



Foreign Affairs and International Concerns

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter is about the United States' relations with foreign countries and our international concerns in general. As we all can probably agree, terrorism and the risk of terrorist attack against our homeland and/or our allies is at the forefront of any discussion regarding foreign relations. Terrorism is not a new development, as America has been the target of attacks carried out by various groups and individuals throughout its history. However, in the past decade it has become apparent that the most immediate threat to the United States and the world is that of radical Islamic terrorism. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), [nearly 60 percent of all worldwide terrorist attacks in 2010 were committed by Sunni Muslim extremists](#). Ironically, according to FBI data, Muslims continue to bear the brunt of terrorism based on the fact that most terrorist attacks occur in predominantly Muslim countries. But, increasing contact between western nations and the Islamic world has led to mounting tensions between the two cultures as the more open and secular western values clash with the more traditional and religiously oriented Islamic society.

Terrorists have not, as of yet, been able to attack the United States with chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) weapons. If al-Qaeda or other terrorist groups develop or acquire CBRN capabilities, however, and has operatives trained to use them, they will do so. Since groups such as al-Qaeda lack access to the sophisticated industrial infrastructure necessary to produce a CBRN, the most likely source of such a weapon would be a nation that is sympathetic to their cause or looking to strike a blow against the West. Among the United States' primary states of concern are: Iran, North Korea and Pakistan. Each country has exhibited open, as well as veiled, hostility toward the United States and/or its allies.

The political change and unrest that have swept through the Middle East and North Africa since early 2011, are likely to have profound consequences for the pursuit of longstanding U.S. policy goals in the region with regard to regional security, global energy supplies, U.S. military access, bilateral trade and investment, counter-proliferation, counterterrorism and the promotion of human rights. The Arab world is in a period of turmoil and change that will challenge the ability of the United States to influence events in the Middle East. This turmoil is driven by forces that will shape Arab politics for years. States where authoritarian leaders have been toppled – Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Libya – will have to reconstruct their political systems through complex negotiations among competing factions. The countries most affected by the Arab Spring – Egypt, Libya, Syria and Tunisia – suffered setbacks to development with economic activity stalling or declining.

Historically, U.S. and Israeli leaders have shared common security goals, democratic values and religious affinities. The recent wave of uprisings and revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa paired with continued difficulties between the Israelis and Palestinians have reinforced the political impasse between Israel and Palestinians on core issues in their longstanding conflict. Although Israel withdrew its permanent military presence from the Gaza Strip in 2005, it still controls most access points and legal commerce to and from the territory. Other than Afghanistan, Israel is the leading recipient of U.S. foreign aid and is a frequent purchaser of major U.S. weapons systems. To date, the United States has provided Israel \$115 billion in bilateral assistance.

The federal government's role in protecting U.S. citizens and critical infrastructure from cyber attacks has been the subject of recent congressional interest. Our reliance on the Internet and dependence on automated systems connected to it represent a massive vulnerability to the United States. Only a handful of nations and organizations possess the level of capabilities necessary to pose a serious threat to our critical infrastructure by way of cyber threats and attacks. But, our intelligence community has recently observed

increased breadth and sophistication of computer network operations by both state and nonstate actors, such as China and Russia.

Foreign affairs expenditures typically amount to about one percent of the annual federal budget and around three percent of discretionary budget authority. Foreign aid dropped from nearly 4.5 percent of discretionary budget authority in 1984 to two percent in 2001, before rapidly rising in conjunction with U.S. activities in Afghanistan and Iraq starting in 2003. In FY 2010, U.S. foreign assistance totaled \$39.4 billion, or 1.1 percent of total budget authority. In real terms, this was the highest level of U.S. foreign assistance since 1985. Prior to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Israel and Egypt typically received the largest amounts of U.S. foreign aid every year since the Camp David Peace Accords in 1978. In FY 2010, the United States provided some form of foreign assistance to about 149 countries. On a regional basis, the Middle East has for many years received the bulk of U.S. foreign aid, however, the share of bilateral U.S. assistance consumed by the Middle East fell from nearly 60 percent in FY 2000 to nearly 26 percent by FY 2010. Africa's, the top recipient region of U.S. aid, share has increased from a little less than nine percent in FY 2000 to nearly 29 percent in FY 2010, largely due to the HIV/AIDS Initiative.

TERRORISM AND TERRORIST NETWORKS

Terrorism is not a new development, as America has been the target of attacks carried out by various groups and individuals throughout its history. However, in the past decade it has become apparent that the most immediate threat to the United States and the world is that of radical Islamic terrorism. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), [nearly 60 percent of all worldwide terrorist attacks in 2010 were committed by Sunni Muslim extremists](#). Ironically, according to FBI data, Muslims continue to bear the brunt of terrorism based on the fact that most terrorist attacks occur in predominantly Muslim countries. But, increasing contact between western nations and the Islamic world has led to mounting tensions between the two cultures as the more open and secular western values clash with the more traditional and religiously oriented Islamic society.

As a result, some radical segments within Islamic society have interpreted certain key teachings of Islam as calling for a *Jihad*, or holy war, against western influences to preserve the religious purity of the Islamic world. The groups and individuals who subscribe to this particular view have manifested themselves in a variety of ways ranging from sophisticated international networks operating across the globe, such as al-Qaeda, to individuals who act largely on their own or have ill-defined relationships with other terrorists, such as United States Army Major Nidal Hassan and his deadly November 2009, shooting spree at Fort Hood. American intelligence and security operations work tirelessly to monitor and thwart terrorist plots by any and all sources and [have successfully foiled more than 40 terrorist plots since Sept. 11, 2001](#).

Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs)

There are currently at least 50 designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) out there in the world. The State Department's Bureau of Counterterrorism maintains a list of designated FTOs that is periodically reviewed and updated accordingly. You can find the full list [here](#) on the State Department's website. The following legal criteria is required for an organization to be designated as an FTO:

- It must be a foreign organization
- It must engage in terrorist activity or terrorism or retain the capability and intent to engage in terrorist activity or terrorism
- The organization's terrorist activity or terrorism must threaten the security of U.S. nationals or the national security of the United States

Several well-known FTOs widely regarded as "enemies" of the United States, its interests and close allies are highlighted below.

al-Qaeda: Al-Qaeda, which in Arabic means, "The Base," is an international terrorist network that was founded in 1988 by Osama bin Laden. Subsequently led by Osama bin Laden until he was recently killed in a raid carried out by United States special forces, al-Qaeda helped finance, recruit, transport and train thousands of fighters from dozens of countries to be part of an Afghan resistance to defeat the Soviet Union. After the Soviet Union's collapse, al-Qaeda focused its attention on combating western influences in Islamic society. Today,

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"It's wrong to claim, as some do, that the motivation of al-Qaeda and its allies is some desire to seek justice in the middle east [...] al-Qaeda and its allies have no clear demands for the middle east. The only common thread in their approach is a violent and destructive opposition to democracy in any form."

