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Introduction

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

Oftentimes in Model United Nations, and especially crisis committees, delegates are called to think beyond their comfort zone. Whether it be delegates casting themselves as diplomats for countries halfway across the world or students roleplaying as magical ministers in fantasy-land cabinets, many situations arise in Model UN where one is challenged to think of new societies and cultures far outside what they are accustomed to seeing in daily life. This committee will not be like that. Instead, matters in this cabinet will be brought a lot closer to home: right here in the United States.

Yet, just because the theater is a little more familiar, does not make the challenges any less complex. As much as we would like to view the world in black and white terms -- easily categorizing what is right from wrong, what must be done from what must be avoided -- we can never indulge in this simplistic view. Indeed, if we are to solve America's challenges, we must find the nuance in each situation: the shades of perspective that must first be comprehended to be solved.

Will this be a hard task? Yes. But that is why you were chosen to handle this mission. Difficult choices must be made, and you will be the ones to make them. Act decisively and choose wisely; the consequences of your actions will carry not just into a narrow spectrum but across all sectors of American society.

Whether it is seeing how the latest technological innovations will impact economic life or examining how foreign policy abroad affects domestic unrest back home, you will be challenged to relate the unrelatable, finding connections in patterns too indiscernible for most seasoned politicians. Whether it is diving into the intricacies of nuclear geopolitics or carefully crafting nuanced policy to alleviate the problems of racial and immigrational divides, you will be challenged to be more resourceful than ever thought before.

Do not be optimistic: there will be challenges. There will be many challenges. Yet, your job is to shift America from a society built on a world eighty years dated to an America prepared to take on the world in the twenty-first century.

Good luck. You will need it.



Section 1:

The End is Here(?): Artificial Intelligence

Context and Background

For as long as there have been computers, there have been conspiracy theories of these machines bringing about the end of humanity. Be it Y2K or even Ultron, there has always been a certain mystique about the powers of computing – especially artificial intelligence. To dispel fiction from fact, the reality of artificial intelligence is much different from the crazy robot armies that one sees in comic books. Yet this technology may still be powerful enough to tear apart the fabric of the American economy and social structure as we currently know.

What is AI? Why Does It Matter?

As first defined by John McCarthy in 1956, the pursuit of artificial intelligence “is to proceed on the basis of the conjecture that every aspect of learning or any other feature of intelligence can in principle be so precisely described that a machine can be made to simulate it.”¹ At its core, AI revolves around mimicking the *learning* process used by humans in order to analyze complex patterns quickly, study the correlation of thousands of different inputs to find meaningful relationships, and ultimately use that predictive power to enact change. Be it using quantum computing to model protein-protein interaction to create better insulin treatments in the lab or the Siri interface on your iPhone, artificial intelligence is already starting to impact

consumers.² In the future, its impact on more aspects of society will only continue to grow.

How Does It Work?

Disclaimer: (To be quite clear, you DO NOT need an in-depth understanding of computer science for this committee. However, having some baseline knowledge will help understand the socio-economic implications of this technology, which is important for debate).

Advanced artificial intelligence works through a process known as “machine learning.” Essentially, once these machines are given a sufficient amount of randomized input combinations while also being told their corresponding output result, the machine starts to piece together which of those inputs truly “matter” in determining the output. Hence, machine learning is useful for determining the signal within the noise. These machines are especially useful for cutting down on the time that traditional brute-force approaches require when solving complex patterns/codes. Computer systems based on these principles aim to mimic human learning via a process called “neural networks” and “deep learning.”³ Over time, these neural networks can examine a large amount of ‘big data’ and come up with accurate predictions relatively quickly.

Current Capabilities

¹ Bernard Marr, *The Key Definitions Of Artificial Intelligence (AI) That Explain Its Importance*. (Forbes 2018).

² R. L. Adams, *10 Powerful Examples of Artificial Intelligence in Use Today*, (Forbes 2017).

