

2010 NFL Nationals International Extemp Topic Area Analysis

As was done for the Catholic Forensic League (CFL) national tournament, Extemp Central provides you with this topic area analysis for the International extemp portion of next week's NFL national tournament in Kansas City, Missouri.

This is the third time that Extemp Central has broken down the topic areas in International extemp for NFL. Last year, IX runner-up Omar Qureshi broke down the IX topic areas and extempers would be wise to consult this topic area analysis as well as Omar's thoughts, which can be found in last year's NFL edition of *The Ex Files*.

If you are in the International extemp field for NFL you will be facing some of the toughest competition in the nation. Although anyone who makes the NFL national tournament is a talented speaker and has earned their way into the field, International extemp tends to have a better field than United States extemp. In looking at the National Points Race, most of the top ten are in International extemp at this year's tournament so if you have chosen to do International extemp you will be in the midst of very elite competition and will be competing against extempers who have proven themselves at previous national circuit events during the year.

As with the CFL topic area analysis, this topic area analysis is meant to provide some insight into the thirteen topic areas that International extempers will encounter at the national tournament. According to some reports, a new batch of question writers will be putting together this year's topics, which will hopefully eliminate the ridiculous questions seen in last year's final round such as "Yes we can. Or can we?" Since I am putting together the USX and IX topic area analysis this year and because thirteen topic areas cover a lot of ground, this year's topic area analysis will have a brief paragraph summary explaining each topic area and then there will be bulleted points detailing issues that extempers might confront in each topic area. Keep in mind, this topic brief is not sanctioned by the National Forensic League and I am not on any panels to write questions for the tournament. My analysis of these topic areas is through my years of experience competing at the tournament and judging rounds and merely predicts what you will encounter in the prep room in Kansas City. Unlike previous years this topic brief will not contain practice questions. This is because of the timing of the release of this topic area analysis and other constraints upon the writer. Instead, this week there will be thirteen questions for USX and IX, one for each topic area. Extempers can also look back at previous week's questions on the site to help prepare them for the tournament. I apologize for any inconvenience that might cause.

Topic Area #1: Africa

The problems of the African continent were the talk of extempers in the 1990s, mostly because of the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that analysts regarded as Africa's version of World War I. In recent years, Africa's problems have fallen off of the global map as the war on terrorism has increased and political problems in Latin America, Europe, and Southeast Asia engulf the world's press. However, when extempers confront this topic area there are a few things to remember. First, Africa is not a country it is a continent. It is very disappointing to hear extempers at a national tournament called Africa a country but I can guarantee that it will happen in several rounds when this topic area is utilized. Please don't be one of those extempers. Second, remember that many of Africa's political problems are because of the borders that European powers drew on the continent in the nineteenth century. These borders put competing ethnic groups within the same national system and European powers played upon these divisions in order to retain power. Many speeches on African politics don't dwell on these ethnic divides and that is also disappointing during African speeches. Finally, if you have to give a speech on

the African economy or the economy of a specific African nation keep in mind that Africa's primary problems are because of a lack of infrastructure, human capital, and good governance. There are tons of stories out there of corrupt African governments and if extempers want to search for some and put them in their files they would be well served with this topic area. A good resource for African newspaper source is AllAfrica. AllAfrica is NOT a source, although many extempers make this mistake every year when I watch speeches. AllAfrica merely collects the reporting done by African papers and you can find the names of those papers in the heading of the articles that you cut. It is always refreshing to hear sources that are on the ground about a specific topic instead of sources that are distanced from the conflicts. Although European and American sources have credibility when talking about international issues, they often have different cultural perspectives and biases when discussing African problems so combining them with indigenous analysis of African affairs will make your speeches more unique. As a final note, this topic area can be fun this year because the World Cup will be taking place during the NFL National tournament. The World Cup is being held in South Africa so if you want to make some soccer analogies in your speeches here or use it as an AGD that might be a good idea.

