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# Globalization & Nationalism: A Recipe for Terror

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**Globalization & Nationalism:**

**A Recipe for Terror**

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## **Nationalism and Globalization: A Recipe for Terror**

### **Introduction**

Nationalism appears to be part of the human condition; it may well be related to the human tendency toward tribalism. Whatever the case, nationalism appears to be a permanent feature on the global landscape. Globalization, while not a new phenomenon by any means, seems to be having a tremendous dilutory effect on the sovereignty of states; it now appears to be carrying the assault to the cultural frontiers of nationalism. Unlike the Westphalian constructs, however, nations will not so easily succumb. There is a greater inherent resistance to change in nations; the only historically effective method has been outright eradication – genocide, in many cases. This being the case, nationalist interests often resort to any means at their disposal to defend their existence. Inasmuch as nations have no recognition, pursuant to the Peace of Westphalia (and its successor agreements), nations have no consistent power base; such as may be gathered is transient, and usually quite weak by comparison to most states. Violence is thus often the only means available for nationalist interests to defend their positions.

Try to imagine the response if, in the hallowed meeting halls of the United Nations, a delegation of the Cherokee Nation were to arrive and take its seats. This scenario could never actually occur, of course; such a “delegation” would never be admitted entrance. The Charter of the United Nations makes no provision for such groups’ participation, as they have no recognition by other member states (Taylor 1989). This condition is the result of a long history of treaties and negotiations extending back to 1648, when the Peace of Westphalia was formalized. The treaty established the basis for sovereign states with fixed borders, and spelled the end of feudalism in Europe. The Peace, and its successor agreements,

have gone far to ensure that political clout, whether in the form of military might, economic influence, or simply by virtue of location, is the only accepted currency in the international arena. States' interests trump the interests of groups of people whose only identity is some arbitrary claim to strong cultural ties. Cries for international assistance are honored in such places as Haiti and Afghanistan, as these states enjoy international recognition. Yet, organizations with considerably greater capacity to effect change than either of those states, such as the IRA (through Sinn Fein, its political arm), for example, or the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka, are barely given the airtime to voice their grievances, much less granted relief. And the only reason they receive such transient recognition as they occasionally enjoy is because they have demonstrated the capacity to inflict grievous harm, consistently, over time.

This paper examines the interactions between the phenomena of nationalism, as a behavioral characteristic of humans; statism, as an institution that has grown from modest beginnings to dominate international relations; and globalization, the process of mobilizing the production and distribution of goods and services on a world-wide basis, often piercing political and cultural boundaries, for the sake of maximizing profit. We contend that cultural groups, whose identities are strong, yet have no voice in international discourse, are threatened by the piercing effects of globalization, and have little recourse but violence – terrorism – as a means to defend themselves politically. We will offer a new definition of terrorism following this line of thought.

## **A Global Context**

Before the phenomenon of terrorism can be examined, it is necessary to review the context in which it occurs. The relationships between the institutions or structures into

which people organize themselves are of paramount importance to comprehending the motivation to this type of violence. Terms such as *state*, *nation*, *culture*, and *society* will be examined for the purpose, as these are often conflated, or otherwise misused, in ways that blur inherent distinctions.

A *state* is a legal construct, characterized by a territory with fixed borders, and sovereignty within those borders (Cohen 1996). The existence of states is, pursuant to agreement, contingent upon their mutual recognition *as* states. The conditions necessary to garner this recognition are complex, but most often require a stable government, a functional economy, and no substantive adverse claims by other states. The possession of a military force sufficient to defend the borders is often persuasive, but is not necessary. It is important, for our purposes, to understand that the term *state* does not refer to the populace that resides within the state's borders.

*Societies* are groups of people organized by codified rules, laws, or charter along with supportive structures. *Cultures* are systems of values, such as language, religion, cuisine, style of dress, etc., shared by groups of people in a common spatio-historical frame. *Norms* or what is normal are a by-product of these systems of values and are reinforced by needs of belonging, guilt, etc. Those bound by such common systems of values are a *culture group*. In the context of the differentiation of the concepts of culture and society, it is necessary that we “start from the premise that individuals have multiple identities and loyalties” (Ferguson & Mansback 1999, 79). For example, one population segment may particularly value its religion, while another may place particular emphasis upon its cuisine. What is important is that individual members be able to identify themselves as such, and be able to recognize others that share these values. These are not exclusive

groups by any means; it is often the case that the groups overlap, or that one group includes some, or even all, of the members of the second. A more relevant example is the case of the societal group that places particular emphasis on the state in which it resides. Members of such a group will likely have emotional ties to the geography, history, and cuisine characteristic of the state in which it resides, in addition to a commitment to the ideology and form of government found in the state. Members of such a subculture would have a sense of the moral rectitude of the actions of its state, and individual members may feel compelled to participate in, or at least speak out in favor of, such actions. Many states host such groups, including the US. Its members are called *patriots* (after the Latin *pater*, meaning “father” – a reference to the projective nature of the state). Many citizens of a state may share such sentiments regarding their state, yet have very different social classes, belong to different churches, and even speak different languages, any of which sets them apart as members of many different subcultures, while still sharing their co-identity as patriots.

The terms *nation*, *nationality*, and *nationalism* are more difficult to pin down. There is a wide variety of disparate definitions for these terms in the literature; a sampling may prove illuminating. When attempting to define *nation*, for example, some seem to point to some version of “shared myths and memories” (Smith 1999, 333), or “a common ideology, common institutions and customs” (Plano and Olton 1979, 119) in a way similar to how cultures are described. Others cite consanguinity as definitive (Snyder 1990), and yet others resort to sentimental (Weber cited in Hutchinson and Smith 1994) or spiritual ties (“The nation is a soul, a spiritual principle.” [Renan 1882, 9]). One declares nations to be but products of the imagination (Anderson 1991), and some despair

of the possibility of definition altogether (Seton-Watson cited in Anderson 1991; Birch 1993).

