

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF GENERAL STUDIES
CAPSTONE 2013

**U.S. FOREIGN POLICY DURING AND BEYOND
PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA'S SECOND TERM**

The concept of a Capstone project is older than, and certainly not unique to, the College of General Studies at Boston University. A final research project has historically been considered the culmination of a liberal arts education. In addition to the historical and academic meanings of the term, there is an architectural sense to the word “capstone.” A capstone is the final block that is placed on top of a construction project to tie the whole structure together. Further, in the language of the building industry, each layer of brick is called a “course.” Therefore, it is appropriate to use the word “capstone” for our final project at the College since it will be the final stage of your education here, the last course that caps two years of study.

As you begin this project, keep three thoughts in mind. First, just as the construction of a building is not an individual effort, but rather a process requiring the labors of an organized group, so too is the Capstone project a group effort. You will be expected to work together for the success of your group. The more each individual gives to the group, the more each person will gain from the group’s work. When there is a genuine group effort, the final product will be better and the experience will be more rewarding. Second, the Capstone project is a kind of drama, requiring an act of imagination as you assume the roles of experts or advocates and present your findings in a real-world format. Third, the Capstone paper is not to be merely a fifty-page research term paper. Instead it should be a synthesis – a combining of separate elements to form a coherent whole. Research is, to be sure, an indispensable part of the project; but you will be expected in addition to construct arguments and to analyze and synthesize your research in order to make a proposal or reach a verdict and justify your conclusions. In other words, research is more than gathering raw data as an end in itself. What is most important is the synthesis of these data into a meaningful whole which, if done properly, will be greater than the sum of its parts.

INTRODUCTION

A century ago the United States had recently taken its place as one of the world's great powers, joining Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and Japan. The multipolar world of 1913 survived the mass carnage of World War I, in the aftermath of which the United States was by far the world's foremost economic power but chose to avoid international responsibility. World War II constituted an attempt by Nazi Germany and imperial Japan to destroy a multipolar world structure and to impose their brutal (and, in the German case, genocidal) domination across the globe. A bipolar world order was indeed the outcome of World War II, but it was two of the victors, the United States and the Soviet Union – not the defeated Germany and Japan – that now stood as the world's two centers of power. During the long Cold War, a weakened but still formidable Britain, a difficult though sometimes helpful France, and the rebuilt democratic states of West Germany and Japan aided the United States, while ultimately depending on the U.S. for their security. The People's Republic of China was allied with the Soviet Union during the 1950s but thereafter was the Soviet Union's rival, often cooperating with the United States during the 1970s and 1980s. The bipolar nuclear world of the Cold War endured (albeit precariously at times) until the unraveling of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990s.

The demise of the Soviet Union resulted in a unipolar world, with the United States as the world's preeminent power. During the 1990s – while seeking to continue its Cold War-era alliances and to build a friendship with Russia – the United States maintained a military capability far more extensive and more potent than that of any other country, employing its power to drive Iraq out of Kuwait and twice to halt large-scale ethnic violence in the Balkans. During this same decade, the rising threat of Islamic extremism became increasingly manifest but, in retrospect, was not confronted with the focus and the resources required to deal with the problem.

The shocking and deadly al-Qaida attack of September 11, 2001, marked a turning point in the history of American foreign policy, as the United States was thrust into a war with a new type of enemy. The Soviet Union of the post-Stalin decades had had the means to annihilate the United States but no intention to do so, because an ultimately rational Soviet leadership understood the implications and did not wish to suffer the consequences of “mutual assured destruction.” In contrast, America's new terrorist enemies aim to destroy the United States (and in the meantime to murder as many Americans as they possibly can) and, adhering to a cult of martyrdom, are not deterred by the prospect of their own destruction. But while they have the intention to annihilate the U.S., they presently lack the means to do so. Obviously, then, the United States is now engaged in a conflict that is fundamentally different from the Cold War, and that therefore requires very different strategies.

In September 2002, President George W. Bush's National Security Council issued a controversial 31-page document titled “The National Security Strategy of the United States of

America.” This document proclaims at its outset that the United States’ national security strategy

will be based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests. The aim of this strategy is to help make the world not just safer but better. Our goals on the path to progress are clear: political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity.

This strategy paper goes on to explain and defend a doctrine of “measured preemption” against terrorists and against rogue states that support terrorists and that possess or seek to possess weapons of mass destruction. The concluding portion “reaffirm[s] the essential role of American military strength,” asserting that “we must build and maintain our defenses beyond challenge.” And by the end of the decade of the 2000s, American military power and other U.S. capabilities had been employed first to overthrow the murderous regimes of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq and then – at a heavy cost and with mixed results – to try to rebuild and stabilize those two countries.

President Barack Obama, a critic of many aspects of the Bush administration’s foreign policy, nevertheless has continued a robust surveillance program and has emphatically endorsed the employment of military force in America’s struggle against Islamic extremism. Indeed, while stressing his preference for diplomacy, Obama also utilized his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech of December 10, 2009, to uphold the use of military power for the purposes of self-defense and humanitarian necessity, declaring that “a nonviolent movement could not have halted Hitler’s armies,” and that, similarly, “negotiations cannot convince al-Qaida’s leaders to lay down their arms.” And in the spring of 2011, Obama ordered the Navy Seals operation that killed al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden in Pakistan.

Then, in January 2012, President Obama spelled out his own national security strategy. Contending that his administration had “restored America’s global leadership” while still “taking the fight to our enemies,” the President emphasized the continuing necessity of overwhelming U.S. military superiority built around “armed forces that are agile, flexible, and ready for the full range of contingencies and threats.” Obama also made a point of highlighting what he sees as the crucial importance of U.S. power in the Asia Pacific region.

U.S. diplomacy in 2013 and beyond faces multiple challenges, many but not all of which are directly connected to the ongoing struggle against Islamic extremism. Two major contemporary challenges are, in essence, updated versions of Cold War-era difficulties. Under the rule of Vladimir Putin, Russia has once again defined itself as an adversary of the United States and is threatening U.S. interests on a range of issues. And China is rapidly building up its military capabilities, is conducting a foreign policy that undermines U.S. interests in Asia, in Africa, in Iran, and elsewhere, and during the past decade has acquired a dangerous degree of economic leverage over the United States.

The assigned task of each 2013 Capstone group is to investigate an important problem in present-day U.S. foreign policy and to devise a recommendation for addressing that problem. This syllabus provides a list of available topics, each of which identifies a significant issue that calls for the attention of U.S. foreign policy makers.

MECHANICS OF THE CAPSTONE PROJECT

1. Groups: The Capstone project is a group project. The groups, each made up of six or seven students, will be constructed according to criteria established by your team's faculty. You will be a member of your group during the entire project. Each group will need to work out for itself some form of division of labor and responsibility. Each member of the group will be responsible not only to herself or himself, but to the other members as well.

2. Project Grades: You will receive one grade for the Project as a whole. This grade will make up 25% of your semester grade in Social Science 202, Natural Science 202, and Humanities 202. There will be three components of your grade: the Capstone paper, the oral defense, and your individual participation in the project. You will be evaluated as a group on the Capstone paper (in other words each member of the group will receive the same paper grade), but as individuals on the oral defense and participation. Thus, each individual will be evaluated on the paper, his or her performance during the oral defense, and his or her participation in the total project. Your overall Capstone grade will be a combination of these three components. (Note: While Capstone groups will not receive written comments on their papers, the faculty team will provide each group with substantial verbal feedback during the oral defense.)