Issues you might hit in this round include:

- The safety of the World Cup in South Africa
- Africa's fight against AIDS/HIV and malaria
- South Africa's racial violence and political climate (will it turn into another Zimbabwe?)
- Zimbabwe's ongoing political problems and the future without Mugabe
- If Africa would benefit from becoming a "United States of Africa"
- Somali piracy
- How corruption can be lowered in African governments
- The UN's efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo against the FDLR
- Al-Qaeda security threats in Western Africa
- Problems in the Niger Delta

Topic Area #2: Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean

This is one of the more sensible topic area arrangements that I have seen a national tournament make. Canada and Mexico are often ignored in rounds that talk about the Americas and are sometimes lumped with other nations like Australia that don't fit a defined geographic category. While the global recession has not been kind to Mexico and the Caribbean, Canada has been ahead of the pack in the industrialized world in creating jobs. Mexico's poverty and social instability because of its drug war has caused massive migration to the United States, where remittances contribute a substantial amount to the Mexican economy. Cuba is also locked into poverty and Raul Castro is trying to figure out how to fix the nation's emerging liquidity problem because of the global recession and America's trade embargo on the island nation. Jamaica has also been beset by political instability because of the nation's drug lords and Haiti has been plagued by ineffective governance and the earthquake that rocked the country earlier in the season. Therefore, this round offers a lot of contrasts between "have's" and "have not's" and nations that have close relations to the United States and those that are viewed with hostility. Because of the close geographic proximity of these nations to the United States, many speeches that you give in this round should have impacts that tie to the United States. Your judge will be more familiar with Mexico than any other nation in this topic area, so if you have to give a speech about Mexico they will be thinking of several things: illegal immigration on America's southern border, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the drug wars occurring in that country. Regardless of if your question directly ties to these areas, although it is likely that it will in some way, you need to show how it impacts Americans. This will make your judge feel involved in the speech and it demonstrates that international concerns impact America, especially in the globalized world in which we live. For Caribbean sources,

extempers should look at publications like *The Latin American Herald Tribune*, *The Latin American Post*, and a think tank called Upside Down World. Upside Down World is a left-leaning think tank and offers a radically different view of Latin American affairs than you will find in the American and European press. For example, they strongly support Hugo Chavez and think that his actions are empowering and great for the region. If you cut Upside Down World, make sure you remember its credentials and cite them in a round so skeptical judges will know that the source is credible. Another important piece of information for extempers on this topic is that Canada will be hosting the next G-8 and G-20 summits the week after NFL. This demonstrates the large role that Canada continues to play in international politics and is useful to use in a speech if you are talking about our neighbor to the North. Finally, because of the poverty in this region, especially in the Caribbean but also with Mexico, extempers will want to get some statistics about the levels of foreign aid America sends to this region of the world. America is providing military assistance for Mexico's drug war and rebuilding assistance to Haiti. If you have to talk about winning the Mexican drug war or how Haiti can be rebuilt, you will need to talk about America's role and having foreign aid statistics to back you up would be great for this round.

Issues you might hit in this round include:

- Canadian concerns about the future of their nation's healthcare model
- The impact of the Mexican drug war on the Mexican government and the effectiveness of Felipe Calderon's policies
- Recent drug violence in Jamaica
- What Cuba can do to improve its economy and end the US-sponsored embargo
- How Mexico can reduce the flow of illegal immigrants to the United States
- Canada's development of oil sands
- The success (or lack thereof) of Canada's Winter Olympics
- If communism is on its last legs in Cuba
- What the international community can do to rebuild Haiti more effectively

Topic Area #3: Central and South America

Hugo Chavez's Bolivarian Revolution continues to spread throughout Latin America and has earned him the ire of the United States and some human rights activists. *The Economist* had a profile of Venezuela's political, social, and economic problems a few weeks ago and I hope that extempers have it in their files. Also, Brazil has stepped up its role on the international stage by helping to broker a deal over Iran's nuclear arms, although some proliferation experts believe that the agreement won't be effective in reducing Iran's capability to construct a nuclear weapon. Brazil sees itself the same way that India and China do: as an emerging global power and calls have risen for it to be given a larger role at the United Nations Security Council and in other international institutions. Political upheaval continues to be a major concern in the region as Colombia is holding a presidential election this year, which is being carefully watched by Hugo Chavez who has argued that if Juan Manuel Santos wins the election that he would impose trade restrictions on Colombia. Furthermore, Argentina has a presidential election next year where Nestor Kirchner will try to swap off with his wife Cristina and some countries in the region like Bolivia and Nicaragua have abolished term limits. The bickering between Colombia and Venezuela, which includes allegations that Venezuela is helping Colombian rebels and concern about American military bases in Colombia, is a major concern in American foreign policy and the tensions between both nations concern analysts who see a military buildup in the region. Russian interests in helping Venezuela build a nuclear reactor have also raised red flags that Chavez wants to acquire a nuclear weapon, which might prompt Brazil and other governments in the region to do the same. International extempers should recognize that the economic problems that this region experienced early in the last decade are blamed on the perceived failure of the Washington consensus, which sought to open the region to free trade and

deregulate its markets. Also, the political clout of indigenous groups, which have endured discrimination in the past from peoples of European heritage in the region, have helped keep Evo Morales of Bolivia and Hugo Chavez in power. When answering questions about this region it is important that you not only explain the factors that keep these leftist leaders in power but also explain how those factors developed. A useful and underutilized source for South America that can work for this topic area is MercoPress, which is the press agency of Mercosur, which is the South American trade bloc of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

