



INSIDE *the* IVORY TOWER

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The walls surrounding the ivory tower of the academy have never seemed so high. U.S. President Barack Obama has picked the team of people expected to craft his foreign policy, and guess who didn't make the A list? Only those experts tasked with explaining the way the world works. Unfortunately, professors of international relations and political science are often the last people a president turns to for advice on running the world. At least, that's what the professors say.

Every two years, the Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) project, conducted by the College of William and Mary's Institute for the Theory and Practice of International Relations, surveys international relations (IR) faculty from every four-year college and university in the United States, as identified by *U.S. News & World Report*. The 2008 results include the responses of 1,743 scholars collected between August and November of last year. Now, we're revealing the role they think they play in policymaking today, and, more often, the frustrating lack of influence professors think they have from their perch above the fray of international politics. Most shocking? Nearly 40 percent of respondents reported that these scholars have "no impact" on foreign policy or even the public discourse about it. Indeed, the only academics judged less effectual in the policy realm were historians.

What exactly do these experts blame for their exile from the political process? In recent years, professors have become increasingly skeptical about the utility of much of their own research to policymakers. In 2006, 48 percent of respondents reported that contemporary case studies conducted by academics were "very useful" to policymakers, but by 2008 only 39 percent of respondents thought policymakers would find this work useful.

Despite their perceived lack of influence, respondents in this year's survey firmly think that academic experts can and should play an important role. It's a conclusion that begs a provocative question: What would U.S. foreign policy look like if there were no wall between the ivory tower and the White House?

If the majority positions of IR scholars served as a blueprint for the Obama administration's policies on issues ranging from the economy to Iran, the survey finds, the results would be at once expected and surprising. It's a largely liberal internationalist agenda, one that names the most important foreign-policy priorities facing the United States as: global climate change (37 percent), the war in Iraq (35 percent), global reliance on oil (34 percent), armed conflict in the Middle East (32 percent), and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (27 percent). A large majority of the experts favor increases in foreign aid (85 percent), free trade agreements (70 percent), and increased spending on the global AIDS epidemic (59 percent). Although these scholars oppose using military force against Iran even as it allegedly pursues a nuclear weapons program, a clear majority favors humanitarian intervention in Sudan if conducted under the aegis of a multilateral institution such as NATO or the United Nations. (It's worth noting that had the survey been sent in December, after the global economic collapse, economic issues would have likely secured a higher spot.)

President Obama clearly shares the experts' concerns. On global warming, he has appointed a climate czar; on oil, he favors strengthening fuel-economy standards; and on the Iraq war, he is sticking to his plan to withdraw U.S. troops. Judging from these priorities, it seems that the preferences of the ivory tower academics and the practical concerns of the administration aren't nearly as different as they appear.

Which entity would you not like to see surpass the United States?

COUNTRY	%
● Russia	60
● China	51
● India	16
● Japan	16
● France	9
● None	9
● Germany	8
● United Kingdom	6
● European Union	4
● All of the Above	23
● Other	2



Public Enemy No. 1

Political pundits and journalists may buzz reflexively over the latest economic stimulus package or saber rattling by Iran. But IR scholars have a longer view, scanning the horizon for power shifts that could affect the global pecking order.

So, which countries pose the greatest threat to the U.S. position today? Forty-three percent of respondents agreed that China's growing military power could threaten international stability. In fact, specialists predict that the strategic importance of East Asia generally will continue to grow. Although only 30 percent see the region as the one of greatest concern for the United States today (up from 19 percent in 2006), 68 percent reported it would be the region of greatest strategic importance in 20 years.

Relatively close on the heels of the threat from East Asia seems to be the troubling potential for a Russian resurgence. When asked which country they would least like to see displace the United States as hegemon, 60 percent said Russia. (Just 51 percent named China.) Sometimes, the oldest grudges are the hardest to break.

What of the Middle East? Scholars seem to anticipate a dramatic easing of tensions in the region during the next two decades. Although 46 percent currently judge it the most vital region for the United States, only 11 percent say it will be the most strategically important in 20 years.

If They Had a Billion Dollars

BENEFICIARY OF BUDGET	%
● Greenhouse Gas/Climate Change	55
● Economic Development Assistance	34
● Global AIDS Pandemic	10

Climate Change

What issue could possibly trump a major recession and not one but two foreign wars? Our warming planet. According to IR scholars in this year's survey for the Ivory Tower Index, a U.S. commitment to take the lead on international climate treaties is long overdue. Although the election of President Barack Obama—who has described the global climate change threat as “a matter of urgency”—promises movement on U.S. environmental policy, it might not be nearly high enough on Obama's to-do list for these experts. Not only do academics consider the environment to be the greatest threat we face today, they predict it will be an even more important foreign-policy challenge for the United States in 10 years.

There remains, however, a disconnect between these findings and the type of research that scholars are conducting at leading educational institutions of the United States. The dialogue in scholarly IR journals often gives the impression that the United States is still fighting the Cold War—that threats to national security come largely from great powers and from states that have or seek nuclear weapons. Although 40 percent of the scholars who responded claim their primary or secondary research focus is on international security issues, only 7 percent of respondents focused on international environmental issues.