³ *A Beginner's Guide to Neural Networks and Deep Learning*, (Skymid)

AI's power has extended far beyond Silicon Valley and has already begun to displace a number of workers. AI is not only poised to take over jobs previously held by less skilled workers, but also those held by skilled workers.

One profession hit hard by the AI revolution is the field of law. Indeed, rather than needing huge paralegal teams for research, AI-based machines can quickly identify key points of information to help the prosecution/defense in a fraction of the time.⁴ Hence, the demand for junior lawyers has plummeted and will foreseeably persist.

Another example of AI-induced job displacement is in journalism. Here, neural networks have learned to create creative and intriguing stories. Bots have already started to generate sports reports and with new advancements in text-generation, the demand for journalists has similarly fallen.⁵

A novel example of AI's future potential is in the culinary industry. Indeed, IBM has recently released a model dubbed "Chef Watson," who is able to come up with new recipes appealing to critics' taste and creativity.⁶ Additionally, with the rise of establishments such as Spycy (where robots have replaced all the traditional restaurant staff), one could foresee AI having even more of a domineering presence in controlling the food industry.

One last example is self-driving cars.⁷ While not cleared for public use quite yet, several companies (Google, Tesla, Uber, and Toyota, etc) have created advanced prototypes almost ready for the market, pending regulation. Be it fewer truckers,

Uber drivers, or public transit, the transportation sector will look very different. As one of the most popular careers in the United States,⁸ legions of drivers are already being pushed out in the microchip revolution.

What Comes Next?

At this point, speculation about the future of AI, while hopefully better than that found in sci-fi blockbusters, is still largely unknown. As with other technological revolutions, oftentimes the effects of these new devices can only truly be felt once they have physically come into existence. However, that has not stopped some from offering their thoughts. Stephen Hawking, a distinguished theoretical physicist, has stated that artificial intelligence could be the "worst event in the history of civilization."⁹ Andrew Yang, a Democratic candidate for the 2020 presidential election, has said that even self-driving cars could "destabilize society." To address these fears, he proposed a "Freedom Dividend" (Universal Basic Income) of \$1,000 per month to stem the harms of AI-induced job loss.¹⁰

Indeed, along with worries about job losses, AI's potential defense and military applications have sparked wariness amongst critics.¹¹ The possibility of AI's use in facial recognition, for instance, has raised concerns about the potential for its abuse.¹² AI being used to hijack people's personal preferences, as was the case with Cambridge Analytica, could potentially sway

⁴ Neil Sahota, *Will A.I. Put Lawyers Out of Business?* (Forbes 2018).

⁵ Jaclyn Peiser, *The Rise of the Robot Reporter*, (New York Times 2019).

⁶ Richard Brandt, *Chef Watson has arrived and is ready to help you cook*, (IBM 2016).

⁷ The Guardian, *Self-Driving Cars* (The Guardian 2019).

⁸ The Guardian, *Self-Driving Cars* (The Guardian 2019).

⁹ Rory Cellan-Jones, *Stephen Hawking warns artificial intelligence could end mankind*, (BBC 2014).

¹⁰ Kevin Roose, *His 2020 Campaign Message: The Robots Are Coming*, (New York Times 2018).

¹¹ Kelley Saylor, *Artificial Intelligence and National Security*, (Congressional Research Service 2019).

¹² Amos Toh, *Worried about how facial recognition technology is being used? You should be*, (Los Angeles Times 2019).

elections.¹³ The future is cloudy, and no one yet knows if AI can light the way.



