

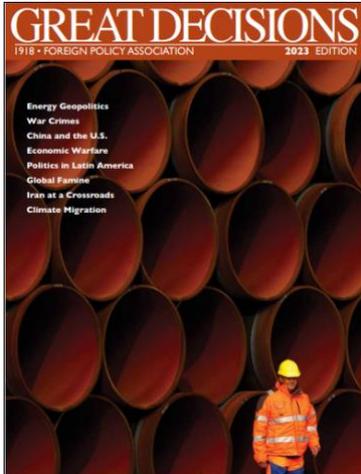


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Foreign Policy Association's Great Decisions 2022 Topics

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The Great Decisions Briefing Book features impartial, explanation and analysis on topics of global significance. Written by experts, each article offers policy options for U.S. officials as well as questions and tools for discussion.

CAPTION FOR THE COVER IMAGE: A worker stands in front of pipes which lie stacked at the Nord Stream 2 facility at Mukran on Rügen Island on October 19, 2017 in Sassnitz, Germany. At the time, Nord Stream was laying a second pair of offshore pipelines in the Baltic Sea between Vyborg in Russia and Greifswald in Germany for the transportation of Russian natural gas to western Europe. Work on Nord Stream 2 commenced in 2011 with the preparatory stages and was completed in September 2021

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Great Decisions 2023 Topics: The eight topics featured in the 2023 publication follow.

1. Energy Geopolitics: Access to oil and gas has long held an influence over the politics of individual nations and their relations with others. But as more countries move toward sustainable energy, and supply chain shortages affect the availability of oil and gas, how will this change the way in which the United States interacts with the outside world?

By FPA Author: Carolyn Kissane

MORE: Energy Geopolitics - the oil and gas industries in flux

Access to sources of energy embolden "energy rich" countries to seize military or economic advantage. Access to energy sources, such as oil and gas, can determine a country's capacity to maintain sovereignty and extend influence and dominance over countries with less capacity. Meanwhile, the U.S. energy sector is maintaining and expanding domestic energy sources and capacity while international diplomatic relations are important in continued access to world energy supply.

2. War Crimes - Russia's invasion of Ukraine has resulted in widespread charges of war crimes and calls for justice. But what exactly are war crimes? Opinions of what constitutes a war crime have evolved, as have ways to identify and punish the perpetrators. How will the war crimes committed in Ukraine be dealt with?

By FPA Author: Francine Hirsch

MORE: War Crimes - A history of crimes against humanity

Maintaining world consciousness of violations against humanity is of paramount importance for working to mitigate crimes against humanity. While military operations causing human suffering or death on a large scale may initially shock the world, as such offensive attacks continue, the world's attention turns away and inhumane campaigns continue, unchecked. What can be done to resolve such conflict and mitigate tragic outcomes?

3. China and the U.S.: For the past ten years, the United States and China have been locked in a competition for who has the greatest global influence. One major point of contention is the status of Taiwanese sovereignty, which has become even more relevant recently with the possibility that Russia's invasion of Ukraine may prompt China to take similar action regarding Taiwan. How will the United States engage a China which is increasingly seeking to expand its sphere of influence?

By FPA Author: David Lampton

MORE: China's Foreign Policy - China's push for global dominance

While China maintains ties to Russia, it also exerts increasing political and economic influence over emerging countries. As China ingratiates itself into emerging economies with the provision of financing and technical expertise for infrastructure projects, it is perceived as a partner in improving the lives of the broader populations. Meanwhile both China and the U.S. continue economic and diplomatic relations within mutual interests of both countries.

4. Economic Warfare: Waging economic warfare consists of a variety of measures from implementing sanctions to fomenting labor strikes. Such tools are utilized by states to hinder their enemies, and in the case of the United States have been used as far back as the early 19th century. Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, economic warfare has been the main means for the west to challenge Russia. How effective will these sanctions be at convincing Russia to cease its war?

