

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART  
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## FUTURE TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM<sup>\*</sup>

Brian Michael Jenkins

When will it stop? Where will it all end? Will terrorism, having reached its peak in the mid-1980s, now diminish as a worldwide problem? Will we see simply more of the same? Will terrorists escalate their violence without changing their basic tactics? Or will terrorists, in the future, employ chemical, biological, or even nuclear weapons, perhaps to hold cities hostage? These questions reflect our growing frustration, our deepening fears. We want an end to terrorism, once and for all. We fear that if it continues, terrorists will enter the domain of mass destruction. Our answers, though necessarily speculative, are nonetheless important, for they define our attitudes and shape our responses.

### WILL TERRORISM PERSIST?

Several factors might lead one to think that terrorism will decline in the coming years. Previous waves of terrorism at the beginning of the twentieth century and again in the 1920s surged, then declined. At least some of the political issues that led to the rise of contemporary international terrorism in the late 1960s have been removed or resolved in other ways. The United States ended its participation in the Vietnam War more than a decade ago, thereby incidentally removing what had been a catalyst for political protest and some terrorist activity in North America, Western Europe, and Japan. The urban guerrilla groups responsible for the rise of international terrorism in South America in the late 1960s and early 1970s were suppressed by local authorities,

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sometimes brutally. Those countries have since cautiously returned to democracy. Operating under greater constraints, authorities in Western Europe nonetheless substantially reduced domestic terrorist violence, although some of the groups survive. Of the original causes that led to terrorism in the late 1960s, the Palestinian issue remains a major source of international political violence in the mid-1980s.

Seen from that perspective, terrorism may be expected to gradually diminish. But it seems more likely to continue. After all, political violence in one form or another has existed for centuries. The waves of terrorist violence at the beginning of this century, when anarchists stalked heads of state, and again in the 1920s and 1930s were eclipsed only by the far greater violence of two world wars. Terrorism seems to flourish during periods of "world peace." When World War II ended, terrorist activity reemerged. It accompanied postwar decolonization struggles in places like Palestine, Kenya, Cyprus, and Algeria, some of which continued up through the 1960s. The terrorist campaigns that were a part of colonial liberation movements like the Jewish underground in Palestine and the FLN in Algeria provided inspiration and models for contemporary terrorist groups.

Modern theories of guerrilla war--which, of course, is not synonymous with terrorism but did contribute doctrinally to the use of terrorist tactics--developed during this same period, from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. Since World War II, which represented the culmination of state-organized violence, there has been a long-range trend toward the "privatization" of violence.



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All of these facts argue for the continuation of some kind of political violence outside of conventional warfare. But will international terrorism persist in its present form? Probably it will, for a number of reasons. International terrorism, as we know it today, not only grew out of the unique political circumstances that prevailed at the end of the 1960s, but also reflects recent technological developments which have enhanced the use of terrorist tactics.

Modern air travel provides worldwide mobility of people, ideas, and conflict. Instantaneous access to a worldwide audience through the modern news media, particularly television, is another factor. This technology is still only in its infancy, and may become uncontrollable in its appetite for news and its ability to broadcast events from where they happen.

The proliferation of inexpensive minicameras and remote satellite broadcasting capabilities will enable the electronic medium of television to cover the world as it now covers a football game. With so many images pouring in from all over the world, editorial selectivity in television may be reduced to split-second decisions regarding which picture, which angle to screen next. Television news may resemble the play-by-play coverage of sporting events, forcing political leaders, even more than now, to make instant decisions in public. Television is the battlefield of the future, where terrorists have the advantages of terrain.

The increasing availability of arms to anybody with the money to buy them is another irreversible change. We are not talking about major weapons systems--ballistic missiles, intercontinental bombers, nuclear

submarines, battle tanks--but about increasingly powerful and increasingly accurate man-portable weapons. Terrorist use of automatic weapons has grown in the last 10 years, and even ordinary street crimes are being committed with the newest submachine guns that boast enormous firepower. The number of machineguns in the United States alone is estimated to be in excess of 500,000. Right-wing extremists recently arrested in the midwestern United States had at their hideout automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades; they had protected their redoubt with land mines, and were building their own tank at the time of their arrest. Police dealing with such terrorists, drug traffickers, criminal gangs, and barricaded suspects have been compelled to create specialized tactical response units equipped with armored vehicles, rapid-fire and heavy caliber weapons, and specialized explosives for breaching barriers and stunning defenders. Tactical operations are of necessity increasingly militarized.

The apparent inability of the world to limit or regulate arms traffic will impose greater demands on physical security or, alternatively, on regulating the people that might use those arms. The landscape of political violence has been permanently altered.

Over the years, a semipermanent infrastructure of terrorism has emerged. Individual terrorists can be arrested, terrorist groups can be "defeated," but governments find it extremely difficult to identify and destroy the resilient web of political fronts, personal relationships, clandestine contacts, foreign connections, alliances with other groups, support structure, resources, and suppliers of material and services that sustain the terrorist underground. There also are economic incentives to use terrorist tactics. Kidnapping and extortion based

upon threats of violence have become routine means of financing revolutionary movements. Many groups realize a substantial cash flow from their criminal activities.

All these reasons suggest that terrorism as we know it now is likely to persist as a mode of political expression as well as an instrument of diplomacy or as a means of warfare among states.