Section 2:

Precarious Partnerships: U.S.-Saudi Relations

Context and Background

Despite having many differences regarding government structure, separation of church and state, and human rights, Saudi Arabia and the United States have nevertheless fostered a strong diplomatic relationship since the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932 by the Saud family and descendants of religious cleric Sheikh Mohammed Ibn Abdul Wahab.¹⁴ The motivations behind each side's willingness to cooperate, while varying slightly over the years, boils down to some specific factors. For the United States, the crude oil and mining products provided by Saudi Arabia help satisfy the large consumer demand back home. Indeed, Standard Oil and the Texas Oil Company (Texaco) formed a partnership with Saudi Arabia in 1936 to form the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) in 1944 – a deal that has watched Saudi Arabia grow into the world's largest oil exporter (7.43 million barrels exported per day).¹⁵ For Saudi Arabia, partnership with the United States offers legitimacy with Western powers and protection against Iran, its fiercest enemy.¹⁶

Yet, despite a generally amicable working relationship, there have been instances of disagreement. Saudi Arabia is the de facto leader of OPEC (Organization of

Petroleum Exporting Countries), whose mission is to “coordinate and unify the petroleum policies of its Member Countries and ensure the stabilization of oil markets in order to secure an efficient, economic, and regular supply.”¹⁷ While that might sound like a benign mission, in reality, it has created a cartel-like oil market where OPEC can significantly influence oil prices worldwide. For instance, in 1973, Saudi Arabia embargoed sale of its oil in response to U.S. support for the Israeli military in the Yom Kippur War, which led to oil shortages and panic back in the U.S. homeland. Additionally, in the 1980s, Saudi Arabia led OPEC in a price war to knock out competition, which in turn kept U.S. shale from becoming a viable global alternative.¹⁸

Finally, a key event driving U.S.-Saudi relations is the terrorist attack on 9/11. This terrorist attack was orchestrated by Islamic extremist group al-Qaeda and killed approximately 3,000 people by hijacking and crashing four airplanes in New York City, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania.¹⁹ Afterward, anti-Saudi resentment grew amongst the U.S. population due to Osama bin Laden, the plot's architect, being the son of the founder of a large Saudi construction company, along with the fact that a significant proportion of the hijackers were

¹³ Alex Hern, *Cambridge Analytica scandal 'highlights need for AI regulation'* (The Guardian 2018).

¹⁴ CFR Editors, *U.S.-Saudi Arabia Relations*, (Council on Foreign Relations 2018).

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ OPEC, *Our Mission*, (OPEC 2019).

¹⁸ *ibid*

¹⁹ CFR Editors, *U.S.-Saudi Arabia Relations*, (Council on Foreign Relations 2018).

Saudi nationals.²⁰ The Bush administration's omission of 28 pages from its Commissioned Report into the terrorist attack fueled speculation that the U.S. government was covering up evidence implicating Saudi Arabia.²¹ Lastly, in 2016, U.S. Congress passed (over President Obama's veto), that 9/11 victims could sue Saudi Arabia – an exception to the generally held-principle of sovereign immunity. Despite this symbolism, most legal scholars that it is impractical to collect on damages.²²

Recent Affairs

Perhaps the most notable event in recent years affecting US-Saudi relations was the killing of Jamal Khashoggi, a columnist for The Washington Post, inside the Saudi Consulate on October 2nd, 2018.²³ The Saudi government had already previously tried to silence him, by banning him from Twitter and slandering him in several state-sponsored media publications.²⁴ The 2019 findings of Agnes Callamard, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, revealed her determination that the killing was a premeditated extrajudicial killing for which Saudi leadership was directly responsible.²⁵ While other world leaders decried the incident immediately and demanded accountability, the United States has been a bit more reserved in its comments.²⁶ Even after the killing, Donald Trump noted the importance of the United States securing Saudi oil and weapons contracts, and called MBS a “friend” of the current administration.²⁷

²⁰ 9/11 Attacks: US to Release Key Name in Saudi Lawsuit, (BBC 2019).

²¹ *ibid*

²² *ibid*

²³ BBC, *Jamal Khashoggi: All you need to know about Saudi journalist's death*, (BBC 2019).

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ Al Jazeera, *Khashoggi killing: UN rapporteur Callamard presents report*, (Al Jazeera 2019).

