

Discussion questions for section on terrorism

February 2: *Terrorism as a Security Threat*

1. Townshend (p.3) observes, “Both political and academic efforts to get to grips with terrorism have repeatedly been hung up on the issue of definition.”

- Why is it so difficult to define terrorism?
- Despite the difficulty, how would you define terrorism? Are there any news stories that you could use to illustrate your definition?
- As part of this definitional debate, is there any such thing as a “good” terrorist versus a “bad” terrorist and how would you make that distinction?
- Can terrorism be an effective strategy? If not, then why does terrorism have such a long history and continuing place in global affairs?

2. What priority should terrorism have on the global agenda? Does globalization, as Crenshaw and Cusimano Love argue, make terrorism a more prevalent global threat? Tying back to our discussion of proliferation, how does the possible spread of weapons of mass destruction affect your answer to these questions?

February 7: *How to Respond to Terrorism?*

1. Grace’s chapter asks, “How Should Countries Respond to Acts of Terrorism?” What options are presented in this chapter? How do these ideas compare to Townshend’s ideas on counterterrorism expressed in his Chapter 7 or Crenshaw and Cusimano Love’s section on “State Responses”? How do you believe that terrorism will best be countered?

2. Townshend (p. 35) recounts, “American jurist Ronald Dworkin warned that the biggest damage resulting from the counterterrorist reaction had been to the long-cherished American legal defences of individual freedom.” When considering efforts to counter terrorism, to what degree do you agree with this statement? Keep this reaction in mind when considering the relative importance of human rights versus restricting terrorism.

3. Does the potential religious link to terrorism discussed in Towshend’s Chapter 6 and briefly by Grace (pp. 11-12) make terrorism in these cases harder to counter? Keep this discussion in mind when doing the reading for the next class section on nationalism.