THREATS TODAY	%
● Global Climate Change	37
● The War in Iraq	34
● Global Reliance on Oil	32
● Armed Conflict in the Middle East	32
● WMD Proliferation	27

THREATS IN 10 YEARS	%
● Global Climate Change	46
● The Rising Power of China	39
● Global Reliance on Oil	34
● WMD Proliferation	27
● Global Poverty	25

What if President Obama allotted IR scholars a \$1 billion budget to spend as they saw fit over the course of the next fiscal year? Although 85 percent of academics report that the U.S. foreign-aid budget should expand overall, scholars also agree about where not to spend the money—the military. Sixty-four percent of experts say that U.S. spending on defense should decline. Instead, when security and economic issues are taken off the table and scholars are given a three-way choice among foreign aid, global AIDS spending, and climate change, the majority of academics would spend any windfall on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Top of the Class

RANKINGS: TOP Ph.D. PROGRAMS		%	TOP MASTER'S PROGRAMS		%	TOP UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS		%
1	Harvard University	66	1	Georgetown University	54	1	Harvard University	21
2	Princeton University	50	2	Johns Hopkins University	49	2	Princeton University	16
3	Stanford University	45	3	Harvard University	38	3	Yale University	12
4	Columbia University	37	4	Tufts University	37	4	Stanford University	12
5	Yale University	26	5	Columbia University	29	5	Georgetown University	12
6	University of Chicago	24	6	Princeton University	27	6	Columbia University	11
7	University of California, Berkeley	19	7	George Washington University	18	7	University of Chicago	7
8	University of Michigan	16	8	American University	13	8	Dartmouth	5
9	Univ. of California, San Diego	15	9	University of Chicago	6	9	University of California, Berkeley	4
10	Massachusetts Inst. of Tech.	14	10	Syracuse University	6	10	Tufts University	3
11	Cornell University	8	11	London School of Economics	6	11	University of Michigan	3
12	London School of Economics	8	12	University of Colorado, Denver	3	11	Duke University	3
13	Johns Hopkins University	7	12	Yale University	3	12	Williams College	2
13	Oxford University	7	12	Massachusetts Inst. of Tech.	3	12	Cornell University	2
14	Georgetown University	6	12	Univ. of California, San Diego	3	12	Massachusetts Inst. of Tech.	2
15	University of Rochester	5	13	Stanford University	2	13	Swarthmore College	2
16	Univ. of California, Los Angeles	4	14	University of Pittsburgh	2	14	Johns Hopkins University	2
16	New York University	4	14	University of Kentucky	2	14	American University	2
17	Ohio State University	4	17	University of Texas, Austin	2	15	Univ. of California, San Diego	2
18	Cambridge University	3	17	University of Michigan	2	15	Brown University	2

Dramatic changes in the ranking of leading IR programs are rare. This year's findings provide no exception; the perennial powers stay on top.

For the top two seats in all three categories—Ph.D. programs, master's, and undergraduate—Harvard and Princeton, Georgetown and Johns Hopkins, and Harvard and Princeton, respectively, maintained their slots. But that's not to say nothing changed: Stanford unseated Columbia's doctoral program and climbed to the No. 3 slot. In the undergraduate ranking, Yale took the No. 3 spot from Stanford.

With four of the top master's programs located within or just outside the U.S. capital, the hot spot to pursue the policy track remains the Washington

Beltway. Those more interested in purely academic pursuits will want to tread the coastlines; the northeast corridor is home to five of the top 10 Ph.D. programs, and California has three of its own in the top 10.

The 2008 survey also asked scholars to identify the top Ph.D. programs in the world for studying IR. When forced to think beyond the American academy, respondents produced a British invasion. For the first time, three schools from Britain made the list of top programs for students wanting to pursue an academic career in IR: the London School of Economics (12), Oxford University (13), and Cambridge University (18). Indeed, none of them appeared on the list two years ago. **IR**

THE FIVE IR PROFESSORS NAMED THE MOST INFLUENTIAL ANSWER:

What is the most dangerous and overlooked threat that Obama neglects?

“The most dangerous, but relatively neglected threat would be the ‘dark side’ implications of the rapid development and worldwide diffusion of biotechnology.”

— **James Fearon**,
Stanford University

“There is the very real possibility that Mexico will implode on Obama's watch and become a failed state, which would surely cause serious problems north of the Rio Grande.”

— **John Mearsheimer**,
University of Chicago

“The most dangerous overlooked threat that we neglect at our peril? Ourselves. The imperative must be not only that ‘they’ recognize ‘us,’ but that ‘we’ recognize ‘them,’ too.”

— **Alexander Wendt**,
Ohio State University

“Obama's administration should be alert to the often overlooked threat that the political environment for the United States could deteriorate, as a result of the political consequences of the economic crisis.”

— **Robert Keohane**,
Princeton University

