



PREPARE TO DISCUSS THE WORLD.

Foreign Policy Association GREAT DECISIONS 2017

Discussion groups co-sponsored by:

The League of Women Voters of La Plata County, The Durango Branch of the American Association of University Women & The Durango Public Library

Topic	Tuesdays 11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.
The Future of Europe	January 31
Trade and Politics	February 14
Conflict in the South China Sea	February 28
Nuclear Security	March 14
U.S. Foreign Policy and Petroleum	March 28
Latin America's Political Pendulum	April 11
Prospects for Afghanistan and Pakistan	April 25
Saudi Arabia in Transition	May 9

Durango Public Library
1900 East Third Avenue
Program Rooms 1 & 2, Main Floor
Brown bag lunch

The order of topics in the briefing book may be different from the schedule shown above.
Please follow the schedule.

Checks for \$25 for each briefing book should be made out to "LWVLPC"
and mailed with the bottom of this form by December 31 to:

Susan McGinness, 756 E. 6th Ave, Durango, Co. 81301

Purchased books will be available for pick-up starting early January at the reference desk of the Durango Public Library

Questions: Janice Sheftel 970-259-5845 janicesheftel@gmail.com

More information about Great Decisions and the Foreign Policy Association

www.fpa.org or click on our web site www.lwvlaplata.org



Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____ Email address: _____



Great Decisions 2017 Topics

The Future of Europe

By Andrew Moravcsik

The outcome of the United Kingdom referendum on EU membership sent shockwaves across the globe. It even caught British voters by surprise. The European Union has helped secure peace in Europe for the past 70 years. Now it faces an uncertain future. Amid a refugee crisis, lingering financial recession and the constant specter of terrorism, unity seems more imperative than ever. But the Brexit vote underscores the complexities of integrating an extremely diverse continent. What will post-Brexit Europe look like, and how can U.S. foreign policy adapt?

Trade and politics

By Jeremy Haft

The U.S. political mood toward trade has gone sour. One need look no further than the 2016 presidential contest for the popular narrative: trade means that China wins, at America's expense. But do the numbers support that conclusion? The metrics used to gauge economic strength—Gross Domestic Product and balance of trade—have not kept up with the realities of modern manufacturing. Obtaining an accurate picture of U.S. economic stature requires a critique of those numbers. Only then can the U.S. develop appropriate policy solutions for the challenges at hand.

Conflict in the South China Sea

By Bernard D. Cole

The South China Sea is a locus of competing territorial claims, and China its most vocal claimant. Beijing's interest has intensified disputes with other countries in the region in recent years, especially since China has increased its naval presence. Despite rising international pressure, including an unfavorable ruling by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, China staunchly defends its policies in the region. Preventing tensions from boiling over is a matter of careful diplomacy.

Saudi Arabia in Transition

By Lawrence G. Potter

As Saudi Arabia struggles to adjust to the drastic decline in oil revenue, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman attempts to boldly transform the country and shift more power to the younger generation. At the same time, many countries such as the U.S. point out the lack of democracy, women's rights and human rights in Saudi Arabia, and blame its promotion of Wahhabism, an extremely conservative version of Islam, for creating jihadists. Bipartisan criticism of Saudi Arabia is rising in Congress. Both countries need each other, but they are at a crossroads in bilateral relations.

U.S. Foreign Policy and Petroleum

Jonathan Chanis

What is the effect of U.S. petroleum security on foreign policy? For 45 years, the country has alternated between periods of energy security and insecurity, sometimes able to wield petroleum as a useful instrument of foreign policy, sometimes not. Despite the so-called "energy revolution," the U.S. today is by no means disentangled from foreign dependence and global trends. In order to be successful, policymakers must recognize both petroleum security circumstances and patterns in the relationship between petroleum and foreign policy.

Latin America's Political Pendulum

By Michael Shifter and Bruno Binetti

The pendulum of Latin American politics is swinging rightward once again. Yet as the "pink tide" recedes, the forces of change have more to do with socioeconomics than ideology. Dramatic economic and political crises have coincided in countries like Brazil and Venezuela. Still, the final result for Latin America may be the emergence of centrist, pragmatic modes of governance, and with them, opportunities for the U.S. to improve relations. The new administration must look beyond the neoliberal model of the 1990s, and develop an approach to relations fit for the 21st century.

Prospects for Afghanistan and Pakistan

By Austin Long

Major internal conflict has plagued Afghanistan for four decades. The U.S., for its part, has conducted military operations in the country nearly continuously since 9/11. Today, war with the Taliban persists, and tensions between the U.S. and Pakistan have gradually deteriorated. As his time in office drew to a close, President Obama limited further withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. The incoming administration has a choice: will it maintain the status quo, completely reverse the Obama administration drawdown or withdraw completely? Does the U.S. face a no win situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan?

Nuclear Security

By Todd Stephen Sechser

Nuclear nonproliferation was a top priority for the Obama administration. While the Iran Deal was a diplomatic victory toward this end, major threats persist from both state and non-state actors. Countries like North Korea, Russia, and India and Pakistan continue to challenge nonproliferation efforts. The possibility that terrorists will carry out an attack using a "dirty bomb," made from captured nuclear materials, looks increasingly real. In a fractious world, which way forward for U.S. nuclear security policy?