Foreign Policy Position Paper Assignment (100 points)

What? We have exploring and evaluating US foreign policy alternatives on a number of issues that confront policy-makers in the post-Cold War, post 9-11 world. We have also been developing a sense of the different viewpoints and priorities among the members of the foreign policy team within the Bush (II) administration. Add to this the growing debate within the foreign policy establishment about grand strategy generally and preemption more specifically. Taken together, these themes suggest a variety of topics and issues appropriate for research.

Your research assignment for this quarter is to prepare a paper (approximately 10 typewritten pages in length) in which you describe, analyze, and recommend on a current US foreign policy topic, issue, or controversy.

Your interest and curiosity about an aspect of current or recent US foreign policy should guide your selection of a topic.

Consider specific policies toward specific countries, regions, and issues:

- North Korea; South Korea; PRC; Japan; Iran; Columbia; Cuba, Russia; post-war Iraq; EU; France; Germany, Egypt, etc.
- Israeli-Palestinian; India-Pakistan; NATO; United Nations;
- Non-proliferation; terrorism; war on drugs; AIDs; free trade; regime change; human rights; international criminal court; global warming; peace-keeping missions, peace corps, etc.
- In broad (or narrow terms) what should US foreign policy be.

Consider the foreign policy process:

- Specific decision makers and interests: Wolfowitz; Rumsfeld; Rice; Powell; the Bush foreign policy agenda; State Department; Defense Department; Democratic Party policy agenda; Green Party; Libertarian Party; military-industrial complex; the oil industry; specific corporate interests; religious groups; citizens’ organizations; think-tanks, etc.
- treaties; executive agreements; role of Congress; secrecy; Patriot Act, etc.
- Preemption; missile defense; foreign aid programs; alliances; multi-lateralism/unilateralism, etc.

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How? Your paper should be focused as specifically as possible on a current foreign policy controversy or current players in the foreign policy process. You will need to describe the controversy, etc. very carefully in your introduction. In the body of the paper you will be developing an analysis of the topic: analyzing means seeking explanations for why a position is taken, what interests are served by that preference and what critics or opponents have to say about the position. In your conclusion you will advocate your policy preference or your judgement of an interest; group; or position: advocating means laying out logically the policy problem, policy controversy, and your own preference for how the US should deal with the problem.

You should use at least five (5) different sources (not including newspaper and on-line news sources). You should make use of the readings for the course as well as the hyperlinks I have listed in the Resources, Topics, and Notes sections of our web-site. You must include a bibliography in the form of a works cited page at the end of your paper----do not use footnotes for references. No bibliography, no credit!! Papers should be single-spaced and you may follow MLA guidelines.

When?

Topics should be selected no later than Thursday, May 1. Prepare a paragraph stating your topic in the form of a question or thesis statement. Turn it in at class, May 1.

Papers are due (in my office—T-212) by Tuesday, June 10 at 5pm.