Growing sponsorship is another reason terrorism will persist. To a certain extent, international terrorism has become institutionalized. State sponsors provide terrorists with resources and a sanctuary where they can retreat, recuperate, rest, and rearm. State sponsorship also means that an office or agency is designated to be in charge of relations with the terrorists. Like any bureaucracy, that agency competes for influence and budget, promises results, and resists dismantling. Having learned to use the new tool of terrorism, the agencies responsible for terrorist activity will have their own vested interest in continuing to use it.

#### WHAT WILL BE THE FUTURE SOURCES OF TERRORISM?

There will be no shortage of potential causes for terrorism: rising population; increased poverty and scarcity; racial tension; inflation and unemployment; increased tension between the have and have-not nations; waves of refugees shoved about by wars and repression; immigrants moving from poorer states to wealthier ones, often bringing with them the conflicts of their home country, sometimes causing resentment among native citizens; rapid urbanization; the disintegration of traditional authority structures; the emergence of single-issue groups; the rise of aggressive fundamentalist religious groups or religious cults.

However, one must be cautious here. Years of research has not been able to demonstrate a connection between poverty, scarcity, inflation or any other socioeconomic indicator and terrorism. Indeed, countries experiencing the highest levels of terrorism are often among the economically and socially most advanced nations in their region or in the world, and often the least authoritarian. Contemporary terrorism seems to come with modern society.

As for the collapse of traditional authority structures, they are collapsing all the time. They collapsed during the French revolution, during the industrial revolution, after the abolition of slavery, after World War I, after World War II, with the fall of the colonial empires, with the advent of transistor radios. And to be sure, all of these developments have been associated with a measure of violence.

Ideology and ethnic nationalism have been the two major engines of modern terrorism. Ideology drove the urban guerrillas in Latin America and their terrorist imitators in Western Europe and the United States. Most of these groups adhered to some variation of Marxism. A few, like the anti-Castro Cuban emigres came from the right. Dreams of an independent homeland inspired groups like the Irish Republican Army, the Basque separatists, the Croatians, the Palestinians, and the Armenians. More recently religious fanaticism, although directed toward secular ends, and secret wars waged by states have accounted for a growing share of the world's terrorist violence.

Responding in a 1985 poll, authorities on terrorism identified state-sponsorship, ethnic conflict and religious fanaticism as the most likely sources of future terrorist violence. Ideological conflict came

in fourth. Several factors may explain why the experts think ideology will decline as a future source of terrorist violence. Ideology never was a major factor in the United States. Although they expressed themselves in Marxist rhetoric, America's bombers of the late 1960s and early 1970s were motivated primarily by a single issue rather than an ideology: opposition to the Vietnam War. When the United States ended the draft and withdrew from Vietnam, the tiny terrorist cells were deprived of any potential constituents and they dried up. U.S. military intervention in some Third World context, such as in Central America or the Middle East, could spark a new wave of political protest and violence.

Ideological conflict was always a more serious business in Europe where in the 1960s many adults could still recall the great ideological contests of the first half of the century. But after a few years of terrorism, the public grew tired of the violence which until then had been fashionable at least in some circles. Discredited by their actions, groups on the far left lost ground as the political center of gravity moved right on both sides of the Atlantic in the late 1970s. This fundamental shift narrowed the recruiting space of groups like Italy's Red Brigades and Germany's Red Army Faction, while authorities reduced their operational capabilities. The resurgence of so-called "Euro-terrorism" in 1984 and 1985 demonstrated that the leftwing extremists did not abandon the field. They did, however, abandon their millennialist visions of revolution and instead concentrated on more concrete issues that offered them a potential constituency: disarmament, opposition to NATO and the deployment of further nuclear weapons. Meanwhile the shift to the right seems to have brought with it an increase in rightwing violence in the 1980s.

Ideology may remain a more powerful force in the Third World where leftwing guerrillas battle governments in Latin America, Africa, and the Philippines, while anti-Marxist guerrillas wage war on Marxist governments in Central America, Africa, Afghanistan, and Indochina. All of these guerrilla groups, left and right, have their terrorist branches to intimidate foes, enforce obedience, extort funds or gain publicity. This traditional use of terrorism will no doubt continue. The use of terrorism by insurgent groups could increase as some of the movements are defeated or stalemated.

It is also possible that some of the Third World groups might find common cause and launch terrorist campaigns directed against targets in the developed world on behalf of Third World causes. Terrorist groups have obliged corporations to pay them revolutionary "taxes," provide free food and medical supplies to the poor or finance philanthropic enterprises. One can imagine a consortium of terrorist groups carrying out campaigns of violence aimed at coercing the world into a new international economic order or to extort concessions to relieve the Third World's massive debt burden. Terrorists have retaliated against corporate managers for chemical spills and industrial accidents that harmed workers. It is then, perhaps, not inconceivable that Third World terrorists might retaliate for pollution or industrial disasters in the Third World. On the other hand, terrorist groups have not had much success in making common cause in the past so we must consign all these scenarios to the category of intriguing but far-fetched.

## WILL TERRORISM INCREASE?

Will terrorism increase? Despite the successes of some governments in combatting terrorist elements, the total volume of international terrorism, measured by the number of incidents, has increased. It traces an irregular line with peaks and valleys, but the trajectory is clearly upward.

