ILLINOIS INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION MODULES (IL-INMP) PROJECT*

SCENARIO

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Preface

The Illinois International Negotiation Modules Project is a program designed to internationalize the community college curriculum and to introduce technology in a meaningful way across a range of disciplines. It was created in 2005-6 specifically for the colleges in the Illinois Consortium for International Studies and Programs, under the leadership of Dr. Zinta Konrad, Director of the International Education Office at the College of DuPage. Our idea was to create a program that would allow the participating classes in the consortium to negotiate online, and then to conclude by bringing the students and faculty together so that they could meet one another and have the chance to share their experiences. Through the process of negotiation, extensive use of computer technology, and reliance upon written communication, the goal of this program is to help community college students better understand contemporary international issues and problems, as well as acquire skills that can be transferred throughout the education process and into the work place. Ongoing evaluation of student learning in similar programs suggests that we have met this goal. We know that similar success will be found in this program as well.

A program like the Illinois INMP is the result of the work of many people, each of whom contributes to its success in different ways. Special thanks to Sandra Anderson from COD for her willingness to step in and oversee the program. Her commitment ensures that the program will continue. Thanks also to Susan Kerby, who has taken over the administrative side of the ILINMP, along with Maren McKeilin. However, it is the faculty who agreed to participate in this pilot program who deserve the greatest thanks. Their enthusiasm has led to the growth of this program and, as we now enter the third year, to a commitment for its continued success.

At Project ICONS at the University of Maryland, my thanks go to a number of people who provide ongoing support for this program that have helped make it possible especially Beth Blake and Audrey Tetteh, who provide ongoing technical support and assistance to the INMP (and to me) with unfailing good humor. Nonetheless, any problems or errors associated with the program remain my responsibility.

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I. INTRODUCTION TO THE SIMULATION

The ICONS/International Negotiation Project (INP) simulation puts students into the role of the decision makers and negotiators on matters of international importance. Working in teams, participants model real-world international relations among countries. The simulation is conducted on two levels: within teams and between teams. Within a team, students will research their assigned country and, working as a group, formulate their country’s foreign policy. Between teams, countries will communicate their foreign policies and conduct international negotiations using the computer as your medium for communication.

The scenario presents the framework for these negotiations. It was designed to put forth an overview of general international conditions and to frame the three issues that will be the primary focus of these negotiations. The scenario does not advocate for any specific country, position or point of view. Rather, using the scenario as a common starting point, each team should do the research that will allow it to see the issues from the point of view of the country that it is representing. If there is a perceived bias in the scenario, it is unintentional.

Assumptions: For purposes of this simulation, we assume that real world international conditions remains as they are articulated in the simulation scenario. That is, unless changes are specifically noted during the simulation, all government leaders currently in power remain in place and no international incidents or developments not emerging from the simulated negotiations occur. A scenario update will be issued immediately prior to the start of the simulation noting changes that should be considered. Should real world events intervene during the simulation, instructions will be issued over the simulation community network as to how these should be handled. Generally, however, real world developments will not effect the simulation once it is underway.

SIMCON (Simulation Control) monitors all negotiations in the simulation and chairs on-line summits. Please note that SIMCON is apolitical, and has no country or team preferences. SIMCON does not interfere with the course of the simulation nor direct it in any way. SIMCON does monitor all massages for content to ensure that stated positions are realistic and accurate. Further, SIMCON reviews all messages for diplomatic language, and will send warnings to any team that does not adhere to the use of such language. SIMCON sends out procedural messages and scenario updates. Questions regarding any aspect of the simulation can be sent directly to SIMCON.

The focus of the simulation is global and with individual countries as the primary actors. However, in creating their positions on the issues countries must take into account various multi-
national organizations, such as the EU, non-governmental organizations, and the role of non-state actors, such as terrorist groups. Although these are not explicitly actors in the simulation, they do influence the policies that each country develops.

**The Scenario and Issues for Negotiation**

The scenario for the simulation follows this introduction. The scenario outlines current world conditions and defines the areas for negotiation during the simulation. The scenario is presented in a case format, that is, each issue area becomes the framework for a particular set of negotiations. Each issue area is framed as a separate case, with a focus on a set of questions that should be negotiated. It is important to remember that even though the issues are framed as distinct cases, they are often interrelated. Countries will often need to consider issues other than the one they are working on in order to get a complete picture of the issue. While the scenario provides basic background information on general conditions, issues and countries, teams in the simulation are encouraged to expand beyond this basic information in the preparation and research phase prior to the start of the simulation.

**The Issues**: This exercise will focus on **three** general problem or issue areas in the world today.\(^2\) They were selected by the faculty at a workshop in September 2011 and were designed to be integrated into the subject of a specific course or courses. They were also chosen to reflect not only current political, economic and social realities, but also to emphasize the interrelationship that exists among countries and issues in the world today. For that reason it is important to note that some of these issues have a number of component parts.

The problem areas selected are not intended to cover all issues or countries. Some countries will necessarily be more active in certain areas than others; however, because issues are interrelated, all countries should formulate policies and strategies for all issues included in the simulation. Further, all countries will be invited to attend on-line “summits,” in addition to the regular e-mail negotiations. There will be two sets of summits, the first, to be held in the early in the negotiation process in order to help teams focus the issues; the second set will be held toward the end of the on-line negotiation process and can be seen as the culmination of the weeks of on-line negotiations. The agenda for each summit will be determined in advance and will grow from the issues raised during the on-line negotiations prior to that point and from the questions for negotiation.

We ask that each country notify all others **in advance of the summits** whether you will or will not be attending so all teams can prepare accordingly. Further, in some cases, a country team that has been actively involved with a negotiation (e.g., putting forth a proposal, helping to mediate among disagreeing countries, etc.) might be asked to take the lead and chair a particular

\(^2\) The issues were selected by participating faculty at the faculty training workshop held at the College of DuPage in October 2010, and reflect current international conditions in a way that is relevant to the various classes and topics in which the simulation will be implemented. Teams are selected by each participating faculty member similarly, to support his/her class material.
summit. In that case, SIMCON will seek the country’s permission to do so and will also offer some suggestions as to how to chair the summit. SIMCON will announce to all teams in advance of the summit who will be chairing and will provide more detailed information about the summit, including the specific agenda topics, prior to the actual event.

The three general issue areas are:

1) **Environment**, specifically looking at water as a scarce resource and control of that resource;

2) **Natural disaster**, with a special focus on planning for natural disasters and their aftermath as it affects the international community; and

3) **Human Rights**, with an emphasis on protecting the rights of stateless peoples or “nations” within larger states.

Note that there is some overlap across issues, a point that will need to be taken into consideration as countries do their research and develop their positions. The point here is that the issues are often not very clear-cut and cross from one category to another. Each of the issues for negotiation is described in more detail in the scenario, and is the focus of an individual “case.” These cases will help you focus your research on these very general and broad topics.

Just as these issues are interrelated and affect one another, another perspective that needs to be considered is the impact of global issues on local communities. For example, questions about access to and control of water is an issue that crosses borders as well as having implications for countries and regions within countries. Lack of clean water ties directly to issues of poverty and health which, in turn, ties to minorities and indigenous peoples within a state. Often, these are the poorest groups and the ones with least access to clean water and to appropriate drugs to cure even the simplest ailments. Thus, not only are issues interconnected but a policy made at the international national level can have a ripple-effect locally. This, too, must be considered when formulating your policies.

Information about some of the countries included in this simulation and their positions on the various issues can be found in the section entitled “General International Conditions” as well as in each of the issue-cases. Remember that this is just general background and it will be up to you to research your country’s or organization’s position on each of these issues in more detail, to research the position of the countries with which you will be interacting, and then to determine who your negotiating partners are or are likely to be. Gathering that information is part of the research step of the process, and will be critical in helping you draft your own briefing/background paper as well as serving as a guide throughout the negotiation process.

**Negotiation Framework**

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3 A scenario update will be provided prior to the start of the simulation.
Diplomacy and negotiation represent alternatives to the use of force in the settlement of potential or actual disputes between countries. In the event of conflict, negotiations between and among the various parties are often used to help settle the conflict before it escalates, or to resolve a conflict once it starts. International negotiation is a phased process predicated on expectations of reciprocity, compromise, and the search for mutually beneficial outcomes. All parties to a negotiation must prepare their positions carefully, looking for a balance between national (domestic) considerations and political realities.

Negotiation is one tool of foreign policy available to countries as a way of addressing their concerns. According to traditional, i.e., “realist,” international relations theory, countries will behave in a way that maximizes their national interest. Theoretically, every country will pursue those policies that enable it to further national interest, however that is defined. Generally, a country will begin by ensuring that its “core values” are maintained. Those values are the ones that guarantee continuity and a country’s security, militarily and economically. A country’s national interest, however, might also include protecting its heritage and its history, its culture and traditions. What we are seeing increasingly in the post-Cold War world, however, is that there are variations within a country as to what these are or how they are interpreted. Hence, the growth of ethnic or religious conflict will result when different groups within a country have conflicting interpretations of what its national interest is or how it can be defined and protected.

Most of international relations is premised on the interaction between and among nation-states, or what we generally think of as countries. A nation-state in actuality combines two distinct concepts: the nation, or a group of people with similar ethnic or religious background, common culture and heritage, and who share common values and beliefs; and a state, which is a territory with a defined border that is under the governance of a political entity of some type. The sanctity of the state is preserved in the concept of sovereignty, which has its origins in 1648 and the Peace or Westphalia that ended the Thirty Years War. The principle of sovereignty states that “Within a specified territory, no external power...has the right to exercise legal jurisdiction of political authority.” Rather, that right is given exclusively to the domestic (national) government. Theoretically, this also means that no state has the right to intervene in the domestic affairs of another state.

Generally, the nation and state are congruent, that is, all (or a majority) of the peoples within the territory accept a set of values and beliefs as well as the legitimacy of the political system. Conflicts can occur, and we have seen this increasingly since the Cold War ended, when a national group rejects the legitimacy of the political system, or seeks to create its own state that represents the values of that nation or group. For example, conflict can result when a vocal and powerful minority imposes its will on the powerless majority, as was the case in Kosovo. In that area the Serb minority began to impose its will on the Albanian majority, resulting ultimately in “ethnic cleansing” and finally international intervention to address the situation. In other current example, the Palestinians are a stateless people who claim part of the land of Israel for their own.

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This has resulted in ongoing conflict between the state of Israel, and this national group. There are similar examples in Asia, such as the Tamil rebels in Sri Lanka, and many cases in Africa, such as in Rwanda and more recently Cote d’Ivoire, where the outcome of the recent presidential election remains disputed.

It is the divergence between the goals of the nation and those of the state as recognized by international law that has often given rise to ethnic, religious and other forms of internal conflicts that threaten not only the country but potentially regional or even international stability. And a dilemma facing the international system is whether it should intervene in cases where human rights abuses are being perpetrated, or whether that would be a violation of the sovereignty of the state.

One of the major decisions that any government has to make is what is in the national interest and how to protect and preserve it. First, the country must begin with a clear statement of its own goals, that is, what is the “national interest.” From that starting point, there are a range of possible options open to countries as they seek to protect that national interest. Since all of these deal with one country’s relationship to other countries, these are called “foreign policy orientations.” The particular option chosen should reflect what the country’s needs at that particular time. Clearly, these can change as both domestic and international circumstances change.

One option for a country is simply to pursue a policy of isolationism, or a desire to turn inward and to minimize political or military involvement with other countries. Often the only exception to this policy is in trading or economic relationships, where even the most isolationist country recognizes the need to trade and interact economically with countries beyond its own borders. A country can choose to be neutral, which means it does not commit its military forces or engage in a military or security alliance with other countries. This does not mean that a neutral country is removed from the international system; rather, neutral nations are often quite engaged because the status of neutrality gives it certain rights and responsibilities in the eyes of the international system. For example, Switzerland, a neutral nation, has become an international banking center as well as the location for many international negotiations.

Or, depending on its national interest, a country can choose to become engaged internationally. This, too, can take on a number of characteristics depending on the country and the international circumstances. For example, countries can choose to enter into military alliances or security arrangements of various types. These can be bilateral, between two countries, or multilateral, among three or more. Often the goal underlying the creation of these alliances is the belief that countries acting together can wield more power internationally than any country can acting alone. NATO is one example of a multilateral alliance that was created in 1949, early in the Cold War period, to join the countries of Western Europe with the United States as a way to deter Soviet aggression. It remains in place today, and has expanded its mandate to include missions outside its formal area, including the war in Afghanistan. The European Union (EU) represents a case where 27 diverse countries throughout Europe have united to pursue common economic, political and security interests while still maintaining the sovereignty of each of the member states.
Increasingly, since the end of the Cold War, economic unions, such as the European Union or APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation), have taken on a security component as well. Conversely, NATO, which was created primarily as a collective security alliance, has broadened its mandate beyond deterrence. Currently NATO looks at itself as a group of democratic nations, united to insure the achievement of common economic and security goals not only within Europe, but beyond the formal “NATO guidelines area.” By admitting countries of the former EasternBloc, ranging from Hungary, Poland and Czech Republic to Romania, Latvia and Lithuania, NATO has affirmed the belief that there is a direct relationship between democracy, capitalist economies and security. It was also a dramatic symbol of the end of the old Cold War divisions and the start of a new era in Europe in particular, but for the international system in general.

Hence, countries can choose which foreign policy orientation to pursue in order to best assure their own national interest and security. However, countries also have to determine how best to respond to any particular set of actions taken by other countries in the international system. Again, they may choose to act unilaterally, bilaterally, or multilaterally. In most cases, however, the greater the number of countries acting together, the more effective a policy decision will be although the more difficult it might be to reach agreement.

Countries have a range of policy options available to them that can be placed along a continuum from positive (rewards) to negative (punishment). In all cases, the country decides which particular course of action to pursue by weighing the relative costs and benefits. A government, acting rationally, should choose the option that will promise to give it the desired outcome at the least possible cost. In most cases, while a country might decide to offer or grant a reward to a country unilaterally, it generally will look to other countries to support it when the option chosen is negative. Threatening or imposing economic sanctions, for example, is a far more credible threat when more than one country agrees to abide by those sanctions. In deciding which option to pursue, the other thing any country must remember is that it must be credible, that is, have the resources and the will to follow through on the policy decision made.

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Given the above, a logical question is where and how does negotiation as a tool of foreign policy fit into this framework?

*Negotiation* is a tool of foreign policy that can be and is used at all points along this
continuum. It represents the main form of communication between and among countries. Every international agreement made is the result of negotiations of some type. So negotiations become the means by which foreign policy options are conveyed from one country to another, and they can dictate the terms for complying with the options. In “normal,” i.e., non-crisis situations, negotiations can be quite routine and might involve nothing more than determining the ways in which two or more countries can implement an ongoing agreement. However, in times of crisis, negotiations can be used to manage the situation and to avoid armed conflict. Even during times of war, negotiations can be involved as a way to bring the conflict to a halt, to dictate the terms of cease-fire and to determine what happens after the conflict ends. One of the best examples of the positive impact of negotiations during times of crisis can be seen during the Cold War when the United States and Soviet Union were engaged in ongoing arms control negotiations. Whether or not these talks resulted in an agreement, they had the effect of keeping the two sides talking with one another, thereby minimizing the possibility that they would actually go to war.

One of the major challenges facing any government involved in a negotiation, however, is separating out the diplomatic from the political. *Diplomacy* is the formal process of interaction and is usually carried out by diplomats who are asked to implement a government’s policy or policies. This is different from the work of politicians, many of whom are also engaged in negotiations of various types but whose main job is to formulate policy (rather than carry it out). Both of these play an important role in the world of international negotiations, although the functions are different.

One of the other challenges in any negotiation lies in understanding the culture and perspective of the country or countries with which you are negotiating. Different countries have different negotiating styles and these must be considered in formulating a position and in determining how to approach another country. In addition, there is a strategy involved with any negotiation: whether to begin the negotiation or wait for another country to respond, how much to reveal about your own position and at what point, how much are you willing to compromise in order to reach an agreement, and, most important, what is your own desired outcome of the negotiation? These must be determined by each country in advance of the negotiation so that it will know how to begin and/or how to respond to another country’s overtures.

**Stages of Negotiation**

Diplomacy and negotiation represent alternatives to the use of force in the settlement of potential or actual disputes between countries. International negotiation is a phased process, predicated on expectations of reciprocity, compromise, and the search for mutually beneficial outcomes. All parties to a negotiation must prepare their positions carefully, looking for a balance between national (domestic) considerations and political realities.

Simulation participants should be prepared to engage in the following stages of the negotiation:

**Phase 1, Preparation:** The preparation is the most critical part of any negotiation. Each team must prepare for the negotiation by doing research on its own position, as well as the likely
position of the other teams with which you will be negotiating. Each team must set goals, that is, what do you want to achieve through the negotiation process. In the “real world,” it has been estimated that 80% of negotiations succeed or fail because of the preparation that is done prior to the time that the negotiation even begins. It should also be noted that, although this is a simulation of international negotiation, learning how to prepare – identifying the problem, doing the background research, formulating a position – is central to accomplishing any task successfully.

Phase 2, Pre-Negotiation: Based on the research and identifying your own goals, each country prepares an internal briefing or working paper that lays out the principles and objectives central to the issues under discussion. The paper should convey an understanding of each issue and the interrelationship among issue areas. In drafting this paper, attention must be paid to domestic policy needs, as well as to the likely position taken by allies and potential adversaries. The briefing paper should also include the team’s desired goals, as well as a negotiating strategy to achieve those goals. In defining the negotiating strategy, it is often best for a team to know what its own bottom line is as well as what the ideal outcome is. The position paper is not to be shared with other teams, but should serve as a framework for your own team. The position paper should be sent to SIMCON on or before February 20, prior to the start of the on-line negotiations at the end of February.

