

# Chapter 15 - Foreign Policy

On September 11, 2001, Americans were forced to change their view of national security and of their relations with the rest of the world - literally overnight. No longer could citizens of the United States believe that national security issues involved only threats overseas or that the American homeland could not be attacked. No longer could Americans believe that regional conflicts in other parts of the world had no direct impact on the United States.

Within a few days, it became known that the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and on the Pentagon had been planned and carried out by a terrorist network named al Qaeda that was directed by the radical Islamist leader Osama bin Laden. The network was closely linked to the Taliban government of Afghanistan, which had ruled that nation since 1996.

Americans were shocked by the success of the attacks. They wondered how our airport security systems could have failed so drastically. Shouldn't our intelligence community have known about and defended against this terrorist network? How could our foreign policy have been so blind to the anger of Islamist groups throughout the world?

## *FACING THE WORLD: FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICIES*

The United States is only one nation in a world with almost two hundred independent countries, many located in regions where armed conflict is ongoing. What tools does our nation have to deal with the many challenges to its peace and prosperity? One tool is **foreign policy**. By this term, we mean both the goals the government wants to achieve in the world and the techniques and strategies used to achieve them. These techniques and strategies include **diplomacy, economic aid, technical assistance**, and military intervention. Sometimes foreign policies are restricted to statements of goals or ideas, such as the goal of helping to end world poverty, whereas at other times foreign policies involve comprehensive efforts to achieve particular objectives, such as preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

In the United States the **foreign policy process** usually originates with the president and those agencies that provide advice on foreign policy matters. Congressional action and national public debate often affect foreign policy formulation as well.

## **National Security and Defense Policies**

As one aspect of overall foreign policy, **national security policy** is designed primarily to protect the independence and political integrity of the United States. It concerns itself with the defense of the United States against actual or potential future enemies.

U.S. national security policy is based on determinations made by the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and a number of other federal agencies, including the National Security Council (NSC). The NSC acts as an advisory body to the president, but it had increasingly become

a rival to the State Department in influencing the foreign policy process until the Obama presidency, when Hillary Rodham Clinton became secretary of state.

**Defense policy** is a subset of national security policy. Generally, defense policy refers to the set of policies that direct the nature and activities of the U.S. armed forces. Defense policy also considers the types of armed forces units we need to have, such as rapid response forces or Marine expeditionary forces, and the types of weaponry that should be developed and maintained for the nation's security. Defense policies are proposed by the leaders of the nation's military forces and the secretary of defense, and these policies are greatly influenced by congressional decision makers.

### **Diplomacy**

Diplomacy is another aspect of foreign policy. Diplomacy includes all of a nation's external relationships, from routine diplomatic communications to summit meetings among heads of state. More specifically, diplomacy refers to the settling of disputes and conflicts among nations by peaceful methods. Diplomacy is also the set of negotiating techniques by which a nation attempts to carry out its foreign policy. Of course, diplomacy can be successful only if the parties are willing to negotiate.

### **Morality versus Reality in Foreign Policy**

Since the earliest years of the republic, Americans have felt that their nation has a special destiny. The American experiment in political and economic liberty, it was thought, would provide the best possible life for its citizens and be a model for other nations. As the United States assumed greater status as a power in world politics, Americans came to believe that the nation's actions on the world stage should be guided by American political and moral principles.

**Moral Idealism.** The view of America's mission has led to the adoption of many foreign policy initiatives that are rooted in **moral idealism**. This philosophy views the world as fundamentally benign and assumes that most nations can be persuaded to take moral considerations into account when setting their policies. In this perspective, nations should come together and agree to keep the peace, as President Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921) proposed for the League of Nations. Many foreign policy initiatives taken by the United States have been based on this idealistic view of the world. The Peace Corps, which was created by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, is one example of an effort to spread American goodwill and technology.

**Political Realism.** In opposition to the moral perspective is **political realism**. Realists see the world as a dangerous place in which each nation strives for its own survival and interests, regardless of moral considerations. The United States must therefore base its foreign policy decisions on cold calculations without regard to morality. Realists believe that the United States must be prepared to defend itself militarily, because other nations are, by definition, dangerous. A strong defense will show the world that the United States is willing to protect its interest.

The practice of political realism in foreign policy allows the United States to sell weapons to military dictators who will support its policies, to support American business around the globe, and to repel terrorism through the use of force.

American Foreign Policy - A Mixture of Both. It is important to note that the United States has never been guided by only one of these principles. Instead, both moral idealism and political realism affect foreign policymaking. At times, idealism and realism can pull in different directions, making it difficult to establish a coherent policy. The so-called Arab Spring of 2011 serves as an example of such crosscurrents in American foreign policy.

The Arab Spring: Egypt and Tunisia. Acting on the basis of political realism, the United States had built long-standing relationships with various dictators in the Arab world, including Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. Close relations with Mubarak helped guarantee the peace between Egypt and Israel. Given such alliances, the United States had to determine whether to support existing governments when they came under attack by the popular rebellions. The king of Saudi Arabia, for one, demanded that America support its old allies.

President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, however, did not believe that realism and idealism were necessarily in conflict. The United States could support democratic movements and remain true to its values. Such a course of action was realistic as well as idealistic because in Egypt and Tunisia, at least, the rebels were winning. Championing popular movements increased the likelihood that America would be on good terms with the new governments in those countries.

The Arab Spring: Libya and Syria. Libya proved to be a special challenge, however. In that country, the rebels were immediately successful in taking power only in the eastern region. The United States and its European allies eventually intervened with air power to assist the rebels. By doing so, these nations were able to demonstrate that their support for Arab popular movements was serious and not just rhetorical. Intervention, however, was possible only because the Libyan rebels had liberated at least part of their country.

The rebellion in Syria turned out quite differently. The dictator of that country, Bashar al Assad, was able to retake rebellious cities and neighborhoods by inflicting horrendous casualties on civilians. Short of all-out war against the Syrian regime, foreign governments had little opportunity to affect developments in that country. Western powers did impose sanctions on the Syrian government, but they had little immediate effect. Nevertheless, the rebellion continued into 2012, as previously peaceful rebels began to arm themselves and launch counterattacks. Foreign powers seemed powerless to prevent Syria from descending into a bloody civil war.

### *TERRORISM AND WARFARE*

The foreign policy of the United States - whether idealist, realist, or both - must be formulated to deal with world conditions. Early in its history, the United States was a weak, new nation facing older

nations well equipped for war. In the twenty-first century, the United States faces different challenges. Now it must devise foreign and defense policies that will enhance its security in a world in which it is the global superpower. In some instances, these policies have involved the use of force.