~ Charles Clarke, Home Secretary, United Kingdom, November 2005

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al-Qaeda is a multi-national network possessing a global reach and has supported Islamic militants in Afghanistan, Algeria, Bosnia, Chechnya, Eritrea, Kosovo, the Philippines, Somalia, Tajikistan and Yemen. Additionally, the group has been linked to conflicts and attacks in Africa, Asia, Europe, the former Soviet Republics, the Middle East, as well as North and South America. Other known areas of operation include the United States, Yemen, Germany, Pakistan.

Al-Qaeda's current goal is to establish a pan-Islamic caliphate throughout the world by working with allied Islamic extremist groups to overthrow regimes it deems "non-Islamic" and expelling westerners and non-Muslims from Muslim countries. Al-Qaeda has cells worldwide and is reinforced by its ties to Sunni extremist networks. Counterterrorism efforts against al-Qaeda have put the organization in one of its most difficult positions since the early days of Operation Enduring Freedom in late 2001, when Coalition military operations in Afghanistan dismantled the Taliban - al-Qaeda's protectors - and led to the capture, death, or dispersal of several al-Qaeda operatives.

***Editor's Note:** For more information regarding the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, please refer to the Afghanistan and Iraq chapter of the 2012 NRCC Issues Book.*

While these efforts have slowed the pace of anti-United States planning and have hindered progress on new external operations, they have not been sufficient to stop them completely. Al-Qaeda retains the capability to recruit, train, and deploy operatives to mount some kind of an attack against the United States and it is safe to assume that al-Qaeda members at-large are attempting to carry out future attacks against United States interests.

The next few years will be a critical transition phase for the international terrorist threat facing our country, particularly from al-Qaeda and like-minded groups, which are often, as a whole, referred to as the "global Jihadist movement." Leadership of this movement is expected to become more decentralized, with "core" al-Qaeda – the Pakistan-based group formerly led by Osama bin Laden – diminishing in operational importance, regional al-Qaeda affiliates planning and attempting terrorist attacks, multiple voices providing inspiration for the movement and more vigorous debate about local versus global agendas.

With fragmentation, core al-Qaeda will likely be of largely symbolic importance to the movement with regional groups and, to a lesser extent, small cells and individuals, driving the global Jihad agenda both within the United States and abroad.

Hamas: Hamas was designated as an FTO in 1997 as an outgrowth of the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and has a presence in every major city in the Palestinian territories. Most of its funding, weapons and training are from Iran, but Hamas also raises funds in Persian Gulf countries and from Palestinian expatriates around the world. Syria and Lebanon both provide safe havens for Hamas leadership. Hamas' military arm, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, is believed to have several thousand Gaza-based operatives and conducts anti-Israeli attacks inside Israel. Hamas' Shura Council, based in Syria, sets its overall policy.

Hamas has not directly targeted U.S. interests, but has directly targeted Israeli targets frequented by foreigners. The organization curtailed attacks in February 2005, after agreeing to a temporary period of "peace" brokered by the Palestinian Authority (PA). Prior to 2005, Hamas conducted numerous anti-Israeli attacks, including suicide bombings, rocket launches, improvised explosive device (IED) attacks and shootings. After winning Palestinian Legislative Council elections in January 2006, Hamas formed the

Executive Force, a 9,000-person paramilitary group, and seized significant control of the PA in Gaza. In June 2007, the Executive Force and other Hamas forces took control of Gaza from the PA and Fatah.

Since this increased control of Gaza, Hamas has claimed responsibility for numerous mortar and rocket attacks targeting Israel and for carrying out a series of drive-by shootings in Israel from 2008 to 2010.

Hizballah: Hizballah is a Lebanese-based radical Shia Muslim group that takes its ideological inspiration from the Iranian revolution and the teachings of the late Ayatollah Khomeini. Closely allied with Iran and Syria, Hizballah was formed in response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and was designated as an FTO by the United States in 1997. The Lebanese government and most of the Arab world still recognize Hizballah as a legitimate “resistance group” and political party. Hizballah provides weapons, explosives, training, funding, guidance and overt political support to several Palestinian terrorist groups, as well as a number of local Christian and Muslim militias in Lebanon.

Primarily operating in the southern suburbs of Beirut, the Bekaa Valley and southern Lebanon, the group’s willingness to engage in violence and its increasing stockpile of weapons continues to threaten stability in the Middle East. Hizballah is responsible for the suicide truck bombings of the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983 and the U.S. Embassy annex in Beirut in 1984 and the 1985 hijacking of TWA flight 847. More recently, since at least 2004, Hizballah has provided training to Iraqi Shia militants, including the construction of shaped IEDs that can penetrate heavily-armored vehicles, to attack U.S. and coalition forces.

Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP): Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is a Pakistan-based terrorist organization formed in 2007 in opposition to Pakistani military efforts in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Designated as an FTO in 2010, TTP has a close, symbiotic relationship with al-Qaeda. Its goals include overthrowing the Pakistani government by waging a campaign of terror against its civilian leadership, its military and against NATO forces in Afghanistan using the tribal belt along the Afghan-Pakistani border to train and deploy its operatives.

TTP is responsible for numerous terrorist attacks against Pakistani and U.S. interests and is suspected of being involved in the 2007 assassination of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Most recently, TTP’s claims to have supported the failed May 2010, attempt by Faisal Shahzad to detonate a bomb in New York City’s Times Square have been validated by investigations revealing that it directed and facilitated the plot.

State Sponsors of Terrorism

State Sponsors of Terrorism are nations which the State Department has designated “to have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism.” The State Department has maintained a list of these nations since 1979 and it can be found [here](#) on the State Department’s website.

The United States imposes the following sanctions on countries on this list:

- A ban on arms-related exports and sales.

- Controls over exports of dual-use items, requiring 30-day Congressional notification of goods or services that could significantly enhance the terrorist-list country’s military capability or ability to support terrorism.
- Prohibitions on economic assistance.
- Imposition of miscellaneous financial and other restrictions.

At the time of this writing, the following four countries are currently designated as State Sponsors of Terrorism:

- Cuba (since 1982)
- Iran (since 1984)
- Sudan (since 1993)
- Syria (since 1979)

Terrorist Safe Havens

The State Department describes terrorist safe havens as physical areas (ungoverned, under-governed or ill-governed) where terrorists are able to organize, plan, raise funds, communicate, recruit, train, transit and operate in relative security because of inadequate governance capacity, political will or both.

The State Department is required by law to provide Congress with a full and complete report entitled, “Country Reports on Terrorism.” This report, which can be found [here](#) on the State Department’s website, extrapolates information on global terrorism, threats against the United States and terrorist safe havens. At the time of this writing, the 2010, “Country Reports on Terrorism,” the most recently available, identified 13 countries or regions as terrorist safe havens: Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Trans Sahara, Lebanon, Colombia’s Border Region, Northern Iraq, Southern Philippines, Sulu/Sulawesi Seas Littoral, Tri-Border Areas and Venezuela.