3. Reporting of Capstone Grades: Team faculty do not assign individual Capstone grades until all oral defenses have been completed. **In order that reporting may be uniform among teams, all individual Capstone grades will be posted electronically on Saturday, May 11.** You will receive only your overall Capstone grade as this is what constitutes 25% of your grade in each course.

4. The Capstone Paper: The length of the Capstone paper should be no more than 50 pages (typed, double-spaced, 12-point font). The 50-page limit does not include preliminary pages (table of contents, etc.) or endnotes, bibliography, or appendices. Bound copies of the paper must be provided for each faculty member. Also, each member of the group needs a copy in order to prepare for, and participate in, the oral defense.

5. The Oral Defense: After the Capstone paper has been submitted to the faculty, your group will meet at an appointed time to defend its work before your team faculty. The oral defense usually lasts about two hours. Each group member should be prepared to answer questions on all aspects of the paper.

6. The Project Schedule: The project will begin with each team's Capstone Kickoff on Friday, March 29 and continue until Friday, May 10. This period of time will be subdivided as follows:

a. The weeks of April 1 and April 8 are for scheduled meetings with faculty, Capstone group meetings, intensive research, and (toward the end of the second week) beginning the writing of the paper.

b. The week of April 15 should be used for additional conferences with faculty as needed, completing any remaining research, and writing and editing the paper.

c. The week of April 22 should be devoted entirely to editing, proofreading, reproducing, and binding the written report.

d. The written report is **DUE at 12:00 noon on FRIDAY, APRIL 26. THERE WILL BE NO EXTENSIONS.** Members of all Capstone groups are required to be present in Jacob Sleeper Auditorium at 11:55 A.M. on Friday, April 26, at which time all Capstone papers will be collected by faculty teams.

e. There will then follow two weeks, those of April 29 and May 6, during which oral defenses for all groups will be scheduled. Scheduling of orals is handled by faculty teams.

7. Sources: Be certain that the Internet and printed sources you utilize are legitimate and credible. (One highly regarded publication that is likely to be useful for research pertaining to all of the topics presented in this syllabus is the bi-monthly journal *Foreign Affairs*.) **You are expected to identify sources using endnotes structured in accordance with *The Chicago Manual of Style*.**

8. Statement on Plagiarism: To plagiarize is "to take (ideas, writings, etc.) from another and pass them off as one's own."¹ Since students are often confused about the use of quotation marks, the faculty has established the general rule that whenever five consecutive words are copied from another author, the words must be presented within quotation marks; failure to do so is plagiarism. Students should note that the sources of ideas and thoughts, even when paraphrased in one's own words and expressed in what is commonly called an indirect quotation, must be credited.

¹*Webster's New World Dictionary*, Third College Edition (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), p. 1031.

THE GROUP'S IDENTITY

Each Capstone group is charged with the task of formulating a policy recommendation on an issue pertaining to contemporary U.S. foreign policy that is drawn from one of the topics presented in this syllabus. For that purpose, the group should assume an appropriate identity, such as an independent panel of experts or a subcommittee of Congress or a segment of the nonpartisan Executive Branch bureaucracy or the staff of a high-ranking government official. Operating under this identity, the group should survey the history and the scope of the issue it is studying, should consider the various serious policy options, and should recommend what it determines to be the best alternative. The recommendation should be addressed to a particular department of the U.S. government or individual leader. The group will consider the ethical, philosophical, social, domestic political, international security, scientific, and technological implications of the chosen problem and of the proposed policy. Policy proposals should reflect careful research and clear thinking.

FORMAT OPTIONS FOR THE WRITTEN REPORT

Your group may choose to act as an informed panel investigating one of the problems outlined later in this syllabus and developing a recommendation that is presented by the whole group. This is the "Policy Recommendation Format." Or your group may choose to act as an arbitrator in a dispute, deciding between two conflicting advocates; two opposing positions are argued (by two sides with separate identities), and then the group (under its own separate identity) makes the final decision. This is the "Adversary Format." Once you choose your topic you should discuss the format of your presentation with your team faculty.

I. POLICY RECOMMENDATION FORMAT

If your group chooses this format you will set yourselves up as an entity that is charged with investigating a specific problem (e.g., whether and to what degree the United States should continue to treat Egypt as a strategic ally) and will through your investigation develop a realistic recommendation as a solution to the problem. Your recommendation will be presented to the appropriate government department or leading individual (your team faculty's "identity"). Your paper should follow these general guidelines:

A. Introduction: Clearly state the problem you are investigating, why it is important to investigate this problem, and to whom you will be presenting your policy recommendation. Your introduction should make the readers realize the nature of the problem and why a solution is needed.

B. Discussion and Development of the Problem: This section of the paper should provide background information on the problem and present data on all its important aspects. Do not merely outline the research you have done on the issue, but present data that draw together all elements of your research and help to explain the controversy that makes your topic a problem. This section organizes and presents data that:

- (1) outline and develop the problem;
- (2) develop the various competing aspects of and approaches to the problem; and
- (3) help direct you toward, and are necessary to support, your policy recommendation.

C. The Recommendation: Your recommendation should be a logical outcome of the background and data you presented in Section B. It may be a recommendation that has already been proposed (which you discovered during your research), it may combine various aspects of different published proposals, or it may be an entirely original solution. This section should reiterate what data support your recommendation and explain why your recommendation is superior to others. You should also be careful to indicate what values (ethical, social, scientific) you used to develop your recommendation. Is your recommendation a realistic, workable solution that you can expect to be taken seriously, or is it a utopian, pie-in-the-sky proposal? You should discuss how your recommendation will be implemented. You must consider the cost (how much and to whom) of the implementation of your proposal. Finally, you should argue the functional effects of your recommendation. Who will benefit from your proposal: particular individuals and groups? the people of the United States? people in other countries? people throughout the world? Is your recommendation a long-term solution or a short-term fix? A major objective is not to sit on the fence with your proposal, but to declare a coherent position and be able to defend it.

II. ADVERSARY FORMAT

In this format your group presents alternative solutions and acts as the arbitrator of a dispute (e.g., whether the United States should take military action to destroy Iran's nuclear weapons program). Two petitioners argue their respective positions on the controversy, and then the arbitrator issues a final decision in favor of one of the petitioners. Your paper will develop competing arguments for each side of the controversy in an orderly, logical manner, render a judgment, and explain the reasons for favoring one position over the other. Your paper should be organized as follows:

A. Introduction: Clearly identify the controversy, and why it is a controversy. It may help to provide a brief history of the controversy in this section. Indicate who the two petitioners are and what positions they will be representing. Identify the arbitrator.

B. Petitioner I - Arguments: Note the existing controversy and the judgment that is

sought. Provide useful and relevant historical background. Present, in a logical, clear manner, the research that supports this petitioner's position and that challenges the position of Petitioner II. For example, if you were arguing for a greater U.S. commitment to the security and well-being of Afghanistan, you might cite data that indicate a large gulf between the amount of U.S. assistance that is needed to subdue the resurgent Taliban and the amounts that have previously been and are currently being provided. Any evidence that will support the petitioner's position and sway the judgment in the desired direction should be put forward.