### **The Emergence of Terrorism**

**Terrorism** is a systematic attempt to inspire fear to gain political ends. Typically, terrorism involves the indiscriminate use of violence against noncombatants. We often think of terrorists as nongovernmental agents. The term was first coined, however, to refer to the actions of the radicals who were in control of the government at the height of the French Revolution (1789-1799).

In years past, terrorism was a strategy generally employed by radicals who wanted to change the status of a particular nation or province. For example, over many years the Irish Republican Army undertook terrorist attacks in the British province of Northern Ireland with the aim of driving out the British and uniting the province with the Republic of Ireland. In Spain, the ETA organization has employed terrorism with the goal of creating an independent Basque state in Spain's Basque region. In the twenty-first century, however, the United States has confronted a new form of terrorism that is not associated with such clear-cut aims.

September 11. In 2001, terrorism came home to the United States in ways that few Americans could have imagined. In a well-documented attack, nineteen terrorists hijacked four airplanes and crashed three of them into buildings - two into the World Trade Center towers in New York City and one into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. The fourth airplane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania, after the passengers fought the hijackers.

Why did the al Qaeda network plan and launch the attacks on the United States? One reason was that the leaders of the network, including Osama bin Laden, were angered by the presence of U.S. troops on the soil of Saudi Arabia, which they regard as sacred. They also saw the United States as the primary defender of Israel against Palestinians. The attacks were intended to frighten and demoralize America so that it would withdraw troops from the Middle East.

Al Qaeda's ultimate goals, however, were not limited to forcing the United States to withdraw from the Middle East. Al Qaeda envisioned world-wide revolutionary change, with all nations brought under the theocratic rule of an Islamicist empire. Governments have successfully negotiated with terrorists who profess limited aims - today, radicals associated with the Irish Republican Army are part of a coalition government in Northern Ireland. In contrast, there is no way to negotiate with an organization such as al Qaeda.

Later Islamicist Bombings. Since September 11, 2001, al Qaeda has not succeeded in committing another act of terrorism on American soil. Terrorists influenced by al Qaeda have committed serious crimes in other countries, however. In March 2004, an attack by Islamicist extremists killed 191 people in a railroad bombing in Madrid, Spain. In July 2005, suicide bombers

attacked the rapid transit and bus systems in London, with a death toll of 56. Al Qaeda affiliates are responsible for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of deaths in Iraq, Yemen, and other Islamic nations. Almost all of the victims in these countries were Muslims.

## **The War on Terrorism**

After 9/11, President George W. Bush implemented stronger security measures to help ensure homeland security and protect U.S. facilities and personnel abroad. The president sought and received congressional support for heightened airport security, new laws allowing greater domestic surveillance of potential terrorists, and increased funding for the military.

**A New Kind of War.** In September 2002, President Bush enunciated what became known as the "Bush Doctrine," or the doctrine of preemption. The concept of "preemptive war" as a defense strategy was a new element in U.S. foreign policy. The concept is based on the assumption that in the war on terrorism, self-defense must be *anticipatory*. President Bush stated in March 2003, just before launching the invasion of Iraq, "Responding to such enemies only after they have struck first is not self defense. It is suicide."

**Opposition to the Bush Doctrine.** The Bush Doctrine had many critics. Some pointed out that preemptive wars against other nations have traditionally been waged by dictators and rogue states, not democratic nations. By employing such a strategy, the United States would seem to be contradicting its basic values. Others claimed that launching preemptive wars would make it difficult for the United States to pursue world peace in the future. By endorsing such a policy itself, the United States could hardly argue against the decisions of other nations to do likewise when they felt potentially threatened.

## **Wars in Iraq**

In 1990, the Persian Gulf became the setting for a major challenge to the international system set up after World War II (1939-1945). President Saddam Hussein of Iraq sent troops into the neighboring oil sheikdom of Kuwait, occupying that country. This was the most clear-cut case of aggression against an independent nation in half a century.

**The First Gulf War.** At the request of Saudi Arabia, American troops were dispatched to set up a defensive line at the Kuwait border. In January 1991, U.S.-led coalition forces launched a massive air attack on Iraq. After several weeks, the ground offensive began. Iraqi troops retreated from Kuwait a few days later, and the First Gulf War ended.

As part of the cease-fire that ended the First Gulf War, Iraq agreed to allow United Nations (UN) weapons inspectors to oversee the destruction of its missiles and any chemical and nuclear weapons. Economic sanctions would be imposed on Iraq until the weapons inspectors finished their work. In 1999, however, Iraq placed so many obstacles in the path of the UN inspectors that they withdrew from the country.

The Second Gulf War - The Iraq War. In 2002 and early 2003, President Bush called for a "regime change" in Iraq and began assembling an international coalition that might support further military action in Iraq. Bush was unable to convince the UN Security Council that military force was necessary in Iraq, so the United States took the initiative. In March 2003, U.S. and British forces invaded Iraq and within a month had toppled Hussein's decades-old dictatorship. The process of establishing order and creating a new government in Iraq turned out to be extraordinarily difficult, however.

Occupied Iraq. The people of Iraq are divided into three principal ethnic groups. The Kurdish-speaking people of the north were overjoyed by the invasion. The Arabs adhering to the Shiite branch of Islam live principally in the south, and constitute a majority of the population. The Shiites were glad that Saddam Hussein, who had murdered many thousands of Shiites, was gone. They were deeply skeptical of U.S. intentions, however. The Arabs belonging to the Sunni branch of Islam live mainly to the west of Baghdad. Although the Sunnis constitute only a minority of the population, they had controlled the government under Hussein. Many of them considered the occupation to be a disaster.

The Insurgency. In short order a Sunni guerilla insurgency arose and launched attacks against the coalition forces. Occupation forces also came under attack by Shiite forces loyal to Muqtada al Sadr, a radical cleric. Coalition forces were soon suffering monthly casualties comparable to those experienced during the initial invasion. Iraq had begun to be a serious political problem for President Bush. By May 2004, a majority of Americans no longer believed that going to war had been the right thing to do.

The Threat of Civil War. At the time of the invasion, al Qaeda did not exist in Iraq. Ironically, the invasion of Iraq soon led to the establishment of an al Qaeda operation in that country, which sponsored suicide bombings and other attacks against coalition troops and the forces of the newly established Iraqi government. Al Qaeda did not limit its hostility to the Americans but issued vitriolic denunciations of the Iraqi Shiites. Rhetoric was followed by violence. While Sunni and Shiite insurgents continued to launch attacks on coalition forces, the major bloodletting in the country now took place between Sunnis and Shiites. By late 2006, polls indicated that about two-thirds of Americans wanted to see an end to the Iraq War - a sentiment expressed in the 2006 elections.

