

International Relations 101: Terrorism and Insurgency

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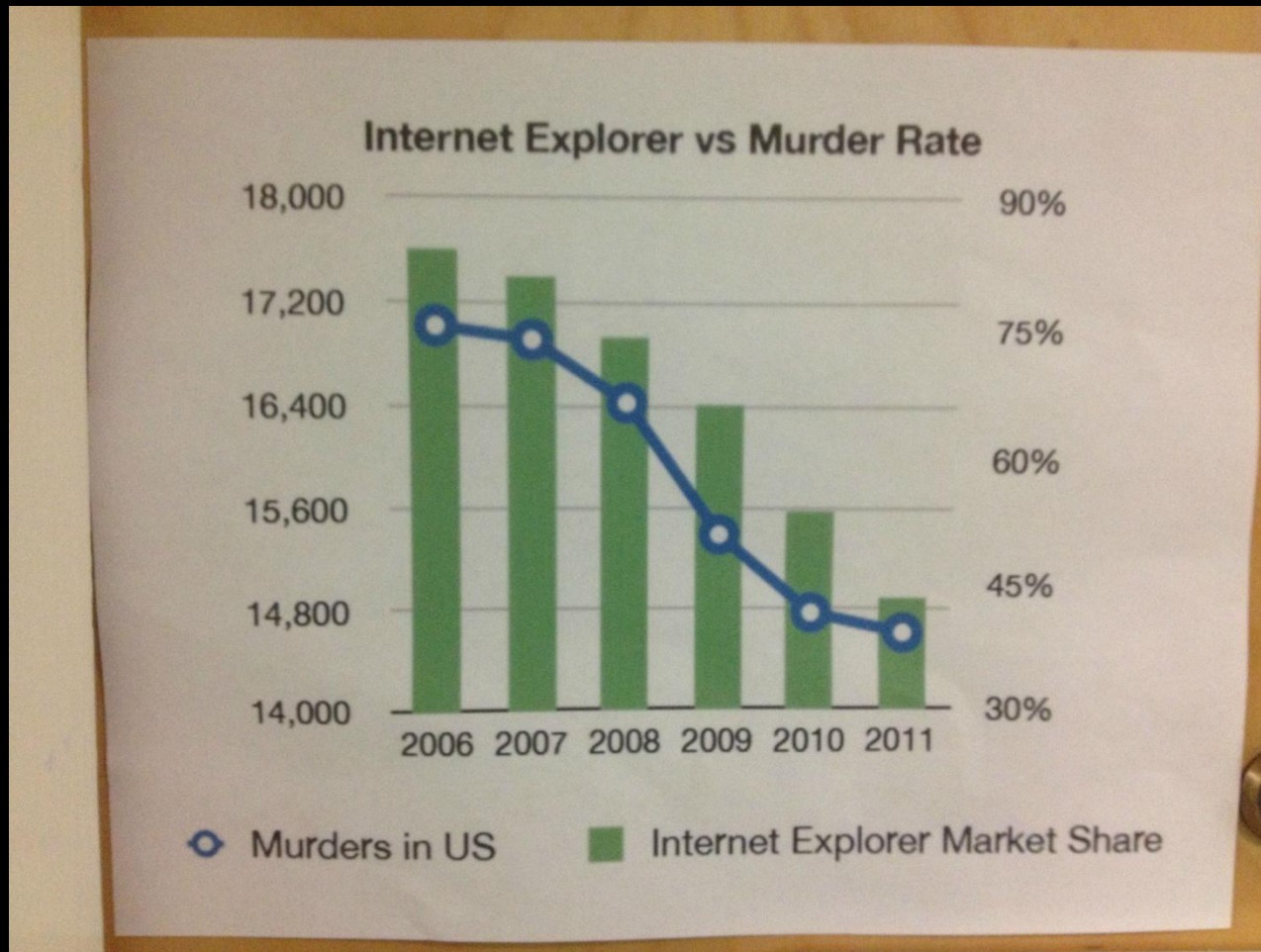
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- If 95% of students in my recitations complete them, *everyone* will receive a third of a letter grade increase in their section grade.
 - This amounts to a one in three chance of raising your class grade from a B+ to an A-, etc.
- Some people never show up to recitation, so if you are here, you basically need to do it.