Overall, the volume of terrorist activity has grown at an annual rate of about 12 to 15 percent. If that rate of increase continues, we could see a doubling of terrorism by the end of the decade--not an inconceivable prospect. Several factors suggest the likelihood of continued growth.

The increase in the volume of terrorist activity has been matched by the geographic spread of terrorism--a slow, long-term trend. The number of countries experiencing some sort of terrorist activity has increased each year. In the late 1960s, international terrorist incidents occurred in an average of 29 countries each year. This average climbed to 39 countries in the early 1970s and 43 in the late 1970s. For the first three years of the 1980s, the average number of countries experiencing international terrorist incidents was 51, and for the period 1983 to 1985, the average was 65.

Although a handful of nations have been the favorite targets of terrorists the number of nations targeted by terrorists has also increased. In 1984, terrorist attacks were directed against the nationals of 60 countries.

And though it is difficult to monitor with any precision the appearance and disappearance of the many hundreds of groups that claim credit for terrorist actions--some of them are only fictitious banners--the level of international terrorist activity no longer appears to depend on just a few groups as it did in the early 1970s. Despite the virtual destruction of some terrorist groups and the decline in operations by others, the total volume of terrorist activity grows.

# Number of International Terrorist Incidents

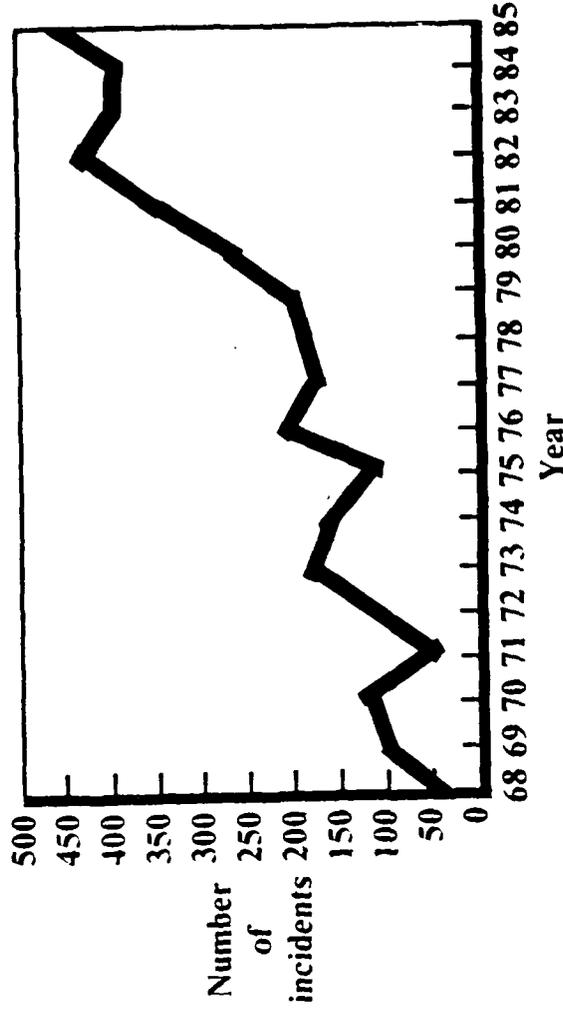


Figure 1

## WILL TERRORISTS ESCALATE?

Will terrorists escalate? Simply killing a lot of people has seldom been a terrorist objective. Terrorists want a lot of people *watching*, not a lot of people *dead*. Most terrorists operate on the principle of the minimum force necessary. Generally they do not attempt to kill many, as long as killing a few suffices for their purpose.

Statistics bear this out. Only 15 to 20 percent of all terrorist incidents involve fatalities; and of those, two-thirds involve only one death. Less than 1 percent of the thousands of terrorist incidents that have occurred in the last two decades involve 10 or more fatalities; incidents of mass murder are truly rare.

Arbitrarily taking 100 deaths as the criterion, only a handful of incidents of this scale have occurred since the beginning of the century. Lowering the criterion to 50 deaths produces a dozen or more additional incidents. This in itself suggests that it is either very difficult to kill large numbers of persons, or it is very rarely tried.

Unfortunately, as we have seen in recent years, things are changing. Terrorist activity over the last 20 years has escalated in volume *and* in bloodshed. At the beginning of the 1970s, terrorists concentrated their attacks on property. In the 1980s, terrorists increasingly directed their attacks against people--the soft target. The number of incidents with fatalities, and multiple fatalities, has increased. A more alarming trend in the 1980s has been the growing number of incidents of large-scale indiscriminate violence: huge car bombs detonated on city streets, bombs planted aboard trains and airliners, in airline terminals, railroad stations, and hotel lobbies, all calculated to kill in quantity.

