

# Introduction

## *United States Foreign Policy in Action*

*You see, Washington has been telling us to wait for decades, even as the problems have grown worse. Meanwhile, China is not waiting to revamp its economy. Germany is not waiting. India is not waiting. . . . These nations aren't playing for second place. Well, I do not accept second place for the United States of America. As hard as it may be, as uncomfortable and contentious as the debates may become, it's time to get serious about fixing the problems that are hampering our growth.*

Barack Obama (2010)<sup>1</sup>

*The purpose of foreign policy is not to provide an outlet for our own sentiments of hope or indignation, it is to shape real events in a real world.*

John F. Kennedy (1963)<sup>2</sup>

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## **Chapter Summary**

This is an exciting period of transition for United States foreign policy. Think about how the world has changed just in our lifetimes. When you were born, the United States was emerging from the Cold War and decades of competition with the Soviet Union. The “victory” of western ideals over communism coupled with rapid economic globalization positioned the United States as the single dominant power in the world. Many leaders in Washington, DC, saw the new era as a unique opportunity for the United States to influence global affairs, to mold the world in its image. This period of dominance lasted only a decade, however, before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the rise of China, and other developments changed the international order.

Today, the country faces many new foreign policy opportunities and challenges. Questions of how the United States will respond – and whether the country will be a major player in global politics in the future – are more open-ended than one might think. Foreign policy issues often involve differing interpretations of primary values and interests. Foreign policy can be surprisingly divisive, and these issues demand that key players engage in struggles over allocations of government resources and commitments. This seems to go against the advice of Senator Arthur Vandenberg (R-MI), who once called for disagreements over foreign policy to stop “at the water’s edge.” Only unity could boost America’s image and power in global politics, he believed.

Debates over US foreign policy typically involve actors with vested interests in determining policy scope and direction. The framers of the Constitution debated which branch of government should have the most authority in foreign affairs, for example. After World War I, some leaders called for the United States to retreat from engagement in global affairs. Later, events like the Vietnam War and foreign aid to developing countries divided the American people and their elected representatives in Washington. Questions about whether the United States should trade with Communist China or commit itself to international treaties that might yield more costs than benefits also have been divisive. Today, some constitutional lawyers question the legality of US surveillance programs in the war on terrorism, as well as the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, popularly called drones, to carry out military strikes in distant countries.

Foreign policy is defined as the actions and strategies that guide government relations with the rest of the world. Foreign policy includes actions taken by states, such as providing aid, making official statements of support for another democracy, or even deploying military troops. Foreign policy is also a function of strategies behind these actions, such as official doctrines or policies formulated to achieve key national security interests. These actions and strategies are typically developed by elected representatives, especially the president and members of Congress. They are also influenced by unelected actors ranging from civil servants in

government agencies and lobbyists to bloggers and average citizens who share information or participate directly in the process. This broad definition underscores how foreign policy is the product of a complex mix of actors and actions. It also highlights the degree of surprise, drama, and unpredictability in the foreign policy process.