End of Semester Calendar

- Today: Terrorism
- Monday: Nukes
- Wednesday: Bargaining with Iran
- Next Week's Recitation: *The Princess Bride*, soccer penalty kicks, and Debs and Montiero
 - Perhaps insurgency (time permitting)

End of Semester Calendar

- The week after next in class: China, wrap up.
- The week after next recitation: None scheduled.
 - Friday is reading period.
 - I will do a review session at noon. Location TBA.
- May 6, night: Another review session, TBA
- May 7, 8:30 am: Final



Friendly Correlation vs. Causation Reminder

Terrorism

1. Rationality
2. Why suicide?
3. Spoiling

Terrorism

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2. Why suicide?
3. Spoiling

Big question: Are terrorists
rational?

Which of these People Is Rational?

Person 1

- “I prefer the Los Angeles Angels to the Milwaukee Brewers. I prefer the Milwaukee Brewers to the Chicago Cubs. And I prefer the Chicago Cubs to the Los Angeles Angels.”

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 to being stuck with Will as my TA. And I prefer blowing myself up to kill five people to being stuck with Will as my TA.”

What Is Rationality?

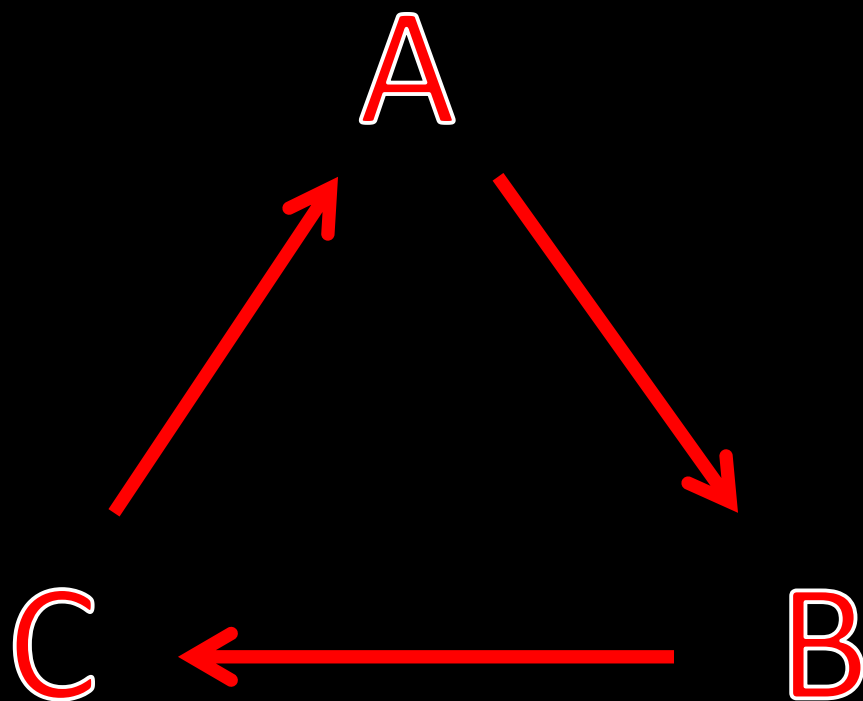
- An actor is *rational* if his preferences are *complete* and *transitive*.
- Rational \neq Sensible

Completeness

- Given any pair of alternatives A and B, an actor must prefer A to B, prefer B to A, or be indifferent between A and B.
- “Decline to state” is not an option.

Transitivity

- Given three alternatives A, B, and C, if an actor prefers A to B and prefers B to C, then he must prefer A to C.
- No cycles!



