

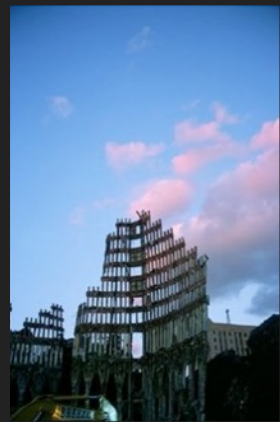


# POLI 142A: United States Foreign Policy



# Terror

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*142A, Lecture 9b*  
*July 27, 2015*



# What is Terrorism?

- Def. Terrorism: Violence with the primary objective of inspiring fear for political purposes
  - Governments/scholars often talk about “non-state actors” in the definition (why?)
  - “Fear for political purposes” can be inspired by states as well as individuals or groups

# What Makes Terror Different

- Political violence can be used in two ways:
  - Denial/conquest/counter-force: physically impose outcomes group/nation prefers
  - Punishment/counter-value: inflict harm until group/nation makes changes by itself

# Terror is Different

- Terrorism is a kind of punishment strategy
  - Terrorist group or nation seeks to get others to change behavior
  - Non-state actors cannot use conquest/denial:
    - Usually too weak
    - Lack resources/organization/equipment

# Terror is Different, cont 2

- So, while terror can be used by any actor
  - It is a weapon of the weak
  - Only action available to weak actors to try to force outcomes it prefers
  - If terrorists had F-18s and smart bombs, they would probably use them.
    - Tactics are determined by the environment

# The Sequence of Conflict

- Mao Zedong:
  - One of the great strategists/theoreticians of unconventional warfare
  - There is a progression or sequence of conflict:
    - Small, weak groups use terror to recruit members and to strike at the state
    - Insurgency evolves from terror
      - “Guerrilla warfare” Ernesto “Che” Guevara
      - Strike weakness with strength

# Sequence of Conflict, cont.

- Eventually, insurgency evolves into conventional armed conflict
  - Mao is clear that terror/insurgency NEVER work by themselves.
  - Unconventional battle is preparatory to conventional battle
  - Sequence can move back and forth (up and down the scale of conflict intensity)



# The Impotence of Terror

- Basically, terror seldom (if ever) works
  - Terrorist acts usually result in reprisals
  - Cannot force opponents to accommodate terrorist demands
  - High risk of alienating “friends”
  - “Gnat biting an elephant”

# Impotence of Terror, cont.

- Why do we see terrorism (if it does not work)?
  - Most of the time, we don't
    - There are far, far more people unhappy with politics than there are terrorists
  - Preference outliers
    - “Terrorist Extremist” is redundant
- Priming the sequence of conflict
  - Mao/Che - terror can turn into something

# Conclusion

- Terrorism instills fear as method of punishment
  - Proximate goal is to compell political change
  - Often equally important as “marketing tool”
- Bottom rung sequence of unconventional war
- Terror is the weapon of the weak
  - But the strong use it as well
  - Seldom works, difficult to defeat