



TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY CHALLENGES

WHEN GEORGE W. BUSH became president, he faced the same range of issues with which his two predecessors grappled. When should the United States intervene militarily overseas? When should the United States act unilaterally and when should it act multilaterally? (See Global Perspective: U.S. Foreign Policy and the United Nations.) How should the United States help Russia and other former communist states? How should the United States handle China's emergence as a world power? What could the United States do to promote Middle Eastern peace?

A New Order for the Twenty-First Century?

During his first months as president, George W. Bush conducted an active foreign policy, traveling to other countries and ordering several changes to policy. As a Texan, Bush placed high priority on U.S. relations with Mexico and other Latin American states. Indeed, his first trip outside the United States as president was to Mexico to discuss immigration, anti-drug policies, economic development, and border issues. Bush also visited Europe twice, first going to NATO headquarters in Belgium and four other countries and next to Italy to the meeting of the heads of state of the world's eight leading industrial powers. On both trips, Bush met with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Bush also made it clear that he intended to pursue ballistic missile defense and abandon the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between the United States and Russia. This was one of the main issues that Bush and Putin discussed during their meetings. Bush also announced that the United States would not abide by the Kyoto environmental agreements, and he pushed Congress to expand presidential authority to negotiate preferential trade agreements.³⁰

By September 2001, the Bush administration had a full foreign policy agenda. Relations with Latin America, Europe, Russia, and China all loomed large, as did security, international economics, immigration, drugs, and the environment. However, the new administration had not sorted through this considerable agenda to determine which items it considered most important. Suddenly and unexpectedly, on the morning of September 11, the Bush administration's foreign and defense priorities became clear.

On September 11, 2001, members of **al-Qaeda**, the terrorist network founded and funded by Muslim fundamentalist Osama bin Laden, hijacked four jetliners, flying two into the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center. The impact destroyed the towers and killed almost 3,000 people. Another hijacked plane slammed into the Pentagon, killing 189. The fourth plane plummeted into a field in Pennsylvania after passengers charged the hijackers and forced them to lose control of the plane.³¹

After the 9/11 attacks, President George W. Bush organized a coalition of nations to combat terrorism. He also demanded that Afghanistan's **Taliban** government, which

al-Qaeda

Worldwide terrorist organization led by Osama bin Laden; responsible for numerous terrorist attacks against U.S. interests, including 9/11 attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Taliban

Fundamentalist Islamic government of Afghanistan that provided terrorist training bases for al-Qaeda.



U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND THE UNITED NATIONS

The George W. Bush administration has had what amounts to a love-hate relationship with the United Nations (UN). However, the tension present in the Bush administration's interaction with the UN is not unique. More than one U.S. administration has simultaneously been drawn to the UN and turned its back on it—in large part because of the different perspectives on U.S. foreign policy goals and the role of the UN. The United States sees itself as an international reformer and understands that the UN can be an important ally in its mission to change the world. And, as a key founder of the UN, the United States sees itself as a custodian or protector of the world organization. Tensions result because often the agenda that the United States sets for the UN differs from that which the UN as an institution sets for itself. Finally, the United States, like all other members of the UN, sees the UN as something to use to further its national interests. Viewed in this light, membership in the UN is no different from membership in the World Trade Organization, the Organization of American States, or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The uncertainty produced by these competing strands in American thinking about where the UN fits into its foreign policy is particularly pronounced in one of the most visible and controversial tasks being undertaken by the UN today: peacemaking. The Bush administration, for example, turned to the UN for help with peacemaking in Iraq.

