INTRODUCTION. This course focuses on the strategy of coercive diplomacy as a key policy option available to the U.S. government in times of international crisis and the threat of war. The strategy focuses on the adversary’s political will rather than his military capability and emphasizes the latent threat of force or minimal and selective use of force rather than the employment of a more robust and indiscriminate military capability. The course examines a number of historical cases and then proceeds to analyze more contemporary cases such as those involving U.S. efforts to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Successful coercive diplomacy typically requires a high degree of leadership skills in that policymakers are required to orchestrate diplomatic efforts with threats of force and often with actual demonstrations of force of a highly selective nature.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS. The student’s final grade will be based on the following:

1) Mid-term examination (30%)
2) Final examination (50%)
3) In-class powerpoint presentation of a selected case study and contribution to class discussions (20%)

BOOKS RECOMMENDED FOR PURCHASE:


Dana H. Allin and Steven Simon, The Sixth Crisis: Iran, Israel, America and the Rumors of War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE AND SYLLABUS (AUGUST 24)

II. THE STUDY OF COERCIVE DIPLOMACY

There are a number of reasons for studying the strategy of coercive diplomacy. First, the strategy if successful can result in the avoidance of the escalation of a conflict to full-scale war. Second, case studies can provide policymakers with a framework or template
of what worked or failed to work in previous incidents or crises, i.e. the case studies can have policy-relevance to current and future governmental decisionmaking. Thirdly, case studies have the potential for building theory in the political and decision sciences. Fourthly, case studies have the potential for extending and enriching the students’ understanding of past and current U.S. approaches to U.S. foreign policy, crisis management, and national security decisionmaking.

REQUIRED READING:


Thomas C. Schelling, Arms and Influence. Chapters 1 (“The Diplomacy of Violence” and Chapter 4 (“The Idiom of Military Action”) (Aug 31)

ADDITIONAL READING:


III. PARADIGMATIC CASE STUDY

Various methodologies are available in political science to examine U.S. coercive diplomacy. The methodology adopted in the original wave of studies was that of case study, which will be the approach employed here. Different kinds of case study have been identified in the literature but the so-called paradigmatic / focused, structured comparison will be the specific kind followed here in that a pre-established analytical framework or working template will be used to examine a number of cases. The advantages and limitations of this kind of case study will be discussed in class.
REQUIRED READING


ADDITIONAL READING:

Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005)

IV. JAPAN: PROLOGUE TO PEARL HARBOR

This case study represents a failure in U.S. coercive diplomacy. President Roosevelt tried through sanctions and embargos to keep the Japanese from aggressively building throughout Asia its “Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere” but the effort was not successful. Believing the United States would eventually take military action against Japan, the decisionmakers in Tokyo planned and executed a surprise attack on U.S. naval forces at Pearl Harbor and the United States found itself at the center of World War II.

REQUIRED READING:

Scott D. Sagan, “From Deterrence to Coercion to War: The Road to Pearl Harbor”, Chapter 4 in The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy (Sept 14)


ADDITIONAL READING:


Robert Dallek, Franklin Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979)


V. THE KOREAN WAR

U.S. involvement in the Korean War is a case where policymakers essentially neglected diplomatic courses of action while pursuing coercive escalatory measures against the adversary and the result was a serious strategic setback for the United States on the
Korean Peninsula, in Asia, and in the Cold War. The United States made several efforts
to deter North Korean aggression against South Korea, but in the final analysis the
Truman Administration failed to clearly communicate through policy statements that
South Korea was within the “defense perimeter” of the United States. How important this
failure was in the over-all calculus of the North Korean leadership (and of Moscow and
Beijing) remains unclear. The United States of course also failed later in the conflict in
that it chose not to take seriously China’s warnings about the United States encroaching
on Chinese territory. The result was the Chinese decision to cross the Yalu River which
opened up an entirely new dimension of the war. Here is a classic example of the United
States avoiding diplomatic initiatives and sounding the tocsin for armed intervention.

REQUIRED READING


ADDITIONAL READING


Allen S. Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War (Sept 21)


Robert L. Beisner, Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), Chapters 19, 20 and 23


VI. THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

The Cuban missile crisis is seen by many analysts and policymakers alike as a successful
execution of the coercive diplomacy paradigm. However, recent scholarship into archival
material of JFK’s foreign policy shows that the decision process in the Executive
Committee’s deliberations was in many ways seriously flawed. Nevertheless, the Soviet
missiles were withdrawn without a U.S.-Soviet military confrontation. The basic question
addressed in this section is why the strategy seemed to work. What were the primary elements in the successful resolution of the crisis?

