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AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION (ABA) PANEL DISCUSSION

Friday, June 6, 1986

Mayflower Hotel

"Future Trends in Terrorism"

P20

Ambassador Oakley has provided an effective summary of where we have been over the last few years in the terrorist threat and how we are combatting it. We should not make any mistakes, however, in assuming that we are winning in the campaign against terrorists. While it is true that we have been relatively free of terrorist attacks in the United States, the number of terrorist events continues to increase and the casualties continue to climb. American tourist trade and visits to Europe have declined dramatically; American businesses around the world are removing their signs, reducing American personnel, and taking the American flag off the roofs of their buildings. The government itself has taken steps to reduce the number of official Americans overseas and in a number of missions around the world our diplomats are virtual prisoners behind the barricades we have erected to protect them. These are not signs that we are winning a war against terrorists, a campaign to stamp out this criminal behavior.

In point of fact, that statement: "War against terrorism and campaign against criminal acts" contains much of the dichotomy we face as a government in dealing with the problem of terrorism. Domestically, we approach terrorism as an issue for criminal

prosecution. We have even extended the long arm of our law to make certain terrorist acts conducted overseas subject to U.S. jurisdiction. Yet, we also talk about "the war against terrorism" -- which in the minds of some gives combatant status to those who take hostages, pirate aircraft, and bomb innocent civilians. The "war analogy" allows our opponents the use of the trite canard "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." Does referring to terrorism as war, rather than criminal activity, lend dignity to terrorists and place their acts in the context of accepted international behavior?

Obviously for some this is the case. In short, we have failed to determine whether or not we are engaged in a battle at the low end of the warfare spectrum -- a form of low-intensity unconventional conflict or worldwide campaign against criminals.

This dichotomy is reflected in our prosecution of the campaign and it is indeed the broad-gage approach we have taken. Bureaucratically, politically, operationally, and technically, we have sought to bring to bear all necessary assets -- law enforcement, diplomatic, economic, military, and covert intelligence services. After the Beirut and Kuwait bombing attacks in 1983, the President directed that we improve our organization to better prosecute the campaign against terrorism. This organizational arrangement was further refined as a consequence of the Vice President's Task Force on Combatting Terrorism in an effort to streamline the decision process and management of our

government's program. Bob Oakley and I co-chair the two interagency entities which oversee our policy and our management of incidents. The question one must ask is does this process work? My answer is sometimes.

Just a few weeks ago, the United States acted against Libya in an effort aimed at preventing further attacks on American citizens. Before our strikes, we were provided with irrefutable evidence of Libyan complicity in the bombing of a discotheque in Berlin. We had further evidence that additional attacks of this kind were being planned. Our action was surely justified, as the President noted in his remarks to the nation on the night of April 14, under the self-defense provisions of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. This action resulted from a concerted effort within the Administration to determine what steps would be most effective in preventing further Libyan-directed attacks.

In general, one can claim that the strategy worked. But, the broader question is one of resources and assets which were brought to bear on the problem. It is widely known that we were forced to use aging F-111's, based in the United Kingdom, on a 2,800 mile round-trip -- along with the assets of two carrier battle groups positioned in the Mediterranean. For a variety of reasons, our NATO allies -- and the French are a part of NATO -- refused overflight permission, forcing a route that was nearly twice as long. We were forced to this decision by a lack of other alternatives.

During the ACHILLE LAURO incident, we were blessed with accurate and timely intelligence that allowed us to intercept the Egyptian aircraft carrying the terrorists responsible for the murder Leon Klinghoffer. In this case, U.S. Navy F-14's were used to force the aircraft to land at Sigonella, where we had hastily positioned our special purpose forces.

In both cases, we used conventional military assets for counter-terrorist missions and met our immediate objectives. But, if we are indeed serious about terrorism posing a long-term threat to the national security interests of the United States, we need to be actively seeking other alternatives besides F-111's, A-6's, and F-14's.

We already have some of what we need. Our Joint Special Operations units are the finest in the world, yet they are positioned thousands of miles from where they are most needed. On several occasions, like the Egypt Air Flight #648 in November 1985, we found ourselves in a situation where we were asked to help but we unable to do so because the Maltese government was unwilling to allow our units to enter their territory to assist the Egyptian commandos in resolving the incident. We find ourselves neither correctly positioned -- given time and distance factors -- nor adequately assured of diplomatic clearance for the use of our forces -- even when American citizens are jeopardized.