Iraqi Endgame. In January 2007, President Bush announced a major increase, or "surge," in U.S. troop strength. He placed General David Petraeus, the U.S. Army's leading counterinsurgency expert, in charge of all forces in Iraq. Skeptics doubted that either Petraeus or the new troop levels would have much effect on the outcome.

In April 2007, however, Sunni tribal leaders rose up against al Qaeda and called in U.S. troops to help them. The new movement, called the Awakening, spread rapidly. Al Qaeda, it seems, had badly overplayed its hand by terrorizing the Sunni population. Also, in March 2008 the Iraqi

government launched an operation to drive Muqtada al Sadr's Shiite militia out of the southern city of Basra. The government forces ultimately prevailed.

During subsequent months, the Iraqi government gained substantial control over its own territory. Still, American attitudes toward the war remained negative. Democratic candidate Barack Obama had opposed the Iraq War from the start, and he called for setting a deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. forces. In 2008, President Bush and Iraqi prime minister Nouri al Maliki negotiated such a deadline. The difference between Obama's position and that of Bush was now merely a matter of months. In February 2009, President Obama announced that U.S. combat forces would leave Iraq by August 2010, and the rest of the American troops would be out by the end of 2011.

### **War in Afghanistan**

The Iraq War was not the only military effort launched by the Bush administration as part of the war on terrorism. The first military effort was directed against al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan and the Taliban regime, which had ruled most of Afghanistan since 1996. In late 2001, after building a coalition of international allies and anti-Taliban rebels within Afghanistan, the United States began an air campaign against the Taliban regime. The anti-Taliban rebels, known as the Northern Alliance, were able to take Kabul, the capital, and oust the Taliban from power. The United States and other members of the international community then fostered the creation of an elected Afghan government.

The Return of the Taliban. The Taliban were defeated, but not destroyed. U.S. forces were unable to locate Osama bin Laden and other top al Qaeda leaders. The Taliban and al Qaeda both retreated to the rugged mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan, where they were able to establish bases on the Pakistani side of the border. In 2003, the Taliban began to launch attacks against Afghan soldiers, foreign aid workers, and even American troops. Despite increases in coalition forces, the Taliban continued to gain strength. Through 2008 and 2009, the Taliban were able to take over a number of Pakistani districts, even as the United States began attacking suspected Taliban and al Qaeda targets in Pakistan using small unmanned aircraft called drones. In 2009, the government of Pakistan initiated military action in an attempt to retake Taliban-controlled districts.

Obama and Afghanistan. In his presidential campaign, Barack Obama called for increased American troop levels to deal with the emergency, and as president, in February 2009 he dispatched seventeen thousand additional soldiers to Afghanistan. During that year, the administration conducted a policy review of the war. In December 2009, Obama announced that he would send an additional thirty thousand troops to Afghanistan but would begin troop withdrawals in July 2011.

The Death of bin Laden. The CIA and other U.S. intelligence forces were unable to develop information on Osama bin Laden's whereabouts until 2010. In that year and in 2011, the intelligence agencies obtained evidence that bin Laden might be living in a highly secure residential compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Pakistan's military academy is located in Abbottabad, which led many

observers to surmise that bin Laden was living under the protection of members of Pakistan's military.

On May 1, 2011, U.S. Navy SEALs launched a helicopter raid on the compound from bases in Afghanistan. In a brief firefight, the SEALs killed bin Laden and four others. The SEALs also collected much intelligence material. The only hitch in the operation was that one of the helicopters crashed on landing. No one was seriously injured, but the commandos had to destroy the damaged helicopter because it was an advanced model that employed classified technology.

Americans responded to President Obama's announcement of the operation with relief and satisfaction. Reactions in Pakistan itself were mostly negative - the raid was generally seen as a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty.

### *U.S. DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS*

The United States has dealt with many international problems through diplomacy, rather than the use of armed force. Some of these issues include the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the growing power of China, and the confrontation between Israel and the Palestinians. Economic and humanitarian concerns can also be addressed through diplomacy.

### **Nuclear Weapons**

In 1945, the United States was the only nation to possess nuclear weapons. Several nations quickly joined the "nuclear club," however, including the Soviet Union in 1949, Britain in 1952, France in 1960, and China in 1964. Few nations have made public their nuclear weapons program since China's successful test of nuclear weapons in 1964. India and Pakistan, however, detonated nuclear devices within a few weeks of each other in 1998, and North Korea conducted an underground nuclear explosive test in October 2006. Several other nations are suspected of possessing nuclear weapons or the capability to produce them in a short time. Israel is known to possess more than one hundred nuclear warheads.

With nuclear weapons, materials, and technology available worldwide, it is conceivable that terrorists could obtain a nuclear device and use it in a terrorist act. In fact, a U.S. federal indictment filed in 1998, after the attack on American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, charged Osama bin Laden and his associates with trying to buy components for making a nuclear bomb "at various times" since 1992.

**Nuclear Stockpiles.** More than twenty-two thousand nuclear warheads are known to be stockpiled worldwide, although the exact number is uncertain because some countries do not reveal the extent of their holdings. Although the United States and Russia have dismantled many of their nuclear weapons systems since the end of the **Cold War** and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, both still retain sizable nuclear arsenals. More alarming is the fact that, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the security of its nuclear arsenal has declined. There have been reported thefts,



smugglings, and illicit sales of nuclear material from the former Soviet Union in the past two decades.

**Nuclear Proliferation: Iran.** For years, the United States, the European Union, and the UN have tried to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear power. In spite of these efforts, many observers believe that Iran is now in the process of developing nuclear weapons - although Iran maintains that it is interested in developing nuclear power only for peaceful purposes. Continued diplomatic attempts to at least slow down Iran's quest for a nuclear bomb have so far proved ineffectual. The group of nation's attempting to talk with Iran includes Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia, and the United States. By 2009, the UN Security Council had already voted three rounds of sanctions against Iran in reaction to its nuclear program.

One problem with the attempt to develop meaningful international sanctions was resistance from Russia and China. By 2010, Russia appeared to have lost patience with Iran, but China was able to limit the impact of the new UN sanctions imposed in that year. China is often reluctant to impose sanctions, and Iran is one of China's major trading partners.

By 2012, it was clear that sanctions against Iran were beginning to damage that country's economy. Of special importance was the U.S. campaign to persuade other nations to stop importing Iranian oil, which enjoyed increasing success. Threats that Israel or even the United States might bomb Iran's nuclear sites added to the pressure. In Washington, D.C., and in Israel, a debate was under way: Should diplomacy be allowed to take its course - or would the use of armed forces be necessary to stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons?