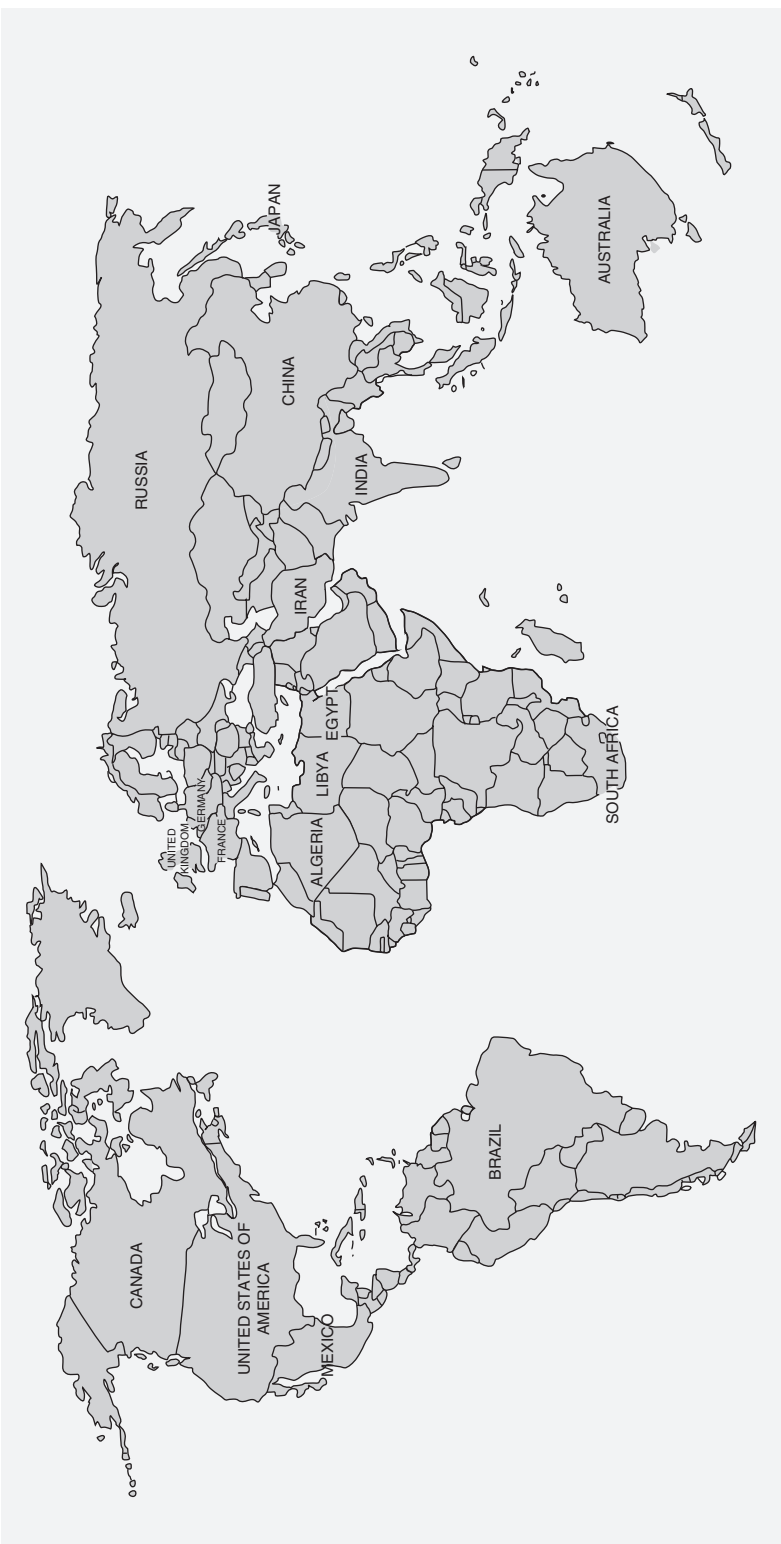
Foreign policy decisions are often the product of complex political processes. These processes can be noble, such as when government officials respectfully disagree over the best path for future policies and patiently exchange views in an effort to find reasonable compromise. They can be complicated, like when players consider both short- and long-term implications of their actions in relation to political commitments. Or they can be tough political street fights in which powerful groups line up on both sides of a controversial issue in an attempt to shape the final outcome, creating clear winners and losers.

This book is designed to bring the politics of US foreign policy to life. It represents a synthesis of traditional content (theoretical frameworks and historical coverage) and interactive exercises. It encourages critical reflection on contending perspectives in political debates, promotes engagement with fundamental concepts and theories in the discipline, details relevant historical information, and provides innovative learning exercises that address a number of foreign policy dilemmas. It draws together the best trends in both politics and pedagogy – including increased access to information in the digital age, reactions to fast-changing circumstances, and imaginative critical dialogues – by interpreting the foreign policy decision-making process through the lens of political debate and exchange. Broadly speaking, this project is founded on republican ideals of knowledge and engagement: the belief that through participation in a community of learners students will develop interests and capacities that promote active citizenship.

## **Historical Foundations**

The history of the United States of America offers a fascinating narrative, from the development of values that shaped the nation at its founding to modern-day struggles over interpretation of those values in a changing world. Actors with defined values and convictions formulate foreign policy. Those actors – women and men, philosophers and pundits, students and diplomats – are stewards of US foreign policy. They have personally vested themselves in the foreign policy process to achieve desired ends. They frequently disagree over the proper conduct of foreign policy. These differences matter.<sup>3</sup>

United States history began well before the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the adoption of the Constitution in 1787. The first settlers arrived in the New World over a century earlier. And like the generations that followed, these stewards disagreed over the values and principles that would define our nation. Fast-forward from the founding of the country to other formative developments: President



**Map 1.1** World map.

Abraham Lincoln (1861–1865) had to manage scores of foreign policy challenges during the Civil War, and endured significant dissent inside his cabinet on policy choices. Nearly a century later, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his advisors struggled over how to respond to a global economic depression before the United States plunged into yet another major war. Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson struggled with Congress over the limits of US containment policy. Each of these leaders looked at the world, and how to respond to global challenges and opportunities, through the lens of their own personal convictions and knowledge of domestic political constraints.

