The Constitutive Effects for Conflict and Insecurity of the Post-9/11 Discourse on Terrorism

This essay examines the ways in which the post-9/11 discourse on terrorism has prioritised certain interpretations of terrorism, and argues that these carefully chosen frameworks serve to legitimate certain conceptions of conflict and insecurity, whilst marginalising others. It is held that conflict and insecurity are not objective terms, but are shaped and constituted by the dominant discourses in operation. From this perspective, it is possible to examine the discourse on terrorism as a framework that serves to define how security and conflict should be understood, and how 'reasonable' responses to terrorism are constructed. After a discussion about the importance and theoretical implications of discourse, the essay briefly outlines the dominant features of the discourse on terrorism in the UK and the US (the two states on which this essay focuses). Following this, the constitution of militarised and exceptional responses to terrorism as reasonable and necessary are discussed. The essay then examines the role played by discourse in justifying the 2003 invasion of Iraq, focussing on the ways in which myth, identity and necessity were used to prompt action. Finally, the ways in which the discourse constitutes the 'us' identity and is used to suppress dissenting voices is explored, and the various resistances to this aspect of the discourse are considered.

Discourse and Theory

When investigating the impact and importance of a discourse, it seems apt to begin by asking why words and language are so important. Jackson gives a useful answer when he says that "words are never neutral; they don't just describe the world, they actually help to make the world" (Jackson 2005: 21). The use of binary terms, the constitutive nature of language, and the emotional connections and historical implications of certain terms and signs render discourse a powerful and value-laden tool. Alongside this position, it is important to consider that discourse and power are closely linked. Foucault argues that "régimes of truth" in society decide "the types of discourse which [that society] accepts and makes function as true." Such discourses are "produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses (university, army, writing, media)" (Foucault 1980: 131-2). If discourse is value-laden, influential, and itself influenced heavily by systems of power, then it begs attention.

In the realm of security, the Foucauldian notion of discourse as an asset and function of power seems particularly appropriate. In discussing the matter, Shapiro highlights an approach which examines discursive frameworks insofar as they constitute "a circulation of silences versus volubilities and of dominant versus subjugation modes of statements and knowledge practices", in short, "a view that places discourse within an economy of power relations." (1990: 331). From such a perspective, the post-9/11 discourse on terrorism should be examined as an asset of dominant power-régimes, and the extent to which that discourse is useful as a tool should be the focus of inquiry. In addition to this, McDonald's conception of the inter-subjective nature of security should be considered. He argues that security (and the practices entailed) are defined and chosen through a process of contestation between different actors. This contestation is played out, in part, through representational strategies that "create support for particular conceptions and practices of security" and "marginalise alternative security perspectives" (McDonald 2005: 174-5). Within this approach, discursive frameworks play an important part in the way in which differing conceptions of security are prioritised and constituted.

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In terms of developing a fuller understanding of the importance of discourse in the social world, Chalaby argues that we must move away from the fascination with discourse as a purely linguistic category. Instead we must conceive of it as a *thing in itself,* a *class of texts* which cannot be reduced to simple aspects of text, but which aims to understand the social forces behind the production of the intertextual framework of meaning. He argues that this is a truly sociological view of discourse (Chalaby 2006). From this perspective, a full understanding of discourse should examine not only the language used during the 'War on Terror', but also the intent and meaning behind such discourses. This essay will draw on these notions of discourse and security construction in order to identify the role of discourse in constituting conflict and insecurity.

Main Features of the Discourse

Whilst this essay will draw out the major features of the post-9/11 discourse on terrorism throughout the discussion on its constitutive effects, it is useful first to examine the dominant discursive trends. One major aspect is the use of binary language; civilisation/barbarism, good/evil and, most fundamentally, us/them. The various binarisms have their own significant implications, which will be unpacked below; together they have formed perhaps the most significant aspect of the post-9/11 discourse on terrorism, exemplified through George W. Bush's famous assertion that "you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" (2001b). Another significant feature of the discourse has been the use of historical parallels, most significantly in terms of allusions to the Cold War and to World War 2 (Jackson 2005: 41-47). The third broad aspect of the discourse, particularly important in the context of this discussion, has been the invocation of militarism and exception; the very notion of a *War* on Terror implies and demands certain ways of conceptualising and performing security, which implicitly marginalise other approaches (Fierke 2007: 172).