**Nuclear Proliferation: North Korea.** North Korea tested a nuclear device in 2006. An agreement reached in February 2007 provided that North Korea would start disabling its nuclear facilities and allow UN inspectors into the country. In return, China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, and the United States - the other members of the six-party negotiations - would provide aid to North Korea. North Korea, however, was allowed to keep its nuclear arsenal, which American intelligence officials believe may include as many as six nuclear bombs or the fuel to make them. In July 2007, North Korea dismantled one of its nuclear reactors and admitted UN inspectors into the country. In October 2008, the United States removed North Korea from its list of states that sponsor terrorism.

By 2009, however, North Korea was pulling back from its treaty obligations. In April, the country tested a long-range missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead, in violation of a UN Security Council demand that it halt such tests. After the Security Council issued a statement condemning the test, North Korea ordered UN inspectors out of the country, broke off negotiations with the other members of the six-party talks, and conducted a second nuclear test. The United States and other parties have sought to persuade China to take the lead in bringing North Korea back to the negotiating table - China is the one nation that has significant economic leverage over North Korea. Tensions increased in March 2010 after a South Korean naval ship sank, with the loss of 104 lives. An investigation revealed that the ship had been struck by a North Korean torpedo. In November

2010, North Korea launched an artillery attack on a South Korean island near the border between the two countries.

### **The New Power: China**

Since Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972, American policy has been to engage the Chinese gradually in diplomatic and economic relationships in the hope of turning the nation in a more pro-Western direction. An important factor in the U.S.-Chinese relations has been the large and growing trade ties between the two countries. In 1980, China was granted *most-favored-nation status* for tariffs and trade policy on a year-to-year basis. To prevent confusion, in 1998 the status was renamed **normal trade relations (NTR) status**. In 2000, over objections from organized labor and human rights groups, Congress approved a permanent grant of NTR status to China. In 2001, Congress endorsed China's application to join the World Trade Organization (WTO), thereby effectively guaranteeing China's admission to that body.

While officially Communist, China today permits a striking degree of free enterprise. China has become substantially integrated into the world economic system, and it exports considerably more goods and services to the United States than it imports. As a result, its central bank has built up a huge reserve of U.S. federal government treasuries and other American obligations. Ultimately, the books must balance, but instead of importing U.S. goods and services, the Chinese have imported U.S. securities. The resulting economic imbalances are good for Chinese exporters, but not so good for almost everyone else in both countries. The United States has repeatedly asked China to address these imbalances by allowing its currency to rise in value relative to the American dollar. Chinese authorities have been reluctant to do so, but recently they have allowed some movement.

**China's Explosive Economic Growth.** The growth of the Chinese economy during the last thirty-five years is one of the most important developments in world history. For the past several decades, the Chinese economy has grown at a rate of about 10 percent annually, a long-term growth rate previously unknown in human history. Never have so many escaped poverty so quickly.

China now produces more steel than American and Japan combined. It generates more than 40 percent of the world's output of cement. The new electrical generating capacity that China has been adding each year exceeds the entire installed capacity of Britain. (The new plants, which are usually coal fired, may promote global warming and also generate some of the world's worst air pollution.) Skyscrapers fill the skyline of every major Chinese city.

In 2007, for the first time, China actually manufactured more passenger automobiles than did the United States. China is building a limited-access highway system that, when complete, will be longer than the U.S. interstate highway system. Chinese demand for raw materials, notably petroleum, has led at times to dramatic increases in the price of oil and other commodities. Its people have begun to eat large quantities of meat, which adds to the demand for world food production. By 2030, if not before, the economy of China is expected to be larger than that of the United States. China, in short, will become the world's second superpower.

The Issue of Taiwan. Inevitably, economic power translates into military potential. Is this a problem? It could be if China had territorial ambitions. At this time, China does not appear to have an appetite for non-Chinese territory, and it does not seem likely to develop one. But China has always considered the island of Taiwan to be Chinese territory. In principle, Taiwan agrees. Taiwan calls itself the "Republic of China" and officially considers its government to be the legitimate ruler of the entire country - that is, of both Taiwan and mainland China. This diplomatic fiction has remained in effect since 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party won a civil war and drove the anti-Communist forces off the mainland.

China's position is that, sooner or later, Taiwan must rejoin the rest of China. The position of the United States is that this reunification must not come about by force. Is peaceful reunification possible? China holds up Hong Kong as an example. Hong Kong came under Chinese sovereignty peacefully in 1997. The people of Taiwan, however, are far from considering Hong Kong to be an acceptable precedent.

Chinese Nationalism. Growing public expressions of Chinese nationalism have raised concern in some of China's neighbors. The Chinese government has sometimes appeared to support nationalist agitation because it benefits politically. When nationalism has seemed to be getting out of hand, however, the government has cracked down. Often, such nationalism has taken aim at ethnic minorities within China itself, such as the Tibetans or the Uighurs, a Muslim people who live in the far-western region of Xinjiang. Negative attitudes toward national minorities may create serious problems for China in the future.

China has recently engaged in disputes with Vietnam, the Philippines, and other Southeast Asian nations over the ownership of dozens of uninhabited islands in the South China Sea. In November 2011, President Obama visited Australia and promised to establish a new U.S. force of 2,500 Marines at Darwin, on Australia's north coast. In June 2012, U.S. secretary of defense Leon Panetta announced that in the future, America would station 60 percent of its navy in the Pacific area, up from 50 percent. These developments were widely perceived as an attempt to reassure nations in the area that were concerned about potential Chinese pressure. In one arena - cyberspace - Chinese-American relations were already quite heated.

### **Israel and the Palestinians**

As a longtime supporter of the state of Israel, the United States has undertaken to persuade the Israelis to negotiate with the Palestinian Arabs who live in the territories occupied by Israel. The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, which began in 1948, has been extremely hard to resolve. The internationally recognized solution is for Israel to yield the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to the Palestinians in return for effective security commitments and abandonment by the Palestinians of any right of return to Israel proper.

The Palestinians, however, have been unwilling to stop terrorist attacks on Israel, and Israel has been unwilling to dismantle its settlements in the occupied territories. Further, the two parties have

been unable to come to an agreement on how much of the West Bank should go to the Palestinians and what compensation (if any) the Palestinians should receive for abandoning all claims to settlement in Israel proper.

In 1988, the United States began talking directly to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and in 1991, under pressure from the United States, the Israelis opened talks as well. In 1993, the PLO and Israel agreed to set up Palestinian self-government in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The historic agreement was signed in Cairo, Egypt, in May 1994. In the months that followed, Israeli troops withdrew from much of the occupied territories, and the new Palestinian Authority assumed police duties.

**The Collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process.** Although negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians resulted in more agreements, the agreements were rejected by Palestinian radicals, who began a campaign of suicide bombings in Israeli cities. In 2002, the Israeli government moved tanks and troops into Palestinian towns to kill or capture the terrorists. One result of the Israeli reoccupation was an almost complete collapse of the Palestinian Authority. Groups such as Hamas (the Islamic Resistance Movement), which did not accept peace with Israel even in principle, moved into the power vacuum.