Peacemaking is a second-generation concept for the UN—the original concept was peacekeeping. The original hope was that permanent members of the Security Council

(the United States, Great Britain, France, China, and the Soviet Union) would be able to work together to keep international peace. This hope was soon dashed by the outbreak of the Cold War, which placed some of these states on competing sides. In the mid 1950s, in an effort to lessen the intensity of the Cold War in the developing world and to reestablish a role for itself in settling international disputes, the UN moved forward with the twin ideas of preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping. Before a conflict turned into open fighting, the UN would try to mediate and settle the dispute. If its efforts failed, it could send UN peacekeeping forces to stabilize a situation. The presence of UN peacekeepers (known as “blue helmets”) was governed by three rules. First, UN peacekeepers must be invited into a country by its government. Second, they must be neutral in the conflict. Third, they must leave when asked. Both the United States and the Soviet Union were willing to accept the presence of UN peacekeepers as a second-best solution in a conflict. It meant that although neither side had won, neither side had lost to the other.

With the end of the Cold War and the diminished U.S.–Soviet rivalry for influence around the world, the need for UN peacekeeping declined. Conflicts between states and within states, however, continued. In fact, we saw the emergence of “failed states”—states that are no longer capable of maintaining law and order within their boundaries or of providing the minimum level of social services to their citizens. Some states devolved into chaos, with citizens caught between warring factions. To address such crises, the UN reworked the concept of peacekeeping into peacemaking. Under it, UN blue helmets would not have to be invited into a country by the government or have to leave when asked. Once in a country, they are not expected to be neutral and stay above the conflict. They are there to help bring an end to it and reestablish peace and order.

As the table highlights, an inherent tension is built into UN peacekeeping efforts. The states that provide the most money for peacekeeping are not those who provide the most troops. Both sets of states believe they should have the major say in how these troops are used.

Largest Financial Contributors to UN Peacekeeping Operations

U.S.	\$674.5 million
Japan	541.6
France	295.9
Germany	198.9
Great Britain	137.6

Largest Personnel Contributors to UN Peacekeeping Operations (total: 48,590)

Pakistan	13.6%
Bangladesh	10.3
Nigeria	7.3
Ghana	5.0
Nepal	5.0

Source: *Congressional Quarterly Researcher*, February 27, 2004, p. 177.

Questions

1. Who should have the most say in UN peacekeeping operations, those who contribute the money for them or those who provide the personnel? Why?
2. Which of the competing strands of American orientation toward the UN discussed above should be given the most weight in U.S. foreign policy decisions? Why?

Source: *Congressional Quarterly Researcher* (February 27, 2004): 177.

had provided safe haven for bin Laden and al-Qaeda's terrorist training camps, turn bin Laden over to the United States. When the Taliban refused, the United States in October initiated air strikes against Taliban and al-Qaeda targets and supported the Northern Alliance, an Afghani opposition force battling Taliban control. By the end of 2001, the Taliban were overthrown and countries around the world were assisting in the fight to combat terrorism. Meanwhile, the international community pledged \$1.8 billion for 2002 to help rebuild Afghanistan, with another \$2.7 billion for subsequent years.

Outside Afghanistan, a broad war on terrorism began soon after the 9/11 attacks as many countries began to share intelligence about terrorists and as Interpol and other security agencies stepped up surveillance of terrorists. Around the world, over a thousand people were detained because of ties to al-Qaeda, 500 in the United States alone. Despite these efforts and increased security measures within the United States and abroad, the Central Intelligence Agency estimated that five to ten thousand al-Qaeda operatives remained in sixty-eight countries, including the United States. U.S.-led anti-terrorist efforts therefore continued, with the United States providing anti-terrorist training to the military in Georgia, the Philippines, and Yemen. The Bush administration also declared that the United States would take the war to countries that aided or sheltered terrorists. Iraq, Iran, and North Korea dominated U.S. attention, with Bush calling these three nations the "axis of evil" in his 2002 State of the Union message.³² Other officials charged that Cuba, Djibouti, Libya, Somalia, Syria, and Sudan also assisted or shielded terrorists.

The **war on terrorism**, then, is a multifaceted, global undertaking that includes military action overseas, increased security measures at home, cooperative intelligence with allies, diplomacy, and eliminating terrorist access to financial institutions. Many Bush administration officials promised that the war would be pursued diligently, and they cautioned that it would be both long and costly. They also promised that it would be won.

