



## Chapter 17

# Creating American Foreign Policy

*How should the United States conduct foreign policy?*

### ■ 17.1 Introduction

Michael and Ande McCarthy are health care workers living in Michigan. Motivated by their religious convictions, they flew to Cuba in 2001 to deliver medical supplies to a Catholic charity group. Because federal law bans travel to Cuba from the United States, they flew in and out of Toronto, Canada.

When the couple drove back to Michigan from Canada, U.S. border authorities asked where they had been. Instead of saying Toronto, the couple answered, "Cuba." A few weeks later, they received a letter saying they had violated the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917 by spending about \$750 for a Cuba vacation package and buying some souvenirs while in Cuba. The letter ordered them to appear before a federal judge and to pay a fine of \$7,500 each.

The Trading with the Enemy Act is an element of U.S. **foreign policy**, or how our government deals with other nations. The U.S. government has not always viewed Cuba as an enemy. Lying 90 miles off the coast of Florida, Cuba is one of our closest neighbors. In the early 1900s, the United States and Cuba developed close economic and political ties. For the next half century, Americans invested heavily in Cuba, buying up most of the country's best farmland for sugar plantations. In addition, American tourists vacationed on Cuba's beaches.

The 1967 American chiefs of state summit meeting

### Speaking of Politics

**foreign policy**

A course of action developed by a country's leaders to pursue their nation's vital interests in its dealings with other countries.

**globalization**

The trend toward more open and free travel, trade, and communication among nations and their peoples.

**diplomacy**

The art and practice of managing communication and relationships between nations.

**ambassador**

A diplomatic official of the highest rank sent by one country as its long-term representative to another country or to an international organization.

**diplomatic immunity**

International law that protects diplomats and their families from being arrested or tried in countries other than their own.

**diplomatic recognition**

Official acceptance of a regime as the legitimate government of its country.

**summit**

A gathering of heads of state or other high-ranking officials to discuss matters of great importance to their countries.

**sanction**

A measure taken by one or more nations to pressure another country into changing its policies or complying with international law.