# DEATHS FROM MAJOR INCIDENTS OF SABOTAGE AND TERRORISM

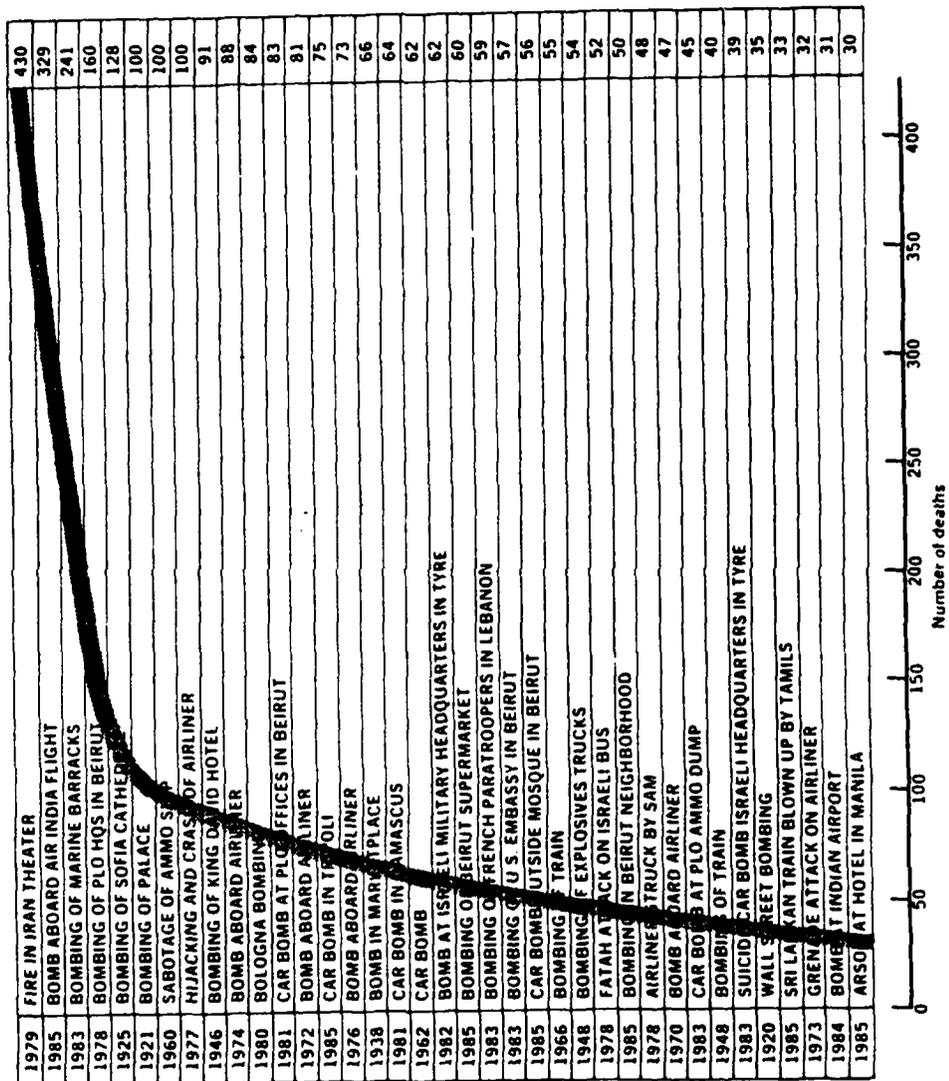


Figure 2

Why are they killing more? Like soldiers in a war, terrorists who have been in the field for many years have been brutalized by the long struggle; killing becomes easier.

As terrorism has become more commonplace, the public has also become, to a degree, desensitized. Terrorists can no longer obtain the same amount of publicity with the tactics they used 10 years ago. They have to escalate their violence in order to keep public attention.

Terrorists have become technically more proficient, enabling them to operate on a higher level of violence.

The composition of some terrorist groups has changed as the faint-hearted who have no stomach for indiscriminate killing drop out or are shoved aside by more ruthless elements.

The religious aspect of current conflicts in the Middle East allows the participants to slaughter one another without conscience. Moslems have no monopoly on martyrdom or mass murder. As we have seen throughout history, the presumed approval of God for the killing of pagans, heathens, or infidels permits acts of great destruction and self-destruction.

And finally, governments themselves have provided terrorists with the resources and technical know-how to operate at a higher, more lethal level of violence.

At the same time, however, several factors work against escalation. Security is one limiting factor. Protective measures taken in the wake of the huge car and truck bombings in the Middle East will reduce the vulnerability of the most obvious targets to this type of attack. If there are more bombings like that which likely caused the crash of the

Air India jumbo jet in 1985, more stringent airport security measures will be applied on a permanent basis to prevent their repeat. Of course, terrorists can obviate security measures by shifting their sights to other, still vulnerable targets, but this forces them to become even less discriminate. There are also technical ceilings. Unless they resort to more exotic weapons, terrorists are approaching limits to their violence. As shown in Figure 3, the numbers of deaths in the deadliest terrorist incidents roughly equal those in the worst accidental disasters. Death on a larger scale is seen only in the slaughter of great battles or in natural disasters like earthquakes and floods. The most plausible scenarios involving chemical or biological weapons in a contained environment--a hotel, a convention, a banquet--would produce deaths in the hundreds. To kill on a larger scale, terrorists would have to possess large quantities of deadly substances and solve problems of dispersal, or they would have to resort to nuclear weapons. This raises questions of technical capacity and intentions. We will come to these in a moment.

On balance, it appears that incidents involving large numbers of fatalities probably will become more common, with deaths in the hundreds remaining for the foreseeable future the outer limit of individual terrorist attacks.

