

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF GENERAL STUDIES
CAPSTONE 2010

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN AN ERA OF DANGER: 2010 AND BEYOND

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 1910 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-Qaeda 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, the Bush administration’s National Security Council, headed by National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, 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 rebuild and stabilize those two countries.

President Barack Obama, a critic of many aspects of the Bush administration’s foreign policy, nevertheless 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-Qaeda’s leaders to lay down their arms.”

While the war against terrorist organizations and rogue states – a war being waged both by military and by non-military means – clearly occupies center stage in contemporary U.S. foreign policy, U.S. diplomacy in 2010 and beyond faces multiple challenges, many but not all of which are directly connected to the ongoing war. 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 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 2010 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 Monday, May 10.** 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 26 and continue until Friday, May 7. This period of time will be subdivided as follows:

a. The weeks of March 29 and April 5 are for scheduled meetings with faculty, Capstone group meetings, and intensive research.

b. The week of April 12 should be used for additional conferences with faculty as needed, completing the research, and beginning to write the paper.

c. The week of April 19 should be devoted entirely to writing, typing, proofreading, editing, reproducing, and binding the written report.

d. The written report is **DUE at 12:00 noon on FRIDAY, APRIL 23. 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 23, at which time all Capstone papers will be

collected by faculty teams.

e. There will then follow two weeks, those of April 26 and May 3, 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.

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

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

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 military operations in Afghanistan) 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?
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TOPICS

1. THE UNITED STATES AND AFGHANISTAN: IS AMERICA ON THE RIGHT TRACK?

Through both involvement and neglect, the United States has played a major role in Afghanistan's recent history. U.S. military assistance, especially the provision of Stinger anti-aircraft missiles to the anti-Soviet Mujahedin, helped to drive the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan during the 1980s. Following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, U.S. neglect was one of numerous factors contributing to the violence and chaos that engulfed Afghanistan and that ultimately resulted in the takeover of the country by the radical Islamic group known as the Taliban in the mid-1990s. The Taliban brutally imposed a rigid Islamic system that had a particularly debilitating impact on the lives of Afghan women, who in effect became non-persons. More important from a U.S. national security standpoint, Afghanistan under the Taliban became the primary global base of al-Qaeda, which accumulated weapons, openly operated training bases, planned and ordered terrorist attacks in other countries, and in reality shared in the governing of Afghanistan itself. Shortly after the dramatic al-Qaeda assault on the United States of September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush – in conjunction with anti-Taliban Afghan forces, most prominently the Northern Alliance – initiated large-scale military action that rapidly overthrew the Taliban and scattered al-Qaeda.

In the wake of the removal from power of the Taliban, Hamid Karzai assumed the presidency of Afghanistan and, aided by soldiers and funds from the United States and many other nations, began the extremely difficult task of rebuilding and securing a shattered country. However, finding sanctuary in mountainous areas of neighboring Pakistan, and aided by a surge in Afghan poppy cultivation (which supplies, at big profit, much of the world's demand for heroin), the Taliban has been regaining strength; and substantial parts of Afghanistan are not under the control of the Karzai government. U.S. and other NATO forces remain in Afghanistan today for the purposes of overseeing the creation of a viable social and economic and political infrastructure, protecting the embattled Karzai government (which recently won re-election in a contest marked by significant irregularities), hunting down the remnants of al-Qaeda, and defeating the resurgent Taliban.

President Barack Obama, who has argued that the Bush administration's emphasis on operations in Iraq resulted in a diversion of U.S. resources vitally needed in Afghanistan, gave a major speech outlining his policy toward Afghanistan on December 1, 2009. Explaining the high stakes for the United States in Afghanistan, Obama announced the deployment of 30,000 additional U.S. troops and other American policy adjustments.

What are the United States' responsibilities to the people and government of Afghanistan? Does the U.S. have an obligation to ensure the well-being of the Afghan people? Has the United States made a sufficient commitment to Afghanistan? What role should conditions in Pakistan play in determining America's Afghanistan policy? How important is Afghanistan in the bigger picture of U.S. global security? What changes, if any, should be made in President Obama's policy toward Afghanistan?

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. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad leads a radical Shiite Muslim regime which actively supports terrorist organizations, particularly Hezbollah in Lebanon. 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 in the long run, it is reasonable to suspect, of the United States as well) are considered in the context of Iran's nuclear weapons program and Ahmadinejad's demonstrable and long-standing attachment to a cult of martyrdom, the danger appears to be ominous. Meanwhile, an internal uprising against the Ahmadinejad regime has arisen in the wake of an apparently fraudulent presidential election in June 2009. The regime has responded with increasingly brutal repression.

Aside from an actual nuclear war, other extremely undesirable consequences would almost certainly result if Iran becomes a nuclear state. Iran would achieve a stranglehold over vital shipping lanes through which much of the world's oil passes. And some Arab governments in the region, including that of Saudi Arabia, would likely seek to develop (or purchase) their own nuclear weapons. A nuclear arms race in the already volatile Middle East is a frightening prospect for the entire world.

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. (Iran's denials of this program generally are not taken seriously by knowledgeable people.) President George W. Bush included Iran within the "Axis of Evil" back in 2002 and afterwards declared on multiple occasions that Iran cannot be permitted to develop a nuclear weapon, a position upheld by President Barack Obama as well. Yet over the years all statements and resolutions of condemnation and punishment issued by the United Nations Security Council have been defiantly disregarded by Iran. 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.