It is worth noting that, even amongst those with the ability to prioritise a discourse in the public domain, the framework of meaning which has been applied to terrorism in the post-9/11 world has not been constant or universal. As mentioned at the outset, this essay will spend some time discussing resistance to the dominant discourse. It will also look at where the foci of the UK and the US diverge.

Militarism and the State of Exception

One of the more significant aspects of the post-9/11 discourse on terrorism has been the use of militarised language and signifiers. This section will outline the ways in which this discourse has been used. It will be argued that the militarised discursive framework has the function of elevating certain interpretations of security and conflict whilst marginalising others, and that the implications of these choices can be seen in various arenas (most clearly foreign policy).

At the most basic level, the militarisation of the discourse occurred through the declaration of a 'war' on terrorism. Rogers argues that such a term places unusual emphasis on the use and place of military force in counterterrorism efforts, and marginalises alternative attempts to treat the events of 9/11 and other attacks as criminal acts (2008: 175-7). Croft outlines a number of alternative possible narratives to the attacks of 9/11 which could have avoided the 'act of war' representation, such as a security failure or a sign of weakness in the US-Saudi Arabia relationship (2006: 113-4). Pillar critiques the ongoing debate about whether terrorism should be perceived as a criminal or a military threat, arguing that elements from both approaches are necessitated by the challenge posed (2008: 384-5). However, this argument seems to ignore the importance of how the problem is approached. As this essay will argue, the militarised approach legitimates and even insists upon certain responses which, whilst arguably effective in a short-term counterterrorist campaign, fundamentally affect how the issues are thought about and responded to.

The militarised discourse is furthered through both ongoing references to a state of war (Bush 2001a; 2001b; 2002a; 2005b) and through the discursive representations of a state of exception. McDonald argues that the Anti-Terrorism Kit distributed to all Australian civilians in 2003 constituted a representational strategy which presented the threat from terrorism as ubiquitous and militarised, maintaining a significant level of fear amongst the population (2005). Whilst not so extreme in the UK, similar conceptions of the threat are echoed by various institutions. In helping citizens to identify possible terror threats, the website of the London Metropolitan Police states: "if you think you have seen a person acting suspiciously, or if you see a vehicle, unattended package or bag which might be a threat,

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immediately move away and call 999" (2006). It further directs that "if something strikes you as suspicious and out of place [then you should] trust your instincts". The securitisation of anything 'suspicious' reinforces the idea of a constant threat and state of exception, which can only be transcended through constant reinforcing of such suspicion. Such an approach appears to appeal to the notion that security in this context must be gained at the expense of the other, the 'suspicious', and that constant vigilance and internalisation of the state of exception are crucial features in combating the threat. The constant reminders to 'remember' 9/11, communicated through language, images and signs, reinforce the ongoing nature of the state of exception; the wartime mentality insists upon permanent alertness (Croft 2006: 45-47; Zehfuss 2003).

