

Foreign Policy Goals

To investigate the nature of current United States foreign policy, the logical source is the State Department, whose job it is to define and direct it. Foreign policy goals include the following:

- Preserving the national security of the United States
- Promoting world peace and a secure global environment
- Maintaining a balance of power among nations
- Working with allies to solve international problems
- Promoting democratic values and human rights
- Furthering cooperative foreign trade and global involvement in international trade organizations

Examining these goals closely reveals that they are based on cooperation with other nations, although "preserving the national security of the United States" implies possible competition and conflict.

Making of Foreign Policy

organizations have a hand in setting United States foreign policy. The main objective of foreign policy is to use diplomacy — or talking, meeting, and making agreements — to solve international problems. They try to keep problems from developing into conflicts that require military settlements.

The President almost always has the primary responsibility for shaping foreign policy. Presidents, or their representatives, meet with leaders of other nations to try to resolve international problems peacefully. According to the Constitution, Presidents sign treaties with other nations with the "advice and consent" of the Senate. So the Senate, and to a lesser extent, the House of Representatives, also participate in shaping foreign policy.

The Secretary of State and many other officials of the State Department play major roles in setting foreign policy. The Secretary of State is usually the President's principal foreign policy adviser, and he or she is the chief coordinator of all governmental actions that affect relations with other countries.

The Foreign Service consists of ambassadors and other official representatives to more than 160 countries. Ambassadors and their staffs set up embassies in the countries recognized by the United States and serve as an American presence abroad. The embassies are part of the State Department, and they protect Americans overseas and are responsible for harmonious relationships with other countries.

The National Security Council, as part of the Executive Office of the President, helps the President deal with foreign, military, and economic policies that affect national security. It consists of the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and others that the President designates. The National Security Adviser — who coordinates the Council — sometimes has as much influence as the Secretary of State, depending on his or her relationship with the President.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), one of the best-known agencies that sets foreign policy, gathers, analyzes, and transmits information from other countries that might be important to the security of the nation. Although the CIA is notorious for its participation in "spy" work and "top secret" investigations, much of its work is public and routine. The CIA Director is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

United States foreign policy has changed dramatically from George Washington's day. Although Americans always pay attention to the advice of their revered founder, the world is of course not the same. The many people that shape American foreign policy today accept the fact that the United States is a member of a world community that cannot afford to ignore the importance of getting along.