

War and Peace

Terrorism

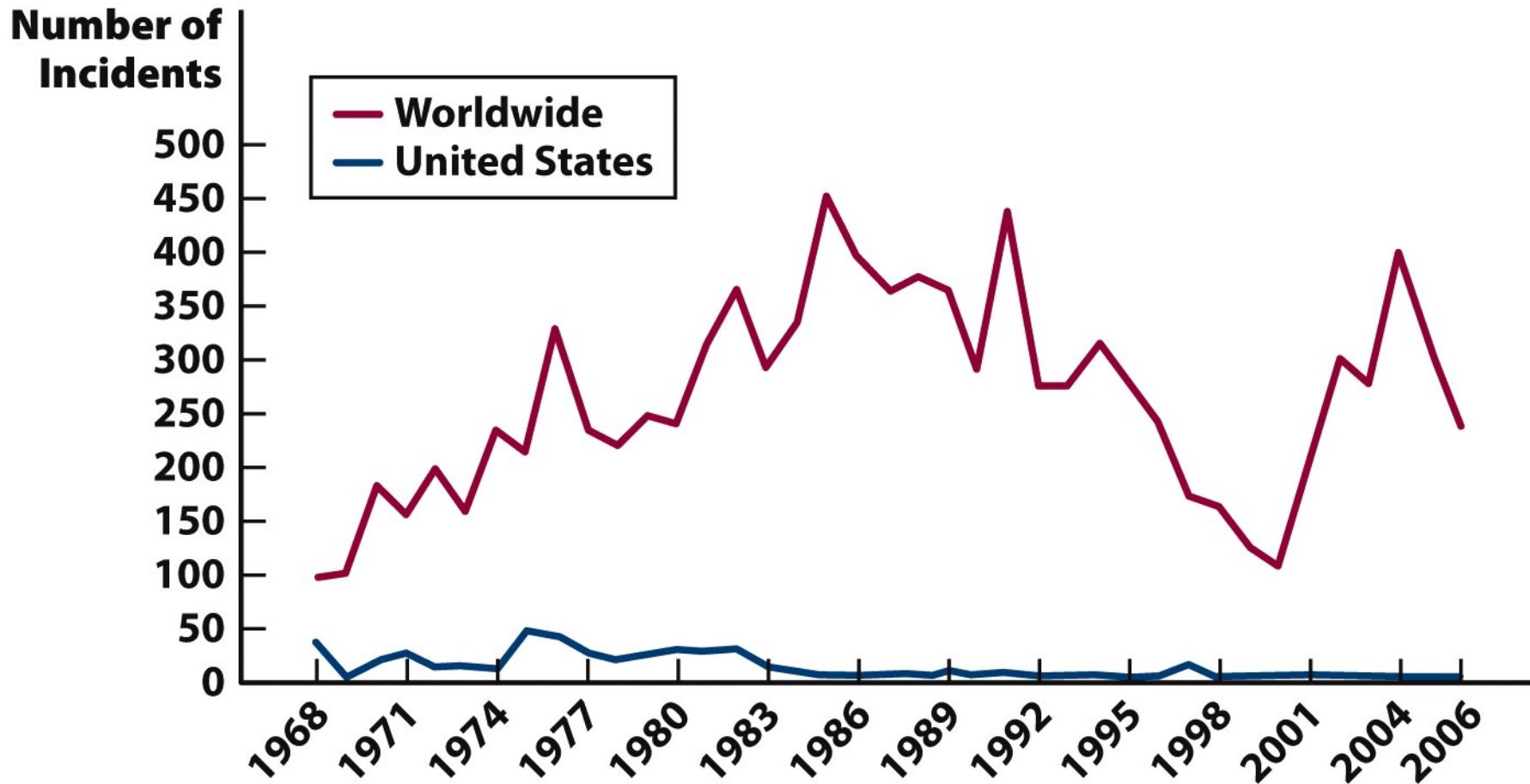
The Puzzle

- **Why do some transnational insurgents choose violence to achieve their aims?**

