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This summer I interned for the bipartisan think tank, the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress in Washington, D.C. During my time there I was exposed to many different aspects that surround the think tank world, especially those that exist within Washington, D.C. One of the most important aspects that the Center offered, which separated it from other think tanks in Washington, was their non-partisan foundation and approach to the projects they researched. This allows the Center to operate without having dedicated loyalties to a specific political party or agenda and thus, allows the Center to approach controversial research topics on a factual, data driven basis. Other highly prominent think tanks in the D.C. area, such as the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Heritage Foundation, or the Brookings Institute, all have known roots and loyalties to political parties. Though the benefits of being sponsored by the Republican or Democratic party is convenient, it eliminates the idea that the data and research published by those institutes to be anything less than agenda pushing for the political party these think tanks represent. The Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress attempts to meet with Congressmen, potential board members, and people of influence in and around D.C.

During my time with the Center I was primarily responsible for researching topics of interest to the think tank. Specifically, various projects that the Center was researching to apply for grants to fund further research into particular fields. While interning the Center received a \$125,000 grant for continuing their research and panel discussions regarding their Cyber-Security Project. The main topic I was responsible for researching regarded the Center's Arab Future Project, which was headed by the State Department to look into the economies of countries in the Middle East and North Africa whom were

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involved in the Arab Spring Uprising in 2011. Applying for the grant with the State Department would allow the Center to look at each country involved on a case-by-case basis, with emphasis on their economics, past investments, and trade relationships with the United States to determine in which of these countries the United States should make a direct foreign investment. This use of soft power diplomacy would be a much more effective approach to bringing some sort of stability into a very unstable region which is attempting to pursue and implement democratic values after being an authoritarian theocracy rooted in the Muslim faith. Through establishing and re-emphasizing old trade relationships with the countries involved in the Arab Spring, the United States would again be an integral trade partner and be able to assist with the democratic change in this highly charged transition of governments.

Arab Spring that started in 2011 and has since continued and continues to change almost daily. While I was at the Center researching Egypt, I experienced the overthrow of the first elected Egyptian President under the new replacement government. President Morsi was removed from power by the military on July 3, 2013 after being given 48 hours to step down from office. This is just one example of how fast passed the think tank world is on topics like the Arab Spring Project. The status quo is always changing and there is constantly new information to be updated.

One of the many aspects of being an intern for the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress was the responsibility of being a liaison for the Center with other think tanks. I had the ability to go to various talks and referendums on the topics I was studying so that the Center could keep up with current information that other think tanks were publishing on the subject. Additionally, I was tasked with gathering an overall

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consensus of information that was being published on relatively new and forming issues or ones that changed almost weekly. This allowed me to hear first hand accounts of research by specialists in that field who were present at the discussions or presentations. A few of the meetings and speeches I attended and observed throughout the summer were focused on the Arab Spring, which was a high area of interest for the Center. Some of these included talks at the United States Institute for Peace that discussed the escalating situations in both Egypt and Syria. A few others were at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars that dealt with how the United States, and potentially other nations, should approach the outplay of events in the Middle East and North Africa. Additionally, there were many hearings on Capital Hill in both the Longworth and Rayburn Buildings that held meetings for these current and ever-changing topics.

As a whole I was absolutely thrilled with my internship. I was truly able to gain a deeper understanding of our country's Legislative System at the national level and to acquire amazing opportunities to hear keynote speakers speak on topics of interest and learned lessons from people working on the Hill, and applying researching skills that were used beyond the classroom and implemented in a real-world setting. After having this summer to be exposed to public policy work and congressional studies, I can say with complete confidence that this is an area I want to pursue after graduation and continue with it into graduate school. As my senior year at Sewanee dawns on me, I look forward to pursuing my interest in public policy and discover what possible career options are open to me. I would like to thank Sewanee's Career Services and the Tonya Public Affairs Internship fund for helping me to explore this incredible internship.