

SCUSA 71

ROUND TABLES

Regional Tables

- 1. Europe:** What is the future of U.S.-European relations given the increasing prominence of nationalist political parties in Europe and the United States, and the United Kingdom's pending departure from the European Union? How can the United States cooperate with its European allies to tackle state and non-state challenges? How does the rise of China and its increasing economic cooperation with European countries affect the transatlantic relationship?
- 2. Western Hemisphere:** How should the United States respond to growing instability in Central and South America? The increasing violence between drug cartels has forced inhabitants to flee to other countries in search of refuge. Moreover, political instability in Venezuela, coupled with interest from both Russia and China, has elevated South America's role in great power competition. Which tools of statecraft should the United States leverage in addressing these challenges?
- 3. Middle East and North Africa:** The United States has significantly increased its engagement with Middle East countries since the 1970s. The attacks of September 11 began a new era of U.S. involvement as its counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and development efforts significantly increased in the region. How should the United States support its allies and partners while preventing its adversaries from gaining influence in the region?
- 4. Sub-Saharan Africa:** Sub-Saharan Africa is a region of untapped potential, but continuously characterized by immense political instability. A growing Nigeria, set to become one of the world's largest democracies, continues to show signs of unrest. The future of Sudan remains unclear following the ousting of its long-time president Omar al-Bashir. Elsewhere on the continent, the specter of terrorism continues to threaten stability with al-Shabaab monopolizing power in Somalia, ISIS affiliates capitalizing on poor security in West Africa, and emerging groups such as Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jama in Mozambique. Meanwhile, China continues to extend its influence in the region through the Belt and Road Initiative. Regional economies, however, continue to develop and the region's major players are beginning to work together. How could the United States more effectively engage in the region moving forward? What might be next in China's relationship in the region, and how will that relationship influence U.S. relationships?
- 5. Indo-Pacific:** The Indo-Pacific is one of the most populated and resource-rich areas in the world, as well as a hotbed for geopolitical competition. How should the United States engage with the largest democracy in the world, India, and cooperate with allies and

partners in the region to manage the reemergence of an increasingly powerful and assertive China? How should the United States prioritize its national interests in the Indo-Pacific?

6. **China:** A rising China represents the closest to a peer competitor the United States has faced since the fall of the Soviet Union. Within this challenge lay opportunities for both cooperation and competition. China's influence spreads through the Belt and Road Initiative, and trade wars complicate diplomacy with this growing economic power. What strategies should the United States adopt to engage or compete with China in the future?
7. **Russia:** Through the use of hybrid tactics just below the threshold of open war, Russia is projecting its power abroad. Russia claims its insecurity is a result of American liberal hegemony and NATO expansion. How should the United States respond to Russia's use of information and other instruments of national power to advance its interests while remaining at a threshold below declared war?

Topical Tables

1. **Trade, Jobs, and Globalization:** How does the United States balance the pursuit of increasing overall prosperity through open international markets while protecting domestic jobs? How should the United States pursue its economic interests in the international market? What are the security implications of economic openness? How can the United States adapt to increasing automation, artificial intelligence, and other technological innovations that will change the nature of work?
2. **The Weaponization of Information:** While instantaneous communication has provided an unprecedented networking opportunity for people from around the globe, hostile actors have weaponized the interconnectedness of modern societies to create internal division, undermine democracy, and recruit extremist sympathizers. Can democracy survive social media? How can the United States respond to state-led attempts to create division and influence elections and to extremist organizations that are recruiting from within the American population while protecting an open and vibrant democracy?
3. **Foreign Policy in an Era of Domestic Political Polarization:** Modern American politics has become rife with partisanship. As party competition for control of U.S. governing institutions has intensified, so have partisan battles in U.S. foreign policy. Does "politics stop at the water's edge," as Senator Arthur Vandenburg so famously claimed? Policy makers in both the Congress and the White House have become increasingly constrained by the continuous pressures imposed by election cycles, modern

mass media, and partisan interest groups. Can U.S. political leaders craft effective foreign policy while embroiled in partisanship? Are there domestic political reforms that could relieve elected officials from the tension of political polarization?

- 4. Security in Cyberspace:** How can the United States advance its security in cyberspace through its foreign policy? Protecting U.S. interests requires protection of critical infrastructure and information systems in both the public and private sectors. The absence of established international rules and norms of behavior in cyberspace, however, hampers efforts to secure critical cyber resources within the United States. What foreign policies might better enable the United States to protect its most important assets against the threat of cyber-attack from both state and non-state actors?
- 5. Alliances and Multilateral Organizations:** U.S. leadership was vital to the creation of many multilateral organizations and security alliances after World War II. Organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the United Nations, and the World Trade Organization have supported U.S. interests at home and abroad, while contributing to increased global wealth and security. These organizations also have been influential in countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Some critics in the United States have recently questioned the credibility and necessity of these institutions, claiming that these organizations generate too many costs and too few benefits. What might the future of U.S. multilateralism look like? How should the United States frame its approach to participation in international organizations in the twenty-first century?
- 6. Migration and Refugees:** Immigration has historically sparked concerns over national identity and domestic economic opportunity. Many citizens have voiced concerns over what they interpret as threats to their long-held cultural traditions, while being worried about immigrants reducing the number of available jobs and depressing wages for citizens. How do developed countries like the United States, France, Germany, and Great Britain develop effective policies to welcome and enjoy the benefits of immigration while maintaining national security and insuring domestic tranquility?
- 7. Climate Change:** Climate Change may represent one of the gravest threats to global security and U.S. strategic interests, yet it has become one of the most intractable policy issues in modern American politics. Agriculture, freshwater, and coastal cities may be under threat as the global environment changes in both predictable and unpredictable ways. Meanwhile, domestic worries over jobs and the economic impact of environmental regulation weigh heavily on the minds many citizens and their elected representatives. How can the United States adopt policies that will address climate change while mitigating negative impacts on economic growth?

8. Emerging Weapons Technology, Nuclear Proliferation, and Arms Control: The last decade has witnessed the emergence of revolutionary weapons technology alongside persistent challenges to regulating nuclear proliferation and arms control. What is the future of interstate efforts to control both emerging and mature weapons technology? The US withdrawal from the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, the problem of North Korea nuclear testing, and the unravelling of the Iran nuclear deal are all pressing issues. Moreover, although the range of missile defense systems has increased substantially, new conventional technologies—such as hypersonic missiles—may limit the capabilities of defensive systems. Meanwhile, advances in artificial intelligence technologies promise to challenge our understanding about how wars are waged. Should the US propose new international treaties for nuclear weapons, hypersonic missiles, or even autonomous systems such as artificial intelligence and unmanned aircraft? How can the US prepare for potentially dramatic changes in modern warfare?