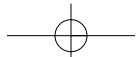


# INSIDE THE IVORY TOWER

ILLUSTRATION BY MARIA RENDON FOR FP



**D**iplomats and politicians often deride academics' lack of firsthand experience when it comes to the practice of international relations. Cold warrior Paul Nitze once said that much of what is taught to political science students is "of limited value, if not counterproductive, as a guide to the conduct of actual policy." For many policymakers, the distance

from which scholars view the political process is a distinct disadvantage: Academics are simply out of touch with the realities of a rapidly changing international landscape.

Yet that distance can also have an upside. The view from the academy allows scholars to reflect dispassionately on vexing foreign-policy problems, discern underlying patterns in state behavior, anticipate future threats, and forecast the consequences of different policy options. Academics can also remain above the political fray, providing counsel to current policymakers and molding the minds of the next generation of leaders. In our second biennial survey, we pull back the curtain on what the academy thinks about some of the most pressing foreign-policy issues facing the United States today.

*Professors of international relations counsel the leaders of today and mold the policymakers of tomorrow. But what do they think about the most pressing foreign-policy issues facing the United States? In our second exclusive survey, FP steps inside the ivory tower. | By Daniel Maliniak, Amy Oakes, Susan Peterson, and Michael J. Tierney*

For the survey, we attempted to contact all international relations faculty at 1,199 four-year colleges and universities in the United States. The schools include all national research universities, master's-granting institutions, and liberal arts colleges identified by *U.S. News and World Report*, as well as seven military colleges. When the results were tallied, 1,112 scholars, more than 41 percent of all international relations professors in the United States, participated in our study.

What emerges is a picture of remarkable, though incomplete, consensus on the critical foreign-policy issues of our time. Across the ideological spectrum, international relations scholars agree far more on current policy and future threats than they disagree. This consensus is particularly striking on the war in Iraq: Eighty-nine percent of scholars believe that the war will ultimately decrease U.S. security. Eighty-seven percent consider the conflict unjust, and 85 percent are pessimistic about the chances of achieving a stable democracy in Iraq in the next 10–15 years. Nearly all those who responded—96 percent—view the United States as less respected today than in the past, a sentiment no doubt heavily influenced by the current war. Unsurprisingly then, professors give

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U.S. President George W. Bush very low marks for his foreign-policy acumen. A scant 1 percent rank Bush among the most effective foreign-policy presidents of the past century.

It is possible, of course, that such consensus derives from a common set of ideological blinders. Consistent with the public perception of academics, 70 percent of international relations scholars describe themselves as liberal, whereas only 13 percent consider themselves conservative. But this liberal bent alone does not explain the scholarly consensus. Majorities of both groups believe the war in Iraq will ultimately harm U.S. security. Liberal and

conservative professors are similarly like-minded when it comes to determining which presidents had the most effective foreign policies.

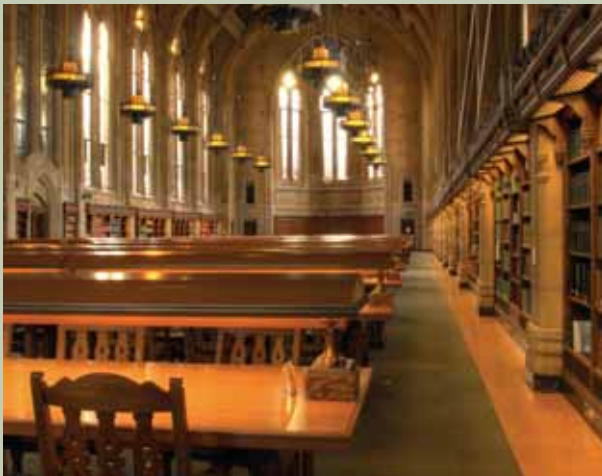
International relations professors also demonstrate remarkable agreement when it comes to future challenges. When asked to identify the three most important foreign-policy issues the United States will face during the next 10 years, scholars overwhelmingly point to international terrorism (50 percent), proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (45 percent), and the rise of China (40 percent). Significant minorities consider armed conflict in the Middle East (34 percent), failed states (30 percent),

## The Best & the Brightest

**T**he top tier of the academy seems to change very little over time: The 10 schools named the best in the field for either a Ph.D. or a master's degree in international relations all appeared in the top 10 of our survey two years ago. The most notable change is the rise of Princeton's Ph.D. program from fourth to second place, thanks to a series of high-profile faculty hires.

