BOSTON UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF GENERAL STUDIES

CAPSTONE 2016

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN 2016 AND BEYOND: ADVICE FOR THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION AND ITS SUCCESSOR

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 month'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 1916 survived the mass carnage of World War I, in the aftermath of which the United States was by far the world's foremost economic power but chose to avoid international responsibility. World War II constituted an attempt by Nazi Germany and imperial Japan to destroy a multipolar world structure and to impose their brutal (and, in the German case, genocidal) domination across the globe. A bipolar world order was indeed the outcome of World War II, but it was two of the victors, the United States and the Soviet Union – not the defeated Germany and Japan – that now stood as the world's two centers of power. During the long Cold War, a weakened but still formidable Britain, a difficult though sometimes helpful France, and the rebuilt democratic states of West Germany and Japan aided the United States, while ultimately depending on the U.S. for their security. The People's Republic of China was allied with the Soviet Union during the 1950s but thereafter was the Soviet Union's rival, often cooperating with the United States during the 1970s and 1980s. The bipolar nuclear world of the Cold War endured (albeit precariously at times) until the unraveling of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990s.

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

The shocking and deadly al-Qaida attack of September 11, 2001, marked a turning point in the history of American foreign policy, as the United States was thrust into a war with a new type of enemy. The Soviet Union of the post-Stalin decades had had the <u>means</u> to annihilate the United States but no <u>intention</u> to do so, because an ultimately rational Soviet leadership understood the implications of launching a nuclear attack and did not wish to suffer the consequences of "mutual assured destruction." In contrast, America's present-day 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 <u>intention</u> to annihilate the U.S., they presently lack the <u>means</u> to do so. Obviously, then, the United States is now engaged in a conflict that is fundamentally different from the Cold War, and that therefore requires very different strategies.

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

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

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

But President Obama's foreign policy, particularly during his second term, has been highly controversial. The controversy is captured very well by the two lead articles in a symposium presented in the September-October 2015 issue of *Foreign Affairs*. For his part, Gideon Rose defends and praises Obama. While acknowledging a "gap between [the President's] words and his deeds," Rose contends that the Obama administration "has not abandoned traditional U.S. grand strategy; it has tried to rescue it from its predecessor's mismanagement." Rose goes on to suggest that "the United States today may be richer, stronger, and safer than it has ever been." In sharp contrast, Bret Stephens argues that Obama has engaged in an "effort to recast the fundamental tenets of the country's approach to the world," leading America's "foes to believe that they can do as they please." Plus there has been "frequent and sometimes unaccountable incompetence in execution." As a result, Stephens concludes, "the world has already entered an era in which global disorders, spurred by American retreat, are proliferating" and are "increasingly hard to contain" (pp. 7, 10-11, 14-16).

U.S. diplomacy in 2016 and beyond faces multiple challenges, many but not all of which are directly connected to the ongoing struggle against Islamic extremism. Two major contemporary challenges are, in essence, updated versions of Cold War-era difficulties. Under the rule of Vladimir Putin, Russia has once again defined itself as an adversary of the United States and is acting to undermine U.S. interests on a range of issues. And China is rapidly building up its military capabilities and is conducting foreign and economic policies that threaten U.S. interests in the Asia-Pacific region and the well-being of the American economy.

The assigned task of each 2016 Capstone group is to investigate an important problem in present-day U.S. foreign policy and to devise a recommendation for addressing that problem. Depending on the nature and the current realities of the selected problem, the recommendation

can be made to the Obama administration, to its successor, or to both. (For example, there would be no point in recommending that the Obama administration jettison the 2015 U.S.-Iran nuclear deal, because there is no possibility that such a recommendation would be considered seriously. A recommendation of this sort could, however, realistically be presented to the next President.) 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 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 no earlier than Saturday, May 7.** 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 25 and continue until Friday, May 6. This period of time will be subdivided as follows:

a. The weeks of March 28 and April 4 are for scheduled meetings with faculty, Capstone group meetings, intensive research, and (toward the end of the second week) beginning the writing of the paper.

b. The week of April 11 should be used for additional conferences with faculty as needed, completing any remaining research, and writing and editing the paper.

c. The week of April 18 should be devoted entirely to editing, proofreading, reproducing, and binding the written report.

d. The written report is **DUE** at **12:00 noon** on **FRIDAY, APRIL 22. 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 22, at which time all Capstone papers will be collected by faculty teams.

e. There will then follow two weeks, those of April 25 and May 2, 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: As defined by *Webster's New World Dictionary,* to plagiarize is "to take (ideas, writings, etc.) from another and pass them off as one's own." 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 (or two leaders, if your advice is intended for both the current and the next presidential administrations). The group will consider the ethical, philosophical, social, domestic political, international security, scientific, and technological implications of the chosen problem and of the proposed policy. Policy proposals should reflect careful research and clear thinking.