If anything, definitions for the terms *nationalism* suffer from even greater problems. One describes nationalism as a sort of shell, to wit: “Nationalism’s core doctrine provides no more than a basic framework for social and political order in the world, and it must be filled out by other idea-systems...” (Smith 1995, 150). Another takes a more existential approach: “Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist – but it does need some pre-existing differentiating marks to work on, even if...these are purely negative” (Gellner 1964, 168). Angell (cited in Snyder 1961, 771) doesn’t tell us what nationalism is, but categorically declares, “Nationalism is the most important thing in the world, more important than civilization, humanity, decency, kindness, pity, more important than life itself.” Clearly, finding a useful definition for nationalism is not to be a straightforward reach for the dictionary or a survey of the extant literature.

A review of the majority of the (more sober) descriptions of *nation* and *nationality* does yield some common themes. The terms seem always to refer, directly or indirectly, to values, or systems of values, i.e., *culture*. In virtually all instances, two of the more prominent cultural values cited are an attachment to the idea of a place, in conjunction with a common historical identity. The place may or may not refer to an actual geographic location; the significance of a “land of milk and honey” is in its ideation, and is not necessarily dependent upon its present existence. There is always a clear sense of identity associated with the usage of *nation* and *nationality*; whenever one of these terms is employed, there is at least a tacit reference to an identifiable “us” and some variably-

specified “them.” In most cases, the other-entity, the “them,” stands in opposition to “us;” there is an implicit conflict of interest. Further, there is often some reference to “sovereignty,” “self-rule,” “political authority,” or “will to decide upon their common political destiny” (Budge, et al. 1998, Guibernau 1996, 47). Finally, there is a consistent, if implicit, reference to nationalism as phenomenal; the nation is a dynamic social response – not a fixed entity.

We are now prepared to offer a synthesis of these commonalities. Cultures, or their component societies, are defined by the systems of values to which they adhere. Spatio-temporal continuity, expressed in terms of the conjoined ideas of place and history, bolster a commitment to a coherent, *valuable* identity (“the most important thing in the world”). Members of these cultural groups will urge, and be urged by, each other to help maintain the integrity of their defining systems; the systems are, after all, the very things that establish the groups’ identities. In order, then, for the group identity to maintain itself, any system of values that threatens to dilute, corrupt, or otherwise diminish the defining system must be perceived as a threat. *Nations* form when the value system(s) of a society or one or more of its component culture groups, is threatened, potentially or in fact, by external influences. Due to the nature and post-feudal origins of states, their very existence means that there is always a potential adversary, perhaps several, immediately adjacent to home territory. Societies existing within a state may well feel threatened by this perpetual condition, and a national identity may arise as a result. It is, thus, not surprising that the terms *nation* and *state* are so frequently conflated, in spite of their very different meanings (Connor cited in Hutchinson and Smith 1994). By corollary, the



terms *nationalism* and *patriotism* suffer from a similar conflation, yet should be generally understood to refer to distinct phenomena – that is, until they coincide.

Stabilization of socioeconomic relations between societies and cultures has been given a tremendous boost with the increasing formalization of statism. Neighboring peoples are no longer threatening to expand into home territory as in feudal times; commerce has been greatly facilitated, as has cultural exchange. Advances in technology, particularly in the areas of transportation and communication, have enabled an ever-greater flow of information, goods, and services to reach ever-further abroad. Likewise, these same technologies have enabled the movement of ever-larger armies across those same distances, faster than ever before. Peace, when it happens, has been increasingly beneficial; war, in turn, has become more devastating than could ever have been previously imagined. In recent decades, the potential for *mutually assured destruction* (MAD) has, in fact, become a recognized factor in international policymaking. Treaties and agreements have been frantically signed to forestall such destruction, and open, all-out warfare has become far less frequent than in the age of feudalism. Paradoxically, under the aegis of such threats, the world has actually become – relatively speaking – a safer place. Accordingly, the capacity to promote one's products and ideas in previously inaccessible markets has increasingly brought a gleam to the eyes of the world's merchants. While the meeting of cultures is by no means a new phenomenon, the evolution of radical statism, in conjunction with technological advances in transportation and communication, has ushered in a new age of *globalization*.

Increased commerce between rival cultural groups – nations – has led to an increased mutual sharing of cultural values. This sharing has necessarily had a hybridizing effect

on the cultural value systems it has involved. In many cases, the variety has been, seemingly paradoxically, welcomed. “Worldliness” has often become a value in its own right, as the wealthiest are able to enjoy, and ostentatiously display, the prized fruits of foreign lands. The learning of foreign languages has historically been the hallmark of a good education, and is, to this day, often requisite to high social standing. Foreign, “outlandish” works of art are rare (or not-so-rare) treasures in the new, international marketplace. Insidiously, glamorously, globalization is having its way with the cultural value systems of its target societies.

Further, the profit available to marketeers has come to represent, in aggregate, a formidable political force in its own right. The economies of states have become increasingly dependent upon foreign commerce, and have necessarily to cater to economic pressures. Individual merchants and, more recently, corporations have become so powerful a presence on foreign soil that policy is frequently, and increasingly, based upon their preferences. The practical ability of states to chart their own destinies has been, often with their own acquiescence, steadily degraded. State sovereignty is quickly becoming subordinate to market sovereignty (Giroux 2005).

