

# **TERRORISM IN AMERICA**

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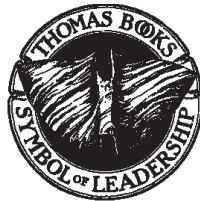
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# TERRORISM IN AMERICA

*A Structured Approach to  
Understanding the Terrorist Threat*

*By*

HARVEY W. KUSHNER, PH.D.



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CIP

*FOR THE GIRLS IN MY LIFE*

*Sara  
Meredith Hope  
Patches  
Candy*

## PREFACE

Most books devoted to the study of terrorism avoid discussions that require the author to make a call about some event that has not been categorized by the authorities as a terrorist incident. Sometimes, social scientists are unwilling to interject their own opinions for fear of being labeled biased. They would rather let some federal agency tell them what is a terrorist event. At other times, these same social scientists hide behind a morass of minutia about, for example, some terrorist organization. Their admittedly interesting descriptive analyses do little to further the understanding of today's terrorism. At still other times, they undertake abstract quantitative analyses that wind up showcasing the method, rather than explaining terrorism. Besides, can data pertaining to the number of people killed or injured by a terrorist attack be added and subtracted in the same way demographers crunch numbers? And how does one compare the World Trade Center bombing that killed six and injured many more with the recorded act of a radical animal rights terrorist who scribbled some graffiti on the wall of a butcher shop? In both cases, the answer is you cannot.

In this work, I have intentionally avoided descriptions of some past terrorist incidents and opted instead to stress the present. This is not a sourcebook for looking up everything you ever wanted to know about terrorism but were afraid to ask. I have also purposely stayed away from using tables and graphs to compare terrorist incidents across different time periods. Of course, some might disagree with my omissions. With caveats in full display, I ask these critics to forgive these omissions and to consider my structured approach to understanding the current terrorist threat. In this way, the reader will come to know the evil within—terrorism in America.

H. W. K.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people assisted in the development of this project—some by offering their insightful comments, and others by providing data on extremists, terrorists, and assorted crazies. They all share in making this a better book. Of course, any mistakes are mine. With this said, I proudly reveal all those individuals and organizations that unselfishly answered my calls for assistance: Brian Levin, Moorhead Kennedy, Jerome Glazebrook, Hal Mansfield, Judge Robin D. Smith, the Anti-Defamation League, the Southern Poverty Law Center, the American Jewish Committee, and the Coalition for Human Dignity.

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To Meredith, my beautiful and talented daughter, may she always be Merry Hope. My significant other, Sara, was always there to listen to my explanation of why a certain event was an act of terrorism even though the politicians were saying something else. Her advice was always taken. Her support and love are most appreciated. My father, Albert, taught me to bring politics to the dinner table. As I grow older, I better understand his plan. Love ya, Pop. Last, but certainly not least, I thank my feline companions, Patches and Candy. Both gave up comfortable spots on the sofa to keep me company atop my computer keyboard. My thanks, Girls, for allowing the mouse to live long enough for me to finish this project.

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# **TERRORISM IN AMERICA**

## Chapter 1

# TERRORISM: THE CONCEPT

### THE SEARCH FOR THE PERFECT DEFINITION

Many authors would agree that it is difficult to define terrorism (see, e.g., Atkins, 1992; Combs, 1997; Kidder, 1993; Sadler & Winters, 1996; Sederberg, 1993; Vetter & Perlstein, 1991; White, 1991). So did Alex Schmid, who in a comprehensive review of the literature identified 22 elements that appeared in more than 100 competing definitions of terrorism provided by writers between 1936 and 1983. In an effort to summarize, if not synthesize, Schmid developed a definition of terrorism that incorporated 16 of these elements:

Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby—in contrast to assassination—the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main target (audience(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought. (1983, p. 28)

One glimpse at this lengthy definition indicates that Schmid's Herculean effort neither solved the definitional problem nor ended the proliferation of definitions. Actually, by the time Schmid published a second edition of *Political Terrorism: A Research Guide to Concepts, Theories, Data Bases, and Literature* in 1988, more definitions had been proffered, ironically, in part in response to a survey on the definitional problem he conducted.<sup>1</sup>

Brian Jenkins (1985) best represents all those authors who could easily obfuscate a concept with a morass of verbiage but who instead choose to define terrorism in the most simplistic of terms. Terrorism,

wrote this erudite terrorism expert, is the threatened use of force designed to bring about political change. Walter Laqueur, in his widely read and extraordinarily detailed *Age of Terrorism* (1987), offers a similar definition. Laqueur writes that terrorism constitutes the illegitimate use of force against innocent people in order to achieve a political objective. These two well-respected terrorism experts are certainly aware of the problems with simple definitions. They would argue, however, that to move beyond them would not prove fruitful because the concept itself is so controversial.

