Answer 5 of the following 6 questions. Each question counts equally.

Remember the examination is only 3 hours: use your time wisely.

Dictionaries (but not specialized political science lexicons) are permitted.

Good luck with the examination.

1) What powers in foreign policy does the US president have according to the US Constitution? Has this power expanded or contracted since the constitution was written? Explain your answer.

The Hook book has much on this topic, and it was covered in lectures. The US constitution explicitly gives the US president the following powers: to make treaties (that is, to negotiate them), to name and send ambassadors, to conduct diplomacy and to be the commander in chief of the armed forces. It is also relevant that the President can appoint cabinet secretaries (the heads of departments). But these powers are limited by powers given to Congress: the Senate must ratify treaties before they are binding, the Senate must confirm ambassadors before they are allowed to assume their duties, and the Congress has the power to declare war, must pay for the military and determines the size of the armed forces. The president and congress have struggled for some time over the extent of power the US president should have with respect to the conduct of foreign policy. Over time, despite some ups and downs, the president was generally able to extend his power significantly at the expense of Congress through the Cold War and maintained this after the end of the Cold War. However, in more recent years, US politics (and the views and personality of Obama) have led to a Congress much more willing to challenge the President in the realm of foreign policy. On the other hand, Obama has a mixed record here, stating that he should consult with Congress before sending troops to Syria one the one hand, but running the drone program on the other.

The US president has sent troops abroad without permission of Congress. This is an important way in which the president expanded his power. The Congress is supposed to have the power to declare war, yet the President has sent troops many places and into all sorts of engagements, without the permission of Congress. This happened most recently
with respect to Libya. In the aftermath of Vietnam, the Congress attempted to limit the president’s ability to do this and passed the War Powers Resolution. But the president vetoed this and presidents have disputed its constitutionality since. Even so, it is notable that presidents have sought a kind of permission from Congress before big wars, such as the Invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq.

While the Congress is to approve appointments such as ambassadors, the President sometimes finds a way around this, such as when Bush appointed John Bolton as US ambassador the United Nations when the Congress was not in session (“a recess appointment”)

In addition to sending troops abroad, giving the President the role of commander –in-chief also gives the president the job of running the war once it is started. There is also an argument that a situation of war gives the president unusual scope of action. This answer looks for a discussion about the Constitution and so it is a bit beyond the scope of the answer to note that many powers the president has claimed are not explicitly written into the constitution. But they often fall into a grey zone of interpretation. Hook mentions three areas that could be brought up: setting the foreign policy agenda, organizing the chain of command, and taking the initiative. Other things could be mentioned here – with the point being that the grey areas the constitution give the president (and the supreme court) room for interpreting what the Constitution says.

Mentioning the “separation of powers” and “checks and balances” of the constitution would be a plus in the answer.

Other means by which Presidential power has increased (a bit obscure, covered more in lecture than in the book, but could be mentioned: 1) the use Executive agreements: the president can make agreements without submitting these to Congress. 2) President Reagan found other sources of money to fund his campaign against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua when Congress attempted to cut off funding for that campaign. This was a part of the Iran-Contra scandal: the money from weapons sold (illegally) to Iran, private money and money from foreign governments. He also used national security council staff as field agents when Congress prohibited use of agencies like the CIA. 3) Use of informal Ambassadors

Students may also write more broadly about the various advantages that the president has with respect to foreign policy: the large resources at his command, the (relatively) unified nature of the executive branch compared to the legislative branch, the selective use of information or misleading Congress (Gulf of Tonkin Resolution 1964 –the Invasion of Iraq in 2003).

There has been some push back about the expansion of the president’s power. Even during the Bush administration, the Supreme Court acted to limit some of the power claimed by the President with respect to the treatment of prisoners captured after 9/11. The political opposition to Obama in Congress has also stimulated this, as noted above.
However, the question asks whether the President’s power has increased with respect to what was stated in the constitution, and the answer to that must be an unqualified “yes” regardless of whether it today is a great has it was at its peak.

2. Decision-making structures and processes make a difference. They can impact the quality of the decision that is made. Compare decision-making in the Bush and Obama administrations.


Here the student may draw upon the two articles by Pfiffner and also material in the Hook book on foreign policy.

