

American foreign policy after world war ii

War



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Foreign policy can be defined as the objective or plan set by a given country, in this case the United States of America, which identifies how this country interacts, relates, and reacts to other countries or international organizations.

Foreign policy is often dictated or established upon a nation's values and goals in the foreign setting. Through a basic exploration of the goals and actions of the United States, it can be seen that much of American foreign policy changed after the events of the Second World War.

Because of its relative distance from the areas where the war was thickest, America was one of the least affected countries during the period of the Second World War. This lent it much of the power it has today. Its economy was unscathed and its population was relatively undiminished. Thus the growth of America as a great power in the world was established, as evidenced by its holding of 50% of the world's total wealth.

Prior to the events of World War II, American foreign policy was inclined to be isolationist in principle. However, the bombing that occurred in Pearl Harbor during the war defused the campaign of most politicians and public figures for isolationism. Then US President Roosevelt used this event to further campaigns for internationalism stressing the need to become pro-active to the suspected whiplash that would occur from European countries such as Russia and Germany. This started the Cold War against Russia, primarily a unified policy brought to the fore by the American bourgeoisie, which stretched on for several years after the end of World War II. (Marsh & Dobson, 4-5)

After the events of World War II, most of the foreign policies taken by the United States took the view of containment of communist spread in Europe. Some conservatives in the government demanded a change in policy. They wanted active efforts of “rollback”. This meant not merely containing Russian imperialism but also actively pressing it back towards the borders of the country. Despite many calls for a more active foreign policy, however, no efforts to meet this demand ever took place and America remained adamant in its display of containment as a foreign policy.

In 1966, President Johnson conceptualized an easing off of the tension between the two countries involved in the cold war and thus foreign policy became more diplomatic in nature. This continued well into the term of President Nixon who was the actual proponent of détente or the diplomatic relations with Russia.

However, with President Carter, this development was stopped and the containment policies of the Cold War were again brought to life. Carter’s containment policies were founded on issues of human rights. These were the building blocks of America’s involvement in dismantling dictatorships in Latin America but were also the cornerstones of the renewed resentment for Russia.

Today, American foreign policy is basically aimed at preventing the growth and rise of foreign powers that could prove potentially threatening to the United States. The older Bush’s administration initiated these attempts, copied by Clinton, and continued today by the younger Bush. Many actions taken by the United States today are based on these policies of threat

prevention and of solidifying presence in areas where countries show a potential of becoming rival powers.

Works Cited

Marsh, Steve, and Dobson, Alan P. U. S. Foreign Policy since 1945 London: Routledge, 2001