Phase 3, Opening Positions: Each team’s opening message should flow from the working paper. As soon as the simulation begins officially, all teams present their opening or “going in” positions on-line for the benefit of other participants during the first on-line exchanges. These messages provide the basis for the start of the negotiations. All teams should remember that the opening messages set the tone for the negotiations that will follow. Once that tone has been set, it will be up to you to determine how to maintain that tone for the duration of the simulation. As you frame your opening message, it might be helpful to remember that the tougher the position you plan to take in the negotiations, the more important it is to set the right tone that will help you achieve your goals. It is also important that you remember to depersonalize and avoid framing the problem as an issue of principle that will not allow you to compromise.

Phase 4, Preparatory Negotiations: The negotiations will then proceed over a number of weeks and should be characterized by an exchange of ideas, comments and proposals. All delegations should assess their positions relative to other teams, and explore ways to form coalitions and build support for your proposals. Try to develop a common ground, that is, identify the areas that you have in common and that you can build upon, rather than focusing upon the things that are different. Remember that the objective of the negotiation process is to see whether you can work cooperatively with other countries in a way that will help you achieve the goals that you defined during the preparation phase.

Phase 5, On-line Summits: There will be two rounds of on-line summits. The first, which is the preliminary round, will take place March 13, 14 and 15, and there will be one on-line summit for each of the three issue areas. The goal of the on-line summits will be for students to have preliminary discussions on each of the issues based on their own expectations and research, and what they know about the other teams’ positions. Note that each of the three preliminary
summits will last 60 minutes. These summits, which take place the second week of negotiations, should be the opportunity for countries to present their initial positions. This will allow all countries to learn about the other countries’ positions so that they can determine how best to negotiate. Based on what they learn at these preliminary summits, each team should revise their working paper and be prepared to start posting proposals that will move their position forward on these issues.

Following Round I of the on-line summits, teams will have the opportunity to revise their working papers based on what they learned in the summits; they can do additional research, and can continue the on-line conversation in order to develop their positions more fully. All teams will have the opportunity to participate in a second round of summits that will take place on April 17, 18 and 19. Each of these will last 90 minutes and will help teams finalize proposals that have been put forward, and see if they can reach agreement. During the period between the preliminary and final summits, the proposal center will become available so that students can post proposals that they developed. They will then be able to use the time from posting until the final set of summits to see if they can reach agreement on the proposals on the table. Voting will take place starting May 1, with the results announced at the final banquet on May 4.

The exact time for each summit will be announced at the start of the simulation. All teams are invited to attend each of the summits; however, we realize that not all teams will have representatives at each summit. It will be helpful to teams as they formulate their own negotiating positions to know who can and cannot be there. Therefore, to facilitate the negotiation process we do ask that you confirm your participation to all teams prior to the actual summit. Teams are expected to negotiate based on an agenda that will be determined in advance of the summit by SIMCON. All teams will have the opportunity to suggest agenda items based on the negotiations to that time. Further, teams will have the opportunity to chair various summits as well. During each summit, deliberations take place on the formulation of a common position and are used to see whether teams can reach agreement on proposals. These summits represent the culmination of the negotiations.

To aid you in the process, the ICONS software includes a feature called a “proposal center.” Proposals are specific ideas that countries propose that can help address some aspect of the three major issues. Proposals are designed to be the focus for negotiations among all countries. Before a proposal can be viewed by all countries, it must be approved by SIMCON. SIMCON will approve proposals that are co-sponsored by at least two (2) teams, and that pertain to specific ways to move forward with any aspect of the three issue areas. Generally, the more specific the proposal, the easier it is to make it the focus of negotiations among the group.

As noted above, teams can post their draft proposals in the proposal center for approval by SIMCON. Once the proposal is approved for viewing other teams can access them and respond. Teams should be prepared to post proposals as of March 16, following the first round of summits. This will also give teams time to do additional research and to begin to build alliances for their proposals. Using the proposal center can be an effective tool to help you prepare for the final round of summits.
Some Caveats: As you engage in these negotiations please remember that a simulation such as this one cannot begin to capture the full complexity of the issues, nor does it try to. Further, this exercise is structured in such a way as to limit your ability to move beyond what might be called the “pre-negotiation phase,” and into the middle- or end-games associated with concluding a real negotiation. Nonetheless, as you move from the preparation stage to defining your opening statement and into the exchange of messages and then the conferences, you should be better able to understand the negotiation process, and the complexity associated with concluding any negotiation – individual, business, international – successfully.

Preparation

Within the class, you will probably be organized in teams to explore the issues for negotiation from the perspective of the country that you are representing. Within that team, you will then have to do the research on the actor you are assigned to represent, the specific issues highlighted in the scenario, and the likely position of the other actors you will be interacting with during the simulation. You will also want to consider the position of non-state actors or interest groups operating in your country who influence or affect your country’s policies on these issues.

In all cases, working as a group you will formulate policies for multilateral and bilateral negotiations. These negotiations might be government to government or country to organization, depending on the country and the issue addressed. While the focus of the exercise is multilateral, participants should keep in mind that fact that bilateral dialogue is also an effective component of negotiations. The determination of when to pursue bilateral versus multilateral discussion must be part of each team’s negotiating strategy. Further, remember that the press is an actor in this simulation and can be used to help further your negotiations and goals, or to thwart progress.

Research: The key to a successful simulation is the research that each team does both prior to the start of the simulation and on an ongoing basis once the simulation gets underway. All teams need a thorough understanding of their own actor’s policies, as well as the policies of the other countries with which they will be negotiating. Further, all teams need to understand which non-state actors are important, and how they will try to influence policy decisions. Because this is a technology-based exercise, the more you can rely on technology for your research the better. Using Internet and the World Wide Web will allow you to access primary documents from the actor that you are representing, and the official positions of the actors with which you will be negotiating. You are urged to take advantage of that capability which will enable you to arrive at a more realistic depiction of your actor’s policies than you would simply by relying on U.S.-based documents alone. Further, you are reminded that issues will arise during the course of the simulation with which you are unfamiliar. When that happens you need to resume your research so that you are able to continue the negotiations in an enlightened way.

There are also many sources available that describe in great detail issues pertaining to national interest, foreign policy orientations and the process of negotiation summarized above as well as to the countries and specific issues addressed in the simulation. These range from traditional International Relations text books to specialized monographs on particular topics.
You are encouraged to consult these as part of your research as they will give you greater insight into the negotiation process.

Communications

A special simulation community will be created to facilitate communication among teams during the simulation. Through this community, you will be able to communicate with all participants, one or more individual teams, with the press, and with SIMCON. You will also use a special conference sector of the community for the scheduled summit meetings.

Regular e-mail: The backbone of your negotiations should be the “regular mail.” Regular mail can be accessed at any time, and should be checked daily. There should be a steady flow of messages from the start of the simulation as each country begins to establish ties and opens communications with other countries. As is the case with “real world” conferences and summit meetings, those messages that flow behind the scenes set the stage for what will take place during the on-line summit conferences and will determine what, if anything, will be accomplished during the limited time of those conferences. Regular e-mail messaging on the IL-INMP community will take place beginning February 27, at which time countries should begin sending their initial opening messages, and will continue until the simulation ends in May with voting on the proposals following the second round of summits.

Getting Started

Many teams feel a bit uncertain as to how to start. Some teams wait for other countries to take the lead. This can create an unrealistic policy atmosphere, as it is often in a team’s best interest to put forward proposals that will be beneficial to it, rather than wait and have to respond to other actors’ initiatives. From the beginning of the simulation, you should be prepared to communicate your proposals to other teams on a range of issues via “regular mail.” And please remember to submit your position/briefing paper to SIMCON (and only to SIMCON) prior to the start of the simulation.

To help you get started on the issues, you might want to focus on the section entitled “Questions for Consideration” which is included at the end of each issue-case. Please refer to this for guidance on the sorts of questions and topics that might arise during the simulation. However, do not feel that you must be confined to just the issues raised here. Once you have done your research and understand your country’s position on the issues, you might arrive at additional issues that are also appropriate topics for negotiation.

It is often the case that the more messages you send, the more responses you are likely to get. Be specific, respond to messages in a timely fashion, and be sure to leave room to negotiate!

“Real World” Applications

Although this is a simulation of events in the international system, many of the lessons learned have practical applications that go far beyond the classroom. This exercise will be more
valuable if all participants realize that they are learning important lessons beyond just those associated with current international issues:

First, the simulation teaches about the process of negotiation, which is part of every aspect of life. While the focus here is on negotiations among and between countries, in fact, the same principles apply to negotiations between spouses, parent and child, boss and employee, and among friends. Central to this is the ability to think through a position clearly, and then know how to articulate it. In other words, the ability to communicate clearly is an important tool not only in this simulation, but in the world beyond the classroom as well.

Tied to that point is the fact that participating in this simulation requires the student to think about the world differently. The research requires you to think about current issues from multiple perspectives as you learn not only your own country’s position, but the position of the other countries that you will be interacting with. This process helps develop important critical thinking and analysis skills.

Second, this program is technology based, something that is a critical part of our world today. Remember that you are using Internet and Web technology to send and receive messages and to do research for the simulation. But, again, the applications of the technology are transferable beyond the bounds of this program. Studies have shown that employers are looking for employees who know and can use current technology for research, writing, and communication. Mastering this skill in an environment such as this simulation will allow you to apply that knowledge that will help you get a job or advance within a job situation.

Third, the basis of this program is the written word, and learning to think critically and analytically. These are skills necessary to advance in the work place as well as your educational career and throughout life. As noted above, the ability to communicate ideas clearly and concisely is valued in the work place as well as in school. And, since virtually everything in this simulation is tied to the ability to communicate complex ideas, you will be practicing this skill throughout the simulation.

Fourth, the simulation requires you to work in teams, another critical skill required in the “real world.” There is virtually no job that allows people to work in isolation; rather, people are expected to be able to work and learn together. Collaborative learning is a skill that requires practice. Participating in this simulation will give you a framework within which to hone that skill.

Fifth, the simulation should give you a sense of the relationship between local and global problems and issues. In a world that is “globalized” and interconnected, the distinction between local and global breaks down. Thus, it is incumbent upon all of us to know about current issues and to see and understand the relationship between local and international events.

Sixth, evaluations of this program have found that faculty who use it in their classrooms teach differently as a result, not only in this class, but in others as well. The emphasis on active learning and student interaction changes the dynamics in the classroom. Another result of this
shift is that students who might not otherwise be interested in the topic become more engaged in the subject.

Finally, the simulation focuses on contemporary international events and the interrelationship among them. This also means that you must make connections across traditional disciplinary approaches. For example, although one of the issues is explicitly economic in nature, you must understand the political and cultural context within which that issue is addressed in the country that you are representing. The particular position taken by any country is a function of its history as well, and its historical relationship with other countries.

In addition to thinking across disciplines, in a world that is increasingly interdependent and interconnected, it is impossible to be considered truly “educated” unless you are aware of important global issues and the different perspectives that countries have on those issues. Similarly, understanding those different country perspectives should help clarify the position that others within your own community might have. And that, too, is part of what it means to be “educated” in the world today.
II. THE SIMULATION SCENARIO:

GENERAL INTERNATIONAL CONDITIONS

As we go to press with this scenario, the major issue facing virtually every country is the instability of the global economy. However, that is only part of the package of issues that international leaders must address at this time. Natural disasters serve as a reminder that often all states can do is react to situations beyond their control, as responding to those can take priority over any other policy option. A series of earthquakes in China, the quake that devastated Haiti, and the tsunami that followed a major earthquake in Japan in March 2011 are examples of natural events that can totally disrupt a country. A 7.2 earthquake in eastern Turkey in October 2011 was followed by a second slightly less powerful temblor in November which further disrupted the rescue operations. Neighboring Iran felt the tremor, although was not directly affected. In all these cases, there was little or no warning, and the effects have been long-term and devastating. For example, two years after the earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010 killing more than 230,000 people, just over 500,000 Haitians continue to live in tents, under tarps or in other forms of temporary housing. Despite promises from the international community, as of January 2011 less than half of the pledged $5.8 billion was disbursed, and some of that went to debt relief, rather than reconstruction. Japan is faring a bit better, due in part, to the fact that it was wealthier to start with. But it continues to have to deal with the aftermath of the impact of radiation from the damaged Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant, which, in turn, has led to a global rethinking about the dangers of nuclear energy. But the way in which the government handled the crisis led to the resignation of Prime Minister Naoto Kan, and sent a signal to other countries about the need to anticipate and prepare for natural disasters, rather than constantly having to react to them when they occur.

Natural disasters serve as a reminder that often all states can do is react to situations beyond their control but also are reminders of the ways in which the members of the international system can work together and with NGOs to foster a relief effort. Generally, it is the poorer and less developed countries that are the hardest hit, as they have the least ability to prepare and often construction if shoddy. This contributes to the devastation and loss of life when a natural disaster hits. But even Japan, a wealthy developed country, was not immune to the effects of natural disaster.

Another major issue that the international system must address is the ongoing civil conflicts that wrack any number of nations, such as the ethnic conflict which affected the African countries of Rwanda and Somalia. More recently the attacks against ethnic Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan

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5 The information contained in this scenario is factual and current as of December 28, 2011. The materials were drawn from readily available sources including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Economist, plus others as noted. Specific cites are included in the text. Note that although specific web sites have been included, they can change and it might be necessary to track down web sources by means other than the specific sites listed in this document.

has led to the death of several hundred Uzbecs, and as many as 400,000 fleeing the violence. In addition to the humanitarian aspects of this latest flare-up, both Russia and the United States have military facilities in Kyrgyzstan, and both countries have been courting Kyrgyzstan. This is yet another example of the dangers that are posed to ethnic groups, such as the Uzbecs or the Kurds in Iraq and Turkey, who, in effect, are “stateless peoples.”

This issue of stateless peoples and the desire for self-determination and recognition within the international system can be seen most clearly with the Palestinian people, an issue that got a lot of attention in September 2011, when the Palestinian Authority applied to the UN for statehood. Although that bid was formally rejected, it remains as an outstanding issue, possibly leading to a vote in the UN General Assembly at some point in 2012.

The issue of statehood for the Palestinian people raises important questions for the international system, and it is now a new one. The Balfour Declaration was issued by the British government in 1917 and called for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in what was then-known as Palestine. For the Arab people, however, the growth of an Arab consciousness paralleled the call for a Jewish state. Ultimately, this led to conflict between the Arabs in the area and the Jewish settlers, a conflict made worse with the formal creation of the state of Israel in 1948. Between 1948 and the present, a number of wars were fought between Israel and its Arab neighbors while there were also a series of negotiations regarding peace. The Camp David accord, brokered by the United States in 1978, was the first major agreement between Israel and an Arab country, in this case, Egypt. That was followed by other negotiations, although none has been as successful. Among the outstanding issues are what to do about the Palestinian people, and the status of Jerusalem, a city that is sacred to the three major monotheistic religions. And as Israel expanded its settlements into the West Bank and Gaza, two areas that are Palestinian strongholds, it made the Palestinian desire for self-determination even stronger leading finally to the latest political salvo.

To Israel, the attempt to declare statehood through the UN is seen as political grandstanding by the Palestinians in the wake of the growing influence of Hamas and the failure of the latest set of negotiations. The claim by the Palestinians, however, is that Israel’s Prime Minister Netanhayu is not willing to negotiate a two-state solution despite what had apparently been progress toward that goal. To the United States, Israel’s strongest supporter, the situation is at an impasse, despite the fact that an agreement had almost been agreed to in 2009. At that time, it is believed that Israel’s then-Prime Minister Olmert offered the Palestinians 94% of the West Bank as the basis for a state along with an additional 6% of Israeli land in swaps, “plus a safe-passage road-corridor to link Gaza with the West Bank.” Supposidely, Olmert also agreed to “internationalize” the sovereignty of Jerusalem, which would be shared as a capital of both states, “with the Palestinian one on the east side, the Israeli one on the west.” However, since Olmert was clearly on his way out of office, he felt that he could not sign any agreement. What this suggests is that the two sides potentially could reach an agreement, although clearly the issues are thorny and will not easily be resolved.

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7 See “Not quite as gloomy as they look,” The Economist, August 1, 2009, 40-41.
In a speech in 2009 Obama bluntly reminded Israel that although the United States is and remains a strong supporter of that country, it also has obligations, including to the Palestinian people. That means that Israel will have to give up its settlements: “The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements.” And he spoke of the important partnership among all these peoples and nations if there is to be peace. Clearly, Obama was sending an important signal. However, none of this was to come to fruition. In May 2011, the US special envoy to the Middle East, George Mitchell, resigned because of lack of progress. And the situation continued to deteriorate as Israel refused to stop building settlements.

Israel’s isolation in the region has grown even more extreme because of deteriorating relations with Egypt, in the wake of the revolution that deposed President Mubarak, and with Turkey, formerly one of Israel’s strongest supporters. The revolutions of the Arab Spring have changed the dynamics in the region in other ways as well. All of this is now being played out over the question of Palestinian statehood. Clearly, this is posing a dilemma for the international system not only because of this specific case, but for the signal it sends to other stateless peoples about issues of self-determination.

While the case of the Palestinian people might be the most visible example, many countries are dealing with issues pertaining to stateless peoples within their territory. Often these are indigenous groups who have been marginalized and who have few options available to them to assert themselves. With limited power and access, some, such as the “Zapatistas” in Mexico have resorted to rebellion at some level as a way to make their plight known both within their own country and to the outside world. The reality, however, is that little has changed.