The 9/11 attacks gave the United States two over-arching foreign and defense policy priorities: defense of the homeland and the global war on terrorism. Few Americans disagreed with these priorities or the policies implemented to achieve them. However, as important as these priorities were, other foreign and defense policy issues could not be ignored.

Assuring strategic stability with Russia was one of the most important. Ironically, the 9/11 attacks drew the United States and Russia closer together as Russia helped the United States gain access to military bases in Central Asia. The United States also muted its criticism of Russian policies in Russia's breakaway province of Chechnya, and

war on terrorism

Initiated by George W. Bush after the September 11, 2001, attacks to weed out terrorist operatives throughout the world, using diplomacy, military means, improved homeland security, stricter banking laws, and other means.

■ The south tower of the World Trade Center collapses September 11, 2001, after it was struck by a hijacked airplane. The north tower, also struck by a hijacked plane, collapsed shortly after. The tragic 9/11 terrorist attacks caused enormous loss of life and had a profound impact on U.S. foreign and defense policy.

Photo courtesy: Thomas Nilsson/Getty Images



Putin indicated a willingness to modify the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, thereby removing ballistic missile defense as a stumbling block in U.S.-Russian relations. The United States and Russia also made so much progress on strategic arms discussions that during Bush's May 2002 trip to Moscow, the United States and Russia signed the **Strategic Offensive Arms Reduction Treaty**, under which both sides agreed to cut their strategic nuclear arsenals to the lowest total in decades.³³

Unfortunately, throughout 2001 and early 2002, tensions and violence rose between Israelis and Palestinians. At first the United States stayed aloof from the escalating conflict, but by 2002, Bush decided only U.S. diplomacy had a chance to stop the cycle of escalating violence. Bush therefore dispatched Secretary of State Colin Powell and other negotiators to the Middle East to find a way to deescalate the crisis. But, violence continued, with few observers holding out hope for peace in the short term.

Bush also recognized the plight that faced developing countries. Thus, in early 2002, he called for a "new compact for global development" in which the United States would increase its development aid by 50 percent, or \$5 billion, between 2002 and 2005. This aid was to go to countries that had good governance, paid attention to health and education, and adopted free market economic policies.³⁴ Bush's supporters praised the program, but critics assailed it as too little, too late, and too tied to a conservative economic agenda.

Strategic Offensive Arms Reduction Treaty

2002 U.S.-Russian treaty that reduced the number of nuclear warheads in each side's arsenals respectively to about 1,700 and 2,200, the lowest total in decades.

The Iraq War

In the summer of 2002, the Bush administration made it clear that it considered Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein a profound, immediate danger to the security of the United States and the world. U.S. officials claimed Hussein was violating international law by continuing secret development of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)—nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons—and that Iraq was a safe harbor and potential breeding ground for terrorists. The United States successfully pressured Hussein to allow in United Nations weapons inspectors, who had been denied free access to Iraq for some time. Teams of UN inspectors, led by Hans Blix, investigated scores of sites in Iraq and interviewed Iraqi scientists in late 2002 and early 2003. The inspection teams found some inconsistencies and lapses in information on the destruction of older weapons, but could locate no solid evidence that Iraq either had or was developing WMDs.

President Bush and Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair, however, did not believe the findings of the UN inspectors. Based on what proved to be faulty intelligence, Bush and Blair argued that there was no question that Hussein was developing WMDs. Moreover, they asserted that Hussein posed a severe danger to the world and, given his long history of brutality, needed to be removed from power so Iraq could become a democratic nation. The United States and Britain convinced several other countries of the need for ousting Hussein but failed to convince the UN Security Council to authorize the use of force, largely due to the opposition of France and Russia. Frustrated that the UN would not offer its support, but resolute to proceed anyway, President Bush referred to those countries that did support war as "the coalition of the willing." (See Join the Debate: Should the United States Pull Out of the United Nations?) Britain, Italy, Spain, Poland, Australia, Japan, and several other countries stood with the United States, while France, Russia, Germany, Canada, and Mexico were among those nations opposing this action. When Hussein refused to abdicate voluntarily when given a last-minute ultimatum, the war began.