Another important factor influencing current U.S.-Saudi relations is the rise of Mohammad bin Salman (MBS) to power. While his father, King Salman, still reigns officially, MBS is known to hold the power behind the throne as Crown Prince.²⁸ Some of his early actions caused many to originally be hopeful that MBS may be a force for good within the regime. For instance, he lifted the ban on female driving within the country and announced a Vision 2030 plan to diversify Saudi Arabia's economy. However, MBS has also had other darker incidents associated with his name.²⁹ For instance, he is suspected of authorizing the removal of dissidents within the country, detaining human rights activists, covering up bombings within Yemen, and even involvement with the Khashoggi killing.³⁰ Ultimately, signs now point towards a clear effort to consolidate power and instill an even more autocratic ruling style.

What Comes Next?

Soon, the U.S. must decide whether to treat Saudi Arabia like friend or foe. Balancing economic interests against moral and humanitarian principles, this country has the power to severely influence U.S. politics, bringing new perspective to the saying “keep your friends close and your enemies closer.”

²⁶ *ibid*

²⁷ CBS News, *Trump calls Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman a "friend of mine,"* (CBS 2019).

²⁸ Bobby Ghosh, *MBS Is the Prince of Mixed Messages*, (Bloomberg 2019).

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ Al Jazeera, *Khashoggi killing: UN rapporteur Callamard presents report*, (Al Jazeera 2019).



Section 3:

The Race With No End In Sight: Nuclear Armament

Context and Background

When evaluating the world political situation in the context of military power, nuclear force is a factor that cannot be excluded from consideration. The destructive capabilities of such weaponry carry the risk of creating world-ending calamities from simple international disputes. The international watchdog group known as the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, maintainers of the “Doomsday Clock,” currently maintains that the risk of global destruction is at its highest point since 1947, due in part to current nuclear trends.³¹ Furthermore, evidence suggests that even a singular nuclear strike with a single warhead can create devastation through an Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP); when detonated in orbit, the electromagnetic radiation produced by such weapons could permanently disable electronics in a radius of up to 1000 miles, effectively disabling entire states or nations.³²

Current U.S. Nuclear Trends

The total global number of nuclear weapons has decreased significantly since the Cold War; current estimates by the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) suggest a decline from approximately 70,300 warheads in 1986 to approximately 13,890

warheads in 2019, with 4,650 of these scheduled for dismantlement.³³ However, technological advances have increased the effectiveness of each individual warhead, meaning this decline is not a proportional decrease in global nuclear strength.³⁴ Of these, the United States controls 5,550 warheads, trailing just behind Russia as the leading nuclear state. Combined, the United States and Russia control 93 percent of the world’s nuclear arms. It should be noted that, while estimates tend to be reliable, exact arms totals are closely held state secrets.³⁵

Current trends in United States leadership suggest a desire to increase nuclear strength. President Donald Trump’s most recent statements reaffirm the nuclear modernization plan initiated during the Obama administration, estimated at a cost of 1.2 trillion dollars, and proposed a 500-billion-dollar expansion to “greatly strengthen and expand [the United States’] nuclear capability.”³⁶ However, friction with the House of Republicans creates doubt over the approval of this plan.³⁷ Further measures like withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), known colloquially as the “Iran Deal”, portend a decline in the use of diplomatic means for nuclear non-proliferation.³⁸

³¹ “Current Time,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (blog), accessed June 30, 2019,

³² Ibid

³³ Kristensen, Hans, and Matt Korda. “Status of World Nuclear Forces,” *Federation of American Scientists*, accessed June 30, 2019.