Major new powers have emerged on the international scene, especially India and China in Asia, Brazil and Venezuela in Latin/South America, and South Africa and Nigeria in Africa. This group of countries (often collectively known as the BRIC or BRICS countries, to include South Africa), have shown the clout that they can have in areas such as the environment and global climate change. Each of these new powers, large or small, is seeking a greater voice in international decision making processes. Other countries, like Iran and North Korea, have been able to exert their influence on the international community by threatening to build nuclear weapons. That threat has been enough to cause great consternation among the major powers who are trying to find ways to stop those rogue states. It has become clear that economic sanctions do not seem to do enough. But it is also clear that their influence is not about just one issue area as they have exerted their influence on the international economic system. Nonetheless, despite their growing political influence, all these countries also suffer from internal issues, some natural and some man-made, that they must contend with.

After years in which US influence internationally waned and its power – especially soft power – was undermined, many around the world as well as at home were waiting to hear what Barack Obama would say and were eager to learn in what direction he would take the United States. As he made clear in his inaugural address, Barack Obama came into office facing critical

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8 “Remarks by the President on a New Beginning,” http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Cairo-University-6-04-09/
challenges to United States foreign and security policy. In that address on January 20, 2009, Obama identified what his U.S. foreign policy priorities would be as president. To all who were watching and listening both at home and abroad, he sent these words: “know that America is a friend of each nation and every man, woman, and child who seeks a future of peace and dignity, and that we are ready to lead once more” (emphasis added).  

From the time he was a candidate, Obama made it clear that his focus would be on the war in Afghanistan, which he felt suffered under the Bush administration’s attention to Iraq. Obama reinforced this message about shifting priorities in remarks he made on March 27, 2009, following the results of the comprehensive policy review on Afghanistan. Obama couched his remarks in terms that made it clear that there would be a new direction in U.S. foreign policy: “So I want the American people to understand that we have a clear and focused goal: to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent their return to either country in the future.” But he also learned quickly that “real world” events often interfere with even the best of intentions. Foreign policy priorities were taken over by the revolutions sweeping the Arab Middle East, and, even then, foreign policy had to take a back seat to the ongoing economic recession at home.

Following the mid-term elections of November 2010 that brought a Republican majority to the House of Representatives, Obama found it much more difficult to enact many of his policies. Obama got a big surge of support, however, when on April 30, 2011, it was announced that American special military forces had attacked a compound in Pakistan where Osama Bin Laden had been living, and that he had been killed in a firefight. In a speech on May 2, 2011, the President said that “justice has been done,” and then added “For over two decades, Bin Laden has been Al Qaeda’s leader and symbol… The death of Bin Laden marks the most significant achievement to date in our nation’s effort to defeat Al Qaeda. But his death does not mark the end of our effort. There’s no doubt that Al Qaeda will continue to pursue attacks against us. We must and we will remain vigilant at home and abroad.”

For a little while, the news of Bin Laden’s death eclipsed the other major foreign policy news, primarily the attacks on Libya. In a coordinated action that included backing from the Arab League, on March 19, 2011, the United States and Britain launched cruise missile attacks against parts of Libya designed to help shore up the rebel forces working to overthrow Libyan leader Qaddafi. At a time of economic crisis and with an economy already depleted from the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, many in the US Congress were raising issues about the wisdom of that military action, especially as Obama had made the decision to authorize the use of US military force without consulting with, and getting permission from, the Congress. While the President claimed that such action was not necessary, some members of Congress argued that not

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consulting with Congress was in direct violation of the War Powers Resolution, passed in 1973. Many of those doubts were laid to rest with the news of the death of Qaddafi in October 2011. While the situation in Libya continues to remain fluid, many heralded his death as the appropriate end to a brutal dictator. It was an example of another foreign policy success for President Obama. He also made good on his promise to remove all American troops from Iraq by the end of 2011. Despite the fact that that country is far from stable, the pictures of US military forces coming home in time for Christmas was a powerful image.

One of the interesting things about the announcement of the attacks against Libya was that it was made while the President was in Brazil as part of a formal visit to Latin America. In April 2009, shortly after becoming President, Obama attended a 34 country Summit of the Americas where he called for an “equal partnership” between the United States and its neighbors to the south. Two years later, he remains very popular in Latin America, although the trip came at a difficult time. The wave of revolutions sweeping the Arab world and the tsunami in Japan clearly were foreign policy priorities, while the ongoing economic issues at home eclipsed the domestic political agenda. Furthermore, as noted in an article in The Economist, “For many South Americans, the United States is no longer the only game in town… Trade with China is booming. Many South Americans feel they can make their own mark in the world. That is especially true of Brazil, the most important leg of Mr. Obama’s trip.” This is a statement about the growing influence of China, as much as about the relatively declining influence of the United States.

The United States has had to deal with increasing violence in neighboring Mexico, which at various times has spilled across the U.S. border affecting relations between these two countries. Nonetheless, economic ties between the two countries are strong and important to both. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), signed in 1994, held the promise of deeper economic integration among the United States, Mexico and Canada. In 2000, Mexico’s then-President Vicente Fox called for the creation of a customs union, a common external tariff and free labor flows. In 2005, the leaders of the three countries agreed to meet annually. However, progress toward all these goals has been halted. The three leaders have not met since 2009, and the violence in Mexico coupled with anti-immigration fervor in the United States has led to more restrictions between the two countries, rather than eliminating them. Although trade between the two countries remains strong, as a result of political issues in both the United States and Mexico further integration has become a distant dream.

The Obama administration is facing a number of other international security and foreign policy challenges beyond those mentioned above. The questionable presidential election in Iran in June 2009 that resulted in the reelection of President Ahmadinejad, was another indicator of how difficult it will be for the United States to deal with that state. However, rather than trying to isolate it, as was the policy of the Bush administration, the Obama administration has given signs that it plans to pursue the dual tracks of negotiation and diplomacy, as well as threats when necessary. The sanctions imposed on Iran by the UN Security Council in June 2010 were the fourth round imposed in the hope of stopping Iran’s nuclear program. Twelve of the fifteen

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members of the Security Council, including China and Russia, voted for the sanctions while Turkey and Brazil voted against them and Lebanon abstained. “The United States and Europe acknowledged before negotiations started that they would not get the tough sanctions they were hoping for, promising to enact harsher measures on their own once they had the imprimatur of the United Nations.”

The Obama administration had to work with Security Council members Russia and China, as well as the European members, to arrive at a package of sanctions that all could agree with. Both China and Russia were adamant that any sanctions not harm Iran’s day-to-day economy, including trade. This is especially important because the EU, China and India are major purchasers of Iranian exports. But to the U.S. administration, imposing any sanctions sent an important signal to Iran.

The United States has been working hard to establish a role in Africa, a region that has long been neglected by the U.S. Many countries in the international system like the U.S. are starting to recognize the important contributions that Africa can make internationally in a globalized world. The countries of Sub-Saharan Africa had generally been removed from areas of focus of U.S. foreign policy. Even during periods of civil war and genocide in countries such as Rwanda and Sudan, the United States remained removed from any active policies, beyond verbally condemning the acts. Seen as outside the U.S. sphere of influence, successive presidents including Clinton and Bush could not justify U.S. military intervention in Africa. But as the first African-American president, and with a Kenyan father, Obama has stronger ties to Africa than any previous president. His decision to visit Ghana following the G8 summit in July 2009 was further evidence that U.S. policy toward Africa might become more pro-active in an Obama administration. And the visit of the First Lady to South Africa in June 2011 was also seen as a positive step. But the reality is that little has changed thus far in the way of US foreign policy toward the continent.

An article in The Wall Street Journal highlights the challenges that the U.S. faces in dealing with Africa: “For years, conflicts and instability in Sudan and Somalia have weighed on American diplomatic efforts in Africa. In Nigeria, the fifth-biggest exporter of oil to the U.S., militant attacks on pipelines have contributed to shut down one million barrels of oil a day, or about a third of total capacity.” And the United States worries about China’s growing influence in the region and wants to make sure that it, too, has a presence. China has worked hard at cultivating trade ties with many of the African countries and the U.S. does not want to be left out. Like the United States, China looks to Africa for energy and natural resources.

The foreign policy issues that the United States is facing pales in comparison to the need to address the ongoing economic crisis. By the end of 2011, there were some signs that the economy was starting to improve, a trend that the Obama administration hoped would continue going into 2012 and the next presidential election. Partisan politics in the run-up to the election has dominated virtually all domestic issues. Ironically, though, it has been in the area of foreign

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policy that the administration has had the most success despite concerns about Obama’s lack of experience in that area.

Africa, the largest of all the continents, has been plagued by various disasters, some natural, such as drought, depletion of natural resources, and the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and some man-made, such as ethnic and religious conflicts. Fighting between Somalia and Ethiopia and the ongoing ethnic cleansing and genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan have both contributed to attention being given to the continent of Africa, little of it positive. In the midst of all these apparent problems, it is easy to overlook those countries that are not only doing well, but apparently thriving.

South Africa is one of those countries. Now an established democracy, South Africa held presidential elections on April 22, 2009 that brought Joseph Zuma to power. Zuma is a former freedom fighter who was backed by an alliance of trade unions, the South African Communist Party and the rural poor, many of whom were traditionally supportive of former-President Mbeke. Zuma is not without issues, though, as he has faced — and survived — trials for both rape and corruption, as well as having been fired as deputy president by Mbeke. But he was able to turn his legal troubles into political assets, allowing “the charismatic Mr. Zuma, who comes from a poor background and received no higher education, successfully portrayed himself as a victim of a political conspiracy orchestrated by Mr. Mbeki, an aloof, British-educated intellectual.”

While some outside South Africa feared that Zuma’s populist measure would lead to a marked change in policy, others see him as a mainstream and very clever politician who will most likely continue the policies that have helped South Africa advance economically.

Going into the elections, for the first time the African National Congress (ANC), the party of Nelson Mandela that has led South Africa virtually since the end of apartheid in 1994, faced some black-led opposition. This led to a split and the creation of a new group, the Congress of the People (COPE), led by former Defense Minister Mosiuoa Lekota and Mbhazima Shilowa, an ex-premier of the region around Johannesburg. Part of the reasons for the split can be attributed to dissatisfaction among those in the ANC with the policies advocated by Thabo Mbeki when he was president and head of the party, as well as with the leadership of Jacob Zuma. Municipal elections held in May 2011 reaffirmed the importance of the ANC as the dominant party, but its support was down compared to previous elections while support surged for the second major party, the Democratic Alliance. Indications are that political changes are the result of dissatisfaction with the ANC and the willingness of many black South Africans to look for alternatives. The next national election is scheduled to be held in 2013.

Like virtually every country, South Africa has felt the effects of the global economic downturn. Until recently, the economy of South Africa had been doing relatively well. Between 2004 and 2007, its economy grew at an average of 5%, and for the decade prior to that, it had

been growing at 3%. By 2011, it was estimated that growth had slowed to 1.3% because of global economic trends but also political uncertainty at home.\textsuperscript{15} The country lost almost 500,000 jobs in the first half of 2009, and at least 300,000 were expected to go by the end 2010. 2011 does not appear to be much better, with the unemployment rate estimated at more than 25%, despite President Zuma’s promise to create 500,000 new jobs by the end of his first year in office. There is concern that the rising unemployment and the inequality in opportunity could contribute to further political instability and even radicalism, especially among the youth of the country.

Despite a generally bleak economic picture, South Africa is not in as bad shape as other countries are. It has a sound banking sector that has been rated 15\textsuperscript{th} out of 134 countries by the World Economic Forum. The government is committed to spend 787 billion rand (about $98 billion) on infrastructure over the next three years.\textsuperscript{16} And the government said that it will not cut spending, preferring to let the budget deficit grow if necessary. Furthermore, as noted in an article in The Economist, “South Africa is also discovering that it can turn its dual nature – a first-world and a third-world country living side by side – to its advantage.”\textsuperscript{17} More specifically, it has been able to forge partnerships between major South African and Western companies, such as Caterpillar and Microsoft, to reach into new markets. The country also has been successful at luring educated African professionals from countries other than South Africa to take jobs in what is now-perceived as a relatively stable country. All this has improved the business climate in that country.

Although there is a growing black middle class, it does not mean that every aspect of life in South Africa is going well, however. Programs to begin to redress the disadvantages caused by apartheid, such as those mentioned above, are seen by many as favoring the blacks at the expense of the “coloreds” (people of mixed race) or those who live in the rural areas in the country. This has fostered hostility among the various groups; white South Africans feel put-upon to give preference to blacks, and those who are not “black” per se and who suffered under apartheid as well, feel that they are being ignored. An influx of immigrants from other African countries who are fleeing war and famine further complicates the picture. Many in South Africa see these immigrants as stealing their jobs, which has contributed to a rise in hate crimes against them. Human Rights Watch has documented abuse of illegal Zimbabwean migrants not only by employees, but also by the police, even the black police. And the economic situation, which has hit the poor in the cities, made this even worse. In 2009 violence exploded in Johannesburg as many of the city’s urban poor became especially frustrated with the government’s failure to deliver on promised services.

An increase in welfare spending has lifted some of the poorest out of extreme poverty. Since 1996 average black income per person has tripled in real terms, to almost 20,000 rand. “But average white income per person over the same period has risen almost as fast, to 136,000 rand – seven times as much as that for blacks. South Africa, always among the world’s most

\textsuperscript{15} See “Long walk to innovation,” The Economist, September 10, 2011, 74.
\textsuperscript{16} “South Africa’s economy: Late starter,” The Economist, August 22, 2009, 66.
\textsuperscript{17} “Long walk to innovation,” The Economist, September 10, 2011, 74.
unequal societies, has become even more so.”18 Expectations were raised when the ANC came to power with their promise of a better life for all South Africans, but many have seen little improvement in their own lives. This has led not only to violence and a sense of despair, but to an increase in crime that is no longer limited to the poorest townships.

While the country spends 6.1% of its GPD on education, there is a significant gap here as well, with black South Africans doing far worse on exams than whites. “Almost 13% of black adults are functionally illiterate, compared with 0.4% of whites. Fewer than 2% of black adults have a degree, compared with 17% of whites (which is still low by international standards).”19 President Zuma has vowed to make education his number of priority, but it is clear that this will be a huge – and expensive task that will not happen quickly.

While he was president (1999-2008), Thabo Mbeki raised South Africa’s profile internationally and he worked hard to show his commitment to Africa as a whole. South Africa has been engaged in negotiations that helped produce a referendum on a new constitution in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2005. It played a part in mediating an end to the conflicts in Liberia and Sudan. And South Africa has sent peacekeeping troops and observers to those countries to help once the fighting ended. Mbeki also tried to create permanent institutions that would serve Africa. For example, Mbeki was instrumental in creating the New Partnership for Africa’s Development in 2001. Headquartered in South Africa, this organization was designed “to make African countries themselves responsible for upholding standards of democracy and good government,...” Mbeki also played in important part in revitalizing the Organization of African Unity by transforming it into the African Union (AU), and he hosts the Pan-African Parliament in South Africa.20 Clearly, Mbeki saw his country’s involvement with the continent closely bound with its economic future.

It is clear that Zuma is following that same path. South Africa is one of the countries (along with Brazil, China, India and Mexico), regularly invited to attend the G8 meetings and which has been playing a larger role within the context of the G20. The country has played a critical role in the climate change talks, hosting the latest round in Durban in November 2011. As host of the World Cup in 2010, the country was on display –and best behavior – to the rest of the world. But below the surface, South Africa remains a country of contrasts. It has fabulous mineral wealth and excellent medical standards (it was the first country to perform a heart transplant) while the actual health record for its population is among the worst internationally. It set up the world’s largest antiretroviral treatment for people with HIV/AIDS, eradicated severe malnutrition for children under five, and increased to almost 100% the enrollment in school of children ages seven to 15. But many blacks still live in shacks without proper sanitation in crime-ridden townships outside the major cities. And although the country now has the world’s

24th largest economy, it ranges only 129 out of 182 on the UN’s Human Development Index. President Zuma will have to confront these challenges if the ANC is to continue to maintain its hold on the political system and if South Africa is to truly join the BRIC countries.

There are strong ties between China and the continent of Africa. China is a country that desperately needs many of the raw materials and resources that Africa has and, under President Hu Jintao, China has been pursuing relations with countries on the continent. This stands as an example of the new and more aggressive direction in China’s foreign policy. Where China has been fostering ties with Africa and the countries of Latin and South America, relations between the US and China have been deteriorating. And China’s assertion of sovereignty over parts of the South China Sea has increased tensions between China and other countries in Asia. One result of that has been that the US has reaffirmed its commitment to its Asian allies, especially Japan and South Korea, both of whom have announced a closer defense relationship with the United States. For many China watchers, its recent behavior “is in part the product of miscalculation, dating from the financial crisis.”

China is Africa’s largest trading partner “and buys more than one-third of its oil from the continent. Its money has paid for countless new hospitals and schools.” Nonetheless, for many in the many African countries with which China deals, feelings are mixed. Many blame China’s poor business practices, often shoddy construction, and feelings that they are being exploited for the change in attitude. “Chinese expatriates in Africa come from a rough-and-tumble, anything-goes business culture that cares little about rules and regulations. Local sensitivities are routinely ignored at home, and so abroad.” But there is anger and disappointment on the Chinese side as well. The Chinese factories provide jobs where there might not be any otherwise. “Indeed, China has boosted employment in Africa and made basic goods like shoes and radios more affordable. Trade surpassed $120 billion last year. In the past two years, China has given more loans to poor countries, mainly in Africa, than the World Bank.”

But quite a bit of the criticism has to do with Chinese protectionism that comes at the expense of consumers, and other countries. For example, “Hundreds of textile factories across Nigeria collapsed in recent years because they could not compete with cheap Chinese garments.” This accusation is not unique to China’s trade with Africa, but other countries, including the US, have made the same claim. So while China has brought investments and wealth to parts of Africa, it has further opened the country up not only to claims of protectionism but to imperialism which the government in Beijing vehemently denies. In fact, other countries such as Brazil are also strengthening their ties with Africa which has allowed some of the more sophisticated African countries to play the “outsiders” off against one another. Nonetheless, it is clear that Chinese investments in Africa have helped many of those countries more than hurt them.