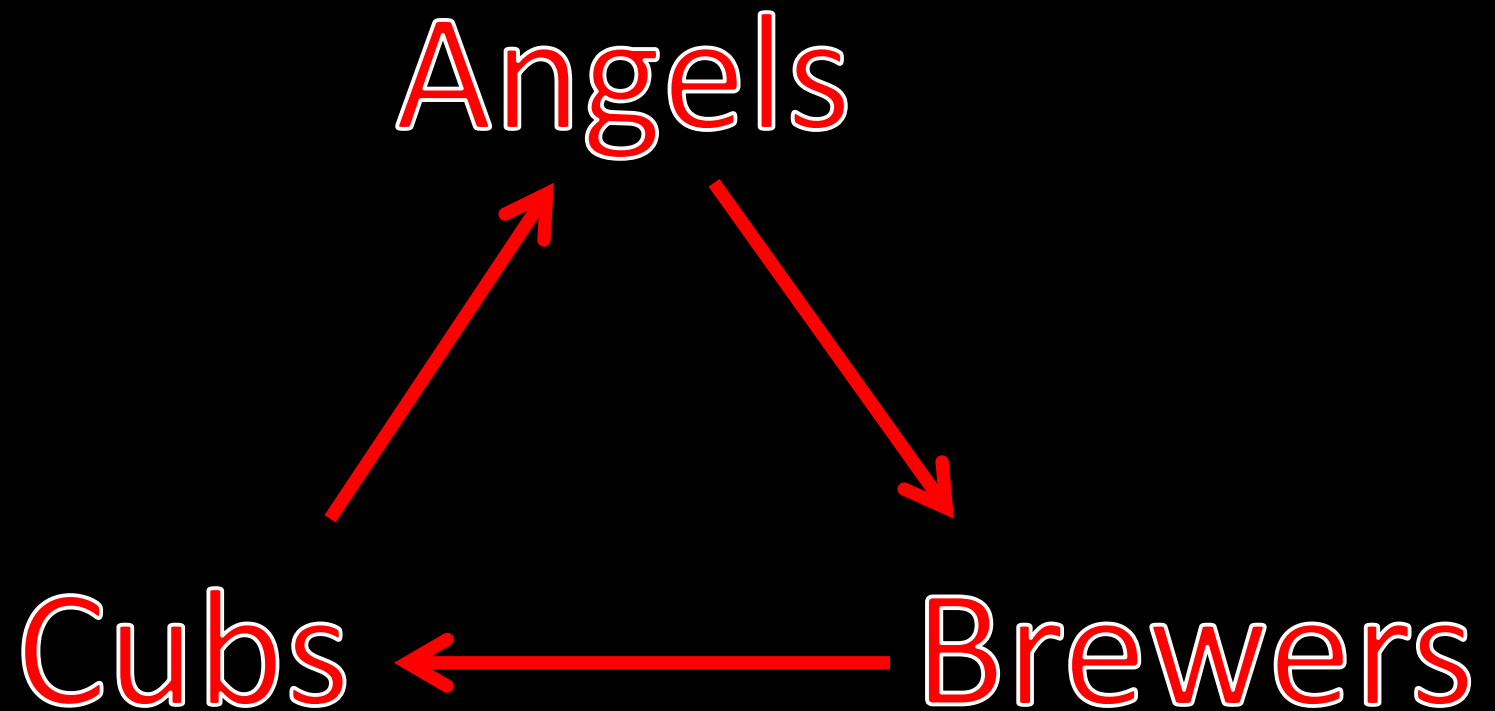
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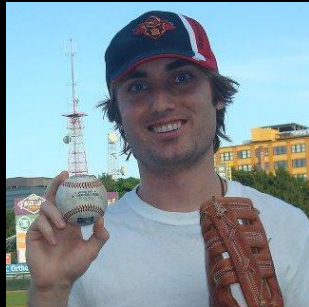
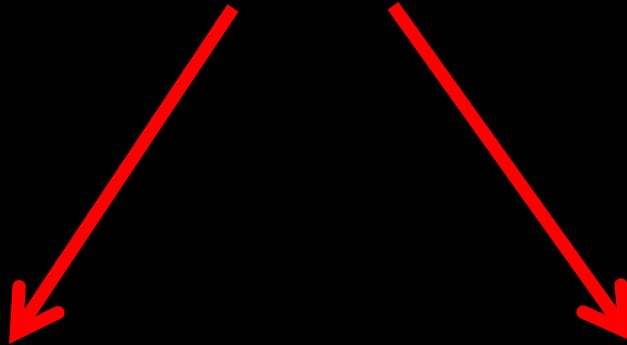
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Suicide Bombing