Schmid's definition given above is a perfect example of a complex definition of terrorism. The definition's length, as well as complexity, makes it exceedingly hard to follow. Other authors as diverse as U.S. Department of State analyst Thomas P. Thornton (1964), social scientist Martha Crenshaw (1983), and senior criminologist with the Australian Institute of Criminology in Canberra, Australia, Grant Wardlaw (1989) are also partial to detailed definitions. Consider, for example, Wardlaw's definition:

Political terrorism is the use, or threat of use, of violence by an individual or a group, whether acting for or in opposition to established authority, when such action is designed to create extreme anxiety and/or fear-inducing effects in a target group larger than the immediate victims with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to the political demands of the perpetrators. (p. 16)

Certainly, this definition is not as complex as Schmid's. Still, one would not call it succinct.

Other authors skirt the simplicity/complexity issue only to create definitions that have their own shortcomings. Consider, for example, definitions of terrorism that concentrate on the use of motivational violence to achieve a political end. Although they manage to distinguish between terrorism and criminal activity, they do not distinguish between a terrorist hijacking and a military battle. Authorities whose works have a tendency to conflate terrorism with a variety of other forms of coercion include Brian Crozier (*Terrorist Activity*, 1974) and James Lodge (1981).

Neil Livingstone (Livingstone & Arnold, 1986) and Benjamin Netanyahu (1986; 1995) offer yet another direction in defining terrorism. These authors, notwithstanding their well-documented political positions, claim that terrorism represents a cheap and effective weapon of warfare against the United States and Western civilization

itself. Gerardo Jorge Schamis (1980) takes a somewhat less ethnocentric position and argues that terrorism now constitutes a new form of warfare that has been sponsored by underdeveloped countries to fight against militarily stronger ones. And for the noted French terrorism expert Gerard Chaliand (1987), terrorism is a natural outgrowth of the anticolonial struggle; it is merely another weapon of revolutionary guerrillas in their campaign of psychological warfare. Donald Hanle (1989) also links the theory of terrorism to warfare. For this career U.S. Air Force officer, terrorism is a form of war based on the manipulation of force to meet political objectives. All forms of terrorism, Hanle argues, employ force as a form of war.

Edward Herman (1983) and Jeffrey Ian Ross (1995) eschew the military approach to explaining terrorism in favor of defining terrorism in much the same way Hannah Arendt did in her classic *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951). For Herman and Ross, terrorism is something a state does to its citizens to maintain political power, which for Arendt meant state control from the “cradle to the grave.” For others, like David Claridge (1996) and Roberta Goren (1984), terrorism is something defined and practiced by a state against people for a variety of reasons as diverse as struggles of liberation and pacifications of populations after annexation. Many proponents of this approach label the policies of Israeli, as well as of the former South African regime, terroristic. Noam Chomsky (1986) would even argue that the United States itself conducts terrorist activities against selected targets while attacking other countries for promoting terrorist activities. Although controversial, Chomsky’s viewpoint is shared by many radical academicians. Still others look toward the state and its agents to provide definitions of terrorism, an approach favored by Brent Smith (1994) in his informative *Terrorism in America: Pipe Bombs and Pipe Dreams*.

Probably the most widely used method of defining terrorism involves those authors who have tried to come to terms with the concept through writing about the psychological causes of terrorism. Some of these authors have created their psychological definitions through the study of individual terrorists (see, e.g., Cooper, 1977; Kellman, 1983; Morf, 1970; Post, 1984). Other authors have turned to the terrorist groups themselves (see, e.g., Clark, 1983; McCauley & Segal, 1987; Morf, 1970) or the region in which these terrorist groups operate for their theories (see, e.g., Ferracuti & Bruno, 1981; Heskin, 1984). Still other authors and theorists have developed broad psy-

chological theories for explaining the causes of terrorism (see, e.g., Crenshaw, 1990; Gurr, 1970; Kaplan, 1978; Ross, 1996; Weinberg & Davis, 1989).

### THE SEARCH FOR THE PERFECT TYPOLOGY

Definitions are indeed important tools of social research, but they fail to capture the complexity of the dynamics and consequences of terrorist acts. Typologies offer yet another approach. They allow for the concept of terrorism to be subdivided into related categories of some type of classification system.

