (Minimal govt.)
 - i. Strong connections with France
 - ii. Major theorist of American independence
 - iii. Preference for free-trade and friendship (avoiding alliances and war)
 - iv. Nonetheless entered into alliances (Unilaterally went to war and greatly expanded American territory)

(1823) Monroe Doctrine: Any intervention by external powers in the politics of the Americas is a potentially hostile act against the US)