

## **U.S. POLICY TOWARD WEAK STATES**

### **Topics in Foreign Policy**

**SIS-419-035**

**SIS-653-005**

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Thursday 17:30 - 20:00

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Welcome to "U.S. Policy Toward Weak States." This is an advanced course in security studies with a focus on failing, failed and fragile states. It surveys major security challenges of weak states, both internally, internationally, and specifically to the United States, within the context of U.S. foreign policy and national security.

The harm emanating from failing, failed and fragile states is three fold. First, when states fail or cannot exercise effective sovereignty there is no responsible agent to ensure the protection and fundamental human rights and provision of minimum humanitarian requirements. In these "ungoverned" spaces genocides, ethnic cleansing and other atrocities may occur without remedy. Second uncontained anomic forces within these areas can infect surrounding territories and neighboring states, thus extending the domain of anomie and destabilizing entire regions. Third malignant forces may strike out from these spaces and attack the interests or even territory of sovereign states, as happened on September 11, 2001, and has occurred repeatedly in recent years off the coast of Somalia and elsewhere.

While it is the third aspect that has captured Americans' attention for the past decade - specifically since the direct attacks on the U.S. homeland in 2001 - U.S. foreign policy has historically been affected by all three aspects of state fragility and failure. State failure can lead to humanitarian catastrophes including war, mass refugee and IDP migrations, famines, etc. which demand a response from the U.S. The regional spillover of weak state pathologies to neighboring states endangers U.S. allies and strategic interests in many regions.

The course is divided into four segments; 1) U.S. foreign policy toward weak states in historical context; 2) the failing state phenomenon and fragility dynamics; 3) impact on U.S. national interests; and 4) policy remedies for state fragility and failure. The first two segments will be followed by a written assignment. These will be take home essay examinations to demonstrate understanding of the historical context of U.S. foreign policy toward weak states, and of key principles of weak and failed state dynamics and the threats they pose to U.S. national interests.

In addition to regular classroom participation, each student is required to participate in one of four in-class group exercises; these will be simulation (role-playing) exercises based on specific weak state case studies. Each student will be required to serve at least once as a session rapporteur, capturing the content and highlights of the discussion, and posting a report (session notes) on the class blackboard site.

As this is a senior-graduate seminar emphasis will be on full class participation and interactive discussion. Regular participation will constitute a significant element in the grading formula. All students will be expected to contribute proactively to discussions.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- develop the analytic skills necessary to understand the dynamics of state weakness and state failure
- understand the historical context of U.S. foreign policy with respect to weak states
- understand the constellation of threats posed by weak and failing states to U.S. national interests
- become familiar with the range of policy and instrumental options available to the U.S. for dealing with weak and failing states

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- knowledge of the motivations for U.S. involvement with weak states over time
- knowledge of diverse approaches to relations with weak states
- ability to articulate and advance persuasive arguments supporting diverse policy approaches to weak state relations
- ability to effectively anticipate and counter arguments in support or against specific interventions in weak states

## **GRADING**

- First Take-home Exam: 25%
- Second Take-home Exam: 25%
- Group Exercise: 25%
- Classroom Participation: 25%

## **SCHEDULE**

### **September 1: Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; Chaos, and Complexity**

- 9/11 Commission Report, pps 1-17, and page 312-313; <http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>
- Horst W. J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber, Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning, *Policy Sciences* 4 (1973), 155-169 [http://www.uctc.net/mwebber/Rittel+Webber+Dilemmas+General\\_Theory\\_of\\_Planning.pdf](http://www.uctc.net/mwebber/Rittel+Webber+Dilemmas+General_Theory_of_Planning.pdf)
- Liana Sun Wyler, Weak and Failing States: Evolving Security Threats and U.S. Policy (Congressional Research Service, 2008); <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34253.pdf>
- Phil Williams, "From the New Middle Ages to a New Dark Age: The Decline of the State and U.S. Strategy," Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2008; <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB867.pdf>

### **September 8: The Emergence of the Modern State and the Interstate System**

- Benjamin de Carvalho, The Emergence of Sovereign Practices: England's Break from Rome and the Henrican Revolution (2007) <http://archive.sgir.eu/uploads/de%20Carvalho-Benjamin%20de%20Carvalho%20SGIR%202007.pdf>

- Charles Tilly, Coercion, Capital and European States: Ad 990 – 1992 (Wiley, John & Sons, 2007)
- Max Weber, Politics as a Vocation (Duncker & Humblodt, 1919)  
<http://media.pfeiffer.edu/lridener/DSS/Weber/polvoc.html>

