Security, Identity, and Terrorism

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- "Of course I support blowing up, it is our right. Maybe no one will sympathize with us when they hear that children blow themselves up, but that, that's called heroism."

  Sabrine, 19 years old interviewed on PA (Palestinian Authority) TV

Can we try to learn about terrorism through security?

- Very emotional subject – understanding terrorism is equivalent to justifying terrorism

- "How can the peace-loving people on the planet escape the plight that terrorizes them? How can people learn to walk daily in the valley of the shadow of death, without fear, but in knowledge that no government can protect everyone and everything, everywhere?" (Kegley Jr, 2003: 2)

What is terrorism?

- There is no agreed upon definition

- Very controversial

- "One person's terrorist will ever remain another's freedom fighter"

Key features (see Cronin: 2002):

- Terrorism always has a political nature (about justice, or someone's perception of it)

- Non-state character (non-state actors, even when supported by states through military, political, economic, or other means)

- Deliberately targets the innocent – innocent people are victims but not the target audience – governments, sources of power usually target audience

- Do not abide by international law, and are deliberately unpredictable (maximize psychological effect)

What terrorism/terrorists are not:

- Not an identity (like being "British")
- Not inherently unifying (not all terrorists have the same goals, same opponents, or belong to the same groups or organizations)
- Not well defined

One possible definition (Cronin):

"Terrorism is the threat or use of seemingly random violence against innocents for political ends by a nonstate actor"

- Modern terrorism originated with French Revolution
- Dependent on political and historical context
- Broadly aimed against: 1. empires, 2. colonial powers, and now 3. US led international system and globalization
- Power struggle – central vs. local, big vs. small, modern vs. Traditional
- Centres on tension between the have and have-nots, the elite vs. the underprivileged
- Linked to independence, self-determination, autonomy
- Psychologically oriented – rooted in creation of identities
- Religious-based terrorism not new – continuation of power struggles
- Alienation and powerlessness strong motivations for would-be terrorists
- Dangerous because not sufficient to reform system – want to replace it

Is there "good" terrorism?

"Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism"

UN General Assembly Resolution 51/210

Adopted 17. December 1996 without dissent

"The resolution 'strongly condemns all acts, methods and practices of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, wherever and by whomsoever committed' and goes on to reiterate 'that criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other nature that may be invoked to justify them.'" (Weiss 2002: 13)

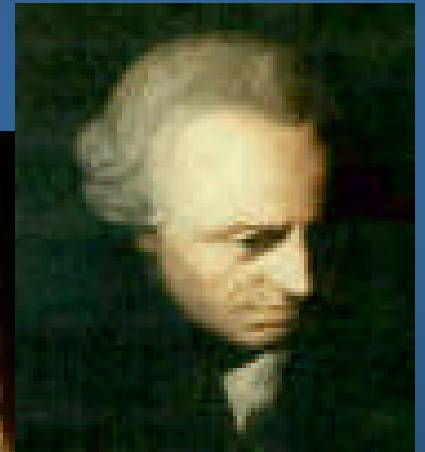# International Law: state-centric approach

- What states agree to has no bearing on what terrorists "agree" to

- UN resolutions fall on deaf ears

Using security theory to learn about terrorism depends on our view as understood by international relations theory
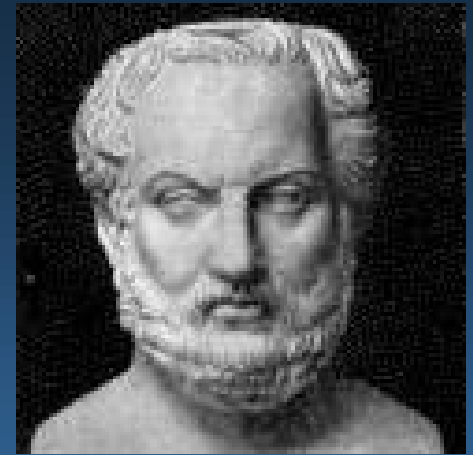
- IR theory presents different ways to see and understand our world

- These views also influence what we are willing to see . . . .