In June 2011, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a [report](#) examining the information provided by the State Department in its 2010 “Country Reports on Terrorism,” and concluded that the report failed to address how countries identified as terrorist safe havens are cooperating with the U.S. to combat the problem or how they are trying to prevent the trafficking of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Terrorist safe havens and how they are (or are not) cooperating with the United States have both become even more relevant recently in light of the Navy Seals recent killing of Osama bin Laden after U.S. intelligence found he had been hiding in a million dollar complex in Pakistan. Many people have questioned how Pakistani government officials did not know he was there.

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs)

Terrorists have not, as of yet, been able to attack the United States with chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons (CBRN). However, if al-Qaeda or other terrorist groups develop or acquire CBRN capabilities and has operatives trained to use them, they will do so. Counterterrorism actions have dealt a

significant blow to al-Qaeda's near-term efforts to develop a sophisticated CBRN attack capability, but al-Qaeda's, and other groups like them, are still intent on their acquisition.

Al-Qaeda targets include aviation, financial institutions in New York City, government buildings and the Metro system in Washington, D.C. Other targets al-Qaeda has considered include bridges, gas infrastructure, reservoirs, residential complexes and public venues for large gatherings. There is also an interest by the group in damaging the United States economy. While CBRN is the ultimate goal, the group continues to opt for more modest, even "low-tech," but still high-impact, attacks affecting key economic sectors.

Since groups such as al-Qaeda lack access to the sophisticated industrial infrastructure necessary to produce a CBRN, the most likely source of such a weapon would be a nation that is sympathetic to their cause or looking to strike a blow against the West. Therefore, the ongoing effort of nation-states to develop and/or acquire dangerous weapons constitutes a major threat to the safety of our nation, our military, our interests and our allies. The threat and destabilizing effect of nuclear proliferation and the threat from the proliferation of these weapons or their acquisition by terrorist networks from rogue nations should be a major concern for our military, Homeland Security and intelligence officials. The time when only a few countries had access to the most dangerous technologies is past.



“Nations do not distrust each other because they are armed. They are armed because they distrust each other.”

~ President Ronald Reagan



STATES OF CONCERN

Iran

Iran is identified as a major threat to U.S. national security interests generated by suspicions of Iran's intentions for its nuclear program as well as its support for militant groups in the Middle East and in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Iranian regime, led by Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Hosseini-Khamenei and current president Mahmoud Ahmadi-Nejad, continues to ignore United Nations Security Council (UNSC) restrictions on its nuclear program and there is a real risk that its nuclear program will prompt other countries in the Middle East to pursue nuclear options. Iran is developing various nuclear capabilities that bring it closer to being able to produce nuclear weapons, should it choose to do so. As of this writing, it is not clear if Iran will decide to build nuclear weapons should they achieve that capability. Iran's support of Shia militia insurgents fighting against United States forces during the war in Iraq and aggressive rhetoric condemning Israel and other western nations, have stoked concerns that, even if Iran decides to give up building nuclear arms themselves, they could share the technology with terrorist organizations.

Iran's refusal to halt work on its nuclear program or to verifiably confine its nuclear program to purely peaceful uses has led to increased international pressure and sanctions. Since early 2010, the Administration and Congress have focused on adopting and implementing additional U.S., U.N. and allied country sanctions on Iran. In June 2010, the UNSC adopted a resolution calling for new sanctions against Iran aimed at cutting off financial support for the regime's program. Since the passage of this UNSC resolution, the European Union (EU), Canada, Japan, South Korea and Australia have all passed new rules strictly limiting Iran's access to banking and financing within those countries. While sanctions have been a major feature of U.S.-Iran policy since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, U.N. and worldwide bilateral sanctions on Iran are a relatively recent development.

The October 2011, plot to assassinate Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States shows that some Iranian officials are now more willing to conduct an attack in the United States in response to real or perceived U.S. actions that threaten the regime. In the wake of a November 2011, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report indicating Iran might have worked on nuclear explosive technology, the EU decided to wind down purchases of Iranian crude oil by July 1, 2012, and the Obama Administration issued Executive Order 13590, expanding the authorities of the Iran Sanctions Act. In Congress, widespread support for cutting off Iran's Central Bank (Bank Markazi) was based on information that it was helping other Iranian banks circumvent the U.S. and U.N. banking pressure, and on the basis that the Central Bank is the prime conduit to pay Iran for oil shipments.

In November 2011, provisions to sanction foreign banks that deal with Iran's Central Bank were incorporated into a broader Iran sanctions bill, H.R. 1905, the Iran Threat Reduction Act. H.R. 1905, passed

Iran



the House on Dec. 14, 2011, by a vote of 410 to 11 (D: 177-9; R: 233-2). Click [here](#) to view the full vote. A separate Central Bank sanctions provision was introduced in the Senate as an amendment to H.R. 1540, the FY 2012 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The provision was modified slightly in conference action on the bill, but was eventually passed by both chambers and signed into law (P.L. 111-81) on Dec. 31, 2011. The Central Bank sanction provision in the FY 2012 NDAA, generally, prevented a foreign bank from opening an account in the United States if that bank conducts business through Iran's Central Bank. Previously, there were no mandatory sanctions against Iran's Central Bank. Initially, the Obama Administration was opposed to these sanctions believing they could lead to a rise in oil prices that would actually benefit Iran. But, President Obama changed his mind and indicated he would implement the sanction provision so as not to damage U.S. relations with partner countries, many who had already cut off dealings with Iran's Central Bank in late November 2011.

In part to address congressional sentiment for extensive sanctions on the Central Bank, on Feb. 6, 2012, the President issued an Executive Order imposing further sanctions on the Central Bank. This Order requires that any assets of the Central Bank of Iran be blocked (impounded) by U.S. financial institutions. Previously, they were required to merely refuse such transactions with the Central Bank, or return funds to it. These sanctions, along with those imposed by other nations, has caused a near collapse of Iran's currency as the regime struggles to find foreign partners willing to face the consequences.

The Obama Administration's policy approach toward Iran has contrasted with the Bush Administration's by attempting to couple sanctions to U.S. negotiations with Iran on the nuclear issue. These attempted negotiations have yielded no firm Iranian agreement. The added sanctions and isolation might have propelled Iran to come back to nuclear negotiations, and the Obama Administration has accepted a return to talks proposed by Iran, although no date for new talks is yet set. Supreme Leader Khamenei has ruled out separate bilateral talks with the United States unless the U.S. ceases its sanctions strategy. This differs somewhat from the position of Iranian President Ahmadinejad who continues to indicate willingness to talk directly to President Obama.

While President Obama has expressed optimism that the new sanctions combined with diplomatic pressure will convince Iran to abandon its nuclear program, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has openly discussed a pre-emptive unilateral military strike by Israel against Iranian nuclear facilities in order to prevent the regime from further developing the technology. President Obama and other western powers have urged Netanyahu to allow time for sanctions and diplomacy to work, worrying that the threat of military conflict with Iran would further increase the price of oil and threaten global economic recovery.