C. Petitioner II - Arguments: Follow the same approach in order to make the strongest sustainable case in favor of your position. For example, if you were arguing for a reduced level of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, you might cite data about governmental corruption and the difficulties of fighting in such a mountainous and politically fragmented country. As with Petitioner I, any evidence that will support Petitioner II's position and sway the judgment in the desired direction should be presented.

D. Judgment by the arbitrator: State what the decision of the arbitrator is, and then logically develop the rationale for the decision. Evidence presented by both petitioners should be cited in explaining the decision. You should strive for a realistic decision that reflects the comparative strengths of the competing petitioners' arguments. Be careful not to rule against a strong argument, or, if you do (for you may, after all, be presented with two strong arguments), be able to justify your ruling. Try to issue a realistic decision that weighs such factors as the costs, the risks, and the likely benefits (both practical and ethical) of the petitioners' competing proposals.

Important Note: Be careful to present opposing positions objectively. Do not intentionally weaken one petitioner's arguments just to arrive more easily at a particular decision. It strengthens an adversary-format paper to present two plausible and well-argued positions.

FOCUSING YOUR RESEARCH

After your group selects a major topic area and has decided which type of format to use, you should consider some of the following questions and advice to help focus your research:

1. What specific problem do you want to examine? A word of caution: Do not be too inclusive (e.g., "We are going to study in depth every aspect of the U.S.-China relationship."). You must define a problem that is manageable in scope within the framework of the Capstone project. The advice of your faculty can be especially helpful in this regard.

2. Investigate your problem from a historical perspective. Include any pertinent background information you come across.

3. What is the current range of thinking about your issue? What are the various serious alternative solutions to the problem you are investigating? Whether or not you choose to use the adversary format, you should identify opposing views about the issue and become familiar with the debate surrounding it. This approach lends more credibility to your eventual policy proposals.

4. Your group may select one of the alternative solutions you encounter in your research, or you may create an alternative you believe is superior to any suggested in the available literature. In determining your solution, you should draw upon your knowledge of ethics to help justify the ends you seek to attain and the means you propose to employ.

5. How would your policy be implemented?

6. What are the implications of your recommendations? What are the domestic political, international security, economic, social, cultural, philosophical, and scientific ramifications of your proposals?

E-PORTFOLIO ASSIGNMENT

As part of the Capstone project, you need to set up a "Capstone" tab on your Digication e-Portfolio site and keep a record of your work on the project. Your e-Portfolio can be a good tool for keeping track of your progress on the project, and it can also be useful in determining your participation. Specifically:

1. Keep a weekly log of your individual contributions to the project (discuss the books and articles you have read, discuss the drafts you have written, list the group meetings you have attended, etc.).

2. Cut and paste all drafts you have written into the Capstone tab of your e-Portfolio. Include even the drafts that do not make the group's final cut.

3. Include a copy of your group's final Capstone paper on your e-Portfolio site.

4. **Capstone self-assessment:** After your group's Capstone paper has been submitted, assess the Capstone project as the culmination of your two years at the College of General Studies. More specifically, the College's faculty and administration would like to know how this project drew upon and enhanced skills you have acquired in your CGS courses. (In this regard, see the goals articulated in our CGS rubric: www.bu.edu/cgs/citl/eportfolios-and-assessment.) This information will help the College better understand how the Capstone experience relates to

your coursework and your intellectual development.

The Capstone self-assessment consists of three questions. Please respond thoughtfully to each question. The total length of your self-assessment should be approximately two double-spaced pages. You should post your self-assessment on the Capstone tab of your e-Portfolio site before your oral defense, and you also should bring a printed copy of your self-assessment to your oral defense for delivery to your professors. Here are the three questions: (1) How did the Capstone project contribute to the development of your research, writing, and editing skills? (2) Did you learn anything new about how to use evidence to formulate a strong argument? Please provide specific examples. (3) To what extent did your coursework at the College of General Studies prepare you for the interdisciplinary nature of the Capstone project? Again, please provide specific examples.

5. Submit your entire Capstone e-Portfolio to your team's course site before your oral defense. Here are the detailed instructions:

(a) Open your e-Portfolio. On the top right of the page you will see a box called "portfolio tools." Click on this pull-down menu and select "submit."

(b) On the left-hand side, you will see a list of courses in which you have been automatically enrolled. Choose the one that corresponds to your team (example: CGS Team X Spring 2013). A green check mark will appear next to your course once you select it.

(c) Return to the top right of the page, where you will now see a "next step" button. Click this button.

(d) On the left, you should now see a title or description of the course assignment (titled "End-of-year Portfolio"). Click on this, and you will see a green check mark appear next to it.

(e) Go back to the top right and choose "next step."

(f) Now, on the box on the left, you see "My Evidence." Click on that.

(g) Go back to the top right and choose "Next Step."

(h) Now on the left you should see your name with an empty box next to it and underneath it a list of all of the files in your portfolio. For the purposes of this end-of-year assignment, choose the first option, which is "all pages." Check marks should now appear in all boxes.

(i) Return to the top right of the screen and choose the first box, "Save and Submit." You are done -- thank you!

TOPICS

1. THE UNITED STATES AND THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

The enormously deadly civil war in Syria began with peaceful demonstrations against the dictatorial rule of Bashar al-Assad in March 2011. A violent reaction by the regime led to violence by its opponents. In recent months aerial bombing of neighborhoods by Assad's forces has become commonplace. By now tens of thousands of people, mostly non-combatant civilians, have been killed. A huge outflow of refugees to neighboring countries has occurred. Many parts of Syria lack any functional governing authority. The regime's large stockpile of chemical weapons has aroused particular international concern. And Israel (which back in 2007 destroyed a Syrian nuclear weapons facility provided by North Korea) has taken military action to prevent the shipment of weapons by the Syrian government to Hezbollah, Iran's terrorist proxy in Lebanon. As of February 2013, the reality in Syria is an extremely bloody and dangerous stalemate.

Each side has its foreign backers; most notably, Russia and Iran support the Syrian government, while Turkey and the Sunni Persian Gulf oil states support the opposition. For its part, the Obama administration is insisting on an end to the Assad regime but has been extremely cautious about taking meaningful action toward this objective. (During the summer of 2012, President Obama rejected a recommendation put forward by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and CIA Director David Petraeus, and supported by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey, to vet and train certain rebel groups and fighters.) Some of the reasons for this caution are the war-weariness engendered by the major U.S. wars in Iraq (recently concluded) and Afghanistan (ongoing) and the 2011 U.S.-led NATO operation in Libya, and the reality that militant Sunni Islamists are among those fighting to overthrow Assad. As this syllabus goes to print, it is unclear where the situation in Syria will stand by April 2013.

Identify the current situation in Syria, and try to determine the best policy for the United States. Should the United States play a direct military role in Syria? Should the U.S. arm some of the opposition forces but stay out of the fighting? Should the United States continue to stand aside as this brutal civil war rages? What strategic and moral considerations should guide the Obama administration in its handling of the Syrian crisis going forward?