Issues you might hit in this round include:

- The chances of the Kirchner's maintaining political power in Argentina in 2011
- The stability of Hugo Chavez's government
- What is wrong with the Venezuelan economy
- The likelihood of a war in the future between Venezuela and Colombia
- Who will win the Colombian presidential election
- If the elimination of term limits is good or bad for Latin American nations
- What Brazil can do to boost its international standing
- The role of Honduras in future Latin American policies post-coup

Topic Area #4: China, Taiwan, Japan, and the Koreans

A shorter way to write this topic area is East Asia, which is the geographic characterization that includes all of these nations. Of the five nations involved in this topic area, more questions will probably come from China. China's leadership sees the global recession as an indictment of Western economic policies and sees that its blending of capitalism and authoritarian government is the best way to handle the nation's affairs. China sees itself as a rising world power but economists fear that the nation's economy is overheating with some even speculating that it will crash next year. If such a scenario transpired, the chances of social conflict in China would be high because of the vast number of people that would be unemployed and the lack of a strong social safety net for those unemployed workers in China. Such a scenario would also be bad for the U.S. economy because of China's willingness to lend and fund America's spending binges. Economics aside, China is using its political clout to dominate the affairs of the region. It is trying to establish an economic cooperation framework agreement (ECFA) with Taiwan that would promote closer economic ties. Nationalist forces in Taiwan fear that this agreement would help China put Taiwan back into its orbit and crush attempts by Taiwan to become an independent nation. Also, China continues to protect North Korea from strong international sanctions, which has become a hot issue because of North Korea's alleged sinking of a South Korean warship earlier in the year. North Korea has warned of restarting the Korean War of the 1950s in case further sanctions are imposed upon the regime, but its threats are enhancing the political prospects of conservative politicians in South Korea. Due to the fact that the United States has over 20,000 troops in South Korea, the prospect of a renewed war while America is tied up in Iraq and Afghanistan would be a nightmare for the Obama administration. Japan has also seen a dispute over America's military bases in Okinawa provoke political upheaval and Yukio Hatoyama is no longer the prime minister. A few days ago Naoto Kan, the finance minister in the Hatoyama cabinet, assumed the role of prime minister and is expected to make large cuts to Japan's budget that economists say is holding back the country's economic recovery. Hatoyama's resignation was done so that the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which overthrew the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) decades long grip on power last year, could do well in July's upper house elections. There are very few questions that could emerge in this round that do not have some regional implication, so extempers would be wise to connect the dots and show regional and foreign policy impacts in their speeches.

Issues that you might hit in this round include:

- The implications for China's growing military and economic power
- The impact of the ECFA on Taiwanese politics and the likelihood of its passage
- If China is a currency manipulator
- If the Chinese economy is overheating
- How the Japanese economy can be turned around and become a robust engine of growth again
- If Naoto Kan will last longer in his post than Yukio Hatoyama was able to
- How the Japanese government can get the U.S. out of Okinawa
- The likelihood of North Korea resuming the Korean War
- If China should continue to shield North Korea from international pressure

