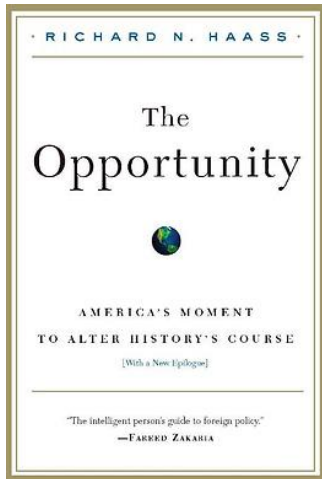


# COUNCIL *on* FOREIGN RELATIONS

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## Teaching Notes

*The Opportunity: America's Moment to Alter History's Course*

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*The Opportunity: America's Moment to Alter History's Course* offers a concise and engaging analysis of international relations and American Foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. A veteran of several presidential administrations, author Richard Haass argues that the United States sits at a unique juncture in world history, one in which much of what it seeks to achieve in the world has the potential to be broadly acceptable to other major powers. To make the most of this moment, and to help prevent a return to a world of great power rivalry, the United States should rely on the concept of integration as the guiding doctrine for its foreign policy.

*The Opportunity* describes an unprecedented moment in which the United States has a chance to bring about a world where most people are safe, free, and can enjoy a decent standard of living. The book is suitable for:

- General courses on international relations or American foreign policy;
- Specialized courses on the theory and practice of international relations;
- Specialized courses on issues in American foreign policy.

*The Opportunity* will help students in an introductory undergraduate course understand the major issues and challenges in international relations and American foreign policy today. It identifies the trade-offs and dilemmas that American policymakers will confront as they decide how the United States should engage the world.

*The Opportunity* will enable students in upper-division courses to explore the nature of international relations and to assess the merits of contending strategies for guiding American foreign policy. It also provides students with the chance to evaluate contending theories of international relations.

## **A. General International Relations or American Foreign Policy Courses**

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What are the principal features of today's international system?
2. Does the United States need a foreign policy doctrine to help navigate the world? Why or why not?
3. Define the doctrine of integration. What are its strengths, weaknesses, and the arguments for and against its adoption? Are there alternative doctrines you would suggest? What are their comparative strengths and weaknesses?
4. How does the doctrine of integration apply to such challenges as terrorism? Nuclear proliferation? Global climate change? Free trade?
5. Is it possible for the United States to accept or even support the rise of nations such as China and India and simultaneously promote its own interests? If so, how could this best be done?
6. Assess the merits of the claim "The United States does not need the world's permission to act, but it does need the world's support to succeed."

### **Debate**

1. Does the United States have a unique opportunity today to bring about a world where most people are safe, free, and can enjoy a decent standard of living?
2. Is it legitimate for countries to intervene in the affairs of other countries for humanitarian reasons?
3. Should American policymakers worry whether the rest of the world sees U.S. actions abroad as legitimate?

### **Mock National Security Council Meeting**

Assign the various positions on the President's National Security Council team. Discuss the merits of various possible approaches the United States could pursue in response to the nuclear challenges posed by Iran and North Korea.

## **B. Advanced Courses in the Theory and Practice of International Relations**

### **Discussion Questions**

In order to lead an international trend toward integration, the United States government needs both the support of its own population as well as the support of the other major governments of the world. Given what some observers see as a rise of anti-Americanism in many places around the world, including among the United States's democratic allies in Europe, what steps should the U.S. government take so that leaders of the other major powers can be both willing and able to join the United States in facing transnational threats and opportunities without facing backlash from their own populations?

1. What do you foresee as the major issues of political dispute among the U.S. population, media, and Congress if the U.S. president were to express his or her intent to implement a foreign policy dominated by the doctrine of integration?
2. What are the arguments a president should use to convince the population and Congress of the merits of this doctrine?
3. What are the arguments you would suggest a leader of a foreign government or U.S. Congressperson use in opposition to integration?

### **Debate**

1. Does the United States have the capacity to successfully implement a doctrine of integration that results in Haass's vision of a world where most people are safe, free, and can enjoy a decent standard of living? If so, what will be the most serious domestic challenges to implementing this strategy? What will be the greatest external challenges?
2. If foreign nations that are vital to the implementation of a doctrine of integration seek to act against or outside of this system of U.S. leadership, what are the repercussions for international relations and U.S. foreign policy?
3. Which nations do you predict to be most likely to attempt to buck a U.S.-led system? How should the United States respond?

### **Exercises**

Assign students one of two roles. Group A will be assigned the role of National Security Council staffer and will have the responsibility of drafting the foreign policy aspect of the president's State of the Union address presenting to Congress, the American people, and the world the new U.S. policy of integration. Group B will be assigned the role of a Congressional foreign policy staffer responsible for drafting a response for their respective representative or senator presenting the argument against integration and making a case for an alternative. Students present their arguments in class, opening

with the State of the Union and followed by Congressional rebuttal, after which students can discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each position.