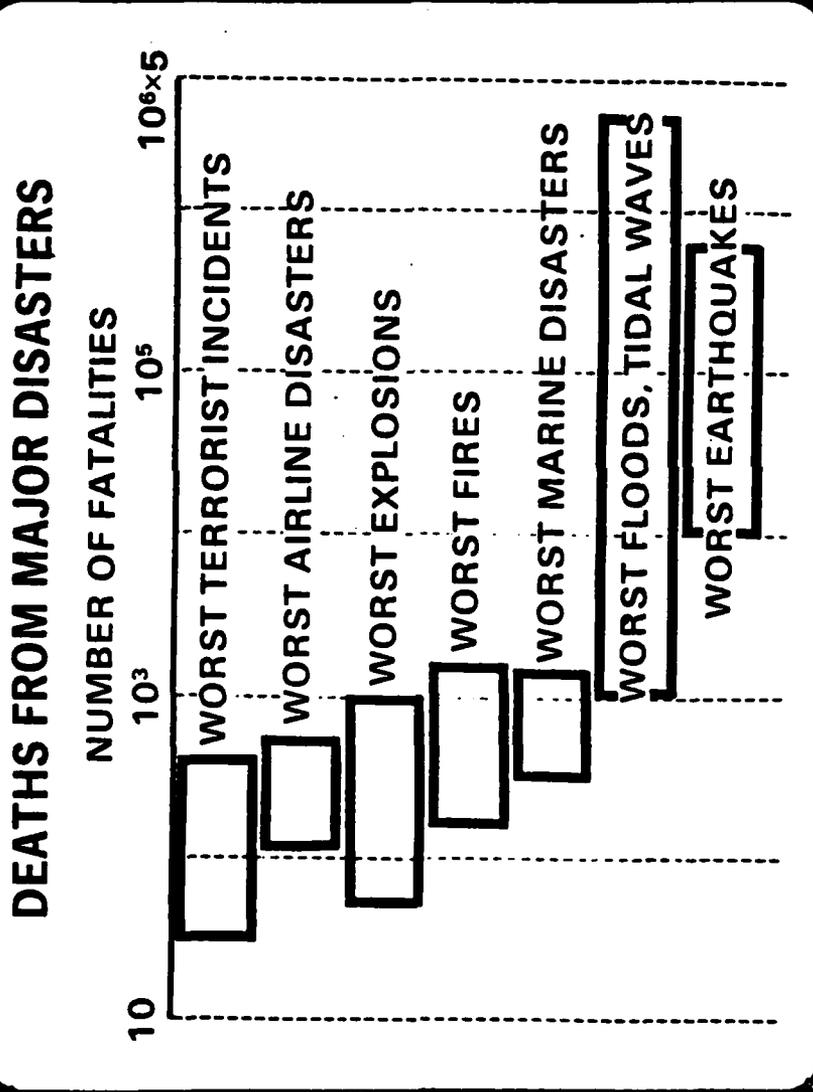


Figure 3

## WILL TERRORISTS CHANGE THEIR TACTICS?

"If I were a terrorist, I would..." It is the invariable preamble to the most diabolical schemes. College students, business executives, housewives, and other seemingly nice people are capable of hatching absolutely horrifying terrorist plots. Real terrorists, by comparison, are unimaginative dullards, content to follow the same script over and over.

But terrorists don't see things the way most people do. Almost everyone assumes that terrorists would want to hold cities hostage with nuclear or chemical weapons, knock out electrical grids to cause widespread blackouts, or poison the water supply. Those who study terrorists more closely are less certain that terrorists could, or would even want to do these things. And from what former terrorists tell us, terrorists themselves apparently contemplate such activity rarely, if at all. Terrorists see what they do now as sufficient. They operate with a limited repertoire that has changed little and seems unlikely to change very much in the future. Six basic tactics account for 95 percent of all terrorist incidents: bombings, assassinations, armed assaults, kidnappings, hijackings, and other kinds of hostage seizures. Terrorists blow up things, kill people, or seize hostages. Every terrorist attack is merely a variation on these three activities.

Looking at what terrorists have contemplated and discarded or tried and failed gives us some idea of the breadth of their imagination. Most of the tactics and operations they have considered are essentially more of the same. They would like to have assassinated more high-ranking officials: the British Prime Minister, the President of South Korea,

the entire cabinet of Chad, the gathered dignitaries at Golda Meir's funeral, the assembled senior leadership of Italy's Christian Democrat Party, the Commander of NATO. They would have given us more spectacular hostage incidents. They considered kidnapping the Pope, but dropped the idea as too risky. They planned to seize 40 industrialists at a meeting in Vienna and contemplated taking a school bus filled with American school children in Europe. They would have hijacked an Italian cruise ship 13 years before the taking of the Achille Lauro. They would have shot down civilian airliners in Germany, Italy, Kenya, British helicopters in Northern Ireland, taxiing airplanes in Paris and Athens. They would have destroyed oil refineries in Rotterdam and Singapore.

What tactical innovations have terrorists produced since the late 1960s? The letter bomb (actually an invention of the 1940s for which Jewish extremists in Palestine get credit), the car bomb, the radio-controlled car bomb, the radio-controlled boat bomb, the suicide vehicle bomb. There also have been innovations in fuzing and detonating devices: the barometric pressure fuze invented by the Palestinians to blow up airliners in flight, the long-term delay mechanism used by the IRA in the attempt on Prime Minister Thatcher's life. And they have added several dimensions to hostage-taking: hijacking airliners to make political demands; seizing embassies; kidnapping diplomats to gain the release of prisoners; kidnapping corporate executives to finance terrorist operations.