For those interested in policy careers, proximity to power is key: Four of the top 10 international relations master's programs are located in Washington, D.C. Aspiring academics should head for the left coast: California boasts three of the top 10 schools for Ph.D. programs.

For the first time, scholars were also asked to identify the best places to study international relations as an undergraduate. The list that emerges looks much like those for top graduate programs. But academics still value a liberal arts education. Several schools in the winner's circle—such as Dartmouth, Swarthmore, and Williams—lack graduate programs in international relations.



### TOP 20 PH.D. PROGRAMS

Rank	School	Percent*
1	Harvard University	65
2	Princeton University	52
3	Columbia University	45
4	Stanford University	45
5	University of Chicago	30
6	Yale University	26
7	University of California, Berkeley	25
8	University of Michigan	22
9	University of California, San Diego	20
10	Cornell University	12
11	Mass. Institute of Technology	11
12	Johns Hopkins University	10
13	Georgetown University	8
14	Duke University	8
15	Ohio State University	8
16	New York University	7
17	University of Minnesota	5
18	University of California, Los Angeles	5
19	Tufts University	4
20	University of Rochester	4

and global warming (29 percent) to be top concerns. Surprisingly, given the periodic alarm raised in the media about the threat of a major pandemic, only 11 percent of academics deem it to be a pressing foreign-policy issue, placing it behind both global poverty (19 percent) and resource scarcity (14 percent).

At the same time, international relations scholars' research may be shortsighted, given their own assessment of future foreign-policy challenges. Sixty-two percent of respondents believe the Middle East is the most strategically important region for the United States today, and two thirds report

that East Asia will be the most important strategic region in 20 years. Yet only 7 percent of scholars identify the Middle East and just 8 percent name East Asia as the primary focus of their research. Occupants of the ivory tower, it seems, suffer from one of the disadvantages inherent in being so far removed from the policy process: They can be slow to respond to the emergence of new threats in the international system. If they hope to get a better audience with policymakers in the future, academics must do more than simply anticipate future challenges. They must engage the issues that drive policy beyond the ivory tower.

#### TOP 20 MASTER'S PROGRAMS

Rank	School	Percent*
1	Georgetown University	65
2	Johns Hopkins University	64
3	Harvard University	46
4	Tufts University	42
5	Columbia University	39
6	Princeton University	38
7	George Washington University	28
8	American University	19
9	University of Denver	9
10	Syracuse University	7
11	University of California, San Diego	5
12	University of Chicago	4
12	Yale University	4
14	Stanford University	4
15	University of Pittsburgh	3
16	University of California, Berkeley	2
16	University of Maryland	2
18	Mass. Institute of Technology	2
18	Monterey Institute of Int'l. Studies	2
20	University of Southern California	2

#### TOP 20 UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

Rank	School	Percent*
1	Harvard University	48
2	Princeton University	46
3	Stanford University	30
4	Georgetown University	28
5	Columbia University	28
6	Yale University	23
7	University of Chicago	21
8	University of California, Berkeley	12
9	Dartmouth College	11
10	George Washington University	10
11	American University	10
12	University of Michigan	9
13	Tufts University	8
14	Swarthmore College	8
14	University of California, San Diego	8
16	Cornell University	6
17	Brown University	6
18	Williams College	5
19	Duke University	5
19	Johns Hopkins University	5

\*PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS LISTING INSTITUTIONS AS AMONG THE FIVE BEST. WHEN POSSIBLE, TIE SCORES WERE BROKEN BY TOTAL VOTES TALLIED.

## A Disastrous War

**T**he war in Iraq has been controversial from the start, and the debate has naturally rippled through the classroom. When asked to identify events that have most influenced the way they teach international relations, 40 percent of scholars cite the current Iraq war. And they are far from hopeful about the likelihood of success there. The chances of establishing a stable democracy in Iraq in the next 10–15 years, according to respondents, are extremely remote. After thousands of lives lost and hundreds of billions of dollars spent, they believe the odds of success have increased very little.

