

Definition of foreign policy research paper examples

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



Abstract

Foreign policy is a set of strategies that a state formulates so as to safeguard its national interests. The constitution of the US divided the power of foreign policy formulation between the congress and the president. The two bodies each play important roles in the process. In the United States, the power to formulate foreign policy lies between the president and the Congress.

However, the office of the president has more power over the formulation and implementation of these foreign policies. The strategic environmental, foreign policy is a foreign policy in the administration of President Obama that aims at maintaining global peace and stability.

Foreign policy of any country, also referred to as foreign relation policy, is a set of strategies that a nation or a state formulates so as to safeguard its national interests. These policies are set to help the nation or state to attain its goals in the international setting. The policies are strategically formulated and employed so as to enable the country interact well with other countries hence provide a nice ambience for exchange of goods and services. Once this is achieved a country has a better chance of achieving its goals. Foreign policy analysis is the study of the formulation and implementation of such strategies (Patrick, 2002, p. 5).

One of the emerging trends in foreign policy formulation is the incorporation of policies that relate state to non-state participants. This is due to the increasing level of globalization hence an increase in trans-national activities. The relationship between state and non-state participants is meant to maximize the benefits that come with cooperation between international

bodies. The nation's interest and goals are very sensitive and paramount issues. They dictate which direction the nation works towards. Therefore, foreign policies are formulated through ideas and decisions made by top officials in the government. A country can accomplish its national interests through maintaining a peaceful co-existence with other nations or through manipulation of these nations so as to benefit from them. In most countries, formulation of foreign policies is done by the head of the government and the minister of foreign affairs. In some countries, the legislature wing of the government has great influence on foreign policy formulation.

The foreign policy of one country can have a major influence on the operation of several other countries. This matter is keenly considered during the formulation of foreign policies. When two countries or states have a conflicting foreign policy, it can affect the cooperation between these countries. Poor foreign policies can put the general stability of the country at risk. In the 19th century, two European regions had conflicting foreign policies, and this affected their cooperation. South American countries which were working with Mercantilist policies had conflicting ideologies with Central American countries' Monroe Doctrine (Moes, 2007, p. 233).

Human beings are social beings. They, however, have to be organized in order to maintain a peaceful co-existence amongst themselves. Nations need to interact and co-operate amongst themselves so as to enable them progress. Foreign policy, therefore, acts as a form of guideline according to which the state will operate and relate with other states so as to maintain a healthy co-existence. Good foreign policies among states make states relate well and find it easy to achieve their goals where as poor foreign policies

among states impedes co-operation among states hence act as a barrier of them achieving their goals. The fact that countries depend on each other and must work together so as to achieve their goals makes foreign policy of every country an important issue.

Shapiro and McGowan were famous economists who looked into the need for having a general theory of foreign policy. They figured out that the absence of general theory in the formulation of foreign policy has some major consequences. First it is difficult to explain the relationship between foreign policies of different states or countries. Second lack of theories explaining foreign policy formation and behaviour make it difficult to make the field a scientific discipline of study. They, therefore, came to the conclusion that a theoretical framework is necessary for foreign policy. This makes the analysis of day-to-day international relationships possible. Though recent, the study of foreign policy is an important one in the understanding of international relationships and co-operations.

In most cases, when the words “ foreign policy” are mentioned in high politics, they are used to refer to military-security issues, sales of arms, crisis decision making and military aid. When the words are used in low politics, they refer to things like agreements of trade and tariffs, humanitarian assistance, and foreign economic policy.

Role of president in foreign policy formulation & congress in foreign policy formulation

Most governments have their political system designed in a way that power is divided between the executive, legislature and judiciary. The constitution of the United States for instance ensures that power is equally balanced

between these three wings of the government. Each of these wings has different roles. The president is the head of state, and he is a powerful figure in the government's decision-making. In the United States of America, there has been debates over who holds more power in the process of foreign policy formulation. The powers share between the presidents, congress and the other arms of the government is a common topic when discussing the process of foreign policy formulation in US. Research done to figure out which group has the ultimate power in the process was done, and the results were released taking three different viewpoints (Cox & Stokes, 2012, p. 7). The first report took a balanced opinion and termed the power as one that is distribution between the legislature and the executive. One of the arguments put forth to argue for this point of view is that over the years, in the United States, power had been shifting back and forth between the two arms of the government. In the recent times for instance, they have been considered to dominate over the president in the country. Therefore, the executive and legislature are believed to be dominating over the president in the process of foreign policy formulation. The second point of view is that the president dominates the process of foreign policy formulation. Scholars like David Mitchell and John Tower take this point of view. They argue that, for the purpose of efficiency in the bureaucracy and practical necessity, the process of foreign policy formulation is best done in the office of the president. They further argue that congress, due to its organizational structure, best deals with domestic policy rather than foreign policy. The final group is of the opinion that it is because of the political order that the office of the president has supremacy in foreign policy.

The president is the most dominant actor that influences foreign policy decision making. He, however, faces some constraints in this process. In Article 2 section 2 of the US constitution, the president is recognized as the commander in chief of the Army and Navy of the country. By and with the consent of the senate, he can make treaties with other countries and appoint judges of the Supreme Court, ambassadors, and ministers. He is, therefore, the most powerful individual in the country. Therefore, when it comes to foreign policy, the office of the president is the most powerful.