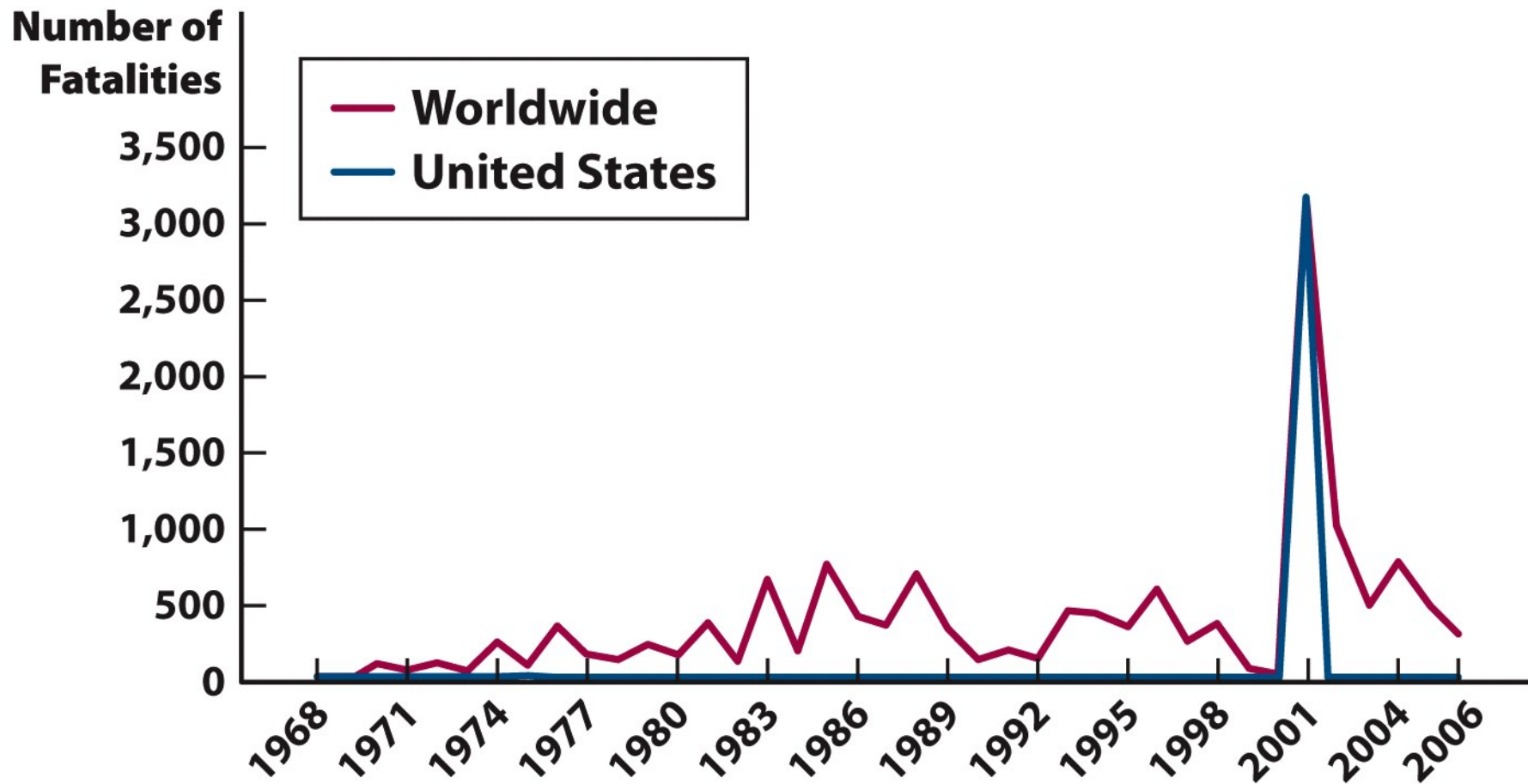


**Osama bin Laden,
Founder, al-Qaeda**

Incidents of Transnational Terrorism, Worldwide, 1968-2006



Transnational Terrorist Fatalities, Worldwide, 1968-2006



Why Violence?

