

Syllabus Foreign-Policy 2018

We will use the format Of the Foreign Policy Association's *Great Decisions 2018* program. Our overriding theme will be the US retreat from the "Pax Americana" established after World War II. We will examine our tenuous relationships with Russia, China and Turkey, as well as, the political and economic problems arising in the Middle East, Europe and Asia.

Our discussions will include current events drawn from the media and identify gaps in coverage that contribute to our nation's retreat from world leadership.

Format: the coordinators will assign readings for each class the week prior to the meeting of that class. Each class will begin with a video or slide presentation on the topic for that class. The presenter for the day will further refine the topic and assist in leading the discussion. Since this is a discussion group, participants should be prepared to respond to the assigned topic. This will require a commitment to the reading assignment for that week. Also, each participant will choose a topic and act as a resource for the week's discussion.

Most readings will be in the Great Decisions Briefing Book 2018. Additional readings will be drawn from current newspaper and magazine articles.

Week 1 – Introduction - 10 Conflicts to Watch in 2018

in this first-class will begin our discussion with a review of foreign-policy issues that may at any time even erupt in events that negatively impact the United States. We will continue our discussion by a further focus on issues presented in the *Great Decisions 2018* program. Our discussions will include the current inadequacy of the Trump administration and its inability to assess the complex international relationships established by the United States over the past 80 years.

Readings: Article: 10 Conflicts to Watch in 2018

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/10-conflicts-watch-2018>

Week 2 - The Waning of Pax Americana?

By Carla Norrlof

During the first months of Donald Trump's presidency, the U.S. began a historic shift away from Pax Americana, the liberal international order that was established in the wake of World War II. Since 1945, Pax Americana has promised peaceful international relations and an open economy, buttressed by U.S. military power. In championing "America First" isolationism and protectionism, President Trump has shifted the political mood toward selective U.S. engagement, where foreign commitments are limited to areas of vital U.S. interest and economic nationalism is the order of the day. Geopolitical allies and challengers alike are paying close attention.

Readings: Great Decisions Briefing Book 2018 (GDBB 2018)

Article –TBA

Week 3 - Russia's foreign policy

By Allen C. Lynch

Under President Vladimir Putin, Russia is projecting an autocratic model of governance abroad and working to undermine the influence of liberal democracies, namely along Russia's historical borderlands. Russia caused an international uproar in 2016, when it interfered in the U.S. presidential contest. But Putin's foreign policy toolkit includes other instruments, from alliances with autocrats to proxy wars with the U.S. in Georgia, Ukraine and Syria.

How does Putin conceive of national interests, and why do Russian citizens support him? How should the United States respond to Putin's foreign policy ambitions?

Readings: GDBB 2018

Article –TBA

Week 4- China and America: the new geopolitical equation

By David M. Lampton

In the last 15 years, China has implemented a wide-ranging strategy of economic outreach and expansion of all its national capacities, including military and diplomatic capacities. Where the United States has taken a step back from multilateral trade agreements and discarded the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), China has made inroads through efforts like the Belt and Road Initiative and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). What are Beijing's geopolitical objectives? What leadership and political conditions in each society underlie growing Sino-American tensions? What policies might Washington adopt to address this circumstance?

Readings: GDBB 2018

Article - TBA

Week 5 - Turkey: a partner in crisis

By Ömer Taşpinar

Of all NATO allies, Turkey represents the most daunting challenge for the Trump administration. In the wake of a failed military coup in July 2016, the autocratic trend in Ankara took a turn for the worse. One year on, an overwhelming majority of the population considers the United States to be their country's greatest security threat. In this age of a worsening "clash of civilizations" between Islam and the West, even more important than its place on the map is what Turkey symbolically represents as the most institutionally Westernized Muslim country in the world.

Readings: GDBB 2018

Article - TBA

Week 6 - Saudi Arabia in Transition

By Lawrence G. Potter

As Saudi Arabia struggles to adjust to the drastic decline in oil revenue, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman attempts to boldly transform the country and shift more power to the younger generation. Mohammed bin Salman replaced Mohammed bin Nayef as crown prince of Saudi Arabia. The shake-up follows a prolonged power struggle and places bin Salman (often referred to simply as MBS) first in line to succeed his father as king. He had previously held the title of deputy crown prince and was second in line to the throne. MBS reportedly held bin Nayef in a room in the royal palace, where he pressured the older man to cede his position. Before the night was over, bin Nayef capitulated.

Bin Salman is just 31 years old, portending a long rule should he become king. He has wielded an unusual amount of influence since his father, King Salman, took power in 2015. MBS served as defense minister, leading Saudi Arabia into a messy conflict in Yemen. He was put in charge of an important economic council. And he was given oversight of Saudi Aramco, the state oil monopoly, which he guided toward its first public offering. He is also seen as a social reformer, loosening some of the tight strictures that have frustrated the kingdom's booming youth population.

