

"Should Terrorists Negotiate With Us? Non-Ideal Theory, the Problem of Extorted Justice and a New Preemptive Role for the Diplomat Cadre"

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Abstract: When we say we shouldn't negotiate with terrorists, what we're really saying is we shouldn't concede anything to terrorists. I argue that many of the reasons for this view are bad, bad not least because sometimes the grievances of terrorists are just; because, depending on the nature and conditions of the grievances, sometimes the method of extorting redress of injustice by violent means is a just method; and because, whether they are wholly just in grievance and method or not, if we are not prepared to concede anything to terrorists, it is not reasonable to expect them to stop. I then comment on when negotiation would not be appropriate. Along the way I reflect briefly on how the relation between ideal and non-ideal theories of justice should figure in negotiations (theories of the ideal distribution of goods, and theories of how to move from non-ideal to ideal distributions), suggesting that the correct general theory of both would be whichever one could succeed in brokering a stable peace among everyone. This means the test case of negotiating with terrorists is data for both the correct ideal and the correct non-ideal theory. I conclude with some proposals about how to redeploy the world's diplomatic cadre in pre-emptive work to prevent future terrorism.