

7-25-2003

## Special Article. Space Security in a World of Security and Insecurity

IBPP Editor  
bloomr@erau.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp>



Part of the [Aviation Safety and Security Commons](#), [Defense and Security Studies Commons](#), [Other Aerospace Engineering Commons](#), [Other Political Science Commons](#), [Other Psychology Commons](#), [Peace and Conflict Studies Commons](#), and the [Terrorism Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Editor, IBPP (2003) "Special Article. Space Security in a World of Security and Insecurity," *International Bulletin of Political Psychology*. Vol. 14 : Iss. 21 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp/vol14/iss21/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Bulletin of Political Psychology by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact [commons@erau.edu](mailto:commons@erau.edu).

Title: Special Article. Space Security in a World of Security and Insecurity

Author: Editor

Volume: 14

Issue: 21

Date: 2003-07-25

Keywords: Space Security

**Abstract.** This article provides a theoretical analysis from which a space security expert could appreciate the complexity and richness of the space security challenge.

It was always nonsense. The idea that the end of the Cold War would bring with it an end of history—i.e., an end of contestation of what entailed the ends of life and the means to get there—could only be nonsense. For even if all people or even just the people who cared about such things could have agreed about ends and means, the devil would still be in the details. And so after the Cold War (as during and before it) one finds followers of the Book—be it the Christian Bible, the Koran, the United States (US) Constitution, a novella, an infinitely looped aphorism, or some other secular or sacred revelation burned within the soul or on some bonfire—involved in struggles comprising problematic behaviors encompassing real and perceived betrayal, violation of trust, and violence begetting ever more of the same.

In at least two ways, these problematic behaviors certainly are not nonsense. First, any nonsense is not devoid of sense but has meaning as something devoid of sense. In this manner, anything labeled nonsense immediately is hoisted on its own semantic petard and is probably still helpful in a search for either Truth or truth. It is thus that this very chapter's beginning that ascribes the notion of the end of history in the context of the end of the Cold War as nonsense has sense.

Second, and more specifically, these problematic behaviors have had all the trappings of sense in that they are imbued with human intentions, goals, passions, and the like—often the hottest elements of human psychology. They also seem to have been omnipresent throughout human history and deadly serious to actor and/or target. A complicating feature, however, is that the trappings of sense may not make sense or only make the wrong sense to those who do not espouse the trappings as self-compatible or as morally, ethically, and even epistemologically and metaphysically relevant.

The most significant problematic behaviors facing the space security expert are sabotage, espionage, and terrorism. For the purpose of this chapter, sabotage denotes any action—including intrapsychic acts of nonattention, misattention, and attendant mental processes—that is intentionally taken to impede the success of some other action. This other action may be also one taken by the saboteur, some other person or people, some other living organism, or some materiel or apparatus. Purposeful miswriting of computer code, enraged destruction of computer hardware, devious and covert distortion of text, intentional misstatements, and unauthorized hacking into computer systems can be a few examples of sabotage.

Espionage denotes the intentional obtaining of information by someone without authorization for obtaining it or the intentional transmittal of said information to someone without authorization to obtain it. The issue of authorization is complex because it usually involves both formal possession of a security clearance or some sort of special access and a validated need-to-know based on the formally prescribed and proscribed duties of someone and the requirements of projects for which this someone is at least partially responsible. Examples of espionage can include intentionally providing classified,

sensitive, or proprietary information to a representative of an organization that is adversarial or competitive to that which one represents. In the world of space security, one may not need to physically possess such information at all but merely to engage in behavior—e.g., through the sabotage of disabling a cyber firewall—enabling someone else to inappropriately access data.

Terrorism denotes the use of violence and/or its threat against noncombatants or noncombatant-oriented materiel or equipment employed by noncombatants to achieve a political objective. The construct of noncombatant is a highly complex and controversial one and is often equated with being innocent and unjustly targeted by terrorism. In eyes of various beholders the construct may denote uniformed soldiers who are militarily surprised; soldiers in mufti who are off-duty; civilian functionaries and representatives of governments; other civilians providing financial or emotional support to an adversary, civilians who pay taxes to an adversarial entity; or, indeed, very young children and very old adults who could in any possible way be construed to be able to support counterterrorism in the past, present, or future. In essence, there are no innocents and, thus, there may be no terrorism, because the latter cannot be reliably differentiated from various military, law enforcement, and even business and social control acts of coercion. Assuming there is a viable construct of terrorism, however, one example might be the threat of blowing up a space communications satellite in orbit for the purpose of generating panic among a general public and then a behavioral capitulation on the part of a government that formally represents that general public and controls the satellite.