The overthrow of Saddam Hussein's government in the spring of 2003 was relatively quick. The U.S.-led bombing campaign quickly destroyed much of the military and governmental infrastructure in Iraq, and Hussein's forces seemed helpless and disorganized. As U.S. ground forces moved rapidly toward Baghdad, the Hussein government fled in disarray. Some of Hussein's key officers and aides were killed, others were captured, and others went into hiding. Within weeks, U.S. and other allied forces had entered Hussein's palaces, torn down statues of the dictator around the country, and were beginning their efforts to create a post-Saddam government in Iraq.

Though the Hussein government was toppled, the situation in Iraq was far less secure than was hoped. In the months after President Bush declared an end to major



SHOULD THE UNITED STATES PULL OUT OF THE UNITED NATIONS?

OVERVIEW: The United Nations came into existence in 1945 as an institution born of two world wars and the desire of most nations for an international organization dedicated to pursuing global justice, peace, and human rights. To back up its mandate, the United States and the United Nations have worked together to help maintain relative global security. For example, UN member nations helped defend South Korea from invasion by North Korea, provided a blueprint to help mediate peace in the Middle East, and voted for sanctions against South Africa to help end racial apartheid. The UN has also helped millions living in famine, as well as aided countless refugees fleeing war and natural disasters by providing food, shelter, clothing, and medical relief. The World Health Organization—a UN establishment—is considered a model of success.

Nevertheless, although having 191 members, the United Nations relies disproportionately on the United States for monetary, material, and military support. Moreover, since the end of the Cold War, the United States and UN have developed competing and antagonistic views in regard to the UN's mandate and global role. The primary problem has to do with legitimacy and sovereignty. In 1992, the UN released a bold initiative—the Agenda for Peace—to recast the UN's peacekeeping role, but the move seemed an attempt to give the UN control over U.S. military and foreign policy resources. The consequence of this initiative was peacekeeping failures in Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia, in which over 1 million have been killed. The Agenda for Peace advocates peacekeeping, yet the UN does not have the requisite forces to carry out this agenda. Only the United States has the sufficient force to carry out this mandate.

Furthermore, due to disagreements with the United States over its military and foreign policy role in Iraq and the Middle East, the UN voted to eject the United States from the UN Human Rights Commission. This action infuriated the U.S. government because countries that engage in human rights violations, such as Sudan, Libya, and Cuba, retained

their seats on the commission. The United States walked out of the UN conference on racism in 2001 because the focus was singularly on perceived Israeli racism instead of racism in general. Finally, after thwarting U.S. policy toward Iraq prior to the U.S.-led invasion in 2003, the UN became embroiled in a major financial scandal involving its Oil for Food program. This program was created during Saddam Hussein's regime in order to give the Iraqi people humanitarian aid while sanctions against Hussein's government were in place. Nearly \$1 billion disappeared into hidden bank accounts and fake corporations, and the U.S. Congress launched an investigation into where the money went.

Should nations such as the United States cede control of their militaries to the United Nations? Since the United States provides the bulk of military force and funding for UN programs (though the United States is consistently in arrears in paying its dues), should not the United States have a dominant role in determining UN policy and actions?

Arguments in Favor of the United States Pulling Out of the United Nations

- **The United Nations is incapable of enforcing its own resolutions.** As the run-up to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq demonstrates, the UN is incapable of enforcing its own declarations and resolutions. Saddam Hussein and his regime violated sixteen UN resolutions created to prevent the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and enforce human rights. During this period, tens of thousands of Iraqis were killed by the Hussein government, and the Hussein regime hid programs to develop and build WMDs—fooling UN weapons inspectors.
- **The United States is not accountable to international organizations when pursuing its own interests.** The United States and United Nations have divergent interests and understandings of international law and diplomacy. To put American armed forces under UN command is to possibly give control of the military to