FORMAT OPTIONS FOR THE WRITTEN REPORT

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

I. POLICY RECOMMENDATION FORMAT

If your group chooses this format you will set yourselves up as an entity that is charged with investigating a specific problem (e.g., whether and to what degree the United States should challenge the aggressive policies of Russia under Vladimir Putin) 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 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 more vigorous military action in an effort to destroy the Islamic State). 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 that combating climate change necessitates a major, long-term commitment by the United States, you might cite data indicating the likely negative consequences of a smaller-scale effort. 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 more limited U.S. approach to combating climate change, you might cite data about the high cost and likely ineffectiveness of a large-scale approach, or the greater importance of some competing foreign policy priorities. As with Petitioner I, any evidence that will support Petitioner II's position and sway the judgment in the desired direction should be presented.

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

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

FOCUSING YOUR RESEARCH

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

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

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

3. What is the current range of thinking about your issue? What are the various serious alternative solutions to the problem you are investigating? Whether or not you choose to use the

adversary format, you should identify opposing views about the issue and become familiar with the debate surrounding it. This approach lends more credibility to your eventual policy proposals.

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

5. How would your policy be implemented?

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

E-PORTFOLIO ASSIGNMENT

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

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

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

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

The Capstone self-assessment consists of three questions. Please respond thoughtfully to each question. The total length of your self-assessment should be approximately two double-spaced pages. You should post your self-assessment on the Capstone tab of your e-Portfolio site before your oral defense, and you also should bring a printed copy of your self-assessment to

your oral defense for delivery to your professors. Here are the three questions: (1) How did the Capstone project contribute to the development of your research, writing, and editing skills? (2) Did you learn anything new about how to use evidence to formulate a strong argument? Please provide specific examples. (3) To what extent did your coursework at the College of General Studies prepare you for the interdisciplinary nature of the Capstone project? Again, please provide specific examples.

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

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

(b) On the left-hand side, you will see a list of courses in which you have been enrolled. Choose the one that corresponds to your team (example: CGS Team V Spring 2016). A green check mark will appear next to your course once you select it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TOPICS

1. THE UNITED STATES, THE ISLAMIC STATE, IRAQ, AND THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

The enormously deadly civil war in Syria began with peaceful demonstrations against the dictatorial rule of Bashar al-Assad in March 2011. A violent reaction by the regime led to violence by its opponents. By now well over 200,000 people, mostly non-combatant civilians, have been killed. And an ongoing huge outflow of refugees to neighboring and more distant countries has occurred.

During the summer of 2012, President Barack Obama rejected a recommendation put forward by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, and other top officials to vet and train certain rebel organizations and fighters. Not long afterward, radical Sunni Muslim groups became dominant in the opposition to Assad. The self-proclaimed Islamic State, an extremely brutal entity with an apocalyptic vision, took over substantial areas in Syria and (because of the incompetence and sectarianism of the Iraqi government and the power vacuum produced by President Obama's total withdrawal of U.S. forces by the end of 2011) in Iraq. The Obama administration launched a limited air campaign against the Islamic State in August 2014, while deciding to provide only relatively small quantities of military equipment to Kurds and others fighting the Islamic State on the front lines. The Islamic State has perpetrated murder and rape on a massive scale, and in recent months it has succeeded in attacking Paris and other overseas targets.

Meanwhile, Russia has joined Iran and the Iranian-controlled Shiite Muslim terrorist group Hezbollah in fighting on the side of Assad. The situation in Syria today is one of political chaos and extraordinarily bloody civil war. While opposing both the Islamic State and the Assad regime, the United States government views the defeat of the former as the higher priority.

Advise the Obama administration and its successor on U.S. policy toward Syria and the Islamic State. Should the U.S. escalate its military effort in Iraq and Syria against the Islamic State, and, if so, in what ways? Should the U.S. continue to push for the removal from power of the Assad regime? Should a protected area, accompanied by a no-fly zone, be established inside Syria to save the lives of Syrian civilians and slow the flight of desperate refugees? And if President Obama insists on sticking with his current approach, what policy changes, if any, should be instituted by the next U.S. President?

2. THE UNITED STATES AND IRAN: NUCLEAR AND OTHER ISSUES

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 theocratic and virulently anti-American revolutionary movement early in 1979 generated an intensely and enduringly hostile relationship between the two countries. Of greatest U.S. concern since the 1990s has been the radical Shiite Iranian regime's nuclear weapons program.

President Barack Obama's approach to the expansionist Iranian theocracy – signaled clearly by his refusal to side with the freedom-seeking Iranian Green Movement in 2009 – has been to conciliate and to negotiate. In July 2015, with Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry

leading the way, the United States, Russia, Great Britain, France, China, and Germany arranged with Iran the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the U.S.-Iran nuclear deal. The JCPOA has gone into effect despite the opposition of a majority of the American people and majorities in both houses of Congress, as President Obama declared it was not a treaty (which would have required ratification by two-thirds of the Senate), and a Democratic filibuster prevented the Senate from formally recording its rejection of the agreement.