But China’s movement into Africa is also indicative of China’s shift in its foreign policy to be far more outwardly focused. It is also clear, however, that China’s aggressive foreign policy stance has caused concern for a number of countries. In fact, it is obvious that Asia in general, and China in particular, are playing an ever more important role in current international politics and economics. As one of five permanent members of the UN Security Council, China is able to wield even more power internationally. This will be especially important given the uncertainty following the death of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, in December 2011.

But China’s foreign policy of “non-interference” also means that it respects the rights of others to “independently choose their own social system and path of development.” China’s foreign policy of “non-interference” also means that it respects the rights of others to “independently choose their own social system and path of development.” But, as noted in an article in The Economist, “With growing economic interests and ever more citizens to worry about in far-flung regions, Chinese policymakers are tweaking their strategy.” China really had to confront this issue in deciding how to respond in the UN to the situation in Libya. 35,000 Chinese work in that country, there was support for tough action against Qaddafi among the pro-Chinese Arab countries, and there was concern that China’s economic interests in the Middle East in general and Libya in particular could be threatened if they acted on the “wrong” side. As a result, the Chinese government made the decision to vote in favor of UN sanctions against Qaddafi in June. Although it later condemned the NATO airstrikes, most believed that the government took that action to protect itself politically from those nationalists who see NATO as a tool of the West. After Qaddafi’s overthrow and death, China remains especially concerned that the new government might take retribution against China for its support of the old regime. China had projects in Libya worth about $18 million when the uprising started, and Libya accounted for 3% of China’s crude oil imports. Furthermore, with its own internal problems (Tibet, the Uighers and other minorities), the government does not want to send any signal that a rebellion or any insurgency can ever be justified.

Uighers are the largest ethnic group in Xinjiang, but the demographics have been changing as the government has encouraged more migration of the Han Chinese to the region. Tensions between the two groups led to riots that broke out in 2009 when Uighers, angry at the government’s policies, attacked local Han Chinese. The riot initially started because of the government’s handling of another brawl between Uighers and Han in south-eastern Guangdong province. The riots drew enough attention that President Hu Jintao cut short his trip to Italy to participate in a G8 summit to return to China. But this illustrated clearly some of the problems that China has been having with its own people, beyond just the situation with Tibet.

Discontent continues to simmer in China among ethnic Tibetans who are spread throughout China. Sichuan has two “autonomous provinces” with large Tibetan populations, and the neighboring provinces of Gansu, Qinghai and Yunnan are affected as well. Authorities have been trying to keep journalists and tourists out of these areas which have seen an increase in protests, including self-immolations of Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns. While the Chinese

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28 “China’s evolving foreign policy,” The Economist, September 10, 2011. 46.
government calls them terrorists, there clearly is concern that the protests will spread resulting in uprisings against the government. The authorities have tried to intimidate the Tibetans, especially in Sichuan, by imposing heavy sentences on anyone accused of involvement in the immolations. But charges of torture have been brought against the authorities and countless monks and even laypeople have been rounded up and accused of taking part in the unrest. Clearly, the issue of Tibet remains a politically treacherous one for China.

Despite what had been a very poor record on the environment, China has restated its commitment “to achieving a 40-45% reduction in carbon emissions per unit of GDP by 2020 compared with 2005.” In another indicator of change in China’s environmental policy and awareness of international perceptions, the government admitted that there are environmental and other problems that were created by building the Mammoth Three Gorges dam upstream on the Yangzi River. When the project was initially approved in 1992, debate was largely stifled. In July 2010, facing a major flood crisis, “officials hinted that they might have overstated its [the dam’s] ability to control flooding.” In May 2011, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao went further. While calling the dam “hugely beneficial,” a statement by the cabinet at a meeting chaired by Wen said that “there were problems relating to the resettlement of 1.4 million people, to the environment and to the ‘prevention of geological disasters’ that urgently needed addressing.” The statement continued to state that the dam had “a certain impact” on navigation, irrigation and water supply downstream.” While some of these were anticipated or noted during the design or construction phase, they “had been ‘difficult to resolve effectively…” One prominent critic of the dam project accused the government of ignoring experts in order to get the dam approved. He argued that the then-leaders knew that any problems would no longer be their responsibility.

This public confession triggered a flurry of articles and comes at a politically tricky time for the country. The Communist Party is preparing for sweeping leadership changes that are likely to take place late in 2012 at the 18th Party Congress. At that time, Hu Jintao is expected to retire from his positions of state president, Communist Party general secretary and Central Military Commission chairman. Speculation is that he will be replaced by an entirely new leadership that will come to power in China, the so-called “fifth generation leadership.” According to some speculation “The government’s decision to be open about doubts that had previously been harbored in private could reflect struggles between out-going leaders and their still-influential predecessors.” There is still speculation as to who will emerge as China’s leaders. All of the fifth generation leadership named were born in the 1950s, and speculation is that Hu is already grooming the succeeding group, the sixth generation leadership. All of these came of age at a significantly different point in China’s history.

Whoever emerges as the next group of China’s leaders will be facing a number of issues. They will be inheriting a more assertive foreign policy with increasing power projection around the world. The country is facing a severe environmental crisis, which has long been known outside the country but lately has been acknowledged internally. China’s economic growth,

29 “Not pointing or wagging but beckoning,” The Economist, March 20, 2010, 47.
30 “China and opposition to dams: Choking on Three Gorges,” The Economist, June 11, 2011, 43.
while still strong, is being outpaced by India, a country that could challenge China for dominance in Asia. And China’s one-child policy has resulted in a precipitous decline in the annual population growth rate so that it is now far below the “replacement rate” which leads to population stabilizing. Furthermore, the population as a whole is aging, with people above age 60 now representing 13.3% of the total population, while those under 14 has declined from 23 to 17%. “A continuation of these trends will place ever greater burdens on the working young who must support their elderly kin, as well as on government-run pension and health-care systems. China’s great ‘demographic dividend’ (a rising share of working-age adults) is almost over.”

These changes have led to another debate as to whether it is time to end or relax the one-child policy.

On the other hand, a recent Pew poll found that “A growing number of people around the world see China’s economy as the most powerful in the world.” The median number naming China as the world’s leading economy has risen from 20% to 31% in the last three years. “Meanwhile, the percentage naming the U.S. has dropped from 50% to 43%.” A majority in Germany, France and Spain as well as the United States “see China’s economic strength as a bad thing for their country.” In contrast, Indonesians see China’s rising economic power as a positive development, and African publics understandably see their countries benefiting from China’s economic growth. Regardless of whether it is seen as positive or negative, this poll also reinforces the perception of China’s global power, which no doubt, has been translated into actions recently.

In short, China has been living with a very uneven image internationally. The United States and the other countries of the west such as the EU nations are quick to condemn some of China’s policies. On the other hand, they also need China which means finding ways to work with that country and to try not to antagonize it any further. In fact, in December 2011 China and Poland initiated a new forum that was designed to encourage closer ties between Polish and Chinese universities including encouraging students to study in the other country. This builds on the strategic partnership that was signed between Polish President Komorowski and China’s president Hu Jintao, the latest of seven such agreements to be signed between China and EU countries.

In September 2010, a Chinese fishing trawler rammed a Japanese patrol boat that tried to stop it from fishing in the area claimed by China. The captain of the vessel was captured by Japan, and later released although Beijing demanded an apology and compensation, which Japan refused to do. In Japan, the perception was that the incident was poorly handled and that the Japanese government caved in to pressure from China. Within China, however, this was seen as a matter of sovereignty. It was also another indicator of growing tensions between the two countries.

Clearly Japan has been one of the countries that has been in ongoing conflict with China. In fact, the government of former Prime Minister Naoto Kan has been criticized for the weak way in which it handled the issue of the Chinese fishing trawler that had attacked the Japanese patrol vessel. Following what had been a bruising battle for party leadership, issues with the United States about the 50 year old security agreement between the two countries, and questions about the economy were all eclipsed by the major earthquake that struck Japan on March 11, 2011 followed by a tsunami that swept in and killed more than 10,000 with close to 3,000 injured, and almost 18,000 still missing 2 weeks after the disaster struck.\footnote{34} As a developed country, Japan was better prepared than most to deal with these kinds of natural disasters. But the perceived weak response of the government led to the resignation of Prime Minister Kan as well as serious questions about the future of nuclear power not only in Japan, but world-wide.

Japan’s government under the leadership of then-Prime Minister Kan was seen as weak and largely ineffectual. Naoto Kan became Prime Minister in June 2010, becoming the fifth in four years. He began his political career as an environmental campaigner, and came to office promising to rebuild the country as it confronted economic instability, mounting public debt and regional instability. Internationally, he had to deal with a resurgent China, tensions on the Korean peninsula, and questions about the security relationship with the United States. In retrospect, given the series of issues he was dealing with, it is not surprising that the natural disaster resulted in Kan’s resignation.

Prior to the March 2011 disaster, Kan proposed the radical idea of raising the sales tax which currently stands at 5%, among the lowest in the world. A canny politician, he started to recruit opposition politicians to help promote his efforts. Since Kan’s party lacked a majority in the upper house of the Diet, he needed such politicians if any of his economic or fiscal proposals were to pass. The reshuffling of Kan’s cabinet in January 2011 was part of a move to convey a message of reform, especially on trade and agriculture as well as addressing taxes and pensions. Kan’s plan appeared to be to try to persuade the public that change is necessary in order to bring pressure on the opposition to deal with Japan’s troubled finances.

By February, Kan was being praised “for putting together a package of proposed reforms: more radical than anything attempted during two decades of economic malaise.”\footnote{35} While critics claimed that the plan would cripple Japan’s economy still further, others praised it for combining fiscal tightening measures with those specifically designed to stimulate growth. Kan also made it clear that he wanted Japan to join a free trade area called the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which currently includes nine countries including the United States, although that would require facing down the farm lobby to remove barriers from heavily-protected rice. But Kan saw the expansion of the trade relationship as a critical part of building ties between his country and the US, as well as ensuring a response to China.

\footnote{34} “Japan tsunami: Toll tops 10,000 two weeks after quake,” BBC News, March 21, 2011, \url{http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12857544}.

In many ways, Kan was gambling his political future on the proposed economic reforms, including the possibility of calling a snap election. But he clearly saw the importance of joining the TPP, knowing that Japan would have to catch up on the talks already started. Furthermore, neighbor South Korea already negotiated free trade deals with the US and EU, and he feared that these would leave Japanese businesses behind. When Kan put forward his proposals in January, he was not under any illusions that the way would be easy. But he could not anticipate the natural disaster that would shake Japan in March nor the political repercussions that would result.

When the earthquake struck on March 11, no one could anticipate the extent of the impact of the tsunami that followed. In addition to leaving a trail of death and destruction in its wake, it crippled the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant, raising questions about the safety of “peaceful” uses of nuclear energy. Dependent on nuclear power, Japan devoted vast resources to persuading the Japanese public of the safety and necessity of nuclear power. The result was the “safety myth… that Japan’s nuclear power plans were absolutely safe…. The belief helps explain why in the only nation to have been attacked with atomic bombs, the Japanese acceptance of nuclear power was so strong that the accidents at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl barely registered.” This complacency resulted in acceptance of Japan’s nuclear power to the point where regulators failed to adopt proper safety measures and advances in technology.

The aftermath of the tsunami made clear Japan’s lack of preparation for a natural disaster, and the government’s inability to deal with it when it struck. On April 17, a month after the tsunami, Tokyo Electric Power unveiled a 6-to-9 month plan to bring the Fukushima Dai-ichi plant to a state of cold shutdown. But there was no plan for dealing with the tens of thousands of evacuees many of whom are elderly, and living in temporary shelters. Some evacuees were concerned about leaving the area, fearing that they would lose their government-provided benefits, as well as links to their communities. Some lost all sources of income, but were not offered any relief to help them.

On April 14, Prime Minister Kan unveiled a 15 member task force charged with arriving at a plan to rebuild the stricken areas. Although the task force did have local representatives, “locals speak of the their need for housing and places to work, but their communities have not organized to press those claims.” By the end of April, two of the non-government members of the Reconstruction Design Council put forward their initial ideas on how to rebuild the shattered northeastern region directly affected by the tsunami. Nonetheless, they anticipated that it would take at least a decade to recover.

Another area that the tsunami made clear was the need for a public debate/discussion on energy policy, including the future of nuclear power. On April 26, 2011, Prime Minister Kan announced a decision to appoint and investigative panel into what happened at Fukushima. “Nuclear officials believe Japan needs a quick and thorough investigation, including international experts, if it is to gauge the safety of other nuclear plans… But whether the

reconstruction council and nuclear investigation promote deep changes in the way things are done in Japan rests largely on the prime minister’s powers of leadership.”\textsuperscript{38}

At that point, no one in Japan relished another change in government. Nonetheless, Kan also made it clear that he would step down, believing that a major aid package would not pass unless he did. One of the most hopeful signs for Japan has been the strength of the Japanese people in the face of the disaster. Furthermore, it transferred attention away from Tokyo and to the local communities who had to deal with the disaster. This has led to the emergence of local leaders who could provide some alternatives to the entrenched politicians who have ruled Japan for decades.

Kan finally did step down in August 2011 and was replaced by Yoshihiko Noda, then the finance minister, who became the sixth prime minister since Junichiro Koizumi stepped down in 2006. Koizumi, who was known for his charisma as well as political acumen, governed Japan for five years, a feat none of his successors has been able to challenge. But Noda was able to get elected based in part on his perseverance, courting voters tirelessly, and speaking plainly and honestly to the members of the governing party finally persuading them that he should be the next leader. Noda came into office wanting to end the rifts within his own DJP party so that he could move forward and secure the funding necessary for reconstruction of the parts of Japan that had been ravaged by the tsunami. And he remains deeply concerned about Japan’s fiscal health, advocating higher taxes if necessary.

The economic tightrope that the Prime Minister is walking has become apparent in the issues surrounding the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which Japan has yet to join. Promoted at the APEC meetings in November 2011, the United States and eight other countries all urged Japan to take part. One of the major aspects of the TPP would be to liberalize trade policies among the member nations, including agriculture as one of the areas. Currently, Japan heavily subsidizes the rice price and imposes a tariff of nearly 800% on imports of rice.\textsuperscript{39} But the farm lobby in Japan has lined up significant opposition in the Diet, and other powerful groups similarly oppose the membership. On the other side, supporters think that Noda has a strong case; the TPP would be phased in over ten years, so the impact would be gradual, it would result in a drop in food prices that would benefit households, and if farming became more competitive as a result, the price of land would increase which would also benefit the farmers. But perhaps the greatest advantage in joining to Noda is that it would link Japan with the United States, the world’s largest economy. And he sees that as a potential step toward other free-trade agreements, including possibly one with China.

Noda also is a foreign policy hawk who described Japan’s alliance with the United States as “the greatest asset we have.”\textsuperscript{40} Despite the fact that the security relationship between Japan and the US goes back more than 50 years, it has not always been an easy one. Nonetheless, the importance of the relationship between the two countries has been reinforced by China’s

\textsuperscript{38} “Japan’s unhelpful politics: Rebuilding Japan – or ruining it,” \textit{The Economist}, April 30, 2011, 44.
\textsuperscript{39} “Japan’s free-trade dilemma,” \textit{The Economist}, October 29, 2011, 53.
\textsuperscript{40} “Japan’s new leader,” \textit{The Economist}, September 3, 2011, 39.
aggressive moves in the South China Sea. One US official was quoted as saying that “America and Japan faced ‘the most challenging security environment’ in 50 years.” Despite the tensions between the US and Japan, both countries know that they need one another, a point reinforced by the new Prime Minister. But as outspoken as Noda is about the importance of the US-Japan relationship, he has been more circumspect about the relationship with China which he sees as providing Japan with both opportunity but also danger.

At a time when much of the Arab Middle East seems to be in revolt against autocratic leaders, the world is looking for other models of positive change in political systems. By that criterion, Brazil seems to be a model of democracy in action. After eight years in office, and prohibited from seeking another term, Luiz Lula da Silva stepped aside and gave his support to Dilma Rousseff, his chief of staff, who won a run-off election in January 2011 to become Brazil’s first woman president. Rousseff won by an impressive margin of 56% to 44% over her challenger, Jose Serra, of the Party of Brazilian Social Democracy. Like Lula before her, Ms. Rousseff faces a number of challenges not least of which will be the need for her to prove herself as a leader. She has to walk a fine line between showing the country and the world that she will provide continuity while at the same time, proving that she is her own person and not Lula’s puppet.

Brazil’s circumstances and standing in the world have changed substantially during Lula’s tenure. Since Lula took the presidency in 2002, the percentage of the population living in poverty has dropped from 26.7% to 15.3%. Average real monthly income per person has increased from 507.7 reais to 630.3, and the average years of schooling have increased from 6.6 to 7.6. Increased demands for Brazilian exports and a booming domestic market coupled with better social policies have helped countless Brazilians not only emerge from poverty but have a better life. Brazil’s wealth has been helped by oil, although one of Lula’s decisions was to give Petrobras, the Brazilian oil company, a monopoly over developing the new oil fields and has raised the government’s shares in the country. This, coupled with extending cheap loans on companies seen as supporting the government, have driven up public debt even as the country’s wealth has grown. But they have also taken funds from infrastructure, education and sanitation, and other needs of the civil society. These are all areas that Rousseff will have to confront, as well as eliminating the deficit, reforming the tax system and relaxing labor laws that limit the growth of the economy.