Topic Area #5: Energy and the Environment

This topic area is similar to one in United States extemp except that this one, for obvious reasons, will be about the international community's energy and environmental concerns. For the energy part of this topic extempers should be aware of two things: oil exploration around the world and natural gas delivery. For oil exploration, extempers should follow trends and signals from the Oil and Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Currently, OPEC is signaling that it will likely keep production at current levels but these things could change because of the volatile climate in the Middle East and the global economy. Furthermore, aside from OPEC nations like Brazil are expanding their oil exploration offshore and other nations, like China, are using pariah states like Myanmar and Sudan for their oil and natural resource needs. This has given protection to these nations in the international community because of China's role on the United Nations Security Council. Due to the fact that China suppresses political dissent, it does little to encourage democratic growth in these nations and its policies are not impacted as much by special interest groups who would desire a more environmentally conscious energy policy. As far as natural gas goes, extempers should keep in mind the primary role of Russia in the European energy market and their desires to circumvent eastern European nations with new pipelines. Russia's use of natural gas as a weapon can be seen in its recent disputes with Ukraine's prior government, Georgia, and Belarus. Also, Turkey is trying to become a global natural gas hub to increase its profile. For the environment part of this question, extempers should be aware of the global campaign against carbon emissions. This season had a lot of controversy over UN climate data and potential manipulations were a boon to global warming skeptics around the world. Just like domestic extempers, international extempers should be aware that if they are advocating for an alternative energy source in this round, which is a possibility because of China's protectionist policies on alternative energy technology, be aware of the economic cost of developing those resources and their impact on the global economy. Also, since this is an international round you need to be aware of how changing energy relationships will impact nation's profiles and their political, economic, and foreign policy climates. Can you imagine what would happen if demand suddenly fell for Middle East oil? What if someone in the international community developed a way to run cars on an affordable energy source other than gasoline? There would be major geopolitical repercussions from these events and those are the things you need to spell out in your speech.

Issues you might hit in this round include:

- Assessing the damage done to climate change efforts by reports of incorrect and fabricated data earlier in the year
- How the international community can best combat global warming
- Russia's use of natural gas as a weapon against its neighbors
- China's foreign policy of putting natural resource acquisitions ahead of human rights concerns
- The international ban on whaling and whether it should be overturned

- The protection of the Amazon rainforest
- Concerns about the sustainability of the world's ecosystems from overhunting, overfishing, and illegal logging
- How the international community can help nations impacted by climate change
- How the international community should deal with nuclear waste sites

Topic Area #6: Europe

Almost all of the press about Europe right now is about economic issues, so you can bet on this round having a lot of questions with an economic bent. The Greek bailout has created animosity within the European Union (EU) and has put strains upon the euro, the EU's common currency. Please remember that not all EU members use the euro (notably Great Britain) and the common currency has not been popular in recent years in nations like Italy, who blame the euro for their declining economic competitiveness. Economic analysts are predicting that Greece's economic problems and those in Portugal, Spain, and Ireland will cause the European Union to change the way that it manages its affairs. Some are predicting the complete collapse of the common currency and others are predicting that the euro will survive after the EU kicks ailing nations out of the club. Anger at the Greece bailout threatens to undermine Angela Merkel's young coalition government in Germany and anger at governments is bound to spread as many European states engage in spending cuts because of the global recession and Greece's financial problems. I recommended in the CFL topic area analysis that you need to study the Greek bailout carefully. Hopefully if you are an International extemper you have been paying attention to the developments in Greece carefully, but if you haven't then you need to do so before the tournament because almost every speech will have to mention Greece's problems in some way shape or form. When explaining Greece's problems you will need to use a myriad of economic terminology to explain what brought about the government's collapse. Such terminology such as naked short selling can be difficult for the average judge to understand unless you guide them through it. Therefore, on the plane or car ride to Kansas City I would recommend trying to memorize definitions and go over ways to explain this economic terminology so that you will be prepared to talk about it. Remember, not all prep has to occur within the prep room. Also, political upheaval in Greece has some commentators putting the odds of the current government falling to a revolution or coup at 25%, which are alarmingly high. One thing to also remember in this round is that this is primarily a Western Europe round because of the Russia and the former Soviet bloc topic area. Any nations that were not part of the Soviet Union during the Cold War are available for questions here. I'd recommend that extempers go to the European Union's website and print off some information on how the EU operates, what programs it is currently implementing, and note the balance of power in the organization. Also, the German magazine *Der Spiegel* is often an underutilized source among International extempers so cut a few articles before you go to Kansas City. It sounds impressive when it's cited in rounds. Finally, be aware of the old question "Should Turkey be admitted to the EU?" It's a mainstay at NFL and there's no reason for this year to be any different.

