



The U.S. and the World:
SS.7.CG.4.1
Domestic and Foreign Policy
READING #2

Name: _____

Date: _____



SS.7.CG.4.1 Benchmark Clarification 2: Students will identify issues that relate to U.S. domestic and foreign policy.

The U.S. government focuses on many different **domestic policy** issues. Some examples of domestic policy issues include social welfare, health care, and education.

Social welfare means that the government provides help to those in need. The government has economic programs for mothers with children, people who are unemployed, and people who are disabled. The Social Security program was started in 1936 to help the elderly by providing them a monthly income after retirement.

The government is also involved with health care. Medicare was created to help the elderly pay for the medical care and medicine they need and often cannot afford. Medicaid was started to help the poor pay for medical care and medicine they need and often cannot afford.

The **federal government** also focuses on improving education. The government provides money for various programs that help students and teachers at all levels of education. One example of a federal education policy was the No Child Left Behind Act, which changed education standards and created new tests to measure student achievement.

On the other hand, the federal government is also concerned with foreign affairs, or relationships, with other nations. The federal government makes **foreign policy** to decide how it will interact with nations around the world.

The President and the **Secretary of State** are the main leaders in charge of foreign policy. They usually have several general goals for their foreign policy. These goals include:

1. **national security** (keeping the United States safe, especially at its borders),
2. **promoting peace** (creating relationships and alliances with other nations, spreading democracy/talking with other nations about the benefits of democratic government)
3. **promoting international trade** (buying and selling goods between countries) and
4. **providing foreign aid** (military, economic, and other types of help to countries in need).
 - One example of foreign aid was the Marshall Plan, through which the United States helped to rebuild Europe after the destruction there during World War II.

The U.S. government must create a plan for **diplomacy** to keep good relationships with other nations. **Ambassadors** and diplomats, including the Secretary of State, work all around the world on these relationships. Sometimes they must solve problems that emerge in relationships with other countries.

The U.S. government must also decide which countries to form an alliance with. The **North Atlantic Treaty Organization** (NATO) is one example of a strong military alliance between the U.S. and many European countries.

The U.S. government sometimes makes **treaties**, or formal agreements, with the leaders of other nations for trade, defense, and national security.

U.S. leaders hope their **international relations** will create a better, safer, and more peaceful world through cooperation with other countries.

alliance - a union between nations for assistance and protection

ambassador - a person sent as the chief representative of his or her own government in another country

diplomacy - the work of keeping good relations between the governments of different countries

domestic policy - a government's decisions about issues within the country

federal government - the national level of government; the government of the United States

foreign policy - a government's decisions about relationships with other countries

international relations - relationship between nations around the world

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) - a group of 28 countries that has agreed to protect each other in case of attack; founded in 1949

Secretary of State - the head of the U.S. Department of State; a member of the President's Cabinet

treaty - an agreement or arrangement between two or more countries