I. COURSE OVERVIEW, REQUIREMENTS AND READINGS
   A. Staff backgrounds: who we are.
   B. Questions addressed in 17.40 include:
      1. **Explanations** and families of explanations for U.S. policy: which are valid?
         Image I: The nature of individuals.
         Image II: The nature of states and societies.
         Image III: The distribution of international power, and the nature of states' international environment.
      2. **Evaluation** of past U.S. policy. Were the premises behind policy valid or false? Were its results good or bad? Were these results desired or undesired by policy makers?
         a. The policy's effects on the USA and U.S. interests: good or bad?
            -- National security interests: preserving U.S. sovereignty and avoiding war. Have past wars, interventions, doctrines and other policies made the U.S. more or less secure in these terms?
            -- Economic interests, including environmental interests. Have past U.S. policies enhanced these?
            -- Philanthropic interests--promoting human rights or otherwise "doing the right thing." What code of ethics should guide foreign policy? Have past U.S. policies measured up to it?
         b. The policy's effects on other peoples and states.
      3. **Policy prescription**: what should now be done? Regarding, e.g., the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), Iraq, North Korean nuclear weapons, Al Qaeda, China and Taiwan, central Africa's great war, national ballistic missile defense, trade policy, and more.
      4. **Predictions**: what will be done?
   In 17.40 we will focus on issue #2, evaluation, especially of national security policy.
   C. Class requirements and readings.
      -- Discussion sections.
         -- They are important. So ...
         -- Please show up for section and come prepared to participate. We need your help to make sections work!
      -- Congressional hearings and debates in discussion section.
      -- Four papers: two 2-pagers and two 8-pagers. A draft of a long paper must be submitted in advance to your TA.
      -- Two 15-minute quizzes.
      -- One final.
      -- Readings.
   D. Class missions, expectations.
      -- We focus on developing your communication skills because **you will need communication skills to succeed in the real world**. Past MIT alumni reported that they later found they needed more communication and leadership skills to rise to the top in life. We are here to help with that.
      -- **Absolutely no background knowledge of U.S. foreign policy/diplomatic history is assumed** for this course.
      -- Feel free to consult 17.40 staff about non-17.40 stuff like planning your career. We will offer what wisdom we can.
II. WHAT IS POLITICAL SCIENCE?
   A. Experimentation vs. observation. Both methods can work well.
   B. Large-n studies vs. case studies. Both methods work; the nature of
      the data decides which method is stronger.
   C. Accidents, Chaos Theory, and History:
      -- If accidents, personalities, and serendipity shape history, how
        can general theories explain the past? Consider Annie Oakley's
        central role in world history.
      -- Does politics have regularities--laws of motion--like those of the
        physical world?
   D. Why is political science primitive?

III. IMAGE III BACKGROUND FACTORS: THE EVOLUTION OF THE GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION
   OF POWER, 1789-present. See tables from Paul Kennedy, Rise and Fall
   of the Great Powers, and Kenneth Oye, Eagle In a New World, esp.
   tables 6, 17, 18, 31, 35, 4-1, and chart 2 on pages 3, 6, 7, 15, 16,
   19, and 20 (handwritten numeration) of handout.
   A. The nature of international power. Past geopoliticians argued that
      industrial power = military power = power. Is this still true? If
      stateless terrorists buy or steal weapons of mass destruction are
      they powerful? (Yes!)
   B. The amazing growth of American industrial power, 1789-1938. See
      especially Kennedy tables 6, 17, 18.
   C. The delayed growth of American military power, 1789-1943. See
      especially Kennedy tables 19, 31, 35.
   D. The concentration of industrial power in the a few places--North
      America, Europe, and Japan. See especially Oye table 4-1.
   E. Did American foreign and military policy make power-political sense?
      1. U.S. mobilization strategy: frugal prudence or strategic
         blunder?
      2. U.S. geopolitical engagements: did they avert real dangers?
         Specifically, if a state conquered all of industrial Eurasia
         (that is, Western Europe, Russia and Japan) would it then have
         enough power to possibly conquer the U.S.? See table 4-1.
         geopolitical sense? See table 4-1.
   F. The rise of China and the future of global politics. See chart 2.

IV. IMAGE II BACKGROUND FACTORS: THE EVOLUTION OF U.S. POLITICS & SOCIETY
   A. Waning ignorance: the growth of American knowledge of the world.
   B. The democratization of U.S. foreign policymaking.
   C. The changing U.S. economy:
      -- The end of fears of depression after 1941.
      -- The levelling of American society after 1941.
   D. The decline of U.S. white racism and the growth of tolerance.

V. OVERVIEW OF U.S. DIPLOMATIC HISTORY, 1789-PRESENT, AND DEBATES ABOUT IT:
   11 WARS, 5 CRISES & 30+ INTERVENTIONS IN A NUTSHELL
   A. Old-time wars (we won't cover in 17.40):
      1. The "Indian Wars," 1492-1890.
      2. The War of 1812, 1812-1815.
      3. The Mexican War, 1846-1848.
      4. The U.S. Civil War, 1861-1865.
      5. The War with Spain, 1898; the U.S.-Filipino War, 1899-1902.
   B. World War I, 1914-1918: causes of U.S. entry? Wisdom thereof?
      Wisdom of the peace?
      the U.S. wage the war wisely? Was the war preventable? If it was
      preventable, who was most responsible for its outbreak? (FDR? U.S.
      isolationists? Woodrow Wilson and his misbegotten Versailles
      Treaty?)
   D. The Cold War, 1946-1989: who/what caused it? Was it preventable?
Was it necessary? Was it wisely conducted?

E. The Korean War, 1950-1953: who started it? Why did it escalate? Why didn't it lead to World War III? Was U.S. entry wise or necessary? Was U.S. crossing of 38th parallel wise or necessary?


I. The ongoing U.S.-Al Qaeda war; the 2003 U.S.-Iraq war; the U.S.-North Korea crisis; U.S.-China relations.