Derrida argues that the state of exception has been constructed in part around the fetishisation of 9/11 as an event. When we say 9/11 "we do not use language in its obvious referring function but rather press it to name something that it cannot name because it happens beyond language: terror and trauma" (paraphrased in Borradori 2003: 147). The loss of life in the attack on the Twin Towers was, in relative terms, fairly minor, and yet a collective experience of indignation and "the drumbeat of the media" crystallised the day as a "major event" (149).[1] The war-like 'spectacle' produced by the media in the days following 9/11, with limited commercials and a string of military and government spokespeople commenting on the new war, prioritised the event over all others (Kellner 2003: 94-6). Fierke argues that the presentation of the situation as a war added to the constitution of a world defined by war, "rather than, for instance, crime or even dialogue". Such a discursive construction "suggests that the danger is an existential one which threatens the very existence of a community." This formulation implicitly justifies emergency measures; "because the threat is existential, the suspension of normal politics is justified" (2007: 172-3). Such a focus has the effect of marginalising an approach to security which might be more concerned with the 30,000 children who died that day, and every day since, from preventable conditions (UNICEF 2000). One of the major effects of the discourse on terrorism has been the opportunity cost for marginalised concerns, which lack airtime, policy consideration and adequate funding (McDonald 2007: 256). Nonetheless, within the militarised and existential discourse which has dominated discussion about terrorism in the post-9/11 world, such concerns must become secondary to the ongoing fight to preserve a 'way of life' which is the foundation for any capacity to aid the suffering. The internal logic of the discourse on terrorism necessitates the marginalisation of other concerns.

The militarised discourse is also extended through the constitution of the terrorist other as irrational, evil, and barbarous. Andrews highlights the reticence from the Bush administration towards attempting to 'explain' 9/11; it focussed instead on binary representations of a positive 'us' and a negative 'them' (2003: 29-30). Such formulation of 9/11 was epitomized by Howard Baker, the US Ambassador to Japan, when he identified the attacks as "a strike against those values that separate us from animals" (2001). The implication of this statement is that the terrorists are as civilised and as complex as animals – they cannot be reasoned or negotiated with, we must simply deal with them on their own terms.[2] In a similar vein, Bush declared that the terrorists in Iraq are "an enemy without a conscience" who "cannot be appeased" (2005b). Such discourse centres on the formulation of terrorists as "evil-doers" (Bush 2001a), a return to a good/evil essentialism which discursively marginalises any grey area. Tony Blair generally avoided the good/evil dichotomies, but engaged in similar binary construction when he insisted that the terrorists are "driven not by a set of negotiable political demands, but by religious fanaticism" (2004).[3] The impact of such discourse on the constitution of the self will be examined in more detail below, but from the perspective of militarisation the effects are clear. The existence of a capable, irrational and hate-filled adversary defies calls for moderation and negotiation – these appear naïve and hopeless. Similarly, those who attempted to explain the attacks of 9/11, either through considerations of poverty or hatred for US foreign policy, were denounced as anti-American, or for "acting like proxies for those who hate the West and everything it represents" (*Telegraph* 2001). Some, such as Pape, have problematised the conception of irrational and non-negotiable terrorists, arguing that such an approach lacks the depth and nuance of a more engaged analysis (Pape 2005). However, such an approach does not fully engage with the apparent function of the discourse. In Der Derian's terms, "retribution required certainty", and complex evaluation and any hint of moderation have been derided where they have surfaced (2002: 102). Whilst a more considered approach might help to understand the adversary, such consideration must be kept out of the popular discourse if militarisation is to become common sense.

The militarisation of the war on terror, and the concrete extension of the conflict to wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, has been widely criticised. The war in Iraq has received particular disapproval, even from scholars who exemplify the

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militarised realist paradigm and who argued that the war was a mistake because it was not in the 'national interest' (Mearsheimer and Walt 2003; NYT Paid Advertisement 2002). However, such criticism (whilst arguably correct in highlighting inconsistencies) fails to engage with the function of discourse outlined at the beginning of this essay. Whilst the militarised anti-terror discourse may have created its own internal contradictions when employed to justify an invasion of Iraq,[4] a more useful perspective might be to examine how the discourse helped to construct a situation in which a particular approach to dealing with terrorism became commonsensical. As this section has suggested, the discourse of militarisation and exception created a powerful framework which marginalised calls for moderation, and denied the terrorists any appeal to complexity. The following chapters will examine the way in which these discursive forms, tied to more specific issues of identity and apolitical necessity, allowed the war in Iraq to be cast as a manifestation of the war on terrorism and as a supreme expression of 'our' identity.

