

## Artigo Selecionado

# American Foreign Policy

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The American foreign policy has been having an effective participation on the world's history over the last 80 years. The establishment of such politics was done according to vital interests of the American people and its ally.

The international environment has motivated the decision power to adopt either an idealist or a realist behavior, in order to attend national interests and objectives. The union of these two actions was only possible after World War II, when the United States helped European countries on a serious situation when facing Nazism.

Nowadays, the world is experiencing the globalization period, situation where a global relationship among countries has been happening, independent of borders or rules. To face the increasing globalization challenge, especially after 9/11, the American foreign policy has established lots of measurements to implement a democratic idealist with practicality, pragmatism and realistic ideas.

America's foreign policy has in its values and interests peace and prosperity, stability and security, and finally, democracy and defense. All these values and objectives, some more than others, have been chased by the different American governments, where they have always tried to achieve permanent commercial advantages, freedom to the countries that need it and the diffusion of ideas and ideals to the American people.

Otherwise, none of this is possible if the Nation does not preserve its autonomy as a politic sovereign unit, which means that it has to act by its survival necessities and independence on every historical moment or even when facing a menace.

Because of some new challenges faced by the American policy such as the terrorism menace, the sprouting of massive destruction weapons, the new fundamentalism thoughts, and new menaces that were unknown so far, it is necessary that the government adopts news perspectives, ideas and democratic posture in order to win a diplomatic struggle.

During the World War I, the American diplomacy has established a strategy with idealist thoughts and explored the romantic side of politics. This included free diplomatic actions, trade with no custom barriers, self-government of the nations, and the balance of the power among nations. These ideals have been established to assure the collective safety, whereas some involved countries would gather up to face a possible menace. The American foreign policy has adopted this same idealism when Iraq invaded Kuwait, during the year of 1991. On that occasion, the U.S. made some effort to form an allied chain in order to return to the invaded country its freedom and self-determination.

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan were together, at the same

time, part of an idealist and realist political measurement package. Idealism has been practiced on the reconstruction of the countries destroyed by the war, which had confirmed the continuity of the democracy and the individual freedom. This policy was based on making possible the restart of the commercial integration between Europe and America, which would achieve one of the objectives of the American strategy.

Besides this policy, the U.S. has focused on realism, which means power, not ideals. The Containment Theory was the strategy adopted by the American policy. Its objective was to avoid the spreading of communism around Europe on the bipolarity period. This theory meant freedom, democracy and security to the threatened countries.

The current policy has shown some similar actions to the policy applied on that period. First, the main objective of the idealist democratic crusade is to extend to the threatening and dictatorial government system a new way of life, where people would take part of the strategic decisions of the country. Free elections and free trading, which avoid any obstacle to the economy's globalization are also points of similarity. In thesis, the enforcement of the democratic institutions must promote the development of individual freedom and the well-being of the population.

The realist policy is recently based on the use of preemption action in any activity that could threaten the U.S. or each one of its ally, especially when involves the use of weapons of massive destruction (WMD). An example of unilateral preemption is the one executed by the Americans during the Cuban Missile crisis in 1962. The doctrine of deterrence

had avoided that Soviet Union linked their territory with the Cuban with a missiles base that would be a menace to the United States. The right of self-defense has become a tool against potential aggressors, demonstrating proactive action against probable offensive actions. In addition, the American diplomatic strategy is supported by an uncontestable military power, which acts unilaterally when the multilateral solutions cannot be achieved.

On the other hand, a unilateral action does not have a legal international support because it opposes the United Nation Charter. Therefore, in case of any warlike action, the American government would be violating an agreement that was assigned a long time ago, unless the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) had authorized this action. In this case, it would be recommended a preventive negotiation with U.N.S.C. members in order to achieve a previous approval.

The success of the actions of the American foreign policy depends, basically, on the balance among the arranged commitments, on the availability of resources, on the Nation's interests and its ideals. The following examples will clarify this equation and will show the behavior of this foreign policy.

The first example happened on Afghanistan on the year of 2001, when the American diplomacy started the war against terrorism. This international action was supported by the members of the N.A.T.O. and consented by U.N.S.C. The main purpose of this operation was to arrest as many members of the Al Qaeda as possible, and punish whoever was providing training to this terrorist group. On that opportunity, as mentioned before, the foreign policy was implemented

according to international rules and with the consent of the U.N. S. C., followed the ideals of terrorism contention and also achieved the objectives established by Bush Doctrine. Another goal was the political reform of the Taliban State, where freedom and democratic ideals would be implemented, providing free elections and humanity rights.

However, the accessible resources were not enough to attain the politics compromises, especially reorganizing the economy and reconstructing the damaged country. It showed the lack of planning of this action. In addition, the coalition troops did a series of abuses to the human right of the Taliban prisoners. Such fact started many international discussions making the authorities to argue about the motive of these abuses and the reason why the prisoners were transferred to a military basis on Guantanamo (Cuba). On both aspects, there was no balance between compromises and resources. The American diplomacy was supposed to make a long term planning, with financial support during all phases of the conflict, especially after post-war actions. Referring to the human rights abuses, the diplomacy should be supervising and guiding the post-war period, to assure the image of the country well-know as respectful of human rights and with democratic principles.

The Iraq war in 2003 was another international action executed by the U.S. against the “axis of evil” (Iraq, Iran and North Korea). The main intention was to eliminate the threat of Saddam Hussein’s weapons of massive destruction.

The U.S.A. government believed that Iraq government represented an enormous risk to the country’s interest on that area. Actually, the American interests

were beyond this accusation. The American objectives were: to vanish any Iraqi connection with terrorist organizations ( Hamas and Palestine Organizations); to transform Iraq on a democratic nation; to offer Israel a safer situation in the Golf area; to assure the oil supply to the U.S.; to demonstrate the military superiority; and, finally, to exercise a new concept of preemption.

The coalition military operation, led by the U.S., showed a tremendous military superiority, avoiding any possible reaction of opponents. However, afterwards, the coalition forces faced a hard asymmetric warfare, which headed to a long-term conflict. In terms of the foreign policy aspect, the U.S. showed attitude to achieve their national objective on the democratic crusade against terrorism. However, as it was shown during the conflict, Iraq did not have any massive destructive weapon that could threaten the world or American allied. Besides, the coalition did an illegitimate attack without the consent of the UN Security Council, breaking a non-interventional international politic commitment.

Again, the foreign policy presented a miscalculating problem on the accounting of the necessary funds to accomplish the operation. The financial and human resources were not enough to promote a complete democratization of the Iraqi nation, leading to a chaotic situation on politics, social and public security instead of the recovering of the country.

Perhaps, one of the biggest mistakes of this policy was the perspective of a short-term war, which did not happen. Now, the war is still happening and thousands of American troops and civilians are being killed day by day . Another big mistake was the impossibility to keep all the pro-

mises made before the war. The approximate amount of soldiers to safely assure the democracy and individual freedom would have to be around 300.000 men; it would require more funds beyond the billion dollars already spent on the operation. Besides, the diplomatic situation is tending to get even worse along with withdrawal of some coalition countries troops, forced to it by the public opinion, such as Spain, for example.

Finally, the American foreign policy has shown, since the post World War II period, great capability and resilience on the elaboration of ideas that would go along to the American's interests with practicability and pragmatism. However, the international structure system requires new conceptions based on the balance between interests and ideals, compromises and resources, specifically when coming from a nation that adopts democracy principles. What really happens is that old solutions do not apply to solve new problems, especially on nowadays globalization times.

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