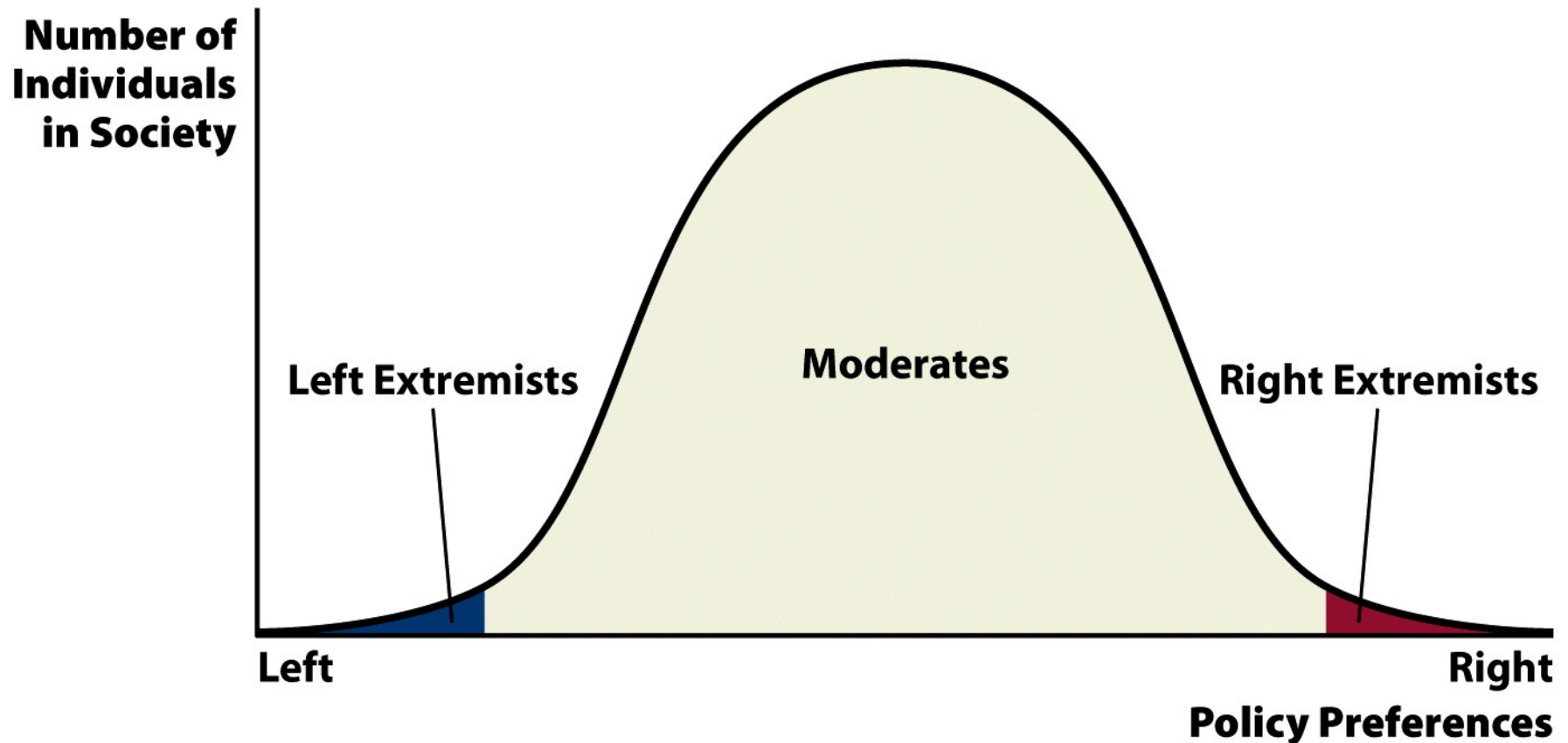
- **Like states, groups use violence to impose a solution or raise costs to other side to elicit concessions--in other words, to bargain.**
 - **Do not need to agree on principles to negotiate and find compromises. Bargaining is zero-sum.**
- **Terrorism is simply another bargaining failure. The same reasons that lead states to go to war, lead groups to use violence.**
 - **Group, state or both must suffer from incomplete information or problem of credible commitment.**