combat, soldiers from the United States and its allies found themselves under attack from mortar fire, roadside bombings, and suicide missions by various insurgents. American war deaths and injuries alarmed the American people. By the end of 2004, the list of war dead exceeded 1,300, with about 10,000 injured. Many Iraqis, even those glad to be free of Hussein's tyrannical rule, were troubled by the lawlessness unleashed by Hussein's overthrow, resented the U.S. occupation, and demanded a more rapid transition to self-government. Some attacks appeared to be the work of individuals who entered Iraq specifically to fight U.S. forces. Bush administration and military officials had underestimated the difficulty of the postwar situation, and began to ask for assis-

those who oppose U.S. interests. Once the United States loses control of its armed forces command structure, it cedes control of the military to an organization that has demonstrated it will act against U.S. defense interests, as in the UN Security Council's attempt to stop the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

- **Many Americans believe that adhering to UN resolutions is to give up American sovereignty.** Many Americans believe there is an attempt to create a “world government” and that to accede to UN mandates and resolutions is to relinquish U.S. sovereignty and U.S. control over its own citizens. Many see the UN as a stepping stone to this end. For example, many nations want the United States to join and abide by the new International Criminal Court (ICC) in which defendants are denied basic U.S. constitutional protections, such as the prohibition against habeas corpus, or illegal imprisonment. This is considered yet one more instance of the international community trying to institute international government.

Arguments Against the United States Pulling Out of the United Nations

- **The UN engages in peacekeeping and nation building when the United States will not.** The UN is currently engaged in fifteen peacekeeping operations. There are currently 44,000 military personnel from member nations in operations in places such as Bosnia, Sierra Leone, and East Timor. The UN can provide peacekeeping support when the United States is either unable or unwilling, thus preventing humanitarian disaster and conflict. This is an essential function if global security and stability are to be maintained.
- **The United States must lead by example.** Because the United States has a unique world, military, and economic position, it can use its various strengths and principles to promote global peace and justice. Why should other nations respond to UN resolutions and decrees when the United States does not? By acceding to UN requests, the United States can set an example

for other nations to follow, and this may help facilitate other nations' compliance with UN wishes to ensure global security.

- **International institutions provide global stability and promote peaceful conflict resolution.** Since the establishment of the United Nations, there have been no worldwide wars. The UN was able to provide security for South Korea and it acts as an international forum for conflict mediation. Though imperfect, the UN affords a medium in which human rights policy is debated and developed and international security and stability discussed. For example, the UN has taken on the cause of disarmament and elimination of WMDs and thereby provides legitimacy in this policy domain, whereas the United States cannot. Because the United States is a world power, its membership in the UN gives the organization credibility and validity.

Questions

1. Does adhering to UN mandates mean giving up national sovereignty?
2. What can be done to reconcile U.S. and UN interests? Do the United States and United Nations have similar interests? If not, what is to be done?

Selected Readings

Thomas Weiss, ed. *United Nations and Changing World Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 2004.
Dennis Jett. *Why Peacekeeping Fails*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.

Selected Web Sites

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/InternationalOrganizations/em842.cfm>. An argument for fundamental United Nations reform.

<http://www.ejil.org/journal/Vol6/No3/art8.html>. A scholarly article on the successes and failures in UN history with a focus on UN activity since the end of the Cold War.

tance from the UN. When June 30, 2004, was chosen as the date for transition to Iraqi self-government, a new round of assassinations and attacks on softer targets by Iraqi militants caused tremendous instability. While some parts of Iraq were successfully rebuilding and remained relatively calm thanks to help from the U.S.-led coalition, the overall situation was enormously volatile. Oil pipelines were sabotaged, Iraqi police stations were attacked, and Iraqis faced great uncertainty about the future. And, no evidence of weapons of mass destruction had been found in Iraq.

