



COUNCIL ON
FOREIGN
RELATIONS

COMMITTEE X



BACKGROUND GUIDE

SUCHITRA MUN 6.0
"Voices R.I.S.E, Solutions Soar"



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BACKGROUND GUIDE

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The United States is a global superpower with significant influence over international economic and political affairs. It possesses the largest economy in the world and is a leader in technology, military capabilities, and cultural exports. The U.S. plays a critical role in shaping global policies, promoting democracy, and addressing international challenges such as climate change, security threats, and economic instability.

The United States remains the world's most powerful nation, but the post-Cold War unipolar moment has been replaced by a more diffuse international system. The U.S. faces a wider array of complex issues requiring sustained attention, including great-power competition, climate change, global health challenges, and the impacts of globalization.

Key U.S. national interests include preventing attacks on the homeland, deterring great-power wars, preserving access to energy supplies, and maintaining an open international economic order. The U.S. also has strong interests in promoting democracy, protecting human rights, and preserving a clean environment.

To advance these interests, the U.S. relies on various instruments, including development, diplomacy, economics, the military, intelligence, homeland security, and international institutions. Federal agencies dedicated to foreign affairs, such as the Departments of Defense and State, play crucial roles.

The U.S. is also a major player in the global oil market, being one of the top producers and consumers of oil, which underscores its strategic importance in maintaining energy security and influencing global energy prices.

However, many seemingly domestic issues now have global attributes that require engagement from a wider array of public agencies. As the U.S. navigates an increasingly complex global landscape, developing new ways to effectively advance its interests while collaborating with international partners will be critical.



Structure of the U.S. Government

The U.S. operates under a federal system, where power is divided between the national and state governments. Key components of this structure include:

- **Legislative Branch:** Comprising Congress (the Senate and House of Representatives), responsible for creating laws and overseeing federal agencies.
- **Executive Branch:** Led by the President, this branch implements laws and manages federal agencies that address national security, foreign relations, and resource management.
- **Judicial Branch:** This branch interprets laws and ensures they align with the Constitution, providing a check on the powers of the other branches.

The U.S. government operates through a network of departments and agencies, each with specific responsibilities crucial to national security and foreign policy. Key players include:

- **Department of State:** Manages diplomatic relations and represents U.S. interests at international organizations, shaping foreign policy through negotiation and engagement.
- **Department of Defense:** Oversees military operations and ensures the security of U.S. interests abroad, including strategic planning for resource protection.



Key Regions to the USA and Challenges posing them

Middle East

- **Geopolitical Significance:** The Middle East holds approximately 48% of the world's proven oil reserves and about 40% of the world's natural gas reserves. This makes it a critical area for U.S. energy imports and global energy markets. The region's oil is not only vital for domestic consumption but also for maintaining global oil prices and ensuring energy stability.
- **Historical Context:** U.S. involvement in the Middle East dates back to the early 20th century, with various agreements and partnerships established to secure access to oil resources. The U.S. has historically supported regimes that align with its interests, often leading to complex geopolitical dynamics.
- **Challenges of Instability:** The region has faced significant political unrest, including the Arab Spring, ongoing conflicts in Syria and Yemen, and tensions with Iran. These factors create a precarious environment for U.S. investments in oil and gas extraction. Attacks on infrastructure and facilities can disrupt operations and threaten the safety of personnel.
- **Economic Dependence:** Many Middle Eastern countries rely heavily on oil revenues to fund their economies. As a result, fluctuations in oil prices can have profound impacts on regional stability and U.S. interests. The U.S. has engaged in diplomatic efforts to stabilize these economies and ensure the continued flow of resources.
- **Emerging Energy Dynamics:** The rise of renewable energy technologies and the global push for sustainability are reshaping the energy landscape. While the Middle East remains a key player in fossil fuels, there is increasing interest in diversifying energy sources and investing in renewable projects in the region.



Africa

- **Mineral Wealth:** The continent possesses approximately 85% of the world's manganese, 80% of platinum and chromium, and 47% of cobalt. These resources are vital for various industries, including electronics, renewable energy, and automotive sectors.
- **Economic Opportunities:** The U.S. has opportunities to strengthen commercial ties with African nations, enhancing access to these resources while promoting sustainable practices. However, the engagement has often been limited compared to other global powers.
- **Challenges of Governance:** Many African countries face governance issues, corruption, and instability that can hinder investment. The U.S. has a vested interest in promoting stability and good governance to secure its resource interests.

Asia

- **Diverse Resource Base:** Major producers include China, India, and several Middle Eastern countries. The U.S. engages with these nations to enhance resource extraction and management while ensuring sustainable practices.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** The U.S. has initiated programs like Asia EDGE (Enhancing Development and Growth through Energy) to strengthen energy security and expand access to energy across the Indo-Pacific region, fostering partnerships that can lead to mutual benefits.
- **Geopolitical Considerations:** As competition for resources intensifies, particularly with the rise of China, the U.S. must navigate complex geopolitical dynamics to secure its interests in the region.



The Role of Private Military Companies (PMCs)

Private Military Companies (PMCs) are private organizations that provide military and security services to governments, corporations, international organizations, and non-state actors. Their services can range from logistical support and training to armed security and combat operations.

PMCs have gained prominence in recent decades, particularly in conflict zones where they can offer flexible and rapid responses to security challenges. They enable states to dissociate from direct involvement in military operations, often performing sensitive or controversial tasks while maintaining a non-partisan image.

Countries around the world utilize PMCs for various purposes, including:

- **Security Operations:** Protecting critical infrastructure, personnel, and assets in unstable regions.
- **Military Training:** Providing training to local security forces to enhance their operational capabilities.
- **Logistical Support:** Assisting with transportation, supply chain management, and other logistical needs during military operations.
- **Combat Services:** Engaging in direct combat operations or support roles in conflict situations.
- **Risk Assessment:** They conduct assessments to identify potential threats and develop strategies to mitigate risks associated with operating in volatile environments.

These firms are contracted by various countries to provide security for resource extraction facilities and other critical infrastructure in unstable regions. The increasing reliance on PMCs raises concerns about accountability, oversight, and the potential erosion of state sovereignty, as these companies often operate outside conventional legal frameworks.