2. THE UNITED STATES AND IRAN: NUCLEAR WORRIES

Throughout most of the Cold War, Iran was a major ally of the United States in a vital area of the world. But the overthrow of Iran's pro-American regime by a virulently anti-American revolutionary movement early in 1979 generated the intensely hostile relationship between the two countries that persists to this day.

In recent years, Iran has been at or very near the top of the list of U.S. security concerns. Its radical Shiite Muslim regime actively supports terrorist organizations, particularly Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Iran's professed international objectives are sharply in conflict with those of the United States. When these objectives, which include the annihilation of Israel (and territorial expansion at the expense of some of Iran's neighbors and, before long, the capacity to strike the United States directly) are considered in the context of the Iranian regime's nuclear weapons program and outward embrace of a cult of martyrdom, they make Iran an urgent security problem -- particularly so because Iran is estimated by experts to be within months of a functional nuclear weapons capability.

In addition to an actual nuclear war, other dangerous consequences would result if Iran becomes a nuclear state. Iran would have the means to block vital shipping lanes through which much of the world's oil passes. And some Arab states in the region, including Saudi Arabia, would likely seek to develop (or purchase) their own nuclear weapons.

There are many questions related to U.S.-Iranian relations, but the fundamental question for the United States centers on Iran's nuclear weapons program. President George W. Bush declared on multiple occasions that Iran cannot be permitted to develop a nuclear weapon, a position upheld by President Barack Obama. Yet all statements and resolutions of condemnation and punishment issued by the United Nations Security Council have been defiantly disregarded by Iran. Despite failing to support extensive anti-regime protests in Iran in 2009, the United States itself has taken increasingly punitive economic measures against Iran; these too have been met with defiance. The response of most of America's friends and allies has been to call either for negotiations with Iran or for more Security Council resolutions, but to reject the possibility of the use of force against Iran. Making matters worse, Russia has warned repeatedly against outside powers intervening with military force to stop Iran's nuclear program. And on the other side, Israel has been threatening to attack Iran's nuclear facilities on its own if the United States fails to act soon.

Should the United States resign itself to a nuclear Iran? Is it conceivable that Iran's nuclear program will be stopped by economic sanctions or other diplomatic means? Is regime change a real possibility, and if so, how, if at all, should this possibility affect U.S. policy? Should the United States consider military force against Iran as a last resort? If your answer is yes, considering the geography and the geology of Iran's nuclear program and the U.S. military resources currently available, what type of military strategy would you recommend? Aside from Israel, would the United States have any important allies to assist it in military operations against Iran? If so, who would they be, and if not, would this be a sufficient reason not to take military action? Finally, how should the United States respond in the event that Israel, fearing for its survival, launches military operations against Iran?

3. AL-QAIDA IN MALI

Northern Mali has recently been taken over by Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and is now the largest territory held by Al-Qaida and its allies. The size of this territory exceeds that of France. Deep inside caves in remote desert locations, Islamic extremists in northern Mali have been burrowing into the earth and erecting a formidable set of defenses to protect what in essence has become al-Qaida's new country. Those now in charge have imposed Sharia law. Women deemed improperly dressed are being flogged, limbs are being publicly amputated, world heritage sites are being destroyed, and major terrorist operations are being planned and (as in Algeria in January 2013) carried out.

With al-Qaida continuing to advance southward, France (Mali's former colonial ruler) launched a military intervention early this year. France's goal is the restoration of the Malian government's control of all of Mali, a goal toward which substantial progress already has been achieved. The United States and Great Britain have been providing the French forces with logistical support. Some analysts believe that Mali poses a more difficult military challenge than even Afghanistan. Referring to AQIM during congressional testimony on January 23, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton offered analogies between Afghanistan pre-September 2001 and Mali today and declared, "we cannot permit northern Mali to become a safe haven."

How important is the issue of Mali (and neighboring countries with a substantial AQIM presence) to the security of the United States? Is there a constructive role for the United States to play in Mali going forward? If France's forces prove unable to defeat AQIM, should President Obama consider more direct U.S. military participation? Ultimately, if confronted with the choice, should the United States accept al-Qaida control of northern Mali, or should the U.S. take whatever actions are required to prevent such an outcome?

4. THE UNITED STATES-EGYPT RELATIONSHIP

Following well over a decade of hostile U.S.-Egypt relations, a dramatic change was engineered in the 1970s by U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. In essence, Egypt switched from the Soviet to the American side in the Cold War and then proceeded to sign a peace treaty with Israel and to become an important U.S. ally and a large-scale recipient of American military and economic aid. After Sadat was assassinated by Islamic extremists in 1981, his successor Hosni Mubarak carried forward a pro-American foreign policy for the next thirty years -- until he was overthrown in an "Arab spring" revolution in 2011.

Shortly after the uprising that toppled Mubarak, elections were held in Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood, led by Mohammed Morsi, came to power. Although the Muslim Brotherhood can accurately be characterized as less overtly violent than al-Qaida, it is nonetheless an Islamic fundamentalist organization that seeks to oppress women and non-Muslims and all Western-oriented Egyptians by imposing Sharia law, and that openly calls for the annihilation of Israel. Moreover, the Muslim Brotherhood has long been a fertile breeding ground for al-Qaida and other violent radical groups.

At present President Obama is carrying through with an agreement arranged previously with the Mubarak regime to transfer to Egypt free of charge U.S. F-16 fighter jets and M1A1 Abrams tanks. In the words of the current U.S. ambassador to Egypt, the Obama administration perceives Egypt under Morsi "as a force for peace, security, and leadership" in the Middle East and as "an indispensable partner" for the United States.

How accurate is this assessment? Are U.S. interests served by continuing to treat Egypt under the Muslim Brotherhood as an ally? Or is the United States undermining its own security, the security of its ally Israel, and the global war against Islamic extremism by praising and lavishly supporting a Muslim Brotherhood government in the world's most populous Arab country? How, if at all, should U.S. policy toward Egypt be altered in light of contemporary circumstances?

5. THE UNITED STATES AND POST-GADDAFI LIBYA

A former Italian colony, Libya gained independence in 1951 as the United Libya Kingdom under the rule of King Idris. The state was renamed the Libyan Arab Republic following a coup d'etat by Muammar Gaddafi in 1969. Gaddafi was a brutal and bizarre dictator, who fell victim in 2011 to what was called the "Arab spring," a series of popular uprisings that also overthrew the rulers of Tunisia and Egypt. Rebel success against Gaddafi was assured only by the deployment of airpower by a UN-sanctioned NATO force led by the U.S., France, and Great Britain.

Civil institutions did not exist under Gaddafi. Political parties were banned. On the eve of Gaddafi's overthrow, Libya was essentially a tribal society with no experience in democratic governance and was held together largely by fear and force. Following Gaddafi's violent demise, the victorious rebels created the National Transitional Council, an interim governing body, to prepare the nation for democratic rule. From its outset, factional infighting has bedeviled the Council, and even though elections in July 2012 created the General National Congress, Libya remains politically unstable as many well-armed former rebel militia groups struggle for influence. And while Libya is blessed with huge oil resources, foreign corporations are cautious about investing in Libya's oil industry given the uncertain political environment.