The hybridization of the values of cultures is, of course, not always perceived as a boon. In some cases, cultural values are deeply entrenched, especially when there has been a long internal rivalry *within* the culture, e.g., Islam. Defenders of these value systems are often militant in their insistence that their cultures remain pure. These fundamentalists deplore the influences of other cultures, perceiving such to be a threat to their way of life. France, for example, is notoriously protective of the linguistic homogeneity of its culture, resisting translations even of its daily news publications into

other languages, in spite of the potential for a more widespread international audience. Furthermore, fundamentalists view members of their own culture who embrace such alien values as weak-kneed at best, and perhaps traitorous. But the true evil is seen in those cultures that offer the greatest temptation away from the pure cultural ideology. For the fundamentalists of Islam, this evil is Western culture, most pointedly exemplified by the United States. A few, a handful, of extremists may see the threat to their way of life as so dire that they choose to take the battle to the enemy, violently. Indeed, as is the case in Islam, the mores of the cultural system may actually reward them for doing so. And this is the general case; time after time, “globalization has ignited identity as a source of conflict” (Cha 2000, 394). In response to this threat, states identified as being instrumental as “forces of globalization” will necessarily implement tighter security measures in self-defense. How this will manifest is anyone’s guess, but it is clear that “the ‘new’ security environment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will operate increasingly in the space defined by the interpenetration between two spheres: globalization and national identity” (*ibid.*, 392).

### **Nationalism & Globalization**

As discussed above, nationalism occurs when cultural/societal values are perceived as being threatened. When the perception is an enduring one, it may well become institutionalized as a value in its own right. As national responses are appended to the value system, fleshing it out, a people’s self-image may gain sufficient coherence, as a cultural icon, to become a representative emblem of its adherents. In other words, a people have identified themselves *as* a unitary body; they have a newfound identity in the face of an adversary—a name. When this happens, a nation is born. There may be

considerable political pressure exerted on recalcitrant members to join the national fray; rallies, demonstrations, and propaganda – manipulating “symbols of group identity” – are typical tools of the national effort to fan its own flame (Bhagarva 2002, 73). Nationalism can, thus, be seen as a dynamic response to the perception of threat. When a nation loses its adversary, it may begin to lose its own identity, and may require a new enemy to sustain itself. The lack of an effective “them” renders the idea of a discrete “us” moot; “at the beginning of the third millennium, one senses the coming of a new identity crisis” (Franck 1997, 151).

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States had no effective adversary; for ten years, American national identity flagged. Then, on September 11, 2001, America was attacked on its own soil. The news coverage following the attacks promptly and efficiently cast the events in terms of the Manichaeian extremes of good and evil (Anker 2005). An analysis of but one hour of prime time reports on the attacks, and various responses thereto, demonstrated the capacity for broadcast media to shape the reality of millions of people *en masse*. The texture of the reports was carefully crafted to produce a maximum of pathos, bolstered by voyeuristic prompts to empathize with victims, with precisely intertwined images of Osama bin Laden and the collapsing towers of the World Trade Center portrayed in excruciating slow motion. The heroes were well defined: fire fighters, police, and other rescue workers were cast in iconographic grandeur, as was President Bush. The towers were themselves portrayed, not as the symbols of economic strength and virility that they might have been on September 10, but recast as the symbols of American freedom, democracy, and all virtuosity, cruelly attacked in their proud repose, murdered in a horrific display of disdain for human life,

liberty, and happiness. In every conceivable way, the presentation was painstakingly choreographed to extract a maximum of melodrama. The end result of this type of news coverage, in conjunction with speeches given by various prominent figures, solidified the effect. The American people now had a clear enemy, thousands of victims, and an impressive array of heroes – their very own President chief among them. Even more significantly, the American people now had specific, concrete examples of heinous attacks on American civilians, ostensibly in the name of hatred and envy of the American virtues of freedom and democracy. The end result was a composite of the ingredients sufficient to, as Anker (2005, 22) puts it, “produce a specific type of American national identity”. The new identity was that of a people whose state *and* way of life had been attacked; the paired responses of patriotism and nationalism would prove sufficient to grant the Bush Administration unprecedented power.

The state is a complex organism. One may be tempted to see the state as a legal framework staffed by legions of public employees. But the state embodies social, political, even cultural frameworks as well. The net effect is to delimit the scope of public interest, and, more significantly, to “establish meaning, and define and naturalize available social identities” (Nagengast 1994, 116). With the coordinated state/media propaganda following the September 11 attacks, American options for a new global identity were firmly established: the United States was to become a security state with a global reach. As a result, the world’s options were defined as well; to paraphrase the 2001 decree of President George Bush, states and all sub-state entities were now, by definition and by default, either part of an identifiable “us,” or else be recognized as a

part of an evil “them.” As long as the atmosphere of threat could be maintained, some sense of American identity should follow in response.

But these sorts of remedial measures, no matter how elaborate, cannot long stave off the deteriorating sense of identity among the world’s societies. Ferguson and Mansbach (1999, 78) conclude that

Contemporary trends...are seriously eroding the state and the state system and ushering in significant shifts in human identities and loyalties. Citizenship and nationality no longer suffice to define who ‘we are’ or where ‘our loyalties’ lie, and ‘sovereign’ borders no longer constitute the sole, or even the main, indication of who is ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ the boundaries of civic and moral obligation.

Devetak and Higgott (1999, 489) echo this idea when they say that we live “in an era of fraying social bond at the state level, and the absence of alternative focuses of identity at the global level...” This is not to suggest, however, that the days of statism are over. The state “does not end; it is just less in control. Activity and decisions for the state increasingly take place in a post-sovereign space” (Cha 2000, 392).