Which Groups Choose Terror?

- **Terrorism is asymmetrical warfare.**
 - **States are always stronger than terrorist groups, but not so strong that they can deter all attacks.**
 - **Object of terrorist is not to defeat the target's military, but to inflict pain on civilians to induce political change.**
 - **Groups choose terrorism when they are too weak to fight the state directly.**

Which Groups Choose Terror?

Terrorists are typically “extremists” who are weak relative to the goals they seek. That is, they lack significant popular support.



Terrorist Organizations

- Terrorist groups are extremely sensitive to defection, which threatens to reveal information about members, supporters, or capabilities.
- Terrorist organizations often are highly decentralized networks with many “cells” that limit consequences of information leakage.
 - Al-Qaeda metastasized from a “networked” hierarchy to a decentralized network after the fall of Afghanistan in 2001.
- Terrorists hide within sympathetic populations.

Terrorism from Incomplete Information

- **Terrorists have private information that they cannot credibly reveal to targets.**
 - **Information asymmetries likely to be large -- groups have uncertain capabilities.**
 - **Groups have incentives to exaggerate their capabilities and resolve.**
 - **Cannot reveal their strategies without vitiating their effectiveness.**
 - **Threats are often not credible.**
- **Terrorists attack to signal their capabilities and resolve.**

Terrorism from Commitment Problems

- To reach agreement, terrorists must credibly commit not to stage future attacks.
- Most effective way is to disarm and give a third party access to organization, but this then reduces the power of the group and the likelihood that the target state will honor any agreement reached.
- Problem of credible commitment is double-sided.

Can Terrorism Be Prevented?

- **Problems of incomplete information and credible commitment will require groups to launch attacks to demonstrate that they can.**
- **We will never “win” a “global war on terror.”**

Can Terrorism Be Deterred?

- **Deterrence poses threats intended to dissuade an opponent from taking an undesired action.**
 - Nuclear deterrence during Cold War.
- **Terrorists are supposedly not deterrable because they “do not have an address.”**
 - But all individuals and groups operate from somewhere.
- **Real issue is credibility of target’s counter-threat.**
 - Would we be willing obliterate Pakistan because al-Qaeda operates from within its borders?

Should We Bargain with Terrorists?

- **More and better information is always better. Intelligence is essential. Must understand your enemy.**
 - Today, intelligence is directed mostly toward counter-terrorism to prevent attacks and destroy groups.
- **Should we negotiate?**
 - Current stance is that we do not negotiate with terrorists,
 - but we do make concessions (ex.: U.S. withdrawal of combat forces from Saudi Arabia in 2003).
 - If terrorism is a product of bargaining failures, should we bargain with terrorists?

Mid-term, Weds., April 27

- Everything through Monday, April 25
- Part I. Essay question
 - Choice of two, answer one (55 points out of 100)
- Part II. Identification
 - Study guide available at <http://dss.ucsd.edu/~dlake/courses/ps12/ps12.htm>. 76 terms, from text and lecture. Key terms from FLS.
 - Prompt: Please define and identify the significance of three (3) of the following five (5) terms. Your answer for each should be brief but demonstrate that you understand the concept and how it relates to the material covered in this course. Your answer should include: **the definition of the term, the significance of the term with respect to International Relations, and a historical example of the term**. Each answer is worth 15 points, for a total of 45 points (out of 100).