One of her biggest challenges will be to rein in government spending. As president, Lula used government loans and tax breaks to help Brazil escape the worst of the global recession. But rather than pulling back when the situation stabilized, the spending continued resulting in what has become an overheated economy. Inflation is running at about 7% well above the target of 6.5% and the government also fell well-short of the fiscal surplus it had anticipated. Some economists think that unemployment, at 6.4%, is so low that rising wages are pushing up inflation. In addition, forecasts of Brazil’s economic growth was cut by the IMF to 4.1% and

41 “Lula’s legacy,” The Economist, October 2, 2010, 30.
3.6% in 2011 and 2012 respectively, meaning that the IMF anticipates that Brazil will grow less than most other emerging economies. To start addressing these economic issues, the government has imposed stricter rules on banking reserves and consumer credit to try to dampen consumer demand. The government also has imposed new taxes on lending. And the government is reviewing various ways in which they can cut government spending. The problem is that most of the budget consists of things that cannot be cut such as payroll, health care and spending for education. These are all part of the unpopular measures Rousseff has started to impose in order to cool the economy, sustain growth, and make the state more efficient. But she has also ruled out cuts to social programs and to infrastructure.

To try to slow the economy, the president has ordered fiscal tightening and measures to control inflation. There is a possibility of resorting to new taxes, or that she would look to private investors to finance some of the infrastructure improvements. To many, the political calculation seems to be that it would be better to bear down now rather than wait until just before the next election in 2014. Just recently, some of the policies are starting to have an impact. As of June 2011, economic growth is predicted to hover around 4%, and inflation rates are starting to fall. Unfortunately, many Brazilians remain pessimistic. According to a poll by the National Confederation of Industry, 71% of Brazilians, a number higher than at any time since 2001, “think inflation will rise further in the coming months…” The poorest are the most pessimistic.

One of the other issues that Rousseff will have to confront is the disparities that exist within the country. The northeast part of the country remains its poorest; it has 28% of the country’s people, but only 14% of the GDP. Approximately 20% of the area’s adults are illiterate, twice the national rate. And it is home to more than 50% of the Brazilians who live on less than 70 reais (about $43) a month. This is also an example of how government policies can have a marked impact. Some of the positive changes in the region are due to the effects of a government anti-poverty scheme, and some are due to targeted micro-credit programs, which together have helped lift a number of people in the region out of poverty. And the infusion of money has helped attract more companies and businesses which have encouraged the government to invest even more in the area. The relatively rapid growth in this part of the country has not come without a price, such as traffic jams and rising housing costs. But the northeast also spends less on schools than the national average, and there are weaker teachers. If the area is to maintain its growth and catch up to the rest of the country, then there will have to be an investment in education or future generations will not be able to benefit from the rapid growth now being experienced.

Ironically, it was Lula who started to make gains in education, and there was plenty of room for improvement around the country. In 2000, half of Brazil’s children finished primary school, and three out of four adults were functionally illiterate. The rich sent their children to private schools, while the poor were unaware of how dire the situation was. A study released in

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46 “Brazil’s president: Dilma’s first big test,” *The Economist*, June 4, 2011, 44.
2010 showed that Brazil has come a long way since that time, showing gains in science, math and reading. But Brazil still was ranked 53 of 65 countries in the study. Two-thirds of 15 year-olds can do no more than basic math, and half “cannot draw inferences from what they read, or give scientific explanation of familiar phenomena. In each of the areas of reading, mathematics and science, only about one child in 100 ranks as a high performer. If Brazil is truly going to be recognized as a global leader, it will need to tackle its education crisis and produce better-educated students.

At a time when Brazilians learned that former president Lula has been diagnosed with cancer, health care has also become a serious issue. Lula entered a hospital in Sao Paulo where current President Rousseff was treated for lymphoma in 2009. Brazil’s Unified Health System (SUS) was created in 1989 from the merger of two state systems, one for those who work and the other for the rest of the population. This makes Brazil one of the few countries in Latin America that does not have a two-tiered system. The 1988 constitution “declared health care to be the right of the citizen and its provision the duty of the state.” But like other things, the implementation differs from the theory. Since funding depends in part on state, as well as the federal government and private sources, only the richest states, like Sao Paolo, can really provide the care necessary for all. Almost 60% of all health care spending in Brazil is private, “a higher share than in most other Latin American countries, and even higher than in the United States.” The poor of the country, who live in remote rural areas or violent urban slums, lack health service. And recently, “the problems of health care have displaced the economy, to rise to the top of voters’ concerns.”

President Rousseff has tried to respond by adding various drugs to those paid for by the SUS, and the Family Health Program has been extended to new regions. She has started to tackle poverty in the country by expanding cash transfers that Lula started with various health measures including better sanitation. But real improvement will not occur until there are changes to the ways in which the SUS budget is spent, including what the money should be used for and how to ensure that those who cannot afford health care will get it. In the meantime, it is clear that former-president Lula will get the best care that Brazil can give.

Brazil’s natural resources have contributed to its wealth but also to its problems. “Brazil’s forests are bigger than anywhere else’s. Its soil is so fertile that some trees grow to full maturity quicker than people do. Beneath the soil lie huge mineral deposits that are raw material for China’s double-digit growth. Brazil is already on its way to becoming an alternative-energy superpower. And … it now seems that there are billions more barrels of oil than previously thought lying beneath deep waters off the country’s coastline.” These resources have contributed to Brazil’s growing economic clout internationally and its role as a leader in South

51 “Health care of Brazil,” The Economist, July 30, 2011, 33
52 “All this and oil too,” The Economist, November 17, 2007, 43.
America. Brazil also emerged as a central player at both the G20 meeting and the recent economic summits.

Brazil has been a leader in looking for alternative energy sources and long ago turned from gasoline to biofuels so that now 77% of new cars in that country run on ethanol, “which accounts for half of all transport fuel consumed in this country.” Brazil depends on sugar cane-based ethanol, which is cheaper to produce than ethanol made from corn or wheat, which is typical of the ethanol produced in the United States and Europe. Brazil has perfected its production of ethanol from sugar cane so that it costs about 22 cents a liter to produce, compared with 30 cents a liter for the corn-based product. That makes it cheaper than gasoline and also more lucrative for farmers who do not have the same subsidies that they have in the United States and Europe. In Brazil, sugarcane production has been spreading, often replacing land otherwise used for growing coffee and citrus fruits, or just pasture lands this has come at the expense of the forests and also land that would otherwise be used for food crops.

Other environmental issues have emerged as important within Brazil. The fertile soil of the Amazon carries with it environmental problems, as well as advantages. Farmers have been cutting down parts of the rain forest for agriculture, which has resulted in a degradation of the environment as well as depleting the biodiversity that makes the region so unique. There is now a plan to dam the Madeira River, one of the Amazon’s main tributaries. If that plan goes forward, it will result in work for thousands of laborers and would contribute approximately 8% of Brazil’s capacity for electricity. This is important at a time when there is the possibility of electricity rationing because of increasing demand.

But the plan has a number of critics as well. If it goes forward, it would occupy part of the Amazon rainforest “that is home to 800 species of bird and 750 of fish….Of the 2,800 people affected, 850 would be flooded out of their homes. The project ‘will produce the most serious environmental impacts of any dam in the Amazon,’ declares Glenn Switkes of the International Rivers Network, a green lobby group.” The project has turned into a fight between pro-growth groups, and environmentalists, although promoters of the dam project have been trying to find ways to reach a compromise acceptable to both sides. Promoters of the project have promised to find ways to invest in conservation and to guide fish upstream in order to protect them. The Inter-American Development Bank has become a supporter of the plan, as have some “green” lobbies. But many environmentalists remain unconvinced, claiming that the dams will cause disruption to the plant and wildlife as well as blocking the natural flow of sediment. These are not new fights in Brazil, and the outcome remains uncertain.

These issues were among those that brought Brazil to the center of the discussion at the Copenhagen summit of 2009, where Brazil joined with other developing countries, such as India, China and South Africa, to set a commitment to reduce its rate of growth of greenhouse gas emissions voluntarily. While this commitment was seen by many environmentalists as not doing

55 “Damned if you do,” The Economist, June 3, 2006, 34.
enough, to others, it was a recognition that they could not expect to achieve much more, and that even a small agreement was better than none. Going into the subsequent Cancun summit in 2010, many were watching Brazil, especially in light of Rousseff’s comments in 2009 that “Brazil is no longer part of the [climate change] problem and has assumed a respected position as the galvanizer of negotiated solutions.” She also noted that “Stopping global warming is a common responsibility, but each group of countries plays a different role. We cannot demand equal sacrifices from those who participated unevenly in the process of industrial development throughout the centuries.”

Countries went into the Cancun summit in late 2010 with low expectations. Nonetheless, the Cancun Agreements provide emission mitigation targets and actions for approximately 80 countries, including Brazil, one of the world’s largest greenhouse gas emitters. By agreeing to cut its greenhouse gas emissions, Brazil was aligning itself with the EU, South Korea and other countries that had similarly adopted emissions targets. But it also reflects the views of many Brazilians who support a low-carbon economy but also the rise of the Green Party domestically. The subsequent conference in Durban, South Africa in December 2011 was able to reach agreement on the need to work toward a new global treaty and progress on the Green Climate Fund. Progress on the more contentious issue, progress on a treaty, was made possible only after Brazil came up with wording all could agree upon, specifically that “The new deal is not to be ‘legally binding’. It will, instead, be ‘a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force.’”

Where Copenhagen “produced a lot of ill will and an ‘accord’ put together by only a small subset of nations… In Cancun the ill-will faded and large chunks of that accord were at least translated into the official UN process.” One of the reasons for success in Cancun was simply a change in process whereby no country had the right to veto the will of others under the rules set by conference chair Patricia Espinosa, who is also Mexico’s foreign secretary. One of the things that also made the agreement unique is that it was able to identify and build upon areas of common concern between the developing and developed countries. Among these was a pledge to create a Green Climate Fund of $100 billion a year to go from the countries of the north (the developed countries) to those of the south (developing) to help pay for emissions cuts and climate adaptation by 2020. What pleased both sets of countries was the notion that the developing countries would be helped, along with the suggestion that not all the money has to come from the government, but that the private sector could contribute as well. A safeguard to protect the rights of indigenous people was also an addition that pleased a number of countries, while a new framework makes dealing with climate change an integral part of the UN process. “All of these now need to be turned from paper agreements into practical ones.”

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56 Quoted in Nikolas Kozloff, “Cancun Climate Summit: Will Brazil Step Up to the Plate?” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nikolas-kozloff/cancun-climate-summit-wil_b_788286.ht...
In many ways, the Cancun summit, held November 29 through December 10, 2010, was an important political highlight for hosting country Mexico. At a time when Mexico has been in the press primarily because of drug wars and murders, the successes at Cancun were attributed largely to the adept way in which Mexico’s president, Felipe Calderon, and foreign minister, Patricia Espinosa, who also served as president of the summit, were able to facilitate the negotiation process. According to one assessment, “The key role played by the Mexican leadership is consistent with the notion of Mexico as one of a small number of ‘bridging states,’ which can play particularly important roles in this process because of their credibility in the two worlds that engage in divisive debates in the United Nations: the developed world and the developing world.”\(^{60}\) The result was the creation of a Green Climate Fund which “is intended to raise and disburse $100 billion a year by 2020 to protect poor nations against climate impacts and assist them with low-carbon development.”\(^{61}\) The Green Climate Fund will initially use the World Bank as the trustee, while creating a new oversight organization to balance the developed and developing countries. While some feel that not enough was accomplished at Cancun, many praised the Mexican leadership for this success.

When President Bush came into office in January 2001, he made relations with Mexico one of his highest priorities. In fact, his first official meeting as president was with Mexico’s then-President Vicente Fox, as an assertion of the strong ties between the U.S. and its neighbors to the south. Since then, however, U.S. ties with Mexico have become strained. The political battles in the U.S. about immigration were seen by many as directed at Mexico, and the decision to build a “fence” along the border between the two countries to limit emigration from Mexico to the U.S. was also a source of strain. Violence against Americans and kidnappings of Americans in the Mexican border towns have affected tourism as Americans have become more wary of traveling to parts of Mexico. And a resurgence of drug cartels and accompanying violence have also raise the specter of Mexico going the same direction as Colombia did in the 1990s when narcotraffickers started to undermine the legitimacy of the government. These are among the issues that Mexico’s president Felipe Calderon has had to face.

After a contested election, Calderon was declared the winner and was sworn in as president in December 2006. In the years since he took office, Mexico has been hammered by an economic crisis, an electoral crisis, the swine flu epidemic, and now an outbreak of drug-related violence that threatens Mexico’s ties with the United States. Nonetheless, there is some good news in addition to the success at Cancun. The introduction of a new methodology to determine GDP showed that in 2007, the first year that the new index was introduced and could be compared against the old one, per capita income was $9,694, higher than $8,445 as indicated by the old method. The new formula gives importance to services and to trade and uses the same classification system as the United States and Canada. And, even so, estimates are that the new method underestimates Mexico’s output. For example, it does not take into account the money


generated in the informal economy and through remittances, nor does it account for the rise in price of many goods produced in that country. 62 And reports indicate that Mexico’s economy is the 14th largest in the world. 63 These all suggest that Mexico is doing better economically than otherwise thought.

President Calderon “has espoused a vision of North America as a union of complementary economies – with Canada – providing the natural resources and Mexico the labor – that would compete with Asia. However, his efforts to liberalize Mexico’s economy, including a plan to allow private investment in energy, has been defeated or watered down in Congress.” 64

There are steps that the government needs to take to help the situation improve still further. Because Mexico’s oil industry is nationalized, it generates little in the way of tax revenue. Oil output is falling rapidly “because of a constitutional ban on foreign investment in energy,” and oil income is expected to drop. 65 And recovery will be delayed unless the government is willing to engage in necessary structural reforms, including raising taxes and cutting spending. The administration passed an energy reform measure in 2008, and another fiscal reform in 2009. President Calderon has argued that the recession was not due to mistakes by the Mexican government, but rather by the impact of the economic downturn in the US, which has also contributed to a fall in remittances home to Mexico. He instituted various stimulus measures, including increased spending on anti-poverty and various work-related programs as well as interest cuts, but they have been overwhelmed by demand. But the administration continues to face many economic challenges, including improving the public education system, upgrading infrastructure, modernizing labor laws, and fostering private investment in the energy sector.

Mexico has become more assertive at finding ways to be integrated economically not only with its NAFTA partners, but with the other countries of Latin and South America. Mexico, along with the US, Chile and Peru, is a member of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Organization (APEC), a group of 21 countries that border the Pacific. And, most recently, Brazil led the way in sponsoring the creation of a South American Union, also known as a Pacific Common Market, which would include Mexico, Colombia, Chile as well as Brazil. Mexico is one of the few countries that does not have free-trade agreements with the others, and is in the process of negotiating them. Together, they are working on a plan for “deep integration” that includes not only broadening ties within their own region, but looking at foreign investment and trade with Asia to help achieve development. They are hoping to attract Brazil to join the group as well, which would bring important economic and political clout. For some, one of the main areas of appeal of the new group is to remind the United States of the fact that countries have more options than just looking to the United States. 66

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64 “North American integration: To each his own,” The Economist, February 25, 2011, 44.
65 “A different kind of recession,” The Economist, November 21, 2009, 40.
66 For more background and information on regional integration in Latin and South America see “Regional integration in Latin America: The Pacific players go to market,” The Economist, April 9, 2011, 41.
One of Calderon’s highest priorities when he came into office in 2006 was to wage a war against the drug cartels. He deployed more than 50,000 soldiers to fight the drug lords, and more than 28,000 people have been killed, some the result of battles between the soldiers and the drug cartels.\textsuperscript{67} In 2009, the Pentagon released a study arguing that Mexico was in danger of becoming a failed state, a charge that the Mexican government vehemently denies. An increase in the murder rate in 2010 compared to 2009 indicates not only an increase in the violence, but the spread of violence. Border cities, such as Monterrey, close to the Texas border, had previously been known not only as a safe city, but as one of Mexico’s industrial powerhouses, “with an average income three times the national average, thanks to factories turning out everything from fridges to fuselages for the United States.”\textsuperscript{68} But the city has since become the site of drug-related violence, including murders and kidnappings that have resulted in the exodus of many of the wealthy from that city to the United States or other parts of Mexico.

In response, many of the leading business people have been galvanized. They have taken full-page ads out encouraging people to stay, and have brought pressure on the government to take action. But the drug war has also exposed weaknesses in the country’s criminal justice system. Police are underpaid, and many supplement their income with bribes. Furthermore, under the Mexican constitution, police have been kept separate from other public servants. As a result, they do not qualify for a minimum wage and the 40 hour work limit. The government insists that reforms of the police as well as the legal system and the courts will soon have an impact in the battle against organized crime. But reforms often take time.

Calderon scored a major victory when the Obama administration admitted that part of the reason for the increasing drug violence has to do with America’s appetite for illegal drugs which, in turn, not only keeps the cartels in business but contributes to the sales of illegal guns. To show good faith, the United States has increased resources allocated to intercepting illicit guns, and has increased the number of federal agencies involved with interdiction. And both the United States and Mexico continue to seek ways to address immigration issues, a political issue on both sides of the border.

Although the presidential election is not scheduled to be held until July 2012, candidates are already jostling for position. The president serves for a single six-year term, so Calderon is not eligible to stand for election. The question is whether his National Action Party (PAN) will be able to maintain its control of power, or whether the presidency will revert back to the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which governed Mexico as a one-party state until 2000. Early indicators are that the PAN will have a lot to overcome. Although the economy had been recovering nicely, it has been hurt by the global recession as well as the increase in violence. This works in favor of the PRI, which has been stressing the idea that it is the only party competent to govern Mexico. How the PRI would tackle the issues is unclear and the PRI still will have to overcome is the image that it has long-held of being corrupt and even authoritarian because of the monopoly it had on power. What is certain is that whoever is elected will have a number of challenges ahead of him.