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 internal regime change a real possibility, and if so, how, if at all, should this possibility affect U.S. policy? Should the United States prepare to employ 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 to the Obama administration? 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?

3. U.S. POLICY TOWARD THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

Beginning with Israel's victory in the Six-Day War in 1967, and for many years thereafter, U.S. policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict had three major objectives. One American objective was to sustain Israel's position as the strongest regional military power in order to gain advantages over the Soviet Union in the Cold War. A second, related objective was to provide the economic, political, and military support that Israel needed to defend itself against enemies seeking to destroy it. And a third objective was to use U.S. influence to promote negotiations and peace agreements between Israel and neighboring Arab states and between Israel and the Palestinians. (Disputes pertaining to limited water resources have constituted a significant additional complication for the pursuit of this third objective.) While the first of these objectives lost its relevance after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the second and third have continued to drive U.S. policy.

From the American standpoint, some of the most desirable results of U.S. diplomacy have been acquiring Egypt as a Cold War ally in the 1970s, the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty of 1979, the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty of 1994, and the ongoing survival of an embattled but militarily formidable Israel. For its part, Israel defended and preserved an endangered pro-American government in Jordan in 1970, and acted boldly to destroy Iraq's first nuclear weapons program in 1981.

Over the years – particularly during the presidencies of Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush – the U.S. friendship with the democratic State of Israel has grown extremely close. In July 2000, the Israeli government, backed by the United States, made a far-reaching offer in an attempt to secure a permanent peace with the Palestinians. But Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, responded by launching a terrorist war against Israel that September. When the United States was attacked a year later by Islamic extremists, President Bush emphasized the linkage between the terrorist enemies of the United States and the terrorist enemies of Israel. When Israel began a large-scale counteroffensive in 2002, Bush repeatedly reaffirmed his view that “Israel has the right to defend itself.” Bush again stood firmly beside Israel during the Israel-Hezbollah war of July-August 2006. Meanwhile, Hamas, a radical Islamic organization sworn to the destruction of Israel, has emerged as a leading force in Palestinian politics and society, ruling in Gaza (from which Israel withdrew unilaterally in 2005) and challenging the leadership in the West Bank of the more moderate Fatah, the party of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Because Hamas was regularly firing rockets from Gaza targeting Israeli civilians, Israel conducted a war in December 2008-January 2009 to stop the rocket fire, and once more the Bush administration provided diplomatic backing for Israel.

The United States today faces some difficult questions. Can the U.S. simultaneously conduct a long-term global war against radical Islamic terrorists (which include Hezbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad, Israel's foremost terrorist enemies), assure the survival of a strong and secure Israel, and promote peace between Israel and the Palestinians? Is it even possible to attain all these objectives? If so, what set of U.S. policies would be most likely to achieve success? If not, how should the United States prioritize its objectives, and what policies would be advisable in pursuit of U.S. priorities?

4. THE U.S. AND INTERNAL ETHNIC VIOLENCE IN SUDAN

Darfur, a region of western Sudan roughly the size of Texas, has been part of a broad conflict that has raged throughout the fifty years of the country's independence. The creation of Arab militias called the "janjaweed" has made the violence in Darfur far more extensive and troubling. The Darfur region and sections of southern Sudan are menaced by the Arab-dominated national government, which uses both its own forces and the janjaweed to terrorize the non-Arab African tribal groups in these regions.

Since 2003 nearly half a million people have been killed in Darfur. The U.S. has labeled these killings "genocide," although the UN and Amnesty International have not recognized the conflict as such. Close to three million people have been displaced and become refugees in other parts of Sudan and neighboring countries. The Sudanese government has not been cooperative in international efforts to resolve the conflict. It has been accused of tampering with evidence, such as attempting to cover up mass graves, has arrested and harassed journalists, and has restricted and censored press coverage. In July 2008 the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) filed ten charges of war crimes against Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir, charges that included three counts of genocide, five of crimes against humanity, and 22 of murder. On March 4, 2009, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for him, but without the genocide charges.

In July 2007 the UN Security Council authorized deployment of 26 thousand peacekeepers and police under a UN-African Union hybrid mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Deployment began soon after but full deployment continues to be obstructed by the Sudan government. Less than half of the UNAMID has been activated, while civilians from Darfur, eastern Chad, and the Republic of Congo continue to suffer mass displacement, killings, and rape. In July 2009 U.S. aircraft began flying equipment to Darfur to support the UN-African Union peacekeeping mission. The U.S. is providing only transport, not personnel, for the mission.

Great hope is being placed in a 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that requires a referendum in January 2011 on national unity or the secession of South Sudan. In 2007 this peace agreement was signed by the Sudan government and one of the three rebel factions, but since then the humanitarian and security situation has deteriorated due to increased combat, aerial bombardment, and the consequent civilian displacement.

The genocidal situation in Darfur is all the more troubling given that the world has seen this pattern before. In 1994 a savage ethnic conflict in Rwanda led to a genocide in which more than 800,000 Tutsi were slaughtered by the predominant Hutu and, in the aftermath, a massive humanitarian crisis occurred. At that time President Bill Clinton was fearful that labeling the events in Rwanda a "genocide" would require international, including U.S., intervention. This he opposed because of a failed U.S. intervention in Somalia. In the mid and late 1990s, many U.S. government officials and policy analysts proclaimed that "never again" should a genocidal situation be allowed to stand.

According to Major General Scott Gration, who serves as President Barack Obama's special envoy to Sudan, 2010 will be a critical year in securing a peaceful future for the entire region. National elections are scheduled for April 2010, and a registration for the referendum for self-determination for South Sudan will begin in July, with the vote taking place in January 2011.