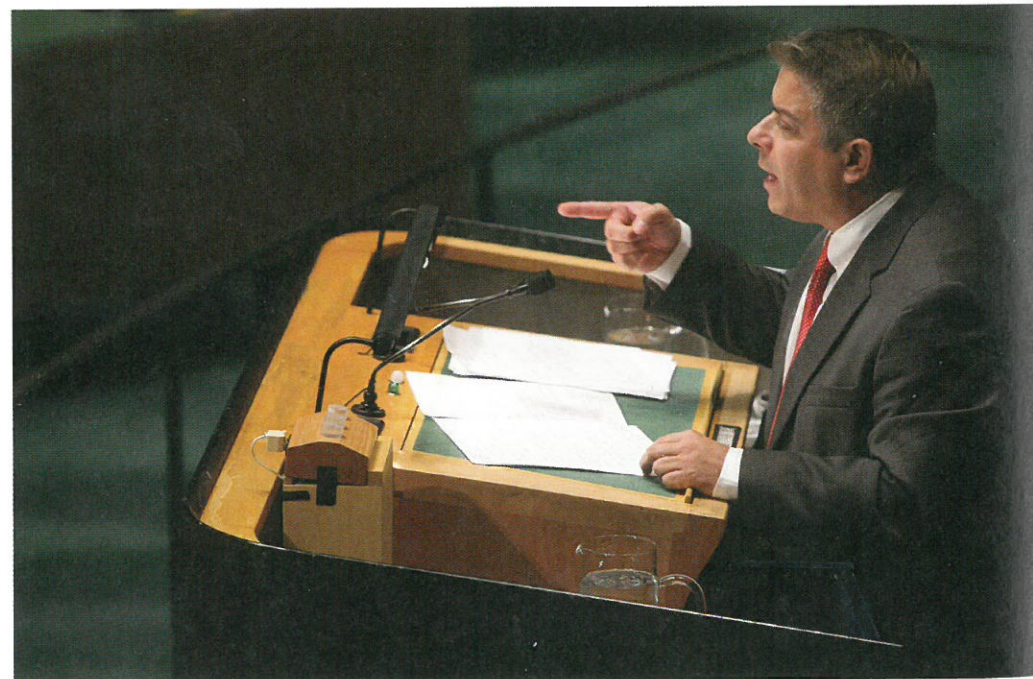


U.S.-Cuban relations changed abruptly after communist revolutionaries, led by Fidel Castro, seized control of the island in 1959. A year later, Castro nationalized most of Cuba's private property. **Nationalization** is the transfer of private property to government ownership. Both Americans and Cubans who owned property in Cuba lost everything when the Cuban government seized their land and businesses.

The United States responded by placing an **embargo**, or ban, on most U.S. trade with Cuba. When Castro signed trade deals with the Soviet Union to make up for the loss of U.S. trade, the United States broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba. After the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, President John F. Kennedy imposed restrictions on travel to Cuba. In recent years, the United States has loosened its sanctions against Cuba. As of 2012, it is not illegal to travel to Cuba, and Americans may engage in basic travel transactions, such as transportation and food. However, travelers are subject to strict regulations on most other purchases.

A growing number of Americans have proposed changing U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba. Others feel just as strongly that the trade and travel bans should remain in place. This chapter explores how foreign policy decisions such as this one are made and why they are important—not only to governments, but also to ordinary people like Michael and Ande McCarthy.

Americans are not the only ones with strong opinions about the relationship between the United States and Cuba. For many years, a number of countries have pushed for the termination of the U.S. embargo. Here, Felipe Perez Rogue, Cuban's Foreign Minister, argues against the embargo at the United Nations General Assembly in 2008.



## 17.2 The Basic Goals of U.S. Foreign Policy

Over the past two centuries, U.S. foreign policy has undergone many shifts. Early presidents, starting with George Washington, embraced a policy of neutrality. They refused to take sides in the disputes and conflicts of other nations. Later presidents pursued a policy of imperialism, seeking to extend American power over other countries. Although specific policies have changed over the years, the basic goals of U.S. foreign policy have remained constant. These goals are based on what Americans see as our nation's vital interests: protecting security, preserving peace, promoting prosperity, and pursuing humanitarian ideals.

### Protecting the Nation's Security

Ensuring national security is central to the foreign policy of every nation. The most important job of any national government is to protect its people from attack. This may be done both by creating armed forces and by forming military alliances with other nations. Without such protection, a country's physical survival could be at risk.

National security is not limited to defending the nation from attacks by other countries. Americans

were reminded of this on September 11, 2001, when two airplanes, hijacked by terrorists, slammed into the World Trade Center in New York City. A third hijacked plane hit the Pentagon, the Defense Department's headquarters just outside Washington, D.C. A fourth plane crashed into a field in Pennsylvania before reaching its target. As the nation mourned its dead, it faced the fact that threats to national security can come from any group—in this instance, a terrorist network called al Qaeda that is hostile to the United States.

Since 9/11, the United States has prioritized protecting its citizens from terrorism. In a speech to Congress, President George W. Bush declared,

*Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated . . . Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen.*

—George W. Bush, Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, 2001

As part of this campaign, the United States has worked to make it more difficult for terrorists to enter the country. Travelers crossing U.S. borders with Canada and Mexico are now screened far more carefully than they were in the past. Visitors seeking **visas** to enter the United States are now interviewed and checked against terrorist watch lists. A visa is an official document issued by a country's government that allows a foreigner to enter and travel in that country.

### Preserving World Peace

A second goal of U.S. foreign policy is the preservation of peace around the world. A peaceful world is both more secure from a military point of view and better for U.S. economic interests. Trade and tourism tend to thrive in peaceful regions and dry up in conflict zones. The United States seeks peace by supporting the peacekeeping work of the United Nations. U.S. officials also work to **mediate** disputes that might lead, or have led, to armed conflict. To mediate means to attempt to solve a dispute by working with both sides to reach an agreement.

