

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE  
UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY

**Terms and concepts to know:**

Realism	Idealism
Monroe Doctrine	Isolationism
League of Nations	Cold War
Deterrence	Massive retaliation
Flexible response	MAD
Arms control (SALT / ABM / INF)	Containment
Truman Doctrine	Korea / Vietnam (Domino Theory)
Peaceful coexistence (détente)	LDC's / developing countries
Nuclear proliferation	Trade
Immigration	Foreign policy principles (natl. interest)
Foreign policymakers	5 aspects of foreign policy

**Study and discussion questions:**

1. Typical government texts suggest there are a number of components or “goals” of American foreign policy (Remy: national security, free and open trade, world peace, democratic governments, and concern for humanity). Discuss the extent to which these “stated” objectives are a true reflection of policymakers motivations. Do you believe they are? Why or why not?
2. During the Cold War, most mainstream historians taught that the U.S. was reacting to the aggressive posture of the Soviet Union. In Russia, they were taught that Russians were merely defending themselves against an aggressive America. Who had it right?
3. Discuss the two major foreign policy orientations of realism and idealism. Of the two, which do you believe should be the foundation for our foreign policy?
4. Supporters of a new American empire argue that the global power of the United States is benign and motivated by high moral ideals, in contrast to previous world empires. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this claim?
5. Review the four post-September 11 questions Chomsky raises in the second half of his essay. Throughout his response to these questions he makes a case for applying “elementary moral standards” or “the standard of universality” to international relations. From your reading of these questions and answers, why aren't consistent moral standards applied to all countries? The principal defense of adopting different standards is that the US is “good” and our enemies are “evil.” Evaluate that good/evil dichotomy.
6. Consider the arguments of both Mallaby and Selfa. Which do you think is the more accurate version of today's age? Is America a “reluctant” or willing imperialist? (It should be clear that both left and right agree that America is an “empire”).

**Readings:**

Heineman. *American Government*, chapter 15.  
Grover/Peschek. *Voices of Dissent*, chapters 9.36

**Video:**

*In Whose Interest?*