

# Foreign Policy-Making Processes in 20-21<sup>st</sup> Centuries: Theoretical and Practical Background on the Example of the USA

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## Abstract

The purpose of this article is to highlight the main changes of the foreign policy of the U.S. and notably the implication of shifts in the foreign policy decision making process. American foreign policy has not been changed for years as it still means protection of homeland, American citizens, and their friends all around the world. But what has been changed is obvious- it is American foreign policy making process. According to environmental changes the policy making process is also derived from one dimension into another. The Cold War has the dominating influence on the American experience not only in a military but also in a political sense. The second traumatic event—September 11, 2011 called for immediate combating international terrorism. Realizing what are the traces, the past had left it is crucial to understand how the United States will respond to the future.

How does the environmental change affect policy and approaches? How do domestic factors impact on foreign policy making? The paper will focus on the political system of the U.S. and its implications toward foreign-policy making provisions, the key members of the foreign policy team players, the missions and goals of the USA government in foreign-policy decision making process.

**Keywords:** foreign policy, government officials, hard power, policy making provisions, policy makers, president, soft power

## Introduction

The foreign policy of the United States is the way in which it interacts with foreign nations and sets standards of interaction for its organizations, corporations and individual citizens of the United States.

Foreign policy making process contains the theme of changing and continuity. No decision maker sets policy in a vacuum. Rarely does a policy maker have a blank check with which to operate. Often, a decision is made within a complex environment where the number and type of options available are constrained by a multitude of factors.

The officially stated goals of the foreign policy of the United States, as mentioned in the Foreign Policy Agenda of the Department of State, are *“to build and sustain a more democratic, secure, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community.”* In addition, the United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs states as some of its jurisdictional goals: export controls, including nonproliferation of nuclear technology and nuclear hardware; measures to foster commercial interaction with foreign nations and to safeguard American busi-

ness abroad; international commodity agreements; international education; and protection of American citizens abroad and expatriation.

As Thomas R. Pickering, ex- under Secretary of State for Political Affairs stated:” International relations today have become increasingly more complex and involve a wide range of issues that, in the 19th century, were never seen as major questions of foreign policy”. He also defined that the most influential actors in the development of U.S. foreign policy are the President and the Secretary of State, the National Security Advisor to the President, the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and, of course, the Director of Central Intelligence, who provides the other key members of the foreign policy team with the latest information on world events. These officials constitute the core of the National Security Council, which is the nation’s highest-level foreign policy-making body. As about the Secretary of State he takes very seriously the primary role of being the principal advisor to the President on foreign policy issues. This institutional framework that predisposes

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with launching Cold War period, became dovetail factor in rationalization and conceptualization of foreign policy priorities and missions till the end of the bipolar era. In the post-modern period this institutional system has not been changed and even has been shaping up contemporary foreign policy decision making provision.

### **Institutional Cooperation in the Process of Formulating Public Policy**

In the American society there is an arguing consideration that causing the sparking debates on how the national public policy being implemented. According to some scholars, there some interesting questions arising on how the roles of officials, who are s a responsible for policy making process, are overlapped and complemented in achieving U.S. foreign policy goals. "The President and the Secretary of State have to give the most comprehensive consideration to foreign policy issues because of their unparalleled responsibilities at the apex of the U.S. foreign policymaking apparatus. The Secretary of Defense often brings an added dimension to the review of national security questions, and the National Security Advisor to the President coordinates and integrates the activities and functions of all of the members of the foreign policy team. He of course intimately understands the President's foreign policy priorities and often initiates insightful debates about that agenda during those meetings of the foreign policy principals which the President does not attend" (The making of U.S foreign policy, 2000).

As it commonly known the National Security Council team is cooperative. They have not allowed personal feelings to intrude on the national interest and have to work very hard to maintain the element of confidentiality as they deal with issues over a long period of time.

According to the Constitutional background the major role of Congress in the entire foreign policy establishment is crucial. Congressional consideration is divided into two sets:

- The first has to do with policy — namely how the Congress, which is a very vocal and essential part of the American government, will react to an issue from a policy perspective.