These innovations could all be categorized as enhancements and variations. The basic tactics have changed little over the years. Indeed, the relative percentage of the various tactics has remained stable for a long time, except for a decline in embassy takeovers.

Seizing embassies was popular in the 1970s. It declined as security measures made embassy takeovers more difficult, and as governments became more resistant to the demands of terrorists holding hostages and more willing to use force to end such episodes, thus increasing the hostage-takers' risk of death or capture.

This is indicative of the kind of innovation we are likely to see. Terrorists will alter their tactics in an incremental way to solve specific problems created by security measures. If one tactic ceases to work, they abandon it in favor of another one or merely shift their sights to another target. How might terrorists respond to the new security measures that have been taken to protect embassies against car bombs? They might resort to aerial suicide attacks, which are technically and physically more demanding. Or they might resort to standoff attacks, the traditional response to strong defenses. Or they might simply attack other, still vulnerable targets. Since terrorists have virtually unlimited targets, they have little need for tactical innovation.

There are several things that appear in the scenarios of most armchair terrorists that real terrorists have not done. With the exception of a couple of minor episodes, they have not attacked nuclear reactors. Terrorists have blown up computers and set fires in data processing centers, but they have not tried to penetrate computers in any sophisticated fashion to disrupt or destroy data.

Will we see a more sophisticated "white collar" terrorism, that is, attacks on telecommunications, data processing systems, or other targets intended to produce not crude destruction but widespread disruption? Perhaps, but disruptive "terrorism" of this type does not appear to be

particularly appealing to today's terrorist groups. Such operations are technically demanding, and they produce *no immediate visible effects*. There is no drama. No lives hang in the balance. There is no bang, no blood. They do not satisfy the hostility or the publicity hunger of the terrorists.

In sum, there is little to suggest major tactical innovations. Terrorist tactics for the foreseeable future will remain for the most part what they have been for the past 15 years. New government countermeasures might provoke more radical departures from the traditional terrorist tactics. Or innovations might not come from those currently identified as "terrorists," but instead from "outsiders," entirely new types of adversaries not yet identified: computer hackers who turn malevolent; ordinary criminal extortionists who turn political. But for the most part, the traditional tactics will predominate. Minor innovations will be devised to solve specific problems. Technical improvements may permit them to succeed where previously they have failed. Tactical innovations that appear to work will be imitated and spread rapidly, and those seen as failures the first time out will be abandoned. It is an evolutionary pattern.

#### **WILL TERRORIST TARGETS CHANGE?**

The greatest advantage that terrorists have and will continue to have is a virtually unlimited range of targets. Terrorists can attack anything, anywhere, anytime, limited only by operational considerations: Terrorists do not attack defended targets; they seek soft targets. If one target or set of targets is well protected, terrorists merely shift their sights to other targets that are not so well protected.

Over the years, the range of targets attacked by terrorists has expanded enormously. Terrorists have attacked embassies, airlines, airline terminals, ticket offices, railroad stations, subways, buses, power lines, electrical transformers, mailboxes, mosques, hotels, restaurants, schools, libraries, churches, temples, newspapers, journalists, diplomats, businessmen, military officials, missionaries, priests, nuns, the Pope, men, women, adults and children.

The future targets of terrorists will be pretty much the same as those preferred today: representatives and symbols of nations and governments--in particular, diplomats and airlines, of economic systems such as corporations and corporate executives, of policies and presence such as military officials.

Will terrorists attack high-technology targets such as refineries, offshore platforms, or nuclear reactors? They already have, although indirectly and in technically undemanding ways. Guerrillas in Latin America have frequently attacked electrical power grids as a means of waging economic warfare against governments. Less concerned with economic warfare, urban terrorists occasionally have attacked electrical energy systems to get attention, to protest government or corporate policies, or to indirectly disable nuclear power plants. Terrorist saboteurs have also attacked pipelines, oil tank farms, and refineries, again with the objective of attracting publicity or protesting specific policies.

Except for attacks on pylons and pipelines, two traditional and easy targets of sabotage, neither guerrillas nor terrorists have achieved an impressive record of success against more demanding or more easily

defended targets. And seldom have they tried to attack directly, in other than a purely symbolic way, really difficult targets like nuclear reactors or offshore platforms which require technical knowledge and operational capabilities most groups do not possess. Even their attacks on powerlines and pipelines are largely symbolic, sometimes causing temporary disruptions but not sustained or directed against critical nodes so as to achieve strategic effects.

Attacks on high-tech targets will remain within the operational domain of established guerrilla groups and larger terrorist organizations. Smaller terrorist groups will continue to carry out sporadic and often symbolic attacks on energy systems and other similar targets. Sometimes they will succeed in causing widespread disruption. Often they will fail. With practice, however, even a small group can get to be quite good at this sort of thing and become more sophisticated in their operations as demonstrated in the growing skill of the New World Liberation Front, a tiny terrorist group in northern California that carried on a long campaign against the local power company. Groups able to recruit confederates within the labor force of a particular industry can also operate at a higher level. Insiders always are the most effective saboteurs.