Issues you might hit in this round include:

- Great Britain's recent election and how long its coalition government will survive
- How spending cuts in Britain will impact David Cameron's political career
- The Greek bailout and its impact on the EU and other politicians in Europe
- Actions against Islamic practices like the construction of minarets in Switzerland and the burqa
- The future of the euro
- The future of the European Union
- If the EU should admit Turkey and/or Russia as members
- How Nicolas Sarkozy can deal with low approval ratings and if his pension reform package will pass

Topic Area #7: India, Pakistan, and Southeast Asia

Years ago, this would have been a volatile topic area with lots of nuclear war impacts. However, despite the Mumbai attacks during last season, the relationship between India and Pakistan has been steadily improving. The Indian government has tried to build stronger relationships with Pakistan, believing that they are crucial for regional stability. Having nuclear weapons pointed at each other is also a good incentive for calmer relations despite Indian demands that Pakistan do more to keep extremists out of Indian territory. I don't have the room here to detail the entire India-Pakistan conflict, so if you are unaware of the history between both nations please examine it in careful detail. No speech about the India-Pakistan relationship can be analyzed without understanding the volatile history between both states. Another major topic in this round will be extremism in Southeast Asia. The region is beset by rebellions of some sort as India fights its Naxalites, Pakistan fights Taliban rebels, Nepal confronts its Maoist insurgents (although that's more of a political problem now), the Philippines and Indonesia fight Islamic insurgents, Thailand does the same although that problem has been subsumed because of political unrest at home, and Myanmar fights rebel groups that oppose the governing junta's policies. All of these conflicts impact elections and the way that governments behave and they are important parts of each nation's national security strategy. Remember when analyzing the tactics these nations take that not all of them behave like the United States. Different cultural norms predominate these areas and although Western European nations might put human rights at the top of their agenda, these nations are willing to use brutal tactics to settle old scores. For example, the Sri Lankan civil war only ended when the government used brutal tactics to crush the Tamil Tigers. Prior governments were less willing to do this and war dragged on too long. While these tactics are appalling in terms of the lives sacrificed to achieve peace, the Sri Lankan presidential election demonstrates that parties who crush insurgents will be rewarded at the ballot box. Extempers also need to be aware that Australia is the odd man out this year. There is no topic area where Australia goes except here. There are anxieties within Australia about India and China's growing economic power and the recent mine tax imposed by the government of Kevin Rudd has some fearing that it will lead to international control of Australia's mining industry. Also, in a blow to global climate change efforts Australia has said that it will not pass a cap and trade bill until 2013. Finally, political anxieties about authoritarian governments, rigged elections, and egregious political behavior dominate the headlines for nations like Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Nepal. Just like Africa, having a few tidbits about corruption in these nations can help you stand out in a round. I will also admit that pronouncing the names of political leaders in this round will be more difficult than others and the way to learn them is to use the Voice of America pronunciation guide online. If you google "Voice of America + pronunciation guide" you will find it.

Issues you may face in this round include:

- How India and Pakistan can resolve their conflict over Kashmir
- If India's economic growth is sustainable and how it can alleviate poverty
- If Pakistan is doing enough against Islamic militants within its borders
- Thailand's political upheaval
- If the Philippines new government can successfully pass economic reforms the nation needs
- If Sri Lanka and Malaysia are becoming authoritarian states
- If it is wise for political opposition movements to boycott Myanmar's election this year

Topic Area #8: The International Community: The Transition from 2000 to 2010

This is the second topic area that is mimicked in United States extemp. Again, for those competing in this year's NFL tournament you were less than ten years old when the 21st century began so it's a little unfair

for you to remember information from ten years ago. This round has never been done as a topic area before so I'm not sure what you can expect here. My best guess is that you will have some comparison questions that will force you to evaluate a policy that a nation has implemented over the last decade or how an international organization's power dynamics and mission have changed during that period of time. As I said in the United States extemp topic brief, you may not have a good knowledge of the history of every nation in the world but most journal articles on a subject or good articles and special reports in *The Economist* will usually break down the history of a national policy or other subject matters. These can help you in this round. When planning for this round, try to think of things that have altered the global landscape over the last decade. After you think about those things for a few minutes several thoughts should come to mind including the inauguration of the war on terrorism, the growth of the Internet, the rise of free trade agreements across the globe, the proliferation of nuclear technology, high oil prices, and the spread of democratic and other destructive ideologies that threaten the global balance of power. This round may ask you to explain how these developments have shaped the international community over the last decade so that it is something to think about for this round as well.