Theodore Roosevelt was one of the first presidents to try his hand at peacekeeping on the



This cartoon depicts Theodore Roosevelt as an "Angel of Peace," dragging Russia and Japan into peace talks. Roosevelt won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to end a war between the two nations. In his acceptance speech, he said, "Peace is generally good in itself, but it is never the highest good unless it comes as the handmaid of righteousness."

international stage. When war broke out between Russia and Japan in 1904, Roosevelt offered to mediate. He invited representatives from both sides to meet with him in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in 1905. Under the president's watchful eye, the warring parties worked out a peace agreement. The following year, Roosevelt became the first American to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his successful mediation of this conflict.

### Promoting Economic Prosperity

Most governments use foreign policy to promote the economic prosperity of their people. The United States is no exception. Since the founding of the United States, the government has sought to protect the right of Americans to buy and sell goods to and from other countries. It has also sought to increase Americans' access to raw materials and resources found in other parts of the world.

Since World War II, the United States has become a leading force in **globalization**, or the trend toward more open, less-restricted trade and communication among the world's nations. Globalization promotes the free movement of goods, money,



people, information, and culture across national borders. This free movement of goods allows U.S. companies to compete for customers on a worldwide scale. At the same time, however, it has introduced new threats to U.S. economic interests.

One such threat is illegal foreign production of goods that are protected by U.S. patents or copyrights. **Patents** give an inventor the exclusive right to make or sell an invention. Similarly, a **copyright** gives developers of original works, such as music, art, books, and software, the right to control their intellectual property. Patents and copyrights ensure that the people and companies who create new products and intellectual property can benefit from their investments of time and money.

Those benefits are lost, however, when foreign producers ignore patent and copyright protections. Some of these producers make money by **counterfeiting**. This means they make and sell copies of patented products without permission from or payment to the patent holders. Others make money by modern **piracy**, or the illegal use of copyrighted intellectual property such as movies and software.

Stopping counterfeiting and piracy has become an important focus of U.S. foreign policy. Trade in counterfeit and pirated goods leads to lower sales and profits for U.S. companies. Moreover, some copycat products, such as counterfeit drugs, may be harmful to people's health.

### Global Theft

Counterfeiting and piracy pose a major threat to U.S. economic interests abroad. Drug companies and software makers are hit particularly hard by the illegal trade in counterfeit goods.

#### Large Industries Hurt By Counterfeit Goods

- Software
- Pharmaceutical
- Footwear and apparel
- Auto
- Motion picture
- Artistic recordings

### Pursuing Humanitarian Ideals

U.S. foreign policy has also been driven by the goal of advancing humanitarian ideals around the world. Some of these ideals involve promoting freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. Others involve ending poverty and promoting human rights. Americans do this by sending foreign aid to other countries to improve the standard of living. U.S. officials also help countries move toward democracy by assisting them with elections and by monitoring elections to ensure that votes are counted fairly.

Woodrow Wilson based his decision to enter World War I as much on ideals as on national security interests. In his speech calling on Congress to declare war, he said,

*The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty . . . It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war . . . But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own Governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right . . . as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free.*



Humanitarian aid is a large part of the United States's foreign policy and is often used to improve the living conditions for people in developing countries. These U.S. Navy soldiers are loading and delivering humanitarian supplies to help foreign nations in need.

Similarly, President Kennedy's creation of the Peace Corps was based as much on ideals as on Cold War security concerns. As Kennedy put it,

*To those peoples in the huts and villages across the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required—not because the Communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right.*  
—John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, 1961

### 17.3 The "Soft Power" Tools of Foreign Policy

Much of foreign policy involves trying to get other countries to do what you want. There are many ways to achieve this goal. Some involve "hard power," or force. Others involve "soft power," or persuasion. Political scientist Joseph S. Nye Jr. defined soft power as

*the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies. When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced.*

—Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 2004

Soft power can take many forms, from diplomacy to exchanges of rock bands and artists.