State elections held in July 2011 provided a boost for the PRI, when three governors were elected including one in the state of Mexico, the nation’s most populous. In addition, the PRI won in Coahuila, a state bordering Texas that has been devastated by drug-war violence. The PRI hopes that this strong showing will help pave the way back to power in the presidential elections. But they also reflected public anger at President Calderon, despite the fact that the crackdown against organized crime appears to be working as evidenced by an apparent drop in crime statistics.

Mexico has faced other internal issues, but they have paled in comparison to the war that the country is now fighting with the drug cartels. As a country with a large and diverse indigenous population, virtually from its creation Mexico recognized and celebrated its indigenous peoples as part of its heritage. That said, it was only with the 1992 constitution that the country was deemed “pluri-cultural.” Two years later, in 1994, the country faced an uprising by indigenous peoples known as “the Zapatistas” which was launched on the day that NAFTA came into effect. “Occupying four towns in Chiapas – where the situation of indigenous people has long been worse than in other states – the National Zapatista Liberation Army (EZLN) stated its opposition to indignities faced by indigenous people and others in Mexico. They called for better conditions for indigenous peoples, protection of communal land and an end to government corruption and human rights abuses.” After the confrontation between the EZLN and the Mexican government raised this issue to the front of the public agenda, “in 1996 the EZLN and Mexican government officials negotiated and signed the San Andres Accords, which guarantee land rights, regional autonomy and cultural rights for indigenous peoples. The Mexican government later refused to implement these agreements.” Although the EZLN by no means represents all of Mexico’s indigenous peoples, it has been considered the voice of all the indigenous people, raising many of the issues of common concern.

With their long-standing political and economic ties, in many ways the United States and the countries of Europe continue to have a difficult relationship both individually and as a bloc. The United States and the EU are the two largest economies in the world which together account for about half of the entire global economy. The EU and U.S. also have the greatest bilateral and trade relationship, with transatlantic flows of trade and investment amounting to about $1 billion per day. Further, through NATO these countries are also military allies, and hold common political values as well as strong cultural ties. Despite all these factors, the decision to go to war with Iraq and questions about the role of the European countries in continuing to support the war in Afghanistan have driven a wedge between the United States and many of its European allies, as well as among the European countries. There are significant divisions that have emerged


recently among the various EU member states which are feeling the economic strains of the recession as well as domestic political issues.

Despite their differences, the EU countries on the Security Council stood with the United States in approving another round of sanctions on Iran in the hope to reining in that country’s nuclear ambitions. The week after the Security Council approved the sanctions, at a meeting in Brussels the EU heads of state “adopted rules that could close many of those potential gaps [in the sanctions resolution] and added more restrictions, banning European companies from making new investments in, or otherwise assistant, Iran’s oil and gas industry. European ministers will now have to decide which Iranian companies are off limits and which European products and deals are affected.”

Much of the EU’s attention, however, has been focused on how to deal with the financial crisis that has affected Ireland, Greece, Portugal and to a lesser extent, Spain. According to one article on the topic, “For many companies in Europe, the debt problems of Greece or Portugal are little more than a distraction. Greece, which accounts for 2.5 percent of the gross national product in the euro zone, is not an important market for most large multinationals.” However, it also raises a more important point: “One risk of the current crisis is that it will create a sharper divide between poorer Southern Europe and prosperous Northern Europe, adding to tensions about how to manage the euro-zone economy.” This is coming at a time when there are already some serious tensions and divisions among the EU countries.

Sweden, an EU member, is a country that has long been seen as an example of economic and social success due, in part, to its decision to maintain neutral status. Sweden’s neutrality has kept it out of NATO, and has also put it into a unique position that has allowed Swedish diplomats to play an important role in mediating conflicts. A notable example is Carl Bildt, Minister for Foreign Affairs, who was co-chair of the Dayton peace conference that helped bring the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina to an end.

The country has followed a capitalist economic system that has allowed it to develop economically while also providing substantial social welfare benefits to its people. This was a country that was seen as able “to combine high taxes and massive state spending with high living standards and a strong economy.” It was not immune to the economic recession that roiled most of the globe recently, but its strong economy also allowed it to bounce back to become the fastest-growing economy in Western Europe. Although it is a member of the EU, (it joined in 1995) in 2003 Swedish voters turned down the opportunity to join the euro-zone, fearing what that might mean for its impact on the economy and sovereignty. As it turns out, the decision benefitted Sweden at a time when the EU is struggling to help fellow members such as Greece and Ireland out of their economic troubles.

Sweden is a member of the Nordic Council, which was created in 1952 to promote economic cooperation and development among the Nordic nations. Prior to its recent meeting in November, a Swedish historian proposed the creation of a pan-Nordic federation that would unite Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Together, they would have coordinated policies on economics and labor, with foreign and defense policy under the auspices of the federation. If this were to happen, the union “would have 25 million citizens and a combined GDP of $1.6 trillion, making it one of the world’s 12 biggest economies and entitling it to a seat at the G20.” The argument continues that “The combined economies could be more dynamic and better able to sustain high welfare and living standards.”

A recent poll showed 42% of Nordic citizens supported the idea, while the remainder was opposed. Furthermore, the growth of right-wing anti-immigrant parties in Scandinavian nations such as Sweden suggest there is a rise in nationalism, rather than support for confederation.

Because of many of its liberal policies, Sweden is a destination for refugees and asylum seekers, with immigrants making up more than 10% of the population. That same liberal attitude that initially welcomed immigrants to Sweden has resulted in a backlash against those same groups. This can be seen clearly in elections that were held in September 2010. A center-right coalition government of four parties, headed by Moderate Party leader Fredrik Reinfeldt, was barely able to hold power in the parliament. According to the Swedish government web page, “[W]ith its blend of conservatism and liberalism — the party has shifted toward the center of the political spectrum under Fredrik Reinfeldt — the Moderate Party is largely supportive of Sweden’s strong social welfare system while at the same time engaging in tax cuts and the privatization of state-owned businesses. A key policy has been to get people off benefits and into work.” Among the other parties in the coalition are the Liberal Party, which traditionally has had a strong commitment to education, respect for the individual, but is also pro-Europe and pro-nuclear power. Joining the coalition are the Center Party and the Christian Democrats.

For the first time, the right-wing nationalist Sweden Democrats garnered more than 4% of the vote (it won approximately 5.7%) which gives the party a seat in parliament. Reinfeldt has refused to work with the Sweden Democrat party as part of the coalition, as the party portrays itself as a nationalist party committed to saving Swedish traditions. Clearly, this is not-too-hidden code for an anti-immigrant stance that calls for “a ‘responsible’ immigration policy with greatly reduced numbers of asylum seekers allowed to stay, and [that] wants to make it tougher for relatives of immigrants already in Sweden to enter the country.”

Jimmie Akesson, the leader of the Swedish Democrats, has refused to get behind the banner of multi-culturalism that the mainstream parties in Sweden have been advocating. Rather, the stance taken by Akesson has been that people who come to Sweden, “must become

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75 “Love in a cold climate,” The Economist, November 6, 2010, 66.
76 Country profile: Sweden, BBC News, http://bewsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_pr...
as Swedish as possible,” asserting that “[T]hey are the ones who have to adjust, not us.”

In spite of their strident calls against immigration, the government made a deal on asylum and immigration with the Greens, which is Sweden’s most pro-immigrant party. Despite these attempts to broaden its appeal, recent polls showed that “support for the party had fallen to 4.6%, the lowest this year.” And as long as they remain above the 4% threshold, they will retain their place in parliament.

The Sweden Democrats have targeted Islamic immigrants specifically calling them “the biggest threat to Sweden's national security since World War II,” and, as a result, they proposed a 90 percent reduction in immigration of refugees and immigration on the grounds of family ties.”

The backlash against Islamic immigrants is likely to grow following explosions on December 11, 2010, in a major shopping area in Stockholm. The bombing was believed to be the work of an Islamist suicide bomber, whose family emigrated from Baghdad to Sweden in 1992. It is believed that while he attended college in Britain, he became involved with extreme Islamists and ultimately adopted those views. “The blasts have caused widespread consternation in Sweden. The country has long prided itself on having created a tolerant and peaceful society at home, and on having avoided involvement in the upheavals that have ravaged much of Europe in modern times, including World War II. Until Saturday, it had escaped the bombings that have hit several other European capitals since the 9/11 attacks.”

This brand of “home-grown terrorism” has much of Europe on edge. Shortly after that attack, twelve men were arrested for terrorism in England, nine of whom were accused of “engaging in conduct in preparation for acts of terrorism.” Shortly thereafter, police in Germany moved against a group accused of radical Islam, and authorities in the Netherlands said that they had arrested 12 Somalis suspected of plotting a terrorist attack. They held six and released the other six. “European concerns about terrorism seemed to mount after a suicide attack this month in Sweden, by a Swede of Iraqi descent who had been living in Britain; terrorism arrests in Spain and France; and other alarms in Germany over fears of a terrorism attack modeled on the 2008 attacks in Mumbai, India. The alerts have been given added weight by a warning in October from the State Department in Washington about reports of a planned

79 “Living with the far right,” The Economist, September 10, 2011, 56.
80 “Living with the far right,” The Economist, September 10, 2011, 56.
81 Jonas Freden, “Center-right wins Swedish election – but short of majority, September 20, 2010,
attack in a European city."\textsuperscript{84} The attacks in neighboring Norway in July 2011 further frightened many in Sweden, but also pushed the rise of far-right movements to the top of the political agenda throughout Scandinavia. And the attack in Oslo only increased the feelings of vulnerability.

One of the international issues that unites the western countries is the desire to ensure that Iran does not develop a nuclear weapon. At a time when the Middle East is already in turmoil, there are fears – justifiably so – that a nuclear Iran would further destabilize the fragile balance that exists in that region. In November 2011, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) released a report that notes its “serious concerns” regarding “possible military dimensions to Iran’s nuclear program.” It also notes that it finds credible information that “Iran has carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device.”\textsuperscript{85} The report then goes on to document its evidence that Iran is on the path to becoming a nuclear power. Although the report has been rejected by Iran’s President Ahmadinejad, it will no doubt give further impetus to Western efforts to tighten the UN Security Council’s sanctions against that country. However, China and Russia have indicated that they would oppose any attempts to impose tighter sanctions, and there has been talk about military action coming from some quarters, including Israel. The possibility of an Israeli attack against Iran is not a new idea, and if there were to be such an attack, it could slow Iran’s progress. But there is also fear that any such Israeli attack would be met by an Iranian attack of its own, assisted by Hezbollah forces in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza.

There is additional evidence that the fears of a nuclear Iran are credible. “Western intelligence sources believe that Iran now has enough highly enriched uranium to build, should it choose to do so, at least one nuclear weapon within a year and that this could be rapidly followed by several more.”\textsuperscript{86} Whether Iran has the capability to produce a miniaturized warhead is less certain, but the prospects of the country developing any nuclear capability is chilling enough for most countries.

To further complicate the equation, Iran is a strong ally of Syria, which has been going through its own internal instability that has not yet been resolved. In addition, Iran might see the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq and the apparent instability that has followed as another opportunity to further its own agenda in the region by asserting itself.

All indications to date are that Iran will not bend to the will of the international system nor to international pressure. In fact, at the end of December, Iran ratcheted up the situation when it threatened to close the strategically important Straight of Hormuz, the only sea outlet for Persian Gulf oil, should the international community impose any additional sanctions. Iran is the


\textsuperscript{85} “That’s right, Iceman. I am dangerous.” The Economist, November 12, 2011, 53.

\textsuperscript{86} “That’s right, Iceman. I am dangerous.” The Economist, November 12, 2011, 53.
world’s fourth largest oil producer but a senior Saudi oil official said that the Gulf states would jump in and increase their production should that become necessary. What made this situation especially tense is that the United States was in the midst of conducting naval exercises in the region at the time that Iran issued its threat. This is but the latest salvo in what has become Iran’s increasingly aggressive stance internationally.

Previously, in June 2010, the first anniversary of the contested presidential election of 2009, the world waited to see whether there would be any additional uprising, and to see what the Iranian government would do. The presidential election, held on June 12, 2009, was a period of political turmoil for Iran and raised for the international community questions not only about the legitimacy of the government of Ahmadinejad, but of the fragility of it. To some, the posturing that has resulted over the nuclear weapons issue is due in no small measure to Ahmadinejad’s desire to repair at strengthen his image at home.

Iran’s political system “rests uncomfortably on two pillars, one democratic, the other theocratic. The elected parliament and presidency have plenty of power over state spending and investment, but little over national security, including Iran’s controversial nuclear program. This falls under the aegis of the theocratic branch, embodied by the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.” It is Khamenei who not only serves as the “moral authority” but also “as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and [he] controls a range of powerful bodies intended to enforce the “Islamic” nature of the system, including courts, state broadcasting and the Guardian Council, an appointed committee charged among other things, with vetting candidates and monitoring elections.”

The 2009 election raised the question of who is really in charge of the country? The disputed results did little to answer that question.

Ahmadinejad stood for a second four year term in the 2009 election. His primary opponent was Mir-Hossein Mousavi, who had served as Prime Minister from 1980 to 1988. Mousavi was seen as a pragmatist as well as a reformer, although as Prime Minister, he guided the country through its war with Iraq, and was at the heart of the regime that took U.S. hostages. Although he has not served in the government since then, he has been a member of Iran’s Expedient Discernment Council, which advises Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and he has served as president of the Iranian Academy of Arts since 1999. Mousavi supports women’s rights and while he does not recognize Israel, he has condemned the Holocaust. During the campaign he stressed the need to engage with the United States, although he also indicated that he would not budge on Iran’s right to pursue nuclear weapons.

Throughout the campaign his wife, Zahra Rahnavard, was at his side. She was seen as a symbol of progress for women, and was instrumental in getting the youth and women out to vote. Polls going into the election indicated a tight race, with Moussavi running slightly ahead of Ahmadinejad. According to one press report, “Even though Iran’s nuclear row with the west

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88 “Demanding to be counted,” The Economist, June 20, 2009, 25.
dominates headlines abroad, analysts predict that the economy and rising inflation in the world’s fourth largest oil exporter will be the main issues in the election campaign.”

The presidential campaign was unusually acrimonious with Mousavi and his wife at the center of large pre-election rallies, and Ahmadinejad and his supporters mounting often-vicious attacks against both Mousavi and his wife. These further polarized the electorate. The results of the election, which was held on June 12, 2009, were disputed, especially when Ahmadinejad was named the winner. On June 19, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei cut off any possibility of compromise, and declared the elections valid. He also warned of violence should protests and demonstrations continue. Despite that, opposition leaders continued to call for protests, leading to a showdown between the protestors and government security forces. The rallies continued, and Ayatollah Khomenei called for an investigation into the results, although he dismissed allegations of fraud.

The announcement of the election results gave rise to major protests throughout Iran in what became known as “the green revolution” because of the color of the scarves the protestors wore to cover their faces. The country remained deeply divided as those who supported Mousavi remained unconvinced that the election was really fair. A government crackdown on protests, and the dismissal of many journalists made it especially difficult for the world to find out what was really going on within the country. Then, in a further complication, on June 28 authorities arrested nine Iranian staff members of the British embassy in Tehran. Although five were quickly released, four remained in custody leading to increasing tensions between Iran and the European Union. The EU is Iran’s largest trading partner, which, in turn, put the EU in a unique position to try to broker an agreement regarding Iran’s nuclear program.

To appease many who claimed that the votes were not fairly counted, the Guardian Council did a random recount of 10 percent of the ballots in Tehran and in some provinces. But rather than satisfying the public, this only fueled further skepticism when it was announced that the recount suggested that Ahmadinejad won even more votes than initially projected. Then, despite questions about the legitimacy of the vote tallies, the Guardian Council formally certified the reelection of Ahmadinejad on June 29. While many remain unconvinced of the legitimacy of the elections, there seemed to be little more that anyone could do. Protests continued well into July although at that point, it did not matter.

In June 2010, on the first anniversary of the election, there were a number of clashes between a small number demonstrators and security policy. The demonstrations were far smaller than the mass uprisings that characterized the protests following last year’s presidential elections. That latest demonstration, coming close to the vote on UN sanctions against Iran, prompted harsh public statements, including one by U.S. Secretary of State Clinton. Her outspoken comments can be compared to one year ago when the then young Obama administration did not want to undermine any possible diplomatic overtures to Iran. Since that time, it appears that the administration realizes that diplomacy alone is unlikely to bring about any change in Iran’s policies.

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Subsequent to the imposition of the sanctions Iran’s Supreme National Security Council called them illegal and said that they were based on false allegations about Iran’s nuclear program.\textsuperscript{90} “The sanctions require countries to inspect ships or planes headed to or from Iran if they suspect banned cargo is aboard, but there is no authorization to board ships by force at sea. Iran has also proved itself adept at obscuring its ownership of cargo vessels. Another aspect of the sanctions bars all countries from allowing Iran to invest in their nuclear enrichment plants, uranium mines and other nuclear-related technology, and sets up a new committee to monitor enforcement.” The United States wanted broader measures direct at Iran’s financial institutions and certain aspects of trade, “but China and Russia were adamant that the sanctions not affect Iran’s day-to-day economy.”\textsuperscript{91} The United States and Western European countries knew that they would not get all they wanted in the UN Security Council and agreed to pursue additional sanctions through other channels. This is the fourth round of sanctions imposed on Iran, and none of them have succeeded in halting Iran’s nuclear weapons program. Iran’s has put forward its threat about the Strait of Hormuz in anticipation of another round of sanctions.

The importance of “national interest” at the expense of global good can be seen clearly in a number of issues that the international system is now dealing with. The global economic recession raised clearly the dangers of a world that is globalized and interconnected. Virtually no country has been untouched by the economic recession. But it also pointed out some of the problems with the international trade and economic system that has been in place since the end of World War II. The world is a very different place now than it was then. Yet the system has not changed.