Issues you may face in this round include:

- The impact of the Internet on the international community
- The impact of nuclear proliferation on global security networks
- How Islamic fundamentalist ideology has shaped the Western world
- If globalization has benefitted or negatively impacted national economies
- If democratic reforms have made the world safer or more unstable throughout the globe
- The impact of Bolivarian socialism on Latin American nations
- The emergence of the G-20 as a replacement for the G-8

Topic Area #9: International Organizations & Global Challenges

Unlike the United States extemp topic areas, which I think make it obvious what the final round topic will be, things are not as clear when looking at the International extemp topic areas. However, of all of the topic areas I think this one will likely be the finals topic. The NFL final round usually asks about global trends and issues and this topic area best fits that description. For the international organizations part of this question, extempers need to understand the dynamics within some of the major international organizations like the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and the International Criminal Court (ICC). Going to the websites of each of these organizations and printing off their missions, structures, and leadership would be excellent resources for your files. Keep in mind that this year the International Monetary Fund (IMF) shifted some of its voting rights to give nations like China a bigger say. Also, the G-20 now has supplanted many of the tasks originally assigned to the G-8 and signifies a shift in the globe's balance of power. The ICC has met in Uganda to discuss whether the crime of aggression should be added to the Court's mandate and that has provoked some outrage from some countries that are not members of the Court, like the United States, because they see the crime of aggression as a tool for taking politically motivated crimes to the Court. For the global challenges portion of the question, keep in mind several social and economic issues plaguing the globe. Bringing fair wages to workers in the developing world is an ongoing struggle as well as helping those in poverty work their way out. Global health care and education efforts are also ongoing and serve as some of the greatest weapons against the spread of radical political, social, and economic ideologies that might threaten global security. If this is indeed the final round topic you can expect to see broad questions like this. The best way to approach those broad questions (in 2003 a notable one was "Will there be peace in the Middle East?") is to establish a clear thesis statement for your answer and to set up a clear framework for answering the question. In 2003, when confronted with the Middle East question, Josh Bone made the decision to make the Middle East peace element of the question primarily about the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict. Remember, you are the speaker and have the right to parametricize down to what you think is the right direction for the topic. As long as you stay on message and are clear as a whistle your speech will go fine. Also, if you are in the final round do your best to relax. You will be nervous going into the speech because all of the cameras and all of the eyes of the extemp world will be watching your every move but you earned the right to get there and you may never get that opportunity again. Take it from someone who knows, the seven minutes on stage last for a lifetime and if you have fun and show some personality you can walk out of Kansas City as a final round national champion even if you don't win the overall national championship.

Issues you may face in this round include:

- The UN's actions in the Middle East peace process and if they are effective
- The UN's mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo against the FDLR
- The IAEA's actions to counter global nuclear proliferation and if they have been effective
- The G-20's rise as a powerful international institution
- What NATO's role should be in the 21st century
- If the ICC should make aggression a crime under its jurisdiction
- Actions the international community can take to help developing nations become more prosperous

Topic Area #10: The Middle East

For all intents and purposes it appears that Turkey and Afghanistan will be in this topic area because they are not clearly included in the others. Since the Palestinians renewed their intifada against the Israelis early in the decade, the 21st century has seen the Middle East explode with violence and turmoil. Diplomatic experts fear that Iran's drive for a nuclear weapons could set off a chain reaction that could make other powers in the region like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, and Syria develop their own nuclear weapons programs. The United Nations Security Council recently expressed its desire to make the Middle East a nuclear free zone, but there is scant chance of that as Israel views its nuclear weapons program as a valuable deterrent against Arab aggression. Extempers should be aware that Israel has a nuclear weapons program, a program that was constructed with the help of the French after the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956, but the Israeli government has never fully acknowledged the existence of this program. Although the Obama has expressed a desire for peace in the Middle East its efforts haven't amounted to much as Obama's approval ratings are low in Israel, Israeli settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem want to expand their holdings, and the government of Benjamin Netanyahu does not want to cave into pressure from Washington like it did in the 1990s. Divisions among the Palestinians, notably among Fatah in the West Bank and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, have aggravated the peace process and Israel's actions against flotillas that are trying to break its blockade of Gaza are only making the situation worse. Turkey's response to the flotilla incident and reducing its relations with Israel show that Israel is on the verge of losing a valuable Muslim ally in the region and Egyptian Muslims have never been happy with its government's peace agreement with Israel during the Jimmy Carter administration. Aside from the Israel-Palestinian peace process which receives the most press in the region, political change in the Middle East remains a prominent concern. Iran's actions against dissidents have provoked outrage and the Iraqi government is trying to bring itself together after elections earlier in the year. Corruption also plagues the Afghan government and if both of these governments fail it would deal a dangerous blow to democratization efforts in the Middle East. Keep in mind that when reading about the Middle East there are publications with their own biases. Sources like *The Jerusalem Post* will have a pro-Israeli bias while a source like *The Middle East Times* or *The Tehran Times* will be more pro-Palestinian. Al Jazeera is also a good source for covering many of the region's affairs. Be aware that many of your judges might have misconceptions about the Middle East. Some judges have a fatalistic view of the Middle East and that the