Analyses of the U.S.-Iran nuclear deal vary widely. Three recent articles in *Foreign Affairs* capture this controversy quite well. Gideon Rose terms the JCPOA "the administration's signature diplomatic achievement," "a solid arms control agreement," and "a practical solution" to the Iranian nuclear challenge (Sept.-Oct. 2015, pp. 9-10). Significantly more skeptical, Michael Mandelbaum calls upon U.S. leaders to make Iran "understand clearly in advance that the United States is determined to prevent, by force if necessary, Iranian nuclearization," a containment policy that he contends is "justified, feasible, and indeed crucial to protect vital U.S. interests" (Nov.-Dec. 2015, pp. 19, 22). And a multi-authored article recommends in detail a broad range of U.S. actions to thwart Iran's designs: Present-day Iran has "reached the zenith of its power"; and because "no sensible Iran policy can coexist with the JCPOA as it stands today" (for it "paves the way for an eventual Iranian bomb"), "the next U.S. President must revise it" and also "should punish Iran for its regional aggression, sponsorship of terrorism, and human rights abuses" (Jan.-Feb. 2016, pp. 65-66, 68, 70).

Considering the U.S.-Iran nuclear deal and all other aspects of U.S.-Iran relations, what policy do you recommend for the next U.S. presidential administration? Can the JCPOA conceivably prevent Iran from ultimately acquiring nuclear weapons? If not, should the United States try to accommodate itself to a future nuclear Iran, or should it adopt new approaches in an effort to avert such an outcome? And what, if anything, should the U.S. do about Iran's various other activities that threaten important American interests?

3. U.S.-EGYPT RELATIONS: SHOULD CLOSE TIES BE RESTORED?

Egypt receives the second most foreign aid from the United States at $1.5 billion per year; Israel is first at $3.1 billion. That Israel and Egypt head the list is no accident. It stems in large part from the 1979 peace treaty between the two countries brokered by U.S. President Jimmy Carter. To sweeten the peace deal, Carter promised substantial American aid, especially military, if the two countries abided by the agreement. The Egypt-Israel treaty was a significant victory for the U.S. in the Cold War, as it ensured that Egypt, perceived as the leader of the Arab world, would remain on the American side (Egypt had been a Soviet ally until Secretary of State Henry Kissinger engineered a shift in Egypt's allegiance following the Yom Kippur War of 1973).

Egypt received U.S. money without interruption between 1979 and 2011. Questions arose at times in these years about the actual value of the aid in furthering U.S. interests in the Middle East, especially after the Cold War ended. But Egypt's strongman ruler for most of this period, Hosni Mubarak, was a staunch U.S. ally until his overthrow in the "Arab Spring" in 2011. Concerns about continuing American aid intensified dramatically after Mubarak's overthrow, because free elections in 2012 brought to power the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist

political party that was overtly anti-Israel and anti-Western, as well as repressive toward women and non-Muslims. U.S. President Barack Obama, with Congress's approval, continued sending the aid to Egypt despite mounting worries about the nature of the Egyptian regime. New complications emerged when massive street protests in 2013 led the Egyptian military to overthrow the Muslim Brotherhood. Obama publicly condemned this action and stopped all military aid to Egypt. Then Egyptian elections in 2014 kept in power General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, the leader of the coup, who reached out to Russia and China for military assistance. In May 2015, with the U.S. military taking a much more active role in Syria and amid the growing presence of the Islamic State (ISIS) in Egypt, Obama restarted the flow of aid to the Egyptian military.

Because of the series of crises that have rocked the Middle East over the past fifteen years, the United States government has had little space to evaluate seriously U.S. aid to Egypt in terms of American interests in the region. Part of your assignment is to assess this issue and to present your assessment to U.S. leaders. What is America's rationale for continuing to provide aid? What does the aid, in practice, do for the United States, and what can the U.S. expect to accomplish through it? Does the aid further American interests or actually work against them? Should it be increased, maintained at its current level, reduced, or cut off entirely? And more broadly, what is the importance and what should be the nature of the U.S.-Egypt relationship now and in the future?

4. SOUTH SUDAN AND THE QUESTION OF U.S. HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION

The Republic of South Sudan is the world's newest country, having gained independence from the Republic of the Sudan in 2011. South Sudan's pathway to statehood began in the long civil war, 1955-2005, between the Christian and animist tribes of southern Sudan and the Arab-Muslim tribes of the north. The administration of U.S. President George W. Bush helped broker a peace treaty in 2005, and the administration of President Barack Obama played a central role in arranging the 2011 referendum that created South Sudan. Whatever optimism South Sudanese had for their oil-rich state vanished soon thereafter when a civil war, one marked by unfathomable brutality, began between the various tribes that had so recently been allied in their pursuit of independence. Under pressure from the U.S., the major tribes accepted a peace agreement in August 2015 that reduced the violence, but full implementation of it remains uncertain.