Some U.S. officials, though, do believe that military action might be the only means of preventing Iran from acquiring a working nuclear device. In an interview with CBS's "60 Minutes" on Jan. 29, 2012, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta said an Iranian effort to construct an actual nuclear weapon is a "red line" and that the United States would take action to halt it.

North Korea

An impoverished nation of about 23 million people, North Korea, officially named the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, has been among the most vexing and persistent problems in U.S. foreign policy in the post-Cold War period. The United States has never had formal diplomatic relations with North Korea and negotiations over its nuclear weapons program have consumed the past three U.S. administrations. U.S. interests in North Korea encompass crucial security, economic and political concerns. Bilateral military

Korea, North



alliances with South Korea and Japan obligate the United States to defend these allies from any attack from North Korea.

Since President Obama took office, North Korea has emphasized two main demands: that it be recognized as a nuclear weapons state and that a peace treaty with the U.S. must be a prerequisite to denuclearization. North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs pose a serious threat to the peace in East Asia. Despite diplomatic agreements in which North Korea reaffirmed its commitment to not transfer nuclear materials, technology, or expertise to other nations, their export of ballistic missiles and associated materials to several countries, including Iran and Pakistan, and its assistance to Syria in the construction of a nuclear reactor, exposed in 2007, illustrate the reach of their proliferation activities. The possibility of North Korea exporting nuclear technology or using such a weapon remains a serious concern.

On Dec. 17, 2011, Kim Jong-il, dictator of North Korea since 1994, reportedly died of a heart attack, touching off a crisis in what is arguably the world's most unstable nuclear power. Before his death, Kim Jong-il took steps to pass power to his third son, 28 year old Kim Jong-Eun (also spelled Kim Jong-Un) by installing him in a number of high level military positions designed to consolidate his own power base. With Kim Jong-il's rather abrupt death, many foreign policy experts question whether Kim Jong-Eun will have the clout necessary to consolidate power and assume leadership of the notoriously impoverished and isolated nation.

So little is known about the new leader that U.S. policymakers face a daunting challenge in navigating a course toward a peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue. In the long run, the ideal outcome is, presumably, reunification of the Korean peninsula under stable democratic rule. Beginning with his presidential campaign, President Obama indicated a willingness to engage with "rogue" governments. But, in 2009, North Korea tested a second nuclear device, expelled U.S. and international nuclear inspectors and declared it would "never" return to the talks. In response, the UNSC adopted a resolution outlining sanctions to deny financial benefits to the North Korean regime. As these events played out, the Obama Administration has adopted what Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called a "strategic patience" policy that essentially waits for North Korea to come back to the table while maintaining pressure through economic sanctions and arms interdictions. Some are concerned that this approach allows North Korea to control the situation, while fears of further nuclear advances and possible proliferation build.

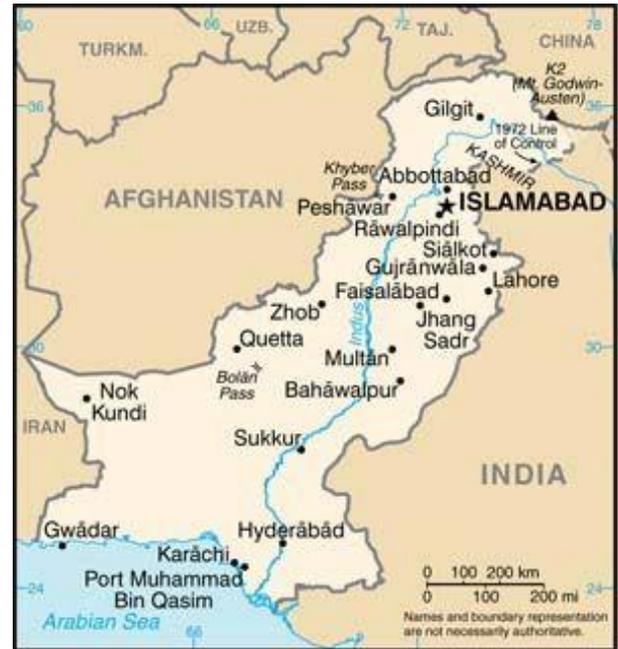
Pakistan

While Pakistan is an American ally and the two nations cooperate on many military and security matters, the Pakistani government is unable to control a number of its more remote and tribal regions, which have lately been used as a base of operations for Taliban and al-Qaeda operatives. These groups appear to be coordinating, despite historical differences in ethnicity and sectarian issues, in an attempt to destabilize Pakistan's security and convince the local populations that the government is weak and ineffectual. The fact that most Pakistani's describe terrorism as a big problem in their country and al-Qaeda and the Taliban have public approval ratings below twenty percent seems to indicate that these groups are gaining little traction amongst the population. But, if the Pakistani government were to lose control over significant regions bordering Afghanistan, the security implications for the region would be enormous as it would provide a safe haven for terrorist groups to train and operate.

Pakistan has long been a leading recipient of U.S. foreign aid despite contentious issues in the nation's stability, the May 2, 2011 raid on Osama bin Laden's compound led many in the west to question how reliable Pakistan is as an ally in the war on terror. Bin Laden's conspicuous location in a suburban area of the Pakistan city of Abbotabad, and in close proximity to military installations led some to believe that elements in the Pakistani government were aiding bin Laden.

Following the bin Laden raid, a number of other incidents including a botched U.S. military operation on November 26, 2011, which left 24 Pakistani troops dead and 13 injured by American operations and a September 2011, attack on the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan by the Haqqani network, an Afghan insurgent group with close ties to the Pakistani army, have continued to strain relations and stir public sentiment in both nations against the other.

These incidents have simply further soured the already troubled U.S.-Pakistani relations, prompting lawmakers to consider new restrictions on, or even elimination of, the billions of annual assistance dollars currently being provided. While numerous concerns exist about whether Pakistan can be accountable in how it uses U.S. aid and whether it is capable of being a reliable U.S. partner in combating terrorism, many experts believe that U.S. strategic interests are inextricably linked with a stable Pakistan and region.



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POLITICAL UPRISINGS AND REVOLUTIONS

On Dec. 17, 2010, a Tunisian street vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire to protest his ill treatment by the police and Tunisian authorities. His act of self-immolation touched off a chain of protests and revolutions, known as the “Arab Spring” or “Arab Awakening,” that, as of June 2011, has overthrown the governments of Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen; sparked a bloody and ongoing civil war with Libya; engulfed

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“The greatest rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connections as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.”

~ President George Washington, Farewell Address, 1796

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Bahrain and Syria in civil uprising; and sparked political demonstrations and protests in Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Western Sahara. While the full impact of the “Arab Spring” remains to be seen, the political landscape in nations across the Middle East and Africa has already changed significantly.

The political change and unrest that have swept through the Middle East and North Africa since early 2011, are likely to have profound consequences for the pursuit of longstanding U.S. policy goals in the region with regard to regional security, global energy supplies, U.S. military access, bilateral trade and investment, counter-proliferation, counterterrorism and the promotion of human rights. The Arab world is in a period of turmoil and change that will challenge the ability of the United States to influence events in the Middle East. This turmoil is driven by forces that will shape Arab politics for years. States where authoritarian leaders have been toppled – Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and

Libya – will have to reconstruct their political systems through complex negotiations among competing factions. The countries most affected by the Arab Spring – Egypt, Libya, Syria and Tunisia – suffered setbacks to development, with economic activity stalling or declining.