Why have the principles of the Genocide Convention, signed nearly sixty years ago in the aftermath of the Holocaust, not evoked an aggressive response by the American government or

the international community? Does labeling any particular mass slaughter “genocide” mean anything when little action is taken to halt the surging violence? Does the U.S., as the world’s preeminent power, bear the primary responsibility for supplying forces to end the genocide in Darfur? Or, considering America’s military commitments to Iraq, Afghanistan, South Korea, and other nations around the globe, should the United States demand more international assistance in this mission? If so, what should be the nature of that international assistance? Taking a different perspective, should the U.S. tolerate this genocide and future genocides elsewhere that do not threaten the vital security interests of the United States? Overall, what should U.S. policy be with regard to the nation of Sudan?

5. U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY JAPAN

Since the end of World War II, America has cultivated a close strategic partnership and a significant economic relationship with Japan. According to Taro Kono, a leading Japanese politician who recently visited Boston University, the close security alliance and strong commercial ties between the U.S. and Japan constitute the “cornerstone of stability” in Asia today.

Japan is a robust democracy broadly supportive of the U.S. agenda on nuclear nonproliferation and many other critical geopolitical issues, and it has long been home to a significant U.S. military presence. However, recent domestic political changes in Japan could be signaling change on the horizon. In the legislative elections of August 2009, the center-left Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) replaced the long-dominant Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The DPJ’s victory followed a campaign in which the party promised to create a new Japanese foreign policy – one that is more independent of the United States and more focused on Japan’s integration into Asia. And as DPJ leader Yukio Hatoyama put it, his party is skeptical of “market fundamentalism in a U.S.-led movement that is more usually called ‘globalization’.”

On the economic front, instability in global financial markets and the recession in auto sales hit Japan’s economy especially hard in 2009. Some experts suggest that Japan’s weakened economic position combined with political changes may alter the dynamics of the U.S.-Japan alliance. However, the two countries’ long-term interests on a variety of security, economic, environmental, and political issues remain closely aligned.

What can be done from a U.S. policy standpoint to fortify the partnership with Japan for the long term? Should U.S.-Japan strategic cooperation be deepened even more? Would a closer military alliance with Japan be possible or desirable? Will the U.S. be able to maintain a significant military presence in Japan? Should it? To what degree will the 2010s require continuity in U.S. policy toward Japan, and to what degree will there be a need for a new approach?

6. THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA

When conceptualizing U.S. foreign policy in Asia, the concern that cannot be avoided -- the elephant in the room -- is China’s rising economic strength relative to other countries in the region and the United States. According to the analysis of the 2009 CIA World Factbook, China’s economy in 2008 was the second-largest economy in the world after the U.S. Other

measures still rank Japan's as the world's second largest world economy. What is beyond dispute is that the U.S. must reckon with China's rising capacity not merely to dominate Asia, but also to influence policy around the globe. Some foreign policy experts warn that America's national competitiveness and capacity to shape the international order on critical issues like trade, social justice, and human rights are on the wane. Moreover, in recent years China's military budget has been growing rapidly.

China's rising commercial and geopolitical stature challenges America's global power. China's current concept of diplomacy, emphasizing nationalism and pragmatism at the expense of broader, ethical concerns, undermines U.S. positions on many global problems. For example, a showdown between U.S.-based Google and the Chinese government has triggered a U.S.-China confrontation over freedom of information and fair business practice. To meet the challenge that China's rising power poses to U.S. foreign policy, the Obama administration may choose to strengthen strategic and commercial partnerships with China's democratic neighbors in the region -- Japan, India, South Korea, and Indonesia -- as a check on China's mounting regional and global influence. Alternatively, or additionally, the U.S. may want to invest more resources in fostering cooperation and mutual understanding with China. Some experts believe that if the U.S. can find ways to engage more productively with China in areas of mutual interest, the authoritarian rulers of China may gradually permit more transparency or be forced to take steps toward political liberalization by constituencies within their own society.

According to the U.S. State Department's "Background Notes on China," a number of policy frameworks for enhancing cooperation with China currently exist, such as the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, the U.S.-China Science and Technology Agreement, and the U.S.-China Energy Policy Dialogue. Whether building on these existing frameworks or adding new ones, the U.S. and China could invest more in collaborative research on environmental or energy problems. For example, China's reliance on coal as the primary source of energy fueling industrialization has produced massive air and water pollution with grave implications not just for the people of China, but also for people beyond China's borders. China may soon overtake the U.S. as the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases. Thus, moving aggressively to develop mutual solutions for stemming pollution is vitally necessary. U.S.-Chinese collaboration on scientific and research projects could be mutually advantageous, as long as both partners make genuine contributions to the proposed venture. In the past, the United States was the leading technological innovator in almost every respect, but China today is evolving rapidly into a technologically innovative society. Publicly-funded research and/or commercial joint ventures could spur innovation and enhance commercial strength in both countries.

What measures can be taken to prepare America for a world in which China plays an expanded role? Should the U.S. deepen relations with China despite fundamental differences on matters of freedom and human rights? How should the U.S. respond to China's economic dynamism and the broader influence that flows from China's manufacturing and engineering prowess? Can U.S. foreign policy objectives best be met by investing resources and consolidating alliances elsewhere in Asia, i.e. with China's democratic neighbors? What role, if any, might countries like Japan, Australia, India, and South Korea play in the U.S. effort to counteract China's growing power? What would be the strategic consequences for the United States of a policy of disengaging from China? Overall, what should be the nature and the central thrust of U.S. policy toward the People's Republic of China?