South Sudan has all the makings of a failed state. Its economy is in shambles, the civil war destroyed whatever unity existed in 2011, more than half of all children do not attend school, violence is endemic, and the price of its only source of revenue, oil, has fallen dramatically in the past few years. Other failing states – many of which also suffer from terrible poverty, violence, and seemingly unbridgeable ethnic and tribal divisions – surround South Sudan. Conflict in these countries often overflows into South Sudan. According to a recent UN report, nearly two million South Sudanese are currently displaced, and four million are vulnerable to malnutrition and even starvation if the civil war does not end, with a stable government put in place.

Although the United States has some practical interests in South Sudan, these are relatively minor. Essentially, a sense of ethical responsibility is the impetus for U.S.

involvement. Memories of the failure of the West to act to stop the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 play a major part in the Obama administration's efforts to resolve the South Sudanese civil war. That U.S. assistance, financial and diplomatic, stems from a humanitarian impulse raises a fundamental question: Does the U.S. have an ethical obligation to use some of its resources to intervene in South Sudan? What should be the nature of any U.S. or U.S.-led intervention? Should America be willing to introduce troops into South Sudan to ensure peace? For how long and at what cost should the U.S. commit itself to building a stable South Sudan? Are there historical models, such as Bosnia in 1995, that should guide U.S. policy toward intervention? Or, in contrast, are there historical cases of non-intervention that would be better guides? Ultimately, would a U.S. failure to act for humanitarian reasons in South Sudan be inconsistent with core American values?

5. DEALING WITH A RESURGENT, AND ADVERSARIAL, RUSSIA

Hopes that a post-Soviet Russia would develop into a democratic society now look misplaced. In the last fifteen years Russia has become an autocratic country that draws on its long tradition of governance by a strong, centralized, and undemocratic state.

Russia's foreign policy is 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. This is the case despite some extremely important Western-Russian shared interests, such as concerns about the spread of Islamic radicalism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Russia under Vladimir Putin has defined its national interests in such a way that its foreign policy often conflicts with America's. Its foreign policy agenda includes reestablishing Moscow's position of strength vis-à-vis the United States and Western Europe; assuring that the former Soviet satellites of Eastern Europe are vulnerable to Kremlin pressure; asserting Russian primacy over Ukraine, Belarus, and the former Soviet republics in the South Caucasus region and in Central Asia; and improving and deepening relations with China. Moscow's most menacing actions have been directed at Ukraine. Russia seized control of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in February 2014 and then officially annexed it in March. Since April 2014 Russia has backed separatist forces that now control a large part of eastern Ukraine; currently about 9,000 Russian troops are in that region supporting more than 33,000 separatist Ukrainian forces.

Russia bitterly resents NATO expansion, which in 1999 and 2004 brought numerous former Soviet bloc countries and former Soviet republics into the alliance. It opposes the spread of democracy, at least along its borders. Its role regarding the Iranian nuclear program is at best ambiguous, the controversial nuclear deal between Iran and the five UN Security Council permanent members plus Germany notwithstanding. Russia has become increasingly influential in the Middle East, often, as with Iran and in Syria, in conflict with American interests. Russia 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. Thus, recent sharp

declines in the prices of these commodities are a serious problem for the Putin regime.

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? What, if anything, can and should be done about Russian aggression against Ukraine and against anti-government rebels in Syria? 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?

6. DEALING WITH AN INCREASINGLY POWERFUL AND ASSERTIVE CHINA

China's development strategy for the next decade, now called "Chinese Dreams," focuses on the programs, goals, and aspirations outlined by President Xi Jinping that, he claims, will rejuvenate the Chinese nation. Xi first announced the Chinese Dreams initiative in November 2012 at a highly publicized opening of an exhibit at Beijing's National Museum called the "Road to Renewal" that featured artifacts and depictions of how nineteenth and twentieth century imperialism affected China. Xi promised that China would overcome the damage and humiliation caused by imperialism's legacy and would assert itself as a global leader, militarily, economically, and culturally.

China's rise and more aggressive stance on the global stage has seriously complicated U.S.-Chinese relations. For example, China's recent actions in the South China Sea directly challenge decades-old American military superiority in that area and threaten some of the United States' closest Asian allies. The Beijing government now claims sovereignty over islands that are also claimed by Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Brunei, and has backed up its claims by setting up seven new offshore bases on reefs in the South China Sea which it enlarged, creating artificial islands. The Obama administration has not only openly criticized both the creation of these islands and China's broader claims in the South China Sea, but has also responded directly by sending a destroyer, the USS *Lassen*, to pass by one of the reefs as part of a "freedom of navigation" military exercise in October 2015. In December, Beijing protested the flight of an American B-52 bomber over the same disputed area, calling the Pentagon's attempt to enforce freedom of international air space a serious military provocation. Meanwhile, the Chinese have announced plans to build a second aircraft carrier, to develop new weapons systems that will upgrade their already formidable blue-water navy, and to strengthen the People's Liberation Army.