The Hook book states that the Bush administration’s decision-making in the aftermath of 9/11 showed signs of “Group think.” A small group of decision-makers were able to control the decision-making and rapidly came to the decision that Iraq should be invaded. They were able to keep those with contrary views out of the process. The group think factor -- a group dynamic -- prevented the tough questions from being asked and contrary opinion being seriously considered. Elsewhere (pp 122) Hook describes the management style of the president. He notes that Bush turned to a “small tightly controlled groups of loyalists”. His also favored a formalistic style in which in which advisors have sharply defined roles and in which information is channeled to the president through gatekeepers. Obama, like Bush, centralized his inner circle within the White House. His basic model was a “competitive model” in which advisors with different perspectives were encouraged to express their opinions, with the President serving as an “honest broker”. His deliberative model is known as “multiple advocacy”: this means that Obama encouraged all to participate. While Bush is described as not being “curious” about the background or details, Obama prodded people to explain more fully and to defend their position. He often retired from the discussion without making a decision, and then announce his decision later.

The articles by Pfiffner confirm these positions in large measure, although they make slightly different points. Pfiffner writes of the Bush White House, that although key advisors such as Rumsfeld and Cheney had emphasized the importance of good procedure, the White House under George W. Bush did not practice this. Cheney limited access to the president who never heard dissenting views on key issues. In fact, Pfiffner writes that “the pattern that emerges . . . is one of secrecy, top-down control, tightly held information, disregard for the judgements of career professionals and the exclusion from deliberation of qualified executive branch experts who might have disagreed with those who initially framed the decisions.” Career professions were not consulted and when they did manage to express their views, these were ignored. Condoleezza Rice did not play the role of “Honest Broker”. However, there is some evidence that the process was more open during President Bush’s second term.
Pfiffner generally concurs in what Hook writes about Obama, but with a few differences. He does not say that Obama was his own “honest broker” but rather emphasizes that Obama liked to be in control and delved deeply into to the policy options himself. Pfiffner agrees that Obama encouraged multiple advocacy and debate and pushed to be presented more information and options. This was particularly true with respect to dealing with the military, which Obama saw as generally uncooperative. Obama used a good deal of time to make his decisions, and was determined not to be pushed into a decision or to let the momentum of past decisions determine future decisions. In sum, Pfiffner says that “President Obama conducted the type of decision-making processes often advocated by political scientists. Obama’s approach guaranteed that he fully examined all serious policy options. Whether or not he made wise decisions is a separate issue.”

While in general we did not focus much on “the individual level” in this course, Hook points out a number of factors that could be considered to be at this level of analysis: belief systems, “operational codes” and a series of “shortcuts” that allow individuals to form opinions and act even when (and possibly especially when) information is in short supply. These are: selective perception, use of analogies, cognitive closure and bolstering. Hook also considered personality traits and how these determine the role played by advisors. In discussing G.W. Bush, Hook cites studies that argue that Bush had a high need for power, a sense of control over events and a lack of trust for others. At the same time Bush lacked of confidence with respect to foreign policy relied upon a few key advisors that he did trust, such as Vice President Cheney. Hook does not have much on Obama in this regard.

3. The US is said by many to have a distinctive outlook, political culture or national style that affects the formation of its foreign policy. List and explain three elements of this distinctive outlook. Draw upon one or more of the following in your answer: Hook, Hook & Spanier, Kagan, lectures given by the instructor or other relevant literature on the required reading list.

There is much material in the course the can be drawn upon to answer this question. First, the first Chapter in Spanier and Hook is “The American Approach to Foreign Policy”. Here there is an extensive discussion of the US mindset. In fact, H & S argue that while all governments have a distinctive “national style”, that the US national style “was molded by its domestic experience and cultural traditions more than that of other major powers.” The US national style evolved before the US became a superpower and has remained an enduring outlook that has made its stamp on US foreign policy. They note that this outlook has in fact trumped the logic dictated by a balance of power approach! Elements of the US national style mentioned by Spanier are: The American Sense of Destiny (first new nation; as a
democracy US is/was qualitatively different from Europe, Manifest destiny; example to the world). The US rejected power politics and embraced foreign policy as a moral mission. They note the American sense of being “exceptional”, or qualitatively different from other states. Here the “City upon a Hill” is included – that is, the notion that the US should be a shining example to the world. S & H recognize that religious thinking and symbols have played a role this understanding: the “City upon a Hill” notion comes from John Winthrop a New England Puritan; Americans are very religious compared to other industrial nations, and their sense of mission frequently takes on an aura of being divinely inspired. Highly moralistic language can characterize foreign policy language; this language can have religious overtones (although it is frequently pitched in a general way – what H & S call the Civil Religion – that is, not specific to a particular religion.) Hook’s Foreign policy book discusses “Manifest Destiny” in its more accurate context, which was supporting the territorial expansion of the US from coast to coast. There is also a short summary of these general views in Hook, pg. 19-21, which stresses exceptionalism and a sense of moral righteousness.