#### Diplomacy: The Art of Conducting Negotiations

**Diplomacy** is the art and practice of conducting negotiations between countries. Most diplomacy is carried out by government officials called diplomats. The highest-ranking diplomat sent by one country to another is the **ambassador**. The ambassador and his staff work out of an **embassy**. The embassy's job is to represent the interests of the home country while developing friendly relations with the host country.

Under international law, ambassadors and their staff enjoy **diplomatic immunity**. This means they are exempt from the host country's laws. The purpose of diplomatic immunity is to protect diplomats from being falsely arrested or otherwise abused by their host country, especially during times of war or conflict. If a diplomat does commit a crime while in another country, it is up to the home country to bring that person to justice.

Diplomatic relations begin when a country grants **diplomatic recognition** to another country's government. Such recognition acknowledges that the government is the legitimate representative of its people. Countries use diplomatic recognition to express approval or disapproval of a government. When communists took over China in 1949, for example, the United States refused to recognize the new government. The two countries did not exchange ambassadors and establish embassies in one another's capitals until 1979.

#### Summits: Meetings of Heads of States

Most negotiations between countries are carried out by diplomats. From time to time, however, national



leaders come together for face-to-face talks. These very high-level meetings are called **summits**.

Summits are used to address problems of mutual concern. For instance, leaders from eight industrialized countries meet annually at the G8 summit to discuss topics such as the global economy. Summits are also used to improve general relations. The United States and China used to be bitter enemies, which began with the establishment of a communist government in China in 1949. In 1972, President Richard Nixon traveled to China for a weeklong summit with Chinese leader Mao Zedong. Their talks laid the groundwork for the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two nations a few years later.

### Treaties: Agreements to Solve Problems Peacefully

When conflicts arise between nations, diplomats try to settle them through peaceful negotiations. The solutions they negotiate are usually spelled out in treaties to which all parties agree. Treaties may be **bilateral**, which means they relate to two countries. Or they may be **multilateral** agreements that involve three or more countries.

Treaties can cover a variety of issues, from ending wars to protecting the environment. Whatever their content, treaties work much like contracts among countries. Like contracts, treaties are entered into willingly by all parties. In addition, under international law, all parties are expected to fulfill their treaty obligations.

### Trade Relations: Managing Cross-Border Commerce

With the rise of globalization, cross-border trade relations have become an important soft power tool.

In 1972, President Richard Nixon visited China for a summit meeting with Mao Zedong. While there, he and his wife, Pat, visited the Great Wall of China. "I think that you would have to conclude that this is a great wall," Nixon noted diplomatically, "and it had to be built by a great people." To his annoyance, many U.S. press reports left out the second part of his quote.



Countries use trade relations to show their approval or disapproval of a government. In 1975, for example, the United States cut off trade with Vietnam after it was taken over by a communist government.

By establishing trade relations, nations signal their desire for more contacts between their peoples. This was President Bill Clinton's intention when he lifted the trade embargo on Vietnam in 1994. In 2001, the former enemies signed a trade agreement that spelled out the rules of commerce between them. As a result, two-way trade between the United States and Vietnam grew from \$1.5 billion a year to over \$21 billion by 2011.