One of the first to employ this approach was Paul Wilkinson, the noted Scottish scholar. In 1974, Wilkinson wrote that terrorism should be classified according to type of terrorist action: revolutionary terrorism, subrevolutionary terrorism, and repressive terrorism. *Revolutionary terrorism*, writes Wilkinson, is the use of “systematic tactics of terroristic violence with the objective of bringing about political revolution” (p. 36). Whereas revolutionary terrorism seeks total change, the second category in Wilkinson’s typology, *subrevolutionary terrorism*, is terror used “for political motives other than revolution and governmental repression” (p. 38). Wilkinson’s third category, *repressive terrorism*, is defined as “the systematic use of terroristic acts of violence for the purposes of suppressing, putting down, quelling, or restraining certain groups, individuals or forms of behaviour deemed to be undesirable by the oppressor” (p. 40).

About the same time that Wilkinson published *Political Terrorism*, J. Bowyer Bell (1975) settled on a sixfold classification scheme related to the motivation of the terrorist: psychotic, criminal, vigilante, endemic, authorized, and revolutionary. According to Bell, the *psychotic* terrorist’s purpose was psychological gratification, the *criminal* sought profit, the *vigilante* wanted to retaliate, the *endemic* acted out of internal struggles, the *authorized* represented state repression, and the *revolutionary* aimed at bringing about change through fear. Frederick Hacker (1977), a psychiatrist, followed with a similar classification system for terrorists that is also the title of his popular book, *Crusaders, Criminals, and Crazyies*.

The typologies of Wilkinson, Bell, and Hacker complement one another and have served as the basis for further classification in recent

years. None of the classification schemes emanating from their pioneering work, however, from the simplest to the most complex, prove complete. On the one hand, efforts to create a typology with categories that are independent, mutually exclusive, and exhaustive usually result in a typology with categories that fit only single terrorist groups (see, e.g., Gross, 1990). On the other hand, a typology that reduces terrorist groups to two or three categories tends to blend important distinctions between terrorists and terrorist groups (see, e.g., Crenshaw, 1973).

Peter Fleming and Michael Stohl (1988), aware of the problem inherent in the search for the perfect typology, set out to identify the best typologies from almost 50 different ones that attempt to categorize the varieties of terrorism. Their efforts identified four major types: (a) those based on the motivation of the terrorist, (b) those based on the historical origin of the terrorist group, (c) those based on the terrorist group, and (d) those based on the type of targets or method of operation selected by the terrorist group. Their effort, reminiscent of the earlier Schmid work on definitions, neither solved the problem inherent in developing the ideal typology nor ended the ever-expanding universe of different typologies. Also like Schmid, they may have inadvertently contributed to the problem by calling attention to the problem itself. Actually, typologies of organizational structures, aims, motives, or ideologies, like definitions, do little if anything to eliminate the controversy surrounding the concept of terrorism.

### NO SEARCH AT ALL

Some authors take pride in writing how they will not take time to define terrorism because attempts to define the term only add to the sense of confusion surrounding it. One author even goes as far as to suggest that “[t]he more disagreements there are on defining terrorism, the more terrorists can benefit by the added confusion on the issue” (Simon, 1994, p. 385). These authors approach the subject by dealing with the tactics of terrorists—hijackings, sabotage of aircraft, hostage-taking—rather than with what exactly constitutes “terrorism.”

A surprising number of authors, however, fail even to mention that they are not going to define terrorism. In other words, they write about terrorism and expect everybody to know what they mean.



Consider, for example, *The Terrorism Reader* (1987), edited by Walter Laqueur and Yonah Alexander. In this historical anthology, these renowned experts on terrorism cover everything from the Greek origin of tyranny to the possibility of terrorists going nuclear. Nowhere, however, is an attempt made at offering a working definition of terrorism.

Nowhere is the lack at an attempt to define terrorism more evident than in the works of those authors who write about the very individuals and groups purported to have terrorist inclinations. Consider, for example, the Samuel Katz (1993) biography of one of the world's most notorious terrorists, Ahmed Jibril. In this important work, Katz painstakingly documents a series of brutal terrorist firsts instituted by Father Holy War, the nom de guerre of Jibril. Never once, however, in this riveting biography does Katz define what he means by terrorism. It is assumed that the detailed discussions of the act itself are enough to define the concept. Or, as one expert writing about modern aviation security put it, "Terrorism! The word defines itself" (Moore, 1991, p. 21). This makes about as much sense as the remark made by Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Potter Stewart, who offered no definition for obscenity but quipped, "I know it when I see it."

