Foreign Policy Issues

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Summer 2010
What is terrorism?

**Terrorism** — Terrorism is a tactic used by non-state political actors. Terrorism involves the harmful targeting of civilian populations in order to create fear and induce political change.

- You do not have “terrorists” instead you have individuals who employ the tactic of terrorism (e.g. groups can engage in both conventional warfare and terrorist acts).
- States do not commit acts of terrorism.
- Attacks on military targets do not count as acts of terrorism.
Are “terrorists” crazy?

Some (e.g. Post) argue that individuals engaged in terrorism are crazy and suffer from mental deficiencies. These arguments are problematic...

- Does not explain strategic logic — why do groups using terrorism act rationally?
- Why would crazy people form a coherent group?

*It is now generally accepted that individuals/groups using terrorism are strategic actors (e.g. Crenshaw).*
Who uses terrorism?

Typically insurgencies use terrorism.

- **Insurgency** — an armed rebellion by a non-state actor against an authority.
What is the goal of terrorism?

Why use terrorism?

- Intimidate a public such that the government will be more supportive of reforms proposed by the group using terrorism (democracies should be targeted more frequently).
- Generate government reprisals that will spur more public support.
- Convince a segment of the population that the group is strong.
Suicide Terrorism – Acts of terrorism which involve the individual participants sacrificing their lives.

- Most suicide terrorism is not religiously motivated.
  - Group v. Individual motivations.
  - "Brainwashing."
  - Pay-off to family post-martyrdom.
- Most suicide terrorism occurs in Sri Lanka.
Problems Measuring Suicide Terrorism

1. Sometimes individuals don’t know that they are involved in suicide missions.
2. Sometimes individuals accidentally kill themselves.
Is Islam inherently Violent?

Quick answer is no but like any religion extremists can develop.

- **Sharia law** — Islamic law. Multiple versions of Sharia law — Taliban’s version extremely different from mainstream view.
Afghanistan

- Soviet’s involved in civil war from 1979-89.
  - Soviets support social government.
  - Americans (with middle eastern states) support Mujahideen.
- Soviet’s leave Mujahideen take control, Mujahideen break up and fight one another for control.
- Anarchy ensues.
- Taliban takes over until 2001.
Iraq

- Led by Saddam Hussein (Ba‘ath Party).
  - Ba‘ath party is secular pan arab organization.
- United States supports during Iran/Iraq war.
- Iraq invades Kuwait...United States and United Nations attack.
- Economic sanctions imposed by UN/US last years kill millions.
- United States invades again in 2003.
Nuclear Proliferation — The spread of nuclear technology between nations.