In May 2004, *The New Yorker* magazine, the *Washington Post*, the television program *60 Minutes*, and other news sources began to report a story that shocked Ameri-

Analyzing Visuals

ABU GHRAIB PRISONER ABUSE

The photos of American soldiers demeaning, taunting, and torturing Iraqi detainees in the Abu Ghraib prison shocked the world when they were published in 2004. The resulting scandal led to investigations by both Congress and the Pentagon and a series of trials against the alleged abusers, most of whom were young, lower-level soldiers. Yet to be determined is whether they were following orders from Army personnel higher in the chain of command or even members of the Bush administration. All such acts

violate the Geneva convention of warfare, to which the United States adheres. What consequences—national and international—do you foresee for the United States as a result of these illegal actions? Taking place at the same time were kidnappings and beheadings of nonmilitary Westerners by various insurgent groups in Iraq. Are there instances in which you would condone torture of an enemy, considering it philosophically if not legally acceptable? Why, or why not?



Photo courtesy: *The New Yorker* magazine

cans. The media revealed that U.S. soldiers guarding Iraqi detainees at Abu Ghraib prison outside of Baghdad had committed brutal and inhumane acts. Prisoners were intimidated by dogs, beaten, forced to strip and engage in sexual acts or pile together on the floor, and subjected to a variety of other acts that violated the Geneva conventions of warfare. The U.S. Army, which had been slow to investigate claims by the Red Cross and others about Abu Ghraib, issued a classified report in late February 2004 that cited rampant examples of “sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses.”³⁵ Not only had the abuse been frequent, but there were photos of U.S. soldiers smiling and giving the “thumbs-up” sign while standing next to piles of naked Iraqi prisoners or

intimidating a hooded prisoner. Reports emerged that several prisoner deaths were under investigation, and that Abu Ghraib was not the only site of such abuse. The abuses at Abu Ghraib were an extreme embarrassment to the United States, and the photos incensed many in Iraq and the Arab world who argued that the cruelty depicted made a lie out of the U.S. claim of superior morality in deposing Saddam Hussein. (During Hussein's regime, Abu Ghraib had been a notorious site for the torture and execution of political enemies.) President Bush and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld denounced the prisoner abuse, but Congress investigated whether the prisoner intimidation might have been encouraged by those high in the chain of command (see *Analyzing Visuals: Abu Ghraib Prisoner Abuse*).

Iraq remains an unfinished piece of business. An uneasy coalition of Iraqis had taken control of the government in 2004, but violence continued, and it was unclear how long the United States would need to station troops or how many more Americans would die in the struggle to make post-Hussein Iraq a democratic haven in the Arab world. President Bush continued to defend the war even though the cost was very high (in dollars and casualties), and no weapons of mass destruction were discovered. Would the United States go to war in such a preemptive strike again, given the high cost and the damage done to relations with many allies?

Beyond Iraq, the United States in 2004 still had two clear foreign and defense policy priorities: defense of the homeland and the global war on terrorism. Proponents of unilateralism had become more vocal, arguing that America should "go it alone," but the United States was also pursuing a more broadly based foreign policy agenda. Notably, most Americans still accepted internationalism, multilateralism, moralism, and pragmatism as the basis for U.S. foreign and defense policy. Most also recognized that the United States faced foreign policy and defense challenges in addition to terrorism.

Identifying Policies to Pursue in the National Interest

Throughout the post-World War II era, most Americans agreed that it was in the United States' national interest to attain economic prosperity, defend the homeland, and protect American values. Further, with occasional exceptions such as the Korean and Vietnam Wars, they generally agreed with the policies put into place to attain these interests. In the post-Cold War era, prosperity, homeland defense, and protecting values remain key elements of the U.S. interest.

Before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, there was disagreement about what policies should be adopted to attain these interests. Although consensus on homeland defense and the war on terrorism pushed disagreement over other issues into the background, that disagreement remains. For example, disagreement exists over whether China, the world's most populous country, deserves "most favored nation" status as a U.S. trading partner. As in the Clinton administration, officials in the Bush administration argue that encouraging trade and economic development in China will lead to democratization in the long run. Opponents argue that China's political repression should not be rewarded with favored trading conditions, and they challenge why the United States continues to boycott trade with communist Cuba while freely trading with China.

