

Global Discussion Questions

No decision in foreign policy is made in a vacuum, and the repercussions of any single decision have far-reaching effects across the range of strategic interests on the U.S. policy agenda. This GREAT DECISIONS feature is intended to facilitate the discussion of this year's topics in a global context, to discuss the linkages between the topics and to encourage consideration of the broader impact of decision-making.

1. Consider “Global supply chains” in the context of “The end of globalization?.” During the 2016 U.S. presidential election, free trade and globalization were major factors in the election, while the 2020 election has had little mention of the subject. How has the view of globalization changed since 2016? Are people more in favor of international trade now than in 2016? How will covid-19 impact people's perception of globalization?

2. Consider “The race for the melting Arctic” in the context of “China in Africa.” China has moved quickly to establish strong diplomatic ties with regions of the world previously ignored by the United States. Should the U.S. get involved heavily in regions already dominated by China? What benefit could the U.S. receive by challenging China's hegemony in these areas? Why hasn't the U.S. been more involved in the Arctic or Africa?

3. Consider “Global supply chains” in the context of “Role of the WHO.” With many nations struggling during the early outbreak of covid-19 to meet the demand for certain medical supplies, should more power be given to international organizations (like the WHO) regarding control over the supply chains of certain essential equipment and supplies? How could countries, private sector companies, and international organizations work better together to prevent future pandemics?

4. Consider “Brexit and the EU” in the context of “The end of Globalization?” After Brexit and the pandemic, are countries that were more inclined to pull away from globalization efforts going to continue to do so? Has there been enough of an emphasis on the economic benefits of globalization on the average person? Why do you feel people are against the growth of globalization and more in favor of economic nationalism?

5. Consider “Persian gulf security” in the context of “The two Koreas” The U.S. has found little success in stopping both Iran and North Korea from developing a nuclear weapons program. Why have attempts to stop both Iran and North Korea's programs failed? How has the historical relationship between the U.S. and each region shaped each issue?

6. Consider the “Role of WHO” in the context of “The end of globalization.” Has the negative reaction to much of the WHO’s response to the pandemic hurt the calls for globalization? How can international organizations become better ambassadors for the global order? Are parts of globalization at fault for some of the issues the WHO now faces?

7. Consider “China in Africa” in the context of “The end of globalization?” Has China’s success with their Belt and Road initiative changed your opinion on globalization? Should the U.S. adopt a similar economic/diplomatic strategy to China’s BRI? Do you think a similar U.S. led effort would produce similar results to China’s? Or should the U.S. continue to pull out of the international community?

8. Consider “The two Koreas” and “Persian Gulf security” in the context of “China in Africa.” Should the U.S.(or international community) put more diplomatic pressure on China to help alleviate domestic issues in regions where they have the most influence? Has China’s reluctance to take a stand against the nuclear weapon programs of Iran and North Korea exacerbated the issue?

9. Consider “Global supply chains” in the context of “Brexit and the EU.” “Taking back control” was a major rallying cry for the “leave” campaign of Brexit. After reading both articles, do you believe that Brexit is an effective way of mitigating the issues seen in the global supply chain article? Did leave campaigners have a point about nations needing to take “control” back over their economy?

10. Consider “Role of the WHO” in the context of “The race for the melting Arctic.” Should an international organization have more control over the Arctic than individual nations? Should this control fall to the United Nations, or should it remain with the Arctic council? How can an international organization gain more power to effectively enact any policies? What might some of the drawbacks be toward growing the size and scope of NGOs?

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