Iraq and the Discourse on Terrorism

The Second Gulf War provides a good opportunity to examine the role of the discourse on terrorism in constituting conflict and insecurity. Whilst, as noted above, many established scholars argued that the invasion of Iraq was not in the 'national interest' of the coalition states, it is possible to identify benefits to powerful interests which may have prompted the invasion (the nature of the outcomes notwithstanding). These might include the desire for control over Iraq's oil and the extension of Western military power (Chomsky and Achar 2007: 83-84), the wish to create a neo-liberal outpost in the Arab World (Klein 2007: 328-330) and petrodollar theories relating to the strength and vulnerability of the US Dollar (Clark 2005). If the theories which argue that the professed motivations for invading Iraq were misleading are correct (and such an assumption is held here) then, given the above considerations about discourse and theory, the discourse which motivated the pro-active foreign policy and the need for a militarised solution should be seen as a constitutive part of an effort to justify a war which may otherwise have faced large-scale opposition. The unprecedented scale of pre-war protest around the world suggests that, had the discourse justifying the war been absent, public opinion might have made the war less possible.

Whilst it would be overoptimistic to claim certainty about the specific contribution made by the discourse on terrorism to the project legitimating the invasion of Iraq, there are certain dynamics which can be safely assumed to have had impact in making the invasion 'reasonable'. These draw from the wider framework of the focus on militarism and apolitical necessity which has already been examined. Three important discursive frameworks were used in linking terrorism to the need for a war in Iraq. One was the use of historical parallels in framing the threat from Iraq, the second was the exteriorisation of terrorism, and the third was the suggested links between Saddam Hussein and terrorism.

The use of historical reference has been a key feature of US discourse in relation to the Iraq war. Bush's speech to the Annapolis Naval Academy in 2005 is a good example of the tripartite way in which the references are often framed;

In World War II, free nations came together to fight the ideology of fascism and freedom prevailed…In the Cold War, freedom defeated the ideology of communism and led to a democratic movement that freed the nations of Eastern and Central Europe from Soviet domination…Today in the Middle East, freedom is once again contending with an ideology that seeks to sow anger and hatred and despair (2005b).[5]

Jackson highlights the impact of the focus on the two previous wars. The image of World War II (WWII) evokes certain myths about the American identity as a heroic defender of freedom and as a guardian of liberal values. The classification of certain states as belonging to an 'Axis of Evil' in the War on Terror is reminiscent of the Axis Powers of WWII, and reinforces Manichean conceptions of evil and non-negotiability. The Cold War rhetoric plays a slightly different role, signifying the threat to 'our way of life' from "soulless ideologues". Such discourse fits into the wider image of existential threats examined above (Jackson 2005: 41-45). However, it would be problematic to follow Jackson's lead in viewing the historical references solely through their capacity to evoke certain reactions about what should be done (although this is clearly important). By focussing on the 'threats' that the US has faced throughout its history, and implicitly advocating the militarised responses to these threats, the use of historical examples reifies an identity the US as a state which has survived thanks to the preservation of its values and ideals through *defensive*

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military force. It also evokes the image of an America which has exemplified and defended liberal values on behalf of others. Such a conception is challenged by Oren, who argues that the American conception of 'liberty' and 'democracy' have not remained constant, but have adapted in accordance with the need to construct a separate identity to that held by a chosen adversary (Oren 2001). Despite this inconsistency, the impact of a discourse which insists upon military force to preserve cherished values, and which hints at the counterfactual of a world in which America did not do so, is significant in reinforcing militarist approaches to terrorism and Iraq.

