

Module 6: Foreign Policy

Topic 2 Content: Current Foreign Policy Challenges

Introduction



Glover Mint: Even with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, America continues to face many foreign policy challenges. Here to discuss American foreign policy in the post-Cold War world are Emily Airheart and Terry S. Tate.

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Global Guide



Emily Airheart: Welcome to *Global Guide*. I'm Emily Airheart, joined by Terry S. Tate, foreign policy expert. Terry, most Americans are aware that the War on Terror is perhaps the most significant shift in American foreign policy to occur in recent times. This foreign policy shift was instituted by President George W. Bush after the attacks on September 11, 2001. The War on Terror has been used to increase counterterrorism efforts, and was even used as justification for the Iraq War. Combating terrorism is extremely important to America's national security, but what other foreign policy challenges does the United States face today?

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Current Foreign Policy Challenges



Terry S. Tate: Foreign policy needs to continually adapt to changes in the international community. You already mentioned the War on Terror, Emily, but that is far from the only foreign policy challenge facing America today. Let's take a look at some of these now.

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Trade with China



Terry S. Tate: While the tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union were growing, the Communist party in China took control of the government. The People's Republic of China was established in 1949, essentially halting the country's trade relations with the United States and its allies. After nearly twenty-five years of strained relations between the two nations, President Richard Nixon became the first American President to visit the People's Republic of China in 1972. This was a huge step in normalizing America's relationship with the Communist government of China. Since then, trade has steadily increased between the two countries. As of 2014, China is the second largest trading partner of the United States, after Canada. This has led to the development of unique foreign policy issues.

One of the main issues is the trade deficit with China. The United States imports goods from China at a much higher rate than China imports goods from the United States. This leads to a deficit in trade, where the United States has a negative balance. The larger this negative balance is, the larger the risk that a nation's currency might lose value. At the end of 2014, the United States had a trade deficit of more than \$340 billion with China.

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Human Rights Abuse



Human Rights Abuse

- The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Affairs (DRL) was formed within the State Department to help promote human rights around the world.
- DRL applies three principles to its work on human rights:
 1. learning the truth and stating the facts in human rights investigations;
 2. taking consistent positions on human rights violations; and
 3. maintaining partnerships with governments and organizations committed to human rights.

Terry S. Tate: It is a sad fact that human rights abuses like torture, slavery, and genocide continue to occur in the modern world. There have been many international attempts to combat human rights abuses, but it is an ongoing mission. The U.S. Department of State attempts to hold governments accountable for protecting human rights and promoting respect for human rights around the world. To help deal with these foreign policy challenges, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Affairs (DRL) was formed within the State Department. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Affairs applies three principles to its work on human rights:

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Weapons of Mass Destruction

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Nations with Nuclear Weapons

- China
- France
- India
- Israel
- North Korea
- Pakistan
- Russia
- United Kingdom
- United States

The graphic features a large white biohazard symbol overlaid on a background of a nuclear explosion with a bright yellow and orange mushroom cloud. The text is presented in a dark grey box with a yellow header for the title and a dark grey body for the list.

Terry S. Tate: The Cold War may be over, but that has not eliminated the threat created by nuclear weapons. China, France, India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States all currently possess nuclear weapons. Biological weapons also have the potential to severely injure or kill thousands of people at a time. The threat posed by these weapons of mass destruction is the reason why U.S. foreign policy focuses on controlling their spread. Diplomatic tools like treaties and economic tools like sanctions are both used to help contain this threat.

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The Future of NATO



Terry S. Tate: NATO is a defense alliance that was formed in 1949 after the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty. This alliance was initially formed among twelve nations, to protect its members from the expansion of the Soviet Union. If a NATO member was attacked, the other member countries would agree to defend the nation under attack. After the Cold War ended, rather than dissolve NATO, the organization actually gained more members. As of 2015, there are twenty-eight members of NATO. The NATO charter was even invoked after the attacks on September 11, 2001, and led to international involvement in the War on Terror. How NATO will be used in future foreign policy remains to be seen.

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Drug Trafficking

Drug Trafficking



- Usually involves organized crime
- Results in violence that may escalate beyond criminal organizations
- **Mexican Drug War:** ongoing fighting among various drug cartels and the Mexican government
- Over 100,000 people killed with many human rights abuses

Next

Terry S. Tate: It is difficult to measure how much money is involved in the illegal drug trade. Some experts estimate that there is around \$400 billion involved in the drug trade each year. Due to the vast amount of money involved in drug trafficking, organized crime is usually involved. The criminal organizations involved compete with other criminal organizations, usually resulting in violence. Sometimes this violence will escalate into an even larger conflict, like the ongoing Mexican Drug War. In recent years, there has been ongoing fighting among various drug cartels and the Mexican government, leading to the deaths of more than 100 thousand people. Many more innocent people have been displaced or continue to suffer because of this conflict. The human rights abuses and the proximity of the U.S. to this conflict make it an ongoing foreign policy challenge.

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The Global Environment



Terry S. Tate: Improving the global environment is another foreign policy challenge that the United States must address. Climate change, the depletion of natural resources, the extinction of species, and the pollution of the ocean and air are just a few of the environmental issues facing the world. Natural disasters, food shortages, and the lack of clean drinking water not only threaten the stability of our institutions, but also the survival of humanity. In order for humans to maintain a stable existence on this planet, the global environment must be protected. This means that the United States, as well as the rest of the world, must play a part in safeguarding the environment.

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Ending of Episode



Glover Mint: Thank you, Terry. Each one of those issues is difficult to address individually, let alone in conjunction with all of the foreign policy challenges facing American today. We appreciate you stopping by for this episode of WUSG News.