

**School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (S-CAR)
George Mason University
Fall Semester 2011**

**Global Governance and Complex Problemsolving in the Post 9/11 World
(CONF 695)
Mondays, 4:30-7:10 pm, Founders Hall, Rm. 308**

**Prof. Dennis J.D. Sandole
dsandole@gmu.edu
(Office Hours: 7:15-8:00 pm and by appointment)**

Prologue

This is the fourth 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 three 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, global warming, 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," 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 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 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 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.*"

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

- (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) Lester R. Brown (2011). *World on the Edge: How To Prevent Environmental and Economic Collapse*. NY and London: W.W. Norton.
- (3) 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).
- (4) 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.
- (5) Karl Cordell and Stefan Wolff (2010). *Ethnic Conflict: Causes, Consequences, Responses*. Cambridge (UK) and Malden (MA): Polity Press.
- (6) Mark Corner (2010). *The Binding of Nations: From European Union to World Union*. New York and London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- (7) 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).
- (8) Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart (2008). *Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- (9) Anthony Giddens (2009). *The Politics of Climate Change*. Cambridge (UK) and Malden (MA): Polity Press.
- (10) Mark Leonard (2005). *Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century*. New York: Public Affairs (Perseus Books).
- (11) Bjørn Lomborg (2007). *Solutions for the World's Biggest Problems: Costs and Benefits*. London and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- (12) Peter R. Neumann (2009). *Old and New Terrorism: Late Modernity, Globalization and the Transformation of Political Violence*. Cambridge (UK) and Malden (MA): Polity Press.
- (13) Jeremy Rifkin (2004). *The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream*. London and New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher (Penguin Group).
- (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).

Recommended Readings

(1) Stephen Flynn (2007). *The Edge of Disaster: Rebuilding a Resilient Nation*. New York: Random House.

(2) 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).

(3) Robert Kagan (2008). *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

(4) McClintock, John (2010). *The Uniting of Nations: An Essay on Global Governance. 3rd Edition*. Brussels and New York: Peter Lang Publishing Group.

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. 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; Brown, 2011; Clarke and Knake, 2010; Collier, 2007; Cordell and Wolff, 2010; Frantz and Collins, 2007; Ghani and Lockhart, 2008; Giddens, 2009; Neumann, 2009; Sachs, 2008; Sandole, 2007 (Chs. 1-2 and pp. 175-176); Sandole, 2010 (Chs. 1-4); and Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009. 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. And

(c) 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: 14 November 2011.**

(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 books reviewed for the "3/4"- term paper, this paper should cover the Corner, 2010; Leonard, 2005; Lomborg, 2007; Rifkin, 2004; Sandole, 2007 (Chs. 3-10) and Sandole, 2010 (Ch. 5) readings. Accordingly, students will (a) review their "3/4"- term papers to identify the complex global problems that the U.S. and others (e.g., the EU) 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. The grade for this paper (15-20 pages in length) will count for 40 percent of the final course assessment. **Due date: 12 December 2011.**

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, single-text document, which will then be sent to the White House and other U.S. Government agencies for consideration of the students' recommendations!*

Structure of Course

29 August: Introductions and Course Overview.

5 September: Labor Day (No Class).

12 September: *Worldwide Conflict Trends and Frameworks of Analysis* (Sandole, 2010, Chs. 1-4; Sandole, 2007, Chs 1-2 and pp. 175-176).

19 September: *Frameworks of Analysis*, cont'd.

26 September: A Brief Review of the *Global Problematique (1): Climate Change, Competition over Resources, Marginalization of the Majority World, Global Militarization, and the Way Forward* (Abbott, et al., 2007).

3 October: The *Global Problematique (2): Environment, Population, and Poverty* (Sachs, 2008; and Collier, 2007).

10 October: Christopher Columbus Mid-Semester Break. Class will be held on Tuesday,
 11 October: The *Global Problematique (3): Global Warming* (Brown, 2011; and Giddens, 2009).

17 October: The *Global Problematique (4): Social Inequality* (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009).

24 October: The *Global Problematique (5): State Failure* (Ghani and Lockhart, 2008).

31 October: The *Global Problematique (6): Ethnic Conflict and Terrorism* (Cordell and Wolff, 2010; and Neumann, 2009).

7 November: The *Global Problematique (7): Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and Failure of Critical Infrastructure* (Frantz and Collins, 2007; and Clarke and Knake, 2010).

14 November: *Shared Sovereignty as a Basis for Global Governance and Kant's Perpetual Peace (1): The European Union* (Leonard, 2005; Rifkin, 2004).

“3/4”- term papers due.

21 November: *Shared Sovereignty (2): Beyond the EU* (Corner, 2010).

28 November: *Solving Complex Global Problems (1): A Costs-Benefits Approach* (Lomborg, 2007).

5 December: *Solving Complex Global Problems (2): A Comprehensive Approach* (Sandole, 2007, Chs. 3-10; Sandole, 2010, Ch. 5).

12 December: *Final papers due*