While it is encouraging in the West to see citizens of some of the most repressive nations in the world demanding freedom and responsive government, many of the ousted regimes had diplomatic ties with the United States and collaborated on issues of national security. This wave of revolution sweeping across an already tumultuous region adds a great deal of uncertainty as to how those relationships and arrangements will change when new political order is finally established. Fluid political environments across the Arab world also offer openings for Islamic activists to participate more fully in political life.

The U.S., since early 2011, has sought to leverage regional trends and action to achieve outcomes consistent with core principles and favorable to U.S. national security interests. To date, the Obama Administration and Congress have taken a varied approach to different cases of unrest and change while making steps toward crafting a common approach to countries that embrace democratic transition.

Tunisia

On Jan. 14, 2011, Tunisia’s government and its president, Zine el Abidine ben Ali, who had presided over the country since 1987, became the first regime to succumb to the “Arab Spring” revolutions after a mere 28 days of protest. Tunisia’s revolution was stoked by both stagnate economic conditions, including high unemployment, as well as political oppression. Following the beginning of the Tunisian revolution, ben Ali declared a state of emergency, dissolved the government and fled the country. Several high-ranking Tunisian government officials attempted to assume power over the course of the next few months until, finally, acting-President Fouad Mebazaa announced and scheduled constituent assembly elections. These elections

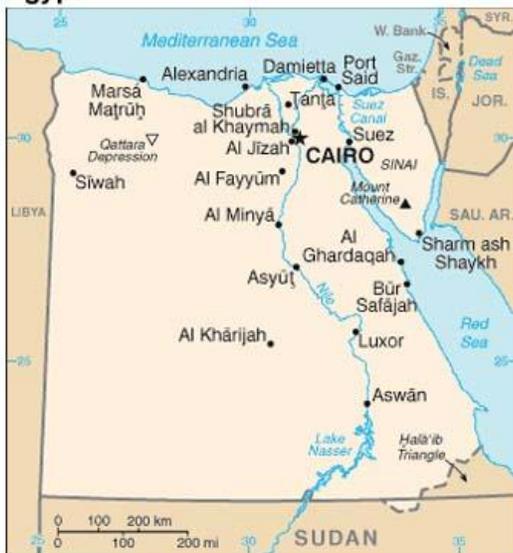
took place on Dec. 12, 2011, and former dissident and veteran human rights activist Moncef Marzouki was elected president of Tunisia in what was described as a free and fair election. Marzouki had previously been imprisoned and exiled for years for opposing former President ben Ali.

Al Nahda, the main Islamist party in Tunisia, which now controls more than 40 percent of the seats in a newly elected National Constituent Assembly, has expressed support for women’s rights and a civil state. But, opponents of Al Nahda are accusing it of conveying moderation so as to enter government and gradually introduced more restrictive and religiously conservative policies. Al Nahda leaders object to this characterization as unfair, so this “battle” over perceptions is likely to remain politically prominent in the short-term in Tunisia. Comparatively, Salafist groups, religiously conservative groups, were not permitted to register as political parties ahead of the October 2011, National Constituent Assembly elections, and their future status is a topic of intense debate within Tunisia.

As far as U.S. response to what has gone on in Tunisia, the U.S. has sought to engage with civil society groups and political parties in Tunisia and has authorized the creation of enterprise funds for Tunisia. A Middle East Response Fund/Middle East and North Africa Incentive Fund (MERF/MENA-IF), administered by the State Department’s Office for Middle East Transitions (which was created in September 2011), was created from unobligated FY 2011 and FY 2012 Economic Support Fund (ESF) funding. As of early 2012, Tunisia is the only country which has been identified to receive MERF funds. Most recently, on March 29, 2012, the Obama Administration announced that it will give \$100 million in cash to Tunisia for short-term debt relief. This infusion will require congressional approval and would go to pay Tunisia’s debt to the World Bank and African Development Bank.



Egypt



Egypt

Following an 18-day, peaceful uprising, long-time Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was forced to resign and cede power to the military on Feb. 11, 2011. This Egyptian revolution was one of the most difficult to deal with from a diplomatic standpoint. The Mubarak government had been a stabilizing force particularly with regards to its peaceful relationship with Israel. Although the revolution started out as peaceful leading up to Mubarak’s resignation, the ongoing transition from military to civilian rule has been anything but smooth. Nearly 800 people have died as a result of constant political unrest. At least in the short term, there are two powerful forces in Egyptian politics: the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) – made up entirely of military officers who held leading positions under Mubarak and the Islamist political parties led by the Muslim Brotherhood. The SCAF, which has exercised executive authority directly and via an interim cabinet, and the Muslim Brotherhood are negotiating, often behind the scenes, to bring about a

transition to civilian, Islamist-led rule by the summer of 2012, when Egypt is set to hold presidential elections.

In November 2011, Egypt held its first round of parliamentary elections, handing a resounding victory to the Freedom and Justice Party, which is closely affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, by taking half of the seats in the newly formed People's Assembly. The SCAF-Muslim Brotherhood understanding is the direct result of political brinkmanship by both sides that had narrowly avoided unleashing prolonged mass unrest surrounding the November 2011, elections. Under the agreement, the SCAF would remain the ruling authority in the country despite the election and would cede the majority of its powers to the civilian government at the end of June 2012. Despite this agreement, in late January and early February 2012, protesters who were dissatisfied with the pace of reforms and on-going economic turmoil, clashed with military and members of the Muslim Brotherhood, demanding immediate transition of power from the military to parliament. After several days of violence, the Muslim Brotherhood joined protesters in demanding that the military step down, touching off tensions between the two camps.

In addition to domestic instabilities, Egypt's new government has provoked a number of international incidents that have further strained relations with the United States including an incident where several American citizens working for non-profit organizations within Egypt, including Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood's son, were arrested on criminal charges and barred from leaving the country. Though the Egyptian government eventually relaxed its travel ban against the defendants, the incident has caused American officials to question the U.S.-Egyptian relationship going forward, including the \$1.5 billion in annual foreign aid that the U.S. currently gives to Egypt.

Egypt's economy has suffered greatly during the past year's transition, and without substantial international support, the situation could deteriorate further, leading to significant public hardship. With the political future of Egypt still uncertain and incidents seeming to indicate a more hostile relationship between Egypt and the West, many are concerned that growing domestic and international conflicts could escalate to destabilize the region and potentially lead to war with Israel. Under Mubarak's rule, his regime's censorship "contained" criticism of Egyptian policy toward Israel or even Hamas by allowing for only a very limited public discussion of the issue. Now Egyptian public opinion and support for the Palestinian cause has the ability to seriously rupture Israeli-Egyptian relations in an unprecedented way. Many fear that should conflict occur, the fallout from heightened Arab-Israeli tensions would be difficult to contain.