Another feature of the discourse on terror with relation to Iraq was the exteriorisation of the terrorist threat. With less emphasis placed on historical narratives, the discourse from politicians in the UK focussed far more on the 'foreignness' of the problem. When Blair commented on Mohammed Khan, one of the central figures in the 7/7 London bombings, he claimed that "he may have been born here. But his ideology wasn't" (2006b). Bulley argues that such statements have a dual effect. On the one hand, they fulfil "a need to construct terrorism as…part of the uncontrollable 'otherness' of the 'foreign,'" and on the other, they export the cause of terrorism to a foreign land, and thus help to justify a pro-active approach to foreign policy (Bulley 2009: 81-87). The simple logical formulation that "the best way to keep America safe from terrorism is to go after terrorists where they plan and hide", was used extensively by Bush (2002b; 2005a). This can be seen as a powerful form of discourse; its attractive simplicity obscures possible discussions about counter-productivity or suspect motives.

Former Home Secretary Jack Straw linked the exporting of the threat to the idea of failed states, warning of a future "in which *unspeakably evil acts* are committed against us, coordinated from *failed states* in *distant parts of the world*" (quoted in Bulley: 87, emphasis Bulley's). Whilst the link between failed states and terrorism has been questioned (Hehir 2007), their linkage in the discourse appears to have significant implications. As well as providing a pretext for action against a state based not upon its actions but upon its action-motivating failed structure (which might be applied to a large number of states, see Rotberg 2004: 5-6), it reinforces the conception that 'our' fight is against the suffering of civilians in failed states, and allows a humanitarian motivation to sit alongside the defeat of terrorists.[6] This discursive structure, i.e., an appeal to both self-interested and benevolent motivations, was used extensively by Blair (e.g. 2004; 2006b).

A third, arguably more specific aspect of the discourse on Iraq has been the assertion of the potential (but unproven) link between Saddam Hussein, 9/11, and terrorist activity more generally. Speaking to the UN Security Council in February 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell said that "Iraqi denials of supporting terrorism take their place alongside the other Iraqi denials of weapons of mass destruction [(WMD)]. It is all a web of lies." He also discussed the "sinister nexus between Iraq and the al-Qaeda terrorist network" (Powell 2003). Since leaving office Powell has indicated his regret at making such remarks when he knew the evidence (both for WMD and for the Iraq-al-Qaeda link) to be flawed (*ABC News* 2005). The effect of such discourse was partly revealed by US public opinion figures; whilst only 3% believed Iraq to be involved in the terrorist attacks of 9/11 immediately after the event, this figure had risen to 44% by the start of 2003 (*Christian Science Monitor* 2003). Even after the link with 9/11 had fallen out of favour in the US, a more abstracted link between Iraq and terror was still claimed (Rice 2006). This was particularly prominent in the UK discourse, where the link between Iraq and 9/11 gained little credibility. Alongside the discussion about failed states advanced above, the connection between Iraq's WMD and terrorists was often made. Blair expressed his "fear that…these weapons, which are being traded right round the world at the moment, [will] fall into the hands of these terrorist groups" (2004). This alternative construction of the security threat is more sophisticated than the alleged link between Iraq and 9/11; whilst the latter may be disproved, the former, professed with the honesty of personal fear, is open ended and challenging. Passivity ceases to be an option, because the dangers of the world 'out there' cannot be ignored.

The discourse on terrorism and Iraq performed two different but interrelated functions. The first was to aid in legitimating the invasion, a role which should be viewed as provoking conflict. The second function was to construct notions of security and conflict which provided a logical structure within which the invasion could be seen to be constitutive of security, and in which the lack of an invasion could be seen to provide manifest insecurity. Historical examples which prompted visions of a security which could only be maintained through force, and a worldview which insisted that 'taking the fight to the terrorists' and intervening in 'failed states' was the only way to guard against insecurity, insisted that security could only be achieved through violent action against the other.