### A DEFINITION OF TERRORISM

It should be apparent to all who peruse the literature on terrorism that the number of approaches to dealing with the concept of terrorism is limited only by those interested in its study. The same can also be said of the number of approaches that inventory the types of approaches (compare, e.g., Cooper, 1973; Schmid, 1983; Wardlaw, 1989). Adding to the confusion are those authors who try to explain in great detail the different definitions and typologies used to explain terrorism (see, e.g., Combs, 1997, pp. 3-19; Vetter & Perlstein, 1991, pp. 3-28; White, 1991, pp. 3-20).

The term *terrorism* means different things to different people. This is why trying to define or classify terrorism to everyone's satisfaction proves impossible. Whereas some blame it on politics, others attribute the difficulty on the popular aphorism, "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." Some would use this logic to label George

Washington a terrorist and Yasir Arafat a freedom fighter. Suffice it to say that comparing the first president of the United States with the first president of the Palestinian Authority might not raise eyebrows in the 22nd century. For now, however, the comparison is ludicrous.

As the noted British terrorism expert Richard Clutterbuck (1994) suggests, mumbling about freedom fighters betrays a lack of understanding of what terrorism is. Terrorism against unarmed victims—killing without due process in order to force a government or civilian population into compliance—is never justifiable. These are the actions of criminals, not freedom fighters.

The terrorist/freedom fighter controversy aside, definitions offered by some very different sources exhibit some striking similarities:

*American Heritage College Dictionary of the English Language*: The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence by a person or organization against people or property with the intention of intimidating or coercing societies or governments, often for ideological or political reasons. (1996, p. 1854)

*FBI Terrorist Research and Analytical Center*: The unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a Government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives. (1991, p. 25)

*Grant Wardlaw*: Political terrorism is the use, or threat of use, of violence by an individual or a group, whether acting for or in opposition to established authority, when such action is designed to create extreme anxiety and/or fear-inducing effects in a target group larger than the immediate victims with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to the political demands of the perpetrators. (1989, p. 16)

The definitions given by *The American Heritage College Dictionary of the English Language* and the Federal Bureau of Investigation are not unlike those used by academicians such as the Australian criminologist Grant Wardlaw. Each definition includes three distinct elements: (a) the *method* (force or violence), (b) the *target* (governments and civilian populations), and (c) the *purpose*, which is twofold (to bring about fear and to bring about political or social change). Beyond this point, lexicographers, government agencies, and academicians differ in their focus on the various aspects or dimensions of terrorist events and the individuals, groups, or organizations involved in their perpetration. Compare, for example, the definition from the FBI with the following one from the U.S. Department of State: “Terrorism is premeditated, politically motivated violence against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an

audience.” Unlike the department’s definition, the bureau’s includes that the terrorist act can be done by an individual or group of two or more individuals for political as well as social objectives. Because of this broader definition, the FBI can then include in its annual reports on terrorism in the United States acts such as assaults, bombings, and hijackings committed by individuals who may be suspected of associating with antigovernment groups, foreign terrorist cells, and others.

These definitional distinctions aside, adapting all three elements from above provides the following simple definition that allows an intelligent discussion of terrorism to go forward:

*Terrorism is the use of force (or violence) committed by individuals or groups against governments or civilian populations to create fear in order to bring about political (or social) change.*

This rather straightforward definition allows the forthcoming analysis to include in it terrorist acts committed by individuals or groups of two or more individuals for social as well as political gain. Unfortunately, it will not solve the definitional problem or please everyone. No definition can. Yet, to argue that terrorism cannot be studied without a comprehensive definition is patently absurd. The approach taken here rescues the discussion of terrorism from those involved in endless debate over definitions and extends it beyond those who mumble about freedom fighters while wrapping themselves in a cloak of political correctness. Those who do are simply industrious tailors to a naked emperor. Instead, this study exposes itself to possible criticism by addressing terrorism in America to uncover the evil within.

## ENDNOTES

1. Schmid’s new edition is entitled *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories, and Literature* (1988).

2. Anyone interested in polemics should consult H. A. A. Cooper’s appropriately titled publication “Terrorism: The Problem of the Problem Definition” (1978), Wardlaw’s *Political Terrorism: Theory, Tactics, and Counter-Measures* (1989), and the definitional debate that takes place from time-to-time in the journal *Terrorism and Political Violence* (see, e.g., Silke, 1996, pp. 12-28).

