

United States Foreign Policy Viewpoints

Internationalist Perspectives

The United States is exceptional and is a force for good in the world. We know best and should impose our will on the Middle East. People in these countries don't have the education, economic power, or tradition of democratic government to appropriately govern themselves. Moreover, we must take pre-emptive action to protect against potential threats to our country.

This view is typically associated with "elite democracy" and a "neo-conservative" ideology.

Example: Dick Cheney

The United States should intervene to prevent genocide, mass slaughter, the use of chemical weapons against civilians. We must protect and defend, if necessary by force, fundamental human rights. Our leadership in the world depends upon our willingness to take stand for our values. We protect our country by aggressively supporting democracy and economic development abroad.

This view is typically associated with "popular democracy" and a center-left perspective.

Examples: Bill Clinton in Kosovo and Obama in Libya

Isolationist Perspectives

The United States should leave other countries alone and focus on our own problems. People in other countries have to figure things out themselves. That is the only way they will ever become self-reliant and democratic and we shouldn't jeopardize American lives and capital getting involved in the Middle East. It will only create more terrorists and give them an excuse to attack us.

This view is typically associated with libertarian philosophy.

Example: Senator Rand Paul

The United States government has actively contributed to the oppression of people and corporate exploitation in the developing world and our presence abroad will only create more resentment. In the Middle East, U.S. policy is driven by our desire to control oil and our need to maintain Saudi Arabia as a ally, even though it's run like a dictatorship. Non-violence and diplomacy is the best approach to foreign affairs.

This view is typically associated with a "popular democracy" and a far left perspective.

Examples: Various anti-war movements