7. THE NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR MENACE

In April 2009 North Korea tested a three-stage Taepodong-2 missile that potentially has the capability of reaching American soil, forcing the United Nations Security Council to convene an emergency meeting. After Security Council permanent members Russia and China urged a wait-and-see approach to the news, the United States and the European Union issued a joint statement urging Pyongyang to end its policy of threats against its neighbors and the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. The statement condemns the North Korean government for harming the peace and stability of East Asia. North Korea claims that the test is part of its emerging peaceful space program.

Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program has been perceived as a serious threat to the international community and the security of East Asia for nearly a decade. In 2003 the North Korean government withdrew from the global treaty to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and then reprocessed enough spent nuclear fuel rods from its main nuclear reactor to give it sufficient plutonium to build six nuclear bombs. In 2005 negotiations involving North Korea, South Korea, the United States, Japan, Russia, and China proved ineffective at halting Pyongyang's plans to test a nuclear weapon. In October 2006 North Korea conducted its first nuclear weapons test, which, although only partially successful, in effect made North Korea a nuclear state. A second nuclear test took place in May 2009. There is little doubt that North Korea now possesses at least a small number of nuclear bombs. And 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.

President Barack Obama alluded to the problem of North Korea in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech when he referred to certain nations as "international rule-breakers." He declared that it is "incumbent upon all of us to insist that nations like Iran and North Korea do not game the [international] system."

What should U.S. policy be toward North Korea? How should the Obama administration deal with the Pyongyang government? Can more multilateral talks be effective? Would bilateral talks be more promising? What roles could other nations, such as China, Japan, and Russia, play? Are sanctions working? What incentives, if any, could be used to influence Pyongyang's policy? Is there a viable U.S. military option? Ultimately, does the regime of Kim Jong Il pose a menace that can be contained, or must it be removed, by force if necessary, for the sake of international security and stability?

8. THE FUTURE OF TAIWAN

Since 1950 the United States has protected Taiwan against a military takeover by China. Bolstered by American protection and economic assistance, Taiwan has grown into the United States' tenth largest export market. Today Taiwan is a flourishing democracy. Its population is larger than Australia's and its GDP is greater than any in Southeast Asia. It is also closely tied to China economically, but politically its democratic leaders reject the idea of rejoining China in the manner of Hong Kong and Macao.

Meanwhile, continued U.S. political and military support for Taiwan has remained a

serious complicating factor for U.S.-China relations. Since President Richard Nixon's historic trip to China in 1972 and his approval of the Shanghai Communiqué that paved the way for reopening diplomatic ties, American relations with Beijing have revolved around an understanding insisted upon by China's leaders and agreed to by the U.S. called the "one-China" principle. According to the one-China principle, the United States acknowledges that Taiwan is part of China. But the United States has refused to countenance any Chinese attempt to reunify with Taiwan by force.

Whether Taiwan should claim formal independence from China remains a highly volatile internal Taiwanese issue. Taiwan's current president, Nationalist Party leader Ma Ying-jeou, has called for "100 Years of Peace" between China and Taiwan. While he has encouraged discussions focused on the future of China-Taiwan relations (the cross-strait talks), he supports only economic and technological, not political, cooperation. On the other hand, China's president Hu Jintao and the Chinese Communist Party attach great importance to the goal of reuniting Taiwan with China. The Communist Party will not yield on this question.

Is it time for U.S. policy toward Taiwan to change? Under the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, the United States is committed to defending Taiwan against Chinese military aggression. Under President George W. Bush and, so far, under President Barack Obama (who in January 2010 authorized a major sale of U.S. weaponry to Taiwan), U.S. policy has upheld the status quo. But can it last? As China and Taiwan become linked economically, and as China's military becomes stronger, is it time for the U.S. to acquiesce in an eventual Chinese military takeover of Taiwan? What would be the regional and international consequences of such a dramatic change in U.S. policy? Ultimately, how far should the United States be willing to go to protect Taiwan from a Chinese military assault?

9. INDONESIA: CAN IT BE A LINCHPIN FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGIONAL STABILITY AND AN ALLY IN COMBATING TERRORISM?

With approximately 240.3 million inhabitants, Indonesia is the fourth most populous nation on earth and home of the world's largest Muslim population. Unlike most other Islamic countries, Indonesia is a secular state and its Muslims have historically been known for their moderation. Indonesia exerts strong influence in Southeast Asia, it has abundant natural resources, and its many thousands of islands are in a strategic location astride major sea lanes (the world's merchant fleet heavily utilizes the Straits of Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok). The United States has invested an estimated \$25 billion in Indonesia and more than 300 major American firms do business there. An unstable or unfriendly Indonesia could seriously compromise U.S. interests and objectives, tilt the international balance toward radical Islam, complicate strategic sea and air routes, hamper efforts to combat piracy and drug trafficking, and weaken a potentially constructive regional counterbalance to China. Yet this is a nation about which the U.S. knows very little. Congressman Jim Leach -- at that time head of the East Asian Subcommittee in the House of Representatives -- said in a 2001 Congressional hearing: "There is no country in the world of such vital importance that is less understood than Indonesia."

Indonesia has had a troubled history. After 1945 it struggled with the Dutch for independence (not won until 1949) and thereafter faced several rebellions against its central government. Soon after its independence Indonesia fell under the sway of authoritarian regimes

that initially supported communism but then brutally suppressed all vestiges of that ideology. It was not until 1999 that a democratic parliamentary government emerged.