Recent natural disasters have raised questions about who is best equipped to handle and distribute international aid, and whether countries are better off getting money rather than materials that can sit in warehouses for months. But addressing this would require the international community to work together and arrive at policies that would be implemented for the common good. Natural disasters also can reveal problems that the international community has not yet addressed. For example, the tsunami in Japan in March 2011 made the world aware of the dangers of nuclear power, long seen as one of the safest and environmentally friendly forms of energy. At a time when the international system has been taking a close look at the Non-Proliferation Treaty and with it, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the problems with the radioactive fallout at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant raised concerns about whether there is such a thing as benign nuclear energy. This is a serious problem that individual nations as well as the international system as a whole must confront.

Further, natural disasters, such as the floods that devastated Thailand, Pakistan and other parts of South Asia serve as a reminder of how ironic nature can be. On the one hand, countries or parts of countries are devastated by flooding while, on the other hand, other parts of those countries and others are suffering from lack of potable water. Water is one of the elements that


is required for human survival. Yet we are at a loss as to how to ensure a safe and adequate supply.

These are not easy questions for the international system to address. Yet, the realities of the world today, is that they must be addressed if conflict is to be prevent or resolved once it is underway, and if the war-torn society is to be rebuilt as a stable society. It is up to each country to review this range of issues from their perspective and point of view in order to develop those policies that will work best for them, given their own priorities and needs.
III. THE ISSUES: THREE CASE STUDIES

The goal of the issue cases that follow is to provide a framework within which countries can address particular global issues. It is important to remember that these were selected from among a large range of issues that all countries are dealing with simultaneously. However, since we cannot address all of them, think of these as a sample of both issues and countries with the goal of seeing whether agreement can be reached.

Although each issue is presented as a unique case to be addressed by a “working group” of countries, the reality is that they are interrelated and must be seen together as parts of a whole. However, the only way to make negotiations possible is to break them up into manageable pieces, which is what the cases represent.

The specific issue cases follow. Each is presented with a synopsis or overview of the particular issue, more detailed background of the issue, and with questions for consideration to help guide the research. Not all questions will be addressed nor is this list of question inclusive. Others will arise in the course of the research and negotiations. But these represent a common starting point and should be seen as such.

It will be incumbent upon each country to review and research issue and to understand it from the perspective of that country. Clearly, each of the countries included in this simulation will see the issue from its own point of view. As each country develops its position on the issue in preparation for the negotiations, it will also be important to consider what is in your own best interest, which countries represent likely allies and supporters of your position, and which countries are most likely to take a position opposed to yours.

As you do the research, it will also become apparent that these issues are interrelated. Therefore, although each can be approached as an individual case, it is also important to recognize when and whether a policy decision made regarding one area will have an impact on decisions made in another.

The three issue cases follow.
Environment: Water as a Scarce Resource

Synopsis

There is a direct relationship between access to food and water and the health of a nation. A thriving population requires good nutrition; similarly, water that is not potable is a source of various water-borne diseases that further undermine the health and safety of a country’s population. This can be seen quite dramatically with the cholera outbreak in Haiti that followed the devastating earthquake. Therefore, it is in all countries’ best interest to work together and to help all countries attain these needs. Water is one of those resources that we think little about. However, conditions of drought, where countries do not have enough water, or areas of floods, are both equally as devastating on a country. In some cases, the irony is that even in countries that experience flooding, such as India and Pakistan, they also suffer from drought which undermines agriculture and crop production, thereby contributing to hunger and poverty. And human consumption and waste of water only add to problems of natural scarcity.

In 2000, the UN adopted its Millennium Development Goals, which outlined targets for specific issues that ideally could be achieved by 2015. One component part of Goal 7, “Ensure Environmental Sustainability,” is to halve, by 2015, “the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.” It is important to note that these two issues – safe drinking water and basic sanitation – go hand-in-hand. While the developed world and parts of North Africa and Latin America are on track to meet this goal, the developing regions have not made sufficient progress towards the target. The incidence of natural disasters has only exacerbated the situation.

As countries are mulling over the two sides of this important issue, the question arises whether water, a natural resource, should be sold as a commodity in the same way that oil is. In short, since water is necessary for human life, should access to it be a basic human right or should it be made available to those countries and individuals who can afford to pay for it?

A working group of countries has been assembled to address many of the separate but interrelated issues regarding water as a commodity. Many of the countries in this working group are those who are most affected by lack of access to food and to safe drinking water. The goal of this working group is to examine questions of access to water as well as see if they can arrive at any agreement about whether or how water can and should be regulated. This is an especially important question in all the cases where bodies of water cross national borders, and in light of the looming goal put forward by the UN.

The Issues

Issues surrounding water as a scarce resource have become politicized because of questions, both ethical and economic, surrounding the sale of water as a commodity, or the issue of water as an item for international trade. In a number of cases public authorities (i.e.,

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governments) have been selling or transferring the ownership and/or management of water systems to private corporations. This move toward privatization is the result of a number of factors including mounting costs and increased liability associated with providing water services. In addition, international organizations (such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank) have put pressure on governments to find ways to reduce public sector debt as well as the growing power and influence of multinational corporations which are seeking ways to increase profit. Those countries that have abundant amount of water have seen this as a resource that they can use for this purpose. Finally, some countries simply see water as a resource (like oil) that they can sell or trade on the market to those countries that don’t have this resource.

Often, the countries that are most affected by these moves are those that are developing and often the poorest. In other words, those countries whose people are least able to pay for water and who often need this resource the most are sometimes the ones who are most eager to sell it in order to raise money. Similarly, the richer, developed countries, like the United States, also need water and therefore are most likely to pay for it and have the resources to do so. While some argue that sharing fresh water can lead to cooperation between and among countries, others fear that the logical outcome of seeing it as a scarce resource (like oil) will only lead to competition and conflict and to increased human suffering.

Hence, although much of the world’s attention has been focused on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the nuclearization of North Korea and/or Iran, one of the greatest possibilities of conflict comes from water, specifically, access to scarce and precious fresh water. This can be seen already with a growing conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia over access to water from the Nile, the world’s longest river. Originating in the highlands of Ethiopia, it is Egypt that has been exploiting that resource. However, recent upheaval in the country have led some of the other upstream countries, including Burundi, Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, to join with Ethiopia to rewrite a 1959 that favored Egypt. Ethiopia plans to dam part of the river as part of a plan to increase hydroelectric capability. Ethiopia has been getting funding from China for the project, but still falls short of the total needed for the project. In the meantime, the prospect of this dam has raised concerns in Egypt but, more important, illustrates clearly the dangers that water scarcity and access to water can cause internationally.

A study done in 2000 by the National Intelligence Council of the United States, working in conjunction with outside scientific, diplomatic and corporate experts, has concluded that “by 2015, nearly half of the world’s population – more than three billion people – will be in countries lacking sufficient water...” Other studies support this dire conclusion. In its 2007 report on the status of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the UN noted that “Shortages of fresh water – perhaps our most precious but degraded natural resource – are also likely to be exacerbated [from climate change].” Further, as this report also notes, a drop in rainfall will contribute to a “drop in crop yields and the critical decline in food, shelter materials and water

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could prove to be catastrophic."94 Ironically, the flooding that has taken place in parts of the world and which are also attributable to global warming do not address the issue of potable water and, in fact, make the situation worse. Thus, a change in rainfall, either in case of draught or floods, which is needed for drinking water, irrigation, and renewal of streams and rivers have a ripple effect.

The MDG report also set a goal of halving the proportion of the population without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, which go hand-in-hand. For example, the situation in Haiti following the earthquake there has resulted in such poor sanitary conditions that it led to an outbreak of cholera that is unlikely to be eradicated from the island for years. Cholera is transmitted through water contaminated with fecal bacteria. Often in areas where sanitation is poor, clean water is lacking. People use the same water to bathe, wash clothing and clean food, and children often play in this same water which is contaminated by sewage.

As one article notes, contrary to popular belief, “there is, globally, no shortage of water. Unlike other resources (such as oil), water cannot be used up. It is recycled endlessly, as rain, snow, or evaporation. On average, people are extracting for their own uses less than a tenth of what falls as rain and snow each year."95 Rather, the main problem is the waste of water. “Agriculture uses three-quarters of the world’s water…. Because water is usually free, thirsty crops like alfalfa are grown in arid California. Wheat in India and Brazil uses twice as much water as wheat in America and China.”96 Laws of economics would suggest that imposing higher prices on the use of this commodity would ensure that usage would go down or, at the very least, that water would be used more efficiently. However farmers reject that approach, arguing that water falls from the skies and, therefore, that no government has the right to charge for it.

In fact, the reality is that less rain is falling from the skies. Faced with severe drought, many countries are struggling to deal with the decrease in rainfall and with that, the shortage of water. For example, 2009 and into 2010 was a period of severe draught in parts of Africa, India and Australia. East Africa has been especially hard hit, resulting in severe food shortages. This has put pressure on the governments and NGOs to feed the starving people. But the UN’s World Food Program “says it has only $24 million of the $300 million it needs just to feed hungry Kenyans for the next six months.”97 This, in turn, has led to a new class of refugees, or what have become known as “climate-change migrants,” who move in search of better conditions, resources for shelter, and pasturelands. This, too, is felt most among the extremely poor, who

are already barely getting by.\textsuperscript{98} An important corollary to this point is that these eco-refugees are not only fleeing drought, but are sometimes forced to flee their homes because of flooding. A new report lists the eco-migration “hot spots” as: “dry bits of Africa; river systems in Asia; the interior and coast of Mexico and the Caribbean; and low levels in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.” To continue, “A one-meter rise in sea levels could displace 24 million people along the Ganges, Brahmaputra, Irrawaddy, Salween, Meking, Yangtze and Yellow rivers – which together support a quarter of humanity.”\textsuperscript{99} Thus, parts of India have to contend with periodic flooding while other parts, which are dependent on the monsoon rains to irrigate their crops, are suffering from drought.

Most of the water that humans use goes to crop irrigation. One reason for world hunger is that irrigation is generally a luxury for the wealthy farmers, thereby leaving the poorer farmers who are dependent on the rains with few options and low crop yields. While in some countries poor farmers have been able to dig wells, in other cases the water tables have been so depleted that they have not been replaced. Many of the lakes, rivers and aquifers that have been most important for food production have already been depleted, including China’s Yellow River, the Nile in Egypt, and the Ganges in India. Some of the world’s great rivers, including the Indus, Rio Grande and Yellow, no longer reach the sea. Draining, damaging or destroying natural rivers and wetlands have also contributed to a depletion of freshwater fish populations, necessary to balance the ecology and that as another important source of food.

Countries facing water scarcity have a number of ways to address it. One of the primary issues tied to water use is diet, as different foods require radically different amounts of water. “To grow a kilogram of wheat requires around 1,000 liters [of water]. But it takes as much as 14,000 liters to produce a kilo of beef. The meaty diet of Americans and Europeans requires around 5,000 liters of water a day to produce. The vegetarian diets of Africa and Asia use about 2,000 liters a day.”\textsuperscript{100} Ironically, as parts of Asia are developing and becoming wealthier, meat intake has increased as well, a shift that will be difficult to reverse. “In general, ‘water intensity’ in food increases fastest as people begin to climb out of poverty, because that is when they start eating more meat. So if living standards in the poorest countries start to rise again, water usage is likely to soar. Moreover, almost all the 2 billion people who will be added to the world’s population between now and 2030 are going to be third-world city dwellers – and city people use more water than rural folk.”\textsuperscript{100} Thus, without changes in efficiency and water use, “the world will need as much as 60% more water for agriculture to feed those 2 billion extra mouths.”\textsuperscript{101}

Issues surrounding water as a scarce resource have become even more politicized because of questions, both ethical and economic, surrounding the sale of water as a commodity. This raises important ethical questions about whether countries should be allowed to buy and sell water or to trade it like other products or resources on the open market. Tied to this is the

\textsuperscript{98} “A new (under) class of travelers,” \textit{The Economist}, June 27, 2009, 67.
question of whether countries should be allowed to transfer ownership of water systems to private corporations who use it to make a profit, or whether it should remain under the control of national governments. If the latter is the case, then (at least in theory) governments can better control the use of water within their own country and can have more control over negotiations with other countries regarding this resource. Both of these are normative questions that can be argued in any number of ways, depending on your perspective and the perspective (and needs) of the country.

The Annual Report published by the UN Development Program (UNDP) calls for access to water to be recognized as a human right by all governments. But water is also a commodity that someone must pay for. As a general rule, the World Bank calculates that “it takes about $10 a month to supply a household in a poor country with the water it needs to subsist.” The report calculates that “about 90% of Latin American households could afford a water bill that size, without spending more than 5% of their income. But in the continent’s poorer countries, such as Honduras, Nicaragua and Bolivia, 30-50% of urban households could not stretch that far. And in India and sub-Saharan Africa, more than half of households would struggle to pay.”¹⁰² If the poor can’t pay for water, either someone else has to or they will go without, which is a serious health issue.

In some countries, such as Chile, the government subsidizes water for poor households. But, as the UN notes, that approach requires that the government be able to identify the poor, meter their water consumption, and be willing to subsidize the cost. In most of the world, the poor cannot depend on their government or on donations of water by private companies to help them. Instead, countries must arrive at a viable solution to this problem.

On the one hand, if water is a resource that is found within a country (like oil), and a country has abundant amounts of it, shouldn’t that country be allowed to sell or trade it with other countries that need it? On the other hand, as a “collective good” that benefits many people as well as a scarce natural resource, does any one country have the right to sell it for its own monetary gain?

The issues surrounding water, who owns and who controls it, are issues that the international community must address as a whole. To see if they can reach agreement on any aspect of this important issue, a working group of countries has been assembled to address many of the separate but interrelated issues regarding water as a commodity. The goal of this working group is to examine questions of access to water as well as see if they can arrive at any agreement about whether or how water can and should be regulated. This is an especially important question in all the cases where bodies of water cross national borders.

¹⁰² “Clean water is a right,” in The Economist, November 11, 2006, 67.
Questions for Consideration

1) Should water be considered a commodity or a resource that can be bought and sold internationally?

2) Can countries reach agreement regarding specific cooperative guidelines on water?

3) Can countries arrive at a way to settle disputes peacefully about water when they do arise?
Natural Disasters and Their Aftermath

Synopsis

Two earthquakes in Turkey, one in October 2011 followed by a second in November, resulted in injuries and death to hundreds. The quake, which was centered near the border with Iran, was the worst that the country had experienced in more than 10 years. The earthquake and then tsunami that hit Japan in March 2011 also caught the international community off guard. There are enough precedents and lessons learned from past disasters to outline what should be done in the future. Natural disasters such as earthquakes and tornadoes often strike without much warning, which is why so many can die or be injured. In other cases, such as Hurricane Katrina that hit the Gulf Coast of the United States in August 2005, a natural disaster was made far worse by problems inflicted by human beings, including poor shoring up of the levees which, when breached, contributed dramatically to the scope of the problem.

While natural disasters almost by their very nature cannot be anticipated, there is no reason why countries cannot and should not work together to prepare for such situations, and to find ways to respond in these cases. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) Societies, an organization well known for its work during various disasters including war, has documented attempts by the international community to draft a coordinated response. One of the most notable was UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182, passed December 1991, specifically to coordinate humanitarian assistance. But the resolution also notes that “Each State has the responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies occurring on its territory. Hence, the affected States has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory.” But the resolution also talks to the need to ensure coordination, the ability to process requests for emergency assistance, create contingency funds “to ensure the provision of adequate resources for use in the initial phase of emergencies that require a system-wide response,” and, create an inter-agency standing committee within the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator headed by a high-level official.

The IFRC notes that “for the most part, the international community has preferred to address coordination issues by less formal means…” and that “the UN has recently been reforming its system of cooperation among agencies to reduce gaps in coordination and to

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improve its interoperability with other humanitarian organizations. However, as the IFRC report also notes, this approach is not the most effective nor efficient, often leading to disparities in aid provided, and often with inappropriately or incompetently provided goods that not only do not help, but can actually be dangerous.

To counter that, and under pressure from the IFRC to begin to address these issues in a more coherent and coordinated way, the UN has called together a working group specifically to examine and update UN Resolution 46/182.

The Issues

A series of natural disasters that hit in 2010 and 2011 made it clear how ill-prepared the international system is to deal with them in a coordinated way. Too often, when aid was sent it was not helpful or was even harmful, for example, sending expired medicines or incompetent medical services. The affected country might shy away from taking aid, preferring instead to try to care for its own citizens rather than opening the country up to the view of outsiders. When help does come, lack of cultural sensitivity further exacerbates the problem, further traumatizing populations already devastated by the scope of the disaster. And often, it is the aftermath of the disaster especially homelessness and health problems such as outbreaks of disease, that are as devastating as the initial disaster, or even more so.

No country is immune to the effects of natural disasters such as earthquakes as recent history has shown. The impact of an earthquake that struck Indonesia in December 2004 was followed by a tsunami that caused great devastation to the island of Sumatra. Estimates are that more than 225,000 died in the tsunami with more than 600,000 left homeless. Living in overcrowded relief camps, the primary challenge facing the international community following this natural disaster was how to protect against the spread of communicable diseases. The United Nations stepped in to provide vaccines to protect children against an outbreak of measles, and the World Health Organization worked with UNICEF specifically for the prevention and then treatment of malaria. In the period between 4 and 10 weeks after the tsunami, estimates were that between 19 and 27 international relief agencies were on the scene. According to the Canadian government, despite the fact that more than 500,000 people were living in temporary shelters for weeks/months after the tsunami, there were relatively few health problems for a number of reasons. “First, large outbreaks of communicable diseases are uncommon following natural disasters and are related mainly to suboptimal living conditions, lack of safe water and sanitation, environmental changes and lack of health care. Second, the Aceh population was accustomed to handwashing and to boiling their drinking-water before consumption. Furthermore, the population was generally healthy, with low levels of malnutrition and infant mortality.”