Most foreign policy analysts believe that the United States was correct to intervene in Libya's civil war, but there is now great uncertainty about America's future role in Libya. As of 2013, the Obama administration has committed approximately \$12 million to help build a counter-terrorism force for Libya, and Congress is currently debating an additional \$3 million for a variety of other uses. This quite limited aid package and the fact that the bulk of it goes toward counter-terrorism speaks to Western leaders' fear that extreme Islamists and al-Qaida affiliated groups may undermine Libya's efforts to create a viable democracy. Al-Qaida's murder of the U.S. ambassador to Libya and three other Americans in September 2012 grimly highlights the ongoing instability in Libya and the difficulty in finding a sustainable policy blueprint for it.

In general, then, should the U.S. assume a less activist policy regarding Libya, or should it undertake a more robust approach to the promotion of political stability, democracy, and

individual rights? What, if any, lessons can be gleaned from the American experience in Iraq? How should concerns about "blowback," a hostile native reaction to what might be seen as U.S. interference in an Arab nation's domestic affairs, affect America's efforts? How does the challenge of Libya relate to America's broader policy towards the Arab world?

6. PRESIDENT OBAMA AND TARGETED KILLINGS THROUGH DRONE STRIKES

In recent years, in the ongoing U.S.-led war against Islamic extremists, the use of drone (pilotless aircraft) strikes to eliminate enemy leaders and their terrorist supporters has been increasing in prevalence and importance. Targeted killing through drone attacks, an approach initiated during the George W. Bush administration and carried forward at a much higher level of activity by President Barack Obama, began as a CIA assignment but lately has come to include a very prominent role for the U.S. military. With the exception of Osama bin Laden (the definitive verification of whose death was perceived as an essential component of the May 2011 Navy Seals operation that ended his life), drone technology has been the Obama administration's preferred method of eliminating major figures in al-Qaida, the Taliban, and affiliated radical groups. At least a few of the victims of these strikes have been U.S. citizens, most notably Anwar al-Awlaki, who have joined with Islamic terrorists overseas. And because terrorist leaders and operatives intentionally situate themselves among civilians, numerous non-combatants have inevitably been killed or injured as "collateral damage."

The Obama administration and its many Democratic and Republican defenders believe that targeted killings in Pakistan, in Afghanistan, in Yemen, and elsewhere have helped keep Americans safe by decapitating terrorist organizations and eliminating many of their operatives, and moreover have done so without exposing U.S. military personnel to danger. They express regret for non-combatant casualties and insist that the U.S. always does its best to avoid or limit such casualties. Regarding the very small number of U.S.-citizen victims, Obama's defenders argue that by participating in a war against the United States such individuals have forfeited any claim to due process rights. (Some point out that several hundred thousand American citizens who took up arms against the United States were killed without due process during the Civil War.) Critics, also both Democratic and Republican, counter that drone attacks are carried out with insufficient congressional oversight, are unethical and may be illegal, and do not contribute to the nation's safety.

What is the present level of congressional consultation for drone operations, and is that level appropriate and sufficient? On balance, do drone strikes contribute to U.S. national security, or do they detract from it? Do charges of immorality and illegality have any validity? On the whole, is the Obama administration justified and wise in persisting in its drone strategy? What recommendations would you make to President Obama regarding the continuation, cessation, or adjustment of his drone strikes policy?

7. OBAMA'S ASIA POLICY: "STRATEGIC REBALANCING"

During President Obama's first term, U.S. foreign policy underwent a very significant change, as the President and the secretary of state began to refocus the United States' strategic priorities away from Central Asia and toward East Asia, a policy originally called the "strategic pivot shift." Some of the specific changes undertaken to institute this new policy included the return of American troops to Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore, improved military cooperation with the Philippines, an increased American military presence in Japan, and a free trade agreement with South Korea. The "pivot" quickly came under scrutiny, criticized for its heavy reliance on military initiatives and for apparently targeting China's growing assertiveness in the region. China has been engaged for many years in a rapid buildup of its military capabilities, and China's far-reaching claims make the South China Sea an area of particular volatility.

In January 2012, the Pentagon relabeled the policy a "strategic rebalancing to Asia," assuring critics that the new plan integrates political, economic, and security considerations with the overall goal of prioritizing East Asia and the Pacific in U.S. defense policy. By "rebalancing" its policies, the United States aims to maintain its strategic advantage and leadership in the region for the foreseeable future.

Achieving such goals will not be easy. The rebalancing of American policy in Asia could involve fundamental changes or adjustments in bilateral U.S. relations with many nations in the region. For example, one of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's final policy statements on Asia caused an alarming uproar in Beijing, as she implied that the United States would defend Japan in certain China-Japan territorial disputes. As a consequence, the Obama administration has backed away from openly taking sides in the many territorial disputes in the area. At the same time, the U.S. has stepped up efforts to strengthen ties with Asian governments that have not been traditional partners of the United States. In November 2011, Obama became the first U.S. President to attend the East Asia Summit (ASEAN Conference), where he met with leaders from India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines to work toward closer economic and diplomatic relationships.

What challenges does the Obama administration face in its effort to "rebalance" U.S. defense policy? Which Asia-Pacific nations should the United States look to as strong allies? Does the U.S. need to alter its relationship with any specific nation or group of nations in the region in order to enhance U.S. security? What are the various methods the U.S. government could use to maintain a presence and retain a leadership role in the region? Are there any domestic economic or political constraints that need to be considered? Which U.S. treaty obligations and other commitments are already in place that could undermine or bolster U.S. policy? Should the United States be pursuing a friendlier relationship with China, rather than seeking to outmaneuver China for power and influence in the Asia-Pacific region?

8. THE UNITED STATES-CHINA TRADE IMBALANCE

In July 2009, Commerce Secretary Gary Locke told the American Chamber of Commerce that the U.S. trade imbalance with China “simply can’t be sustained.” Locke pledged that the Obama administration would seek to restore balance in the trade between the two countries. It has failed to do so. The U.S. trade deficit with China hit record levels in 2010, again in 2011, and again in 2012. Moreover, as a result of a history of large federal budget deficits combined with U.S.-China trade deficits that date from the 1980s and have grown significantly since then, China has become the U.S. government’s largest creditor, displacing Japan. China holds about 25 percent of the total U.S. debt held by foreigners, a position that gives it enormous leverage over a fragile American economy. Furthermore, it is increasingly clear that China and the United States have conflicting interests in several parts of the world.

The causes of the U.S. trade deficit with China are complex. China keeps the value of its currency low to ensure that its manufactured goods can be priced lower than competitive products manufactured in the United States. China is the final place of assembly for many electronic products whose components are made elsewhere, often in other Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. This means that the value of those components is added to the U.S. trade imbalance with China rather than to the imbalance with the country where they actually were made. In other words, China has absorbed some of the trade deficit once credited to Japan and Taiwan. Also, many foreign firms that manufacture in China, including American firms, design and patent their products in the United States and then manufacture them in China at a very low price, meaning that China in the end receives only a relatively small percentage of the price American consumers pay for their high-tech electronic goods.

Even as American consumers benefit from lower prices for the products they buy, the United States has been severely hurt by its chronic trade imbalance with China. Since 1998 the United States has lost between three and four million manufacturing jobs, many of them high-paying positions that supported the American middle class.