The constitution grants Congress the power to control and regulate the country's commerce with foreign countries. They also have the power to support and bring up armies. Finally, Congress has the right to declare war against another state. With this powers, Congress to has a major influence on foreign policy. As a matter of fact, the powers held by the office of the president and the Congress causes disputes over which one dominate or has the final authority to carry out external relation of the country (Dumbrell, 2000, p. 16).

The American constitution does not state who has the ultimate power over foreign policy (either the congress or the president). Famous political figures, however, took different sides to support on to whom this power should rest. In the " no one man doctrine" (Guelzo & Lind 2009, p. 42), Abraham Lincoln is for the idea that no individual person should have the power to lead the country into war. Other leaders, however, for instance John Tower, was for the idea or resting the entire power of foreign policy on the president for the reasons that it creates practical necessity and is important for the unity of the whole nation.

The president works with the National Security council; the department of defence, the State department, the intelligence community, the National Economic Council, and several other bureaucratic agencies when formulating and implementing foreign policy of the US. The State Department of the US is an institution within the government that is most involved in the formulation of foreign policy. This organization is headed by the Secretary of State. However, the president has so much influence on the Secretary of State. Therefore, this makes the president a core person in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. Recent president of the US George W. Bush and the acting president Barack Obama have had close relationships with the secretary of state, and both presidents seemed actively involve their secretaries of state in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. Some US presidents, however, for instance Richard Nixon, decided to deal with high politics of foreign policy and worked more closely with the National Security Adviser in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.

After the Cold War era, the US national security was compromised.

Therefore, in order to prevent a national crisis, the Congress agreed for a presidential supremacy system in the foreign policy formulation. The president was given the authority to send the military to war. The concentration of decision making process made it easier and faster for the state to respond to any emergency.

Congress of the US has also been given extensive powers to determine the nature of foreign policy. This power, however, varies over time. Lawmakers rarely come into contact with policies that influence the relationship of the

country with other nations. However, the laws passed by the congress, or the nominations of the treaties approved by the senate has great influence on the interaction of the country with other states. Issues such as human rights, trade, foreign aid and sanctions are controversial when it comes to who has the power to influence them.

The US constitution gives power to both the congress (the legislative branch) and the president (the executive branch) over foreign policy formulation and implementation. The power sharing process has been a controversial one. In the period of World War 2, the president had more power in foreign policy formulation. In the 1970s, the office of the president abused the power granted to it (in Vietnam and Watergate) and the Congress was made much stronger, and the office of the president derives most of its powers. In the 1980s, the restriction imposed to the office of the president were lifted increasing its flexibility.

Consultation between the office of the president and the congress is the most important thing that should be observed. Both these bodies have powers over foreign policy formulation and implementation. Consultation has several advantages which include: avoidance of making different policies which may lead the county to two different directions; it also discourages the Congress from mismanaging micro-programs. Consultation does not necessarily mean agreement. The branches might hold different views. In fact, disagreements ensure strong and refined policies formed.

Foreign policy in Obama administration and the nations involved

In the Obama administration, Obama Doctrine is a term used to refer to the principles of foreign policy. Obama Doctrine does not refer to a particular foreign policy. It refers to the general style of Obama's foreign policy.

Different people perceive the Obama doctrine in different ways. For instance, the targeted killing of American Citizens policy, has been described as a generally naïve and idealistic one which promotes pacification of enemies of the US. Other think that it is more or less similar to policies from different president only that it has a more radical tone (Vig & Kraft, 2012, p. 88).

The strategic environment policy is one of President Obama's long-term foreign policy plans. This foreign policy aims at commanding geopolitical space in important areas such as Eurasia. The policy aims at preventing the rise of opposing powers that that might challenge strategic marking of territory by America in strategic regions. The rate at which china is rising calls for America's invasion in the region. The United States aims at securing transport and communication routes so as to safeguard and easily access the basic sources of energy (Rosenbaum, 2010, p. 122).

Apart from gaining territory and accessing the natural resources, America also aims at enhancing the global security especially at such fast growing regions. This follows the fact that America is a super power nation of the world. Therefore, to maintain this power, the country has to take control of the growing regions which might turn out to be their threat. The current administration regards America as the leading but not the only powerful nation in the international community. The use of hard power to control the

globe is, however, greatly discouraged and therefore the rising nations which might be of risk to the security of the globe must be controlled before they run out of control. The strategic environment foreign policy aims to control and influence the development of the entire international community through enhancing co-operation among the different nations. In addition, it also aims at creating a global security that will be a favourable environment for the co-operation and development of these nations.

The strategic environmental foreign policy of the administration of Obama was clearly depicted in the handling of Iran. Obama stated that the many issues between the two countries could be dealt with through consultation if only there was mutual respect. Obama was clear that there was no need of going to war to solve the matter that is basically due to Iran's nuclear program. Most nations are encouraged and allowed to use peaceful nuclear power. However, states which will insist on using nuclear energy to manufacture deadly weapons will be dealt with accordingly. Here Obama wants to ensure to ensure a peaceful coexistence among the different nations which will provide a favourable atmosphere for their development. The Iran issue will be a test for Obama's philosophy of foreign policy. The president has never come out clean to challenge threatening nations to think of solving their issue in a diplomatic manner. The main goal of this foreign policy is to deal with hostile powers in different regions and more especially in the Middle East. If this is achieved, it will ensure stability and maintain the local pluralism of dominance and power.

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