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are important lessons that, unfortunately, do not hold true in all cases.

Furthermore, the scope of the disaster and the speed with which it hit led to an outpouring of international support. “After the tsunami more than 160 aid organizations and UN agencies began operations in Indonesia to provide food, shelter and schooling. Foreign troops were also involved in initial emergency relief efforts. Agencies estimate a humanitarian response may be needed for up to two years,”\(^1\) From the United States, former Presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush worked together to raise funds, with Clinton named “UN special envoy for tsunami aid.” This high-level attention helped considerably in the funding and rebuilding efforts that followed the devastation.

The earthquake that hit the country of Haiti in January 2010 stands in marked contrast to the situation in Indonesia. The earthquake, which struck just outside the capital Port-au-Prince, killed over 200,000 people and left more than 500,000 homeless. The most immediate problem was finding housing for the people prior to the start of the rain and then hurricane season. The camps are overcrowded and many people preferred to live in makeshift housing and tents, rather than in the camps. One year after the quake, housing was still temporary with make-shift neighborhoods around Port-au-Prince still lacking basic infrastructure, such as roads and sanitation facilities.\(^1\)

What caught the international community by surprise in Haiti’s case was the outbreak of cholera that followed the earthquake. There had never been any recorded cases of the disease in that country. As a result, in the period immediately following the quake, little attention was given to this possibility, as the US Center for Disease Control and other major health organizations deemed it “very unlikely to occur.”\(^1\) Because of the low incidence of the disease, the population was especially vulnerable to it, so when the outbreak did occur, there was a very high fatality rate and there were far fewer doses of vaccine available than were needed. Furthermore, given the situation with the number of displaced persons, “Had a large stockpile of oral cholera vaccine been available and deployed to inoculate the majority of Haitians most at risk after the outbreak following last year’s earthquake, the illness and death from the cholera epidemic could have been reduced by about half, according to new research.”\(^1\) Further, the authors of a recent study on the cholera outbreak in Haiti “recommend that a comprehensive global plan be developed for the use of cholera vaccine to treat epidemic cholera. Distribution could be coordinated through global and regional public health organizations such as the World Health Organization and Pan American Health Organization. The authors note that the current cost of the two existing vaccines, at $5 and $1.50 per dose, make a good case for international distribution.”\(^1\)

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investment in production and distribution of a stockpile.”113 This further substantiates the IFRC argument about the need for international coordination and planning prior to the disaster, rather than asking the international community to respond to the situation.

A recent example of a major natural disaster was the earthquake and then tsunami in Japan in March 2011. Japan, unlike Haiti, is a wealthy and economically developed country. While that could not protect it from the devastation caused by this natural disaster, it did help considerably in the aftermath of the event. And the cultural norms of the country further protected it. For example, “In the face of calamity, a decent people has proved to be extremely resilient: no looting; very little complaining among the tsunami survivors…. Everywhere there was calm determination to conjure order out of chaos.”114 Furthermore, because the international community has dealt with such disasters in the past, it was better prepared to quickly step in in this case. Within the first 24 hours, the Japanese Red Cross dispatched 62 response teams to the area. “These medical relief teams – made up of about 400 doctors, nurses and support staff – are already providing assistance in affected areas through mobile medical clinics, as well as assessing the damage and needs of the communities affected. More than 300,000 people who were evacuated before the tsunami struck have been housed in temporary centers set up in schools and public buildings where the Red Cross has distributed upwards of 30,000 blankets so far.”115 And, most important, the Red Cross is advising anyone who wants to help to donate financially to the cause, rather than contributing food, clothing or supplies which raise problems of warehousing and shipping.

On the other hand, the very role that Japan plays in the international community meant that the impact of the disaster was felt far beyond the area affected. Stockmarkets around the world were roil by fears of the economic impact. Early estimates of more than $100 billion in damage seemed outlandish, although not enough to destabilize Japan’s economy. Disruption to manufacturing had an impact on supply chains internationally, which also could damage an already shaky global economy. And, of course, the radiation leaks from the Fukushima Dai-ichi plant raised serious questions about the future of nuclear energy.

But there is a darker side to the catastrophe as well. As is the case with other natural disasters, the displaced and homeless needed a place to go; early estimates were that more than 260,000 were left homeless. Refugee shelters were overcrowded, with little food. Red Cross workers talked of the “food refugees,” specifically “people who may have their homes but have no food, for the shops have run out.”116 Here, many blamed the very orderly Japanese bureaucracy for contributing to the problems. One senator claimed that he found plenty of food

115 “American Red Cross Responding to Japan Earthquake and Pacific Tsunami,‖ March 12, 2011, http://www.redcross.org/portal/site/en/menuitem.1a019a978f421296e81ec89e43181aa0/?vgnextoid=f9efd2a1ac6ae210VgnVCM10000089f0870aRCRD.
116 “Disaster in Japan: Come back in ten years’ time,” The Economist, March 26, 2011, 47.
available, but no means of distributing it because the roads were closed to all except emergency vehicles. He then relayed how he had borrowed a helicopter to fly food and medicines to the hardest-hit areas, but was refused permission to land. “He asked if he could drop the supplies at the supplies at the airport, hovering just a meter above the ground. Again, he was told this was against the rules.”

In retrospect, the government has been doing some serious thinking about what should have been done differently. The senator, noted above, said that the first thing that the government should have done was declare a state of emergency in order to override some of the existing bureaucratic regulations that inhibited disaster relief. But he also noted that very few politicians were aware of the extent of the problems. Furthermore, in the case of Japan, there were – and still are – the confluence of a number of issues. The chain started with an earthquake, followed by the tsunami, and then the radiation leak from the nuclear plant. While any one of these would have been a problem, the combination of the all of these put a serious strain on the government.

The radiation leak not only has caused its own environmental and health problems, but it has raised fears of food safety, as the radiation has gotten into milk and water, thereby making both of these in short supply. In the near-term, though, the government has to determine how best to meet these various crises which have implications far beyond Japan.

And there are countless other less dramatic natural disasters that strike countries regularly. For example, a flood that struck the mountains behind Rio de Janeiro in Brazil in January 2011 resulted in the deaths of at least 740, with hundreds more missing and more than 21,500 left homeless in what has been called the country’s worst national disaster in decades. Dozens of villages were affected, and countless farms buried in mud and rock. The loss of farmland led to skyrocketing prices for fruits and vegetables, which had an effect far beyond just the capital. Catastrophic rains due to La Nina effects said to be attributed to global warming were blamed for this catastrophe, and Brazil is known to have sophisticated satellite technology that can be used to predict such storms. But that has not stopped the building that has been taking place in the most vulnerable areas, where an estimated 5 million Brazilians live in such danger zones. Trying to anticipate the need for disaster relief, the government actually created a disaster relief fund, although less than 1% was actually spent on prevention last year. The government claimed that that is due to the fact that there were few plans presented for workable projects. Nonetheless, the country can expect such natural disasters to continue.

An earthquake that struck Turkey in October 2011, followed by a major aftershock in November, resulted in death or injury to hundreds. The quake struck near the Turkey-Iran border in an area that is near an active fault-line. However, of greater concern to many, is what would happen if a major quake struck Istanbul, Turkey’s largest city with a population of more than 12 million, and which also lies near a major fault line. As an old city, many of Istanbul’s buildings were not constructed to withstand that kind of disruption.

In all these cases, as with many others, the international community rushed in to provide help. However, often the help was not the type that was most needed to deal with the challenges that the community or even country was facing. Here the findings of the IFRC are especially instructive. They have concluded that “At the national level, many states lack robust legal and institutional arrangements for the coordination of international actors providing assistance in their territories and the negative consequences of this lack of preparation have been apparent in recent operations.” The proposed remedy for this, as far back as 1971, was for each country to appoint “a single national disaster relief coordinator to facilitate the relief of international aid in times of emergency.”\(^{119}\) Since one of the biggest failures identified in time of national crisis was a central governmental focal point, the goal here was to ensure the most effective means to bring aid to the area in which it is most needed.

Furthermore, as the IFRC also notes, “Once relief does arrive in the affected state, it represents all too often what assisting actors want to give rather than what is really needed or appropriate… In fact, the wrong kind of assistance can do more harm than good. This is true not only in connection with the bottlenecks that a flood of inappropriate relief goods can cause in customs, but also the effects badly designed relief can have once it arrives in the country.”\(^{120}\)

As a result of its examination of international disasters and optimal responses, the IFRC has arrived at a number of conclusions about how the international system can best be prepared to respond to natural disasters and emergencies. Improving coordination is especially critical in facilitating requests and offers of assistance between and among states in the case of emergency. The UN has started to reform its process of cooperation to begin to address the gaps. But the international system still has a long way to go, especially since natural disasters and various types of emergencies are not going to diminish.

To respond to this growing need and under pressure from the IFRC to begin to address these issues in a more coherent and coordinated way, the UN has called together a working group specifically to examine and update UN Resolution 46/182.

Questions for Consideration

1) How can countries build on the framework of Resolution 46/182 for strengthening the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance?

2) How will countries arrive at funding mechanisms for such emergency assistance?

3) How can countries better prepare to meet the challenges of a range of such

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international emergencies?
Human Rights: Protecting the Rights of Stateless Peoples

Synopsis

Many countries are made up of a number of different national groups that live within them. Often, they cross borders; for example, the Kurds can be found in the modern nation-state of Iraq, Turkey, and other countries in the region. These people who existed in what was informally known as “Kurdistan,” speak their own language and have their own culture and traditions. But they are not recognized by the international system as a state. Perhaps the best example of a stateless people would be the Palestinians, who seek their own independent state of Palestine to parallel the Jewish-state of Israel, which they feel was created from their land.

Some of these issues came to a head in the fall 2011 when the Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas went to the UN to seek full UN membership for the Palestinians, an important step in formal recognition of statehood. As this issue continues to percolate, it raises to the international community important issues of self-determination. Along with that, however, is the issue of who is responsible for overseeing the rights and protections of stateless peoples.

In 1954, the UN passed the “Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.” Although almost 60 years have passed since the convention was put forward, it “remains the primary instrument that regulates the states of non-refugee stateless persons and ensures that stateless persons enjoy human rights without discrimination.” The convention acknowledges the vulnerability of stateless people and, at least in theory, ensures that they are to be treated like all nationals of a state. However, as is true with many aspects of international law, the dilemma facing the international community is how to implement this and truly protect the rights of these stateless people.

Under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, an international working group has been convened specifically to arrive at ways to update this convention. As virtually every country is facing some issue pertaining to “stateless peoples” within its borders, the group assembled to discuss this is assumed to be representative of the entire international system.

The Issues


Article 15 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that “Everyone has the right to a nationality,” and that “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.” According to the United Nations, “nationality is a legal bond between a state and an individual, and statelessness refers to the condition of an individual who is not considered as a national by any state.” Therefore, “statelessness” refers to a situation where an individual has no formal nationality or citizenship. Furthermore, statelessness is a problem that can affect an estimated 12 million people world-wide. Ultimately, it is up to a state to regulate nationality and to determine who is – or is not – a citizen. Thus, stateless peoples might have links to one or more states, but might not have formal citizenship in any.

What makes this of grave concern to the UN and a global human rights issue is the fact that stateless people who are denied their nationality are often unable to obtain identity documents, may be detained and held without due legal process, denied access to health care, education and employment, and prevented from participating in the acts that many take for granted. They are often more vulnerable to illegal acts such as trafficking, as well as arbitrary treatment both by government officials and by those who are citizens of the state.

This situation can occur for a host of reasons. When a country disintegrates from one to many states, as was the case with the Soviet Union or former Yugoslavia the newly-created state can define its criteria for citizenship. This, in turn, can lead to a definition that is exclusive rather than inclusive. Incompatibility or inconsistencies in laws can also contribute to statelessness. And sometimes when territory is transferred from one state to another or boundaries defined or redrawn, it can affect the nationalities or “nations” within the new state. Thus, the Kurds who consider themselves stateless people absent a state of “Kurdistan,” regardless of the status conferred on them by the state in which they live, such as Turkey or Iraq.

Often the concept of “statelessness” is self-identified. For example, for most of the history of modern Turkey, the Kurds identified themselves as Kurds rather than Turks, which resulted in discrimination and often violence directed against them. The Kurds have fought back, not only in Turkey but in some of the other countries in which they reside (Iran, Iraq and Syria). The creation of the PKK, the Kurdistan Workers party, has resulted in rebellions and terrorist campaigns as they seek their own statehood. In 2009, the Turkish government indicated that it would ease some of its existing restrictions against the Kurds, including allowing villages to retain their Kurdish names, setting up Kurdish language and literature departments in universities, and scrapping laws that have resulted in the arrest of thousands of young Kurds for allegedly acting on behalf of the PKK. The withdrawal of American troops from neighboring Iraq could also help foster peace and recognition. Increasingly, the Iraqi Kurds are looking to Turkey for protection in exchange for limiting the movements of PKK fighters in that region.

The question is whether the Kurds as stateless people will be satisfied with anything less than the creation of a Kurdish state, or Kurdistan.

As an international issue, there is virtually no country that is not dealing with some aspect of stateless peoples. Even the United States has been trying to address the issues surrounding the Native American population, which during the period of US expansion, lost much of its land and was put onto reservations. Although on those reservations the Native American peoples have full sovereignty – one of the reasons that there are gaming casinos on tribal lands has to do with their laws which exempt those casinos, gas stations, sales of cigarettes, etc. from federal taxes – as a population they tend to be poor and with limited access to education and health care. According to one source, “American Indians and Native Alaskans number 4.5 million. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, these Americans earn a median annual income of $33,627. One in every four (25.3 percent) lives in poverty and nearly a third (29.9 percent) are without health insurance coverage. To put this in stark terms, counties on Native American reservations are among the poorest in the country and, according to the Economic Research Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nearly 60 percent of all Native Americans who live outside of metropolitan areas inhabit persistently poor counties.” Native Americans and Native Alaskans have long been struggling to be part of “the American dream” which includes their own lands and an equal place in the US, which can be interpreted as an issue of self-determination.

One of the movements that we can see in the international system has been toward self-determination, which suggests that peoples of any nation have the right to form a state. Thus, the Kurds, who as a group exist in a number of countries (mainly in Iraq, Turkey and Iran), and who have their own language, traditions and way of life, seek to create a country of “Kurdistan,” that will guarantee them their sovereignty with everything that goes with it. Another prominent case is the Palestinians who are a stateless people who seek to create their own state with defined borders and a government that is sovereign. But, as recent history has shown, it is not that easy to create a new nation-state. In other words, being a “nation” does not necessarily mean that there is justification for a state.

Stateless peoples are often minorities within a larger state and, as such, suffer from all forms of abuse. China is another such example. In a country whose economic system now appears to be more capitalist than communist, there have been virtually no political changes, a fact that has not gone unnoticed among many. In 2009 ethnic violence in the western region of Xianjing, centered in the city of Urumqi, led to the deaths of hundreds, with thousands more injured. A series of government policies led many of the areas 10 million Uighurs, who tend to be Muslim, to believe that “their culture and livelihoods were under assault by the Han Chinese, the dominant ethnic group…. The policies include limits on religious practice, the phasing out of Uighur-language instruction in schools and the reinforcement of better working conditions for the Han, from business people to migrant workers.”


A 2009 Amnesty International report “charts the recent history of the erosion of Uigher language in education, beginning with a policy in the 1990s that eliminated Uigher as a language of instruction at the university level.”\textsuperscript{129} And although the Uighers are favored in some ways, for example, they can have more than one child without having to pay a fine and Uigher students have extra points added to their scores on standardized tests necessary for university, they have been losing out to the Han Chinese who have been migrating to Xinjiang in employment and the economy as a whole. The Chinese government denies that the unrest and dissatisfaction of the Uighers are the result of government policies. Rather, they blame the tensions on outside figures, such as the Dalai Lama or a leading Uigher businesswoman who now lives in Washington, D.C. For the Uighers, however, the changes in government policy have undermined them and their way of life. The case of the Uighers, and the ethnic clashes in Xinjiang, have pointed to the issues pertaining to the ethnic minorities in China and real concerns about the human rights abuses that they suffer.

Given their uncertain status, stateless people are expected to conform to certain modes of behavior as well. These assume that all stateless people have the obligation to obey the laws and regulations of the country in which they reside, that they will not themselves engage in human rights violations or war crimes of any kind, and that they will, as appropriate, begin the process of becoming naturalized citizens of their country of resident with the support of that country.

The 1954 UN Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons “remains the primary international instrument that regulates the status of non-refugee persons and ensures that stateless persons enjoy human rights without discrimination.”\textsuperscript{130} The Convention recognizes the international status of “stateless persons,” including establishing a definition and a core principle that “no stateless person should be treated worse than any foreigner who possesses a nationality.”\textsuperscript{131} While this might not appear to be significant, within the boundaries of international law it acknowledges the vulnerability of stateless persons and provides for specific measures to protect them. As is often the case with international law, however, there are virtually no provisions made as to how to implement those provisions. Rather, implementation often depends upon the will of individual states. Thus, the dilemma facing the international community is how to implement this and truly protect the rights of these stateless people.

Under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, an

\textsuperscript{129} Wong, “New Protests Flare in Chinese City After Deadly Ethnic Clashes.”
international working group has been convened specifically to arrive at ways to update this convention. As virtually every country is facing some issue pertaining to “stateless peoples” within its borders, the group assembled to discuss this is assumed to be representative of the entire international system.

Questions for Consideration

1) Can countries agree upon criteria or a framework for determining when individuals within their territory are to be considered “stateless?”