A slightly different picture emerges when political ideology is factored in. Conservatives are generally more positive than liberals about the effect of the invasion on Iraq’s democratic future. Liberals, on the other hand, are much more likely



to believe that the war has been counterproductive. But large majorities in both camps—91 percent of liberals and 66 percent of conservatives—remain pessimistic about the odds of a democratic Iraq emerging in the years to come.

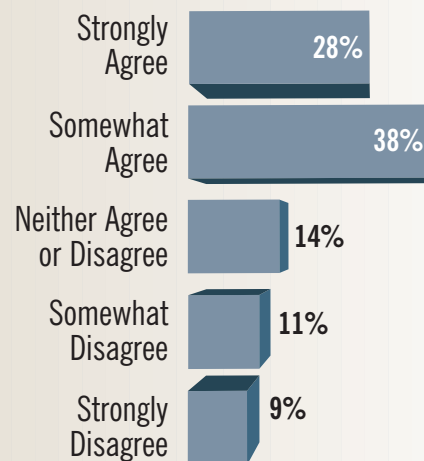
## A Bad Influence?

**L**ast year, political scientists John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt ignited a fiery debate when they questioned the influence of the Israel lobby over U.S. foreign policy in the *London Review of Books*. The lobby’s excessive power, they argued, has benefited neither the United States nor its ally, Israel.

The article provoked a fierce response. In the pages of *Foreign Policy*, Mearsheimer and Walt took on their critics in a special debate, “The War over Israel’s Influence.” One of the critiques of their thesis targeted their academic arrogance. “From their Olympian perch,” wrote Aaron Friedberg, a political scientist at Princeton University, “the authors, apparently alone, see what is truly in America’s national interest.”

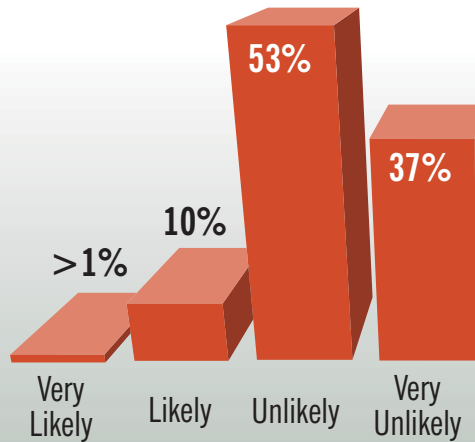
But to many of their fellow academics, Mearsheimer and Walt’s conclusions look to be dead on. According to our survey, the overwhelming majority of international relations scholars (66 percent) agree that the Israel lobby has too much influence over U.S. foreign policy. Just 20 percent of respondents disagree. But their

Does the Israel lobby have too much influence over U.S. foreign policy?

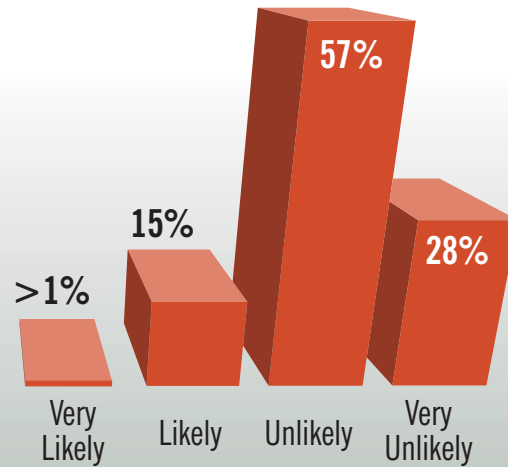


beliefs about the Israel lobby do not appear to trickle down to their students. Our concurrent survey of nearly 700 students in introductory international relations courses at a dozen universities reveals that students were less likely to believe that the Israel lobby exerts too much influence over U.S. foreign policy after taking the course than before.

If the 2003 Iraq war had not occurred, what would be the likelihood of a stable democracy in Iraq in 10–15 years?