When TWA Flight #847 was skyjacked by Shiite terrorists minutes after takeoff from Athens, we began a 17 day ordeal to achieve the release of 145 passengers, a 104 of which were Americans. As the aircraft shuttled between Algiers and Beirut, we found ourselves completely unable to intervene in a manner that we safely ground the airplane at a point where we could act unilaterally or with others to terminate the incident.

Despite significant improvements in our bureaucratic structure, technology and procedures for rapidly disseminating information, and a dramatically improved military capability, we are rarely able to predict or, more importantly, prevent a terrorist attack from occurring. Our covert action capability at the opening of this Administration was practically non-existent. The task of rebuilding it is slow and arduous. Had we possessed such a capability during TWA #847, it might have been possible to render the aircraft incapable of flying at a point where we could have acted to release the hostages before the could be taken from the plane in Beirut. Such a capability might have saved the lives of the 60 persons killed on Egypt Air Flight #648.

Yet, to many, particularly in our Congress, the thought of covert action is an anathema. Critics of such a capability have hamstrung our intelligence services with a series of constraints on both the service and the executive that makes such action almost impossible. Our experience with Libya just weeks ago

proves that even overt military action, no matter how popular with the American people, is a subject for intense debate. During the Congressional consultations the day of our raid, the President, the Secretaries of State and Defense, and the National Security Advisor were berated for not allowing sufficient time for adequate consultations. Several members criticized us for giving them "a briefing on a decision already reached," rather than the opportunity to consult. It was carefully explained that the strike could be recalled at any point up to 15 minutes before 7:00 p.m. and, if there was a consensus among those present that our action was incorrect, the President would so order. No such consensus existed. In fact, those who raised concerns about the consultation agreed with the decision to strike. Yet, despite admonitions that public revelations about the consultation or its contents would jeopardize American lives, immediately following the meeting two members walked straight to reporters' awaiting microphones.

These are significant problems which we must overcome. In addition to those essential diplomatic steps which we must take to work more closely with our allies and the formulation of additional laws which strengthen our ability to prosecute those who perpetrate such brutality, we must also:

- Improve the ability to conduct covert operations aimed at preempting terrorist acts before they occur. These actions involve disrupting, frustrating, confusing, and exposing terrorists, their organizations, and their supporters.

- Examine the current dual-oversight committee structure in the Congress. The demands for prior notification in the oversight process practically mandate inaction.
  
- Explore means to better position our counter-terrorist military units so that they are closer to the scene of action.
  
- Arrive at understandings with the legislative branch or change the current resolution on War Powers so that the President can act decisively without further jeopardizing American lives.
  
- Stop talking tough and start acting quietly. Effective action speaks far louder than words -- particularly in the terror camps of the Bekka valley, the Libyan desert, the Crimea, Castro's isle of pines, or Ortega's Nicaragua.

Some have suggested that a joint committee on counter-terrorism would be an appropriate legislative forum for these issues. Others have proposed that the Intelligence Oversight Act and War Powers Resolution be modified or even eliminated.

What we need is a realistic approach to a growing problem. Terrorism does indeed threaten the faith of the American people in their government. It erodes the image of reliability of the



United States as an ally. If we fail to address the problem, both the individual terrorist and his cause -- however ill-conceived -- gain strength and confidence.

It is important that we look for long-term solutions to a long-term problem, there will be no quick fixes in this effort. We should not allow ourselves to create the expectation that terrorism will indeed go away tomorrow. Yes, 1986 will hopefully, as the President has said, be the year in which the world comes to grips with the plague of terrorism. But, we should realize that the cure for the plague means tough medicine that at times will be hard to swallow.

# Terrorism: How the West Can Win

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU

WHY SHOULD the West concern itself with terrorism? Its victims are few, its physical damage limited, its violence sporadic. In comparison with outright war, it poses a relatively minor threat to the lives and property of the citizens of free societies. Yet terrorism cannot be dismissed so easily. For one thing, it is escalating. The number and scope of attacks is steadily increasing. Aircraft are commandeered, passenger ships seized, politicians assassinated. Anyone is a potential victim. And while the number of those actually involved may be small, the entire world is set on edge—or rather, the democratic world, the West, the principal target of terrorism.