The disruption in Saudi Arabia's central power structure caused anxiety in Washington, which lost important contacts with the ouster of bin Nayef. Relations are further complicated by the ongoing Qatar-Gulf Crisis. That

confrontation began in June, when a Saudi-led coalition that included the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt abruptly cut off diplomatic relations with Qatar. The coalition imposed an embargo on the tiny but oil-rich nation, closing air, sea and land borders and expelling Qatari diplomats and citizens. They cited Qatar's support for terrorism and claimed that it was in violation of 2013 and 2014 agreements with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members, which barred support for hostile groups in the GCC states and in Egypt and Yemen. The coalition members have long been aggravated by Qatar's friendly relations with Iran (despite the embargo, Qatar restored full diplomatic relations with Iran in August), and its tendency to pursue independent foreign policy directions.

Readings:

NYT article Ben Hubbard, "[Saudi King Rewrites Succession, Replacing Heir with Son, 31.](#)" The New York Times (Jun. 21, 2017).

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/21/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-crown-prince-mohammed-bin-salman.html?ref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FSaudi%20Arabia>

["Qatar crisis: What you need to know,"](#) BBC, (Jul. 19, 2017).

["What did Donald Trump achieve in the Middle East?"](#) The Economist (May 25, 2017).

Week 7 - The Future of Europe: Coping with Crisis

By Andrew Moravcsik

The outcome of the United Kingdom referendum on EU membership sent shockwaves across the globe. It even caught British voters by surprise. The European Union has helped secure peace in Europe for the past 70 years. Now it faces an uncertain future. Amid a refugee crisis, lingering financial recession and the constant specter of terrorism, unity seems more imperative than ever. But the Brexit vote underscores the complexities of integrating an extremely diverse continent. What will post-Brexit Europe look like, and how can U.S. foreign policy adapt?

Readings:

White Paper on the Future of Europe

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white_paper_on_the_future_of_europe_en.pdf

Week 8 - Prospects for Afghanistan and Pakistan

By Austin Long

Major internal conflict has plagued Afghanistan for four decades. The U.S., for its part, has conducted military operations in the country nearly continuously since 9/11. Today, war with the Taliban persists, and tensions between the U.S. and Pakistan have gradually deteriorated. As his time in office drew to a close, President Obama limited further withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan.

Trump committed to launch a diplomatic and economic initiative in Afghanistan. The current State Department has not sent an ambassador to Kabul and it did away with the office of the special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Trump's speech in fact caused some anxiety in Islamabad. The president threatened to cut off aid to Pakistan if it didn't act against terrorist sanctuaries along its border. And he spoke of a strategic partnership with India, Pakistan's nuclear rival.

Recommended Readings

BBC report: Who Are the Taliban?

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-11451718>

Atlantic article: In Afghanistan, Trump is Re-escalating A Hopeless War

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/05/trump-afghanistan-surge/526161/>

Asad Hashim, [“Pakistan in the crosshairs of Trump’s Afghan Strategy.”](#) Al Jazeera (Aug. 24, 2017).

Brookings report: A Deadly Triangle: Pakistan, India, & Afghanistan

<http://csweb.brookings.edu/content/research/essays/2013/deadly-triangle-afghanistan-pakistan-india-c.html#>

NYT Feb 2, 2018

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/01/world/asia/afghanistan-war.html?ref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fworld&action=click&contentCollection=world®ion=rank&module=package&version=highlights&contentPlacement=9&pgtype=sectionfront>

Week 9 - U.S. global engagement and the military

By Gordon Adams

The global power balance is rapidly evolving, leaving the United States at a turning point with respect to its level of engagement and the role of its military. Some argue for an “America First” paradigm, with a large military to ensure security, while others call for a more assertive posture overseas. Some advocate for a restoration of American multilateral leadership and a strengthened role for diplomacy. Still others envision a restrained U.S. role, involving a more limited military. How does the military function in today’s international order, and how might it be balanced with diplomatic and foreign assistance capabilities?

Readings: GDBB 2018

Article - TBA

Week 10 - Media and foreign policy

By Susan Moeller

State and non-state actors today must maneuver a complex and rapidly evolving media landscape. Conventional journalism now competes with user-generated content. Official channels of communication can be circumvented through social media. Foreign policy is tweeted from the White House and “fake news” has entered the zeitgeist. Cyberwarfare, hacking and misinformation pose complex security threats. How are actors using media to pursue and defend their interests in the international arena? What are the implications for U.S. policy?

Readings: GDBB 2018

Article – TBA

OR

Global health: progress and challenges

By Joshua Michaud

The collective action of countries, communities and organizations over the last 30 years has literally saved millions of lives around the world. Yet terrible inequalities in health and wellbeing persist. The world now faces a mix of old and new health challenges, including the preventable deaths of mothers and children, continuing epidemics of infectious diseases, and rising rates of chronic disease. We also remain vulnerable to the emergence of new and deadly pandemics. For these reasons, the next several decades will be just as important—if not more so—than the last in determining wellbeing across nations.

Readings: GDBB 2018

Article - TBA

OR

WEEK 10 - NUCLEAR SECURITY: THE ENDURING CHALLENGE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

By Todd Stephen Sechser

Nuclear nonproliferation was a top priority for the Obama administration. While the Iran Deal was a diplomatic victory toward this end, major threats persist from both state and non-state actors. Countries like North Korea, Russia, and India and Pakistan continue to challenge nonproliferation efforts. The possibility that terrorists will carry out an attack using a “dirty bomb,” made from captured nuclear materials, looks increasingly real. In a fractious world, which way forward for U.S. nuclear security policy?