In February 2004, Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon announced a plan under which Israel would withdraw from the Gaza Strip regardless of whether a deal could be reached with the Palestinians. Sharon's plan met with strong opposition, but ultimately the withdrawal took place.

In January 2006, the militant group Hamas won a majority of the seats in the Palestinian legislature. American and European politicians refused to talk to Hamas until it agreed to rescind its avowed desire to destroy Israel. In June 2007, the uneasy balance between the Hamas-dominated Palestinian legislature and the PLO president broke down. After open fighting between the two parties, Hamas wound up in complete control of the Gaza Strip, and the PLO retained exclusive power in the West Bank.

Israel implemented an economic blockade to pressure the Hamas regime in the Gaza Strip to relinquish power. Hamas retaliated by firing a series of rockets into Israel. On January 3, 2009, in the final weeks of the Bush administration, Israeli ground forces entered the Gaza Strip. Israel declared a cease-fire on January 18, just days before Obama's inauguration.

**Israel and the Obama Administration.** In February 2009, Israelis elected a new, more conservative government under Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu. The tough positions advocated by the new government threatened to create fresh obstacles to the peace process. In particular, the new government accelerated the growth of Israeli settlements on the West Bank, even though the Obama administration opposed such settlements. As a result, a degree of tension built up between the administration and the new Israeli government.

In September 2011, however, the Palestinian Authority appealed to the United States to recognize the West Bank and Gaza as an independent Palestinian state. The plan was vehemently opposed by Israel, and the United States promised to veto any recognition of the UN Security Council. Indeed, Obama opposed the measure with some of the strongest pro-Israel rhetoric in years. Obama's approval ratings among the Israeli public improved sharply. Clearly, Obama was no longer attempting to restart Israeli-Palestinian negotiations - rather, he was running for reelection.

**The Blockade of Gaza.** The Israeli blockade of Gaza became a prominent issue in May 2010, when radical activists attempted to breach the blockade with six ships carrying humanitarian aid. A majority of the activists were Turkish. Israeli commandos seized the ships while they were still well out to sea. Passengers on the largest ship resisted with improvised weapons. The subsequent fighting resulted in the deaths of nine activists. Widespread condemnation of the commando raid and the blockade itself followed.

The blockade was officially justified as a way of keeping weapons out of the hands of Hamas. The materials barred from Gaza, however, were not limited to arms or even construction materials but included such small luxuries as spices and pastries. In the weeks following the flotilla incident, Israel substantially reduced the list of prohibited imports.

### **The Economic Crisis in Europe**

U.S. foreign relations are not just a matter of waging wars or trying to prevent them. International economic coordination is another major field of action. One such issue - discussed in a previous section - is our trade relations with China. During 2010, 2011, and 2013, however, an even greater threat was posed by some of our closest international friends, the nations of Europe.

**The Debt Crisis.** The seventeen nations that share a common currency - the euro - were hit hard by the worldwide financial panic of 2008. In particular, the nations of the so-called euro periphery faced a debt crisis. In Greece and, to a lesser extent, Portugal, the governments themselves had borrowed irresponsibly. In Ireland and Spain, many real estate loans went sour, threatening the survival of the banks that had made the loans. Ireland and Spain found themselves in danger when their governments assumed the debts of the threatened banks.

The nations of the euro periphery began running out of funds to service their debts, and they faced ruinous interest rates if they attempted to borrow in the financial markets. If a nation such as Britain, Japan, or the United States faced such a crisis, it could rely on its central bank - in America, the Fed - to serve as *lender of last resort* and simply "print" the necessary money. In fact, in 2008 Britain did just that, accepting a small amount of inflation. But the periphery nations did not control their own money supplies, and the European Central Bank (ECB) was banned from acting as lender of last resort. Investors began pulling funds out of the troubled nations, reducing their money supplies further. The panic threatened to spread to Italy.

The circumstances faced by the euro periphery were reminiscent of the difficulties confronting nations during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Then, countries were unable to expand their money supplies due to their commitment to the gold standard. In the 1930s, the nations of the world eventually abandoned the gold standard so that they could reflate their economies. Would the euro periphery countries eventually respond by leaving the euro? In 2011, 2012, and even more so in 2013 that was the question. Eurozone nations did come up with bailout loans for Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and eventually Spain, but the adequacy of these supports has been widely questioned.

The German Question. The response of the ECB to the crisis was to demand that periphery governments follow policies of fiscal austerity, in which they would meet their debts by major reductions in spending and increases in taxes. Such a policy directly contradicted the advice of Keynesian economics, although it had certain similarities to economic measures advocated by some Republicans in the United States. Keynesians argued that austerity could push the periphery further into recession, thus making the debt crisis even harder to resolve.

An alternative would be to strengthen European institutions. European banks could be backed by a euro-wide support facility, as in the United States. The eurozone could issue joint Eurobonds to support troubled governments. Such measures, however, were blocked by Germany and several of its smaller allies within the eurozone. The German government, under Angela Merkel, believed that such joint measures would force the German taxpayer to bail out the rest of Europe.

In May 2012, Socialist Francois Hollande was elected president of France. Thereafter, a substantial bloc of countries argued that German policies threatened to cause a disaster that would harm Germany as much as any other nation. President Obama was among the world leaders calling for a German change of course. In September, the ECB said that it was willing to buy, from investors, unlimited amounts of bonds issued by the troubled Euro governments. The ECB was able to win German approval for this plan.

### **Humanitarian Efforts**

Humanitarian assistance has also been a major component of America's foreign policy. Many voters are not aware, for example, that the George W. Bush administration more than doubled the value of U.S. foreign aid provided to African nations, but many Africans are aware of this fact. As a result, Bush was popular in much of Africa. (Of course, as the son of a Kenyan father, President Obama was even more popular in Africa.)

AIDS. Much of the assistance given to African nations is aimed at combating disease. Among the most important of these illnesses is AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome), which remains extremely widespread in the southern part of the continent. One-fourth of the populations of Botswana and Zimbabwe are infected.

Darfur. Another African humanitarian crisis took place in Darfur, which is part of Sudan. Following a 2003 rebellion in that area, government-backed militias drove up to 2.5 million residents

out of their villages and into refugee camps. Hundreds of thousands died. The United States participated in relief efforts organized under the United Nations, and in 2004 the U.S. Congress characterized the Sudanese government's actions as genocide. In 2009, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Sudan's president, charging him with war crimes.

Natural Disasters. In January 2010, a catastrophic earthquake struck the nation of Haiti near its capital, Port-au-Prince. Fatality estimates ranged from 46,000 to 85,000, and most of Port-au-Prince's population was forced to camp out in the open.