The disintegration of cultures into more specialized societies has become a modern trend. "Any number of what were previously considered essentially stable countries are experiencing religious, ethnic and other internal conflicts with increasing numbers of separatist movements trying to carve up larger countries into smaller and more tightly focused ethnic areas” (Staten 1999, 1). The effects of modernity are not, however, only being felt at the state level; local and even individual identities are being impacted as well. Once again, Ferguson and Mansbach (1999, 85) describe the condition:

As the sources of governance become less sharply defined...there is a backlash in which individuals seek psychological refuge in smaller, more proximal polities, trying (and usually failing) to isolate themselves from forces they only dimly understand. For example, the growing impact of both alien cultures and related threat of cultural homogenization produce

localizing hostility to ‘outsiders.’ Local government, religion, ethnicity, profession, and even urban street gangs may offer places of refuge and revitalized identity... Such polities can slake the thirst for intimacy, tradition, autonomy, and control in the midst of bewildering change.

As systems of values succumb under the pressures of “modernization,” people lose their sense of cultural continuity; confidence in group identity is badly shaken.

“Modernity...disrupts settled ways of life, casts doubt on old principles and meanings, and imposes thoroughgoing uncertainty on social, religious, and even interpersonal life” (Purdy 2004, 28).

If the process were to end at this point, one might anticipate either a blithe acceptance as people habituated themselves to the condition, or an overwhelming despair of global proportion as they failed to do so. Cultures, however, are – by definition – valuable. Further, cultures are the stuff of history; they are *resilient*. Whenever state authorities have demanded that a cultural group integrate itself into a new cultural matrix, there has almost always been resistance. “The more compulsion was involved, the less likely it was that anticipatory socialization to the new environment had taken place. In such contexts ethnic or transnational communities will persist or be recreated” (Cohen 1996, 518). With the advent of a new era of weakened sovereignty, in conjunction with a general loss of identity at all sub-state levels, cultures will naturally re-assert themselves. Taylor (1989, 172-173) explains, “The origins of today’s ‘nations’ are to be found in yesterday’s ‘tribes.’” It is, thus, not overly surprising that the devolution of states results in a return to the former value systems and ways of life, especially when those underlying systems previously enjoyed a long history of success<sup>1</sup>. “The revival of old ethnic and

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<sup>1</sup> More significant than the actual degree of success of a historic culture is the *belief* that it was successful. Such values are of an inherently subjective nature, and the social ties they engender are emotionally based.

tribal memories and identities, and the divorce of nation from state, necessitate new approaches in [International Relations Theory] that start from the premise that individuals have multiple identities and loyalties” (Ferguson & Mansback 1999, 79). Far from becoming a homogenous global culture, the world’s peoples are scrambling to regroup into whatever cultural collections most strongly resonate with them, individually, or in local groups. And when the resonance is particularly strong, when the identification with the new group is solid, resistance to further change is the more violently staunch. “The danger of interstate wars appears to have declined significantly, while that of postmodern war has grown, contributing (in its ‘ethnic’ and ‘tribal’ manifestations) to a rash of ‘failed states’” (Ferguson & Mansback 1999, 84). While this reasoning may be putting the cart before the horse, the association between weakening state authority and a resurgence of localized identity is strong. Finally, the phenomenon of cultural fragmentation and reformation, while facilitated by weakened central authority, itself furthers the process. States cannot long withstand such a multiplicity of divergent interests, and *patriotically* react against it in order to protect their *own* identities. Purdy (2004, 40) names the condition:

[There] is an incapacity to tolerate the plurality of cultures, religions, and forms of life that one encounters in a modernizing society, in which traditional divisions, whether into neighborhood, region, or caste, have broken down... There is no choosing between the virtues and the vices of modernity, of which globalization is the vector...

The term *globalization* generally refers to “a spatial reorganization of production, industry, finance, and other areas” (Cha 2000, 392) resulting from technological advances that “sharply reduced [the] cost and time requirements” of transportation and

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This is precisely the reason that such values are so adamantly adhered to, even when that might appear to be an ill-considered or irrational course of action.



communication (Jackson 2003, 784). In this sense, it is a purely economic phenomenon. Sociologists, however, offer a broader construction, suggesting that “globalization involves both capitalist markets and sets of social relations *and* flows of commodities, capital, technology, ideas, forms of culture, and people across national boundaries via a global networked society” (Kellner 2002, 287). While it might be argued that the spatio-economic phenomenon will naturally lead to the cultural interactions cited by sociologists, the end result is the same. “Today’s world is organized by accelerating globalization which is strengthening the dominance of a world dominated capitalist economic system, supplanting the primacy of the nation-state with transnational corporations and organizations, and eroding local cultures and traditions through a global culture” (*ibid.*, 285).

Globalization is the topic of much heated debate, in terms of its purported advantages and drawbacks, short- and long-term effects on global economy, government, environment, and on culture. Much of the discussion is couched in terms of the “winners” and “losers” of globalization; there is, however, much disagreement as to whom these are. “Globalization has become the most over used and under specified term in the international policy sciences since the end of the cold war. It is a term that is not going to go away...” (Devetak & Higgott 1999, 483). For our purposes, representative statements from both proponents and opponents of globalization will adequately illustrate its relationship to nationalism.

Proponents of globalization see it as an unmixed blessing, one that results in a condition where everyone profits, the only differences arising from degrees of benefit. “Globalization marks the triumph of capitalism and its market economy. Some theorists

see the emergence of a new transnational ruling elite and the universalization of consumerism” (Kellner 2002, 285). From a nationalist position, this outcome is most disastrous; such a position would prefer to emphasize the effects of “global fragmentation [through] ‘the clash of civilizations.’” Defenders of globalization lash out at such attacks, suggesting, “the antiglobalization forces are united only in what they oppose. The reality is that all these groups seek a post-enlightenment form of tribalism. As ideas matter, this ideological Molotov cocktail is dangerous for the survival of an open society” (de Quiros 2004, 382). It is not clear that the author isn’t here actually referring to an open *market*; perhaps there is no effective difference to him. At any rate, his reference to tribalism, while clearly intended as disparaging, is quite telling in light of our discussion of nationalism thus far. Some opponents of globalization, like its proponents, typically focus strictly upon the politico-economic aspects of the debate. “Its critics see globalization as harmful, bringing about increased domination and control by the wealthier overdeveloped nations over the poor underdeveloped nations, thus increasing the hegemony of the ‘haves’ over the ‘have-nots’ (Kellner 2002, 286). Others, however, begin to describe the inherent problems in a world undergoing globalization. They see it “as generating new conflicts and new spaces for struggle,” and describe globalization’s processes as “highly turbulent and [having] generated new conflicts throughout the world” (*ibid.*, 291-292). There is a glimmering of a condition of strife, and of social instability in such descriptions. It has been observed, “globalization involves both a disorganization and reorganization of capitalism, a tremendous restructuring process, which creates openings for progressive social change and intervention” (*ibid.*, 294), a rather positive take on what could only be described as catastrophic changes in a global