Profound debates over US foreign policy did not end in the post-Cold War era. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, President Bush enjoyed high public approval ratings, and Congress acted in bipartisan ways to support major foreign policy initiatives. These included backing the war in Afghanistan, passing legislation that may have curtailed civil liberties, and even authorizing the invasion of Iraq. Yet, by the start of the Iraq War in March 2003, Americans had become deeply divided over the direction of US foreign policy. Nearly as quickly as the Bush administration gained support for an assertive foreign policy agenda, consensus faded and the American people entered into a bitter and partisan period. Those divisions played out in the 2008 presidential election in competition for votes in “red” and “blue” states – the outcome of which was considered a referendum on the eight years of the former Bush administration.

President Obama faced a number of foreign policy challenges in his first term in office. The year 2011 brought the “Arab Spring” of democratic revolutions in former authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa. Each new uprising presented both opportunities and dilemmas for the United States. For example, as the Egyptian dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak teetered on the brink of collapse, facing a popular revolution centered in Tahrir Square in Cairo, the president faced a tough choice: Egypt was a long-time ally of the United States, and Mubarak had served as a critical voice for moderation in the Middle East for decades. Egypt and Jordan were the only two countries in the region that had signed treaties for peace with Israel, and the governments also played a role in helping to control virulent Palestinian nationalism. Accordingly, President Obama seemed caught between idealism and pragmatism. Should the administration back a long-time ally of the United States against a popular uprising, or should it pressure Mubarak to leave office by using both diplomatic carrots and sticks? Secretary of State Hillary Clinton favored the former option, but Secretary of Defense Robert Gates warned that protesters were dying for their cause and US intransigence threatened to place Obama on the “wrong side of history.” In the end, Obama phoned Mubarak directly and made his case: “It is time to present to the people of Egypt its next government. The future of your country is at stake.”<sup>4</sup> This and other events contributed to Mubarak’s resignation from office on February 11, 2011, and the start of a transition to democracy in that country.

The United States faces many other contemporary foreign policy challenges, including:



**Photo 1.1** US President Barack Obama and Turkish President Abdullah Gül, September 23, 2011.

Source: White House Photo/Pete Souza, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/whitehouse/5062813261/> (accessed March 29, 2012).

- *Economic policy:* How should the US government manage the fallout from the latest global economic crisis? Should the United States liberalize or restrict its trade policies to promote economic growth?
- *Security policy:* How should the United States deal with challenges presented by “rogue states,” such as Iran and North Korea? How might relations between these countries change with the death of North Korean dictator Kim Jong-il in 2011 or presidential elections in Iran in 2013?
- *Great power relations:* Could the Obama administration truly “reset” relations with Russia for the twenty-first century? How do democracies balance concerns for human rights in China with the need to strengthen economic ties in Asia?
- *Border security:* What should the United States do about drug trafficking and immigration problems along the border with Mexico? How can the US government respond to the violent drug war escalating just over the border in Mexico?
- *Environmental policy:* How cooperative should the US government be in international negotiations on the environment? Should the United States accept dramatic limits in greenhouse gas emissions in order to become a leader on climate change solutions?
- *Human rights:* How do concerned citizens respond to human rights violations and ethnic conflicts around the world? Should the United States send ground

troops to intervene when governments crack down on civilians in Libya or Syria, or to stop the devastating civil war in the Congo? Should the Obama administration close the Guantánamo Bay prison for detainees in the war on terrorism?

- *Economic development:* How can the administration improve US relations with developing countries? Would a rapid influx of foreign assistance funds help some countries to escape the poverty trap?

Once again, answers to these contemporary questions must be seen as a function of both international challenges and domestic political struggle, involving a fascinating mix of players.

## Major Actors in the Foreign Policy Process

This text will explore the roles of key actors involved in formulating United States foreign policy. The first major force shaping US foreign policy is external: Global political developments impact the policy process every day. Had Communist North Korean forces not invaded South Korea in June 1950, for example, President Harry Truman would not have deployed hundreds of thousands of US soldiers to fight there. Had Latin American countries asserted greater control on farming and organized crime, illegal narcotics trafficking might not be as great a threat to US security as it is today. Indeed, there are countless ways in which world politics can impact US foreign policy – from debates in the United States about immigration policy to nuclear disarmament to support for Israel. Events in the international system force the United States to grapple with very difficult issues every day.