## Chapter 2

# INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

### THE THREAT FROM OUTSIDE

On Friday, February 26, 1993, at 12:18 p.m., a massive explosion occurred in the subterranean garage of the Vista Hotel, located at the World Trade Center complex in New York City. Had the terrorists accomplished what they intended to do, they would have toppled one of the 110-story towers into the other and killed many of the approximately 50,000 people who were in the complex at the time of the blast. Or had the sodium cyanide in the terrorists' bomb not vaporized instead of burning, cyanide gas would have been sucked into the north tower and killed thousands.

Ramzi Ahmed Yousef (a.k.a. Abdul Basit Mahmoud Abdul Karim), found guilty for plotting against U.S. airlines in East Asia in 1995, was what prosecutors called the "architect of the bombing." He told Secret Service Agent Brian Parr on a flight to New York from Islamabad, Pakistan, after his arrest in 1995 that his only regrets were that the casualties and destruction had not been greater and that if he had had more money he could have built a bigger, "more effective" bomb. The agent also related that Yousef watched in disappointment from the Jersey City side of the waterfront as smoke poured from the still-upright towers in lower Manhattan.

Miscalculations and evil intentions aside, the terrorists' bomb, consisting of approximately 1,200 pounds of explosives, caused \$500 million in damage, cut short the lives of 6 innocent people, and injured more than 1,000 others. Not since the Civil War has the United States seen such a patient-producing event. The largest act of terrorism on U.S. soil in history made people skittish for months to come.

In a typical textbook of the early 1990s, *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Harold Vetter and Gary Perlstein (1991) argue that the continental United States should remain relatively "free from much of the violence

that seems to be endemic to other parts of the world” (p. 50). For Vetter and Perlstein, “Political terrorism of the kind that is familiar to the people of Europe and Latin America has not posed a serious danger to the public order in the U.S.” (p. 64). Jonathan White (1991) agrees. Terrorism, writes White in *Terrorism: An Introduction*, “is something that happens in other places” (p. 163). “When Americans speak of terrorism,” says White, “they are usually referring to incidents far from American shores. Americans may be victimized frequently by terrorist acts, but these incidents generally occur overseas. . . . Many people believe that terrorism is not an internal problem for the United States” (pp. 162-163).

Even a book devoted to terrorism in America that had the advantage of being published just short of 1 year after the World Trade Center bombing, Brent Smith’s *Terrorism in America: Pipe Bombs and Pipe Dreams* (1994), devotes precious little space to why foreign terrorists were able to strike inside the United States. Only Smith’s mention of the capture of Japanese Red Army member Yu Kikumura at a rest stop on the New Jersey Turnpike in 1988 addresses the reality of international terrorism coming to America. His discussions of the Irish Republican Army’s (IRA) fund-raising activities and Omega 7’s bombings and assassinations do not. Consider, for example, the exploits of Omega 7, which targeted anyone or anything that supported Fidel Castro (that usually meant the Soviet Union). This unhappy group of expatriated Cubans’ disdain for the Soviets made their actions appear justified to a considerable portion of U.S. society at war with the Kremlin.

Clearly, these textbook writers were not overly concerned with foreign nationals committing acts of terrorism on U.S. soil. Others, however, were more focused on the threat. They knew that “the times are a-changin’.” Consider, for example, Robert Kupperman and Jeff Kamen’s admonition in their book *Final Warning* (1989): “Spilling blood on U.S. soil was probably perceived not only as problematic logistically but also too risky in terms of provoking a devastating reaction. But events would gradually discourage that caution and lead terrorists to consider strikes directly into the heart of America” (p. 6). Steven Emerson and Christina Del Sesto were also busy documenting the terrorist threat to the United States in their book *Terrorist* (1991).

Reports published by the U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism* (see, e.g., 1991 through 1994), and the FBI Terrorist

Research and Analytical Center, *Terrorism in the United States* (see, e.g., 1991 through 1994), also warned of the potential for a new wave of terrorism. In *Terrorism in the United States: 1991*, for example, the FBI (1992) writes that even though “the United States did not evidence an international terrorist attack within its borders during [the Persian Gulf War] . . . the threat was not eliminated. . . . [And] given the present state of global affairs, and . . . the potential for terrorism inside the United States, we must remain alert to the possibility of terrorism” (pp. 20-21).

Because the study of terrorism involves the study of changing global politics and violence, most scholars believe that journalists like Emerson and Kamen, and government bureaucracies like the U.S. Department of State and the FBI, have trouble being objective, albeit scientific, about their analyses. Are academicians immune from doing the same? Clearly, they are not. As a matter of fact, textbook writers like Vetter, Perlstein, White, and Smith should have followed the lead of investigative reporters like Emerson and Kamen, as well as reports from the U.S. Department of State (1991, 1992, 1993) and the FBI (1990, 1991, 1992), and paid closer attention to political and social occurrences that spelled trouble for the United States. Now let’s look at all those events that made it possible for a new breed of foreign terrorists to bomb the World Trade Center, plot to bomb other landmarks in New York City, and pose an ongoing threat to law enforcement authorities because the terrorist groups are difficult to track, infiltrate, and intercept.