Free societies are naturally concerned with the welfare of their citizens in distress. And this concern is not necessarily related to the number of victims. A mine explosion, for example, may involve a handful of miners trapped underground, but the attention of an entire nation may be riveted to their fate for days, even weeks. This is not only because the cameras may be there to record the unfolding drama. There is a deeper reason. Consciously or unconsciously, every citizen imagines himself trapped in the same predicament. Will the rescuers get there in time or will he be abandoned to the forces of nature, forces beyond the reach of the authorities? It is the empathy for one's fellow citizen and the concomitant test of a government's ability to offer succor

that endow these events with their importance to society as a whole.

Terrorism induces a similar anxiety—with one important difference. Unlike natural catastrophes, terrorism is neither purposeless nor fortuitous. It is deliberately planned, organized, initiated, and launched by people who wish to dramatize the powerlessness of governments. For whatever their specific motives or demands may be, the overriding consideration of all terrorist acts is to humiliate governments and expose their impotence. And this impotence is dramatized with special force and acuity when a handful of people are able to strike at anyone, anywhere, anytime.

The result is a loss of confidence on the part of the ordinary citizen in the resolve and competence of his government. To illustrate the crucial difference in the response of citizens, consider the reactions of people after a natural disaster like a hurricane or a volcanic eruption. The government's performance is seldom the predominant issue. Most people recognize, indeed accept, that a force of nature can wreak destruction beyond the capacities of government to prevent or immediately repair. After the initial anxiety, the common response is seldom anger but compassion, understanding, and a willingness to help. This is true even if the disasters are relatively frequent and serious, as in earthquake-prone regions. But persistent attacks of terrorism produce an entirely different reaction. The initial shock is transformed into criticism and rage at the government for not acting to prevent or curb such attacks. People instinctively agree with Churchill's dictum that a government's first obligation is to protect its citizens. While they may not always apply this standard in the case of natural calamities, they *always* apply it, stringently, in the case of armed attacks. The citizen points an accusing finger at his leaders, as if saying: I've entrusted you with the supreme obligation of protecting me and given you the exclusive authority and means to do so. You have failed. You have broken my trust.

Having induced in the public a sense of the government's impotence and of his own invincibility, the terrorist now reaps the real reward. For the stage is now set for the second critical

phase in the terrorist demands. I do not mean money, publicity, or *political* claims to be more precise. Consider the terrorist government and what is not going to give him what he wants.

This is a no-lose game. The government does not give in to further terrorism. The government and more, the terrorist demands. The scores are obvious. A temporary hiatus (with the government has a child clamoring for government simply once the line of more demands. Blackmail in the attack, the more terrorist murders "anything but the

The terrorist's future blows, not terrorism thrive up to this threshold every person in the neighborhood. The response is two-fold: the willingness to be demonstrated. Through repeated not only resist

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phase in the terrorist strategy—the consideration of his demands. I do not mean only the immediate ones (safe passage, money, publicity, release of jailed terrorists, etc.), but the larger *political* claims that he professes to represent. The citizens or, to be more precise, the media, now press the authorities to consider the terrorist claims. The citizens in effect turn to the government and say: You have failed to stop the terrorist. He is not going to go away. Listen to him, negotiate with him, give him what he wants to make him stop.

This is a no-lose proposition for the terrorist. If the government does not give in, the terrorist promises (and often delivers) further terrorism. This induces further criticism of the government and more, increasingly desperate calls to heed the terrorist demands. If the government succumbs, the terrorist scores an obvious victory; even if the terrorist agrees to a temporary hiatus (which he seldom does), the citizen knows that his government has caved in and betrayed his trust yet again. Like a child clamoring for forbidden toys, the public expects the government simultaneously to give in and to hold fast. And once the line of concession is crossed, more atrocities and more demands are sure to follow, with the inexorable logic of blackmail in the face of weakness. The more outrageous the attack, the more outlandish the target, the better. To call terrorist murders "senseless," then, is to miss the point. They are anything but that.

The terrorist's strategy is premised on the ability to deliver future blows, no matter what. The fear and intimidation that terrorism thrives on is totally dependent on the ability to live up to this threat. It is essentially the same kind of terror that every person experiences during childhood in the face of the neighborhood bully. As in the case of the bully, the necessary response is twofold: the conscious refusal to be intimidated and the willingness to fight back. Virtually always, this resolve has to be demonstrated in action. The same is true of the terrorist. Through repeated blows, he must be taught that his victim will not only resist his assaults but fight back vigorously.

