Foreign Policy Essay, Research Paper

The United States outlook on foreign policy affairs after World War II was influenced by the fear of communist expansionism rather than establishing foreign relations with each country. The U.S. found itself with a conflict between its profound belief in the constitution and democracy and a need for domestic and national security. In 1947, the National Security Act authorized the creation of the Central Intelligence Agency. Its role was to protect domestic security and oversee national relations. Following World War II the Cold War intensified and the anti communist sentiment consumed our country. The actions of the CIA conflicted with that of the constitution and the morality of the American people. Many actions taken by the CIA were secret and covert. Since congress would be required to approve or disapprove of any involvement in a third world country the CIA would keep their actions quiet and not inform the congress. The CIA adopted interventionism policies in third world countries to stop communism and promote our ideology. It was not always known how much the president and his advisors were aware of the covert activities of the CIA. In order to understand our foreign policy concerning third world countries it is important to consider the assumptions, policies and tactics of President Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Nixon.

In 1945 Harry Truman took office suddenly and was expected to keep our country and our nation together. Truman?s main objective was to create a foreign policy that would control the spread of communism through out the world including third world countries. While facing the Korean War and trying to stop and contain communism Truman thought that it was time to either get out, or begin a strike on China. The United States knew that a ?war against China might well mean war against Russia, which Truman was not prepared to accept.? (Ambrose, Rise to Globalism) Truman reversed the prior United States policy of unilateral disarmament and neutrality to an arms build up and collective security. He made America stronger than it had ever been seen before and helped in creating the United States in becoming a world power.

In 1952, Dwight Eisenhower was elected president and immediately became extremely popular. He also shared Truman?s basic view of American foreign policy. Eisenhower also perceived communism as a force struggling for world supremacy. Eisenhower and his secretary of state, John Dulles, and his brother Allen, who headed up the CIA, felt that containment did not go far enough to stop communist expansion. A more aggressive policy was established. It was during this era that the CIA began more covert actions within the third world countries. In Operation Success the CIA engaged in paramilitary activity to over-throw the leader of Guatemala, a Russian controlled dictator. This policy has continued through many presidential administrations. President Eisenhower wanted to control the spread of communism and did so by using the tactics of the CIA. In 1958 he presented the Eisenhower doctrine which sent marines into Lebanon to support the residing president. The president?s intervention illustrated his methods for it was a unilateral action that endangered general war to support a less than democratic government. Many felt that his relations within third world counties were not up to date or current of the time.

Kennedy?s brief tenure as president was the most noted for tense confrontation known the Bay of Pigs. Communist Cuba led by Fidel Castro was about to receive missiles from Russia. Since Cuba is only a short distance from the United States border of Florida. This became a fearful threat to the national security of the U.S. Cuba was in the mists of building missile sights aimed directly for the United States and Russia was providing the nuclear warheads. Kennedy formed a blockade of destroyers also equipped with missiles. ? The threat of mutual annihilation remained high. Kennedy stood firm.? (Amborse) Khrushshev finally backed down due to a proposal that he would send no more weapons if Kennedy would withdraw the blockade and not invade Cuba. Following the Cuban missile crisis caused European counties to think about revising their relationship with the US. Kennedy believed that that a struggle would remain throughout various third world counties, but that it was important to negotiate through diplomacy then to use military force. The third world counties needed to have their own desires as to what their government should be and Kennedy felt that this was the time to start that process.

After Richard Nixon entered the presidency in 1968 he chose Henry Kissinger as his assistant for national security and his Secretary of State. Nixon and Kissinger both believed that if a nation were weak, it might be wise for the United States to ignore provocation, even if that nation were communist. If that nation were strong and able to harm the US then America must and should act to counter that nation. During the Vietnam War this administration authorized the bombing of Cambodia to destroy North Vietnamese sanctuaries. This was concealed activity was not sanctioned by the American people. ?Kissinger created an elaborated covert network to keep the bombing a secret.? (Rosatii) Many Americans already did not approve of America?s involvement in the Vietnam War. The White House became very concerned that the Democratic Party may have received knowledge of this secret bombing. This led up to the presidential scandal called Watergate. The White House brought its covert activities stateside and authorized a break in into the Watergate hotel to try to determine what the democrats knew about Cambodia. An investigation followed which unraveled all the deceit of the Nixon administration. The American people found out that this illegal activity was sanctioned all the way to the president himself. Nixon left office in disgrace.

?The Vietnam War and the Cambodia bombing followed by Watergate warned the American people about the dangers of an increasingly autonomous national security bureaucracy headed by an accountable president.? (Rosatii) Congress passed the War Powers act of 1973, which set limits on the use of U.S. troops in hostile areas without declaration of war of congressional authorization. It also set up committees in Congress to over see the actions of the CIA. This substantially changed the United States foreign policy toward third world counties. We still to this day engage in covert activity and support the local paramilitary groups favorable to United States polices, it seems less likely that the United States would engage its own troops without authorization from Congress. From 1948 to 1968 much of United States foreign policy was established. It was based on the Cold War and fear of communism. Now the Cold War is over, but the US still engages in activities in third world counties to promote our ideology and encourage democracy.