## OUT WITH THE OLD

### **The Soviet Union and Terrorism**

Throughout the late 1960s and the 1970s, many Middle Eastern terrorist groups sent their recruits to the Soviet Union for training in low-intensity warfare, which is a rather benign-sounding name for terrorism. Actually, the Soviets viewed terrorism as compatible with their efforts to support wars of national liberation even though they knew that violence against civilian populations was inconsistent with traditional Marxist-Leninist thinking on class struggle. The Soviets hoped that Palestinian terrorism against Israel would enhance their

position within the Arab world and erode that of Israel's staunchest supporter, the United States.

Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow was where Palestinians would go to learn terrorist tactics. Their curriculum included liberal doses of Marxist ideology interspersed with demonstrations on how to handle Kalashnikov assault rifles and to make bombs. Some of the more promising students were recruited for more elaborate training by the Soviet secret police, the KGB.

Lumumba graduates would often return home to assume leadership roles in many of the Palestinian terrorist groups that sponsored their stay at the university, most notably the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Their duties included, among other things, the sharing of their newfound skills. Soon, Palestinian terrorist groups like the PLO were running their own terror academies.

An unidentified source in Turkey's Istanbul GUNES news service, on July 17, 1982, listed more than 40 terrorist organizations receiving training from the PLO in terrorist camps in Lebanon. Among the most frequent students were the Turkish terrorist groups: Dev-Sol (Revolutionary Left); Dev-Yol (Revolutionary Way); Turkish Communist Party-Marxist-Leninist (TKP-ML); Turkish Communist Workers Party (TKIP); Acilciler (The Swift Ones); Marxist-Leninist Armed Propaganda Union (or Unit) (MLSPB); Turkiye Devrimci Kommunist Partisi (Turkish Revolutionary Communist Party); Devirimci Halk Birligi (Revolutionary Turkish People's Union); Dev-Savas (Revolutionary Fight); Halkin Devirimci Conculeri (People's Revolutionary Pioneers); and Apolcular (Followers of the Abdyllah Ocal Group). The Red Brigades (RB); Basque Nation and Liberty (ETA); Irish Republican Army (IRA); Italian Marxist-Leninist Vanguard Organization; Corsican Separatists; Swiss Anarchists Union; German Red Army (RAF); Japanese Red Army; Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA); National Liberation Front of El Salvador; Argentine Montoneros guerrillas; Peronist Revolutionary Movement; Sri Lanka guerrillas; Dhofar Front guerrillas; and Nicaraguan Sandinista guerrillas all participated as well. Strange as it may seem, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and the WSG, known as the War Sports Group, representing the neo-Nazis, were also reported to have received training in these PLO camps, which as noted, passed on techniques learned from the Soviets (Mickolus, Sandler, & Murdock, 1989, p. 296).



For nearly a decade, Soviet-trained and -supported terrorism operated with impunity in the Middle East and, to a lesser extent, in Europe. The Soviets, as Roberta Goren (1984) notes, viewed terrorism as “indirect aggression” and a very useful instrument of political subversion. According to Goren, the Soviet Union was quick to support terrorist activities that could systematically “undermine a society with the ultimate goal of causing the collapse of law and order and the loss of confidence in the state” (p. 14). Terrorism, writes Ray Cline and Yonah Alexander in *Terrorism: The Soviet Connection* (1984), was simply another way to aid the Soviets in their efforts to destabilize the West.

As events in the Middle East or Europe would threaten to affect public opinion—or worse yet, U.S. intervention—Soviet leaders would rein in their client terrorists. The Soviets always kept their terrorists on the proverbial “short leash.” Moreover, the Soviets never granted anything without strings attached, much less unconditional support for terrorists. In fact, conditional support of the Palestinian cause created considerable resentment against the Soviets within the very Palestinian terrorist groups they aided and abetted. Evidence does suggest, however, that, on occasion, Soviet authorities would ask the PLO for advice and were willing to defer to their wishes on matters of policy and tactics relating to the Middle East. The substance of a transcript of a conversation between Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet foreign minister, and Yasir Arafat, chairman of the PLO, on November 13, 1979, uncovered during an Israeli operation in Lebanon, bears this out:

*Gromyko:* Are you considering certain tactical concessions in return for getting recognition from the hostile camp? And are you also considering recognizing Israel’s right to exist as an independent sovereign state? During the discussions with the Americans, we felt we were at a dead end. Here I would like to know what your opinion is and please regard it as a question only. . . .