World Politics 101-
(or '3 mainstream theories to understanding your world')

- Realism
- Rationalism
- Idealism

Realism

Thucydides - 4th century BC

- anarchy – war of all against all
- sovereignty – antagonistic supreme authority
- state – primary actor
- national interest – equated with individual self-interest>primary goal
- state of war – natural condition
- physical security (military) primary, more important than economic
- economics – protectionist
- history unchanging – progress unlikely
- power – relative gains, balance of power
- morality – of the state
- objective view (study the world from a distance – something the researcher is NOT part of but a disconnected object of study)

Rationalism

- anarchical society
- sovereignty – important but reduced through international law
- state important, but many actors – international organizations, corporations, public.
- national interest consistent with other national interests
- natural condition – peace (but war, especially 'just war', not eliminated)
- economic security as important as physical – free trade
- human nature changes - progress possible
- absolute gains
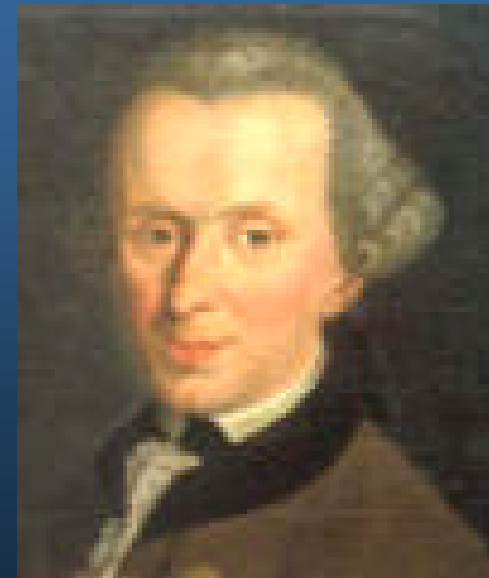- morality – reason
- objective view

Jeremy Bentham 1748-1832

Idealism

- cosmopolis
- sovereignty – eliminated?
- actors – public opinion, individuals rank very high
- no national interest – harmony of interests
- natural condition – peace (war eliminated)
- security of one is security of all
- economics – free trade (brings peace and prosperity)
- human nature changes – progress inevitable (ie: Kant or Marx)
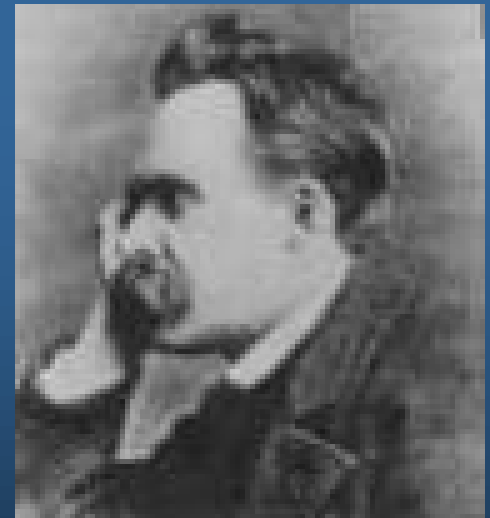- morality – reason or divine source
- objective view

Immanuel Kant 1724 - 1804

Critical Theory (World Politics 102)

- Anarchy/society – all social constructs

- Sovereignty – social construct

- Actors – anyone and everyone – no predetermined legitimate actors

- National interest – social construct, impossible to embody all true interests into one grand meta interest

- Natural condition – condition of largely unrecognized inequalities due to fabricated constructs that we use to create our world

- Security – rooted in inequalities – will never have security without address for inequalities

- Economics – a condition of gross inequality

- Human nature – socially constructed to conform to dominant interests

- Morality – socially constructed, but should be rooted in interest to address inequalities

- Subjective view broadly speaking challenging the global order, the researcher acknowledges her place in the system she is analyzing

Friedrich Nietzsche 1844-1900

What is security?

- Traditionally state-centric, often associated with realism

- In so far as traditional security has any bearing on the people within the state, it is largely with regard to the elites

- Within the traditional parameters, security requires a sense of urgency and legitimacy to use extraordinary means

- The military is the tool of security, emerging swiftly, responding to unfairness, conquering space

- The possibility of altering the existence of the state is what is equated to security.

