

## Global Governance and Complex Problemsolving in the Post 9/11 World (CONF 695) Fall 2009

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### Prologue

This is the second time that “*Global Governance and Complex Problemsolving in the Post-9/11 World*” (CONF 695) is being offered at ICAR. It became available for the first time exactly one year ago because of the critical juncture at which we had arrived. This challenging point in historic time was represented by the increasing frequency *and/or* intensity of complex problems confronting much of the planet and, at the same time, the election in November 2008 of the first successor to George W. Bush as chief executive of the world’s sole surviving superpower, with global reach economically, culturally, and militarily. Upon taking office in January 2009, President Bush’s successor was expected to deal with these issues, against the background of what one of our authors, Thomas Homer-Dixon, calls the “*ingenuity gap*”.

Given the topical, complex and “moving-target” nature of our subject matter, the reading for this course will be somewhat “heavy” -- on average, amounting to about one book per week throughout the semester. Since many global challenges are not only *interconnected*, but also *impact existing political and other conflicts*, our working assumption is that our investment in time and other resources will be justified, especially if, upon graduation, you want to be involved professionally in designing *and* implementing interventions into protracted conflicts as well as responses to the complex problems that do or could impact them.

### Description

The initial objective of this course is, through class discussions of appropriate readings, to identify aspects of the *global problematique* (e.g., among others, global warming, AIDS and other pandemics, deforestation, poverty, population increases, WMD proliferation, scarce energy resources, terrorism) that do or *could* impact political, social, economic and other conflicts, rendering them even more intractable than they might otherwise be. The second objective is to brainstorm responses to these problems, many of which are *linked*, as part of an overarching strategy to deal with the conflicts in whose causal complexity they play a role. Those responses include nontraditional ways of interacting with others in the world, including a role for the first post-Bush U.S. president in leading or otherwise influencing others to deal effectively with common problems that cut across traditional Westphalian borders.

### Rationale

As the G8 annual summit ended in Hokkaido, Japan, on 9 July 2008, *The Economist* presented a timely, compelling case for the reinvention of *global governance*, arguing

that the current infrastructure for "*global management*" is irrelevant to the problems of the 21st century ("Briefing: Who Runs the World? Wrestling for Influence," 5 July 2008, pp. 33-36). Whether we examine the United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), World Trade Organization (WTO) or the G8 itself, Einstein's famous quip that "The release of atom[ic] power has changed everything except our way of thinking," still applies!

One of the reasons for this *perceptual lag* is that these and other organizations, including states themselves, are still embedded within mindsets that developed during the "Golden Age" of the Westphalian international system when state sovereignty was sacrosanct and sufficient to go to war to preserve. Now, however, more and more policymakers have come to recognize that components of the global problematique such as "climate change, the flaws and forces of globalization, the scramble for resources, state failure, mass terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction" (*The Economist*, op cit.), not to mention a global financial and economic crisis, are *interconnected* in complex ways.

The implications are clear: Current global problems are *cross-border* in impact and, therefore, "often need global, not just national or regional, solutions" (ibid.). But what we are getting instead from current global governance is either a mockery or exacerbation of problems in need of solution. Witness the dismal failure to meaningfully apply "*responsibility to protect*" in Darfur, Zimbabwe, and Myanmar. This, plus the G8's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to only half by 2050, against the background of NASA climate scientist Dr. Jim Hansen's (and others') dire warning that we have, *at most, ten years* within which to do something about global warming, lest the planet really become imperiled and "*the human race ... face mass extinction.*"

Clearly, there is a need to do things differently in the world, but the vision, commitment, and resources to reduce the "*rhetoric-reality disconnect*" have been missing. On the assumption that former U.S. President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright are correct in their assessment that "*America is the world's indispensable nation,*" President Barack Obama must lead or otherwise influence world players of all "tracks" to move resolutely in the direction of developing a culture *and* practice of effective global problemsolving.

### Readings

- (1) Chris Abbott, Paul Rogers and John Sloboda (2007). *Beyond Terror: The Truth About the Real Threats to Our World*. Oxford Research Group. London: Rider.
- (2) Zbigniew Brzezinski (2007). *Second Chance: Three Presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower*. New York: Basic Books (Perseus Books Group).
- (3) Paul Collier (2007). *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About it*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