The lectures also covered this topic. Bailey discussed American Exceptionalism, Manifest Destiny, “anti-statism” and Liberalism. Liberalism is a contributor to “anti-statism” and also important in its own right. The basic idea of AE is that the US is different than other states, and because it has a special mission in the world, should not be bound by the rules that need to be developed to bind others. MD was developed as the idea justifying US expansion across the North American continent. Anti-statism is about the tendency for Americans to be suspicious about the central state or federal government (or as Americans tend to call it, “the government”). It is fed by the individualism of liberalism and by religion (both in terms of content and also because there are many religions in the US, and none wanted to cede power to a central state or give another religion the chance to establish itself in a strong central government. The lectures noted the religious element in the US sense of destiny. However, the sense of mission has been watered by many springs over the years, religion, Social Darwinism, a sense of the “White man’s burden”, secular progressivism, etc. Two things all of these have in common is the sense that the US has a special role to play, a mission, and that the ideas that fire the US are of universal validity. In other words, the US is doing what is in the good of all (a kind of cosmic good) and not just in the good of the US.

(Students might also discuss the article by Kagan. He notes many aspects of American thinking noted by others – such as a tendency to see the world in black and white terms (good versus evil), to act unilaterally, to prefer coercion to persuasion, to seek finality in foreign policy issues (to actually solve the problem) and to have little regard for International Law. These points he contrasts to Europeans. However, note that Kagan does not attribute these characteristics to national style, but to differences in power between the US and the Europeans. The US thinks this way because it is powerful, the Europeans as they do because they are now relatively weak.)

It is difficult to unravel all of these ideas. All tend to support or feed one another. However, a good answer must have some real content as to the thinking embodied in this package of ideas. It is not enough to say that Americans they are better than everyone else and then leave it at that.
4. The place (or role) of the United States in the inter-state system has changed over the years -- and so has the inter-state system itself. Describe briefly the changes in both from 1945 until, roughly, the present day. In conclusion, consider whether the end of the Cold War changed US foreign policy.

4. Rollen USA har spilt i den internasjonale statssystemet har endret over tid – og så har systemet selv. Beskrive kort endringene i både systemet og USAs rolle fra 1945 frem til i dag. Til slutt, vurder om slutten av den kalde krigen har endret USAs utenriks politikk.

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The end of the Cold War found the US as the most powerful country in the world. The European great powers were devastated, even those on the winning side. Great Britain was bankrupt, and started to shed its colonies. France had been deeply shaken, and Japan, Germany and China were devastated – with China soon transitioning into a civil war. The multi-polar European balance of power system was gone. The Soviet Union had suffered tremendous damage despite being on the winning side. As the post-war period developed, and the Soviet Union grew stronger, a bi-polar system developed with the US and the Soviet Union as the two “poles”. Even so, the US was by the more powerful of the two until into the Cold War period. By about 1968, the two were reckoned to be about equal. The bipolar system continued on until 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed, leaving the United States as the single most important country in the world. This was the so-called unipolar moment for the United States. Students here might want to refer to Krauthammer, whose article “The Unipolar Moment” is on the required reading list. Today, the US is still the single most powerful country in the world, but is increasingly challenged by China. China has witnessed a remarkable economic expansion and is reckoned by some to be the largest economy in the world (or soon will be), a major holder of US debt and with a large trade surplus vis a vis the US. It is investing its earnings in an expanding military (navy in particular).