China's rapid economic expansion fuels its increasing military might. While economic growth has slowed during the past year, China's influence on the United States' and many other economies remains significant. The United States faces major competition with China for global resources and trade. For example, Xi's recent Silk Road Economic Belt program outlines plans for increased trade and investment throughout Asia and Europe, potentially shutting American business out of investment opportunities with allies.

Concentrate on one or more particular aspects of the umbrella program of Chinese Dreams, and analyze its or their importance for the United States. For example, you may choose

to investigate economic or political issues, or you may focus specifically on China's Silk Road initiative or the conflict over the South China Sea or the problems with recent agreements between the U.S. and China on cybercrime. Should the United States pursue a policy of cooperation, a policy of resistance, or some combination of the two? What role should be played by U.S. allies? How can the U.S. best answer the challenges posed by China's expanding global presence and ambitions?

7. DEALING WITH NORTH KOREA: A ROGUE STATE WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

In January 2013, in response to North Korea's successful rocket launch, the United Nations Security Council voted to impose tighter sanctions on that country. Following the action taken by the UN, Kim Jong Un, North Korea's young leader, issued this statement: "We do not hide that a variety of satellites and long-range rockets which will be launched by the D.P.R.K. ('Democratic People's Republic of Korea') one after another and a nuclear test of higher level will target the U.S., the sworn enemy of the Korean people." North Korea then proceeded to carry out a 6-10 kiloton test the next month – its third, the first two having occurred in 2006 and 2009. And in January-February 2016, North Korea conducted its fourth, and largest yet, nuclear test – claiming immediately afterward that it had exploded a hydrogen bomb – followed by a long-range rocket launch aimed to demonstrate its progress in the area of ICBM (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile) technology. The UN Security Council swiftly condemned this launch as an "intolerable provocation" and pledged "expeditiously" to impose "significant" additional sanctions. Nonetheless, Kim Jong Un's earlier threat to target the United States is, very ominously, turning into reality.

The North Korean nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs have long been perceived as a serious danger to the United States, to South Korea and other U.S. allies in the East Asian region, and to the international community more generally. There is no doubt that North Korea – a brutally oppressive country with a totalitarian government that flagrantly disregards its citizens' human rights – now possesses at least a small number of nuclear bombs. Based on the past behavior of the North Korean regime, including its collaboration with Iran on long-range missile development, the U.S. government is particularly worried that nuclear material might be sold by North Korea to a terrorist group or to another rogue state. But China, the one country with the political and economic leverage to force an end to North Korea's nuclear weapons program, has so far been unwilling to take the steps necessary to do so.

What should U.S. policy be toward North Korea? How should the Obama administration and its successor deal with the Pyongyang government? Can multilateral talks, despite their previous failures, be effective? Would bilateral talks be more promising? Could the expansion of sanctions have any positive impact? Is there a U.S. approach that might finally induce China to exert its great leverage? What incentives, if any, could the U.S. offer to influence North Korea's behavior? Is there a viable U.S. military option? Ultimately, does the regime of Kim Jong Un – who appears to be even less restrained and more reckless than his dangerously aggressive late father and predecessor, Kim Jong Il – pose a menace that can be contained, or must it be removed, by force if necessary, to protect the American people and to advance international security and stability?

8. U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONS AND EAST ASIAN SECURITY

The preamble to Japan's constitution, in effect since 1947, states: "We, the Japanese people . . . have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world." One consequence of post-WWII Japan's constitutionally mandated policy to possess only limited military capabilities has been nearly continuous discord domestically and internationally over its role, or lack thereof, in maintaining security in the Pacific. Calls for changes in Japan's constitution that focus on amending Article Nine, which renounces war as a means to settle international disputes, have been heard for decades. In a 1975 *Foreign Affairs* article, for example, then Prime Minister Takeo Miki suggested a "new realism" for Japanese foreign policy, one that reflected a more active role for Japan's military, especially in Asia (Kazushige Hirasawa, "Japan's Emergency Foreign Policy," October 1975). Then, in the early 1990s, there was international frustration that Japan's constitution prevented Japan from contributing troops during the Persian Gulf War.

Today, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, with the overwhelming support of his Liberal Democratic Party, is making progress in what some analysts have called his "life's work": to replace a constitution written by American occupiers with one that gives Japan potentially a more active role in global affairs and makes Japan a more "normal" nation ("Back to the Future: Japan's Constitution," *The Economist*, June 1, 2013). The Japanese constitution allows for a military for defensive purposes, but the document declares that Japan cannot keep a standing army, air force, or navy. In fact, the country has developed a well-trained and technologically advanced military but calls it the "Self-Defense Forces." Because many Japanese fervently reject Abe's desire to be able to deploy these forces overseas, out of political prudence he and his party have reinterpreted constitutional limitations on military growth rather than attempting to amend the constitution, at least for now. In 2013, Abe was able to redefine the role of Japan's Self-Defense Forces to include coming to the aid of allies if they are attacked. The Obama administration and many congressional leaders have supported Abe's actions, but also have expressed concern that such changes could have unpredictable outcomes, including upsetting the tenuous balance of power in East Asia. In 2014, President Obama's apparent approval for the Japanese military to "do more" was qualified with the warning that such actions should fall within "the framework of our alliance" (Martin Fackler and David E. Sanger, "Japan Announces a Military Shift to Thwart China," *New York Times*, July 1, 2014).

