International Terrorism: The Short Version
“Acquiring weapons for the defense of Muslims is a religious duty. If I have indeed acquired these weapons, then I thank God for enabling me to do so. And if I seek to acquire these weapons, I am carrying out a duty. It would be a sin for Muslims not to try to possess the weapons that would prevent the infidels from inflicting harm on Muslims.”

-Time Magazine Interview (23 December 1998)

“In today's wars, there are no morals. We believe the worst thieves in the world today and the worst terrorists are the Americans. We do not have to differentiate between military or civilian. As far as we are concerned, they are all targets.”

-Time Magazine Profile (16 September 2001)

“Thinking people, when disaster strikes, make it their priority to look for its causes, in order to prevent it happening again.”

-“Message to America” (1 November 2004)
International Terrorism

1. Welcome to Dr. T’s guide to understanding international terrorism

2. The purpose of today’s discussion is to engage all of you in a discussion about international terrorism

3. People seem to have forgotten about the war on terrorism: why do you think this is?

4. My job today therefore is to make the case that terrorism is still a threat BUT that it is a greatly diminished one…
International Terrorism

Pre-Quiz (see quiz)

*Let’s start discussing these immediately - write as we go!*
International Terrorism

What is Terrorism?

A. Jim Ray argues that terrorism has been around for a long time—“terrorist acts were quite common hundreds of years ago”

B. Other experts note that terrorism is a tactic of the powerless against the powerful
What is Terrorism?

A. Harvard professor Joseph Nye suggests terrorism is a method of violence with roots that stretch far back in history

B. He (2001) notes that terrorism was used by anarchists and other revolutionaries in the 19th century

C. WWI was sparked by an act of terrorism (assassination of Archduke Ferdinand by a Serbian nationalist)
What is Terrorism?

D. Today we live in what Harvard Professor Ashton Carter calls “the age of catastrophic terrorism”

E. It is an era where terrorist orgs such as al Qaeda (AQ) want access to WMD in order to kill as many of its enemy (us) as possible
What is Terrorism?

F. When most people use the term “terrorism” they usually think violence, fear, death, destruction, suicide bombers, etc.

1. **Question**: what do YOU think when you hear the term “terrorism”?
What is Terrorism?
H. The thing that gets in the way of trying to define terrorism is the old “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter” issue. For example,

1. to Israelis, Palestinians who detonate bombs which kill innocent Israelis are terrorists

2. Palestinians say they are simply resisting Israeli occupation and brutality and the responses by the Israeli govt. were the deliberate killing of innocent Palestinian civilians (i.e., they see it as terrorism)

3. Given this reality, if the word “terrorism” had existed in 1776, probably our very own founding father’s would have been labeled by British authorities as “terrorists”
What is Terrorism?

I. There is no consensus definition in my field, the field of terrorism studies.

J. Even the United Nations does not have a definition for terrorism.

K. To confuse you even more, the Obama administration is refusing to use the phrase “terrorism” and instead is using the term “man-caused” disasters (this is at the directive of the Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano)
What is Terrorism?

L. Professor Walter Laqueur explains there are over 100 different academic and definitions of terrorism in the field…

M. Some say that terrorism is a tactic or a strategy, so it is impossible to really explain it…

N. I do think it is important though to identify what terrorism is (which I will on the next slide) if nothing else to distinguish it from other forms of violence
What is Terrorism?

O. One way of looking at organized international (inter-state) and inside a country (intra-state) violence is through what we call a spectrum of conflict (see handout)

1. Notice the range of types of conflict
   a. from low level civil conflict all the way to large scale wars of unlimited mass destruction (like WWII)
   b. terrorism fits somewhere in the middle of that spectrum…
   c. This typology is useful then b/c it helps us identify what terrorism isn’t—a riot, a mass casualty conflict, etc--brings us to a definition

|------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|

Range of Low-Intensity Conflicts


Figure 1. Spectrum of Conflict
What is Terrorism?

Marc’s Definition of Terrorism (contains 4 elements)

1) First, Terrorism is at root a violent act
   a. which separates it from sit-ins, protests, etc
2) Second, it has a political motivation or goal
3) Third, it is perpetrated against innocents
4) Fourth, it is staged to be played before an audience
   whose reaction of fear & terror is the desired result

**Therefore, terrorism is an act of violence
perpetrated on innocent people to evoke fear/terror
in a desired audience, for political ends

***This eliminates postal workers, soccer hooligans, bad
santas, lunatics on a killing spree etc from the label of
terrorist***
Identify the Terrorist

Let’s play a game to see if you were paying attention: it is a game I like to call, “identify the terrorist”...let’s try it.