As a part of answering the last part of the question, the student should consider how (or whether) US foreign policy has changed. The GHW Bush regime was very cautious about taking advantage of the weakness of the Soviet Union, and Americans looked to cash in the “peace dividend.” Bush did manage to put together a coalition to roll back the invasion of Kuwait but did so in such a way as to not antagonize the Soviet Union. The Clinton administration attempted to focus more on internal matters – and there was a window in which it looked as though the US would continue to do that and let Europe, for example, take a greater lead in its own affairs and the UN a greater role in the world in general. But this general policy ran aground on the rocks of the former Yugoslavia, when the Europeans and the UN failed to offer a coherent and effective alternative to US leadership. The US accordingly took on a more active international role. This was an era in which NATO expanded and the US economic model gained ground around the world. The Clinton administration also worked to integrate China into the world economy (it jointed the WTO later, in 2001) and also expanded free trade pacts. The administration of George Bush took office with the intention of focusing on internal, economic matters but 9/11 made foreign policy the major focus of that administration. At that time, particularly during the first Bush
administration, the US seemed to embrace the unipolar moment, acting in a highly unilateral way. This is typified in particular by the invasion of Iraq, which key US allies did not support. The Bush national security strategy which embraced preeminence and made it a goal to maintain it (and to use preemptive /preventative war when necessary) also seems to reflect this unipolar moment. The Obama administration, having inherited a country beset with economic difficulties and two wars, has played a much less aggressive international role, showing for example, extreme reluctance to send troops to Syria.

In short, US foreign policy has definitely been affected by the end of the Cold War, but not in a single way. The various administrations have taken different approaches to this change in the power configuration.

5. George Kennan is often said to be the architect of US foreign policy in the Cold War. What name do we give his “strategy”? What does he say the US should do and why? Is that what the US actually did?

George Kennan skal være “arkitekten” av USs utenrikspolitikk under den kalde krigen. Hvilket navn har strategien han skissert fått? Hva var det han sa US skulle gjøre og hvorfor? Gjorde USA egentlig det som Kennan anbefalte?

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Kennan’s strategy is known as containment. He advised that the United States adopt a policy of “long-term, patient, but firm and vigilant containment”. Although Kennan came to disagree with the way the US came to interpret and apply his ideas, Kennan is nonetheless usually credited as the father of the concept. The long telegram was a required reading in this course, and this question calls for knowing how Kennan analyzes the situation and what he prescribes. Kennan is also discussed on pages 39-41 in Hook and Spanier, and Kennan was the subject on the first seminar in the class.

First, Kennan sees the leaders of the Soviet Union as deeply committed to an ideological view of the world (communism) that sees the capitalist west as an enemy. Capitalism and Communism are fundamentally incompatible. However, some elements within the West are friendly to communism and should be encouraged, while others are false friends – such as social democrats and moderate socialists – who mislead. The capitalist countries will inevitably war among themselves. While Kennan denies that the Russian people in general share the views of the “Kremlin” (where the leaders are traditionally located), he also writes that the views of these leaders do generally harmonize with traditional Russian insecurity (although he also says that the Russian leaders have traditionally had a special kind of insecurity all their own, relating to a fear that the outside world will reveal their rule to be archaic, fragile and foreign systems and conditions to be better. This insecurity on part of the leaders has put its stamp on the Soviet form of Marxism and made the leaders particularly committed to it: it provides an excuse for everything and a reason to isolate the country. The US should not assume that these leaders are just cynically using this ideology!
The Soviet Union, then, will work relentlessly to expand its power and influence, exploit differences between western capitalist powers, to promote parties and people that might make their countries more favorably disposed to the Soviet Union and to relentlessly oppose those false friends (moderate socialists and social democrats). It will work to push the boundaries everywhere, using organizations like the United Nations when it suits them – but only to the extent that it suits them. They will undermine colonies and to weaken western influences among “backward” and “dependent” peoples. They will act in an opportunist manner.