The earthquake in Haiti resulted in one of the largest recent U.S. relief efforts, but America has provided support to many other countries facing natural disasters. These include the great Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, which killed more than 250,000 people, mostly in Indonesia.

The tsunami that struck the Japanese region of Tohoku in 2011 was also an exceptional disaster - up to 20,000 people died. Developed nations such as Japan tend to require less assistance in responding to natural disasters than do undeveloped ones. Still, the U.S. government was able to provide a variety of specialized services, and donations by American citizens were exceeded only by the response to the Haitian earthquake and the Indian Ocean tsunami.

#### *WHO MAKES FOREIGN POLICY?*

Given the vast array of challenges in the world, developing a comprehensive U.S. foreign policy is a demanding task. Does this responsibility fall to the president, to Congress, or to both acting jointly? There is no easy answer to this question because, as constitutional authority Edwin S. Corwin once observed, the U.S. Constitution created between the president and Congress an "invitation to struggle" for control over the foreign policy process.

#### **Constitutional Powers of the President**

The Constitution confers on the president broad powers that are either explicit or implied in key constitutional provisions. Article II vests the executive power of the government in the president. The presidential oath of office given in Article II, Section 1, requires that the president "solemnly swear" to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

War Powers. In addition, and perhaps more important, Article II, Section 2, designates the president as "Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States." Starting with Abraham Lincoln, all presidents have interpreted this authority dynamically and broadly. Indeed, since George Washington's administration, the United States has been involved in at least 125 undeclared wars that were conducted under presidential authority. For example, in 1950 Harry Truman ordered U.S. armed forces in the Pacific to counter North Korea's invasion of South Korea. Bill Clinton sent troops to Haiti and Bosnia. In 2001, George W. Bush authorized an attack against the al Qaeda terrorist network and the Taliban government in Afghanistan, and in 2003 Bush sent military forces to Iraq to destroy Saddam Hussein's government.

Treaties and Executive Agreements. Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution also gives the president the power to make treaties, provided that the Senate concurs. Presidents usually have been successful in getting treaties through the Senate. In addition to this formal treaty-making power, the president makes use of executive agreements. Since World War II executive agreements have accounted for almost 95 percent of the understandings reached between the United States and other nations.

Executive agreements have a long and important history. During World War II, Franklin D. Roosevelt reached several agreements with Britain, the Soviet Union, and other countries. In other important agreements, Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson all promised support to the government of South Vietnam. In all, since 1946 more than eight thousand executive agreements with foreign countries have been made. There is no way to obtain an accurate count, because perhaps as many as several hundred of those agreements have been made secretly.

Other Constitutional Powers. An additional power conferred on the president in Article II, Section 2, is the right to appoint ambassadors, other public ministers, and consuls. In Section 3 of that article, the president is given the power to recognize foreign governments by receiving their ambassadors.

### **Other Sources of Foreign Policymaking**

There are at least four foreign policymaking sources within the executive branch in addition to the president. These are the (1) Department of State, (2) National Security Council, (3) intelligence community, and (4) Department of Defense.

The Department of State. In principle, the State Department is the executive agency that has primary authority over foreign affairs. It supervises U.S. relations with the nearly two hundred independent nations around the world and with the United Nations and other multinational groups, such as the Organization of American States. It staffs embassies and consulates throughout the world. It does this with one of the smallest budgets of the cabinet departments.

Newly elected presidents usually tell the American public that the new secretary of state is the nation's chief foreign policy adviser. In the Obama administration, the statement was a true description of the role of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Under most presidents since World War II, however, the preeminence of the State Department in foreign policy has been limited. The State Department's image within the White House Executive Office and Congress (and even with foreign governments) has been poor - it has often been seen as a slow, plodding, bureaucratic maze of inefficient, indecisive individuals.

It is not surprising that the State Department has been overshadowed in foreign policy. It has no natural domestic constituency as does, for example, the Department of Defense, which can call on defense contractors for support. Instead, the State Department has what might be called **negative constituents** - U.S. citizens who openly oppose the government's policies.



The National Security Council. The job of the National Security Council (NSC), created by the National Security Act of 1947, is to advise the president on the integration of "domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to the national security." Its larger purpose is to provide policy continuity from one administration to the next. As it has turned out, the NSC - consisting of the president, the vice president, the secretaries of state and defense, the director of emergency planning, and often the chairperson of the joint chiefs of staff and the director of the CIA - is used in just about any way the president wants to use it.

The role of national security adviser to the president seems to adjust to fit the player. Some advisers have come into conflict with heads of the State Department. Henry A. Kissinger, President Richard Nixon's flamboyant and aggressive national security adviser, rapidly gained ascendancy over William Rogers, the secretary of state. More recently, Condoleezza Rice played an important role as national security adviser during George W. Bush's first term. Like Kissinger, Rice eventually became secretary of state.

The Intelligence Community. No discussion of foreign policy would be complete without some mention of the **intelligence community**. This consists of the forty or more government agencies and bureaus that are involved in intelligence activities. The CIA, created as part of the National Security Act of 1947, is the key official member of the intelligence community.

Covert Actions. Intelligence activities consist mostly of overt information gathering, but covert actions are also undertaken. Covert actions, as the name implies, are carried out in secret, and the American public rarely finds out about them. The CIA covertly aided in the overthrow of the Mossadegh regime in Iran in 1953 and was instrumental in destabilizing the Allende government in Chile from 1970 to 1973.

During the mid-1970s, the "dark side" of the CIA was partly uncovered when the Senate undertook an investigation of its activities. One of the major findings of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence was that the CIA had routinely spied on American citizens domestically, supposedly a prohibited activity. Consequently, the CIA came under the scrutiny of oversight committees within Congress.

By 2001, the agency had come under fire again. Problems included the discovery that one of its agents had been spying on behalf of a foreign power, the inability of the agency to detect the nuclear arsenals of India and Pakistan, and, above all, its failure to obtain advance knowledge about the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The Intelligence Community and the War on Terrorism. With the rise of terrorism as a threat, the intelligence agencies have received more funding and enhanced surveillance powers, but these moves have also provoked fears of civil liberties violations. Legislation enacted in 2004 established the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to oversee the intelligence community.

A simmering controversy that came to a head in 2009 concerned the CIA's use of a technique called *waterboarding* while interrogating several prisoners in the years immediately following 9/11. Before 9/11, the government had defined waterboarding as a form of torture, but former vice president Dick Cheney, a public advocate of the practice, denied that it was. One concern was whether Bush administration officials would face legal action as a result of the practice. In May 2009, President Obama, even as he denounced waterboarding, assured CIA employees that no member of the agency would be penalized for following Justice Department rulings that had legitimized harsh interrogation methods. The Obama administration also declined to pursue cases against the Justice Department officials who made those rulings.