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Identity and the Dissident

The post-9/11 discourse on terrorism has also had repercussions for domestic policy, most prominently relating to the reduction of civil liberties within countries such as the US and UK. The right to protest, due process and the right to assemble have all been curtailed with justifications relating to the 'lesser evil' and the need to prioritise measures to combat the terror threat (Gearty 2007). Chomsky notes that governments around the world have used the rhetoric of fighting terrorism to justify the suppression of dissent and oppressed groups, notably relating to the Palestinians, the Chechens and the Kurds (Chomsky 2003: 126-7). As with the militarised response to terrorism, the discourse around the reduction of civil liberties in the UK is based on a sense of apolitical necessity. Former Home Secretary John Reid claimed that those opposed to "the measures which the police and security agencies say are necessary to combat this threat…*just don't get it*" (Reid 2006, emphasis added). Similarly, Blair made the claim that "the modern world is different from the world for which [traditional court processes and attitudes to civil liberties] were designed" (Blair 2006a). Again, there are two ways in which the curtailment of liberties might be viewed within the context of this essay. The first is the perspective suggested by McDonald that, from a position which views security as emancipation, the victims of the war on terror (which includes both those who suffer from the curtailment of their civil liberties and the victims of opportunity cost mentioned above) should be classed as being placed in a situation of insecurity (McDonald 2007). An alternative perspective, perhaps more productive in understanding the role of discourse in constructing what security *is*, could be to focus on the constitutive effects of the discourse on dissent and civil liberties in defining identity and terrorism.

As was noted above, the us/them dichotomy has been used heavily in the post-9/11 discourse on terrorism. By classing those opposed to the 'necessary' amendments to 'traditions' of civil liberty as not 'getting it', dissidents are discursively defined as antiquated and unrealistic. Furthermore, in denying the prioritisation of the terror threat by taking up police time through protest, the dissident is placed in opposition to the 'us' which seeks to combat terrorism, and is formed as an agent of insecurity by default. In addition, as Jackson and Molloy have noted, increasingly permissive definitions of terrorism have allowed anti-terror laws to be used against protestors (Jackson: 14; Molloy: 124-5). Whilst this might be concerning as a basic issue of justice, the discursive power of allowing dissidents to be classed alongside terrorists presents additional implications. The marginalisation of the dissident has the effect of redrawing the boundaries of identity in society, between the 'us' which is realistic about the threat from terrorism, and the 'other' which is not. Fierke links Foucault's discussion on Bentham's Panopticon "as a paradigm of modern self-discipline under the gaze of authority" to the emerging trends of suspicion provoked by the discourse on terrorism discussed above (2007: 183). It might be appropriate to also consider anti-dissident self-discipline as an effect of the identity construction which emerges from the securitisation of the dissident as ignoring apolitical necessities. However, as this essay will go on to discuss, there has been considerable resistance to this aspect of the post-9/11 discourse on terrorism and its effects.

Counter-Discourse and Resistance

At the beginning of this essay, it was posited that conceptions of security are not simply defined by the dominant discourse, but are the subject of contestation. Whilst dominant 'régimes of truth' exert considerable influence, there are resistances to the mainstream discourse on terrorism in the UK and the US, both relating to the militarised approach to combating terrorism and the marginalisation of dissent. These can be seen as limiting the effectiveness of the dominant discourse.

One popular trend of counter-discourse has been to subvert the very phrase 'war on terror'. These subversions range from the moderate yet disparaging reference to the "*so-called* War on Terror" (Tatchell 2007, emphasis added) to the more pejorative 'The War Against Terrorism' (acronym: twat), and 'The War on Terra'.[7] Such terms have become popularised in recent years, most famously in the Borat film in which the main character tells a crowd of US sports fans that he supports their 'War *of* Terror' to general applause (*Borat* 2006).[8] McDonald notes that a campaign to resist against the representational strategy manifested by the security kits distributed throughout Australia led to up to 100,000 of the kits being returned within one month (McDonald 2005: 186). In the UK, the forms of resistance are complex, and not without their problems. One example might be the popular poster and placard, produced by the Socialist Workers Party, which names George Bush as 'World's #1 Terrorist'. Brassett argues that

