Terrorism, Civil War, and Non-State Threats

Princeton University
Fall Semester, 2016

Tuesday - Thursday 9-10:30am
Robertson 020

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Terrorism, Civil War, and Non-State Threats is a seminar devoted to understanding (1) non-state security threats including forms of political violence other than interstate war and (2) how policy makers can—and sometimes cannot—take action to ameliorate the threat from non-state violence. The course will require careful reading of 1-2 policy statements and 2-3 moderately technical articles each week on topics including: terrorism, the causes of civil war, the duration and cessation of civil war, the transition from violence to democracy, violence and social order, economic development and violence, the institutional structure of insurgent organizations, government violence and expropriation, revolution, and ethnic violence.

Course Requirements:

1. Class participation, 35%. Since this is a seminar I expect that you will complete all the required readings before class to the point where you can critique or defend any reading. Feel free to work in groups and pool notes, I will never know if you don’t actually do the reading if the notes are good and it’s good training for the future.

Here are some thoughts on how to attack the readings:

- Some of the readings are descriptive, these are intended to provide context for thinking about a specific kind of threat. As you read these try to identify key facts or examples that you find puzzling and/or surprising.
- Some of the readings are theoretical, providing you with ways of thinking about the phenomena we are studying. Before approaching each theoretical reading think about the key questions from previous weeks and how that reading relates to things we covered in previous weeks. Then skim over the reading to get a sense of the themes it covers, and, before reading further, jot down what questions you hope the reading will be able to answer for you. Next, read the introduction and conclusion. This is normally enough to get a sense of the big picture. Ask yourself: Are the claims in the text surprising? Do you believe them? Can you think of examples of

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1 Courtesy of Professor Macartan Humphrey’s excellent graduate syllabus on political violence.
places that do not seem consistent with the logic of the argument? Is the reading answering the questions you hoped it would answer? If not, is it answering more or less interesting questions than you had thought of? Next ask yourself: What types of evidence or arguments would you need to see in order to be convinced of the results? Now read through the whole text, checking as you go through how the arguments used support the claims of the author.

- For any reading you should keep notes as you read. When you come across issues that you are not convinced by, write them down and bring them along to class for discussion. Also note when you are pleasantly surprised, when the author produced a convincing argument that you had not thought of.

2. Develop some expertise, 35%. You and your classmates will be placed into teams of 2 or 3 (depending on class size) to become our class expert for a specific non-state threat. We will work as a class to make a list of threats during our first meeting, but here are a few examples of organizations current and past organizations that could be or were considered non-state security threats:

1. Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan
2. Afghan Taliban
3. Sinaloa Cartel
4. Islamic State
5. Boko Haram
6. Earth Liberation Front
7. Lords Resistance Army
8. African National Congress
9. USAID/World Bank
10. Allied Democratic Forces
11. Democracy International
12. Lord’s Resistance Army
14. Greenpeace

For each threat your team will produce a fact sheet that should include sections addressing the following:
- Short description of the organization/threat.
- Why does this group use violence and/or why is it a security threat?
- For violent groups were other means available to achieve the political end?
- Why did people take part? Why did non-participants support the organization?
- Did the violence achieve its purpose and/or has the organization been successful at its stated goal?
- Was the violence justified or what arguments do proponents offer for the organization’s activities?
- What could be done to reduce the threat from this organization?
- Describe a question this case raises for approaches to non-state security threats broadly understood.

Fact sheets should be posted on Blackboard before class and provided as a handout. Feel free to include links to images and videos. We will choose presentation dates on the first day of class.

3. There will be a term paper on some aspect of a non-state security threat, 30%. The research paper should be exactly as long as needed to address the issue it studies, approx. 20 pages is typical.
I will not allow incompletes in this course, so please plan accordingly. Papers will be due at 4:30 p.m. on January 17, Dean’s Date. No late papers will be accepted under any circumstances.

Readings:

Books can be purchased online or I can place them on reserve at Stokes Library. Articles can be downloaded and book chapters will be available on Blackboard or library e-reserves.

