

# Suicide Terrorism/Nuclear Proliferation

William Spaniel

[williamspaniel@gmail.com](mailto:williamspaniel@gmail.com)

[wjspaniel.wordpress.com](http://wjspaniel.wordpress.com)

# Administrative Stuff

- No class next week. (I know this terribly disappoints you. Sorry.)

# “The Game Theory of Baseball”



- Fireside Chat at the Drama House
- Billed as Rev. Dr. William J. O’Malley, Jr. PhD (Soon to Be Esquire)
- April 19
- 8 pm
- Learn how to catch a baseball at a game!

# But First...Pop Quiz!

- Quiet, please.
- Take out a sheet of paper and write your name at the top.
  - Make sure your name is legible. I'm grading these this time.

# Pop Quiz

1. The Tamil Tigers are primarily based in
  - a. Sri Lanka.
  - b. China.
  - c. Syria.
  - d. The Seneca Falls Zoo.

# Pop Quiz

2. Robert Pape argues that
  - a. suicide terrorism is on the rise because it works.
  - b. most suicide terrorists are uneducated, unemployed, single men.
  - c. suicide terrorism is almost exclusively utilized by Islamic extremists.
  - d. “pink slime” is yummy.

# Pop Quiz

- Please rip your name off the top of the paper and pass them to the front.

# Part I: Everything You Know about Suicide Terrorism Is Wrong

# Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism

- Suicide terrorism is not just for Islamic extremists.
  - Tamil Tigers have executed more suicide bombings than any other group.



# Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism

- Suicide terrorism is not just for Islamic extremists.
  - Tamil Tigers have executed more suicide bombings than any other group.
- Suicide terrorists are not just young, disgruntled, unemployed, unmarried men.

American Airlines  
# 11



Al Suqami



Waleed M. Alshehri



Wail M. Alshehri



Alomari



Atta

American Airlines  
# 77



Moqed



Almihdhar



Nawaf Alhazmi



Salem Alhazmi



Hanjour

United Airlines  
# 93



Alghamdi



Al Haznawi



Alnami



Jarrah

United Airlines  
# 175



Al-Shehhi



Alghamdi



Al Qadi Bannhammad



Hamza Alghamdi



Alshehri

# Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism

- Suicide terrorism is strategic.
  - Leaders of terrorist groups almost always have *political* goals.
  - Demonstrates resolve.

# A Brief Rant about Mathematical Modeling

- Common criticism of rational choice modeling of terrorism: “people who kill themselves are not rational.”
- In math world, rational  $\neq$  sensible.
  - “Rational” just means that an actor’s preferences are complete and transitive.
  - Thus, we can model actors with silly preferences—including those with a death wish.

# Which of these People Is Rational?

## Person 1

- “I prefer the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim to the New York Yankees. I also prefer the New York Yankees to the Chicago Cubs. And I prefer the Chicago Cubs to the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim.”

## Person 2

- “I prefer blowing myself up to kill five people to working a 9-5 desk job. I prefer working a 9-5 desk job than being in Will’s recitation. And I prefer blowing myself up to kill five people than being in Will’s recitation.”

# Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism

- Suicide terrorism is strategic.
  - Leaders of terrorist groups almost always have *political* goals.
  - Demonstrates resolve.
- Suicide terrorism did not begin in 9/11.
  - Pape's article gives a detailed history from 1980 forward, and there are plenty more instances before then.

# Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism

- Suicide terrorism *works*.
  - Lebanon 1983
  - Gaza Strip 1994
  - West Bank 1995
  - Sri Lanka 1990
  - Turkey 1990

# Part II: A Brief History of Nuclear Weapons

# Can You Name...

- The ten countries today with nuclear functioning nuclear weapons?
  - I use the word “functioning” loosely for one of them.
- The four countries that once had nuclear weapons but gave them up?

# United States (1945)

- Manhattan Project
- Dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ending World War II
- Would have been a lot worse if the Nazi scientists beat us to it.



# Soviet Union (1949)

- The Soviets had spies in the Manhattan Project.
- US knew the Soviets were developing a bomb but chose not to launch preventive war.
  - War exhaustion from World War II?
- Cold War starts in earnest.

# United Kingdom (1952)

- Tube Alloys
- Agreement with the United States.

# France (1960)

- France and the United States do not have as intimate a relationship as the U.S. and the U.K.
- Concern that the U.S. would not use its nuclear arsenal to defend France.
  - Therefore, nukes.

# China (1964)

- They have them. Let's just move on.

# India (1974)

- India does not like Pakistan very much.
- Tested the “Smiling Buddha,” a “peaceful nuclear explosion,” in 1974.
- Remained mostly dormant until 1998. (Hold that thought.)

# Israel (1979)

- Israel does not have nuclear weapons.

# South Africa (1979)

- The Vela Incident
  - A US satellite (Vela Hotel) detected a flash in the Atlantic Ocean between South Africa and Antarctica.
- Built due to concerns of civil war spillover from Angola.
  - #2 silliest historical fact I know of.
- Dismantled at the end of Apartheid.

# #1: The Fall of the Berlin Wall



# Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine (1991)

- When the Soviet Union dissolved, nuclear weapons were leftover in these countries.
- Moscow still controlled the launch codes.
  - But, with enough time, the governments could have hacked the bombs.
- Governments were flat broke, however.
- Transferred the bombs back to Russia in exchange for international aid.

# Pakistan (1998)

- Five weeks after India's nuclear tests in 1998, Pakistan tested six bombs.
- Pakistan is now "too nuclear to fail."
- The A.Q. Khan network

# North Korea (2005)

- Conducted a (relatively crappy) explosion in 2005 and 2006.
- But a crappy bomb on Seoul...



# North Korea (2005)

- Conducted a (relatively crappy) explosion in 2005 and 2006.
- But a crappy bomb on Seoul...
- They have tentatively traded us their bombs for a billion pounds of food (seriously).

# Iran (2013)

- ?

# Questions

- Nuclear weapons are costly. Why do some states pursue them? Why do the other states *not* pursue them?
- Do nuclear weapons promote peace or risk war?
- If a nuclear war were to happen, what strategies should states adopt?