

Section #11

Terrorism and insurgency

Terrorism

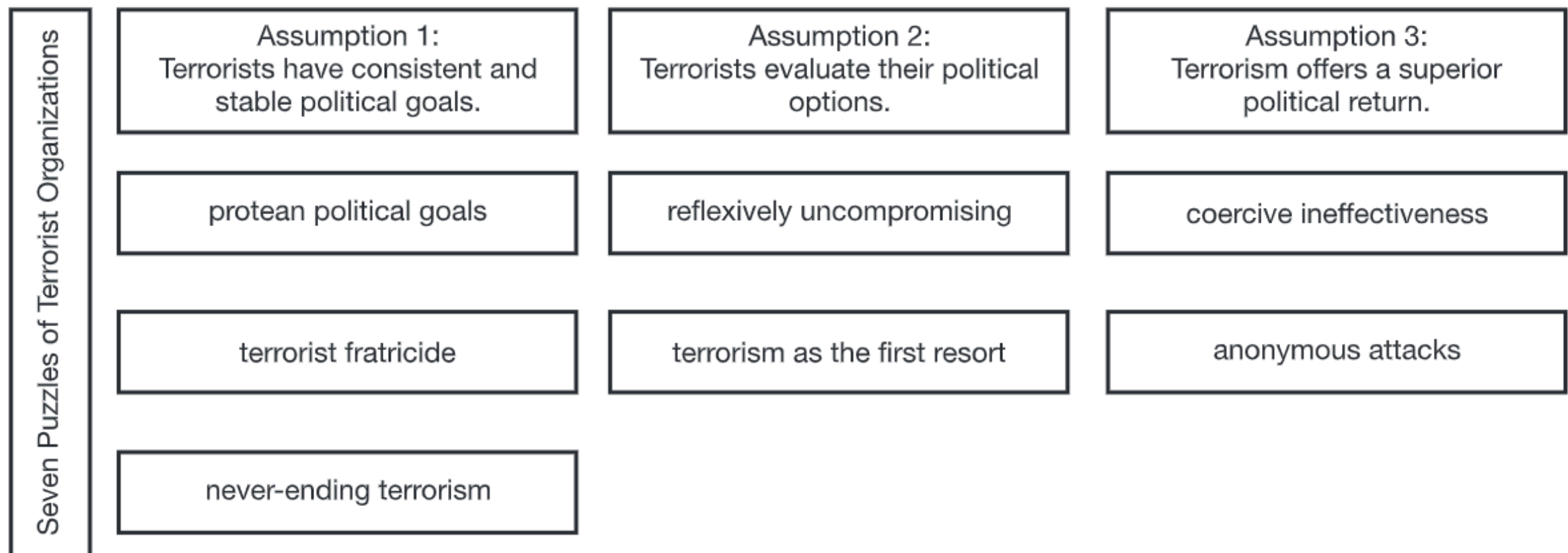
- Definition: the use of violence against civilians by non-state actors to attain political goals
- Goals: ultimate desires
 - Regime change, territorial change, policy change, social control, status quo maintenance
- Strategies: plans of action to attain goals
 - Attrition, spoiling, intimidation, outbidding, provocation

Why do terrorist organizations commit violence?

- Lots of uncertainty surrounding the power, resolve, and trustworthiness of terrorist organizations
 - Verbal threats by terrorists are **cheap talk**
- Terrorist organizations must then find a way to credibly communicate to its supporters and targeted government
 - **Costly signals** (acts of violence) reduce uncertainty
 - Strategy of terrorism depends on target audience and which type of uncertainty trying to address

Challenges to the strategic model

Figure 1. The Empirical Weakness of the Strategic Model



NOTE: The strategic model's assumptions are obviously interrelated; there is no implication that each puzzle violates only one of them.

Discussion:

Counter-terrorism strategies

1. What do different logics of terrorism imply about how states should respond to terrorist threats?
2. Which theoretical model of terrorism should policy-makers assume when developing CT strategies?
3. What are common pitfalls of state responses to terrorism? (Why do they occur?)

Insurgency

- Definition: armed rebellion against government authority for political purposes
- Goals: regime change or separatism
 - Motivation: grievances and political instability, “greed” and poverty, competing ethnic/religious groups
- Strategies: rural guerrilla warfare, urban warfare, etc.

Counterinsurgency (COIN)

- Efforts to get a militant group to stop committing violence
 - Use military force to fight and defeat rebels
 - Win “hearts and minds” of civilian population
- Goal: a virtuous cycle between population security and political/economic construction
 - Boost economic activity, trust in government
 - Diminish support for insurgents and gain local assistance in fighting the insurgents

COIN Challenges

- Divergent interests between intervening great power and local insurgents
- Great power cannot commit to a forever war due to asymmetry of stakes
- Hard to identify who is friend and who is foe
 - Raises risks for civilian population if intervening power is indiscriminate
 - Raises risks for intervening power's forces as well which must be deployed among the population

Discussion:

COIN in Afghanistan

1. Why did COIN fail in the war in Afghanistan? Was any other outcome ever possible?
2. What lessons are to be drawn from the U.S. experience in Afghanistan?