Yet serious challenges remained. Indonesia was severely affected by the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s, militant groups fought for secession, and Jemaah Islalmiah (Muslim terrorists allied with al-Qaeda) masterminded a bombing in Bali that killed over 200 people in 2002 and attacked the JW Marriott Hotel and the Australian embassy in the capital Jakarta, among other sites. Indonesia seemed poised for disintegration, torn apart by separatist movements and inter-ethnic battles. However, the government managed to arrest and then put out of business those responsible for terrorism, all of which was accomplished with considerable popular support and without compromising civil rights. The government also devolved some powers to the provinces, thereby reducing separatist tensions, and carefully nurtured the economy back to health. Just last year Indonesia posted some of the strongest economic growth in Asia.

In 2004 free and fair legislative elections took place in Indonesia. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, leader of the secular Democratic Party, swamped hard-line Islamic parties and then was reelected president in 2009. After decades of military dictatorship and the threat of Islamic terrorism, Indonesia under Yudhoyono has achieved political stability. Looking forward, Indonesia can play an important strategic role as a source of stability in Southeast Asia and can assist the global effort to thwart Islamic terrorism.

What can the United States do to help consolidate Indonesia's fragile transition to democracy, support the territorial integrity of the country, reduce the factors that contribute to radicalism, and strengthen a bilateral partnership that since the beginning of the Cold War has at times been fractured by cultural, political, and economic differences? How important a role should Indonesia play in U.S. foreign policy?

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 the current Russian political system, the Russian government seems to be an autocratic regime that draws on Russia's long tradition of a strong centralized state. Whether one looks at Prime Minister Vladimir Putin -- who remains Russia's strongman even though he is no longer president -- President Dmitri Medvedev, most Russian political parties, or Russian public opinion, there does not seem to be a significant 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 stands despite what should be some extremely important shared interests, such as opposition to 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 broadening 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, as demonstrated by its opposition to the 2003–2004 “Rose Revolution” in Georgia and the 2004–2005 “Orange Revolution” in Ukraine. The Russian invasion of Georgia in August 2008 had a variety of objectives, but one of them was to crush Georgia’s democratic regime. Russia also was simultaneously sending two warnings to other countries: one to Ukraine not to move too close to the West and the other to European nations not to rely on oil or natural gas pipelines running from Central Asia through Georgia that might compete with pipelines traversing Russian territory. Russia has obstructed U.S. efforts to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. It has made massive conventional arms sales to Iran and Syria, two countries that actively support international terrorist organizations. Closer to home in the Western Hemisphere, Russia has sold arms to Venezuela, a country that is increasingly hostile to the United States. 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. (Take note of this point the next time you drive down the New Jersey Turnpike and have to buy some gas at the Lukoil station.)

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. AIDING POST-EARTHQUAKE HAITI: CAN NATION-BUILDING WORK THIS TIME?

On January 12, 2010, a shallow, 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, causing massive casualties and destruction of infrastructure. The U.S. government was quick to respond, but logistical bottlenecks, including problems landing at Haiti’s airport and the loss of the country’s main wharf, slowed the delivery of emergency services during the first few days when help was most urgently needed. Natural disasters have plagued Haiti in the past, contributing to a vicious cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and weak governance, but the scope of the death and destruction in 2010 is unprecedented. The situation for Haiti’s surviving citizens is still desperate at the time of this writing, and experts forecast that food shortages and instability in Haiti are likely to continue for some time.

Because Haiti is so near to the coast of the United States, and several American cities, including Boston, have large Haitian immigrant communities, there may be a compelling case, from a foreign policy standpoint, for America to devote special attention to the rebuilding of

Haiti. However, America's own financial resources are strapped at the current time, with some experts warning of grave consequences if the U.S. government's deficit is not reduced. Still, there is substantial interest among American citizens and American institutions to help the Haitian people at this difficult but potentially pivotal moment in their history. For example, a team of faculty from Boston University, specializing in disaster management and geographic analysis, mobilized immediately after the quake to meet with Haitian government officials, including President Rene Preval (see *BU Today*, January 25, 2010). This group of university professionals brought satellite maps and other scientific information to assist Haitian authorities as they set priorities for rebuilding. The B.U. faculty made key suggestions welcomed by President Preval about where not to build housing, so as to avoid fault lines, and about the potential benefits of reforestation and the use of renewable energy sources.

In addition to the overwhelming outpouring of financial and material aid to Haiti by American citizens and NGOs, the U.S. government has committed thousands of National Guard and Army troops to provide security, transport, and medical assistance under the command of Lt. Gen. P. K. Keen, who has asserted that their presence will be needed for a minimum of six months. Unlike American financial aid, U.S. military operations have been loudly criticized by some foreign governments, United Nations agencies, and even several Haitian organizations whose leaders cite decades of failed American policies toward Haiti. For example, the Clinton and Bush administrations both supported the concept of "nation-building" in Haiti, whereby American financial support was aimed at promoting democracy and economic development, but in actuality only served to exacerbate corruption and further destabilize an already weak government. On January 26, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton felt compelled to respond to the critics, stating: "I deeply resent those who attack our country, the generosity of our people, and the leadership of our president in trying to respond to historically disastrous conditions after the earthquake." But because the U.S. government in the recent past has played a role in regime change in Haiti, suspicions prevail.