Who is the terrorist?
Identify the Terrorist Game

Who is the terrorist?
Identify the Terrorist Game

Who is the terrorist?
A KISS History of Modern Terrorism

A. We can trace the word “terrorism” to French Revolution and Jacobin Reign of Terror (1792-1794), though individual acts of terror-violence can be traced back at least to ancient Greek and Roman republics.

B. David Rapoport (2007) argues describes four waves in the history of modern terrorism:

1. Anarchism: believed state to be source of all evil-if eliminated it there could be justice and heaven on earth; they assassinated heads of state in Russia, France, Italy and US to get their way...their excesses eventually spelled their doom (People’s Will in Russia, Anarcho-Syndicalists in America)
A KISS History of Modern Terrorism

2. Anti-Colonialism/National Liberation: wanted independence from Western imperialists following WWII--the ANC in South Africa and the IRA in Northern Ireland are two such examples; the ANC and IRA eventually both took power
3. Left-Wing Radicalism: these groups wanted to eliminate capitalism and bring about communism and a radical redistribution of power and wealth along class lines. Groups such as the Red Army Faction of Germany and FARC (still fighting) in Colombia are examples.
4. Religious Terrorism: 4th wave is the current crop of religious terrorists who believe the world is decaying into a morass of greed and moral depravity, mostly because of Western (read the U.S.) influence which is corrupting and despoiling the regimes and peoples who are the descendants of the prophet Mohammad; *al Qaeda, Hizbollah, Hamas*, are exemplars of this creed.
A KISS History of Modern Terrorism, cont.

*What all these terrorist organizations and terrorists share in common is a utopian vision for changing the world as well as a willingness to use violence to achieve those ends...they all see themselves as heroes, fighting for justice and fairness...*

**The interesting aspect of religious terrorists like Osama bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahiri is their goals:**

1. They see terrorism as a necessary means of defending their faith
2. and (2) of reconstructing the Caliphate under the rule of Shariah
3. To achieve these ends, it is critical to drive the “head of the snake,” or “the far enemy” out of the region so they can focus on destroying the near enemies
An Explanation for 9/11, Spain, London, Bali, Mumbai, etc

*Rather than lecturing you about this, what would be better is turn to the two videos I brought:

1) “Searching for the Roots of 9/11”
2) “The Road to 9/11”

**We will watch the first 15 or so minutes of “Searching” and the entire “The Road to 9/11”

***They provide answers to the question about why we were attacked, why some young Muslim men are attracted to the “cult of al Qaeda” and why those who join would be willing to give up their lives for the cause. Before we see the videos lets take a look at the current threat.

****Following this we look at the videos, hold a discussion and conclude with the post-Quiz.
A. Let me touch on something that is a real puzzle to many experts, America hasn’t been attacked again since 9/11/01

B. No analysts—NOT ONE—thought that was possible on 9/12/01. But we haven’t been attacked again.

C. Europeans—Spain, London, and the Netherlands—have been attacked though. Innocent civilians in the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, the West Bank, and so on have also been murdered by terrorists.

D. The Bush admin. took credit for no post-9/11 attacks on American soil—they say this was b/c of the war on terror, hardening of US borders, better airport security, more vigilant population, destruction of al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan, Patriot Act, enhanced interrogation techniques, etc.

E. There’s probably truth to some of this BUT I tend to agree with Professor John Mearsheimer who says quite simply that the threat of Islamic “sleeper” attacks was always wildly overblown.
**The Current Threat/Toward the Future**

In fact, former CIA analyst Marc Sageman (2008) says there are no sleeper cells ready to be activated by al Qaeda “central” in the U.S. and that our Muslim population (about 2.35M strong compared to 20M in Europe) is really well integrated into American society…

G. Since 9/11 there have been 60 arrests connected to Islamist terrorism (Sageman) in the US compared to over 2300 such arrests in Europe.