Some analysts, including Americans, suggest that the United States is no longer sufficiently powerful to maintain a strong presence in East Asia. Are they correct or incorrect? Is it time to reassess the U.S.-Japan alliance forged after World War II? Can the U.S. continue to claim that its military will protect Japan from its enemies? What should the U.S. government do to assist Japan now that China has begun to provoke Japan openly by claiming disputed territories in and impeding access to areas of the South China Sea? Your group must consider the United States' role in Japan's future foreign policy decisions and initiatives.

9. THE TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

In November 2015, after nearly eight years of negotiation, twelve Pacific Rim nations, including the United States, reached a trade agreement aimed at promoting economic growth and productivity, raising living standards, and enhancing environmental protections among member states. President Barack Obama immediately announced that he planned to sign the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), claiming it would open Asian markets for American products and provide workers "the fair shot at success they deserve."

But opposition within both U.S. political parties also began to surface. Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) has claimed that with this agreement "the administration has put big business first, workers, communities, and small businesses last." Republican Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) commented, "The Trans-Pacific Partnership is a once in a lifetime opportunity and the United States should not settle for a mediocre deal that fails to set high-standard trade rules." Senator and presidential candidate Bernie Sanders (I-VT) said, "I am disappointed but not surprised by the decision to move forward on the disastrous Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement that will hurt consumers and cost American jobs" (Daniel W. Drezner, "Will Congress Approve the Trans-Pacific Partnership?", *Washington Post*, October 6, 2015).

Congressional approval is required for the United States to be a part of the TPP. The process of ratification appears to be highly political and laden with controversy. Are the criticisms valid? Has the Obama administration responded effectively to these criticisms? The task of your group is to analyze this trade agreement and to determine whether the TPP, as it is now configured, would likely, on balance, be beneficial for the economic and other interests of the United States.

10. A TURNING POINT IN VENEZUELA: THE END OF CHAVISMO?

From his election in 1998 to his death in 2013, President Hugo Chavez dominated Venezuelan politics, instituting what has come to be called "Chavismo" – a blend of left-wing populism, Bolivarianism, and anti-imperialist/anti-American rhetoric. Chavez was popular domestically; with enormous oil reserves, he used petro-funded state spending as the foundation for his domestic political success. Chavez also had ambitions of regional leadership, portraying himself as a latter-day Simon Bolivar, the early nineteenth-century Venezuelan revolutionary hero of Latin American independence movements. In the process of carrying out his domestic and international agendas, however, Chavez became a highly controversial figure. He eroded civil liberties and democratic institutions at home, becoming nearly a dictator in the eyes of many. Internationally, his anti-Americanism, and his links to terrorist groups and state sponsors of terrorism, made him an irritant, if not a serious threat, to the United States.

Since Chavez's death, his hand-picked successor, Nicolas Maduro, has attempted to follow his late colleague's political path. But economic crises, largely brought about by low oil prices and Maduro's unwillingness to engage in meaningful reform, have contributed to the destabilization of Venezuela. Unlike his predecessor, Maduro is highly unpopular, evidenced by widespread protests. Maduro has responded with further crackdowns on civil liberties, the

heavy-handed use of the National Guard to crush demonstrations, and tightened control over the media. His tactics have not, however, bolstered his leadership. Parliamentary elections in December 2015 dealt a blow to Maduro and his party. The opposition won a majority in the legislature, and some lawmakers want a recall election to remove Maduro from office.

Do the events since Chavez's death spell the end of his movement? Could a new, less hostile Venezuela be emerging from Maduro's apparent failure to continue Chavismo? How should the next U.S. President proceed in relations with Venezuela? Since oil sales provide the majority of Venezuela's revenue, can the U.S. somehow use low prices and reduced demand for Venezuelan oil as leverage in its relations with Venezuela? Should the U.S. government use sanctions against individuals, such as those imposed in the 2014 Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act, as a tool for influencing the political situation there? Is there a new approach to relations with Venezuela that would benefit U.S. interests in Latin America?

