17.471 American National Security Policy

Elements of National Security Policy
Concepts

- National Security Policy
- National Security Policy Making
- National Interests
- Vital Interests
- Politics
- Policy legitimacy
- National Power
National Security Policy

- **Pattern** of government decisions & actions
  - intended to counter **perceived threats** to America's **national interests**, and especially America’s **vital interests**
Key Questions for the Course:

- What are America’s “national interests?”
  - What are America’s *vital interests*?

- Who determines American national interests? Vital interests?
Key Questions for the Course:

- Who and what threatens those interests?
  - How do we determine threats?
- What actions should we take to protect those interests?
  - Who determines priorities?
National Security Policy

- Pattern of government decisions & actions intended to counter perceived threats to American national interests

- Policy = \[ \sum_{\text{time}} \sum_{\text{players}} \text{decisions, laws, rules, actions} \]

- History matters
  - Prior decisions
  - Prior actions/inactions
  - Prior events
National Interests

- Things deemed important for national well-being, prosperity, continuity

- Economic interests
  - access to markets

- Political interests
  - countries with shared interests and values

- Political Values
  - democracy
  - human rights
Vital Interests

- Things deemed *essential* for national well-being, prosperity, continuity
  - things on which our national survival depends
  - what are you willing to sacrifice lives for?

- External Focus
  - Foreign threats

- Internal Focus
  - Education
  - Poverty
  - Environment
America’s Vital Interests

- American territorial integrity
  - Stable and friendly Canada & Mexico
- Preservation of American political and economic institutions
- Safety of Americans at home and abroad
- Strong & Prosperous European free market democracies
Generic Threats

- **Countries**
  - Soviet Union
  - China
  - “axis of evil”

- **Events**
  - War
  - Political and Economic Instability

- **Technology**
  - WMD
  - Terrorism
Specific Threats – Setting Priorities

- Iraqi atomic bomb vs. Pakistani atomic bomb
- Nuclear missiles vs. terrorism
- Collapse of Russian economy & fledgling democracy vs. Collapse of Latin American economies & democracies
- How do we decide?
National Security Policy Making in Theory

- On-going conversation about
  - What are our national & vital interests
  - Who and what threatens them
  - What we should do about it
Politics in Policy-Making

- Facts are not enough to set policy priorities
- Politics = Clash of values & interests in determining policy
  - Clash of “future visions”
    - What “ought to be”
    - How to get there
- Policy legitimacy
  - How policy choices were made
  - Not their “correctness”
National Security Strategies

☐ National Power
☐ Alliances & Coalitions
☐ Collective Security
☐ International Law
National Power

- Capacity to influence the decisions & actions of other countries & actors
  - \( \text{Power} = \frac{\text{Work}}{\text{Time}} \)
  - \( = \text{Force} \times \text{Distance} / \text{Time} \)
Components of National Power

- Military Power
- Economic Power
- Political Power
- Cultural Power

National Power
Bases of Military Power

- Geography
- Natural resources
- Population
- Economy (fiscal resources)
- Industrial capacity
- Technology
- Willingness to Use Force
Bases of Political Power

- Moral authority & Reputation
- Leadership
- Capacity for Diplomacy
- Engagement in Bilateral & International political institutions
  - Organizations
  - Treaties
Bases of Economic Power

- Dominance of Markets & Trading
  - [strategic minerals & resources]
    - Oil in 1940s and 1950s
- Foreign Investment & Fiscal Capacity
  - Capital: Financial Loans, Grants, Aid
- Control of International Financial Institutions
- Boycotts, Embargoes, Blockades
Policy Arenas

- High Policy
  - Should we develop a national missile defense system and how much should we spend?

- Middle Policy
  - What would be the most effective NMD configuration and how should the program be managed?

- Low Policy
  - Which competing interceptor design is best?
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- National Power
Assignment for Wednesday