economy. In practice, many of the agents of globalization, apparently having faith in the doctrine of market liberalization, spare but scant attention to the actual effects of globalization. Devetak and Higgott (1999, 497) explain:

For many in the developed world, liberalization has become an end in itself with little or no consideration given to its effect on prevailing social norms and values within societies and polities. Consequently, the consensus over how society is organized within the spatial jurisdiction of nation states is strained and the continued process of liberalization is threatened. Globalization is unraveling the social bond.

It may readily be seen that, regardless how one views globalization, its effects upon cultural stability are unquestionably severe, even if one counts them as positive.

States appear to be particularly powerless to resist globalization; this is but a reiteration of the discussion concerning the diminution of state sovereignty. But the effect that a state's impotence has upon its citizenry is significant. Devetak and Higgott (1999, 488) again elaborate:

Globalization makes it harder for government to provide the compensatory mechanism that could underwrite social cohesion in the face of change... Free markets and the reduction of, or failure to, introduce compensatory domestic welfare is a potent cocktail leading to radical responses from the dispossessed.

Further, not only are states not able to shield citizens from the buffeting effects of globalization, states instead "appear far more anxious to offer incentives and remove obstacles to having their national economies fully integrated into the global economic system" (Ferguson & Mansback 1999, 94). Yet, many states appear unable to accomplish even this. Instead, "globalization has come to be associated with financial collapse and economic turmoil... Neither markets nor the extant structures of governance appear capable of providing for all three [Keynesian conditions of economic efficiency, social justice, and individual liberty] at once" (Devetak & Higgott 1999, 483). It is little

wonder that state sovereignty is on the wane; statism is proving wholly inadequate to respond to the challenges of globalization.

The instability foisted upon states by globalization is, as previously discussed, affecting global cultures in unprecedented ways. Cohen (1996, 517) explains,

In the age of globalization, the world is being organized vertically by nation-states and regions, but horizontally by an overlapping, permeable, multiple system of interactions. This system creates communities not of place but of interest based on shared opinions and beliefs, tastes, ethnicities (where these are trans-state), religions (again, where these are trans-state), cuisine, the consumption of medicines, lifestyles, fashion, music, etc. Unlike those who argue that a single homogenized global culture is emerging [it has been suggested] rather that multiple cultures are being syncretized in a complex way.

This is, perhaps, stating the case at its mildest. The goals of the globalization effort are to reduce barriers between markets, so as to enable the smoothest, most efficient trade possible. The barriers in question are political and social, or, more specifically, state governments and cultural resistance. It has been seen that states are impotent to resist effectively the effects of globalization; cultures, conversely, are proving to be far more resilient. The net effect is fascinating, from a sociological perspective. State control has been diminished by globalization, freeing up formerly suppressed cultural expression. At the same time, those same forces of globalization are busily attempting to wear down the very cultural identities they have only just enabled. Cha (2000, 394-395) elaborates,

Globalization has ignited identity as a source of conflict... However, it [the elevation of conflict] is also a function of globalization. The process of globalization carries implicit homogenization tendencies and messages, which in combination with the 'borderlessness' of the globalization phenomenon elicits a cultural pluralist response.

As cultural integrity fragments and reforms in unpredictable ways, there is a growing sense of valuelessness emerging on a global scale, while local subcultural groups

consolidate their identities. The overarching effect is one of radical bouts of passionate resistance against a backdrop of general cultural malaise. Purdy (2004, 34) describes the function:

Mobility, individualism, and skepticism toward tradition put in motion two dynamics, one of which sustains and enhances the tendency toward liberty, while the other undermines that tendency by producing intense and sometimes violent countermovements in culture and politics.

The proponents of globalization and the neo-liberal agenda place a great deal of emphasis on such values as democracy and liberty. From a strictly economic perspective, these twinned values, when properly implemented, produce an environment that most successfully curtails state interference in the international marketplace. This condition is, naturally, of paramount importance to the free flow of goods and capital; globalization is at its most efficient when such impediments are rendered impotent. Cultural resistance, however, becomes more intensely focused as new, or renewed, group identities rear their collective heads in defiance of the effects of globalization.

Kellner (2002, 294) summarizes the condition:

Against capitalist globalization from above, there has been a significant eruption of forces and subcultures of resistance that have attempted to preserve specific forms of culture and society against globalization and homogenization and to create alternative forces of society and culture, thus exhibiting resistance and globalization from below. Most dramatically peasant and guerrilla movements in Latin America, labor unions, students, and environmentalists throughout the world and a variety of other groups and movements have resisted capitalist globalization and attacks on previous rights and benefits.

It is clear, however, that globalization is not an entity; it has no address, nor a board of directors. Globalization is a process; it cannot be localized to a particular state or organization. There are, however, forces and agents of globalization that *can* be identified. Robinson (1996, 633) makes the call, “The agent of the global economy is

transnational capital, managed by a class-conscious transnational elite, based in the center countries and led by the United States.”