*Arafat:* Knowing that we are the victim, we raised many possible solutions, while none of our enemies presented any. We said: A democratic state where Jews and Arabs will live. They said: This means the destruction of Israel. In 1974, we said we will establish the Palestinian state on every part of land that Israel withdraws from, or which will be liberated, and this is our right.

We have proposed all these things and they have offered nothing.

*Gromyko:* If there is a change in your position, I ask you notify us, since one cannot escape this issue. In every statement, the Americans say: How can we recognize an organization while they are not ready to recognize any-



thing? This is demagoguery, but we have to know how to deal with it. I ask you to think about it and make your comments.

I thank you for the useful discussion. We think that we march with you on the same path concerning the Middle East problem. The Soviet Union is a friend of the Arabs and does not tend to change its friends. We hope that the Arabs and the PLO feel the same way.

Arafat: The PLO has no doubts. (Adams, 1986, pp. 45-46)

Some actions of the more radical Middle Eastern terrorist groups eventually caused the Soviets to become less enthusiastic about the potential destabilizing benefits of low-intensity warfare. This especially was true whenever the Soviets were on the receiving end of a terrorist operation. The hijacking of an Antonov-24 airplane in which a stewardess was killed and three passengers were wounded in October 1970 by two Lithuanian residents from the Soviet Central Asian republic of Uzbekistan even caused the Soviets to vote for the punishment of hijackers. After a Soviet diplomat was shot and killed by an unidentified gunman on a motorcycle near the Soviet embassy in New Delhi in 1985, the Soviets had had enough and proceeded to vote for a strongly worded condemnation of terrorism in the United Nations. Actually, the Soviets, according to Walter Laqueur (1987), always opposed terrorist hijackings and attacks against diplomats. By the late 1970s, Soviet sponsorship of terrorism had lessened, but the Middle Eastern terrorist groups had a life of their own. The evil genie that was terrorism was out of the bottle, and there was no getting it back inside.

Nearly three decades after the Soviet Union trained its first batch of Palestinian terrorists, the Soviets themselves began to sense their own vulnerability to terrorism. In 1989, under the watch of Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviets, in what Galia Golan (1990) called a major shift in policy, began to implement a counterterrorism policy. By the next decade, the former Soviet Union and the United States actually took steps toward resolving terrorist issues with the formation of a joint task force to prevent international terrorism. Today, in fact, the Russians are themselves faced with the threat of terrorism in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Chechnya. Separatist groups, such as the Chechens, have already used terrorism to advance their cause. Still, until their collapse, a somewhat less enthusiastic, notwithstanding more vulnerable, Soviet Union played the "terrorist" card and made money and weapons available to terrorists by way of its client states.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 deprived Palestinian terrorist groups of a significant source of money, weapons,

and safe havens. The FBI Terrorist Research and Analytical Center also believes that the collapse affected left-wing extremist groups in the United States. "The transformation of the former Soviet Union also deprived many leftist groups [in the United States] of a coherent ideology or spiritual patron. As a result, membership and support for these groups waned" (FBI, 1996, p. 11).

German reunification also affected these Palestinian terrorist groups. It ended East Germany's role as an important supplier of money, weapons, and sanctuary for terrorists to hide after their operations. The training camp in Pankow, East Germany, had been particularly notorious for assisting these terrorists with arms, money, and intelligence. Aid from training camps inside Albania; Varna, Bulgaria; Ostrova and Karlovt Varv, Czechoslovakia; Lake Belaton, Hungary; Poland; and Rumania also dried up with the collapse of the Soviet-sponsored Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance, better known as the Warsaw Pact. Even former Soviet client states Syria and Libya, which at times were independent sources of money, weaponry, and training, refrained from overt support of terrorism. Syrian training camps in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon and Libyan training camps in Focra, Misurata, Res Hilal, and Sirte no longer advertise their wares as centers for terrorists to hone their skills. Instead, Tripoli and Damascus embarked on a series of covert actions in support of Palestinian terrorists because they could no longer get backing in any confrontation with the United States from a Soviet Bloc that no longer existed.