- Therefore security exists to secure the state, largely regardless of, and disconnected, from its 'contents'.

As such . . . .

- Security very much like 'trickle-down' economics' created by elite interests

- Security 'trickles-down' to those residing within the state, assuming that when the state is secure, so would be its contents.

What then?

- Is the state apparatus, which determines security threats, dependent upon the interests of the contents of the state, the people who reside within it?

- How is a threat to the people determined? By the state apparatus/elites?

- Must a certain percentage of the population come to harm before a situation is deemed a matter of security?

- What is required to put the 'trickle-down' (state-centric) security in motion?

- If the people are threatened, is the state also threatened (do security needs 'trickle-up?)
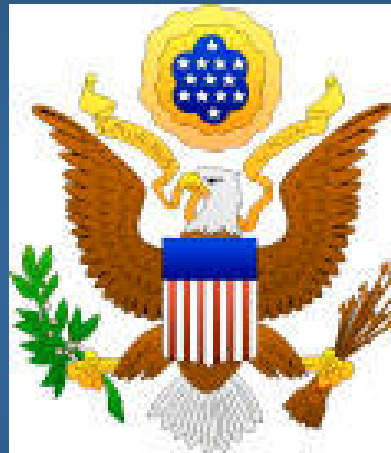
Realism and state security

- Realism (and liberalism for that matter) support a strong state-centric focus

- Can we understand terrorism through state security?

- A focus on state security falls within the traditional realist camp

- Understanding and responding to security through a state-centric lens leads to problems

- "The threats we are now confronting have roots in surprising places. And yet, even after September 11, and now post-Operation Iraqi Freedom, national security by and large continues to be defined in the traditional way. Threats are concrete, specific, and grounded in material capabilities. At issue, for the most part, are political-military questions such as power, territory, alliances, credibility, and prestige. Most important, the response when challenged is to deploy the tried and true elements of realpolitik – military action, coalition building, threats and promises, intervention overt and covert."

  Michael J. Mazarr, Professor of National Security Strategy, U.S. National War College

As we gather tonight, hundreds of thousands of American servicemen and women are deployed across the world in the war on terror. By bringing hope to the oppressed, and delivering justice to the violent, they are making America more secure.

- Protection comes in the form of a militarized and miltarily-dependent state.

- *The first to see our determination were the Taliban, who made Afghanistan the primary training base of al Qaeda killers.*

- Al Qaeda men dehumanized – killers. In practice or reality they no different than any other military or government machine

- *Having broken the Baathist regime, we face a remnant of violent Saddam supporters. Men who ran away from our troops in battle are now dispersed and attack from the shadows. These killers, joined by foreign terrorists, are a serious, continuing danger. Yet we're making progress against them. . . . Of the top 55 officials of the former regime, we have captured or killed 45.. . . We are dealing with these thugs in Iraq, just as surely as we dealt with Saddam Hussein's evil regime.. . . The killing fields of Iraq -- where hundreds of thousands of men and women and children vanished into the sands -- would still be known only to the killers.*

- Not just al Qaeda are 'killers', but Iraqi men. Demonized. Acceptable to kill them (no justice through law, courts, etc – not worthy of such treatment as non-humans)

We also hear doubts that democracy is a realistic goal for the greater Middle East, where freedom is rare. Yet it is mistaken, and condescending, to assume that whole cultures and great religions are incompatible with liberty and self-government. I believe that God has planted in every human heart the desire to live in freedom. And even when that desire is crushed by tyranny for decades, it will rise again . . . As long as the Middle East remains a place of tyranny and despair and anger, it will continue to produce men and movements that threaten the safety of America and our friends..

Double-speak.

America can value the 'other', the 'demon', when it falls in line according to the prescribed values. However, America is apparently aware that the well-being of people in the (in this case) Middle East is linked to their own well-being and security

boys and girls of Afghanistan are back in school. With the help from the new Afghan army, our coalition is leading aggressive raids against the surviving members of the Taliban and al Qaeda. The men and women of Afghanistan are building a nation that is free and proud and fighting terror.

- Women of Afghanistan, Iraq, are acknowledged once they are saved. They are free only according to the standards set by the dominant discourse.