In the domestic arena, this book begins with an examination of the role of the president and the executive branch of government in foreign policy development. At this writing, the United States has had only forty-four presidents. Directly elected by the people, many presidents profoundly impact policy during their terms of office. Indeed, these leaders often make their mark on history through major foreign policy statements and decisions – such as President Jefferson’s leadership in expanding the nation’s territory at the turn of the nineteenth century to President Kennedy’s management of the Cuban Missile Crisis in the 1960s (see Chapters 2 and 3). The US Constitution vests the president with significant foreign policy authority. The president serves as commander-in-chief of the armed services; presidential envoys negotiate treaties with foreign countries on issues ranging from free trade to international criminal investigations. And the president must sign and implement legislation that passes through Congress related to US foreign policy.

The US Congress has a significant impact on foreign policy. The Constitution vests Congress with considerable power over domestic and foreign policy. Indeed, many experts believe the framers intended Congress to have stronger policy authority than the president. Congress has the power to declare war – the ultimate foreign policy commitment – and the power to legislate, to make laws that



govern the behavior of our citizens and foreign relations. While the president negotiates international treaties, the US Senate is given the power to ratify them with a two-thirds majority vote. Congress has other significant “checks” over presidential authority including the right to approve the president’s nominees to top political offices and control over government spending. Perhaps most importantly, Congress has exercised these powers in relation to US dealings with the world. Given that Congress is powerful in foreign affairs, and has been directly elected by voters to whom its members are beholden, this provides a channel for you to influence the foreign policy process.

The judicial branch of government is represented most visibly by the Supreme Court and a large network of federal and state-level courts throughout the United States. The judicial branch has the authority to interpret the constitutionality of laws of the nation. From time to time, the courts address issues of significance in foreign affairs. The Supreme Court is made up of presidential nominees for life, and the broader judicial system often represents the people in efforts to establish boundaries for policy conduct. Recent Supreme Court decisions that have impacted foreign policy include rulings on US federal government policy concerning detainees in the war on terror.

This text also surveys the role of unelected actors in the foreign policy process, including bureaucracies, interest groups, the media, and public opinion. For example, the US Department of State employs thousands of highly trained civil servants who are involved in international negotiations on a range of issues. The Department of Energy deploys experts around the world to learn about the latest research on renewable energy supplies; the Coast Guard is involved in daily interdiction missions to stop drug smuggling. Interest groups are fascinating organizations that try to influence the policy process by lobbying the government. Political party organizations can play powerful roles in the policy process by shaping decisions taken by elected officials at the local, state, or national levels of government. The media report on developments in the nation and the world that might affect Americans, and media coverage can influence the policy process. Finally, scholars have studied this potential impact of public attitudes on foreign policy development, finding direct and indirect impacts on policy.

Each of these actors is a participant in the policy process and worthy of more focused consideration. And so are you. Your level of engagement in local, regional, and national politics can have a direct impact on foreign policy. Consider the ways a local candidate for the US House of Representatives views a foreign policy challenge or dilemma. The candidate would appreciate your support, perhaps through volunteering for her campaign or working in her district office. Now multiply the voice of your representative by the hundreds of others who share her views and imagine their combined impact on foreign policy. Or perhaps you prefer a more direct route to influence through government service: You could excel in international studies at your university or college, score well on the Foreign Service Officer exam, and work for the US Department of State. Following a few years of training and gaining experience, you could be an official representative of the United States



engaged in international diplomacy while serving at an embassy, consulate, or mission overseas. If you prefer behind-the-scenes work, why not start by volunteering for a local group or supporting a cause you care about like the environment or perhaps early childhood education. Volunteer work like this could lead to grassroots lobbying and advocacy for policy at the local, state, or national level. Right now, there are tens of thousands of young people working on campaigns, studying politics, going door-to-door for petition drives, and working in Washington, DC. They have a surprisingly significant impact on domestic and foreign policy every day.

### **Pedagogical Approach: How to Use This Book**

This book provides an exciting survey of the politics of US foreign policy as well as active learning frameworks to promote engagement with issues. In addition to presenting major theories of foreign policy and historical developments, chapters feature interactive exercises designed to open supplementary avenues of investigation and deepen learning. These exercises have been used successfully and updated in accord with contemporary developments in foreign policy. In other words, the book presents exercises that are student-centered and student-tested.