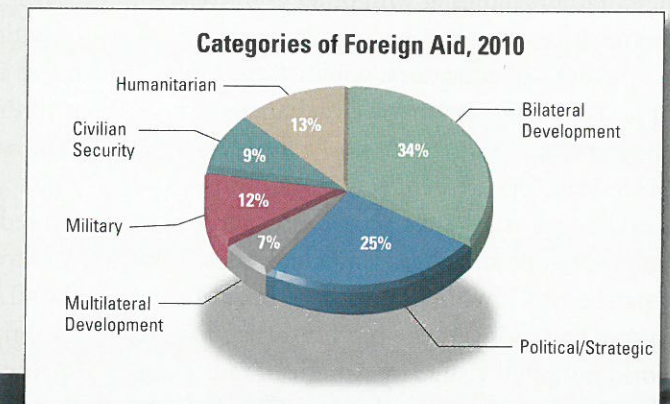
Most trade agreements made by the United States with other countries include a **most-favored-nation clause**. This clause means that the other country will be granted all trade advantages, such as low tariffs, that any other trading partner receives from the United States. For example, the United States heavily relies on imported mineral fuel from Canada and Saudi Arabia. Because of their natural resources, the two countries enjoy the same trade benefits so that the United States can maintain good trade relations with both nations. The effect is to put all countries with most-favored-nation status on an equal footing with one another in terms of trade with the United States.

### Foreign Aid: Assisting Less Wealthy Countries

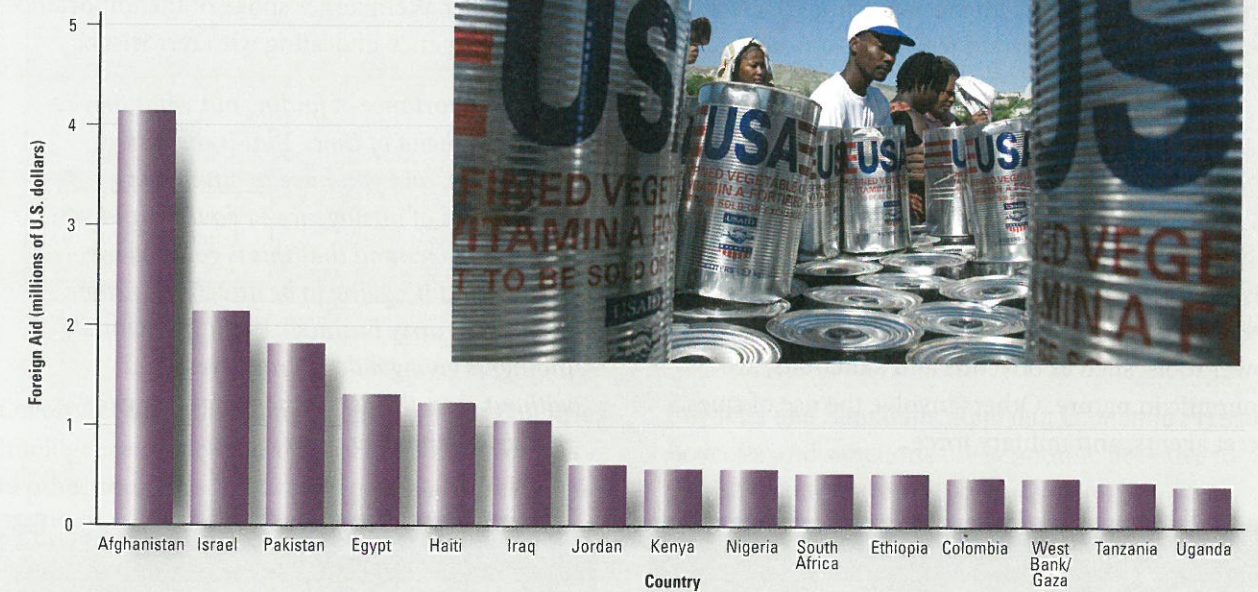
Wealthy nations often provide aid to other countries. Foreign aid can come in various forms, including cash, equipment, and personnel. In 2010, the United States provided foreign aid to over 180 countries.

## U.S. Foreign Assistance

U.S. spending on foreign assistance reached nearly \$35 billion by 2010. The graphs show how this aid is spent and which nations receive the most aid. In the photograph, workers in Haiti unload cooking oil sent by the United States to assist those affected by the Tropical Storm Hanna and Hurricane Ike.



### Top Foreign Aid Recipients, 2010



Source: CRS Report for Congress, "Foreign Aid: An Introductory Overview of U.S. Programs and Policy," 2011.

