

HONORS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
POLITICAL SCIENCE 2820

Current Events Discussion Board Postings

Each student will be assigned a foreign policy area of the United States. The topics will be specifically discussed in class. After being assigned a topic (i.e. health care), each student will post one general update per week about their topic and how it affects the United States. Each posting should include information from at least one source – cited in the post – and average 200-300 words. Please avoid the “cut-and-paste” postings. It is okay to quote your article, but a paraphrase would be most appropriate. Include in your posting your expert analysis of the situation you are posting about.

In addition, each student must comment on at least two other posts from other students and their areas of coverage. The responses can be either just about the post from the other student or it can be an attempt to bring information from your area to the discussion about that topic.

PLEASE REMEMBER ALL POSTS MUST BE APPROPRIATE IN CONTENT. ALL ANONYMOUS POSTINGS WILL BE ELIMATED.

Sample Post

Randall Palmer of Reuters news service is reporting (original story posted on 14 August 2008) that the conservative led coalition leading the Canadian government may be forced to dissolve the current parliament, which is a move that would trigger a new round of parliamentary elections. (See full story at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20080814/wl_canada_nm/canada_election_col).

The conservative prime minister Stephen Harper, who won the prime ministership of the House of Commons in 2006 on a campaign of closer ties to the United States, has been faced with difficulties in getting legislation passed because of the believed growing power of the liberal faction in the parliament, especially in the upper house of the Senate, which is controlled by the Liberal Party. Liberal leader Stephane Dion has held up key votes in the Commons, which has caused Harper great frustrations and now he seems ready for a national showdown over the future direction of the country. However, recent polls have shown that a new election would change very little on the Canadian political front since the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party are statistically tied in overall support. This could be seen as a blow to strengthening already close relations with the United States, especially with the United States in an election year.

This is a very interesting development for two countries that are so closely allied that they share the world's longest unguarded national border. The war in Iraq, oil prices and the value of the Canadian currency in relation to the dollar seem to be the biggest issue in the Canadian election, with the conservative led House of Commons taking most of the blame for these issues. This is eerily similar to the issues in the American Presidential Campaign. Will the conservatives leading both countries be able to keep their ruling power, or will the liberal led opposition gain control in these two countries? There seems to be a strong liberal movement growing in both countries whose political and economic ties make it allies almost automatically. We'll have to wait and see if these movements win enough support in the two countries and how it will change the overall relationship between the United States and Canada. (Words in posting – minus introductory paragraph – 311)