

Chapter 17: Foreign Policy and  
National Defense

Section 3  
Lecture Notes

AMERICAN  
**GOVERNMENT**

PEARSON

# ► Objectives

1. Summarize American foreign policy from independence through World War I.
2. Show how the two World Wars affected America's traditional policy of isolationism.
3. Explain the principles of collective security and deterrence and their use during the cold war.
4. Describe American foreign policy since the end of the cold war.
5. Understand why the world remains a dangerous place.

## ▶ Key Terms

- **collective security:** the idea that nations will act together to protect the peace
- **deterrence:** keeping a strong enough military to discourage any attack by a hostile power
- **cold war:** a period of more than 40 years of hostile U.S.-Soviet relations
- **containment:** the policy of keeping communism from expanding
- **détente:** a relaxing of tensions

# ► Introduction

- How has American foreign policy changed over time?
  - For many years the United States was isolationist, concentrating its early foreign policy efforts in the western hemisphere.
  - After taking part in the two World Wars, the United States won the Cold War with the Soviet Union and emerged as a major player in international affairs.
  - After this, the U.S. began seeking to influence political, economic, and military issues around the world.

# ► Isolationism

- For many years the United States tried to avoid becoming entangled in foreign affairs and alliances.
- However, the United States did have diplomatic relations and trade with many nations.
- Benjamin Franklin (right) was one of the first U.S. diplomats.



## ► Isolationism, cont.

- Geographic isolation, abundant national resources, and weak U.S. armed forces all encouraged isolationism.
- In 1823, President Monroe issued the **Monroe Doctrine**, warning European powers to stay out of the affairs of North and South America.
- By 1900, America had expanded across the continent and overseas and sought to expand its political influence as well.

# ► Intervention

- Beginning under President Theodore Roosevelt in the 1900s, U.S. forces began to police Latin America to restore stability.
  - According to the cartoon, what was involved in Roosevelt's policy?



THE WORLD CONSTABLE

## ► Intervention, cont.

- In the 1930s President Franklin Roosevelt pursued the **Good Neighbor Policy**, reducing U.S. military and political involvement.
- In the 1800s, America opened Japan to trade and called for an **Open Door policy**, giving all nations equal trade access to China.
  - By the 1940s, U.S. relations with both Japan and China were poor.



- Checkpoint: How did World War II change the foreign policy position of the United States?
  - After entering World War I, America had isolated itself once again until the start of World War II.
  - The United States ended WW II as the world's major military and economic power.
  - U.S. foreign policy then shifted to one of heavy international involvement, aimed at protecting American security and prosperity.

## ▶ Collective Security & Deterrence

- After World War II America tried to create a world community that would unite against threats to peace.
  - The United Nations was created in 1945 to pursue this goal, but its effectiveness was limited during the cold war.
- The United States has also pursued a policy of **deterrence**, building a military strong enough to deter any direct attack on America.

# ▶ The Cold War

- The Cold War began after WW II as the **United States** and **the USSR** confronted each other in Europe and elsewhere.
  - The Soviet Union occupied Eastern Europe and set up communist regimes.
  - President Truman then offered U.S. military and financial aid to the rest of Europe.
- The U.S. policy of **containment** during the Cold War sought to contain the spread of communism.

# ► Cold War Confrontations

- Soviets blockaded Berlin in 1948-49, but a U.S. airlift of supplies saved the city without a fight.
- Soviets placed nuclear missiles in Cuba in 1962, but backed down during the Cuban Missile Crisis.



## ▶ Korean and Vietnam Wars

- **The Korean War** (1950-53) pitted UN forces, mainly Americans and South Koreans, against communist North Koreans and Chinese that were supported by the Soviets. It ended in a stalemate.
- **The Vietnam War** (1965-1973) saw the United States fighting the North Vietnamese and communist guerillas.
  - The American people were bitterly divided over the war, and the United States eventually withdrew.

# Cold War Conflicts, 1947-1991

## KEY

- United States and allies
- Other communist states
- Soviet Union and allies
- Cold War hot spots (with dates)



# ► Détente

- President Nixon sought to improve relations with the USSR and China, but Soviet relations remained strained.



- The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 led to U.S. support of the anti-communist rebels and a renewed containment policy.

# ▶ The Cold War Ends

- Checkpoint: What led to the end of the cold war?
  - Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev made reforms and met with President Reagan to ease tensions.
  - Economic and political problems in Eastern Europe and the USSR also contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.
  - U.S. policies of deterrence and containment worked over time.



# ► Modern Dangers

- The modern world faces many threats.
  - Terrorist groups like al Qaeda oppose the United States.
  - Hostile nations such as Iran and North Korea may gain nuclear weapons.
  - Africa suffers from many conflicts.
  - The Middle East divides U.S. interests between the need for oil and American support for Israel. U.S. efforts to broker a peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have had limited success.

# ▶ Afghanistan

- After the 2001 attacks, U.S. forces toppled the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.



- Today the pro-al Qaeda Taliban forces continued to fight U.S. and NATO troops for control of the country.

- The United States and its allies began the second Gulf War in 2003.
  - The goal was to end the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's dictatorial regime and its suspected weapons programs.
- American forces have been involved in an ongoing effort to stabilize and rebuild Iraq as a democracy in the face of continued violence.
- This task will likely continue for years to come.

## ► Review

- Now that you have learned about how American foreign policy has changed over time, go back and answer the Chapter Essential Question.
  - How should the United States interact with other countries?