### **September 15: Historical Context; America and Weak States**

- Max Boot, The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power (Basic Books, 2003)

### **September 22: America, Weak States and the Cold War**

- Michael Latham, The Right Kind of Revolution (Cornell University Press, 2010)

### **September 29: Why States Fail (1)**

- Paul Collier, The Bottom Billion (Oxford University Press, 2007)

*The first take home essay examination on “the historical context of U.S. policy toward weak states” due at COB*

### **October 6: Why States Fail (2)**

- Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War" (2001);  
[http://jam.unsudan.info/background-info/data/conflict-analysis/12205\\_greedgrievance\\_23oct.pdf](http://jam.unsudan.info/background-info/data/conflict-analysis/12205_greedgrievance_23oct.pdf)
- David Keen, The Economic Functions of Violence in Civil Wars, Adelphi Paper 320 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)

### **October 13: Why States Fail (3)**

- James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*;  
<http://www.yale.edu/irspeakers/Fearon.pdf>
- Max G. Manwaring "A Contemporary Challenge to State Sovereignty: Gangs and Other Illicit Transnational Criminal Organizations in Central America, El Salvador, Mexico, Jamaica and Brazil," , December 2007;  
<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=837>

## **October 20: Blundering into Conflict**

### Case Study 1; Somalia

- R. D. Hooker, Jr ., "Hard Day's Night; A Retrospective on the American Intervention in Somalia" (Joint Force Quarterly, 2009) [http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq\\_pages/editions/i54/29.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq_pages/editions/i54/29.pdf)
- Christopher J. Lamb, with Nicholas Moon, "Somalia: Did Leaders or the System Fail?" (PNSR Case Studies, 2008)

*The second take home essay examination on "the phenomenon and dynamics of State Failure" due COB*

## **October 27: No Class**

## **November 3: War of Necessity**

### Case Study 2; Afghanistan

- 9/11 Commission Report, pps 320-350; <http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>
- Ashraf Ghani, Michael Carnahan and Clare Lockhart, "Stability, State-Building and Development Assistance: an outside perspective" (<http://www.princeton.edu/~ppns/papers/ghani.pdf>)
- Rory Stewart, "The Iresistable Illusion," (London Review of Books, July 9, 2009) [http://www.lrb.co.uk/v31/n13/stew01\\_.html](http://www.lrb.co.uk/v31/n13/stew01_.html)

## **November 10: The U.S. and Starte Building**

- James Dobbins, America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq (Rand Corporation, 2003)

## **November 17: War of Choice**

### Case Study 3; Iraq

- Joseph J. Collins, "Opting for War: An Analysis of the Decision to Invade Iraq," (PNSR Case Studies, 2008)
- Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, Hard Lessons; The Iraq Reconstruction Experience (2009); [http://www.sigir.mil/files/HardLessons/Hard\\_Lessons\\_Report.pdf](http://www.sigir.mil/files/HardLessons/Hard_Lessons_Report.pdf)

## **December 1: Democratization and Good Governance**

- "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," Seymour Martin Lipset, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (Mar., 1959), pp. 69-105; <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1951731>
- "DAC Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation," Development Advisory Committee, OECD, 1997 (pps.36-51); <http://www.fas.org/asmp/campaigns/smallarms/eguide.pdf>
- "How Development Leads to Democracy; What We Know About Modernization," Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, From *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2009

## **December 8: Responsibility to Protect**

Case Study 4; Rwanda

- Gareth Evans, *The Responsibility to Protect: Ending Mass Atrocity Crimes Once and for All*, (Harper Collins, 2009)
- Samantha Power, *A Problem From Hell* (Harper Perennial, 2001)

## **December 15: Wrap Up – Alibis**

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE**

All students must adhere to the Academic Integrity Code (<http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/regulations/reg80.cfm>). As the code states, "By enrolling at American University and then each semester when registering for classes, students acknowledge their commitment to the Code. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and their responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, examinations of whatever kind, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Students are responsible for learning the conventions of documentation and acknowledgment of sources. American University expects students to complete all examinations, tests, papers, creative projects, and assignments of any kind according to the highest ethical standards, as set forth either explicitly or implicitly in this Code or by the direction of instructors."

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site ([www.prepared.american.edu](http://www.prepared.american.edu)) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/college-specific information.

What is the US national interest at stake?

Is intervention justified? Advisable?

What form shld intervention take?