

Great Decisions 2014 Topics



- **Defense Technology**

From robotic planes to cyberweapons to 3D printing and human enhancement, new “game-changing” technologies are moving from science fiction to battlefield reality – all during an age of fiscal austerity. But in wrestling with the new, we can actually learn a great deal from the past. Our forebears went through similar challenges with such once fanciful but now normal concepts as airplanes, submarines, and tanks. What are the “killer applications” of the 21st century battlefield, and in turn, what are the issues that the U.S. must navigate in adapting to them?



- **Israel and the U.S.**

Modern Israel’s struggles with the Palestinians have turned what was meant as a safe haven for Jews into the center of a decades-long conflict. The U.S. has stepped in as Israel’s ally due to the two countries’ shared values, providing years of unparalleled military and diplomatic support. But now those ties are being tested. The Arab Spring, Iran’s nuclear ambitions, failed peace talks, and Israel’s own decision to give Washington the cold shoulder have put new strains on the 65-year-old “special relationship.”



- **Turkey’s challenges**

Turkey: a nation at a crossroads, a bridge over an ever-growing chasm between the East and West. Turkey’s first Prime Minister Kemal Ataturk envisioned a modern, democratic nation-state built on the ashes of the Ottoman Empire with strong ties to Europe, not the Middle East. But as the clashes between secular and religious groups and the recent protests in Taksim Square show, the soul of Turkey is still very much up for grabs.



- **Islamic awakening**

The aftermath of the Arab Spring has resulted in unforeseen changes in the political landscape in many countries, especially regarding the role of Islam and democracy. How have the countries in the Maghreb reacted, including Tunisia, where the Arab Spring began? Is U.S. foreign policy adapting successfully to all of the changes in the region?



- **Energy Independence**

Energy independence, by taking the bargaining chip of oil dependence off the table, would be good for American foreign policy. But the very technological advances that make independence possible have created a dilemma for lawmakers. In a government with fixed resources, should the U.S. encourage more traditional fuel production or invest in the young technology of renewable resources?



- **Food and Climate**

Even as a sixth of the world's population suffers from chronic hunger, a changing climate threatens to wreak havoc on already insecure and vulnerable populations. As food and water become scarce and once fertile land becomes barren, the U.S. finds itself faced with new challenges in securing the globe. The U.S. is getting ready, but can it lead the way to climate reform?



- **China's foreign policy**

China has gone to great lengths to emphasize the "peaceful" nature of its meteoric rise. Yet few dispute that China is the dominant regional power in Asia – and in recent years Beijing began to flex its muscles regionally in order to advance its strategic interests. What does the rapid rise of this new superpower mean for other countries in the region, and are there potential points of conflict with the U.S. as it "pivots" to Asia?



- **U.S. trade policy**

America's foreign policy tools are not limited to sanctions, treaties or military campaigns – they also include the sales pitch. The logic behind this pitch, or "economic statecraft," is simple: promote the benefits of democracy and the free market. In so doing, the U.S. will gain valuable and stable partners, both in business and in diplomacy. Now, as China and other emerging nations battle the U.S. for global influence, Secretary Kerry will take the reigns as a free market matchmaker.