The Department of Defense. The Department of Defense (DOD) was created in 1947 to bring all of the various activities of the American military establishment under the jurisdiction of a single department headed by a civilian secretary of defense. At the same time, the joint chiefs of staff, consisting of the commanders of the various military branches and a chairperson, was created to formulate a unified military strategy.

Although the Department of Defense is larger than any other federal department, it declined in size after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. In the subsequent ten years, the total number of civilian employees was reduced by about 400,000, to approximately 665,000. After 9/11, the war on terrorism and the combat in Afghanistan and Iraq drove the defense budget up again. The budget leveled off in 2012, however, and as a result of attempts to reduce the federal budget deficit, it may actually decline in 2014.

### **Congress Balances the Presidency**

A new interest in the balance of power between Congress and the president on foreign policy questions developed during the Vietnam War. Sensitive to public frustration over the long and costly war and angry at Richard Nixon for some of his other actions as president, Congress attempted to establish limits on the power of the president in setting foreign and defense policy.

The War Powers Resolution of 1973. In 1973, Congress passed the War Powers Resolution over President Nixon's veto. The act limited the president's use of troops in military action without congressional approval. Most presidents, however, have not interpreted the "consultation" provisions of the act as meaning that Congress should be consulted before military action is taken. Instead, Presidents Ford, Carter, Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and Clinton ordered troop movements and then informed congressional leaders.

The War Powers Resolution was in the news again in May 2011, sixty days after the United States and several European nations began providing air support to the rebels in Libya. Sixty days was the deadline for President Obama to seek congressional support for military action. Obama, however, claimed that no authorization was needed because U.S. activities did not amount to "hostilities." In June, the House passed a resolution rebuking the president, but the Senate refused to consider it.

The Power of the Purse. One of Congress's most significant constitutional powers is the so-called power of the purse. The president may order that a certain action be taken, but that order cannot be executed unless Congress funds it. When the Democrats took control of Congress in January 2007, many asked whether the new Congress would use its power of the purse to bring an end to the Iraq War, in view of strong public opposition to the war. Congress's decision was to add conditions to a war-funding request submitted by the president. The conditions required the president to establish timelines for the redeployment of American troops in Iraq. Bush immediately threatened to veto any bill that imposed conditions on the funding. His threat carried the day.

In this circumstance, the power of Congress was limited by political considerations. Congress did not even consider the option of refusing to fund the war altogether. For one thing, there was not enough support in Congress for such an approach. For another, the Democrats did not want to be accused of placing the troops in Iraq in danger. Additionally, the threat of a presidential veto significantly limited Congress's power. The Democrats simply did not have a large enough majority to override a veto.

### *THE MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY THEMES*

Although some observers might suggest that U.S. foreign policy is inconsistent and changes with the current occupant of the White House, the long view of American diplomatic ventures reveals some major themes underlying foreign policy. In the early years of the nation, presidents and the people generally agreed that the United States should avoid entanglements and concentrate instead on its own development. From the beginning of the twentieth century until the present, however, a major theme has been increasing global involvement. The theme of the post-World War II years was the containment of communism. The theme for at least the first part of the twenty-first century is countering terrorism.

### **The Formative Years: Avoiding Entanglements**

The founders of the United States had a basic mistrust of European governments. This was a logical position at a time when the United States was so weak militarily that it could not influence European developments directly. Moreover, being protected by oceans that took weeks to cross certainly allowed the nation to avoid entangling alliances. During the 1800s, therefore, the United States generally stayed out of European conflicts and politics. In the Western Hemisphere, however, the United States pursued an active expansionist policy. The nation purchased Louisiana in 1803, annexed Texas in 1845, gained substantial territory from Mexico in 1848, purchased Alaska in 1867, and annexed Hawaii in 1898.

The Monroe Doctrine. President James Monroe, in his message to Congress on December 2, 1823, stated that the United States would not accept any new European intervention in the Western Hemisphere. In return, the United States would not meddle in European affairs. The **Monroe Doctrine** was the underpinning of the U.S. **isolationist foreign policy** toward Europe, which continued throughout the 1800s.

The Spanish-American War and World War I. The end of the isolationist policy started with the Spanish-American War in 1898. Winning the war gave the United States possession of Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines (which gained independence in 1946). On the heels of that war came World War I (1914-1918). The United States declared war on Germany in April 1917, because that country refused to give up its campaign of sinking all ships headed for Britain, including passenger ships from America. (Large passenger ships of that time commonly held over a thousand people, so the sinking of such a ship was a disaster comparable to the attack on the World Trade Center.)

In the 1920s, the United States went "back to normalcy," as President Warren G. Harding urged it to do. U.S. military forces were largely disbanded, defense spending dropped to about 1 percent of the total annual national income, and the nation returned to a period of isolationism.

### **The Era of Internationalism**

Isolationism was permanently shattered by the bombing of the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941. The surprise attack by the Japanese caused the deaths of 2,403 American servicemen and wounded 1,143 others. Eighteen warships were sunk or seriously damaged, and 188 planes were destroyed at the airfields. President Franklin Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan immediately, and the United States entered World War II.

At the conclusion of the war, the United States was the only major participating country to emerge with its economy intact, and even strengthened. The United States was also the only country to have control over operational nuclear weapons. President Harry Truman had made the decision to use two atomic bombs in August 1945 to end the war with Japan. (Historians still argue over the necessity of this action, which ultimately killed more than 100,000 Japanese and left an equal number permanently injured.) The United States truly had become the world's superpower.

The Cold War. The United States had become an uncomfortable ally of the Soviet Union after Adolf Hitler's invasion of that country. Soon after World War II ended, relations between the Soviet Union and the West deteriorated. The Soviet Union wanted a weakened Germany, and to achieve this, it insisted that Germany be divided in two, with East Germany becoming a buffer against the West. Little by little, the Soviet Union helped to install Communist governments in Eastern European countries, which began to be referred to collectively as the **Soviet bloc**. In response, the United States encouraged the rearming of Western Europe. The Cold War had begun.

Containment Policy. In 1947, a remarkable article was published in *Foreign Affairs* magazine, signed by "X." The actual author was George F. Kennan, chief of the policy-planning staff for the State Department. The doctrine of **containment** set forth in the article became - according to many - the bible of Western foreign policy. "X" argued that whenever and wherever the Soviet Union could successfully challenge the West, it would do so. He recommended that our policy toward the Soviet Union be "firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies."