11. THE U.S. AND CUBA: IS THIS VESTIGE OF THE COLD WAR OVER?

When the Marxist-Leninist and Cuban nationalist revolutionary Fidel Castro came to power in 1959, relations between the island nation and the United States changed dramatically for the worse, and they have been troubled ever since. The failed 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion was a disastrous CIA attempt to overthrow Castro, and the U.S. also tried repeatedly to assassinate him. Castro's close ties to the Soviet Union made Cuba a Cold War adversary of the U.S., and led to the nearly catastrophic Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Throughout the Cold War, Cuba served as an outpost of the Soviet empire, just ninety miles from America's shores.

With the fall of the Soviet Union, Cuba found itself without its longtime sponsor and benefactor. While the global Cold War was now over, a vestige of that conflict, owing in part to domestic American politics, persisted in the hostile relationship between Cuba and the United States. A cornerstone of U.S. policy toward Cuba, an embargo imposed in 1960, remained in place, but the Castro regime continued in power. For twenty-plus years after the end of the Cold War, the U.S.-Cuba relationship seemed frozen in time. Even when Fidel Castro, in ill health, stepped aside in favor of his brother Raul, little changed.

Beginning in 2014, however, a notable redirection of the Cuba-U.S. relationship has finally been occurring. In December of that year, President Obama announced that a series of secret negotiations, assisted by Pope Francis, had led to some significant new agreements. The U.S. and Cuba, after more than fifty years of tension, agreed to normalize relations, and the U.S. has begun removing some of its restrictions on travel and remittances to Cuba. Although the embargo has not been entirely lifted, the Obama administration has clearly initiated a new course in U.S.-Cuba relations, and Obama has announced that he will visit Cuba in March of this year.

Is the Obama administration's new approach the best way to deal with Cuba? Has the embargo been as ineffective and wrong-headed as many of its critics suggest? Can U.S. influence help bring greater human rights, economic freedoms, and democracy to Cuba? Is there a different approach to Cuba that would be more effective? What should the United States consider to be its most important goals for its relationship with Cuba? By lessening the pressure on and isolation of Cuba, is the U.S. risking endorsing a repressive, Leninist state? Or are recent reforms in Cuba evidence of real, lasting movement toward a more open society?

12. THE UNITED STATES' NUCLEAR ARSENAL: WHAT MEETS THE NEED?

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

The size of the United States' nuclear arsenal actually is only half the question of how to make sure the U.S. arsenal meets the country's twenty-first-century security needs. The other half involves the advanced age of U.S. warheads and delivery vehicles – intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), bombers, submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and the submarines that would launch them – that make up that arsenal. The last American nuclear warhead was built in 1989, and all of the warheads and delivery systems in the U.S. arsenal are based on 1970s technology. They are well beyond their intended lifetime. The average age of the Minuteman III missiles, the backbone of the U.S. ICBM force, is forty-one years, and the average B-52 H bomber, the backbone of the U.S. nuclear bomber force, was first deployed a half-century ago. And it is not only the weapons that are old; the facilities to build them are even older and in a serious state of disrepair. A start in addressing this problem has been made with the construction of a huge new factory designed to modernize the United States' aging nuclear warheads. Planned during the George W. Bush administration, it was completed at a cost of $700 million in the fall of 2014. But many experts argue that much more must be done. Although there are additional plans to modernize the U.S. nuclear arsenal, programs that will cost tens of billions of dollars, the American effort currently lags far behind Russia's. Other nuclear powers, including China, which has successfully tested a new multiple-warhead ICBM, also are modernizing their nuclear forces. Thus the second half of the question: Is the current program to modernize America's nuclear forces sufficient, does it need to be accelerated, or is it unnecessary and too expensive?

13. GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

The World Bank defines food security as "access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life." Food security is a key aim of the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations development agenda for 2015-2030 that the United States signed in October 2015. As of January 2015 some 800 million people, more than 10% of the world's population, are food insecure. Progress in combatting food insecurity has been made, but this progress has been geographically inconsistent. Successful programs are utilized in some areas but not in others.

Smallholder farms are critical to improving food security, as recognized by the Obama administration's Feed the Future program. Yet U.S. emergency food aid to poor countries sometimes has the unintended consequence of forcing smallholder farmers out of business. U.S. law requires that all emergency food aid come from U.S. sources and be delivered on U.S. ships exclusively. Cheap emergency food aid makes it hard for small farms to compete, and many fail, reducing the supply of locally grown food and increasing dependence on food aid. Senators Bob Corker (R-TN) and Christopher Coons (D-DE) of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee have introduced S.525, the Food for Peace Reform Act, to remedy these unintended consequences. Yet there are powerful agricultural and merchant marine interests opposing the reforms.

U.S. government subsidies to U.S. farmers, such as those in the Agricultural Act of 2014, can hurt smallholder farms. With subsidies, U.S. farmers can expand their acreage and produce additional crops. To avoid depressing the price of farm products in the U.S., excess supply is exported below market price to developing countries, undercutting smallholder farmers who cannot compete.

