

FINAL EXAM STUDY QUESTIONS

Please bring this list to the exam.

You may outline your answers on the back of these study-question sheets, and on the extra attached sheet, but you will not be allowed to consult other materials.

You will be asked to answer two from a choice of three of these questions, plus some short identifications--probably six from a choice of eight.

You are encouraged to study together as you prepare your answers.

The exam will last 2.5 hours. The essays will each be 35 percent of your grade on the final; the group of short identifications will be 30 percent of your grade on the final. If you budget your time accordingly you should spend 52.5 minutes on each essay and 45 minutes on the short IDs.

1. Write a memo to the President of the United States that frames the most serious threat now facing the United States and defines a strategy for addressing this threat. Use relevant history and evidence to support your arguments. In your answer, make reference to previous grand strategy concepts. If they still apply, say so; if they are obsolete, explain why.

2. The Cold War witnessed sharp debates over American grand strategy for national security. What strategies were proposed during the Cold War? In retrospect, which strategy seems wisest? And did the U.S. choose wisely, or would different strategic choices have produced better results? Offer an assessment of American strategy ideas and choices, using 20-20 hindsight and your knowledge of general principles of international politics.

3. Robert Jervis outlines two contending explanations for international conflict: a

"spiral" model, and a "deterrence" model. The spiral model posits that conflicts arise from belligerent policies that unintentionally provoke hostility from others. In this view conflict is a self-fulfilling prophecy--states convert others into enemies by treating them as enemies. The deterrence model contends that conflicts arise from failure to stand firm early against aggressors. In this view wars develop when status quo powers encourage aggressors to demand more by appeasing them. In the spiral view conflicts could be avoided by appeasing adversaries; in the deterrence view conflicts could be avoided by tougher policies. Which model best explains the major wars and conflicts of the United States in the 20th century? What current policy prescriptions follow from your analysis?

4. What was the worst American foreign policy blunder over the last century? Explain and defend your answer with reference to relevant history and ideas. Identify a feasible and superior alternative course of action; and explain what changes--that is, in identity of U.S. policymakers, in their ideas, or in the U.S. policy making process--might have permitted the selection of this superior alternative policy. Also mention several other U.S. blunders that you consider less serious and explain why.

5. Discuss the effects of the nuclear revolution on U.S. foreign and national security policies. How have nuclear weapons affected these policies? How should they have affected these policies? What future U.S. policies do nuclear weapons call for? Refer to relevant concepts and theories.

6. What has been the net impact of the United States on the Third World since 1900? Critics paint the U.S. as an evil empire that fostered dictatorship, sparked war, and spread poverty in the Third World. They argue the best favor the U.S. could do the Third World today is leave it alone. Others claim the U.S. has been a white knight that spread democracy, peace, prosperity and justice in the Third World. Which view is closer to the truth? What current policy prescriptions follow from your answer? Should the U.S. pursue an active or isolationist policy toward the Third World today?

7. What does the history of American intervention during the 20th century teach us about the likely results of the current U.S. intervention in Afghanistan against the Afghan Taliban? Do you favor or oppose this intervention? Why?

8. Write a memo to the President of the United States on how the U.S. should manage its future relations with China. Consider in your answer the possibility that China's economy will continue its rapid growth and China's GNP will eventually rival America's. Use relevant history and relevant theories (if any) to support your arguments.

9. Discuss the size of the role of domestic factors in the making of past U.S. foreign policy. What domestic factors (ethnic lobbies, foreign lobbies, corporate lobbies, elite culture, popular culture, public opinion, ideology, etc.) have been most important? What important policies (if any) do they explain? Did their impact on policy advance or injure the national interest?

10. Describe and evaluate U.S. counter-terror efforts since the al-Qaeda attack of September 11, 2001. What strategies were adopted? Which were wise and which unwise? Why? What lessons from history would help the U.S. develop better counter-terror policies?

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