## Discussion Questions

# Chapter 12 Foreign Policy and Homeland Security

1. Option: Assign student groups to take a position and argue the pros and cons of the following policy. How much authority should the NSA have to gather information about ordinary Americans in its search for patterns that might alert the agency to risks of terrorism? Should all phone calls and all email messages be monitored for such patterns? What about Web browsing and postings to social network sites such as Facebook? At what point does such government surveillance cross the line and become an invasion of privacy or even a violation of federal laws that are designed to protect citizens’ civil liberties even as the nation pursues its national security goals?
2. Discuss: Is it acceptable to privatize the government function of security? That is, to give 25,000 employees of private contractors (such as Edward Snowden) access to Americans’ private information?
3. Discuss: The large slice of the U.S. budget is spent on defense. The “blowout” pie slice is called “Discretionary spending;” the rest of the U.S. budget is nondiscretionary, that is, we are under obligations to spend it. Is this the proper amount of federal spending on defense? Do you support or oppose this much defense spending as a part of U.S. foreign and defense policy?
4. Discuss: Should the United States view climate change as a national security issue? What policy tools will be used to combat climate change globally?
5. Discuss: Should the United States deploy drones as part of our defense policy? How? Should they be used militarily? For surveillance? What about for surveillance in the United States?
6. Discuss: Is President Obama correct in his view that providing foreign aid is an important policy tool? Why does the United States provide so much aid to Israel, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Egypt? Should the United States continue this aid? Should it focus elsewhere? What kind of aid might be needed in other countries?
7. Discuss: What should the U.S. role be in today’s conflict-riddled world? Should the United States become involved in conflicts in Syria, Ukraine, Sudan, and the Middle East?