By FPA Author: Jonathan Chanis

MORE: Economic Warfare - The power of sanctions

While the U.S. has itself exercised and encouraged other countries to enact economic sanctions against Russia, sanctions alone as a deterrent are not sufficient to render the immediate effect and meanwhile Ukraine suffers the effects of invasion. With many European countries' dependence on Russian oil and gas, sanctions to compel Russia to abandon its incursion into Ukraine are incomplete, affect broader populations, and hampered a swift end of war.

5. Politics in Latin America: Electoral results in Latin America over the past four years have led many observers of the regional/political scene to discern a left-wing surge in the hemisphere, reminiscent of the so-called "Pink Tide" that swept the area some 20 years ago. But how much do these politicians actually have in common? What implication does their ascendancy have for the region?

By FPA Author: Jorge Castañeda

MORE: Elections in Latin America - The rise of left-wing governments in Latin America

The flux of Latin American politics from a right-wing stance to economic and social issues is gravitating back to more left-wing government approaches and solutions to social and economic conditions. Instability of government leadership impedes substantial nation-building progress. Some may observe that this mirrors the U.S.'s own swing in political responses to economic and social matters. With a number of presidential and legislative elections being held in Brazil, Columbia, Costa Rica, the outcomes are bound to affect the U.S. in significant ways.

6. Global Famine: Fears of global food shortages have followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has disrupted grain shipments from the major grain producer. But what about countries and regions that were suffering before this impending shortage? How is famine defined, and how is it different from simple food shortages? What if any remedies are there?

By FPA Author: Daniel Maxwell

MORE: Global Famine - Lack of Food Worldwide

Reduction of food production, supply chain disruption, and political upheaval are among the fundamental factors for food scarcity, hunger, and famine. Multiple factors affect food supply and distribution. Just one example is Russia's invasion into Ukraine which is making agricultural production in one of the world's breadbaskets limited and uncertain. Concurrently, weather, droughts and torrential rains destroy food production resulting in food shortages affecting millions of destitute, hungry people, and determining whether they live or die. Desperate to survive, mass migration by millions of people effect worldwide population distribution.

7. Iran at a Crossroads: By the fall of 2022, Iran was in a state of turmoil due to widespread protests against government-enforced wearing of the hijab, a failing economy, an ineffective new president, and the looming succession of the country's leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. Abroad, renewal of the Iran nuclear deal seemed doubtful and tensions remain high between Iran, Israel, and Arab states. Many Iranians have lost hope of a better future, and the country seems at a crossroads. How should the United States deal with it?

By FPA Author: Lawrence Potter

MORE: Iran and the Gulf States - Iran's status in the world

Iran maintains influence in the Middle East - both stabilizing and destabilizing. Concerns for the conditions in Yemen and Israel as well as other countries in the Middle East and Gulf states keep U.S. foreign policy attention on the region, such as Saudi Arabia's moves to increase, or decrease, oil production affecting the balance of sustained world economic growth. While Iran and Russia are deemed to be allies, Iran has its own economic and diplomatic interests for oil production and holding sway over the region and world.

8. Climate Migration: As climate change accelerates and drought and rising sea levels become more common, millions of people in affected regions must uproot themselves and seek safety elsewhere. Who are these affected individuals, and how might the United States aid them, and be affected by the migration?

By FPA Author: Karen Jacobsen

MORE: Climate Migration - The human impact of climate change

When regions of the world become inhabitable, people migrate for sustainability - food, water, and work - for themselves and their families. Whether it's conditions such as drought in N. Africa or rising sea levels in Latin America, millions of people live in these affected regions and will make decisions to relocate temporarily or permanently. In short, changes in climate affect migration, and changes in migration affect climate. Legal and social frameworks may become extended to the max and may need to be invented anew.

Source: Foreign Policy Association. September, 2022. October, 2022. Indiana Council on World Affairs, August, 2022.

Note: Topic order and titles are final.