Given that the war did occur, what is the likelihood that Iraq will be a stable democracy in 10–15 years?



## Diplomats-in-Chief

Who are the most effective foreign-policy presidents of the past century?



**1** Franklin D. Roosevelt  
72 percent



**2** Harry S. Truman  
40 percent



**3** Richard M. Nixon  
30 percent



**4** Bill Clinton  
28 percent



**5** Ronald Reagan  
27 percent

When asked to name the top three American presidents with the best records of advancing U.S. foreign policy, international relations scholars overwhelmingly agree: A resounding 72 percent of respondents place Franklin D. Roosevelt among the top foreign-policy presidents of the past century. Notably, fdr received high marks from liberals (77 percent), moderates (66 percent), and conservatives (55 percent) alike. Two other Democrats and two Republicans round out the top five. Apparently the disgrace of the Watergate scandal does not diminish Richard Nixon's foreign-policy achievements, including establishing relations with China

and negotiating major arms control treaties with the Soviet Union.

If academics are in agreement about the most capable diplomats to occupy 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, they also concur on those who have been the most deficient. Seven U.S. presidents received less than 1 percent of all responses, although George W. Bush is the only member of this group to serve in the past 30 years. Disdain for the current president's foreign-policy record transcends ideological divisions: More conservative scholars rate Bill Clinton among the best foreign-policy presidents than George W. Bush.

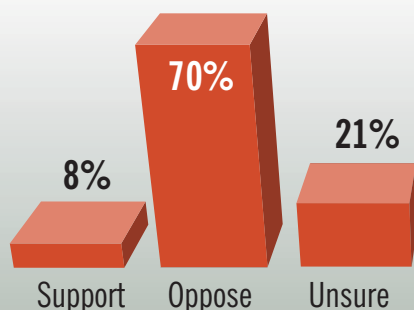
## Safety in Numbers

Contrary to popular belief, international relations scholars are not doves. Most believe that military force is warranted under the right conditions. Unsurprisingly, given the daily reminder of the challenges of going it alone in Iraq, academics favor using force only when backed by the full weight of the international community. If a military confrontation with North Korea or Iran emerges over nuclear weapons, scholars demonstrate an extreme aversion to unilateral American action. If the U.N. Security Council authorizes force, however, approval for action skyrockets.

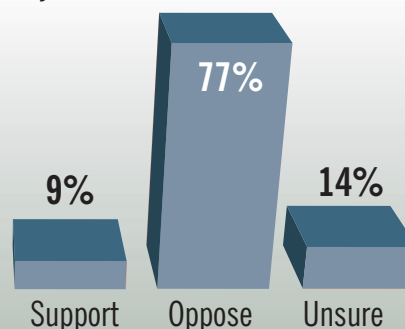
This support for multilateralism is remarkably stable across ideology. In the cases of both

Iran and North Korea, liberals and conservatives agree that U.N.-sanctioned action is preferable. More striking are the attitudes of self-identified realists. Scholars of realism traditionally argue that international institutions such as the United Nations do not (and should not) influence the choices of states on issues of war and peace. But we found realists to be much more supportive of military intervention with a U.N. imprimatur than they are of action without such backing. Among realists, in fact, the gap between support for multilateral and unilateral intervention in North Korea is identical to the gap among scholars of the liberal tradition, whose theories explicitly favor cooperation. **FP**

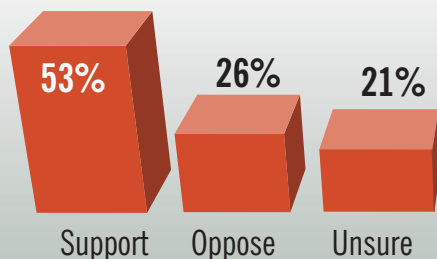
If **North Korea** continues to produce material that can be used to develop nuclear weapons, would you support the United States' taking military action?



If **Iran** continues to produce material that can be used to develop nuclear weapons, would you support the United States' taking military action?



If the U.N. Security Council votes to use military force against **North Korea**, would you support the international community's taking military action?



If the U.N. Security Council votes to use military force against **Iran**, would you support the international community's taking military action?