The containment theory was expressed clearly in the **Truman Doctrine**, which was enunciated by President Harry Truman in 1947. Truman held that the United States must help countries in which a Communist takeover seemed likely. Later that year, he backed the Marshall Plan, an economic assistance plan for Europe that was intended to prevent the expansion of Communist influence there. In 1949, the United States entered into a military alliance with a number of European nations called the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, to offer a credible response to any Soviet military attack.

## **Superpower Relations**

During the Cold War, there was never any direct military conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Only on occasion did the United States enter a conflict with any Communist country in a significant way. Two such occasions were in Korea and in Vietnam.

After the end of World War II, northern Korea was occupied by the Soviet Union, and southern Korea was occupied by the United States. The result was two rival Korean governments. In 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. Under UN authority, the United States entered the war, which prevented an almost certain South Korean defeat. When U.S. forces were on the brink of conquering North Korea, however, China joined the war on the side of the North, resulting in a stalemate. An armistice signed in 1953 led to the two Koreas that exist today. U.S. forces have remained in South Korea since that time.

The Vietnam War (1965-1975) also involved the United States in a civil war between a Communist north and pro-Western south. When the French army in Indochina was defeated by the Communist forces of Ho Chi Minh in 1954, two Vietnams were created. The United States assumed the role of supporting the South Vietnamese government against North Vietnam. President John Kennedy sent 16,000 "advisers" to help South Vietnam, and after Kennedy's death in 1963, President Lyndon Johnson greatly increased the scope of that support. American forces in Vietnam at the height of the U.S. involvement totaled more than 500,000 troops. More than 58,000 Americans were killed and 300,000 were wounded in the conflict. A peace agreement in 1973 allowed U.S. troops to leave the country, and in 1975 North Vietnam easily occupied Saigon (the South Vietnamese capital) and unified the nation.

Over the course of the Vietnam War, the debate over U.S. involvement became extremely heated and, as mentioned previously, spurred congressional efforts to limit the ability of the president to commit forces to armed combat. The military draft was also a major source of contention during the Vietnam War.

The Cuban Missile Crisis. Perhaps the closest the two superpowers came to a nuclear confrontation was the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. The Soviets placed missiles in Cuba, ninety miles off the U.S. coast, in response to Cuban fears of an American invasion and to try to balance an American nuclear advantage. President Kennedy and his advisers rejected the option of invading

Cuba, setting up a naval blockade around the island instead. When Soviet vessels appeared near Cuban waters, the tension reached its height.

After intense negotiations between Washington and Moscow, the Soviet ships turned around on October 25. On October 28, the Soviet Union announced the withdrawal of its missile operations from Cuba. In exchange, the United States agreed not to invade Cuba in the future. It also agreed to remove some of its own missiles that were located near the Soviet border in Turkey.

A Period of Détente. The French word **détente** means a relaxation of tensions. By the end of the 1960s, it was clear that some efforts had to be made to reduce the threat of nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union gradually had begun to catch up in the building of strategic nuclear delivery vehicles in the form of bombers and missiles, thus balancing the nuclear scales between the two countries. Each nation had acquired the military capacity to destroy the other with nuclear weapons.

As the result of lengthy negotiations under Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and President Nixon, the United States and the Soviet Union signed the **Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I)** in May 1972. That treaty limited the number of offensive missiles each country could deploy.

The policy of détente was not limited to the U.S. relationship with the Soviet Union. Seeing an opportunity to capitalize on increasing friction between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, Kissinger secretly began negotiations to establish a new relationship with China. President Nixon eventually visited that nation in 1972. The visit set the stage for the formal diplomatic recognition of that country, which occurred during the Carter administration (1977-1981).

Nuclear Arms Agreements with the Soviet Union. President Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) initially took a hard line against the Soviet Union. In 1987, however, after several years of negotiations, the United States and the Soviet Union signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. The result was the dismantling of four thousand intermediate-range missiles.

In 1991, President George H. W. Bush and the Soviet Union signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). Implementation was complicated by the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991. In 1992, however, the treaty was re-signed by Russia and other former Soviet republics.

The Dissolution of the Soviet Union. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, it was clear that the Soviet Union had relinquished much of its political and military control over the states of Eastern Europe that formerly had been part of the Soviet Union. No one expected the Soviet Union to dissolve into separate states as quickly as it did, however. Although Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev tried to adjust the Soviet constitution and political system to allow greater autonomy for the republics within the union, demands for political, ethnic, and religious autonomy grew. On the day after Christmas in 1991, the Soviet Union was officially dissolved.

Russia after the Soviet Union. In 1991, Boris Yeltsin won the first free presidential election in Russian history. Under Yeltsin, Russia undertook wide-ranging economic reforms aimed at

introducing capitalism into what had been a communist country. State-owned enterprises were sold off, frequently at low prices to persons with inside connections. Radical changes resulted in major economic crisis - Russian GDP declined by 50 percent between 1990 and 1995. Thereafter, oil exports led the way to economic stabilization.

In 2000, Yeltsin resigned because of poor health. He named Vladimir Putin, architect of the Russian military effort against an independence movement in the province of Chechnya, as acting president. A few months later, Putin won the presidency in a national election. Putin chipped away at Russia's democratic institutions, slowly turning the country into what was, in essence, an elected autocracy. When Putin's second term as president came to an end in 2008, he could not immediately run for reelection. He therefore engineered the election of one of his supporters, Dmitry Medvedev, as president. Medvedev promptly appointed Putin as prime minister. It was clear that Putin retained real power in Russia, and in 2012 Putin again took the presidency.

In recent years, the United States has become concerned over Russia's aggressive attitude toward its neighbors. In 2008, Russian troops entered Georgia to prevent that nation from retaking an autonomous region that was under Russian protection. On several occasions since 2005, Russia has cut off the transmission of natural gas to Europe as a result of disputes. Russia also acted angrily to U.S. plans for antimissile defenses in Eastern Europe, aimed at protecting Europe from a possible future Iranian attack. Russia appeared to believe that the defenses were directed against it. Still, the United States needed Russian assistance in matters such as curbing Iran's nuclear program.

The 1992 START agreement expired in December 2009, and in April 2010 President Obama and Russian president Medvedev signed New START, a follow-on treaty. New START reduced the number of permitted warheads to 1,550 for each side, a drop of about 30 percent from previous agreements. After some delays, the Senate ratified the treaty in December 2010.

#### *DID YOU KNOW?*

~Including the Civil War, more than 1 million American soldiers have been killed in the nation's wars.

~The United States invaded and occupied part of Russia in 1919.

~It is estimated that the Central Intelligence Agency has about twenty thousands employees, with about five thousand in the clandestine services.

~In the name of national security, the United States spends at least \$11.4 billion annually to keep information classified.

~Russia has suffered more battle deaths in putting down the rebellion in Chechnya than the Soviet Union experienced in its decades-long attempt to subdue Afghanistan.