Resistance to globalization can take many forms. One might rally a boycott against foreign products, for instance. But such efforts are doomed to failure, in the long run, if the products in question are cheaper, of better quality, or more accessible than domestic competition. Consumers look out, first and foremost, for their own interests. Economic competition is, after all, the first, best tool of globalization. Resistance might come from political pressure for state-sponsored protection of local production (e.g., tariffs); but, as we have seen, such efforts are never successful in the long run. In desperation, resistance might take the form of protest marches, demonstrations, or walk-outs. But globalization seems to smoothly and easily accommodate such transient statements; it simply waits until tempers have died down, and erstwhile grumbling protesters resume their status as hungry consumers. Only the staunchest, most entrenched movement can find the commitment necessary for a sustained program of resistance. This degree of focus requires a target, some place or thing upon which to fix a gaze. A dedicated resistance movement requires an identifiable enemy. A strong “us” demands a formidable “them.”

And so it is that the world is divided by globalization. From a cultural perspective, globalization weakens state sovereignty, introduces diluting factors to extant cultural bases, and results in a fragmented society, the shards scrambling to find identities into which to reorient themselves. Globalization meets with resistance at every step, and gently rolls over every effort. Kellner (2002, 290) reports, “The disclosure of powerful anti-Western terrorist networks shows that globalization divides the world as it unifies, that it produces enemies as it incorporates participants.” Threats to group identity

galvanize coherent resistance; nations are born as a result. Nationalism can, thus, be seen as the greatest threat – or *counterthreat* – to the globalization agenda. Cha (2000, 393-394) explains,

Agents of threat can be states, but can also be non-state groups or individuals... With globalization, terms such as global violence and human security become common parlance, where the fight is between irregular substate units such as ethnic militias, paramilitary guerillas, cults and religious organizations...

Nationalist groups form in an effort to resist extinction due to cultural dilution.

Nations fight to retain their identities. But, because they are not formally recognized, they have no official existence; they have no voice. “Violent nonstate actors take it upon themselves to use violent means to help achieve their goals because they often feel shut out of the process and not able to use political means such as negotiating” (DiPaolo 2005, 167). Effectively powerless in the face of globalization, and bereft of effective states to which to turn, they resort to violence as the last desperate means at their disposal. As long as globalization persists in destabilizing established social order, as long as cultures are increasingly threatened, the response will continue to grow. Nagengast (1994, 110) spells it out,

The potential and reality of additional ethnic and nationalist violence are enormous as dissidents challenge the prevailing and approaching order and existing states struggle to implement new distributions of power and capital to suppress internal movements for political change, especially autonomy and self-determination...

When a substate or nonstate actor engages in violence, the typical response of the state in which the act occurred is to treat it as any other criminal act. Some individuals may be arrested, or even shot in the process. But these organizations are large, diffuse, and non-localized. They cannot be threatened with retaliation; they cannot be targeted at all (Cha

2000, 400). And this effective immunity is the measure of their success. As they continue not to be “caught,” as they persist in brazenly claiming credit for their acts of violent resistance, they take on a certain legitimacy. They become stronger, better supported, and better organized. Their names become known. They become political entities with which to treat. In a way, they become much like states, and, in many cases, become as militarily powerful as states (DiPaolo 2005, Watkin 2004). Unlike states, however, these entities are not bound by territories with fixed borders. Ferguson and Mansbach (1999, 79) offer an explanation,

Various factors account for the current upsurge in nonstate identities, not least of which is the declining importance of territory as a source of power and prosperity. The proliferation of transnational and global networks of de-territorialized communities has further reduced the relevance of territory in global politics. After all, territory is no more essential to identity than the barnacle is to a boat. Identities demarcate psychological rather than territorial space and – like cultural, economic, and coercive boundaries – can overlap and intersect, and only rarely are exclusive.

Identity is at the heart of nationalism, and its goal is persistence of identity; it is an expression of the will to survive. It is no surprise, then, that many of these groups do not seek independence in the traditional sense; rather, it is autonomy they seek (Ferguson & Mansback 1999, 95). In many cases, they have demonstrated military might on par with that of states; what they truly desire is commensurate political power. They want a voice.

## **UNPO**

The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO 2006) was founded February 11, 1991 at the Hague. Representatives from such peoples as the Crimean Tatars, the Australian Aboriginals, Iraqi Kurdistan, and Tibet<sup>2</sup> – 15 in all – met to establish “an organization that would embody, promote, and affirm the value of

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<sup>2</sup> The Tibetan representative was HH the Dalai Lama; he continues to serve in that capacity today.



democracy, tolerance, non-violence and the right to self determination” (*ibid.*, np). Each had had a long history of difficulties in finding redress among the Members of the United Nations, and “were struggling to preserve their cultural identities and protect basic human rights.” By their own statement, they were attempting to “find non-violent ways to make governments listen to their concerns.”

The organization’s mission statement (*ibid.*, np) effectively identifies many of the problems of globalization faced by national groups:

The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) is a democratic, international membership organization. Its members are indigenous peoples, occupied nations, minorities and independent states or territories who have joined together to protect their human and cultural rights, preserve their environments, and to find non-violent solutions to conflicts which affect them. UNPO provides a legitimate and established international forum for member aspirations and assists its members in effective participation at an international level.

Although UNPO members have different goals and aspirations, they share one condition – they are not represented in major international fora, such as the United Nations. As a result, their ability to participate in the international community and to have their concerns addressed by the global bodies mandated to protect human rights and address conflict, is limited.

The NGO was established to provide the venue so desperately needed by peoples with no other opportunity to voice their grievances, or make their demands. Its stated purpose is to pressure governments to respond to their needs, without the necessity to resort to violence.