region will always be beset by religious and/or political violence. If you have ideas that are counter to this perspective you need to make sure that you demonstrate how peace is a realistic process. Remember, although a majority of people in the Middle East want peace they have different definitions of what a feasible peace would look like. Also, radical groups in the region like to disrupt peace agreements to satisfy their own goals so any solution would need to have mechanisms that could resist violence and the antagonisms of these groups in order to succeed.

Issues you may face in this round include:

- The tensions that exist between Israel and Lebanon, Israel and Syria, Israel and Turkey, and Israel and Iran
- The Gaza blockade and the recent flotillas sent to break it
- What the future Iraqi government will look like
- How an Iran nuclear weapon would impact the Middle East
- How religious violence can be stopped in the Middle East and how religious extremism can be effectively combated by governments in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, etc.
- If Turkey is becoming a less secular state and how that impacts the country's foreign policy
- How the Afghan government can effectively fight corruption

Topic Area #11: Russia and Former USSR Satellite States

For geographical purposes, I think it would be wise for them to define the parameters of this topic as Russia and its allies in the Warsaw Pact alliance. This includes the Czech Republic, Poland, the Baltics, etc. If you need more information, look up an old map of the Cold War era and that will help you a great deal. The last several years has seen the Kremlin try to exercise more control over its former satellite states. Russia nearly wiped Georgia off the map two years ago and has pressured Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, and other former satellite states with threats to cut off its natural gas supply. However, extempers need to understand that Russia often deals from a position of weakness and insecurity instead of from a position of strength. As Henry Kissinger made clear in his book *Diplomacy*, Russian rulers of the past were the opposite of German leaders in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Whereas German leaders saw the future of their nation as extending to the east, Russia believed that it needed to extend into the West and create a buffer zone from Western aggression. Napoleon's invasion of Russia and Hitler's invasion over a century later reinforced these beliefs. The end of the Cold War was damaging for Russian psyche and Vladimir Putin has called the dissolution of the Soviet Union one of the greatest travesties in world history and penned one of my favorite quotes about the Soviet Union that extempers might want to commit to memory for this round and for future speeches: "Whoever does not miss the Soviet Union has no heart. Whoever wants it back has no brain." Anyway, at the end of the Cold War Russia had numerous political and economic problems and the insecurity generated by these problems has made Russia adopt a firmer stance internationally to make up for its weaknesses. Democratic and economic reforms only brought corruption and pain to the Russian people and considering their distress it is no surprise that when Vladimir Putin became president in 2000 he adopted a more authoritarian bent. Although Putin controls many of the political operations in Russia today, despite being prime minister and no longer president, there are rising protests against his tactics. Despite these protests, Putin is still viewed favorably by a large number of Russians. Extempers should be aware of Russia's START accord with the United States and plans to renew it. What they should note in their speech is that Russia likes arms limitation treaties because they cannot afford to keep up with America's nuclear arsenal. Again, Russia is playing politics based on its position of weakness and not of strength. Furthermore, during its invasion of Georgia the Russian army's tanks broke down and its army was not very well disciplined. Although the war was a victory for Russia, its military weaknesses were exposed to Western planners and that is something they have not forgotten. Since this topic area encompasses the Eastern European region

extempers need to be observant of political factors that are at work in those nations. The economic climate has energized far-right parties in nations like the Czech Republic and Hungary and the ouster of Victor Yushenko in Ukraine's presidential contest have led to closer relations between Ukraine and Russia. President Obama's decision to remove missile interceptors from Poland and the Czech Republic was heavily criticized by some in the region as a signal to Moscow that America was abandoning Eastern Europe. Finally, don't forget Russian security problems with Muslim insurgents in Chechnya and the Caucasus region. Although Russia has thought that it could buy peace in these regions or crush rebels with brute force, the suicide attack in Moscow earlier in the year showed that Russia still does not have complete security from Muslim insurgents.