There are other disturbing prospects connected to the U.S. trade imbalance with China. Chinese and other Asian manufacturers are not satisfied just to build products conceived and designed in the United States. They want to develop their own products, which means that high-paying American research and design jobs are now at risk. Also at risk, at least according to a review issued by the White House, are high-tech U.S. weapons. The problem is that electronic components manufactured abroad, especially in Asia, could have their circuitry sabotaged by so-called “Trojan horses.” This could enable our adversaries to cause those weapons to fail at a time of their choosing.

What changes in U.S. trade policy will be necessary to establish a trade relationship with China that can be sustained? Is China likely to undertake any helpful measures, or will the United States have to take unilateral measures of its own? What would be the costs of these measures? What would be the costs of not taking unilateral measures to reverse this country’s trade imbalance with China? Also, what non-economic factors, if any, should influence U.S. trade policy with China?

9. DEALING WITH NORTH KOREA, A ROGUE STATE WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

In January 2013, in response to North Korea's successful rocket launch, the United Nations Security Council voted to impose tighter sanctions on that country. Following the action taken by the UN, Kim Jong Un, North Korea's new leader, issued this statement: "We do not hide that a variety of satellites and long-range rockets which will be launched by the D.P.R.K. ('Democratic People's Republic of Korea') one after another and a nuclear test of higher level will target against the U.S., the sworn enemy of the Korean people." North Korea then proceeded to carry out a 6-10 kiloton nuclear test on February 12. This was its third, and largest, nuclear test, the first two having occurred in 2006 and 2009.

The North Korean nuclear weapons program has long been perceived as a serious threat to the international community and to the United States and its allies in the East Asian region. There is little doubt that North Korea -- a brutally oppressive country with a totalitarian government that flagrantly disregards its citizens' human rights -- now possesses at least a small number of nuclear bombs. Based on the past behavior of the North Korean regime, the U.S. government is particularly worried that nuclear material might be sold by North Korea to a terrorist group or to another rogue state. But China, the one country with the political and economic leverage to force an end to North Korea's nuclear weapons program, has so far been unwilling to take the steps necessary to do so.

What should U.S. policy be toward North Korea? How should the Obama administration deal with the Pyongyang government? Can multilateral talks, despite their previous failures, be effective? Would bilateral talks be more promising? Are sanctions working, and if not, can they be made to work in the future? Is there a U.S. approach that might finally induce China to exert its great leverage? What incentives, if any, could the U.S. offer to influence North Korea's behavior? Is there a viable U.S. military option? Ultimately, does the regime of Kim Jong Un pose a menace that can be contained, or must it be removed, by force if necessary, for the sake of international security and stability?

10. DEALING WITH A RESURGENT, AND ADVERSARIAL, RUSSIA

Hopes that a post-Soviet Russia would develop into a democratic society now look increasingly misplaced. While it is difficult to define Russia's current government, it seems to be an autocratic regime that draws on Russia's long tradition of a strong centralized state. Whether one focuses on President Vladimir Putin or on Russian public opinion, there does not seem to be a sufficiently influential democratic constituency in that resurgent great power.

Russia's foreign policy appears to be running parallel with its internal political evolution. The era of a pro-Western foreign policy, which began under Mikhail Gorbachev during the last years of the Soviet Union and continued into the post-Soviet 1990s under Boris Yeltsin, is now over. That conclusion appears to stand despite some extremely important shared interests such as concerns about the spread of Islamic radicalism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Russia has lately defined its national interests in such a way that its foreign policy often conflicts with America's. Its foreign policy agenda includes reestablishing Moscow's position of strength vis-à-vis the United States and Western Europe; assuring that the former Soviet satellites of Eastern Europe are vulnerable to Kremlin pressure; asserting Russian primacy over Ukraine, Belarus, and the former Soviet republics in the South Caucasus region and in Central Asia; and improving and deepening relations with China and Japan. Russia bitterly resents NATO expansion, which in 1999 and again in 2004 brought several former Soviet bloc countries and former Soviet republics into the alliance. It opposes the spread of democracy, at least along its borders. Russia has obstructed U.S. efforts to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons and has repeatedly warned the United States against taking military action to stop the Iranian nuclear program. Russia has made massive conventional arms sales to Iran and Syria, two countries that actively support international terrorist organizations, and has acted in Syria to preserve the dictatorship led by Bashar Assad. It is China's largest arms supplier as well, selling that country, another increasingly powerful rival of the United States, some of the most technologically advanced Russian weapons systems.

Russia's growing international power depends heavily on its role as an exporter of oil and natural gas, which has propelled its economic growth and given it influence over industrialized countries, including American allies in Europe, that depend on those exports. Even the United States imports energy supplies from Russia.

Are genuinely friendly U.S.-Russian relations possible? If not, is U.S.-Russian cooperation possible? What, if anything, can and should the United States do to reverse its deteriorating relations with Russia? Which Russian policies are unacceptable from the standpoint of U.S. national interests? On the other hand, which Russian ambitions must the United States accept in order to secure Russia's compliance with U.S. actions deemed vital to American national interests? Finally, what role do U.S.-Russian relations play in the broader context of American foreign policy?

11. REMEMBERING SOUTH AMERICA: BUILDING THE U.S.-SOUTH AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP

South America sometimes seems an afterthought in U.S. foreign policy. This region that extends from Colombia to the tips of Argentina and Chile occasionally gets mentioned during election campaigns, but after elections other global concerns – China, the Middle East, Russia – take precedence and Latin America is largely forgotten. Congress pays even less attention to it except to block passage of bilateral free trade agreements laboriously hammered out by U.S. and South American negotiators, or to rail against some particularly harsh anti-American statement by Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez.

The United States' inattention to the region, however, stands in stark contrast to China's increasing interest in South America. Chinese-South American trade has grown exponentially in the early twenty-first century, rising from twelve billion dollars in 2000 to one hundred forty billion dollars in 2011. Chinese-initiated trade deals in the region, and Chinese-financed

infrastructure projects in several countries, further solidify this burgeoning relationship. As of today, only the U.S. has larger trade and investment ties with South America than the Chinese have.

China's growing presence in the Western Hemisphere almost certainly will weaken American political and economic power in the region if nothing is done to invigorate what should be strong U.S.-South American relationships. Geographically, the Atlantic and Pacific oceans separate South America from the rest of the world as much as they do the United States. Politically, many South American countries possess vibrant democracies and civil societies that increasingly resemble those of the U.S. Linguistically, the rise of Spanish as the second language of the U.S. connects us to predominantly Spanish-speaking South America. Economically, intra-hemispheric trade has increased substantially in the last twenty years. Logically, these connections should lead to close relationships.

Yet myriad disagreements exist between the U.S. and its South American neighbors, disagreements exacerbated by the long-history of U.S. interference in and domination of the Western Hemisphere. Regimes in Ecuador and Bolivia, along with Chavez's in Venezuela, successfully use overtly anti-American rhetoric to garner popular support, and even far less hostile governments in Brazil and Argentina openly mistrust U.S. intentions in the region. The United States' failure to resolve the problems in U.S.-South American relationships threatens to diminish long-term U.S. and regional economic growth, and reduce American global power to the benefit of the Chinese.

What actions should the Obama administration take to improve the United States' relationships with South American nations? Should the U.S. seek to draw as close to South America as it has long been to Europe, and, if so, how can it best advance this objective?