### **The Persian Gulf War and Yasir Arafat**

The Persian Gulf War saw a dramatic increase in the number of international terrorist incidents. Yet, it only took 1 year for the U.S. Department of State to record one of the largest 1-year decreases in these occurrences since the United States began keeping such records. Attributing this decline to the destruction of Iraqi terrorist networks is as problematic as attributing the decrease to an increase of low-level terrorist events brought about by the Persian Gulf War itself. Furthermore, statistics gathered by organizations other than the U.S. Department of State may be based on different definitions of terrorism and, therefore, may show many more or less incidents of terrorism during the same time frame. Those interested in playing the numbers

game can consult the U.S. Department of State's annual *Patterns of Global Terrorism* and compare it with, for example, the *Annual Risk Assessment* publication put out by Risk Assessment Services. Those interested in the impact of the war on the changing face of terrorism itself are asked to consider Yasir Arafat's tactical mistake of siding with Iraq before and during the Persian Gulf War in 1991.

Long before the war, Arafat, the man with the stubbly face and checkerboard kaffiyeh who personified terrorism itself, knew he could not run his PLO with the whimsical support of Libya's Moammar Gadhafi or the cash-and-carry conditional backing of the former Soviet Union. He set out to create alternative sources of funding that would give the PLO the stability it needed to carry on a protracted terrorist campaign. According to the British journalist James Adams (1986), a significant portion of this funding came in the form of protection money from the conservative and vulnerable oil states.

At the time of the Persian Gulf War, PLO assets were estimated to be in the neighborhood of \$10 billion, with Saudi Arabia and the other oil-rich gulf states providing a large chunk of the PLO's annual operating budget. Khaled Abu Toameh (1993) estimates that, in the years leading up to the war, the annual donations of the Saudis and Kuwaitis were approximately \$86 million and \$50 million, respectively. Arafat's support of Saddam Hussein would shut down this extraordinary flow of oil money.

With the generous subsidies from the gulf sheiks and Saudi princes nothing more than a fleeting memory, the PLO found itself in the middle of its worst financial crisis since its inception in April 1964. Arafat, some said, trusted no one but himself on financial matters, and he alone would authorize and sign checks for large expenditures. At PLO headquarters in Tunis, staffed with MIT-trained computer experts, as well as throughout PLO offices around the world, where Harvard MBAs traded stocks and commodities, staff salaries were reduced and lifestyles strictly curtailed. Arafat was forced to sell off some valuable real estate holdings of the PLO and to close down its newspapers. He even agonized over investments as diverse as blue-chip stocks on Wall Street and cattle ranches in Somalia. The Fortune 500-like PLO, which was reputed to control enough Wall Street paper that it could move the Dow Jones, had a serious cash flow problem.

Further contributing to Arafat's financial woes was the decision by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency to curtail financial aid to

Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories. In addition, the *amwal al-sumud*, or “steadfastness funds,” that Palestinians “outside” sent Palestinians living “inside” under Israeli occupation all but dried up when Saudi Arabia and Kuwait expelled Palestinians after the Persian Gulf War. Palestinians working in these countries would routinely have 5 percent of their salaries automatically deducted from their paychecks to contribute to these steadfastness funds. Rumor had it that the money that did make it to the territories was being pocketed by some prominent local Palestinians. But more serious than the financial woes of the PLO was a political crisis made worse when oil money went to Arafat’s sworn opposition in the occupied territories—the shadowy terrorist group Hamas.

### The Islamic Resistance Movement

*Hamas* is the Arabic acronym for Islamic Resistance Movement and means “zeal.” It is a militant mass movement with solid support among Palestinians living in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. Hamas was formed by Sheik Ahmed Yassin during the *intifada*, or uprising, against Israeli occupation of the territories on December 14, 1987, to stop stone-throwing Palestinian youths from joining the PLO. Its enemy is not only Israel but also the PLO and the Palestinian administration of Yasir Arafat. Why the difference? Why this antipathy?

It is important to recall that Islam is more than a faith. Its founder was a politician, as well as a visionary. Even the Israelis, usually so astute about their Arab environment, missed this reality. Even as they closed universities in the occupied territories, they encouraged Islamic seminary study. They hoped to turn the minds of their subject people away from Arab nationalism and support of the PLO toward the peaceful ways of religion.

Soon Israel found itself confronted by Hamas, which traces its roots to the Muslim Brotherhood founded in Egypt during the 1920s by Hassan al-Banna, championing the liberation of Palestine, not for the sake of nationalism, but of Islam. In contrast with a political movement like the PLO, which is willing to compromise with Israel as part of the peace process, Hamas is uncompromising and maximalist. It demands the total liberation of the sacred land of Palestine as demanded by God, who will repay martyrs for this cause with life everlasting.