Has the earthquake provided an opportunity for the Obama administration to improve U.S.-Haitian relations and, more importantly, to help rebuild Haiti in a manner that creates a viable, stable nation? How can the U.S. government best facilitate the provision of emergency assistance for Haiti? Can a policy of "nation-building" for poor countries like Haiti be effective? What roles should be played by non-profit organizations, universities, and businesses? If America does not engage fully in helping Haiti, what will be the consequences, if any, for U.S. national security and for this country's standing abroad as a moral leader? Can lessons be learned from this humanitarian disaster that might be applicable to the handling of future humanitarian disasters elsewhere?

12. THE U.S. AND CUBA: THE LAST VESTIGE OF THE COLD WAR?

While the Cold War ended nearly twenty years ago, relations between the United States and Cuba seem to be one remaining outpost of Cold War dynamics. The two nations, separated by only ninety miles of water, have been at odds ever since the Cuban Revolution of 1959 and the creation of a Communist government led by Fidel Castro. Indeed, Cuba was the site of the most harrowing moment of the Cold War -- the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

Over roughly the past five decades, U.S. policy toward Cuba has sought to isolate and

penalize the Communist government. The embargo against Cuba has been a cornerstone of the U.S. approach to the island nation, and the U.S. has long been critical of Cuba's lack of democracy and the violation of basic human rights by the Castro regime. But the policy of embargo has not been without controversy. From one perspective, it has been widely supported by members of a vocal Cuban exile community in the United States, many of whom suffered at the hands of Castro's government. Others, however, have argued that the embargo has failed to bring positive change to Cuba, and has only punished its already suffering citizens.

Recent signs may forecast domestic changes within Cuba, and perhaps some change in the U.S. approach to the island. Longtime leader Fidel Castro is now 83 years old, and in poor health; leadership has largely passed to his younger brother Raul Castro. And in the spring of 2009, the Obama administration made some changes in U.S. policy. While the embargo was not dismantled, the changes did lead to a loosening of some travel and remittance restrictions. Furthermore, Vice President Joe Biden has openly stated that "over the next decade and sooner there is likely to be, and needs to be, changes in the relationship between Cuba and the United States."

What might be the nature of these changes? With the Castro regime still in power, how should the United States approach a potential, but uncertain, political transformation in Cuba? Should the U.S. continue its embargo for the time being? Or is an alternative approach more advisable? Also, how significant is the Cuban question as a foreign policy issue? Of what strategic and/or military importance is Cuba to U.S. interests?

13. 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 silence his internal opponents and has styled himself a regional leader and an adversary of the U.S. He now holds dictatorial power in 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 eight times as of the fall of 2009, and strongly supports its nuclear 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 and rising 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 hope that somehow he will be overthrown or self-destruct? 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?

14. THE U.S. AND A NATION IN CHAOS: FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD ZIMBABWE

The southern African nation of Zimbabwe was established in 1980, replacing white-minority-ruled Rhodesia. One continuity in Zimbabwe since 1980 has been the dominant political presence of Robert Mugabe. Mugabe's leadership has been marked by numerous abuses, and Zimbabwe today is a nation in crisis.

Zimbabwe suffers from an almost unimaginable list of problems. Its economy has been in steep decline in recent years, suffering from a shrinking GDP, hyperinflation, a shortage of hard currency, extremely high unemployment rates, shortages of even the most basic consumer goods, and the dislocation and chaos caused by Mugabe's land redistribution program. In addition, Zimbabwe is challenged and weakened by human and drug trafficking, HIV-AIDS, and tense relations with its neighbors.

Politically, Zimbabwe suffers under Mugabe's authoritarian rule. He has been accused of a wide range of outrages, including rigging elections, violating basic human rights, and instituting political violence against opponents. While a power-sharing agreement was reached in 2009 between Mugabe and opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai, the reality is that Mugabe remains effectively in control.

What should U.S. policy be toward Zimbabwe? Can the U.S. help save the nation from complete collapse? Should the United States push for Mugabe's arrest and prosecution? How might Zimbabwe's chaos contribute to wider problems on the African continent? Which issues (economic, humanitarian, etc.) should guide U.S. policy toward Zimbabwe? How might U.S. policy toward Zimbabwe be integrated into the larger U.S. policy toward sub-Saharan Africa and/or the developing world? From the vantage point of the United States, is the Mugabe regime solely a humanitarian problem, or is it also a strategic problem?

15. A NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM FOR THE UNITED STATES?

The question of a national missile defense system has been debated in the United States for many years. In signing the 1972 ABM Treaty, the United States in effect accepted the dual premise that attempting to build a missile defense against a Soviet nuclear attack both undermined efforts at nuclear arms control and was not technologically feasible. Although in the 1980s President Reagan challenged those premises by pursuing the space-based Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), neither he nor his two immediate successors withdrew from the ABM Treaty. However, in 1993, the Clinton Administration cancelled the SDI program; it was replaced by a more limited missile defense research project.

Meanwhile, the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the spread of

nuclear and missile technology to additional countries changed the nature of the missile threat confronting the United States. Instead of thousands of Soviet missiles, America now was facing threats, still potential rather than imminent, from countries like North Korea and Iran, whose capabilities were far more limited. That suggested the possibility that an effective missile defense system *could* be built. At the same time, the fear arose that, unlike with the Soviet Union, the threat of massive retaliation and assured destruction might not deter the unpredictable and radical North Korean and Iranian regimes. That suggested that an effective missile defense system *should* be built.