The philosophy behind active teaching and learning focuses on the use of instructional techniques for meaningful student engagement in the discovery of knowledge.<sup>5</sup> Conscious selection of goals for the classroom and methods for teaching help create a sense of purpose in the educational process. Active learning also means collaboration – a commitment on the part of instructors and students to enliven the educational environment. Educational objectives of these approaches include:

- promoting a deeper understanding of the concepts being taught;
- allowing students to learn by doing – to experience the dynamics of decision-making, policy research, or negotiations first-hand;
- allowing students to make conceptual linkages between theory and real-world examples;
- increasing retention of knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

These exercises help promote effective learning cycles, challenging students to take risks and express their views on complex and controversial issues.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, this approach views learning as both a means and an end – a process of discovery that leads to the critical construction of knowledge. Interactive exercises create positive, powerful, and effective learning environments. They promote engagement with material, encourage critical thinking, and can contribute to responsible global citizenship.<sup>8</sup>

The text is also designed to stir interest by providing fresh perspectives on critical themes in foreign policy analysis. It features provocative questions, competing answers, and numerous exercises designed to promote critical thinking and encourage reasoned argumentation. This approach is consistent with trends in higher

education, including the desire for more creative, discussion-based styles of teaching and the growing popularity of online education and online access to materials.

## Key Features

This text draws from these advancements in pedagogy and offers innovative features, including:

- **Major Interactive Learning Tools:** Chapters 4 through 8 blend theory and narrative content with interactive exercises, including structured debates, collaborative team learning projects, teaching case studies, and a role-play simulation. Each exercise features background information, document templates, worksheets, suggested readings, and additional resources for easy implementation.
- **Quotations and Debates:** Chapters begin with quotations by notable figures in United States foreign policy, many of whom disagree on the topic at hand. Quotations help frame the debate regarding issues in foreign policy that students may consider while reading the chapter.
- **Chapter Contents:** These listings of headings and subheadings detail the structure of chapters and provide a ready reference guide.
- **“Learning Through Technology” Features:** Boxes throughout the book reference technology such as blogs, Facebook, Skype, Twitter, and YouTube that allows us to connect with international affairs, either as observers or as participants.<sup>9</sup>
- **“Exploring Further” Features:** These boxes can be found throughout the book and provide transcripts of classic speeches by US presidents as well as Congressional declarations. They offer first-hand materials for students to read, analyze, and critically discuss.
- **“Case in Point” Features:** These boxes examine real-world illustrations of theories and issues discussed thematically in the text. They offer mini-case studies, background information on key personalities and issues in contemporary foreign policy, and some additional resources and exercises.
- **Interactive Graphics and Tables:** These data, graphics, tables, and figures all relate to broader chapter themes and serve to illustrate important theories. Data presented in tables and figures are relevant for discussion and critical analysis of themes in chapters.
- **Discussion Questions:** Seven out of the nine chapters include thought-provoking questions for class discussions; these also help gauge student comprehension of key theories, concepts, and historical information.
- **Ancillary Web Material:** Throughout the text, you will see special references to supporting online material, called Components I, II, and III, hosted on the companion website. These web components complement the text and provide avenues for further exploration of important themes. The URL for this website is [www.wiley.com/go/lantis](http://www.wiley.com/go/lantis). Component I is designed for students and features online resources on US foreign policy sponsored by respected media outlets,

policy research institutes, and government agencies. Component II is also designed for students and provides a film and media archive that offers rich historical perspectives on US foreign policy. The majority of Component III is intended for instructors and is password-protected on the companion website. Documents A–G provide valuable background information for the active teaching and learning approaches used throughout the text, as well as “bonus” exercises. Document H of Component III is an appendix to the book that looks at the history of the United States and terrorism, and is available to both students and instructors.

In summary, this textbook was designed to help readers experience real-world challenges in foreign policy – and develop a deeper understanding of events. Theoretical frameworks help us to make sense of the complexity of foreign policy decision-making, and analytical exercises provide greater depth of knowledge. Material is presented to help students summarize and keep track of various explanations of events covered from the different perspectives and levels of analysis. Theory connections are made to real, practical policy challenges. Taken together, it is hoped that these approaches will help readers become better-informed US and global citizens.