For the past 15 years, UNPO has enjoyed considerable success. It been active in enabling these national groups to gain access and effectively use the various United Nations bodies, including the (former) UN Commission on Human Rights (and now the UN Human Rights Council), the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and the

Working Group on Indigenous Populations. Access to such bodies has proven difficult for the individual groups, as making the arrangements to be heard “is often a complex and costly undertaking” (*ibid.*, np).

The organization has grown substantially. It now represents about 60 national groups in six regions – a total of over 150 million people (*ibid.*). It is interesting that the key to UNPO’s success may lie in the fact that all of these peoples are bound in a common cause, linked by a common *identity* – they are all victims of oppression. The very fact of the existence of other groups in similar plights lends credence to each individual member’s cause, bolstering the strength of purpose in each, and in the organization as a whole. UNPO members whose cause may have seemed lost but a few years ago might now feel a new, collective sense of purpose. In this, UNPO might well be congratulated on its achievements.

For all of its successes, however, UNPO still fails to address the grievances of the most severe cases, i.e., those national groups that have already resorted to violence to achieve their goals. In order to qualify for membership, national groups must (among other things) renounce violence as a means of policy (*ibid.*). Perhaps, when a group reaches the depth of desperation necessary to resort to violence, it may harbor some skepticism that talks of the sort UNPO offers are sufficient. It may be the case that certain more radical elements among UNPO’s member nations feel this way as well. It remains to be seen how effective UNPO will be in bringing about the changes necessary to satisfy the demands of cultural identity.

### **Globalization’s Response**

UNPO has garnered considerable success in bringing disparate threatened nations together in a common cause: the preservation of cultural identity. The neo-liberal agenda, however, cannot tolerate such syncretism in the global marketplace. Globalization can withstand individual acts of resistance, or even group efforts such as protests. Globalization has consistently put sovereignty to heel; statism is no longer an obstacle to untrammelled free trade. Cultural syncretism, however, cannot be bought. It is immune to the coercive effects of economy. Nationalism, by the very fact of its persistence, is winning in the war against globalization. "The failure of neo-liberal development policies in countries such as Indonesia and Argentina, and the new prominence of elite and popular nationalism and fundamentalism whose most vivid expression is terrorism, have together shown the insufficiency of the neo-liberal program" (Purdy 2004, 1). "Terrorism will remain a major transnational problem, driven by continued ethnic, religious, nationalist, separatist, political, and economic motivations" (Staten 1999, 1[citing Hughes]).

It is perhaps ironic that, in a practical sense, the successes of nationalist resistance movements are empowered by the very forces of globalization they seek to resist. Without the benefits of cheap transportation and communication, these groups could not hope to achieve the levels of success they consistently enjoy. Cha (2000, 399) explains,

The measurement process is no longer one-dimensional in the sense that one cannot readily draw linear associations between technology, capabilities and power. For example, what gives local, economically backward states regional and even global influence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is their ability to threaten across longer distances. Globalization facilitates access to select technologies related to force projection and weapons of mass destruction...

## **Terrorism**

Authorities on the topic of terrorism frequently have difficulty in determining exactly what terrorism is. "Terrorism more perhaps than most concepts has generated widely divergent interpretations" (Laqueur 2004, 232). This is a problem. "It is difficult to get a grip on this issue when we cannot agree on what terrorism is and who is a terrorist" (Robey 2004, 244). "An author writing in the 1980s listed more than a hundred definitions, and since then there have been numerous additions" (Laqueur 2004, 232). Proposed definitions "sometimes show a preference for limiting it to the criminal sphere or nonstate activity" (Watkin 2004, 6). Yet, "it has been acknowledged that illegitimate acts of terror can occur during armed conflict or otherwise be carried out by and on behalf of states" (*ibid.*). Pearlstein (2004, 144) addresses this by differentiating between legitimate and illegitimate acts of terror, "Terror... differs from terrorism in that terror is the official act of a government body where as terrorism is the rebellious act of a discontented nongovernmental organization." That the discourse could have reached this level of absurdity is indicative of how frustrating the identification of the phenomenon has become.

Attempts to find a definition of terrorism go back to 1937 with the League of Nations, "all criminal acts directed against a state... and intended to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons or the general public" (Laqueur 2004, 233). Unfortunately, this definition includes the actions of many states; naturally, states would like to be able to point to aggressors against themselves, without the possibility that they themselves might be so labeled. This condition is vital to the "us" versus "them" nomenclature inherent in the cultural framework. States are as reliant upon patriotic support as any other value system is reliant upon its particular nationalist group.

"The European Union proposed a draft according to which terrorism was considered an act aimed at seriously altering or destroying the political, economic, and social structure of member countries, a rather clumsy attempt [at] definition because a social revolution could be peaceful as well as violent" (*ibid.*, 234). The other, perhaps unstated problem with this description is that this is precisely the effect that globalization has on many countries. Once again, this definition has the potential to be recursive, and must be rejected for the same reasons as the League of Nations offering. According to title 22 of the United States Code, "terrorism is premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience" (*ibid.*, 233). This definition seems to grasp much of the meaning we have found in our discussion; it also renders the US susceptible to the problem of recursivity we have encountered, inasmuch as "clandestine agents" such as the Central Intelligence Agency may be implicated. DiPaolo (2005, 170) defines terrorism as "(a) the use of violence as a means of diplomacy and (b) the effort... to imitate the structure of the state in their attempts to seek local change." This definition, too, captures much of the meaning gleaned from our discussion, and has the benefit of shielding states from the possibility of recursivity. The problem with this definition is that it describes the condition without explaining it; the definition is not prescriptive. It isn't possible to appropriately address the problem of terrorism unless we understand it, and further, share a common understanding.

