

# ■ US FOREIGN POLICY

Revision Sheet for Business School Entrance Exams | Updated February 2026

## ■ KEY ACTORS IN US FOREIGN POLICY

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

## ■ MAJOR HISTORICAL DOCTRINES

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

## ■ MAJOR ALLIANCES & INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

■■ NATO	■ UNITED NATIONS	■ IMF & WORLD BANK
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<b>Founded:</b> 1949  <b>Members:</b> 32 countries (North America + Europe)  <b>Purpose:</b> Collective defense (Article 5: attack on one = attack on all)  <b>Current issue:</b> Trump has questioned NATO burden-sharing	<b>Founded:</b> 1945  <b>US role:</b> Permanent Security Council member with veto power  <b>Location:</b> UN HQ in New York  <b>Issues:</b> US sometimes bypasses UN for unilateral action	<b>Founded:</b> 1944 (Bretton Woods)  <b>US role:</b> Largest shareholder and influence  <b>Purpose:</b> Global financial stability and development  <b>Criticism:</b> Accused of promoting US economic interests
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**Other key partnerships:** AUKUS (Australia-UK-US), Five Eyes intelligence alliance, bilateral treaties with Japan, South Korea, Philippines

## ■ REGIONAL PRIORITIES & RELATIONSHIPS

### ■ CHINA - Strategic Competition

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

### ■ RUSSIA - Adversarial

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

### ■ MIDDLE EAST - Complex Engagement

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

## ■ EUROPE - Traditional Allies

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

## ■ LATIN AMERICA - Backyard Diplomacy

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

## ■ KEY FOREIGN POLICY TOOLS

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

## ■ TRUMP'S FOREIGN POLICY APPROACH (2025-)

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

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