What is so egregious about the three interrelated problematic behaviors of sabotage, espionage, and terrorism is that they often subvert what may be the two most basic classes of distinctions that undergird psychological constructions of human securities and insecurities. One class comprises the distinctions between the me and not me, inside one's self and outside one's self, self and other, and, ultimately, us and them. The other class comprises the distinctions between pleasure and pain, good and bad, and the desired and undesired. Together, the two classes may combine to undergird constructions of the known self and alien other, ingroup and outgroup, and, ultimately, ally and enemy.

The horror from the flash of realization that one's body is a host of malignant tissue, that one's mind is being controlled by others (in certain cases labeled as examples of psychopathology), or that a colleague or ally watching one's back is holding a figurative or literal knife to it—the ultimate fear of the space security expert—may defy adequate description through language. Suffice it to say that at that moment one's very world seems to implode with every bit the intensity of a communications asset exploding.

This phenomenological sense of world implosion—along with the possibility of actual physical destruction—is a cardinal feature of the three problematic behaviors of sabotage, espionage, and terrorism that are described above. This is even more the case in the context of space security, because space-based communications has already formed in many parts of the world—and are increasingly becoming in yet other parts—the essential infrastructure of many essential features of life. The conscious and unconscious fear of infrastructure becoming extrastructure may have something to do with the richly detailed history of human response (especially the official response of government and other formal organizations) to the three problematic behaviors—a response too often characterized by overreaction, nonadaptive bias, malignant egoistic strivings, and plain stupidity. Three such examples in the last 100 years involving United States history include the mass internment of loyal Japanese-Americans during World War II, the McCarthyite Red Scare soon after the advent of the Cold War, and the writing and initial implementation of the Aviation Security and Transportation Act of 2001.

But a much more mundane but equally egregious example involves the psychopathology of everyday life wherein constructs such as emotionally disturbed, unreliable, and treasonous are instinctively applied as negative stereotypes towards entire groups of people. Other individuals and other groups becoming aware of the negative stereotyping may, then, be confronted with three basic choices. One choice is to pile on and engage in the same sorts of thoughts, emotions, motives, and behaviors. A second choice is to avoid the targeted out-individual or out-group—most often because of not wanting to be “outed” as well through other-perceived association with those already outed or not wanting to be a victim of “collateral damage.” A third choice is to engage with the outed in solidarity—perhaps to demonstrate human solidarity or humanistic resistance to what is not humane.

Some space security experts and many members of space organizations opt for the second choice and refuse to support the selection of members of an out-group into a space organization, allow their entry only with difficulty, or induce an environment intended to influence an already selected member of the out-group to leave the organization. These actions—taken with the full intention of supporting security—much more likely harm security through reinforcing the sense of “outness” among members of the out-group. This, of course, plays into the hands of terrorism.

This same negative stereotyping as a social phenomenon seems fairly consistent with the psychological nexus fueling the history of crimes against humanity. (Erickson, 1999; Heinz, 1995; Laqueur, 1987; Lindy & Lifton, 2001; Weine, 1999). That this history and the posited psychological nexus still seem to characterize human behavior may possibly suggest an evolutionary advantage to be exploited for different reasons by both terrorists and those who seek to extricate themselves from a world of terrorism to one without it. Unfortunately, this last group only facilitates ensuring that there is no such latter world.

To their credit, other experts in security realize the present state of affairs and are collaborating on policies, legislation, and programs to prudently prevent, minimize, and manage sabotage, espionage, and terrorism. Their main focus is on necessary technological prophylaxis—e.g., biometric identification checkpoints and explosive detection systems—organizational creation and modification, and reactive crisis management. However, as these innovations continue to be developed, the human element fueling problematic behavior—e.g., sabotage, espionage, and terrorism—seems to be given short shrift.