In addition, Egypt may no longer play as helpful a role in brokering Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. Though Egypt under Mubarak maintained a "cold peace" with Israel, under his leadership Egypt did host a number of important Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and Israel counted on some Egyptian cooperation in countering Hamas rule in the Gaza Strip.

Yemen

In February 2011, Yemeni citizens began protesting against corruption and eventually for the ousting of then-President Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime. Saleh was wounded in an attack on his presidential residence in June 2011, and fled to Saudi Arabia to seek medical treatment. On Nov. 23, 2011, after several unsuccessful attempts to return to power, Saleh finally signed an agreement in the Saudi Arabian capital of Riyadh to officially cede power to a caretaker government, which in turn announced that presidential elections would be held on Feb. 21, 2012. President Abdo Rabu Mansour Hadi, Saleh's former vice president, was sworn in on Feb. 25, 2012. He is known as a loyal supporter of Saleh.

Yemen, an impoverished Arab country with a population of more than 23 million, is one of the Arab world's least governable countries, with significant sectarian and tribal divisions presenting a constant challenge to national cohesion. Since Yemen's unification (of North and South Yemen), the United States government has been mostly concerned with combating al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist groups inside Yemen. Although there has been a level of distrust of Yemen's commitment to fighting terrorism, the Saleh government had been a key United States ally in the War on Terror, collaborating with United States security personnel to crack down on the country's extensive al-Qaeda operations. During the early years of the Bush Administration, relations improved though Yemen's lax policy toward wanted terrorists and U.S. concerns about corruption and governance stalled additional U.S. support. Yemen harbored then and continues to harbor now a number of al-Qaeda operatives and has refused to extradite several known militants on the FBI's list of most wanted terrorists. In September 2011, multiple news reports indicated that an alleged U.S. air strike in Yemen killed Anwar al Awlaki, a high value target of U.S. counterterrorism forces heavily involved with al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), an arm of al-Qaeda. This operation further indicated that there is and continues to be a serious "al-Qaeda problem" in Yemen.



Libya

The political change in neighboring Tunisia and Egypt helped bring long-simmering Libyan reform debates to a boiling point in January and February 2011 (please see Figure 2 below for a concise timeline of events). In late February 2011, Libyan protests turned to full-on rebellion and a civil war broke out between Libya's dictator, Colonel Muammar al-Qadhafi - one of the longest serving heads of state having held power since 1969 - , based in the western capital city of Tripoli, and rebel forces, based in the eastern city of Benghazi. After months of fighting and with significant assistance from NATO air support, including support from the U.S. military, rebel forces managed to win a number of victories against Qadhafi and made slow progress in driving Qadhafi's forces westward toward Tripoli. Despite this progress, the rebel forces, or National Transitional Council (NTC) forces, were still notoriously



ill-equipped and poorly trained, making military operations slow and difficult to conduct. Many of NATO's member countries as well as regional powers (such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar) provided military advisors, weapons and aid to rebel forces to support their efforts against Qadhafi.

While the Obama Administration emphatically insisted that the United States would not commit ground troops in Libya, American military personnel gave support to rebel military operations through involvement in NATO as well as through missile strikes. While President Obama sought and obtained support from the international community to pursue military actions in Libya, many members of Congress felt that the legislative branch was not properly consulted on the U.S. military role in the conflict. On March 23, 2011, Speaker of the House John Boehner [wrote a letter to the president](#) which outlined his concerns that the U.S. mission in Libya was ill-defined and would commit U.S. forces to an open-ended conflict. With significant numbers of troops already committed in Afghanistan and Iraq, dedicating additional military personnel to Libya, even in a supporting role, requires the United States to divert resources from other security efforts around the globe, putting additional demand on already strained resources. There is also concern that the President's lack of consultation with Congress put him in violation of the War Powers Act of 1973, which requires Congress to authorize the use of military force by the President within 60 days of the action commencing. On Wednesday, June 15, 2011, after [Speaker Boehner had informed the President that on June 18, 2011, the Administration would be in violation of the War Powers Act](#), President Obama asserted that the Act [did not apply](#) to U.S. military action in Libya since U.S. involvement there was not large enough to require Congressional authorization, a position that many in Congress rejected.

Ultimately, Qadhafi was beaten and killed by NTC forces on Oct. 20, 2011, in the Libyan town of Sirte. Qadhafi's death, along with the death of his son, eliminated the possibility of a Qadhafi loyalist regime remaining in place. Even with his demise and defeat, Libya still faces profound challenges including navigating political obstacles, rebuilding the economy and securing Libya. The good news is that the Libyans have so far met the deadlines and goals outlined in the transition roadmap developed by the NTC, and are on track to hold elections in June 2012, for the National Congress which will then draft a constitution. On Oct. 23, 2011, Libya's de facto Prime Minister, Mahmoud Jibril, stepped down and called for fast and fair elections to set up a successor to the Qadhafi regime. A transitional Prime Minister Abdurrahim ElKeib was elected by the NTC, which has been the government body for rebel controlled Libya since the beginning of the civil war earlier in 2011. For these successes to continue, the interim government needs to assert its authority without igniting divisions among Libya's various stakeholders and work toward disbanding and integrating its various militias.



Figure 2 (Source: Congressional Research Service)

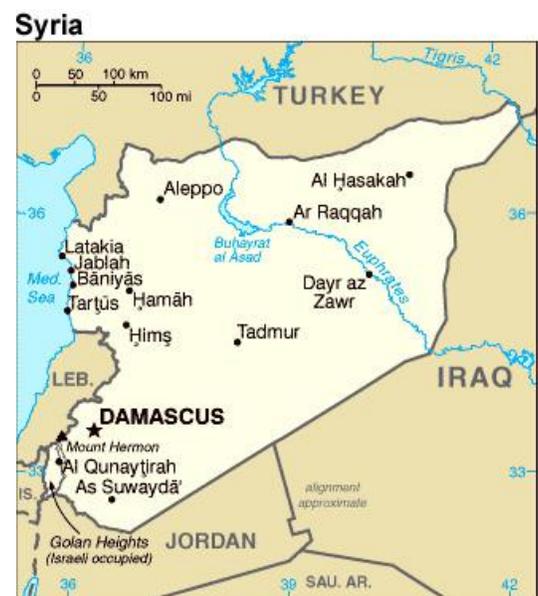
As of this writing, the following actions have been taken by the 112th Congress with regard to Libya:

- On May 26, 2011, Rep. Conyers (D-MI) offered an amendment to the 2012 Defense authorization bill what would prevent funds in the bill from being used to establish or maintain the presence of armed forces or private security contractors on the ground in Libya except to rescue a member of the armed service. The amendment was passed 416 to 5 (D: 183-3; R: 233-2). Click [here](#) to view the full vote.
- On June 3, 2011, the House passed H. Res. 292 which declares that the President shall not deploy ground troops in Libya and required the President to present a detailed report to Congress on the administration's plan for future military involvement in Libya. The resolution was passed 268 to 145 (D: 45-135; R: 223-10). Click [here](#) to view the full vote.
- On June 3, 2011, the House failed to pass H. Con. Res. 51 which would have directed the President to remove all U.S. military forces from Libya, including those in a supporting role in the NATO mission, and would declare the President in violation of the War Powers Act of 1973. The resolution failed 148 to 265 (D: 61-121; R: 87- 144). Click [here](#) to view the full vote.
- On June 24, 2011, the House failed to pass H.J. Res. 68 which would have given congressional authorization to the U.S. military operation in Libya. This resolution was intended to fail in order to show that the House disapproves of the President's actions with regards to U.S. military involvement in Libya. The resolution failed 123 to 295 (D: 115-70; R: 8-225). Click [here](#) to view the full vote.
- On June 24, 2011, the House failed to pass H.R. 2278 which would have prohibited the Defense Department from using funds in support of NATO's military operations in Libya. The failure of this bill allows for continued funding of the current U.S. military support operations. The bill failed 180 to 238 (D: 36-149; R: 144-89). Click [here](#) to view the full report.