12. THE UNITED STATES AND THE PROBLEM OF VENEZUELA

According to Dr. Luis Fleischman, a professor at Florida Atlantic University, Venezuela under President Hugo Chavez "has become a strategic threat to the United States." Since coming to power in a democratic election in 1998, Chavez has maneuvered to extend the duration of his rule and to silence his internal opponents, and he has styled himself a regional leader and an adversary of the U.S. He now holds near-dictatorial power in Venezuela, although an ongoing battle with cancer has recently compelled him to spend substantial time in Cuba receiving treatment, bringing into question his continuing control of Venezuela.

Within Venezuela, where Chavez and his socialist program appear to be supported by a majority but detested by a substantial minority, he has implemented a new constitution and new laws that have greatly strengthened presidential power. He has employed threats and violence against opposition journalists. His anti-business policies have undermined internal economic growth, although Venezuela's vast oil reserves have prevented economic disaster from befalling the country.

Venezuela's foreign policy under Chavez has been hostile and confrontational toward the United States. Chavez has cultivated a special relationship with the Castro regime in Cuba. In

Colombia, Chavez provides support to FARC, a violent anti-government guerrilla organization that protects drug cartels. He has forged close ties with the government of Iran, having visited that country many times, and strongly supports its nuclear weapons program. Moreover, Chavez allegedly is providing a safe haven for growing numbers of radical Islamic terrorists and has issued false identification papers and Venezuelan passports to terrorist operatives. Venezuela today can be classified as a “revolutionary state” with a significant capacity to harm the United States.

How seriously should the United States take the threat posed by the Chavez regime in Venezuela? Would the best policy be to ignore Chavez and await his demise, hoping for better relations with Venezuela after he is gone? Or should the United States be more proactive about confronting Chavez? Is there a diplomatic approach that might prove fruitful? Is the U.S. in a position to undermine Chavez through economic pressure, or do Venezuela’s oil reserves render Chavez immune from such pressure? Can military action be a part of the solution to this problem? Ultimately, what, if anything, should the United States do about the provocative and dangerous behavior of a belligerent Venezuelan government?

13. THE U.S. AND A COUNTRY IN CHAOS: FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD ZIMBABWE

The southern African nation of Zimbabwe was established in 1980, replacing white-minority-ruled Rhodesia. Robert Mugabe became Zimbabwe’s first prime minister that year and subsequently rigged elections repeatedly to remain in power for almost thirty years. Another sham election in 2008 led to popular protests for change, which, combined with international pressure, forced Mugabe to share power with his main political rival, Morgan Tsvangirai. Until recently, Mugabe, who still controls the military and police, and Tsvangirai were often in conflict, with Mugabe frequently undermining Tsvangirai’s efforts to reform Zimbabwe politically and economically.

The legacy of Mugabe's three decades in power is an impoverished, economically moribund country. Eighty percent of Zimbabweans live in poverty. GDP per capita is \$500, which is lower by nearly half from twenty years ago. Zimbabwe's economy went into a steep decline in the early 2000s due to rapid expropriations of white landholdings and frequent political violence. The farm sector quickly collapsed, while the violence sank the tourism industry. Mass unemployment and severe shortages of basic goods soon followed, which combined with human and drug trafficking and HIV-AIDS to leave a broken society by the end of the decade. The most recent disaster came in 2008, when a stunning bout of hyperinflation began, peaking late that year with a monthly inflation rate of 6.5 sextillion percent. The CIA reported that unemployment in 2009 might have reached ninety-five percent. Only the elimination of the Zimbabwean dollar and its replacement with the American dollar as the country’s main currency eased the inflation cycle. Although the economy has shown some signs of recovery in the last couple of years, violence in the mining areas and the government’s admission on February 1, 2013, that it had \$217 (not a misprint) in the bank give little reason for optimism on the economic front in the medium term.

One small glimmer of hope does exist. Mugabe and Tsvangirai recently agreed to a brand new constitution, and Mugabe apparently will allow elections to be held sometime this year, so real political change may be on the horizon. This possibility of change leads to the fundamental question you need to answer: What should U.S. policy be toward Zimbabwe? More specifically, can or even should the U.S. help save Zimbabwe from complete collapse? Which issues (economic, humanitarian, political, strategic, etc.) should guide U.S. policy there? How might U.S. policy toward Zimbabwe be integrated into the larger U.S. policy toward sub-Saharan Africa and the developing world?

14. THE UNITED STATES NUCLEAR ARSENAL: WHAT MEETS THE NEED?

The United States nuclear arsenal has been reduced drastically under a series of nuclear arms reduction treaties signed with the Soviet Union in 1991 and with its successor state, the Russian Federation, in 1993 and 2002. The Soviet/Russian nuclear arsenal has been similarly reduced by those treaties. The most recent treaty, New START, which was signed by the United States and the Russian Federation in 2010 and took effect in January 2011, calls for further reductions by both countries to a level of 1,550 deployed warheads and 700 delivery vehicles by 2018. Beyond that, there is strong evidence that the Obama administration is considering making cuts that will reduce the U.S. arsenal below the levels stipulated by New START, assuming Russia can be persuaded to reciprocate. As part of a study known as the Nuclear Posture Review that began in 2011 and continued into 2012, the Pentagon was instructed to consider three options for deployed warhead levels below those mandated by New START: 1,000-1,100, 700-800, and 300-400. In November 2012 a State Department panel called the International Security Advisory Board suggested that mutual U.S.-Russian reductions to lower levels than those mandated by New START could be made outside formal treaty obligations. In sharp contrast, there are defense specialists who argue that the United States needs a force of 2,700 to 3,000 deployed nuclear warheads to meet its defense needs. They argue further that going below New START levels is irresponsible before the impact of that treaty's reductions has been assessed, especially in light of Russia's extensive nuclear modernization program, China's nuclear arsenal, and other emerging security threats such as those posed by Iran and North Korea. Which side's argument is more compelling, and why?

The size of the United States nuclear arsenal actually is only half the question of how to make sure the U.S. arsenal meets this country's twenty-first-century security needs. The other half involves the advanced age of U.S. warheads and delivery vehicles—intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched missiles (SLBMs, as well as the submarines that launch them), and bombers—that make up that arsenal. The last American nuclear warhead was built in 1989, and all of the warheads and delivery systems in the U.S. arsenal are based on 1970s technology. They are well beyond their intended lifetime. The average age of the Minuteman III missiles, the backbone of the U.S. ICBM force, is forty-one years, and the average B-52 H bomber, the backbone of the U.S. nuclear bomber force, is a half-century in age. And it is not only the weapons that are old; the facilities to build them are even older and in a serious state of

disrepair. Although there are plans to modernize the U.S. nuclear arsenal, programs that will cost tens of billions of dollars, the American effort currently lags far behind Russia's. Other nuclear powers, including China, also are modernizing their nuclear forces. Thus the second half of the question: Is the current program to modernize America's nuclear forces sufficient, does it need to be accelerated, or is it unnecessary and too expensive? And might the modernization of the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal safely allow for cuts even below those mandated by New START?

15. ON THE FIRING LINE: DEFENSE SPENDING IN AN ERA OF FISCAL TURMOIL

The U.S. federal government is in a state of fiscal crisis. The United States' current national debt stands at \$11.5 trillion, which amounts to almost three-quarters of the U.S. gross domestic product (the combined goods and services produced annually by the country's economy). In the 2012 fiscal year alone, the government reported a budget deficit in excess of \$1 trillion, and annual deficits threaten to go even higher in the decades ahead.