Other issues of foreign and defense policy remain. How large should the American military be? In addition to the threat of terrorism, does the military defend the United States against threats posed by North Korea, Iran, or other countries? Should the United States defend human rights overseas by intervening in places such as Kosovo and Rwanda? Should it refuse to deal with countries such as China that violate human rights? How involved should the United States be in trying to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian dispute or the Indian-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir, which could escalate into nuclear war?

These are a few of the questions that policy makers ponder as they debate which policies to implement in the national interest.



Balancing Foreign and Domestic Affairs

To a certain extent, the division of U.S. policies into “foreign affairs” and “domestic affairs” is artificial. It is only rarely possible to concentrate on domestic issues to the exclusion of international issues. Nevertheless, except for homeland defense and the war on terrorism, many Americans believe the United States should concentrate on solving its domestic problems, minimizing the United States’ involvement in other foreign and military issues.

Even after the 9/11 attacks, finding the appropriate balance between domestic and foreign affairs is difficult for the president and other policy makers. Scarce national resources and scarce presidential time must be parceled out as competition for resources and time emerges between foreign and domestic issues. Striking the appropriate balance between foreign and domestic affairs so that American interests and objectives are achieved and the American public is satisfied is thus a continuing challenge for the president and others involved in the foreign and defense policy process.

Meeting Threats from Weapons of Mass Destruction and Information Warfare

Nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons are called **weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)**. Along with **information warfare**, that is, attacks against information and communication systems, they present a significant threat to the United States. With it being publicly acknowledged that al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups actively seek to obtain weapons of mass destruction, the threat is heightened. Meeting these threats is a key element of the war on terrorism.

The reality of the threat of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons can be illustrated by three examples. First, since the Soviet Union broke up, there have been hundreds of attempts to smuggle nuclear materials to Iraq, North Korea, and elsewhere. Most of the smugglers, but not all, have been caught. Second, the anthrax mailings that caused five deaths in the United States in late 2001 drove home the dangers of biological weapons. Third, in 1995, the Japanese religious cult Aum Shinrikyo released the nerve gas sarin in the Tokyo subway system. Six people died and thousands became sick. A few weeks later, four more chemical attacks, two using cyanide gas, were launched against other Japanese railway targets.

As for information warfare, greater use of computers has increased the United States’ vulnerability to attacks on information systems. Computer hardware and software could be destroyed or degraded. Critical information could be acquired or altered. False information could be inserted. Unauthorized access could be obtained and false directions given. Critical services and functions could be denied. Confidence in systems could be undermined. These threats have led officials to warn about the danger of an “electronic Pearl Harbor” in which information warfare could bring some sectors of the United States to a halt. Indeed, computers and Web sites used by the U.S. government as well as businesses such as CNN, Home Depot, and Amazon.com often have come under attack from individual hackers.

How serious is the threat of information warfare? Government studies have highlighted the vulnerabilities of U.S. infrastructures, including communications and telephones, banking, power grids, water systems, fuel supply networks, and other systems that rely on computers.³⁶ Indeed, in a 1997 war game, government hackers penetrated computers on military bases, gained access to computers on a navy cruiser, could have closed down the U.S. electric power grid, and positioned themselves to disable the emergency 911 network.³⁷

weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)

Biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons, which present a sizeable threat to U.S. security.

information warfare

Attacks against information and communication systems, which present a sizeable threat to U.S. security.

Addressing Drug and Environmental Problems

During the late twentieth century, international efforts to address the illegal drug trade and the quality of the world's environment emerged as issues that challenged U.S. policy makers. The United States has a mixed record on both.

American policy makers use three tactics against illegal drugs. The first concentrates on reducing demand in the United States and rarely is involved with foreign and defense affairs. The second emphasizes stopping the flow of drugs into the United States. It includes seizing drug-running planes and ships and stopping drug smuggling at U.S. and foreign ports and airports. A third tactic is helping countries stop drug production within their borders. The United States provides economic and military help. For example, in 2000, the United States began a \$1.3 billion anti-drug military aid program to Colombia. U.S. Special Forces have also engaged in anti-drug operations.