Syria

Syrians began protests against their president, Bashar al-Asad in January 2011, calling for him to step down and transfer power to a provisional government. After a few months of half-hearted attempts to appease the protesters by offering resignations of government ministers, al-Assad began a campaign of brutal suppression against the protesters, which has touched off armed conflict between poorly organized opposition forces made up of protesters and military units who have defected and forces loyal to al-Asad.

At the time of this writing, the opposition forces have still been unsuccessful at challenging al-Asad's control over the country. The confrontations and violence that have swept through Syria have escalated to the edge of civil war in early 2012. President al-Asad's refusal to leave power has intensified the Syrian conflict even in the face of internal demands and intense international pressure calling for political change and an end to



violence against civilians. In January 2012, the United Nations estimated that more than 5,400 Syrians have been killed since the unrest began in 2011. The United States closed its embassy in Damascus and, on Feb. 6, 2012, the State Department completely suspended operations there and Ambassador Robert Ford left the country.

The brutality of al-Asad's response has led to Syria's expulsion from the Arab League (a regional organization designed to promote economic and political cooperation between member states) and drawn international condemnation, including from President Obama, who imposed new sanctions on Syria's intelligence and military services. Violence in Syria has caused a dramatic increase in refugees from Syria fleeing into the neighboring countries of Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, causing those governments to worry about the destabilizing effect that the conflict will have on the region. The Administration continues to expand U.S. sanctions on Syria while advocating further multilateral sanctions.

U.S. policy toward Syria since the 1980s has ranged from confrontation and containment to cautious engagement, as successive Congresses and Administrations have sought to end Syria's support for terrorism, encourage regional peace talks and prevent proliferation of missiles and weapons of mass destruction. In the event of a swift regime change or other political transition in Syria, U.S. officials and Congress will face a series of complex decisions regarding the timing and scope of potential changes to existing policy and sanctions to facilitate or further restrict relations with a successor government.

ISRAEL



Since Israel's founding in 1948, successive U.S. Presidents and many Members of Congress have demonstrated a commitment to Israel's security and to maintaining close defense, diplomatic and economic ties. Historically, U.S. and Israeli leaders have shared common security goals, democratic values and religious affinities. Israel perceives threats from Iran and from Iran-sponsored organizations such as Hizballah, Hamas and other Sunni Islamist Palestinian militants in Gaza. Israeli leaders have renewed calls for urgent international action against Iran's nuclear program.

The recent wave of uprisings and revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa paired with continued difficulties between the Israelis and Palestinians have reinforced the political impasse between Israel and Palestinians on core issues in their longstanding conflict. Although Israel withdrew its permanent military presence from the Gaza Strip in 2005, it still controls most access points and legal commerce to and from the territory.

Additionally, the recent political instability in the Middle East has underscored the fact that Israel is America's only reliable ally in the entire region. Other than Afghanistan, Israel is the leading recipient of U.S. foreign aid and is a frequent purchaser of major U.S. weapons systems. To date, the United States has provided Israel \$115 billion in bilateral assistance. Almost all U.S. bilateral



aid to Israel is in the form of military assistance, although in the past Israel also received significant economic assistance. Despite its unstable regional environment, Israel has developed a robust diversified market economy and a vibrant parliamentary democracy. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and his Likud Party lead a coalition that is unusually stable relative to recent Israeli governments. The next national elections in Israel will be held no later than early 2013.

At a time when Iran continues to make threats and is defying international nuclear facility and weapons inspectors, it is critical that the security and stability of Israel is maintained and supported by the United States. Without its stable presence in the Middle East, the current volatile regional political situation there could be much, much worse. This is why the United States has a history of such a tried and true commitment to supporting our ally, Israel. It is important to continue to invest in Israel, including its missile defense system, to help reassure Israel that it has the backing and support of the world's most powerful military. It also sends a strong message to Iran and any other foes – that aggression against a U.S. ally means that they will also have to contend with the U.S.

There are numerous U.S.-based groups actively interested in Israel and the peace process. These are noted below with links to their websites for information on their policy positions:

- American Israel Public Affairs Committee – <http://www.aipac.org>
- American Jewish Committee – <http://www.ajc.org>
- American Jewish Congress – <http://www.ajcongress.org>

- Americans for Peace Now – <http://www.peacenow.org>
- Anti-Defamation League – <http://www.adl.org>
- Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations – <http://www.conferenceofpresidents.org>
- Foundation for Middle East Peace – <http://www.fmep.org>
- Hadassah (The Women’s Zionist Organization of America, Inc.) – <http://www.hadassah.org>
- Israel Bonds – <http://www.israelbonds.com>
- The Israel Project – <http://www.theisraelproject.org>
- Israel Policy Forum – <http://www.israelpolicyforum.org>
- J Street – <http://jstreet.org>
- Jewish National Fund – <http://www.jnf.org>
- Jewish Policy Center – <http://www.jewishpolicycenter.org>
- New Israel Fund – <http://www.nif.org>
- S. Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace – <http://www.centerpeace.org>
- United Israel Appeal – <http://www.jewishfederations.org/united-israel-appeal.aspx>
- Zionist Organization of America – <http://www.zoa.org>

CYBERSECURITY

The federal government's role in protecting U.S. citizens and critical infrastructure from cyber attacks has been the subject of recent congressional interest. Our reliance on the Internet and dependence on automated systems connected to it represent a massive vulnerability to the United States. Cyber threats pose a critical national and economic security concern due to the continued advances in information technology (IT). While the United States' critical infrastructure, from the electric grid to the financial sector, is vulnerable to attack through cyberspace, terrorist groups, by and large, currently lack the capability to attack in these areas. To penetrate, map and damage the networks that control the industrial base requires a large team of experienced hackers, a lot of time and advanced infrastructure.