U.S. assistance programs can be divided into five major categories.

- **Bilateral development assistance.** These types of programs are designed to help with the long-term development of poor countries. They focus on economic reforms, promotion of democracy, environmental protection, and health.
- **Security assistance.** Programs in this category are aimed at protecting U.S. political, economic, and national security interests. Since the 9/11 attacks, much of this aid has gone to countries of importance in the war on terrorism.
- **Humanitarian assistance.** These programs are

devoted to helping victims of human-made and natural disasters. Most of this aid goes to refugees from conflicts, floods, droughts, and other immediate threats to life.

- **Multilateral assistance.** This is aid that consists of donations from multiple countries. It is used to fund international organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank.
- **Military assistance.** This type of aid helps U.S. allies acquire military equipment. It also supports training for military officers and peacekeeping forces from other countries.



### Cultural Exchanges: People-to-People Contacts

Many countries use cultural exchanges to increase goodwill and understanding with other countries. Cultural exchanges may involve visits to another country by groups of educators, scientists, or businesspeople. They may also involve exchanges of performing artists.

The U.S. State Department actively promotes cultural exchanges as a way to “communicate America’s strengths, freedoms, hopes, and challenges.” The State Department’s Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad program sends jazz and hip-hop artists to parts of the world not often visited by American musicians. U.S. embassies also arrange foreign tours for performing arts groups. In addition to performing live, these American artists participate in workshops, classes, jam sessions, and radio and television appearances.

### 17.4 The “Hard Power” Tools of Foreign Policy

Whereas soft power tools aim to persuade, hard power tools are designed to coerce another country into adopting a desired course of action. Some hard power tools, such as boycotts and **sanctions**, are economic in nature. Others involve the use of spies, secret agents, and military force.



Modern technology makes spying much easier than in the past. This satellite image shows an al Qaeda training camp hidden in the mountains of Afghanistan. The camp was later destroyed by U.S. air strikes.

### Intelligence Gathering: Assessing Foreign Threats

Making good foreign policy decisions depends on having reliable information about the activities and intentions of other countries. Such information is called **intelligence**. “By definition, intelligence deals with the unclear, the unknown, the deliberately hidden,” says George Tenet, former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director. “What the enemies of the United States hope to deny, we work to reveal.”

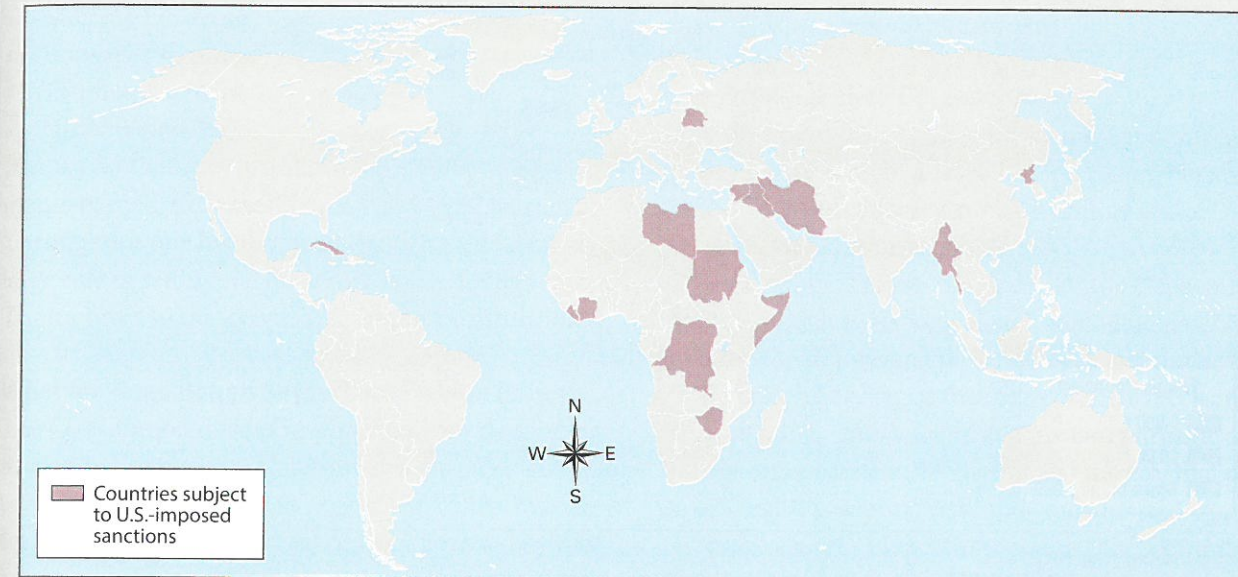
Most countries have an intelligence agency like the CIA. Such agencies gather information related to national security, either through public sources or by spying. They use this information to assess possible threats to the nation. In an interview conducted shortly after the 9/11 attacks, former secretary of defense Casper Weinberger spoke of the importance of good intelligence in dealing with terrorists:

*It’s the importance of finding out what they’re planning ahead of time. That is the task of intelligence, and you have to have a very special kind of intelligence to do that; and you have to understand that this is going to involve spying. And it’s going to be attacked by some people as a dirty business. What it is actually [doing] is giving a democracy eyes. And without eyes, the democracy’s not going to remain a democracy very long.*

### American Sanctions

The United States imposes unilateral, or one-sided, sanctions on countries for many reasons. Some sanctions are broad-based, effectively cutting off trade with the other country. More often, sanctions are targeted at specific goods, such as weapons or nuclear materials, or at U.S. funds going to the target country.

#### Recipients of U.S.-Imposed Unilateral Sanctions, 2012



Source: U.S. Department of the Treasury.

### Covert Action: Influencing Events in Other Countries

Intelligence agencies also carry out **covert actions** in other countries. A covert action is a secret operation that supports the country’s foreign policy. The agents who carry out such operations try to influence what goes on in another country while hiding their role in those events.

During the Cold War, the United States used covert actions to overthrow unfriendly governments. After 9/11, the Bush administration authorized a large covert action program aimed at al Qaeda. CIA agents were authorized to capture or kill al Qaeda leaders wherever those leaders are found. The CIA teamed with U.S. forces to locate and kill al Qaeda’s leader Osama bin Laden in 2011. Critics charge that such actions violate human rights. Defenders answer that such tactics are needed to protect Americans from future terrorist attacks.

In recent years, remotely piloted aircrafts called drones have emerged as common tools in covert actions. Drones are used for surveillance, military operations, and other similar activities.

### Boycotts and Sanctions: Applying Economic Pressure

Boycotts and sanctions use economic pressure to punish a country for its actions or policies. These hard power tools can be used by countries that act alone or in concert with other nations.

A **boycott** usually involves a refusal to buy goods from a country as a form of protest against its policies. Boycotts can also involve a refusal to take part in an international event. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter called on U.S. athletes to boycott the Moscow Olympic games. The Olympic boycott was a protest against the Soviet Union’s decision to invade its neighbor Afghanistan.

A sanction is an action taken against one or more countries to force a government to change its policies. The most common sanctions are designed to punish the offending nation’s economy. Economic sanctions may involve tariffs, trade barriers, and other penalties.