9-5

Which of these People Is Rational?

Not Rational and Not Sensible

- “I prefer the Los Angeles Angels to the Milwaukee Brewers. I prefer the Milwaukee Brewers to the Chicago Cubs. And I prefer the Chicago Cubs to the Los Angeles Angels.”

Rational but Not Sensible

- “I prefer blowing myself up to kill five people to working a 9-5 desk job. I prefer working a 9-5 desk job to being stuck with Will as my TA. And I prefer blowing myself up to kill five people to being stuck with Will as my TA.”

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 - Possibly the worst argument ever.
 - EVAH! It's as bad as institutions are good!

Reality

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- Terrorists have well-defined goals.
 - We make think their goals are stupid, but they don't.
- Terrorists act strategically to achieve their goals.
 - If they didn't, how on earth are they still around 12 years after September 11?

Reality

- Treating terrorists as smart, strategic individuals will yield useful policy prescriptions.
- I have no idea what pretending like terrorists are crazy does for us.

Going Forward

- We will not explain why terrorists have such bizarre preferences.
 - This is IR 101, not Psych 101.
- We will take their bizarre preferences as a given and see where it takes us.

Terrorism

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2. Why suicide?
3. Spoiling

Big question: Why use suicide tactics and not other tactics?

Three Answers

1. Strategic benefits
2. Signaling
3. Outbidding

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Signaling

- Some terrorist groups have realistic goals.

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Signaling

- Some terrorist groups have realistic goals.
- States might not want to fight terrorist organizations if their followers are resolved.
 - Suicide terrorism credibly demonstrates resolve.

Three Answers

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Outbidding

- Terrorist groups have two audiences: their enemy and competing groups.

Outbidding

- Terrorist groups have two audiences: their enemy and competing groups.
- How do you snuff out your competitors?
 - Be the flashiest of the terrorist groups out there.

Terrorism

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Spoiling

- Terrorists may wish to *spoil* a peaceful settlement between two parties that would otherwise be able to reach an agreement.

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Domestic
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Terrorists

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Terrorists

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WESTPHALIAN
SOVEREIGNTY?

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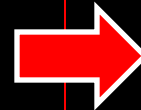
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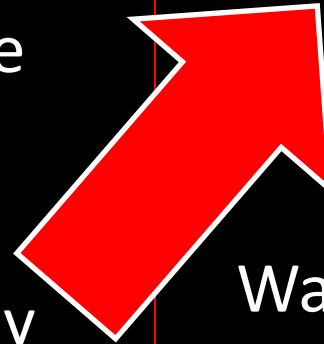
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- Suppose the domestic government actually wants peace.
 - It wants to suppress terrorists to gain the trust of the foreign power.

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 - It wants to suppress terrorists to gain the trust of the foreign power.
 - But terrorists aren't easy to stop!



Consider the Following

- Foreign governments can only observe whether there was a terrorist attack or not.
 - They can't tell exactly how hard the domestic government was trying to suppress the terrorists.

Spoiling

- Terrorists therefore *spoil* the trust between the foreign power and passive domestic government.
 - They want to (falsely) signal that the domestic government is doing nothing to stop them.
 - Blowing people up is a good way to do this.