Only a handful of nations and organizations possess this level of capability. But, our intelligence community has recently observed increased breadth and sophistication of computer network operations by both state and nonstate actors. Among state actors, China and Russia are of particular concern. As indicated in the October 2011, economic espionage report from the National Counterintelligence Executive, organizations within these countries are responsible for extensive illicit intrusions into U.S. computer networks and theft of U.S. intellectual property. The United States needs to make real investments to bolster the security of its critical infrastructure, starting with government and military systems, but extending into the private sector, particularly the electric grid and the financial community.

FOREIGN AID

Some Democrats and Republicans view the foreign affairs budget as a place to cut funds in order to reduce the budget deficit. Both Democrats and Republicans also view a robust foreign affairs budget as essential for America’s national security and foreign policy interests, perhaps even saving long-term spending by preventing the much costlier use of troops overseas.

The State Department, Foreign Operations and Related Agencies (State-Foreign Ops) appropriations bills, in addition to funding U.S. diplomatic and foreign aid activities, have been the primary legislative vehicle through which Congress reviews the U.S. international affairs budget and influences executive branch foreign policy making in recent years. But, the State-Foreign Ops does not perfectly align with the international affairs budget. Food aid, which is funded by both the Agriculture appropriations bills and the Commerce-Science-Justice appropriations bills, is not funded through the State-Foreign Ops appropriations bills.

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, foreign aid has increasingly been associated with national security policy. U.S. foreign aid policy has developed around three primary rationales: national security, commercial interests and humanitarian concerns. These three rationales are the basis for the multitude of objectives of U.S. assistance including promoting economic growth, reducing poverty, improving governance, expanding access to health care and education, promoting stability in volatile regions, promoting human rights, strengthening allies and curbing illicit drug production and trafficking.

Foreign affairs expenditures typically amount to about one percent of the annual federal budget and around three percent of discretionary budget authority. Foreign aid dropped from nearly 4.5 percent of discretionary budget authority in 1984 to two percent in 2002, before rapidly rising in conjunction with U.S. activities in Afghanistan and Iraq starting in 2003.

Editor’s Note: For more information on specific federal budget terms like “discretionary budget authority,” please refer to the Budget and Federal Spending chapter of the 2012 NRCC Issues Book.

In FY 2010, U.S. foreign assistance totaled \$39.4 billion, or 1.1 percent of total budget authority. In real terms, this was the highest level of U.S. foreign assistance since 1985. The lowest point in U.S. foreign aid spending since World War II came in 1996 and 1997, when foreign assistance obligations fell to below \$15 billion.

Figure 3: Top Recipients of U.S. Foreign Assistance, FY 2000 & FY 2010			
(in millions of current U.S. dollars)			
FY 2000		FY 2010	
Israel	\$4,069	Afghanistan	\$4,102
Egypt	\$2,053	Israel	\$2,220
Colombia	\$899	Pakistan	\$1,807
West Bank/Gaza	\$485	Egypt	\$1,296
Jordan	\$429	Haiti	\$1,271
Russia	\$195	Iraq	\$1,117
Bolivia	\$194	Jordan	\$693
Ukraine	\$183	Kenya	\$688
Kosovo	\$165	Nigeria	\$614
Peru	\$120	South Africa	\$578
Georgia	\$112	Ethiopia	\$533
Armenia	\$104	Colombia	\$507
Bosnia	\$101	West Bank/Gaza	\$496
Indonesia	\$94	Tanzania	\$464
Nigeria	\$68	Uganda	\$457

Source: Congressional Research Service

Prior to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Israel and Egypt typically received the largest amounts of U.S. foreign aid every year since the Camp David Peace Accords in 1978. In FY 2010, the United States provided some form of foreign assistance to about 149 countries – **Figure 3** identifies and compares the top 15 recipients of U.S. foreign assistance for FY 2000 and FY 2010.

On a regional basis, the Middle East has for many years received the bulk of U.S. foreign aid. With economic aid to the region's top two recipients, Israel and Egypt, declining since the late 1990s and overall increases in other areas, however, the share of bilateral U.S. assistance consumed by the Middle East fell from nearly 60 percent in FY 2000 to nearly 26 percent by FY 2010. Africa's, the top recipient region of U.S. aid, share has increased from a little less than nine percent in FY 2000 to nearly 29 percent in FY 2010, largely due to the HIV/AIDS Initiative, that funnels resources mostly to African countries. In FY 2010, South and Central Asia each received 26 percent rising from a roughly two percent share 10 years ago, largely because of aid to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

With the exception of several years between 1989 and 2001, during which Japan periodically ranked first among aid donors, the United States has led the developed countries in net disbursements of economic aid, or "Official Development Assistance (ODA)," as defined by the international donor community. In 2009, the most recent year for which data are available at the time of this writing, the United States disbursed \$28.83 billion in ODA, or 24 percent of the \$120 billion in net ODA disbursements that year from the 29 members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD's) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), representing the world's leading providers of economic aid. France ranked second at \$12.60 billion, Germany at \$12.08 billion and the United Kingdom at \$11.49 billion. Japan has significantly scaled back its foreign aid program in recent years and gave \$9.47 billion in 2009.

For 50 years, the bulk of U.S. bilateral economic aid program has been administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID is directly responsible for most bilateral development assistance and disaster relief programs. In addition to USAID and other entities under State-Foreign Ops' jurisdiction, the Department of Defense administers all traditional aid-funded military assistance programs and the Department of Treasury administers U.S. contributions to and participation in the World Bank and other multilateral development institutions.

The most significant permanent foreign aid authorization laws are the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (P.L. 87-195), the Arms Export Control Act of 1976 (P.L. 90-629), the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-480) and the Bretton Woods Agreement Act of 1945 (P.L. 79-171). Although foreign aid authorizing bills have passed the House or Senate, or both, on numerous occasions, Congress has not enacted into law a comprehensive foreign assistance authorization measure since 1985. In the absence of regular foreign aid authorization bills, the State-Foreign Ops appropriations bills incorporate new policy initiatives that would otherwise be debated and enacted as part of authorizing legislation.

Editor's Note: For more specific information regarding federal budgeting terms like "authorization," please refer to the *Budget and Federal Spending* chapter of the 2012 NRCC Issues Book.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS TALKING POINTS

- Our foreign policy should keep America on offense and provide our intelligence professionals and service men and women with all the tools they need to keep us safe.
- President Ronald Reagan's idea of securing peace through strength must drive our international efforts and diplomatic priorities.
- America must strengthen its security alliances, create new ones and establish new coalitions and entities based on shared values.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

For a fuller understanding of these issues as well as more in-depth information regarding specific countries and organizations of interest, the following websites and reports may prove helpful to candidates:

- Unclassified portion of this year's [Worldwide Threat Assessment of the United States Intelligence Community](#), Office of the Director of National Intelligence
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) [The World Factbook](#)
- U.S. State Department [A-Z List of Country and Other Area Pages](#)
- U.S. State Department [Country Reports on Terrorism](#)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Most Wanted Terrorists – http://www.fbi.gov/wanted/wanted_terrorists
- United Nations – <http://www.un.org>
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) – <http://www.nato.int/>
- House Committee on Foreign Affairs – <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/>
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – <http://www.oecd.org>