

# **American Foreign Policy & The Muslim World**

Edited by

**Ishtiaq Hossain    Mohsen M. Saleh**



**Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations**

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السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية والعالم الإسلامي

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## *Chapter One*

# *American Foreign Policy: Dynamics of Domestic Sources*

*Dr. Ishtiaq Hossain*

# **American Foreign Policy: Dynamics of Domestic Sources**

## **Introduction**

Systematic analysis of American foreign policy requires answers to the following basic questions: What are the most important sources of American foreign policy? Does the US always respond to the international context while making its foreign policy? Or are the main sources of American foreign policy to be found within the domestic context of America? If that is the case, then who plays the key role in making America's foreign policy? Is it the president of the United States? What kind of role does the US Congress play in the country's foreign policy making? Or is Washington's foreign policy a product of the "tussle" between the White House and the Congress? What about the role of special interest groups? Do these mostly Washington, D.C., based lobbyists influence the foreign policy-making elites of the country? What about the role of public opinion? As a democratic country, shouldn't this play a key role in Washington's foreign policy? Does American business community influence Washington's foreign policy-makers? Answers to these questions are considered vital in understanding and explaining US foreign policy.

This chapter addresses the above-mentioned questions while analysing the main domestic sources of US foreign policy. It is argued here that in order to comprehend and explain the foreign policy of the US - the world's lone super power - we need to pay special attention to its domestic sources. This is because as Walter Lafeber points out, domestic interests and security remain the only constant in US foreign policy-making especially since 9/11.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, while any explanation of US foreign policy cannot afford to ignore the external context of America's foreign policy, especially when a threat to its national security is located beyond its borders, neither can the domestic political context be ignored in such analysis. For American foreign policy, decisions are the products of the country's domestic political process and considerations even when the US tries to respond to any sets of events beyond its borders. The main aim of this chapter is to provide an analysis of the domestic sources of American foreign policy with a special emphasis on the governmental structures.

## **Sources of American Foreign Policy: "The Funnel of Causality"**

James Rosenau identifies the following five main types of independent variables in foreign policy formulation of a country: individual, role, governmental, societal and systemic.<sup>2</sup> Eugene R. Wittkopf, Charles W. Kegley,