- (4) Stephen Flynn (2007). *The Edge of Disaster: Rebuilding a Resilient Nation*. New York: Random House.
- (5) Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins (2007). *The Nuclear Jihadist: The True Story of the Man Who Sold the World's Most Dangerous Secrets ... and How We Could Have Stopped Him*. New York: Twelve (Hachette Books Group).
- (6) Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart (2008). *Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press
- (7) J. Joseph Hewitt, Jonathan Wilkenfeld and Ted Robert Gurr (2007). *Peace and Conflict 2008*. Boulder [CO]: Paradigm Publishers.
- (8) Thomas Homer-Dixon (2002). *The Ingenuity Gap: Facing the Economic, Environmental, and Other Challenges of an Increasingly Complex and Unpredictable Future*. New York: Vintage Books [Alfred A. Knopf].
- (9) Robert Kagan (2008). *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- (10) Mark Leonard (2005). *Why Europe Will Run the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. New York: Public Affairs [Perseus Books].
- (11) Bjorn Lomborg (2007). *Solutions for the World's Biggest Problems: Costs and Benefits*. London and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- (12) McClintock, John (2007). *The Uniting of Nations: An Essay on Global Governance. 2d Edition*. Brussels and New York: P.I.E. Lang.
- (13) Jeffrey Sachs (2008). *Economics of a Crowded Planet*. London and New York: Penguin Press.
- (14) Dennis J.D. Sandole (2007). *Peace and Security in the Postmodern World: The OSCE and Conflict Resolution*. New York and London: Routledge [Taylor & Francis].
- (15) Robert Shapiro (2008). *Futurecast 2020: A Global Vision of Tomorrow*. London: Profile Books.
- (16) Fareed Zakaria (2008). *The Post-American World*. New York: W.W. Norton.

### Assignments

(A) We will read and discuss in class, *on average*, one (1) of the above books during each 3-hour class meeting. Student volunteers, therefore, will be required to present on each book for each class meeting. For presentations, or participation in presentations on two books, each student will receive a grade that will constitute 10

*percent* of their final course assessment. Students can participate in more than two presentations for *extra credit*, which can then move them from, say, a B+ to an A- in this category. A schedule of presentations will be determined during the first two class meetings.

(B) Students will complete a “3/4”- *term paper*, based upon the readings by Abbott, et al., 2007; Collier, 2007; Flynn, 2007; Frantz and Collins, 2007; Ghani and Lockhart, 2008; Hewitt, et al., 2007; Homer-Dixon, 2002; Lomborg, 2007; Sachs, 2008; Sandole, 2007; and Shapiro, 2008. The paper will address the following themes:

- (a) The main point[s] the author[s] of each book attempted to make;
- (b) How well the authors achieved their goals;
- (c) How each volume fits into the interrelated themes of the course: “*Global Governance*,” “*Complex Problemsolving*,” and “*Post-9/11 World*”; and
- (d) To what extent *all* the reviewed readings cohere into a *synergistic whole* “that is greater than the sum of its parts”!

This paper, comprising 20-25 double-spaced pages in length, will count for *50 percent* of each student’s final assessment. **Due date: 12 November 2008.**

(C) For the final paper, students will survey *all the course readings* in order to craft a “*Memo to the President*.” In addition to the 11 books reviewed for the “3/4”- *term paper*, this paper should cover the Brzezinski, 2007; Kagan, 2008; Leonard, 2005; McClintock, 2007; and Zakaria, 2008 readings. Accordingly, students will (a) review their “3/4”- *term papers* to identify the complex global problems that the U.S. should play an active role in addressing;(b) how those problems are interconnected; (c) how those problems do or could exacerbate latent or existing political and other conflicts; and (d) how those problems might be efficaciously addressed by the U.S. and other actors (e.g., the EU). The grade for this paper (15-20 pages in length) will count for *40 percent* of the final course assessment. **Due date: 10 December 2008.**

**NOTE [a]:** *Since these two (2) papers are meant, among other things, to demonstrate that students have been in the course, the papers should contain appropriate references to course concepts and the corresponding readings. For further clarification -- including about the GMU Honor Code (e.g., avoiding any hint of plagiarism at all costs) -- please feel free to consult with the instructor.*

**NOTE [b]:** *After the completion of the semester, students will be invited to participate in editing their final papers into a coherent volume, which will then be sent to the White House for consideration of the students’ recommendations!*

### Structure of Course

3 September: Introductions and Course Overview.

10 September: Violent Conflicts Worldwide (Hewitt, et al., 2007).

17 September: Frameworks of Analysis (Sandole, 2007, Ch. 2).

24 September: Surveying the *Global Problematique: Climate Change, Competition over Resources, Marginalization of the Majority World, Global Militarization, and The Way Forward* (Abbott, et al., 2007) and

1 October: The *Global Problematique: Environment, Population, Poverty, and Global Problemsolving* (Sachs, 2008).

8 October: The *Global Problematique. 4 "Poverty Traps": Violent Conflict, Landlockedness, Abundant Natural Resources, and Bad Governance* (Collier, 2007).

15 October: No Class (Christopher Columbus Mid-Semester Break).

22 October: The *Global Problematique: State Failure* (Ghani and Lockhart, 2008).

29 October: The *Global Problematique: Peace and Security Failure* (Sandole, 2007).

5 November: The *Global Problematique: Nuclear Weapons: Proliferation and Terrorism* (Frantz and Collins, 2007).

12 November: Solving Complex Global Problems (Homer-Dixon, 2002; Lomborg, 2007).

*"3/4"- term papers due.*

19 November: The European Union as a Basis for Regional and Global Governance, and Kant's *Perpetual Peace* (Leonard, 2005; McClintock, 2007; Shapiro, 2008).

26 November: No Class (Thanksgiving).

3 December: The Role of the U.S. in Global Problemsolving (Flynn, 2007; Brzezinski, 2007; Kagan, 2008; Zakaria, 2008).

10 December: *Final papers due*