As an example, organizational creation and modification have been significant as security responses in the post-9/11 environment—a semiotic that ineluctably stimulates the unconscious transfer of undesired elements of oneself from oneself to some intrapsychic terrorist schema, differential contamination of cognition by affect, the corporate lust to make a buck, and naked strivings for self-advancement—that converged on a public discourse focused on what a new cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security would look like. Advocacy and dialectic focused on which security-related agencies should be in the Department and which should be out. Organizational questions abounded as to the identity of the first Department secretary, the size of the budget, and the actual costs of reorganization of government. Other Issues comprised the quest for corporate liability for divulging sensitive, security-related information to the Government; the protection or lack thereof of labor rules for Department personnel; and the ease of money transfers among Department agencies.

One could make a strong case, however, that a new Department would do little to significantly advance US homeland security and could even threaten it through a misallocation of resources (Smithson, 2002). This is because the homeland security initiatives that needed to happen, such as more cooperation between law enforcement and intelligence entities; facilitation of accurate, responsive, and secure

information transmission from intelligence collectors to operational security authorities; upgrading of an intelligence analytic fusion center; delineation of more appropriate public safety and public health guidelines; development and implementation of novel education and training modules concerning emergency and crisis management; and construction of a more integrated first-responder capability were not being impeded by existing governmental infrastructure. And organizational creation and modification maintained and even aroused the common impediments to problem resolution typified by political turf battles, personality conflicts, the fear of change, and so on.

In fact, the new Department initiative was largely a political tactic to seize partisan electoral advantage, a well-meaning but flawed attempt to reassure the general public, and an exemplification of magical thinking about bureaucratic innovation as a show of resolve and muscle that spontaneously transfigures into operational savvy eliciting despair in US terrorist adversaries (cf. Grote, 2002; Lewis & Considine, 1999; Oliver, 2000). This psychology has been and will surely be exploited by terrorist and other enemies of the US—both foreign and domestic.

In essence, then, a psychology of crisis response through organizational creation and modification largely exacerbated the probability of further crisis. Although the US has often exemplified the zenith of organizational success, this time its organizational penchant rivaled egregious self-injurious behavior that fosters a security department but not security. One might make an argument by analogy to the recent announcement of the creation of a new National Aeronautics and Space Administration Engineering and Safety Center (Leary, 2003) in response to the Columbia space shuttle disaster and investigation.

The moral of the story is that without a viable approach for selecting, evaluating, and managing the people who work on space, space communications, and space security issues, impending perpetrators of sabotage, espionage, and terrorism may only be aided in their malevolent quests. However, it is fervently believed by many psychology experts that most problematic behaviors can be best addressed by understanding people—through something called personality—and by constructing a space security program focused on the human element—through something called personnel security. A future issue of IBPP will turn to these matters in the context of space security. (See Erickson, E.J., Jr. (August, 1999). *The anarchist disorder: The psychopathology of terrorism in late nineteenth-century France*. Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities & Social Sciences, 60, (2-A), 0517; Grote, D. (2000). *Public sector organizations: Today's innovative leaders in performance management*. *Public Personnel Management*, 29, 1-20; Heinz, W.S. (1995). *The military, torture and human rights: Experiences from Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay*. In R.D. Crelinsten, & A.P. Schmid (Eds.). *The politics of pain: Torturers and their masters*. (pp. 65-97). Boulder, CO, US; Laqueur, W. (1987). *The age of terrorism*. Boston, Little Brown & Co; Leary, W.E. (July 16, 2003). *NASA, in response to Columbia panel, plans an agencywide safety center*. *The New York Times*, p. A13; Lewis, J. M., & Considine, M. (1999). *Medicine, economics and agenda-setting*. *Social Science & Medicine*, 48, 393-405; Lindy, J.D., & Lifton, R.J. (Eds.). (2001). *Beyond invisible walls: The psychological legacy of Soviet trauma*. New York, NY, US: Brunner-Routledge; Oliver, S. (2000). *Symmetrical communication: Does reality support rhetoric?* *Corporate Communications*, 5, 26-33; Smithson, A.E. (July 15, 2002). *One federal department too many*. *The New York Times*, p. A21; Weine, S.M. (1999). *When history is a nightmare: Lives and memories of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. New Brunswick, NJ, US: Rutgers University Press.)