

**School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (S-CAR)  
George Mason University  
Fall Semester 2012**

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

**Thursday, 4:30-7:10 pm, Founders Hall, Rm. 476**

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**(Office Hours: 7:15-8:00 pm and by appointment)**

**Prologue**

This is the fifth time that “*Global Governance and Complex Problemsolving in the Post-9/11 World*” (CONF 695) is being offered at S-CAR. It became available for the first time exactly four years 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 Barack Obama was expected to deal with these issues, against the background of what Thomas Homer-Dixon (2002) 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-two books 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, students 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, climate change, AIDS and other pandemics, deforestation, poverty, population increases, WMD proliferation, resource scarcity, 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," *The Economist*, 5 July 2008, pp. 33-36). Whether we examine the United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), World Trade Organization (WTO) or the G8 itself and its G20 successor, 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 currently in Syria. 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 warnings a few years ago that we then had, *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.*" (Dr. Hansen and two of his colleagues have recently revisited this issue, with an article published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, which we will discuss in class.)

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.

### Required Readings

As mentioned on page 1, doing justice to this course requires students to be aware of a number of issues, many of which are discussed in the following 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) Ian Bremer (2012). *Every Nation for Itself: Winners and Losers in a G-Zero World*. New York and London: Penguin Books.
- (3) William Bratton and Zachary Tumin (2012). *Collaborate or Perish: Reaching Across Boundaries in a Networked World*. New York: Crown Business (Random House).
- (4) Lester R. Brown (2011). *World on the Edge: How To Prevent Environmental and Economic Collapse*. NY and London: W.W. Norton.
- (5) Richard A. Clarke and Robert K. Knake (2010). *Cyber War: The Next Threat to National Security and What To Do About It*. New York: Ecco (Harper/Collins).
- (6) 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.
- (7) Mark Corner (2010). *The Binding of Nations: From European Union to World Union*. New York and London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- (8) 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).
- (9) Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart (2008). *Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- (10) 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).
- (11) Mark Leonard (2005). *Why Europe Will Run the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. New York: Public Affairs (Perseus Books).
- (12) Bjørn Lomborg (2007). *Solutions for the World's Biggest Problems: Costs and Benefits*. London and New York: Cambridge University Press.

- (13) Malloch-Brown, Mark (2012). *The Unfinished Global Revolution: The Road to International Cooperation*. New York and London: Penguin Books.
- (14) Jeffrey Sachs (2008). *Economics of a Crowded Planet*. London and New York: Penguin Press.
- (15) Dennis J.D. Sandole (2010). *Peacebuilding: Preventing Violent Conflict in a Complex World*. Cambridge (UK) and Malden (MA): Polity Press.
- (16) Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (2009). *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*. London: Allen Lane (Penguin Group).

In addition, students should read, “Perception of Climate Change,” by James Hansen, Makiko Sato, and Reto Ruedy, which appears in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 29 March 2012, and can be accessed online at: <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2012/07/30/1205276109.full.pdf+html>

### Assignments

(A) We will read and discuss in class, *on average*, one-two (1-2) of the above books during each 3-hour class meeting. Volunteers will be required, therefore, 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. General class participation will count for an additional *10 percent* of the final grade, bringing the total to *20 percent* for in-class participation.

(B) Students will complete a *final paper*, based upon all course readings, including the recent article by Dr. Hansen and his colleagues. The paper is divided into two parts:

- (1) Please identify elements of the “*Global Problematique*”, i.e., the complex global problems that no one nation or international organization can solve on its own; then address (b) how those problems are interconnected and (c) how they do or could exacerbate latent or existing political and other conflicts. And
- (2) Please address (d) how those problems and related conflicts might be efficaciously addressed by the U.S. and other actors (e.g., the EU).

The grade for this paper (25-30 pages in length) will count for *80 percent* of the final grade. **Due date: 13 December 2012.**

**VERY IMPORTANT]:** *Since this paper is meant, among other things, to demonstrate that students have been in the course, it 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:** *After completion of the semester, students will be invited to participate in editing their final papers into a coherent, single-text document, which may then be sent to the White House and other U.S. Government agencies for consideration of the students' recommendations! Students are also encouraged to participate in S-CAR's Global Problematique Working Group, which, thus far, has convened a successful conference on complex global issues.*

### Structure of Course

30 August: Introductions and Course Overview.

6 September: *Worldwide Conflict Trends and Frameworks of Analysis* (Sandole, 2010, Chs. 1-2).

#### A. Elements of the Global Problematique and Some Solutions

13 September: A Brief Review of the *Global Problematique: Climate Change, Competition over Resources, Marginalization of the Majority World, and Global Militarization* (Abbott, et al., 2007).

20 September: *Global Problematique: Climate Change* (Brown, 2011; and Hansen, Sato, and Ruedy, 2012).

27 September: *Global Problematique: Environment, Population, and Poverty* (Sachs, 2008; and Collier, 2007).

4 October: *Global Problematique: Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and Failure of Critical Infrastructure* (Frantz and Collins, 2007; and Clarke and Knake, 2010).

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

18 October: *Global Problematique: Social Inequality* (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009).

#### B. Further Solutions to the Global Problematique

25 October: *Solving Complex Global Problems: A Costs-Benefits Approach* (Lomborg, 2007).

1 November: *Solving Complex Global Problems: An Ingenuity Approach* (Homer-Dixon, 2002).

8 November: *Solving Complex Global Problems: Coordination and “Revolutionary” Governance Approaches* (Bratton and Tumin, 2012; and Malloch-Brown, 2012).

15 November: *Solving Complex Global Problems: Shared Sovereignty Approaches: The EU and Beyond* (Leonard, 2005; and Corner, 2010).

22 November: Thanksgiving: *No class*.

29 November: *Solving Complex Global Problems: The G-20 (and Beyond) Approach* (Bremmer, 2012).

6 December: *Solving Complex Global Problems: A Peacebuilding Approach* (Sandole, 2010, Chs. 3-5) and Course Review.

13 December: *Final papers due*.