H. The simple, objective fact is that there are simply FAR fewer domestic homegrown Islamist terrorists in the US than in Europe, and this is the main reason we haven’t been attacked again…

  1. The 2007 arrests of young Muslim 2nd generation immigrants for trying to blow up part of Fort Dix, NJ shows a threat exists
  2. But our Muslim communities are simply not very radicalized when compared esp. to Europe
  3. Ergo, there is MUCH less of a threat of domestic terror attacks…
  4. To be honest there is always a chance of an attack, but what are the odds of such an attack?
The Current Threat/Toward the Future

I. So what are the odds of a terrorist attack on American soil?

1. According to Ronald Bailey of Reason Online:
   a. Your odds of dying in a car accident is 1 in 6500 (lifetime odds = 1 in 83)
   b. Your odds of dying in a plane crash are 1 in 400,000 (lifetime odds = 1 in 5000)
   c. Your odds of dying whilst walking across the street is 1 in 48,500 (lifetime odds = 1 in 625)
   d. Your odds of drowning is 1 in 88,000 (lifetime odds = 1 in 1100)
   e. Your odds of being murdered is 1 in 16,500 (lifetime odds = 1 in 210)
   f. Your odds of being struck by lightning is 1 in 6.2M (lifetime odds = 1 in 80,000)
   g. Your odds of dying in a 9/11 style terrorist attack is 1 in 100,000 (lifetime odds = 1 in 1300)

2. IOW, your risk of dying in a plausible terrorist attack is MUCH lower than your risk of dying in a car accident, by walking across the street, by drowning, or even being murdered...

3. The point is there is a very low order of probability that you personally will be killed in such an attack
The Current Threat/Toward the Future

J. So what about our old friend, OBL? What’s up with him and his organization? *Is the organization still a threat?*
The Current Threat/Toward the Future

1. The good news is that AQ CENTRAL, which was based in Afghanistan and led by bin Laden and A. al-Zawahiri, was badly routed in Afghanistan in October-December 2001.

2. Their host, the Taliban, fell from power and a regime we helped come to power was installed

3. We mobilized our allies and commenced the GWOT. After the bombings in Tunisia, Indonesia, S Arabia, London, Spain, Morocco, Turkey, and the Netherlands many more countries joined the fight

4. **The point**: what Marc Sageman calls “AQ central” was neutralized operationally, though many of its top leaders (including OBL and Ayman al Zawahiri) are still at large and delivering speeches via video and the internet…

5. **BUT** they have largely been neutered as a seriously dangerous threat…

**Q**: What does that organization look like right now?
The Current Threat/Toward the Future

6. So what does that organization look like right now?
   a. *Al Qaeda “Central” has become “Leaderless Jihad”*
   b. In other words, the world is now chalk full of “little al Qaeda’s” springing up all over the world...they are FRANCHISEES with a lot of freedom and autonomy
   c. Witness the November 2008 attack in Mumbai, India by 10 Jihadists, who killed 173 people. The group calls itself “al Qaeda” though it has no connection to AQ Central...
   d. BUT there is no central coordination from above
   e. The groups are sort of tied together only very loosely through the internet, which makes the existence of leaderless Jihad possible
   f. BUT, w/o direction, much money, or leadership, the movement CANNOT COALESCE INTO A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION CAPABLE OF TAKING OVER A COUNTRY
   g. Therefore, leaderless jihad is still a terrorist network BUT to me not much more
7. In sum, I think the threat is still real--the bad guys still have a fanatic willingness, though thankfully not yet the capacity, to strike with the worst possible weapons of violence...(Mumbai attacks are a recent example—but those were the worst possible weapons...)

8. But the world turned on Holy War, Inc.,--almost every country in the world has joined the fight against them, their money has virtually dried up, AQs original bases in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Afghanistan have been destroyed and even Iraq has become MUCH more stable...which has dried up some of the recruiting pool

9. **Bottom line:** we haven’t been attacked again since 9/11, **AQ Central** has been unable to launch another major attack anywhere, and it has resorted to being a communications company, producing occasional video-tapes rather than actual terrorism
The Current Threat/Toward the Future

10. There is a mushrooming problem, esp. in Pakistan, where elements of the Taliban and AQ have reemerged...
The Current Threat/Toward the Future

11. The president-Zardari-is weak and the tribal areas uncontrollable; Pakistan has nukes too
12. But the military is in control of them and the country is not collapsing...yet...though the system is chaotic
13. I worry less about AQ central and even the offshoots and MORE about
   a. WMD proliferation from North Korea and perhaps Iran
   b. State failures along the Horn of Africa (ie Somalia), the Middle East and South Asia
   c. Global economic collapse and possibility it spills over into 1930s like intl. turmoil
   d. America getting involved MORE deeply in a potentially un-winnable, tribal, and medieval internal dispute in Afghanistan (McCrystal is asking for b/n 40-80,000 more troops to do counter-insurgency)
14. Even given the release of bin Laden tapes and the recruitment manual (see handouts), I’m not THAT worried about them at the moment...Remember they are just “overseas contingency operations”  
**I will close with this: don’t forget the risks we discussed earlier, and keep in mind we have WAY bigger problems on our hands at the moment**
"That's all folks!"