Environmental issues such as global warming, ocean pollution, deforestation, desertification, and the loss of biodiversity moved onto the foreign policy agenda in the late twentieth century. Sometimes the United States has been a leader in international efforts to address environmental issues. When it became clear that the growth of the hole in the ozone layer was related to chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) use, the United States quickly supported and signed the 1987 Montreal Protocol to reduce the use of CFCs. However, in 1992, the United States opposed many environmental proposals at the UN Rio Earth Summit, arguing that they endangered economic growth. Eventually, the United States supported most of the measures, but only after they were weakened. Under the Clinton administration, the United States supported a treaty passed at the 1997 **Kyoto Conference on Global Climate Change** designed to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming. However, many in Congress as well as U.S. business interests claimed it would be too costly to implement.³⁸ George W. Bush opposed the Kyoto agreements and withdrew U.S. support when he became president.

Kyoto Conference on Global Climate Change

1997 international conference to develop agreements to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.

Deciding When to Intervene Overseas

Between the end of World War II and the demise of the Soviet Union, U.S. military intervention overseas usually was tied to the containment of communism. But, the demise of the Soviet Union eliminated this easy benchmark for deciding when to intervene. Presidents George Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush all faced the problem of when to use the U.S. military overseas. As events in Panama, the Philippines, Kuwait, Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan indicated, none of these presidents hesitated to commit U.S. forces to overseas action.

The question remains: "Where should the U.S. intervene?" In 2001, the answer was relatively easy in the case of Afghanistan, whose Taliban government supported and sheltered Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda terrorist training camps. The Bush administration's strategic doctrine of "preemptive defense" has aroused more debate. Believing that Saddam Hussein's regime had secretly resumed its development of weapons of mass destruction and that Iraqi officials had links to al-Qaeda, and concerned about the potential danger Iraq posed to America and its interests, the United States and several partner countries invaded Iraq in March 2003. But this preemptive defense was controversial with many U.S. allies and fueled criticism in the United States. Would the United States take preemptive action beyond Iraq? The United States has not taken military action against Iran or North Korea, the two other countries President Bush referred to as part of an "axis of evil."

Beyond the war on terrorism, the same quandaries confront U.S. policy makers after the 9/11 attacks that they struggled with before. Should the United States intervene overseas to stop human rights violations? Should the United States intervene overseas



Photo courtesy: U.S. Navy/AP/Wide World Photos

■ An intercontinental ballistic missile target is launched from the Pacific Missile Range Facility on Kauai, Hawaii. The missile was struck down by an interceptor missile fired from 200 miles out at sea in a successful test of the Pentagon's plans to shield America from medium- and long-range missiles.

to overthrow dictatorial governments or support democratic governments? Except for the Bush administration's strategic doctrine of preemptive defense, there are no easy guidelines, and decisions will undoubtedly be made on a case by case basis.

Choosing Between Unilateralism and Multilateralism

Since the United States is economically and militarily the most powerful country in the world, why should it not do what it wants to do in foreign and defense affairs? Why should it limit its actions to only those with which other countries and international organizations like NATO and the UN agree? The easy response is that the United States should always act to protect its national interests, aligning its actions and policies with the UN and other international and nongovernmental organizations when possible, but not allowing those institutions to constrain U.S. actions and policies. On another level, the challenge revolves around the issue of what kind of world the United States wants to have develop. Should it be one where might determines right, or one where mutual agreement determines the course of action?

This is a difficult problem for policy makers. In the end, deciding whether unilateralism or multilateralism will predominate is a political issue. Throughout this chapter, we have seen cases where the United States chose to undertake foreign and military action on its own, and other cases where the United States acted only in the presence of international support and agreement. The failure of the United States to win approval from the United Nations Security Council for the 2003 invasion of Iraq led to vigorous debate at home and abroad over unilateralism, and U.S. actions created hard feelings among many of America's traditional allies. The challenge is to make U.S. interests and the interests of the global community coincide, and when this is impossible, to promote U.S. interests without damaging the United States' status in the global community. Repairing the damage caused by U.S. actions in Iraq may depend on how willing the United States is to share decision-making power in the future.