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid

Nuclear Trends in Other Nations

When assessing the nuclear capabilities of the U.S., it is equally necessary to consider the armament plans of other nations. Indeed, military strategy has historically been defined by the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD); in short, countries are discouraged from launching nuclear strikes by the threat of an equally devastating counterattack.³⁹

With regards to Russia, the principle nuclear rival to the United States, current data suggests that Russia has been following non-proliferation agreements under the New START agreement from April 2010. This agreement limited Russia's strategic nuclear arsenal to "1,550 operational warheads and 800 deployed and non-deployed launchers by February 2018."⁴⁰ However, Russia has also modernized their nuclear arsenal under President Vladimir Putin, notably building low-yield weapons.⁴¹

Despite other countries possessing just a combined 7% of the world's nuclear arms, the destructive nature of these weapons means that any nuclear proliferation is of significance. Countries like India and Pakistan have recently expanded their nuclear stockpiles and delivery platforms in response to both sectarian conflicts with each other and the commensurate Chinese development of nuclear weapons.⁴² Further, non-

proliferation organizations have reported 870 incidents between January 2013 and June 2018 in which security breaches occurred near secured stockpiles of nuclear weapons or critical materials. Combined with the emergence of cyber-weapons, the prospect of non-state affiliated groups possessing nuclear weapons is an increasing threat.⁴³

What Comes Next?

Moving forward, there are two considerations of utmost importance in forming any comprehensive nuclear policy. The first is balancing the risks in nuclear proliferation while keeping relative peace. These weapons have massive destructive potential, and while that can intimidate our enemies, that intimidation could also cause them to develop their own weapons to intimidate us. Hence, the only way out of this mutually assured destruction is global trust and cooperation – something easier said than done. The second is preventing the rise of non-state nuclear actors. So far, that has been avoided. Yet, with new threats popping up around the globe with increased firepower, preventing this huge disaster becomes harder as each day passes. It is an almost-impossible task to extinguish each threat before it creates any havoc, yet this quest is paramount for the damages rendered by even just one successful development of nuclear weapons would be

³⁹ Tom de Castella, "How Did We Forget about Mutually Assured Destruction?," February 15, 2012, sec. Magazine,

⁴⁰ "Nuclear Weapons in Russia | Russian Nuclear Sites & Weapons Program | NTI," accessed June 30, 2019,

⁴¹ "Official: U.S. Far Behind China, Russia in Modernizing Nuclear Arsenal," *USNI News* (blog), April 25, 2019,

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ "Five Global Trends in Nuclear Policy | NTI," accessed June 30, 2019,

catastrophic for America and the world as a whole.



Section 4:

Social Struggles: Race Relations

Context and Background

When discussing major issues that affect contemporary American politics, the issue of race-relations in this country simply cannot be left out. Especially in recent years, the dynamic between primarily minority communities' interactions with law enforcement has sparked much dialogue and debate. Stimulated in part by the rise of activist organizations like Black Lives Matter in 2013, concerns over police brutality and racial profiling have become increasingly loud.⁴⁴

At the same time, following the election of President Donald Trump concerns over immigration, particularly with regards to undocumented immigration from Mexico. Significant debate has arisen over the role and extent of the federal government in controlling immigration to the United States, with heated debate surrounding the detention of asylum seekers. Given these many controversial elements and precarious situations at the crossroads of security politics and humanitarianism, one must keep in mind that any decision has both legal and social implications. Weighing both are of utmost importance in order to solve current-day crises and set a good future precedent.

Domestic

Public concern has increased in recent years over the increasing perception of violence in local police forces. Correlating with this perception is the increased utilization of military equipment. Under the Department of Defense's 1033 program, recently expanded under President Trump, more than 8,000 law enforcement agencies have received excess equipment otherwise slated for destruction. This equipment ranges from mundane survival equipment to military gear like grenade launchers, bayonets, and military vehicles, including aircraft. This militarization is further reflected by notable shifts in tactics; one study found a 1,400 percent increase of paramilitary-style tactics by law enforcement since 1980.⁴⁵

These concerns have manifested in response to fatal police shootings. In 2018, 992 people were fatally shot in police encounters.⁴⁶ That being said the number of cases involving unarmed victims has declined over time. The causes of this decline are currently unknown, and the small data sample makes this trend uncertain.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, these incidents have led to significant protest movements against police brutality and support for stricter oversight, with the most recent call for action occurring after the death of Philando Castile.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ "Black Lives Matter | Herstory," accessed June 30, 2019,