The result, during the Clinton Administration, was the National Missile Defense Act of 1999, which committed the government “to deploy as far as is technologically possible an effective National Missile Defense system capable of defending the territory of the United States against limited missile attack.” And in 2002, during the administration of George W. Bush, the United States withdrew from the ABM Treaty in order to construct a national missile defense system.

The current U.S. missile defense program is directed against countries with small nuclear arsenals such as North Korea and, potentially, Iran, which might resort to nuclear blackmail or may not be deterred by the threat of retaliation. It is designed to protect not only the United States but also its allies and friends and involves a variety of systems with different capabilities. The United States currently has the capacity for what the Defense Department’s Missile Defense Agency calls “a limited defense against ballistic missile attack.” Between 2001 and 2008 the Missile Defense Agency was successful in 35 of the 43 tests it conducted, each firing one missile to shoot down another. The agency calls these tests “hit-to-kill intercepts.”

Missile defense is controversial. Some weapons experts, such as Joseph Cirincione, believe it is not possible to build a system that is sufficiently reliable. Others, such as Loren B. Thompson, the former Deputy Director of the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University, strongly disagree, and there is an ongoing debate on the subject. Several countries are currently partnering with the United States in building missile defenses. Japan has worked with the United States since 1999 and plans to deploy four warships with Aegis missiles. NATO allies such as Great Britain, Denmark, the Netherlands, and the Czech Republic all support American missile defense efforts. Israel’s Arrow missile defense system, which the United States co-funded and helped to develop, has been deployed since 2000. A more advanced version of the Arrow, again with U.S. assistance, is currently in development. India is another country that has worked on developing a missile defense system. Meanwhile, in January 2010 the People’s Republic of China, an adversary of the U.S. rather than an ally, successfully tested a new technology for intercepting ballistic missiles.

Is an effective system – one that can cope with threats from countries like Iran and North Korea – technologically feasible? Is one affordable? Which available options offer the most promise? For example, should there be a ship-based component to any U.S. missile defense system? What problems is a missile defense system likely to solve? What new problems, if any, might it create?

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. (According to a recent symposium sponsored at Boston University by the African Studies Center, learning from the failures of past malaria eradication programs can help set a realistic direction for future malaria control.) 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 HEALTH: COMBATING HUNGER

In June 2009, the Food and Agriculture Organization, an agency of the United Nations, estimated that hunger now affects one billion people -- about one-sixth of the world's population. High food prices and falling incomes due to this year's global recession have combined to produce a world hunger crisis. Yet public investment in agricultural research by the U.S. Department of Agriculture has fallen significantly in recent decades. Meanwhile, agricultural research by U.S. corporations such as Monsanto or Dow Chemical is not tailored to address the types of problems most perilous to the malnourished communities of the developing world. If the current crisis continues unabated, chronic malnutrition will stunt the neurological development of more and more children under the age of five in affected communities. It can be argued that there is a moral imperative for countries with abundant food resources like the U.S. to respond to this hunger crisis, yet designing and implementing a workable solution from a foreign policy standpoint will not be easy.

For this topic, select one of the areas of the developing world in which malnutrition is the most severe, and design a U.S. policy for helping to end hunger there. Is combating hunger 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?

18. ENHANCING U.S. SECURITY AND UPLIFTING WOMEN IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan poses a unique problem for the United States in the global war against Islamic extremism. For Pakistan is both a major U.S. ally and, contradictorily, a primary safe haven for al Qaeda and the Taliban.

Recently-passed legislation, "The Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009," is oriented toward bringing tangible benefits to the Pakistani people. The package allocates U.S. funds to projects encouraging social welfare, an independent media, and accountability in government. One controversial aspect of this foreign aid package, from the standpoint of Pakistan, is the prominence afforded women in the funding of vocational training, education, and development projects. Linking funds to increases in female education and female participation in the labor force offends many in a Muslim society like Pakistan. Some have called the conditions placed on the funds an infringement on Pakistan's sovereignty. However, the law's insistence on women's participation in society can be seen as not just a moral issue, but also a stability issue and a security issue. According to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who has made the welfare of women and girls a "core factor" in U.S. foreign policy, instability and extremism are often found in places where women are severely mistreated. Targeting girls' education can create momentum for the rebuilding of the entire community. In "Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide," journalists Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl Wu Dunn describe educating girls as "the single best way to lower fertility, improve children's health, and create a just and more dynamic society." Giving females prominence in aid programs does not mean excluding or devaluing men. Rather, making women's rights a priority in the developing world is a strategy for turning around a community in a relatively short period of time, since girls in poor countries are particularly undernourished intellectually. With access to education and other support services, they can make substantive gains rapidly and set in motion other positive changes.

Is "The Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act" an advisable law? Is this law likely to contribute to the attainment of U.S. objectives in Pakistan? If so, why, and if not, why not? Do you agree with U.S. intelligence experts who argue that more engagement with local civilians and more attention to local public opinion will boost U.S. efforts to defeat the Taliban in Pakistan? What changes, if any, should be made in the United States' policy toward Pakistan?

19. 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. The award-winning film *An Inconvenient Truth* featuring former Vice President Al Gore was produced in an effort to raise the public's awareness of the need for action on global climate change. One of the major sources of carbon dioxide emissions is the generation of energy by the burning of fossil fuels -- oil, coal, and natural gas. Another contributing factor is the destruction of forests, which serve as a major reservoir of carbon; the cutting and burning of forests, a common activity in the tropics, releases great quantities of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Damage to ocean ecosystems is yet another major contributor to global warming; 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 many nations ratified this treaty, the U.S. government criticized several aspects of the agreement and refused to ratify it.