Issues you may face in this round include:

- What the Khordorkovsky episode says about economic freedom in Russia
- If Putin will be Russian president again in the near future
- How Russia's nuclear agreement with the United States will alter Russian defense priorities
- If Russia should abolish conscription
- If Ukraine is turning away from the West
- Why far-right parties are gaining in Eastern Europe and how that impacts European politics
- How Russia can reduce the threat posed by Muslim extremists in the Caucasus

Topic Area #12: US Foreign Policy: The Foreign Perspective

This is a tricky round that the NFL loves to throw at International extempers every year. Essentially, you still need to know what is going on with American foreign policy but the questions ask you to assess the impact that America's foreign policies are having on the nations that are involved. For example, a question about Obama's "reset" policy with Russia will ask you to weigh the impact of that policy upon Eastern Europe. Using sources like the Council on Foreign Relations can provide you with some insight into America's foreign policy goals in the region and the impact that America's actions might have on local populations. As Omar Qureshi suggested in last year's topic area analysis for International extemp, take note of the places that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has traveled to recently because those will likely be issues in this round. Also, global opinion of the United States might have improved since George W. Bush but polls demonstrate that some of the goodwill that Obama initially brought into office and with his speech in Cairo, Egypt (which conservatives keep referring to as the "global apology tour") has been lost because of America's inability to solve the Israeli-Palestinian problem to Arab's liking. Since this round is very broad you can get a question about any nation in the world here, but most of your questions will come down to answering this question: do America's allies/friends view America as being in a position of strength or weakness? If the answer is strength they are more likely to side with America and do our bidding but if they see us in a position of weakness they might be more willing to strike out. This is the impact you will need for a speech in this round and honestly it varies from nation to nation. Nations like Colombia value U.S. protection and see us a way to keep Hugo Chavez at bay in the region. However, nations like North Korea, Iran, and China likely view the U.S. as negotiating from a position of weakness because of its economic recession and overstretched military position. As you close up your research for nationals, it would be wise to scour the international press or do a quick online search for any mention of the United States in these publications. You would be surprised by some of the opinion-editorial pieces that you might come across that express favor and/or disfavor with the United States.

Issues that you may face in this round include:

- Why the Japanese people would like to see the U.S. leave Okinawa
- Why the Middle East is losing faith in President Obama

- Why Obama's favorability ratings are low among Israelis
- How China interprets American foreign policy and how it influences their actions
- If South Korea and/or Japan find the U.S. to be a trusted ally
- The future of America's special relationship with Great Britain under David Cameron
- How much the U.S. should help Greece in dealing with its economic problems

Topic Area #13: The World Economy

The one aspect of International extemp that is harder than United States extemp is how extempers are forced to confront economic issues. In almost every previous topic area extempers could confront an economic question about a specific nation. In this topic area, extempers will need to talk about the health of the entire global economy which is no easy task. However, there are some resources that extempers can use for this round without becoming swamped. First, if you still have *The Economist's* "The World in 2010" publication you will notice that there are some economic predictions in that piece near the end of the magazine. Second, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) publish reports on the health of the global economy and provide predictions for the health of the global economy in future sectors. With the global downturn, many economies that were open to free trade have begun to shut themselves in and the United States, with a Democrat dominated Congress, is less open to free trade deals than it was under the Bush administration. Extempers will hit a few questions in this round where they will have to weigh whether free trade has benefited or hurt nations around the globe. Also, the credit crunch that is affecting the globe from Europe to Japan to the United States will have major impacts on government spending patterns. With more fiscal discipline, countries might gain more control over their economic standing and might be less willing to lend to profligate governments in the future. As with all economic questions, extempers will need to have boatloads of statistics to support them as well as any economic theories that are applicable (David Ricardo's ideas of comparative advantage and his discussions about outsourcing are worth a look for this topic area) but they need to be able to explain to their audience what these statistics mean. I have seen many speeches were extempers recite statistics after statistic but they don't tell me what I'm supposed to know after that statistic has been cited. If you don't do this your audience is going to be confused and you are going to be punished by the rank that you get in the round. Remember, what you get across is just as important as what you say.

Issues you may face in this round include:

- Predicting the future of the global economy (growth or more recession)
- If a global bank tax would be a good idea for the global economy
- The impact of governments reining in spending on the global economy
- If free or fair trade is best for the global economy
- How the international community can improve labor standards
- What steps need to be taken to make the Doha trade round succeed
- The impact of America's economic recession on global markets