One possibility to explain the extraordinary difficulty in reaching consensus on the matter of this elusive definition is that states do not *want* a definition. Nagengast (1994, 115) suggests,

As for terror, academics, politicians, and popular pundits usually reserve the label for political opposition movements or figures, only rarely applying it to states. Violence and terror are highly politicized terms, embraced and elaborated by victims, and avoided by perpetrators, especially if the perpetrator is a state. In fact, state leaders everywhere claim respect for universal human rights, and deny that their acts constitute torture, violence, for terror, preferring to characterize them as necessary measures to ensure order and respect for the law. Nonetheless, the state is often the instigator of cycles of violent human rights abuses as it seeks to suppress change and prevent opposition movements from undermining its legitimacy.

Rather than contend with the possibility that an officially adopted definition of terrorism might turn around and bite them, many states apparently would prefer to avoid the problem by avoiding a definition altogether.

Another, darker possibility is that the agents of globalization realize that nationalism and terrorism are the natural result of their efforts, and, thus, regard these phenomena as necessary evils – part of the costs of doing business in the global marketplace.

Sunhaussen (2004, 6) observes,

All we are doing is fighting terrorists but hardly any thought is given to how to solve the problems which lead to terrorism in the first place. In the few instances when people raise the question of why terrorism occurs, the answers, as we shall see, are so silly that they have to be considered intended misinformation. In other words, no-one seriously intends to eliminate terrorism from our lives.

Laqueur (2004, 238) seems to agree that definition is problematic, allowing that a failure to reach consensus on this important topic is acceptable:

With all these misunderstandings, deliberate and involuntary, it is still true that... people reasonably familiar with the terrorist phenomenon will agree 90 percent of the time about what terrorism is, just as they will agree on democracy or nationalism or other concepts. In fact, terrorism is an unmistakable phenomenon, even if the search for a scientific, all-comprehensive definition is a futile enterprise. Many years ago I wrote that any definition beyond 'the systematic use of murder, injury, and destruction, or the threat of such acts, aimed at achieving political ends' will result in controversy, and arguments will go on for ever.

At the risk, then, of contributing to a perpetual state of controversy, we are prepared at this point to offer a definition for terrorism. We must first, however, review the underlying concepts a final time. Culture is a behavioral characteristic of human populations. Cultural groups form when members of population segments identify themselves and each other as adherent to specific cultural systems of values. These identities are based in a subjective sense of history and continuity, yet serve as a very real basis for the lifestyles of their members. When a threat, or the perception of a threat, confronts the continuity or integrity of the group's system of values, the group identity is threatened. The group responds in defense of itself in whatever ways it can. Nationalism is a culture group's defensive response to the perception of threat to its values or identity. The tools at a nation's disposal are limited, however, by the political constraints of states, and the economic constraints of the global market. Registering grievances with state authorities is often ineffective, whether because the state has no interest in rendering assistance, or, more commonly, is powerless to do so. Appealing directly to the agents responsible for the cultural imposition, even when they can be identified, is all but futile. Without a voice, and impotent to effect social change geared toward preserving their way of life, the nationalists become desperate. They resort to violence. *Terrorism is the violent, last-ditch effort by nationalist groups to defend, and/or gain the attention of whomever may assist them in protecting, the continuity of their culture-group's identity, system of values, and way of life.*

This definition is not limited to non-state or sub-state actors, nor does it insist that terrorists be clandestine, covert, or in any way obscure. States, however, cannot be terrorists, in that they not only already have a voice in the international arena, but also

states have no cultural identities! (Warfare, and other “legal” forms of state violence, can be truly horrific—but such activities are not terrorism.) Instead, culture groups within states respond defensively, nationalistically, when their state-based values are attacked. These are patriots, and patriots are *not* exempted from the definition. Thus, it matters not at all what cultural values a national group is defending when it resorts to violence. Terrorism is terrorism, of whatever stripe. This definition has the advantage of applying to any circumstance. For example, pursuant to this definition, participants in the Boston Tea Party were unquestionably terrorists. To the extent that Timothy McVeigh identified himself with a threatened cultural group – a nation under siege – he, too, was a terrorist. Conversely, if there was no such identification, then he unequivocally was *not* a terrorist, but merely a psychopathic murderer. Finally, the extent to which a national group defends itself may well extend to an aggressive posture. For a nation may well believe itself to be threatened if there exists any potential opposition. When this is the case, nationalism is at its virulent worst, for any other culture, in fact, *all* other cultural systems of values are perceived as threats. Under these circumstances, these national extremists may well adopt violence as a way of life, under the aegis of exterminating anyone other than themselves.

The discussion concerning globalization, thus, plays no intrinsic part in the definition of terrorism. Rather, globalization has been seen to facilitate the circumstances wherein terrorism is most likely to occur. Globalization does not directly cause terrorism or nationalism; it is merely the vehicle whose payload is designed to flatten cultures. Globalization’s ‘payload’ consists of the goods, services, religious agendas, languages, philosophies, ethnicities, music, cuisine, styles of dress and dance, television and radio



broadcasts, etc., that impact and dilute the cultures which it targets. While many offer considerable resistance, no culture, no nation on earth appears to be immune to its impact.

### **Conclusion**

We contend that this explanation sufficiently defines, and isolates the sole source of, terrorism. Further, the explanation is thoroughly normative, as there is an apparent solution. Nations resort to violence only in extremis; it is their *last* resort. Given the opportunity to voice their grievances in another, effective manner, nations would clamor for it, rather than resort to terrorism. Thus, the only potentially viable solution is for nations, or some of them, to be formally recognized, and granted true, palpable power in global discourse. It might be suggested that the United Nations be transformed into a bicameral entity, such that a representative umbrella group (such as UNPO, for example) be granted some legislative authority in the functioning of the organization. In this way, otherwise unrepresented peoples might have true representation in the UN, in a way similar to the House of Commons in parliamentary systems, or the House of Representatives in the US system. However, we contend that, short of some sort of viable representation in matters of global discourse, as long as nations feel impinged upon, terrorism will remain an ongoing threat.

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