Identities

- Muslim men cast in role of "bad" patriarchs
- Muslim women victims (until "liberated" or made free by the liberator)
- United States in the role of the "good" protector, guardian of freedom
- These are identities imposed by the state discourse

- "The security threats the United States faces today have everything to do with the pressures of modernity and globalization, the diaphanous character of identity, the burden of choice, and the vulnerability of the alienated."

Michael Mazurr

United States and Terrorism

- US adept at destroying state governments and using armed forces

- Less adept at using intelligence, law enforcement, economic sanctions, educational training, financial controls, public diplomacy, coalition building, international law, and foreign aid (Cronin, 2002).

- "The barbarity of the 'new world order' aims at little more than preserving the present configuration of property and privilege. No wonder the license of September 11 is not considered valid by so many!" (Desai, 2004)

The state is not sufficient

- Security is complex
- Other securities needed to responsed to failures of a state-centric focus (a secure state can be a threat to the people within it)
- NOT one-sided, narrow, condition-orientation of security (state – secure or not secure)
- security comes in many forms in many spaces and times.including economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, cultural, societal and political security.
- Security is in flux, and ignoring the multiple dimensions and dynamics of the security relationship does not make them disappear or become irrelevant in reality; at the same time, *the state is not eliminated*, but is a recognized, integral player in security.
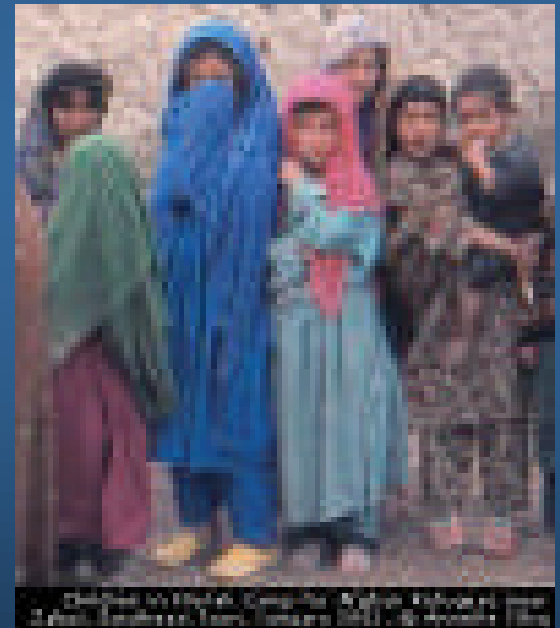
Different approaches to security

- International security

- Regional security

- State security

- Societal security

- "Human" security

Securities relevant to nonstate actors: Societal security and Human security

HUMAN SECURITY

- Expanded notion of security
- Popularized in 1994 in the UNDP Human Development Report
- 'Freedom from Fear, Freedom from Want'
- Identified 7 broad categories of security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political
- Individual, not state, is focus

Traditional versus Human Security

- HS too broad – all 'motherhood and applepie', and means nothing

- Cannot identify all security needs of all individuals – need to restrict

- 'Security' is different from everyday security – High politics, state-oriented, urgent action of extraordinary means (usually military)

Societal security - identity

- societal security is about "identity, the self-conception of communities, and those individuals who identify themselves as members of a particular community." (Ole Wæver, 1995, 1998)

- complicates security, not only adding another 'legitimate' voice to the security dynamic, but one which is determined on the basis of diverse identities and can therefore reflect diverse security needs.

- identities securitized through societal security, to deal with such stresses as 'Europeanization', and to extrapolate from that 'Americanization' and globalization.

Is societal security important?

- societal security is recognized as a security sector independent of state security but important to the dynamic of state legitimacy (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998)

- identity is an important part of the security dynamic, and is a valid "security strategy."

- Security as a democratic process gives greater potential to voice identities and give them space in the security agenda

How does human and societal security help us learn about terrorism?

- It is now frequently argued that removing the sources of alienation from "powerless" societies could reduce the attractiveness of terrorist networks

- Be aware of identity and societal security – supporting the positive creation and development of identities through culture (for example)

- Note that the securities, and often international and state securities which are furthered through such processes such as globalization, reduces the human and societal securities of the less powerful