The US should recognize that it has an implacable enemy that will expand power and influence when it is possible to do so. However, the Soviets are not like Hitler. They are flexible and do not have a fixed plan. They are not likely to use force in the same way that Hitler did. They will not respond simply to diplomacy, but they recognize and respond to force. That means that the US should resist Soviet expansion. Firm resolve and letting the Soviets know that force might be employed will generally make them back down without a major confrontation. This is particularly the case because the US and the west are stronger than the Soviet Union. However, Kennan’s specific recommendations focus more on policies that the US should follow at home: 1) the US should accept and understand what it is dealing with; 2) the public should be educated so as to reduce the sense of hysteria about the Soviet Union which he clearly feels is exaggerated; 3) improve conditions within in the US – because communism flourishes in bad conditions (or as he puts it, “communism is like malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue”; 4) rally other nations with a clear vision of the world we want to build – and this should be more than just trying to spread the US system, because others value security as much as anything else. 5) we should be true to our own values, and not become like the enemy.

As for whether the US actually did this, is a question that has a superficial answer and a more sophisticated answer. Containment is usually said to be the grand strategy of the US – although various administrations had varying versions of it – such as Eisenhower’s and Dulles’ “roll-back” and the Nixon administration’s policy of “Détente”. This version of the answer is embedded in the question. It is not wrong. But, a more sophisticated and even better answer is that while the US practiced what was called “containment” that the US often adopted a much more aggressive and ideological policy, more in line with Paul Nitze’s NSC 68. Even if the student does not recall NSC-68 (which was not stressed in the course, but which is discussed on in Hook, pp. 68 to 73) a very good answer would recognize that Kennan came to criticize what he called the “legalistic-moralistic” approach that led to episodes such as the Vietnam War, which Kennan did not support.

6. Name and describe at least two of the key bureaucracies that are active in foreign policy. How do they impact the making and carrying out of US foreign policy?

6. Nevn og beskrive minst to nøkkel utenriksbyråkrati som er aktive i utenrikspolitikk i USA. Hvordan påvirker dei dannelsen og gjennomføringen av US utenrikspolitikk?

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This material is covered in the Hook book and the lectures. It requires that the student put together information and then to think and analyze a bit.

This question draws first and foremost on the Hook book, chapter 6, “The Foreign Policy Bureaucracy”. The book highlights the four “complexes”: the security, diplomatic, economic and intelligence complexes. If the student describes these, ok. I have in mind however, specific agencies within those such as: the Department of State (the only actor discussed by Hook in the diplomatic complex); the Department of Defense, the National Security Council, and the Department of Homeland Security (in the defense complex); the Intelligence Community (the book does not discuss the individual agencies very much, although the Director of National Intelligence is mentioned as an outcome of changes after 9/11, and actors such as the NSA and the CIA are discussed passim). The economic complex is composed of the National Economic Council, the US Trade Representative, the Treasury and the Commerce departments, and international financial institutions (the World Bank and the IMF).

I am looking for the student to talk about the size of the selected bureaucracy and describe what it does. What do the DOD and the DOS actually do? (I am expecting these to be most often picked – although the security community was covered in class and the DOS was not, so it might be a popular choice.) I am not expecting exact numbers with respect to size but do expect them to recognize beyond some banal level that these are large organization.

With respect to the last part of the question, the student can draw from the first part of the chapter and from the guest lecture by Knutsen. On the one hand, these bureaucracies are a remarkable resource for the President and the executive branch. They provide expertise on the very many different issues the US must deal with, and run the day to day business of foreign policy. They also provide “ballast” or security to government, as well as “continuity and constancy.” These large bureaucracies are a part of what makes the executive branch more informed about foreign policy than, say Congress.

However, bureaucracies have their downsides and these affect foreign policy as well as anything else. Bureaucracies compete with each other for dominance and control of issues and policy. For example, the Department of Defense cut the State Department out of planning with respect to Iraq (particularly what would happen after the war. It can also lead to complex, multilayered politics that lead to confusion as to who is doing what. This competition – and also the existence of Standard operation procedures (SOPs) and organizational cultures – can mean that agencies don’t talk to each other and/or insist on doing things in their own way. The organizational culture of any given organization can create an us versus them situation – it might lead to organizational esprit de corps within the organization but to a sense of superiority with respect to other agencies. “Parochialism” – or taking a narrow view of what is important to one’s own agency instead of what is good for the country is also a recurring theme. A part of all of this is the need to preserve the budget of the agency – which means making sure that the agency gets the missions and tasks required to maintain its status.