

STATECRAFT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SIMULATION

DEBRIEFING QUESTIONS

NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS: The following “debriefing questions” are designed to illuminate, for the entire class, key concepts that may be experienced more directly by some students than others. For example, only a subset of countries likely experienced an autocratic president, an intense security dilemma with a neighbor, an exploitative trading arrangement, or a secret deal with a rising hegemon. Yet all students can gain from this knowledge to maximize the learning impact of the simulation. Therefore, it is recommended that you spend at least 30-60 minutes of class time focusing on debriefing after the simulation has concluded for the semester. There is enough material here to fill multiple class periods if you wish to spend several days really delving into what was learned in the simulation, but the basic debriefing points can be covered in 30-60 minutes. (Note that the first 5 topics are recommended, while the remaining topics are optional). A class-wide discussion that allows everyone to hear from specific players about their experiences is the recommended approach to debriefing. You might consider bringing members of specific countries up to the front of the class as you ask them relevant questions. For example, suppose a coalition of three countries ended up dominating international relations in your Statecraft world. Bringing those three countries’ members to the front while you discuss power transition and hegemony will put the focus on those key players. You are of course not limited to the following questions; you know the unique contours of how things unfolded in your simulation world, and so you are encouraged to ask more specific questions of certain countries and students who had special roles or experiences in your simulation. (For example, “I want to ask the members of Utopia: why did you break that treaty with Mordor? It seemed to be in your best interests, so what was your reasoning?”).

International Cooperation, Treaties, International Law, and IGOs

Questions:

- Did countries regularly meet and deal with global problems through the UN or another body (even an informal one)?
- Were IGOs effective in facilitating cooperation (as liberals expect) or were they either ineffective or dominated by the most powerful countries (as realists expect).
- Was your able to come to an agreement on negotiation rules for your nonproliferation treaty discussions?
- Did you come to an agreement on the nonproliferation treaty? Do you think all countries actually followed it? Did the IAEA catch any countries breaking the treaty?
- Did you feel like you gave enough resources to the IAEA for it to be effective in catching countries breaking the nonproliferation agreement?
- Do you think international cooperation was easier or harder in your world than in the real world? Why?

Trade and Economic Interdependence/Dependence

Questions:

- Think about the resources in your world: gold, food, steel, oil, and scientific knowledge. Were all of these resources equally valuable or were some more useful than others? Why were some more or less valuable?
- Every country was rich in some resources and poor in others. What *opportunities* and *constraints* did these resource endowments create for your country? Be specific. What resources and products did you have a comparative advantage in producing?
- What countries did you develop trade relationships with, and why? (i.e., what resources did they have that you needed and vice versa?)
- Did these trade relationships make it easier for you to cooperate and avoid conflict with your trade partners on other issues? (As commercial liberalism would expect). In causal terms, did you trade with certain countries because you were already allies or did you become allies due to your ongoing trade relationship?
- Did you find that certain trade relationships were asymmetric, with one partner needing the other more? Did these situations of dependency (rather than interdependence) create opportunities for coercion and did some countries take advantage of this? (As realists would expect).
- Which countries in your Statecraft world represented the wealthy, developed “core” and which were part of the “periphery”? Describe relations between the core and the periphery: was there an element of exploitation, and how did the exploited actors respond?

Power Transition, System Polarity, and Hegemony

Questions:

- How did the polarity of your world evolve over the simulation? Did it become bipolar? Unipolar? Which countries became particularly powerful?
- Power is generally defined as influence, not simply in terms of capabilities. Which countries had a lot of influence in your simulation world, and how did they acquire this influence? Can you think of examples of countries exercising “hard power” in your world? What about “soft power”?
- Did you face a situation in which one or more countries were quickly “rising” through economic or military gains? Did this create fear and destabilize the international system? How did you deal with these rising powers? (Did you balance against them or bandwagon with them?)
- With no higher authority above states, the world of Statecraft meets the realists’ definition of anarchy. How did the lack of an enforcer affect countries’ perceptions and interactions in your world? Is it possible to (at least partially) overcome the negative effects of anarchy in Statecraft? If so, how? What are the implications for real world politics?

- If you had a single hegemonic power in your world, how did that country exercise leadership and shape the rules of the international system to their benefit?
- How were the most powerful states in your Statecraft world perceived? (Common answers could include “condescending,” “threatening,” “insensitive to others’ views,” etc.). Was it their capabilities, their actions, or their rhetoric (or some combination of these) that produced these perceptions? Do you find parallels to America’s experience as the world’s dominant power? If you were advising the U.S. President, what advice would you give about the way power should be exercised to minimize resentment or hostility?

Ethics

Questions:

- Choose an example of a war that either (a) occurred in your Statecraft world or (b) was seriously contemplated by your country or others. Evaluate this actual or potential war in terms of the following principles of Just War Theory: just cause, right intention, last resort, legitimate authority, reasonable chance of success, proportionality, and discrimination. On which criteria does the war “pass the test,” and where does it fall short? Overall, would you say this was a just war or not?
- Is Statecraft “just a game” in which anything goes, or should students adhere to some basic ethical practices such as honesty and not harming others since their classmates’ grades may be affected by what happens in the simulation? Justify your position. What examples from your simulation qualified as ethical or unethical behavior, in your view?