We will divide the course into three sections:
1. Terrorism
2. Civil War
3. Policy Responses

Depending on class interest we may curtail the section on policy to spend a week or two discussing additional non-state threats. Possible examples include climate change, piracy, or fresh water shortages.

SECTION 0: THINKING HARD ABOUT EVIDENCE

Week 1 (9/20 & 9/21 – not reschedule of 9/22 class to 9 a.m. on 9/21)
Presentation by Mike and Hoot re. Haqqani Network

Policy Readings
- Everyone brings their own, come prepared to discuss briefly:
  o What is the argument?
  o What is the evidence adduced for it?
  o Is it credible?

Academic Readings
4. A smorgasbord on ML and social science, including:
   i http://stanford.edu/~jgrimmer/bd_2.pdf
   iii http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~hal/Papers/2013/ml.pdf

SECTION 1: TERRORISM

Week 2 (9/27 & 9/29): Strategic Purposes and Threat
Presentation by Alex L. and Hoot on MQM
Policy Readings

- http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/57618/michael-scott-doran/somebody-else-civil-war

Academic Readings

2. Why suicide terrorism?

Week 3 (10/4 & 10/6): Organizing Terror
Presentation by Jonathan and TBD on OAS

Policy Readings

- http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2002/03/01/al_qaeda_the_ngo

Academic Readings


**Week 4 (10/11 & 10/13): Motivation of Terrorists**

**Presentation by Alex K. and Julia on Boko Haram**

**Policy Readings**

- http://www.newstatesman.com/2014/10/portsmouth-kobane

**Academic Readings**


Recommended for critique of reading #1 that we will discuss:


**Week 5 (10/18 & 10/20): Motivation of Terrorists’ Supporters**

**Presentation by Asha and Steven re. Islamic State**

**Policy Readings**


**Academic Readings**

1. Your choice of these two:
a. C. Christine Fair, Neil Malhotra, and Jacob N. Shapiro. “Faith or Doctrine? Religion and Support for Political Violence in Pakistan.” *Public Opinion Quarterly*


**SECTION 2: CIVIL WAR**

Policy Readings Germane to the Whole Section


**Week 6 (10/25 & 10/27): Causes and Duration of Civil War**

Presentation by Ann and Oscar re. FARC/UP

Policy Readings

- [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2003/05/01/the_market_for_civil_war](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2003/05/01/the_market_for_civil_war)

Academic Readings


**Week 7 (11/8 & 11/10): Settling Civil Wars**

**Presentation by Paco and Sadja on Anonymous**

**Policy Readings**
- [http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/12/10/obstacles-to-ending-syrias-civil-war/](http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/12/10/obstacles-to-ending-syrias-civil-war/)

**Academic Readings**


**Week 8 (11/15 & 11/17): Why People Fight**

**Presentation by Gillian and Mor on PKK**

**Policy Readings**
- [http://www.fpri.org/enotes/20060331.sicherman.balkanghost.html](http://www.fpri.org/enotes/20060331.sicherman.balkanghost.html)
- [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/13/rogue_generals](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/13/rogue_generals)
- [http://www.merip.org/mero/mero041311](http://www.merip.org/mero/mero041311)

**Academic Readings**


**SECTION 3: POLICIES TO COMBAT NON-STATE THREATS**

**Week 9 (11/29 & 12/1): Counterterrorism and COIN**

**Policy Readings**

- [http://www.e-ir.info/2013/08/03/counterinsurgency-the-graduate-level-of-war-or-pure-hokum/](http://www.e-ir.info/2013/08/03/counterinsurgency-the-graduate-level-of-war-or-pure-hokum/)

**Academic Readings**

1. FM 3-24, ch. 1.

**Week 10 (12/6 & 12/8): Development**

**Policy Readings**


**Academic Readings**


**Week 11, part 1 (12/13): Peacekeeping, Top-down and Bottom-up**

**Policy Readings**


**Academic Readings**


**Week 11, part 2 (12/15): Demobilization, and Reintegration (or not)**

**Policy Readings**

- [http://www.ideaspaz.org/portal/media/docs/cartagenacontribution.pdf](http://www.ideaspaz.org/portal/media/docs/cartagenacontribution.pdf)

**Academic Readings**