Finally, the phenomenon of state sponsorship of terrorism, if it continues, may alter terrorist targeting. States not only provide terrorists with the capabilities to take on more difficult targets but also may provide terrorists with incentives for doing so. If this happens, terrorism truly will have become strategic in its potential consequences.

## WHAT WEAPONS WILL TERRORISTS USE?

What weapons will terrorists use in the future? Terrorists now use what they can buy in the gunshops or on the black market or what they can steal from arsenals. They seek powerful, rapid-fire, concealable weapons. They use commercial explosives, and military stuff when they can get it. These suffice for current operations. Since terrorists generally do not attack defended targets, they have no need for more advanced arms. Anyway, they now match the firepower of the authorities.

Terrorists probably will use more sophisticated explosives, in larger quantities, although there is no great need to increase quantity. Terrorists in the Middle East have on several occasions built bombs containing more than 1,000 pounds of explosives. Car bombs with 200 or more pounds of explosives are not uncommon. Fifteen to 20 pounds of high explosives planted inside a large building will take its front off.

We will probably see increased use of standoff weapons--mortars, rocket launchers, rocket-propelled grenades--to overcome security measures. Finally, there remains a potential for the use of portable precision-guided munitions, which terrorists have already employed on several occasions. These weapons are now manufactured in the tens of thousands. They are easy to operate. They are increasingly available. According to a recent survey of law enforcement officials and authorities on terrorism, 55 percent thought it "very likely" and another 29 percent thought it "somewhat likely" that by the year 2000, terrorists will employ shoulder-fired, precision-guided, surface-to-air missiles to shoot down civilian planes.

## WILL TERRORISTS GO NUCLEAR?

Will terrorists resort to weapons of mass destruction? Will they employ chemical or biological warfare? Will terrorists go nuclear? Many people believe that nuclear terrorism of some sort is likely and may be inevitable. Reflecting the results of a poll conducted among 1,346 opinion leaders in the United States, George Gallup, Jr., in his recent book, *Forecast 2000*, wrote that "while a war between the superpowers, the U.S. and the Soviet Union, is a real cause for concern [a disastrous nuclear incident involving terrorists in this country], seems to be the most imminent danger."

I happen to think nuclear terrorism is neither imminent nor inevitable, if by nuclear terrorism we mean terrorists employing stolen nuclear weapons or a clandestinely fabricated nuclear explosive device to kill or threaten to kill large numbers of people. Lesser terrorist acts in the nuclear domain--the seizure or attempted sabotage of a nuclear reactor, the dispersal of radioactive material, an alarming nuclear hoax that may cause panic--are possible.

The question of nuclear terrorism involves an assessment of both capabilities and motivations. It is conceivable that someone outside of government who is familiar with the principles of nuclear weapons could design an atomic bomb. However, the ease with which a private citizen can build one, assuming he or she could somehow acquire the necessary nuclear material, has been greatly exaggerated. But even if terrorists can build a nuclear weapon, would they want to? Terrorism has certainly escalated, but it is still a quantum jump from the kinds of things that terrorists do today to the realm of nuclear destruction. Why would terrorists take that jump?

Without resorting to nuclear weapons, terrorists could do more now, yet they don't. Why? Beyond the technical constraints, there may be self-imposed constraints that derive from moral considerations or political calculations. Some terrorists may view indiscriminate violence as immoral. The terrorists' enemy is the government, not the people. Terrorists pretend to be governments, and wanton murder might imperil this image.

There are political considerations as well: Terrorists fear alienating their perceived constituents. They fear provoking public revulsion. They fear unleashing government crackdowns that their groups might not survive. Certainly, in the face of a nuclear threat, any rules that now limit police authorities in most democracies would change.

Terrorists must maintain group cohesion. Attitudes toward violence vary not only from group to group but also within a group. Inevitably, there would be disagreement over mass murder, which could expose the operation and the group itself to betrayal. Obviously not all groups share the same operational code, and as we have seen, certain conditions or circumstances might erode these self-imposed constraints.

What about chemical or biological weapons, which are technically less demanding than nuclear weapons? The same self-imposed constraints apply. Moreover, although there have been isolated incidents, neither chemical nor biological warfare seems to fit the pattern of most terrorist attacks. Terrorist episodes have a finite quality--an assassination, a bombing, a handful of deaths, and that is the end of it. That is quite different from initiating an event that offers no

explosion but instead produces indiscriminate deaths or lingering illness, an event over which the terrorists who set it in motion would have little control.

Still, we must take note of a disturbing trend. Product contamination is a crime clearly on the rise. Criminal extortionists, seeking huge payoffs, malevolent pranksters, mentally unbalanced persons seeking revenge for real or imagined grievances or dramatic forums from which to express themselves on a variety of issues have poisoned, or have threatened to poison food, pharmaceutical products, or water supplies. Most of these threats turn out to be hoaxes, and many go unreported, but there have been moments of public alarm. The poisoning of Tylenol capsules with cyanide killed six people and nearly caused a national panic in 1982. The episode received enormous publicity and it inspired numerous copycat crimes around the world. It also demonstrated the obvious vulnerabilities of society to this type of crime and the tremendous economic losses faced by firms confronted with such threats. The Tylenol case cost the manufacturer \$100 million in lost product and sales. Facing financial disasters of this magnitude, corporations may decide to quietly pay off rather than risk the consequences if news of a threat leaks out.