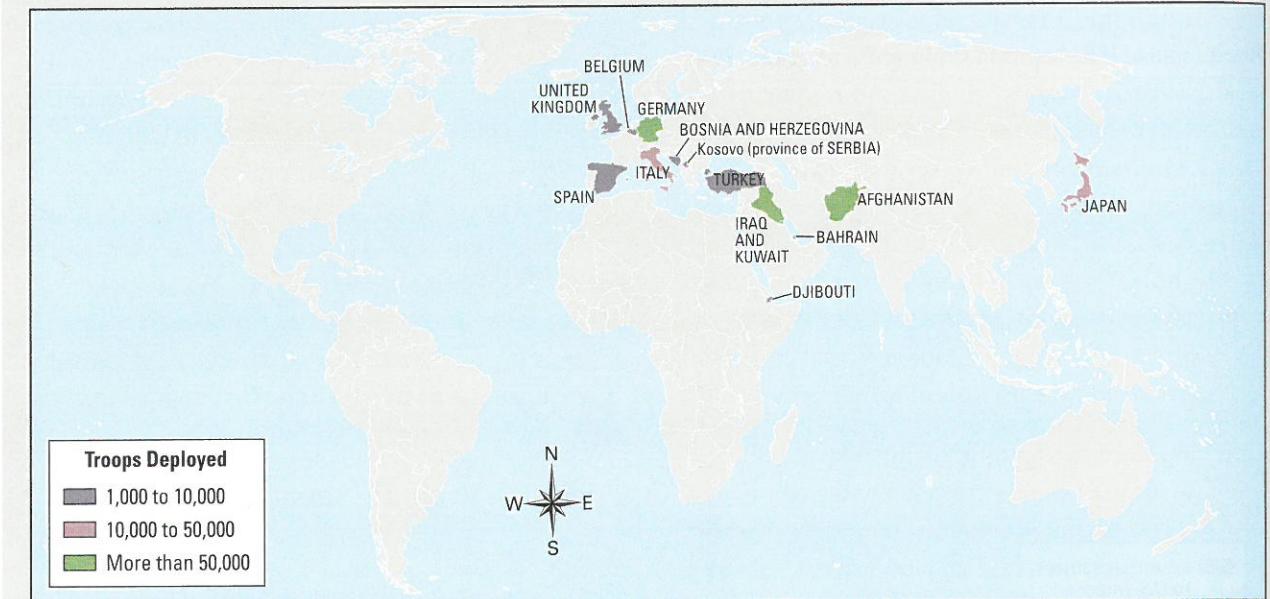
Sanctions have a mixed record of success. One of the most effective uses of sanctions was against South Africa’s racial policies. Until 1991, the South



## U.S. Armed Forces Abroad

As this map shows, U.S. troops are deployed across the globe. These troops are stationed in almost 150 countries, a majority of which harbor less than 1,000 deployed troops.

### Deployed U.S. Military Personnel Worldwide, 2011



Source: U.S. Department of Defense.

African government treated black South Africans as second-class citizens. They had few political or legal rights. Economic sanctions, combined with anti-apartheid protests in South Africa, finally forced the government to abandon its racist policies. In 1994, Nelson Mandela took office as South Africa's first black president.

### Military Alliances: Defending Against Attacks

Military alliances are agreements made by countries to defend one another in case of an attack. Countries join military alliances for mutual protection. Military alliances are particularly important for small countries that lack the resources to defend themselves without the help from allies.

The largest military alliance today is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The United States, Canada, Iceland, and nine Western European countries formed NATO in 1949. NATO's primary purpose was to guard against the threat posed by the Soviet Union and its communist allies in Eastern Europe. By 2012, NATO had expanded to 28 nations, including many former Soviet nations.

NATO members agree to consider "an armed attack against one or more of them . . . an attack against them all."

### Armed Force: The Tool of Last Resort

When all other tools fail, countries may resort to war as their foreign policy tool of last resort. As British politician Tony Benn once observed, "All war represents a failure of diplomacy."

Sometimes full-scale war is not necessary to achieve the desired result. Such was the hope of President Clinton when he called for NATO air strikes against Serbia, a country in Eastern Europe, in 1999. Clinton resorted to armed force only after diplomatic efforts had failed to end Serbia's **ethnic cleansing** campaign in the province of Kosovo. Ethnic cleansing involves the mass removal and killing of an ethnic group in an area—in this case the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo.

Over the course of three months, NATO aircrafts flew 38,000 combat missions over Serbia. The conflict ended when Slobodan Milosevic, the president of Serbia, finally agreed to pull his troops out of