If left unresolved, the U.S. fiscal crisis could result in the following: a further downgrading of the nation's credit rating, a crippling debt load placed on future generations of Americans, a marked decline in societal living standards, a panic sell-off of long-term U.S. treasury bonds, sluggish economic growth, very high unemployment, the weakening of the dollar in international markets, declining foreign investment, deflation, and even financial insolvency.

Given the extent of the problem, one might expect that the White House, working in tandem with Democratic and Republican lawmakers on Capitol Hill, would fashion a long-term deficit reduction plan. However, the results to date have been disappointing. President Obama and Congress have repeatedly divided along partisan lines in trying to come up with a comprehensive political solution. Nonetheless, calls have been issued from members on both sides of the aisle to reduce the deficit by various combinations of raising tax rates, reforming the tax code, restructuring long-standing federal entitlement programs, cutting domestic discretionary spending, and decreasing defense spending.

Regarding the defense budget, outgoing Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta has publicly endorsed a program of cutting \$487 billion over next ten years from the Pentagon's budget. This reduction, in addition to the billions more in potential "sequester" cuts, have led many to argue that America's ability to defend itself from all manner of foreign military and terrorist threats will be greatly impaired. Others have suggested that such cuts are long overdue and that the military budget can be substantially reduced without any great harm to overall U.S. national security.

Which side of the great defense debate would you take? To address this question, you will need to study closely and assess the security needs of the United States from top to bottom and determine what are the minimum force and resource levels required. In this process, you will need to consider the issue of how to balance the objective of restoring the financial stability of this country with the heavy demands of U.S. national security. Does the United States continue to require a defense budget as large as the present one? If so, which of the various alternative methods of reducing the federal deficit would you recommend? If not, which areas of the

defense budget should be targeted for cuts?

16. GLOBAL HEALTH: CONTROLLING THE SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Global health initiatives in the past, while well-intentioned, have not delivered the positive outcomes anticipated by donors. Significant investments in U.S. foreign aid have brought only marginal improvement to the world's poorest and sickest populations. According to Paul Farmer, Founding Director of Partners in Health, better results can be achieved if more careful analysis is dedicated to the way in which scarce resources are delivered and administered.

Experience has shown that the design and implementation of global health programs is critical to their success. Donating drugs to developing countries is only the beginning of the complex task of administering treatment effectively. Training health workers to guide patients through complex treatment regimens can drastically improve health outcomes and check the spread of disease. Combating diseases such as malaria and HIV-AIDS has proven especially complicated, because prevention requires educating people to make lifestyle changes. Moreover, sustainable changes and lasting improvements in public health require certain prerequisites, such as a functioning government, the rule of law, and a basic communication and education infrastructure.

For this topic, choose an area of the world chronically afflicted by a particular disease such as malaria, tuberculosis, or HIV-AIDS, study past successes and failures in dealing with the spread of infectious diseases, and design ways for the United States to contribute to a solution. Is controlling the spread of infectious disease purely a humanitarian issue, or does it also have a national security dimension? To what extent should American resources be allocated for solving it? And how can these resources be utilized most effectively?

17. GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

An urgent problem confronting humanity is the greenhouse effect: the warming of the earth's atmosphere by an increase in the levels of carbon dioxide and other gases. While the majority of greenhouse gases come from the burning of fossil fuels, another contributing factor is the destruction of forests, which serve as a major reservoir of carbon. The cutting and burning of forests is a very common activity in the tropics, and releases great quantities of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The increase in carbon in the atmosphere has also led to widespread ocean acidification. In turn, damage to ocean ecosystems is yet another major contributor to global warming, because, in addition to producing most of the oxygen we breathe, the oceans absorb about 25 percent of current annual carbon dioxide emissions, and half the world's carbon stocks are held in plankton, mangroves, salt marshes, and other marine life. Other greenhouse gases, including chlorofluorocarbons, methane, and nitrous oxide, also are accumulating in the air as a result of human activities. The increase in atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide and other gases over the last half-century has been well-documented, and its impact on climate has been substantial. A number of international meetings, most notably the 1997 climate summit in

Kyoto, Japan, had earlier dealt with this issue. Under the auspices of the United Nations, an international treaty setting rules for the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol was negotiated. Although the majority of nations ratified this treaty, the U.S. government criticized several aspects of the agreement and the Senate refused to ratify it. In the spring of 2001, President George W. Bush withdrew the United States from the Kyoto Protocol.

Moving away from such resistance, President Barack Obama has been committed to finding a new international consensus on how to curb the emission of greenhouse gases. A promising bid for such action took place with the UN climate summit held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2009. After eight draft texts and all-day talks among 115 world leaders, it was left to Obama and Wen Jiabao, the Chinese premier, to broker the final political agreement. The result, however, was disappointing: It consisted of a somewhat vague three-page document that did not secure the unanimous approval of the countries in attendance. It was agreed that rich countries will commit to cutting greenhouse gases, while developing nations will take steps to limit the growth of their emissions, but no specific limits were established at this point. At a later climate conference, held in the Persian Gulf city of Doha in 2012, the Copenhagen accord was further refined to reflect the growing consensus that more recently industrialized nations, such as China and India, should no longer be allowed the exemptions that had been included in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.

What can be done to move the world's nations to a more complete and binding set of agreements to address the issues of global climate change, including the protection of the world's oceans? What should the role of the United States be in taking leadership to achieve this goal? How should the U.S. deal with the positions on this issue taken by the newly-emerging economic powers, namely China, India, and Brazil? Considering President Obama's clear declaration regarding the urgency of dealing with climate change in his 2013 Inaugural Address, what should be done to win eventual congressional approval of a more robust agreement? What sorts of domestic policies (setting higher fuel efficiency standards, promoting conservation and non-polluting energy sources, etc.) would effectively advance a U.S. government effort to contribute significantly to the fight against global climate change? Is the market-based model of "Cap and Trade" an effective way of curbing global carbon emissions, or should governments consider a more direct approach, such as a carbon tax? What are the decisions that would have to be made in order to motivate both the U.S. and the rest of the world's nations to achieve the goals that scientists see as imperative for averting a climate catastrophe?

SUMMARY

We have presented you with a detailed syllabus designed to serve as a guideline for the Capstone project. Remember, these pages are only a syllabus, nothing more. You are not expected simply to read this document and be able to go off and produce a Capstone report. Your team faculty are to serve as your ultimate directors. Each faculty team may have slightly different expectations and may set slightly different guidelines for you to follow. In any case, your faculty are there to guide you through this venture in an attempt to make the Capstone a productive and profitable learning experience.

If you are feeling slightly overwhelmed at this point, relax. Legions of former Boston University sophomores have successfully completed their Capstone projects. It may be helpful to take a moment to consider that the process of putting together a Capstone paper can be condensed into five tasks:

- (1) Identify the problem that you will be investigating.
 - (2) Gather pertinent evidence and arguments pertaining to this problem, being careful to examine the various sides of the issue.
 - (3) Based on this research, formulate a recommendation or decision.
 - (4) Determine the implications of your recommendation or decision.
 - (5) Bring this work together in your written report.
-