No one claimed responsibility, no perpetrator was ever arrested, no motive ever discovered in the Tylenol case. When authors of these threats are apprehended, they usually turn out to be ordinary criminals, angry former employees or genuine crackpots. Seldom have their motives anything to do with political causes or those we currently label terrorists.

One exception was the 1979 poisoning of Israeli oranges by Palestinian extremists. No one was harmed by the mercury-injected oranges, but fear sent sales of Israeli oranges in Europe plummeting. A Palestinian group claimed credit for this apparently effective economic warfare but then promptly abandoned the tactic. Israeli officials later hinted that quiet threats of retaliation against Arab states prompted the Palestinians to end the campaign.

More recent contamination threats have involved issues beyond personal gain or individual revenge. In one case, the money demanded by extortionists was to have been used to finance the political activities of an emigre group. In another case, the intent may have been to humiliate certain public officials. Another involved demands to drop criminal charges against a popular figure. Still another sought to discourage shopping at supermarkets involved in a labor dispute. Animal rights extremists have threatened to poison the products of corporations using animals in laboratory tests. Publicity, economic warfare, ransoms to finance operations, punishment for despised policies--these are the stuff of political terrorism. While the more ambitious schemes of chemical or biological warfare are likely to remain beyond the technical reach and outside the motives of most political terrorists, at least for the near-term future, we must anticipate the possibility of more limited scenarios involving political demands based upon product contamination.

Over the longer term--the next 10 to 15 years--my concern is that chemical weaponry will be acquired by unstable, dangerous countries like Iraq, Iran, or Syria, and will increasingly be used in warfare. If chemical warfare becomes more commonplace, particularly in a region like

the Middle East, we cannot dismiss its potential use by terrorists. The same is true of nuclear weapons, but probably over a longer time period.

### **WILL TERRORISM BECOME ANOTHER KIND OF WAR?**

Where will terrorism fit in the future of armed conflict? The current trend toward state sponsorship of terrorism probably will continue. Limited conventional war, classic rural guerrilla warfare and international terrorism will coexist and may appear simultaneously. The Iranian revolution and its spread to Lebanon, which has involved the effective use of international terrorism as an instrument of policy, may provide a model for other Third World revolutions and revolutionary states, just as the Cuban model inspired a generation of imitators in Latin America. If it does, we are in for a lot of trouble.

We also may see international terrorism emerge as a new kind of global guerrilla warfare in which terrorist groups sally forth from the political jungles of the Third World to carry out highly publicized hit-and-run attacks, militarily insignificant but of great political consequence, avoiding confrontations where they might run into well-equipped, well-trained, specialized anti-terrorist forces.

Terrorists now avoid seizing embassies in Western capitals. They hijack airliners, keep them on the move to evade any rescue attempt, and retreat with their hostages to sanctuaries like Teheran or Beirut. In the absence of government, as in Lebanon, or the presence of a hostile government, as in Iran, these sanctuaries lie beyond the reach of the world regime of treaty and law. If Iran defeats Iraq and the Gulf States fall, then the world's "badlands" might be centered in the Middle East, a crescent reaching from the Mediterranean to Persia.

## HOW WILL TERRORISM AFFECT SOCIETY?

Finally, what developments will we see in security? The "privatization" of violence has been matched by the "privatization" of security, as illustrated by the tremendous growth of private sector security expenditures. In the United States, a total of \$21 billion is now spent annually for security services and hardware (as compared with \$14 billion spent annually on all police). The figure will reach \$50 billion to \$60 billion a year by the end of the century.

We will see the further proliferation of inner perimeters, the rings of security that now surround airline terminals, government buildings, and, increasingly, corporate offices. From this last development, however, emerges a cynical counterterrorist strategy. By protecting the most obvious symbols, terrorists' preferred targets, terrorists will be forced to become less discriminate in their attacks. That will create greater public outrage, which governments can exploit to obtain domestic support and international cooperation to combat terrorists.

All these security measures, however, will not buy us a feeling of security, but only remind us of our vulnerabilities. Terrorism is not an objective threat measured in bodycount. It is a subjective threat. News of the latest terrorist attack will still penetrate protected perimeters, making us vicarious victims. Behind our alarms, sensors, surveillance cameras, reinforced walls, we will live in fear.

## CONCLUSION

This survey offers a depressing but conservative view of future trends in terrorism. Terrorism persists. It may double in volume, but the world does not end in terrorist anarchy. Few changes are foreseen in terrorist tactics or targets.

Terrorists will escalate their violence, their attacks will become more indiscriminate, we may see political demands based upon threats of food contamination, but terrorists probably will not enter the Armageddon world of mass destruction. Terrorism will become institutionalized as a mode of armed conflict for some, no less legitimate than other modes of conflict. The media will increase its ability to cover terrorist incidents; we will see even more terrorism. The extraordinary security measures taken against terrorism will have become a permanent part of the landscape, of our life style. They will no longer attract comment.

That may be the most insidious and perhaps the most worrisome development in the coming years. Terrorism will become an accepted fact of contemporary life--commonplace, ordinary, banal, and therefore somehow "tolerable."

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