- Secondly, Congress has the very important duty of providing funding for government programs, both as part of the annual budget process and often on an emergency basis through supplemental appropriations. Thus, consideration of the concerns of Congress from the point of view of funding is very important.

The role of president is beneficial as he consults with Congress and adds the reasonable formulations to decision making process. As about the, Secretary he also spends a very large portion of time conferring with senior Members of the Congress about particular issues.

Moreover, policy-makers, are supposed to think "out of the box" that is considered to be critical. To try to get to new dimensions of a solution to a problem is often one of the most interesting and important challenges.

In foreign policy making process, outsiders have often become insiders. Many of the most important government officials come from the private sector, serve for a few years, and then return to universities, research institutes, the media, business, or law firms. They continue to comment on and seek to influence the course of U.S. foreign relations from their positions outside the government. Outsiders have regular opportunities to influence the course of public affairs. Government officials constantly are able to measure and refresh their views with the help of the most thoughtful, experienced, and committed members of the public. According to Robert Schulzinger, People outside the government who are interested in foreign affairs have a dense web of outlets to use in helping policy-makers to set the diplomatic agenda and adopt specific policies for implementation (The making of U.S foreign policy, 2000).

The decentralization of foreign policy-making in the United States depicts the power of the U.S. government and its increasing accessibility to outside interests. Having considered the statement a foreign policy is being debated and conducted by highly educated professionals with substantive training and experience in foreign affairs from both the public and private sectors.

When people think of foreign policy-making in the United States, they usually think of the president. After all, presidents have been the chief architects and implementers of American foreign policy since the beginning of the republic. The framers of the U.S. Constitution were mindful of the advantages that the presidency brought to this endeavor: a hierarchical institution with a single head, the one institution that would be in continuous tenure, and the one that could act with the greatest "energy, dispatch, and responsibility" (The making of U.S foreign policy, 2000).

### **Historical Background of Policy Making**

According to balance of power concept the most rational approach in policy making is a power division that requires institutional cooperation to formulate public policy. That is why the framers sought to establish the Senate, the smaller of the two legislative houses, as an advisory body to assist the president in making foreign policy. Both the treaty-making and appointment provisions require the Senate's "advice and consent. Confirmation of the statements it is possible to get found in historic sources of public governance at national wide.

"However, when the country's first president, George Washington, tried to seek the Senate's advice on a treaty that his administration wished to negotiate with native peoples who lived in the western part of the state of Georgia, he found the Senate slow to respond and members' advice insipid at best. Instead of returning to the Senate for foreign policy recommendations, Washington turned instead to the principal heads of his executive departments, a group James Madison termed the president's cabinet. The term stuck, and so did the practice of using the cabinet as an advisory body for foreign and domestic affairs. Beginning with Washington, presidents became the chief foreign policy-makers and their secretaries of state their principal ad-

visers and administrators for that policy“(The making of U.S foreign policy, 2000).

The Senate continued to ratify treaties, but presidents rarely sought its institutional advice. Nonetheless, about 70 percent of the treaties they submitted to the Senate gained ratification with little or no modification. Throughout the 19th century and into the 20th, presidents dominated the foreign policy-making process. They received ambassadors, recognized countries, and entered into agreements, short of formal treaties, with their executive counterparts in other countries. As commanders in chief, presidents also positioned armed forces to defend American lives and interests. President Thomas Jefferson ordered the Navy and Marines to retaliate against the Barbary pirates, who threatened American shipping. President James Polk directed the Army into disputed territory with Mexico to reinforce what Texans considered to be their rightful border. President Abraham Lincoln called up the militia and instituted a blockade of the South. Congress could have opposed these presidential actions but chose not to do so. When a policy was unsuccessful, however, members of Congress felt free to condemn it, as they often did. Only in the areas of trade and tariffs did Congress play an active policy-setting role.

U.S. foreign policy emerges from a dialogue between public officials...and private citizens’ says Robert Schulzinger, a professor of history at the University of Colorado at Boulder and author of eight books on the history of U.S. foreign relations (The making of U.S foreign policy, 2000).

