

State and Terrorist Conspiracies

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Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people. To destroy this invisible government, to befoul this unholy alliance between corrupt business and corrupt politics is the first task of statesmanship.
(President Theodore Roosevelt)

*While you here do snoring lie,
Open-eyed conspiracy
His time doth take.*

(The Tempest; Ariel at II, i)

Introduction

To radically shift regime behavior we must think clearly and boldly for if we have learned anything, it is that regimes do not want to be changed. We must think beyond those who have gone before us, and discover technological changes that embolden us with ways to act in which our forebears could not.

Firstly we must understand what aspect of government or neocorporatist behavior we wish to change or remove. Secondly we must develop a way of thinking about this behavior that is strong enough carry us through the mire of politically distorted language, and into a position of clarity. Finally must use these insights to inspire within us and others a course of ennobling, and effective action.

Authoritarian power is maintained by conspiracy

Conspiracy, Conspire: make secret plans jointly to commit a harmful act; working together to bring about a particular result, typically to someone's detriment. ORIGIN late Middle English : from Old French *conspirer*, from Latin *conspirare* agree, plot, from *con-* together with *spirare* breathe.

The best party is but a kind of conspiracy against the rest of the nation.
(Lord Halifax)

Where details are known as to the inner workings of authoritarian regimes, we see conspiratorial interactions among the political elite not merely for preferment or favor within the regime but as the primary planning methodology behind maintaining or strengthening authoritarian power.

Authoritarian regimes give rise to forces which oppose them by pushing against the individual and collective will to freedom, truth and self realization. Plans which assist authoritarian rule, once discovered, induce resistance. Hence these plans are concealed by successful authoritarian powers. This is enough to define their behavior as conspiratorial.

Thus it happens in matters of state; for knowing afar off (which it is only given a prudent man to do) the evils that are brewing, they are easily cured. But when, for want of such knowledge, they are allowed to grow until everyone can recognize them, there is no longer any remedy to be found.

(*The Prince*, Niccolo Machiavelli [1469-1527])

Terrorist conspiracies as *connected graphs*

Pre and post 9/11 the Maryland Procurement Office (National Security Agency light cover for academic funding, google for grant code “MDA904”) and others have funded mathematicians to look at terrorist conspiracies as *connected graphs* (no mathematical background is needed to follow this article).

We extend this understanding of terrorist organizations and turn it on the likes of its creators where it becomes a knife to dissect the power conspiracies used to maintain authoritarian government.

We will use *connected graphs* as way to harness the spatial reasoning ability of the brain to think in a new way about political relationships. These graphs are easy to visualize. First take some nails (“conspirators”) and hammer them into a board at random. Then take twine (“communication”) and loop it from nail to nail without breaking. Call the twine connecting two nails a *link*. Unbroken twine means it is possible to travel from any nail to any other nail via twine and intermediary nails. Mathematicians say the this type of graph is *connected*.

Information flows from conspirator to conspirator. Not every conspirator trusts or knows every other conspirator even though all are *connected*. Some are on the fringe of the conspiracy, others are central and communicate with many conspirators and others still may know only two conspirators but be a bridge between important sections or groupings of the conspiracy.

Separating a conspiracy

If all *links* between conspirators are cut then there is no conspiracy. This is usually hard to do, so we ask our first question: What is the minimum number of *links* that must be cut to separate the conspiracy into two groups of equal number? (divide and conquer). The answer depends on the structure of the

conspiracy. Sometimes there are no alternative paths for conspiratorial information to flow between conspirators, other times there are many. This is a useful and interesting characteristic of a conspiracy. For instance, by assassinating one “bridge” conspirator, it may be possible to split the conspiracy. But we want to say something about all conspiracies.

Some conspirators dance closer than others

Conspirators are discerning, some trust and depend each other, others say little. Important information flows frequently through some *links*, trivial information through others. So we expand our simple connected graph model to include not only *links*, but their “importance”.

Return to our board-and-nails analogy. Imagine a thick heavy cord between some nails and fine light thread between others. Call the importance, thickness or heaviness of a link its *weight*. Between conspirators that never communicate the *weight* is zero. The “importance” of communication passing through a *link* difficult to evaluate a priori, since its true value depends on the outcome of the conspiracy. We simply say that the “importance” of communication contributes to the *weight* of a link in the most obvious way; the *weight* of a *link* is proportional to the amount of important communication flowing across it. Questions about conspiracies in general won’t require us to know the *weight* of any *link*, since that changes from conspiracy to conspiracy.

Conspiracies are cognitive devices. They are able to out think the same group of individuals acting alone

Conspiracies take information about the world in which they operate (the conspiratorial environment), pass it around the conspirators and then act on the result. We can see conspiracies as a type of device that has inputs (information about the environment) and outputs (actions intending to change or maintain the environment).

What does a conspiracy compute? It computes the next action of the conspiracy

Now I we ask the question: how effective is this device? Can we compare it to itself at different times? Is the conspiracy growing stronger or weakening? This is a question that asks us to compare two values.

Can we find a value that describes the power of a conspiracy?

We could count the number of conspirators, but that would not capture the difference between a conspiracy and the individuals which comprise it. How do they differ? Individuals in a conspiracy conspire. Isolated individuals do not. We can capture that difference by adding up all the important communication

(*weights*) between the conspirators, we will call this the *total conspiratorial power*.

Total conspiratorial power

This number is an abstraction. The pattern of connections in a conspiracy is unusually unique. But by looking at this value which is independent of the arrangement of conspiratorial connections we can make some generalisations.

If total conspiratorial power is zero, there is no conspiracy

If total conspiratorial power is zero, there is no information flow between the conspirators and hence no conspiracy.

A substantial increase or decrease in total conspiratorial power almost always means what we expect it to mean; an increase or decrease in the ability of the conspiracy to think, act and adapt.

Separating weighted conspiracies

I now return to our earlier idea about cleaving a conspiracy into halves. Then we looked at dividing a conspiracy into two groups of equal numbers by cutting the links between conspirators. Now we see that a more interesting idea is to split the *total conspiratorial power* in half. Since any isolated half can be viewed as a conspiracy in its own right we can continue splitting indefinitely.

How can we reduce the ability of a conspiracy to act?

We can marginalise a conspiracy's ability to act by decreasing *total conspiratorial power* until it is no longer able to understand, and hence respond effectively to, its environment.

We can split the conspiracy, reduce or eliminate important communication between a few high *weight* links or many low *weight* links.

Traditional attacks on conspiratorial power groupings, such as assassination, have cut high *weight links* by killing, kidnapping, blackmailing or otherwise marginalizing or isolating some of the conspirators they were connected to.

An authoritarian conspiracy that can not think efficiently, can not act to preserve itself against the opponents it induces

When we look at a conspiracy as an organic whole, we can see a system of interacting organs, a body with arteries and veins whose blood may be thickened and slowed till it falls, unable to sufficiently comprehend and control the forces in its environment.

Part 2, next week.