There seemed to be a better chance for a new treaty with the arrival of Barack Obama as President of the United States, since he was far more concerned about the problem of global climate change than his predecessor had been. 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. However, the result was disappointing: It consisted of a somewhat vague three-page document that did not secure the unanimous approval of the countries in attendance. (Sudan and Saudi Arabia refused to sign.) So, not surprisingly, the Copenhagen accord has been severely criticized by climate change activists. Many countries desired a stronger agreement with more ambitious international objectives. On the other hand, the accord did please nations who want to put economic development first. 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. There was a promise of short-term financial assistance of \$10 billion a year over three years for poorer countries to help them fight climate change and a long-term funding package worth \$100 billion by 2020.

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 position on climate change, 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 complement a U.S. government effort to contribute significantly to the fight against global climate change? 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?

20. THE UNITED STATES AND DEFORESTATION: WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

"Shortsighted persons, or persons blinded to the future by desire to make money, . . . sometimes speak as if no great damage would be done by the reckless destruction of our forests. It is difficult to have patience with the arguments of these persons. . . . Nothing should be permitted to stand in the way of the preservation of the forests." So declared President Theodore Roosevelt in his final annual message to Congress in December 1908.

A century later, deforestation is running apace in many areas of the globe, particularly in

developing countries. This is a particularly severe problem in tropical rainforests, which can be converted to arable land and grazing pastures profitably, at least in the short run. Some of the pressures on forests are local in nature. For example, overpopulation and land tenure issues have led many poor, displaced peasants to settle rainforest land where logging roads have been built, in order to establish small subsistence farms for their families. In other situations, deforestation is influenced by global supply and demand. For instance, large tracts of the Amazon rainforest have been converted to grazing areas for cattle destined for fast-food corporations in the United States. As another example, vast regions of rainforest in Southeast Asia have been converted to oil palm plantations in response to a global demand for "biofuels."

A large and growing body of evidence shows the ecological problems associated with deforestation. Fires that clear rainforest lands emit carbon dioxide while destroying trees that would otherwise "scrub" the atmosphere of this greenhouse gas through photosynthesis. Methane, which is much more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, is released by grazing cattle as well as by exploding termite populations harvesting cellulose from trees that have been cut down. Erosion depletes nutrients from already marginally fertile rainforest soils. Runoff threatens the quality of fresh water in river systems and, in turn, endangers aquatic life in the rivers. While rainforest clearing may yield an immediate short-term economic benefit, the ecological degradation that occurs because of deforestation produces harmful long-term economic and social consequences.

The problems associated with deforestation are both local and global. Global demand for resources drives deforestation in a variety of ways. For this topic, consider the roles that U.S. policies and U.S. consumerism play in the process of rainforest degradation. How can a major power (and a major consumer) like the United States institute policies that will slow rainforest destruction? Should our government play such a role, or is the problem primarily a matter of private responsibility on the part of American corporations and consumers? Can the U.S. work with partners in developing countries to establish new policies that will preserve rainforest integrity? Can a conservation model like that of Costa Rica, which had major input from the United States, succeed in highly complex societies like those of Brazil and Indonesia? In sum, how might the United States contribute to solving this severe international problem?

21. 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. That will not be easy, as the U.S. trade deficit with China currently is well over \$250 billion per year, by far the largest deficit the U.S. has had with any country in history. Moreover, China until now has been intent on preserving that imbalance. As Nobel Prize laureate Paul Krugman commented in January of this year, referring to China's policy of keeping the value of its yuan at about 6.8 to the dollar, China "follows a mercantilist policy, keeping its trade surplus artificially high." To be sure, the overall U.S. trade deficit involves more countries than China. For example, America's deficit with Japan has ranged from \$69 billion to \$89 billion per year since 2000. But the largest part of the problem is China, which in the third quarter of 2009, as the global economy began to recover, was responsible for half of the surge in

the U.S. global trade deficit in manufactured goods. Meanwhile, in January 2009 China became the U.S. government's largest creditor, displacing Japan, a position that gives China enormous leverage over a fragile American economy. And as of January 2010, China had displaced Germany as the world's largest exporter.

The causes of the U.S. trade deficit with China are complex. 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, or 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 or Taiwan. Also, many foreign firms manufacture their products in China, and many of these companies are American. They design and patent their products in this country and manufacture them in China at a very low price, meaning that China in the end receives only a small part of the price American consumers pay for their high-tech electronic goods. Thus your Apple iPod was conceived and designed in the U.S., but it is assembled in China by a Taiwanese firm using components from many countries. Only a few dollars of your iPod's wholesale price go to China; most of the profits come back to Apple here in the United States.

That said, 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. 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. This ongoing pattern does not bode well for efforts to bring about a sustainable economic recovery in the United States or reduce the massive debt burden that clearly threatens this country's economic future.

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. According to retired General Wesley G. Clark, "Maliciously tampered with integrated circuits cannot be patched. They are the ultimate sleeper cell." What changes in U.S. trade policy will be necessary to establish a trade relationship with China that can be sustained? To what extent could the problem be solved by China permitting a rise in the value of its currency relative to the dollar and further opening its domestic market to imports, including those from the United States? Is the Beijing regime likely to undertake these measures, or will the United States have to take unilateral measures of its own, such as placing tariffs or quotas on Chinese goods, in order to induce changes in China's policies? Is there any merit in a plan proposed several years ago by businessman Warren Buffett under which import certificates would be given to companies in exchange for each dollar's worth of goods produced domestically and sold abroad? 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?

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.
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