Due to the Globalization effect that contributes much rethinking and refreshing foreign policy approaches at national level those persons who are responsible for implementation decisions including foreign affairs have to be considered and refresh their views in conjunction with those novelties and realms stemming from transformation of global governance. It predisposes applicability of having high motivated and well experienced governmental officials in politics. Foreign policy of the United States could be understood from broad national perspective and only from the narrow governmental level.

In Cold War Period ordinary citizens who were not part of the governmental bodies formally or informally contributed much and influenced on foreign policy decisions and had their impact on international politics. This undertakings had been done via lobbying efforts that included writing, teaching, and appealing directly to Congress and the executive branch. In that respect the simple elections have been given crucial features by electing new administrations with new points of view. The same provisions have been un-shifted in new post-cold war era.

### **What is Soft-Power Capability and how does it Impact on Foreign Policy?**

“What is power, and why does it matter? It is ability to affect others to get the things you want. You can do that in three ways: you can use coercion, sticks; you can use payments,

carrots; or you can use attraction and persuasion, soft power. In the twenty - ½ rst century, the ability to combine these as smart power will be one of the main challenges not just for the United States but for any actor in international politics. Today we are seeing two big shifts in how power is used in international politics and world affairs. These shifts, which are the result of the information revolution and globalization, are power transition among states and power diffusion from states to non-state actors” (Nye Bulletin of the American Academy, 2011).

Hard power has been the traditional form of foreign policy tool, but in the 21st Century, soft power has been emerging according to some scholars. Many scholars have studied soft power as a behavior influence outcome in the post September 11 period (Nye 2004, Schneider 2005, Arndt 2005, Chong, 2005, Gray, 2011).

The definition of soft power has been closely linked with Joseph Nye, Jr. (1990, 2002) who first coined this term. Dr. Joseph Nye, Jr., a noted foreign policy scholar and practitioner, coined the phrase “soft power” in 1990. Nye has served as the Dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard; Chairman of the National Intelligence Council; and Assistant Secretary of Defense in Bill Clinton’s administration. He has written and lectured extensively on the idea and usage of soft power.

Nye describes soft power as “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than through coercion.” He sees strong relations with allies, economic assistance programs, and vital cultural exchanges as examples of soft power.

Despite Nye’s concept’s popularity, current power scholarship is still divided about the nature of power. Some scholars see capabilities (Singer, 1963) as the most important factor and others see it as a behavior outcome (Nye 2002, 2004, 2011). Nye (2011, p.11) built his concept as a behavior outcome, or as he calls it “relational power concept” on the multiple faces of power.

As power literature has developed, so did Nye’s initial definition of soft power. Earlier versions of Nye’s soft power definition were: “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payment” (Nye, 2004, p. x) which included “culture, values and foreign policies” (Nye, 2004, p. 11). Later, Nye extended his definition into “the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes” (2011, pp. 20-21). While further developing his concept of soft power, Nye (2002, 2004, 2011) has been focusing on the outcome of soft power.

Soft power and hard power literature has also been divided about the effectiveness and usefulness of such capabilities. Some scholars claim that soft power is effective and it sometimes reinforces and sometimes interferes with hard power, while others strongly believe that, soft power is emerging and getting more influential in today’s global information space and it has less hard power support.

Skeptics of soft power argue that hard power is the most effective foreign policy tool. Gray (2011, p. ix) states that hard power must remain the essential instrument of policy as soft power is unsuitable for policy directions and control as it relies too much on the foreign countries' soft power is the opposite of "hard power." Hard power includes the more noticeable and predictable power associated with military force, coercion, and intimidation.