REQUIRED READING:

Alexander L. George, The Cuban Missile Crisis: Peaceful Resolution Through Coercive Diplomacy,” Chapter 6 in The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy (Sept 28)


ADDITIONAL READING:


VII. THE VIETNAM WAR

The Vietnam War is a case where a strategy of coercive diplomacy was consciously pursued by U.S. policymakers at the time but the result was ultimate defeat at the hands of the adversary. Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon all tried their hand at bringing the war to a close but the North Vietnamese prevailed. The Vietnam War is a classic example of what military analysts and policymakers today call “asymmetric warfare” where one side dominates the other in terms of firepower and technological capability but can in the final analysis lose to a determined and committed foe.

REQUIRED READING


ADDITIONAL READING


VIII. PRELUDE TO OPERATION EL DORADO CANYON (LIBYA 1986)

In April 1986 the Reagan Administration carried out a military strike on five target complexes in Tripoli, the capital of Libya. The strike was in part a retaliation for a terrorist bombing at a disco in West Berlin, which resulted in some U.S. casualties and was believed by the Administration to be instigated by Libyan intelligence organizations. For some time Libya had been on the U.S. State Department list as a terrorist state and the disco bombing provided the catalyst for the Administration to employ substantial force against Qaddafi and his government. The Administration’s stated goal was to roll back Qaddafi’s terrorist activities (put him “back in his box”) by means of this military attack.

REQUIRED READING

Tim Zimmermann, “Coercive Diplomacy and Libya,” Chapter 9 in The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy (Oct. 12)


ADDITIONAL READING


George P. Shultz, Turmoil and Triumph (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1993)

Lawrence Freedman, A Choice of Enemies: America Confronts the Middle East (New York: PublicAffairs, 2008)

MID-TERM EXAMINATION (OCT 19)

IX. THE PERSIAN GULF WAR
The 1991 Gulf War or Persian Gulf War started when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and Western powers led by the United States intervened to force the Iraqi dictator to retreat to his own country. Numerous kinds of sanctions had been imposed by the UN and the United States prior to the invasion and intervention but these sanctions failed to deter Iraq from avoiding IAEA inspections of its suspected WMD sites and from threatening his neighbors with aggressive actions.

REQUIRED READING:


ADDITIONAL READING:


Alan Munro, Arab Storm: Politics and Diplomacy Behind the Gulf War (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006)

X. COERCIVE DIPLOMACY AND NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

One can distinguish between two different kinds of U.S. policy toward the proliferation of nuclear weapons. U.S. non-proliferation or anti-proliferation policy seeks to deter or prevent a country from initially acquiring nuclear weapons. U.S. counterproliferation policy seeks to reverse or roll back a country’s nuclear weapons program that has developed some momentum and appears to be on a course that will lead to a credible nuclear capability. The coercive diplomacy paradigm is therefore appropriately addressed to U.S. policies aimed at countering weapons programs already underway. The great concern of the United States with regard to nuclear proliferation is that a country inimical to U.S. national security may use the weapons to advance that country’s terrorist agenda.

REQUIRED READING

XI. NORTH KOREA
For more than a decade the United States has tried to keep North Korea from developing a full-fledged nuclear weapons capability. The United States has so far relied solely on a policy of diplomacy and sanctions to counter North Korea’s progress but to no avail. Although North Korea was a signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in the mid-1960s, it has consistently failed to meet its obligations to the treaty. As in the case of previous Administrations, the Obama Administration has avoided any suggestion that the use of overt force to compel North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons and programs is a near-term policy option.

REQUIRED READING:
Jonathan Pollack, No Exit: North Korea, Nuclear Weapons and International Security (Nov 9)

ADDITIONAL READING:

XII. IRAN

The weight of current evidence uncovered by the International Atomic Energy Agency is that Iran is embarked on a full-fledged nuclear weapons program. So far, the United States has been content to only apply various kinds of sanctions on Iran and has refrained from taking measures that could be identified as latent threats of force as part of a coercive diplomacy strategy. In this section we examine the various options open to the United States as the Iranians continue to make progress in its nuclear weapons program and consider in some detail what a coercive diplomacy strategy might look like should this be the preferred option for the United States.

REQUIRED READING:

Dana H. Allin and Steven Simon, The Sixth Crisis: Iran, Israel, America and the Rumors of War (Nov 16)

ADDITIONAL READING:


Saira Khan, Iran and Nuclear Weapons (London: Taylor Francis Ltd., 2011)


Iran’s Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Capabilities: A Net Assessment. A Strategic Dossier. London: International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2010

THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASS NOVEMBER 23

XIII. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAMINATION (Nov 30)