## **Overview of the Book**

This book is organized as both a survey of United States foreign policy and a vehicle for virtual engagement in the process of foreign policy development. The chapters provide an overview of major theoretical traditions in the study of US foreign policy paired with historical coverage and, often, active learning exercises that engage students with complex, contemporary foreign policy problems.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide an introduction to the history of US foreign policy development as a noble struggle. Next, Chapter 4 provides an introduction to the major institutions and theories (including scholarly work on presidential leadership, management styles, advising, the “imperial presidency” model, Congressional partisanship, the role of ideology, and committee structures) that have defined US foreign policy, and features an active learning exercise on the struggle between the executive and legislative branches of government over the war on terrorism. Chapter 5 introduces major theories of bureaucratic politics, both traditional and contemporary, and examines the influence of select executive branch agencies in detail, including the Departments of State, Defense, and intelligence agencies. This chapter also details a role-playing simulation of a National Security Council emergency meeting.

Chapter 6 explores the power of interest groups and unelected actors in the policy process. It includes a critical examination of contemporary lobbying practices and the role of ideology and political party organizations in shaping foreign policy patterns over time. Students also engage with the challenging question of the role of

interest groups in policy-making through the teaching case method. Chapter 7 explores theories of “public” influence on foreign policy, examining the role of the media and public opinion. This chapter also features a fascinating set of collaborative learning exercises. Assignment topics include the controversial role of “soft media” programs like *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* in shaping public attitudes as well as government secrecy debates and the public’s “right to know” about US foreign policy.

Chapter 8 brings these issues full circle by examining the power of grand strategy debates in the foreign policy process. The chapter reviews the key institutions and actors in the US foreign policy process and analyzes contemporary debates over the proper role of the United States in world politics. The chapter also provides the foundation for a structured debate on the future of US grand strategy and the country’s responsibility to promote global security. Finally, Chapter 9 draws together the many themes presented in the book and offers thoughts about current and future directions of US foreign policy.

## Notes

- 1 President Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President in State of the Union Address,” January 24, 2012, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/01/24/remarks-president-state-union-address> (accessed June 18, 2012).
- 2 President John F. Kennedy, “Address at the Mormon Tabernacle,” Salt Lake City, Utah, September 26, 1963, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 736.
- 3 This is a paraphrase of the argument offered first by Harvard professor Graham T. Allison, in “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *American Political Science Review*, vol. 63, no. 3 (1969), pp. 689–718.
- 4 Helene Cooper, Mark Landler, and David E. Sanger, “In U.S. Signals to Egypt, Obama Straddled a Rift,” *New York Times*, February 12, 2011, p. A1.
- 5 Philosophically, the approach has a long history, from Socrates to John Dewey, to today’s online simulations of world politics. Matthew Krain, Kent Kille, and I have written about active teaching and learning strategies for international studies in the past, and my understanding of these approaches has been greatly influenced by our collaborative work. See Jeffrey S. Lantis, Kent K. Kille, and Matthew Krain, “The State of the Active Teaching and Learning Literature,” in *The International Studies Compendium*, Robert Denemark, ed. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).
- 6 David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984).
- 7 Gary G. Bitter and Jane M. Legacy, *Using Technology in the Classroom*, 7th edition (Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon, 2008); Derrick L. Cogburn and Nanette S. Levinson, “U.S.–Africa Virtual Collaboration in Globalization Studies: Success Factors for Complex, Cross-National Learning Teams,” *International Studies Perspectives*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2003), pp. 34–51; Mariya Y. Omelicheva, “Resolved: Academic Debate Should Be a Part of Politi-

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- 8 See Kent J. Kille, “Simulating the Creation of a New International Human Rights Treaty,” *International Studies Perspectives*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2002), pp. 271–290; Michael D. Kanner, “War and Peace: Simulating Security Decision Making in the Classroom,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. 40, no. 4 (2007), pp. 795–800; Matthew Krain and Jeffrey S. Lantis, “Building Knowledge? Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Global Problems Summit,” *International Studies Perspectives*, vol. 7, no. 4 (2006), pp. 395–407; Sarah M. Wheeler, “Role-Playing Games and Simulations for International Issues Courses,” *Journal of Political Science Education*, vol. 2, no. 3 (2006), pp. 331–347.
- 9 Charli Carpenter and Daniel W. Drezner, “International Relations 2.0: The Implications of New Media for an Old Profession,” *International Studies Perspectives*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2010), pp. 255–272.