⁴⁵ "Militarization of Police In the United States," *Charles Koch Institute* (blog), accessed July 1, 2019,

⁴⁶ "Fatal Force: 2019 Police Shootings Database," *Washington Post*, accessed July 1, 2019,

⁴⁷ John Sullivan, Julie Tate, and Jennifer Jenkins, "Fatal Police Shootings of Unarmed People Have Significantly Declined, Experts Say."

⁴⁸ Katie Nodjimbadem, "The Long, Painful History of Police Brutality in the U.S.," *Smithsonian*, accessed July 1, 2019,

According to some critics of the current administration, while President Trump has not created significant policy concerns with regards to police, he has contributed to the controversy with divisive rhetoric. In public addresses he has referred to gang members as “animals” and called for law enforcement to not “be too nice.”⁴⁹ Furthermore, his statements on the Central Park case, involving the charging and later exoneration of five teenagers of color for sexual assault, have sparked concerns of racial bias in the president’s attitude.⁵⁰

This controversial and emotionally charged subject will need to be handled with utmost caution. Issues of domestic crime will need to be resolved with special care towards social implications, ensuring that the public perception of justice is maintained as much as actual justice is enacted.

Immigration

Much of the discourse surrounding immigration has focused on border policy with Mexico. Approximately 11.6 people immigrated from Mexico to the United States in 2017 with approximately forty-three percent being unauthorized. Current sources note that the total number of unauthorized Mexican immigrants has declined by 2 million since 2007. Still, as of 2017 approximately 4.9 million still live in the United States.⁵¹

Of special note is the implication of asylum seekers -- immigrants fleeing persecution in their home countries. Under international law the United States must fairly evaluate the claim of anyone entering the country regardless of means of entry.

The Trump administration, attempting to deter such immigrants, enacted the controversial policy of separating families, detaining asylum seekers separately from their children. Further policy decisions include an order withholding bail to asylum seekers, potentially keeping them in jail indefinitely while their applications are processed.⁵² While the practice of family separation was reversed by a federal judge in 2018, accounts suggest that limitations in that ruling have allowed for continued detainment of children separate from their families, often in unsanitary and neglectful conditions. New York Representative Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez has explicitly described these places as concentration camps, albeit with significant backlash from peers.⁵³ Nonetheless, as of June 2019, 24 immigrants have died in custody.

What Comes Next?

Just as with concerns over domestic policing, any actions will require special care to ensure a just solution for both current United States citizens and aspiring immigrants. While America still has a reputation as a “melting pot” to uphold, it must also protect its borders for a country cannot exist without definition. Moving past the heated rhetoric of today’s parties on the left and right, what cannot be stated enough is that this immigration crisis carries sizeable implications for millions, and the more that comprehensive solutions are delayed, the more social divisions increase.

⁴⁹ Tal Kopan CNN, “Trump: ‘We’re Going to Destroy’ MS-13,” CNN, accessed July 1, 2019,

⁵⁰ A. B. C. News, “Trump Won’t Back down on ‘Central Park Jogger’ Case,” ABC News, accessed July 1, 2019,

⁵¹ 1615 L. St NW, Suite 800 Washington, and DC 20036 USA 202-419-4300 | Main 202-857-8562 | Fax 202-419-4372 | Media

Inquiries, “What We Know about Illegal Immigration from Mexico,” *Pew Research Center* (blog), accessed July 1, 2019,

⁵² Michael D. Shear and Eileen Sullivan, “What Is Asylum and Who Can Seek It? Explaining Trump’s New Restrictions,” *The New York Times*, April 17, 2019, sec. U.S.,

⁵³ Isaac Chotiner, “Inside a Texas Building Where the Government Is Holding Immigrant Children,” June 22, 2019,

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