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such counter-discourse reaffirms "the dichotomy between cosmopolitanism and terrorism/barbarism…from a different angle", in short, "*you are with us or you are with logic of the War on Terror*" (Brassett 2009: 155, his emphasis). Such an approach challenges but does not appear to cut through the militarised and essentialist discourse about terrorism. There are, however, examples of dissent which deny the sensibility of the dominant discourse more clearly. In May 2001 a large group of Kurdish and British activists demonstrated outside the Home Office over the ban on certain terrorist groups, wearing t-shirts saying 'We Are the PKK',[9] challenging the lack of complexity in the us/them binarism for its moral and practical shortcomings (*SchNEWS 2001*).

In early 2009, criticism of the militarised and exceptionalised discourse of the war on terror was advanced by the UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband. He condemned the tendency to "lump terrorist groups together and draw the battle lines as a simple binary struggle between moderates and extremists, or good and evil," and argued that the militarised focus was problematic because we cannot "kill [our] way out of the problems of insurgency and civil strife". He also talked about the issue of identity, arguing that "the foundation for solidarity between peoples and nations should not be based on who we are against, but on the idea of who we are" (Miliband 2009). Whilst Miliband's comments are, to some extent, limited in how they deal with the 'us' identity construction which has been a part of the war on terror, they signal a potential shift in how the discourse on terror is applied. Miliband insists that the UK must continue to fight terrorism, when he says that "the issue is not whether we need to attack the use of terror at its roots, with all the tools available. We must. The question is how." The claim that we must 'use all the tools available' but must reconsider 'how' seems to be contradictory, but his focus on language suggests that it is the discourse which is due for review. The reasons for this approach are complex, and cannot be discussed here. However, it seems fair to assume that the popularised counter-discourse has contributed to a shift in acceptable discourse, through both mocking and highlighting the shortcomings of the dominant discursive framework.

Conclusion

This essay has examined the post-9/11 discourse on terrorism, arguing that it has served to prioritise certain conceptions of what is, i.e. a non-complex and essentialist analysis of terrorism, and what must be done, i.e. a militarised and identity-laden war on the other. It has also examined how this discourse constitutes a conception of insecurity and conflict which, whilst professedly apolitical and necessary, legitimates certain types of response whilst marginalising others. Conflict might be resolved through dialogue, but such approaches to terrorism are ridiculed and ignored. Similarly security might be achieved by peaceful means (indeed, in the case of terrorism, the 'insecurity' might be cast as irrelevant next to more deadly forces such as poverty), but again such perspectives are marginalised by the dominant discourse. Whilst attempts to deconstruct and resist this discourse are ongoing, and perhaps increasingly influential, the dominant discourses have been influential in shaping how security and conflict are conceptualised in the modern context.

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[1] Indeed, the very use of the term '9/11' to denote the attacks of 11 September 2001 should be viewed as a speech act which immediately marginalises other '9/11's throughout history; Chile and Ireland both remember the date for their own massacres, and yet their memories are silenced (Croft 2006: 16).

[2] Denying the human status of an enemy or adversary was a significant feature of the colonial constitution of the colonised (Fanon [1961] 2001: 32-33).

[3] Although it should be noted that, in the same speech, Blair referred to the "devilish execution" of 9/11.

[4] For example, the National Intelligence Council warned that an attack on Iraq would probably increase the threat from terrorism (US National Intelligence Council 2003: Appendix A).

[5] Similar examples come from before the war in Iraq, e.g., Bush (2002).

[6] On Iraq as a failed state, see Baker (2006).

[7] '*Terra*' is the Latin name for the planet Earth.

[8] Another fine example of humorous counter-discourse can be found in the board game '*War on Terror',* in which the selection of certain cards can lead to certain players wearing the 'evil balaclava' for the duration of their arbitrarily earned turn as an 'evil empire': http://www.waronterrortheboardgame.com/

[9] The PKK is the Kurdish Workers Party (Parti Karkerani Kurdistan).

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