

■ US FOREIGN POLICY

Revision Sheet for Business School Entrance Exams | Updated February 2026

■ KEY ACTORS IN US FOREIGN POLICY

■■■ EXECUTIVE BRANCH	■■■ LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
<p>President: Chief diplomat and Commander-in-Chief</p> <p>Secretary of State: Top diplomat (currently Marco Rubio under Trump)</p> <p>Secretary of Defense: Military policy (currently Pete Hegseth)</p> <p>National Security Advisor: Advises president (Mike Waltz)</p> <p>CIA Director: Intelligence (John Ratcliffe)</p>	<p>Senate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Confirms ambassadors and treaties (2/3 majority for treaties)Confirms Cabinet appointments <p>Congress (both chambers):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Declares warControls budget and foreign aidCan impose sanctions

■ MAJOR HISTORICAL DOCTRINES

Monroe Doctrine (1823): "Americas for Americans" - Opposition to European colonialism in Western Hemisphere
Truman Doctrine (1947): Containment of communism; US support for countries resisting Soviet influence
Marshall Plan (1948): Economic aid to rebuild Western Europe after WWII (fight communism through prosperity)
Eisenhower Doctrine (1957): Military and economic aid to Middle East countries resisting communism
Nixon Doctrine (1969): US allies should take primary responsibility for their own defense
Carter Doctrine (1980): US will use military force to defend interests in Persian Gulf
Reagan Doctrine (1980s): Support anti-communist movements and governments worldwide
Bush Doctrine (2002): Pre-emptive strikes and regime change to combat terrorism post-9/11

■ MAJOR ALLIANCES & INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

■■■ NATO	■■■ UNITED NATIONS	■■■ IMF & WORLD BANK
----------	--------------------	----------------------

Founded: 1949	Founded: 1945	Founded: 1944 (Bretton Woods)
Members: 32 countries (North America + Europe)	US role: Permanent Security Council member with veto power	US role: Largest shareholder and influence
Purpose: Collective defense (Article 5: attack on one = attack on all)	Location: UN HQ in New York	Purpose: Global financial stability and development
Current issue: Trump has questioned NATO burden-sharing	Issues: US sometimes bypasses UN for unilateral action	Criticism: Accused of promoting US economic interests

Other key partnerships: AUKUS (Australia-UK-US), Five Eyes intelligence alliance, bilateral treaties with Japan, South Korea, Philippines

■ REGIONAL PRIORITIES & RELATIONSHIPS

■■ CHINA - Strategic Competition

Relationship: Strategic competitor; world's second-largest economy
Key issues: Trade war, technology competition (semiconductors, 5G, AI), Taiwan, South China Sea
Trump policy: Tariffs, tech restrictions, "America First" approach
Military: US supports Taiwan, freedom of navigation operations in South China Sea

■■ RUSSIA - Adversarial

Relationship: Adversarial since Cold War; further deteriorated after Ukraine invasion (2022)
Key issues: Ukraine war, NATO expansion, cybersecurity, election interference
Sanctions: Extensive economic sanctions since 2014 (Crimea) and 2022 (Ukraine invasion)
Trump stance: More conciliatory toward Russia than previous administrations; seeks to end Ukraine war

■ MIDDLE EAST - Complex Engagement

Israel: Strongest US ally in region; military and economic support; Abraham Accords (2020)
Iran: Major adversary; sanctions over nuclear program; Trump withdrew from Iran nuclear deal (2018)
Saudi Arabia: Key ally for oil and regional stability; concerns over human rights
Iraq & Syria: US troops presence for counter-terrorism; fight against ISIS
Afghanistan: US withdrew in 2021 after 20-year war; Taliban returned to power

■ EUROPE - Traditional Allies

- NATO allies:** UK, France, Germany, Poland (most important European partners)
- EU relations:** Trade tensions under Trump; US pressure on defense spending
- Ukraine support:** US is largest provider of military aid to Ukraine
- Energy:** US LNG exports to reduce European dependence on Russian gas

■ LATIN AMERICA - Backyard Diplomacy

- Key issues:** Immigration, drug trafficking, trade
- Mexico:** USMCA trade deal (replaced NAFTA); border security tensions
- Venezuela:** US sanctions on Maduro regime; recognition of opposition
- Cuba:** Long-standing embargo; Trump reversed Obama's normalization

■ KEY FOREIGN POLICY TOOLS

- Diplomacy:** Negotiations, treaties, embassies (State Department leads)
- Military force:** World's largest military; bases in 80+ countries; power projection
- Economic sanctions:** Freeze assets, restrict trade (Iran, Russia, North Korea, Venezuela)
- Foreign aid:** Development assistance, military aid (~\$50 billion/year)
- Intelligence:** CIA, NSA - gathering information, covert operations
- Trade policy:** Tariffs, trade agreements (USMCA, bilateral deals)
- Public diplomacy:** Cultural exchanges, media (Voice of America), soft power

■ TRUMP'S FOREIGN POLICY APPROACH (2025-)

- "America First":** Prioritize US interests over multilateralism; skeptical of international institutions
- Trade:** Aggressive use of tariffs; renegotiate trade deals; confront China economically
- Alliances:** Pressure allies to pay more for defense; transactional approach to partnerships
- Military:** Reduce foreign military commitments; avoid "endless wars"
- Immigration:** Strict border control; reduce refugee admissions
- Unpredictability:** Personal diplomacy with leaders; departure from traditional diplomatic norms
- Key priorities:** End Ukraine war, counter China, secure border, renegotiate trade deals

■■ CURRENT MAJOR CHALLENGES (2026)

- ✓ China-US competition: Technology, Taiwan, economic rivalry
- ✓ Russia-Ukraine war: US role in supporting Ukraine, negotiations
- ✓ Middle East instability: Israel-Hamas conflict, Iran nuclear program
- ✓ Climate change: Balancing economic interests with environmental commitments
- ✓ Immigration: Southern border security, asylum policy
- ✓ Cybersecurity: Attacks from China, Russia, North Korea
- ✓ Global trade: Protectionism vs. free trade; supply chain resilience
- ✓ AI and technology: Maintaining US leadership, regulating emerging tech

■ KEY CONCEPTS TO UNDERSTAND

- Isolationism:** Avoiding foreign entanglements (historical US position pre-WWII)
- Interventionism:** Active involvement in world affairs (post-WWII approach)
- Unilateralism:** Acting alone without international support
- Multilateralism:** Working through international institutions and alliances
- Soft Power:** Influence through culture, values, diplomacy (vs. military hard power)
- Hegemony:** US dominance in global system since end of Cold War
- Pivot to Asia:** Reorienting focus from Middle East to Asia-Pacific (China threat)
- Exceptionalism:** Belief that US has unique role and responsibility in the world