U.S. policies towards family planning assistance also affect food security. The United Nations estimates that the world's population will rise to nine billion by 2050, creating more demand for food. Most of the increased population will be in developing countries already stressed by food insecurity. Many families would like to restrict their family size but do not have access to family planning. U.S. policy towards family planning assistance has varied over the past twenty years, with Republicans favoring less assistance due to opposition to abortion as a family planning method. While the Obama administration has eased the restrictions imposed under the Bush administration, it is unclear what the policies of the next administration will be.

Your task is to advise the next President on these food security matters. What stance should he or she take towards emergency food aid, agricultural subsidies, and family planning assistance? How should he or she deal with opposition from the agribusiness sector and conservatives on family issues? Should the next administration continue the Obama assistance program Feed the Future? What policies have proven to be effective and should be extended to more areas?

14. RESOLVING CLIMATE CHANGE, OR THE ISSUE OF CLIMATE REFUGEES

An urgent problem confronting humanity is climate change: the warming of the earth's atmosphere by an increase in the levels of greenhouse gases. A number of international meetings have attempted to establish agreements among the largest emitters of greenhouse gases, but so far they have largely failed. In late 2015, 195 countries came together in Paris to try once again

to arrange a universal legally binding agreement that would limit global warming to well below 2° Centigrade, and that would take effect in 2020 if and only if at least 55 countries representing 55% of the global greenhouse emissions ratified the agreement in accordance with their own specific legal systems and then signed the agreement between April 2016 and April 2017.

President Barack Obama committed the United States to this agreement and submitted the required framework under which the U.S. will reduce its emissions. The Republican-controlled Congress vowed not to approve the agreement, so the President, via an executive order, committed the Environmental Protection Agency (via the Clean Air Act) to put forward a Clean Power Plan (CPP) that would be the centerpiece of America's commitment to the Paris Accords. However, this plan was challenged by twenty-seven states, coal producers, business groups, and an array of utilities. On February 9, the Supreme Court of the United States issued a "stay" that overturned a D.C. Court of Appeals panel's decision to allow the EPA plan to go forward. Many believe that this action by the Supreme Court has effectively killed the U.S. commitment to the Paris Accords, because it will delay action beyond the signing deadline.

Most experts agree that the United States' and China's buy-in to this climate accord is critical, and that without the active support of these two countries, little will be done to reduce emissions worldwide. President Obama worked hard to secure China's agreement to participate. How China and other countries will respond to the roadblock preventing the EPA from implementing the CPP is at present unknown.

What is known, however, is that ongoing climate change will create climate refugees. Current climate projections suggest that parts of the Middle East may heat up significantly by 2050, such that large areas may become uninhabitable. And some island nations are literally facing extinction with sea-level rise. Situations such as these are one reason why climate change represents a significant issue for U.S. national security. One think tank estimates that climate refugees from both environmental collapse and sea-level rise may number 200 million by the year 2050, and their migratory pathways are expected to pose both social service and security problems, especially for European countries, but also, potentially, for the United States.

Your group's task is <u>either</u> to focus on the question of what the President of the United States should do to try to resolve the problem of global climate change, <u>or</u> to assume that the international effort which produced the Paris Accords will fail and to focus on developing a strategy for addressing the long-range problem of climate refugees.

15. CLIMATE CHANGE AND GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES IN THE ARCTIC

The vast majority of scientific predictions suggest that global climate change will produce a range of environmental and political challenges in the coming decades. Among them is a potential international showdown in the Arctic. Rising global temperatures have led to record ice melt in the region. In particular, the area of the Arctic covered by permanent ice has been shrinking rapidly, and scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have predicted that the Arctic may experience ice-free summers by 2040. These changes are altering both the environment of the far north and the geopolitical situation there.

At least two major consequences of shrinking Arctic ice are of importance to U.S. foreign policy makers: greater access to Arctic resources, including minerals and fossil fuels, and newly

open shipping lanes. Either development could lead to international conflicts in the Arctic region in coming years and decades. And these developments have gained the attention of world powers. According to political scientist Pavel K. Baev, Russia, for example, is "desperate to find a way to convert its indisputable military superiority in the Arctic theater into tangible political advantages." China, the world's leading export nation, is also interested in the potential trade advantages offered by shortened shipping routes. As such, China and a number of other nations have sought and gained observer status in the Arctic Council, an intergovernmental body that addresses issues related to the region and is made up of the "Arctic Eight," the nations with territory in the surrounding region: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. In international law, the Arctic region is officially governed by the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The United States, however, has not ratified the Law of the Sea, though it did participate in the conferences that led to the UNCLOS treaty, and Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama both favor ratification.

What are America's interests in the Arctic region, and what should its priorities be? How can the U.S. avoid conflicts there? Would development of Arctic resources like oil and gas lead to yet further climate change, and therefore further problems? Who should make decisions regarding resource extraction, shipping, and other issues in the Arctic? Should the U.S. ratify UNCLOS and become a fuller participant in the official governing structure? Or, as its critics allege, would ratification sacrifice some measure of U.S. sovereignty?

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.