One of the classic examples of American soft power is considered to be the Marshall plan. The World War II caused large devastative effects and even reached to complete economic collapse of the European nations that easily became plausible to the Soviet Union influences and intervention clauses (mainly Eastern and Central European nations). In order to protect Western European nations from the aggressiveness, the USA had to provide new leverages as foreign policy instruments and one of the efficient ones became the Marshall Plan, included humanitarian aid, such as food and medical care and attempt to rebuild destroyed infrastructures, such as transportation and communication networks and public utilities. Besides of that the USA then Administrations led by Truman and Eisenhower and later Kennedy considered also "cultural values and practice" sharing and indoctrination to the European sole that was a predisposition of the contemporary foreign policy leverage, labeled as "soft power". The consistent elements of Cold War period "soft power" included – movies, soft drinks (like, American Coca-Cola), fast-food chains, etc. Namely cultural communication knot between the American and Western European communities transformed into new geopolitical dimension named as "Euro-Atlantic Community" based on such core values as freedom, independence and openness that had promoted business and communication dynamics in aegis of the Community. Later the mission has been transposed by the internet as American version of freedom of expression as one of the consistent instruments of "soft power" in Post-Modernist epoch.

To outline the difference between soft and hard power it will be better to clarify the meaning of both terms. Soft Power is the series of national resources that can lead to a country's ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes while Hard Power refers to using military or economic force to get others to change their position (Nye, 2004, p. 5).

As about Foreign Policy Instruments it "Forms of pressure and influence available to decision makers, represent an ascending scale of seriousness in terms of the commitment of resources, the impact of third parties and the degree of risk in use" (Brighi & Hill 2008, p.113).

According to Nye, a decline in the United States' use of soft power since 9/11. The wars of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the Bush Doctrine's use of preventive warfare and unilateral decision making caused declension of the value of soft power in the minds of people at home and abroad. Hard power is believed to have of military and economic importance (coercion and payments) but from the past few years' experience it can be deduced that it is not as influential in today's world as it used to be in previous world. Smart

power is becoming more and more effective to attract other nations, to cause willingness in countries of the globalized world for sharing goals, interests, viewpoints of other countries, without resorting to coercion. Soft power is the most flexible and profitable instrument for the actors to gain as Nye mentions "what they want."

## Conclusion

Having considered importance of foreign policy as a consistent part of the whole political system of any nation, indicates that all actors getting involved in promotion of national interests are key makers of foreign policy missions and goals. In foreign policy making process, outsiders have often become insiders. It means that many government officials, after serving for a period of time return to their former positions at Universities, the media, business, etc. but they are still involved in political processes as the outside players who are searching for ways to make and implement better decisions, choosing better course for U.S. foreign relations.

As ex- Secretary of State Madeleine Albright claims: "Today's players are not only nations, but a host of non-state actors. The issues are often not separable, but interconnected. The rules shift with every scientific breakthrough. And although America has enemies, the outcome is not zero-sum: In the long run, we will all do better, or none of us will" (The making of U.S foreign policy, 2000).

It is necessary for policy to evolve in order to accommodate strategies that address modern problems that were not as much of a priority in the late 20th century. The experience of the last decade offer some glimmers of what that future may hold. The new challenges, that are also defined as new threats or transnational challenges need to be respond immediately and accurately. These new threats - asymmetric warfare, terrorism, hybrid warfare, and child labor, cyber terrorism, illegal migration, drug and arms smuggling, trafficking, border threats, etc. should be addressed in order to improve the psychological condition and physical environment in which people live. Therefore for reaching these objectives on how to deal with challenges, proper instruments are to be considered and taken into account, one of which certainly includes "soft power" concept applicable to successfully pursuing these geopolitical missions.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, created the tense atmosphere, eternal fear and sense of insecurity in the Western world. What should governments do in order to protect their citizens in an age where adverseness is the main issue and when enemy tries to be concealed?

The best solution to secure the world and maintain the sustainability of the globe is to support and emphasize the notion: "One world or none." Best point of that attitude is that the structural and political conditions for the realization of the one world concept are better than ever. Never before in history has there been a common, international acceptance by almost all the world's countries who try to follow and support general global norms. These are the norms of security,

democracy, a market economy, human rights, and personal freedom. The interpretation of these norms is different in different countries, but in common almost all states attempt to follow these international norms.

However, whilst those changes made an immediate impact on foreign policy, it did not alter the long-term course of US foreign policy because that remained firmly focused on the outcomes of action elsewhere in the world in relation to American interests.

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