The terrorist objective, of course, is not negotiation but capitulation. As long as he can sustain the pressure, as long as he

can launch attacks with increasing frequency and audacity, he will advance toward his goal. The primary task, then, in fighting terrorism is to weaken and ultimately destroy the terrorist's ability to consistently launch attacks. This is often presented as a difficult or even impossible task. It is asserted that the clandestine nature of terrorism and the openness of Western societies make terrorism against the West nearly impossible to root out. I would argue the exact opposite. Terrorism can be easily stopped. The minute you weaken its ability to deliver repeated blows, you have broken its back. And it is well within the means of the West to achieve this. But before discussing the political, military, and other ways in which this can be done, we must consider further the moral debilitation which terrorism produces in our societies. For without an appreciation of the moral issues involved in the battle against terrorism, an effective defense is doomed.

What are the moral wounds that terrorism has already succeeded in inflicting on our societies? As we have seen, the number of victims and the extent of physical damage is not the issue. Rather, it is the shaken confidence in government, the questioning of its abilities and competence to ensure a world subject to the rule of law, and the way terrorism gradually *conditions* us to lawlessness and outrage. We are by now almost resigned to attacks on airline offices, seizure of embassies, hijacking of airplanes, bombing of government buildings, assassination of political leaders, machine-gunning of children. If as recently as the mid-1960s somebody had offered such a description for a world ostensibly at peace, we would have scoffed. Yet the realization that wild beasts prowl our airways and waterways, that they can escape retribution by fleeing to countries which respect, indeed worship, the law of the jungle, has been steadily replacing our older conception of justice, order, and accountability in international affairs.

In a curious way, straightforward war, even when launched for the most vicious motives, never did this. Such wars have clear terms of reference. They have a beginning, they have an end (even though that end may be a protracted one). The aggressor either loses, in which case our sense of justice is rein-

forced, or he may be drawing a mental line for the next battle, in which diplomacy will prove overwhelming and confusion.

But terrorism wounds that is common to all. It opens up new battles from its onslaught. The idea that airports are the *Achille's Heel* targets too.

Terrorism not only erodes our moral boundaries. For the shoppers, tourists, the crucial distinction is that *we* begin to attack, the public complies with his own compliance. Hostages with jail, murder of children, the commission of the terror.

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forced, or he may win, in which case we absorb the defeat by drawing a mental (and sometimes physical) demarcation line for the next battle, in the hope that the combination of defense and diplomacy will prevent it from breaking out, or failing that, from overwhelming us. There may be tragedy, but there is no moral confusion.

But terrorism does not offer us this comfort. Like an open wound that is constantly gashed, its relentless attacks continually open up new battlefields. No areas of life seem to be immune from its onslaught. For example, having finally gotten used to the idea that airplanes are unsafe, we have had to adjust (after the *Achille Lauro* piracy) to the new fact that cruise ships are targets too.

Terrorism not only cuts across political boundaries with apparent impunity. It violates our most precious moral and ethical boundaries. For the deliberate targeting of innocent civilians—shoppers, tourists, passengers, students—has gradually eroded the crucial distinction between combatant and non-combatant. It is not only that the terrorist breaks down this distinction. It is that *we* begin to accept his standards. With each fresh terrorist attack, the public is conditioned—first by the terrorists, then by his own compliant interpreters in the press—to equate innocent hostages with jailed terrorists and to accept the notion that the murder of children is a regrettable but understandable expression of the terrorists' purported grievance.

The distance from "understandable" to "legitimate" is a short one. It is made even shorter by the tendency of Western diplomacy, echoed by the media, to fall back on two platitudes concerning terrorism.

The first is the ready acceptance of the terrorist argument that even the most abhorrent violence is the direct result of certain "root causes," such as poverty, political oppression, denial of national aspirations, etc. But terrorism is not an automatic result of anything. It is a choice, an evil choice. That this is true can easily be seen in the many modern instances of the direst oppression, when the oppressed rejected terrorism and chose to wage their struggle by honorable means. Earlier in the book I cited a classic illustration of this principle, but because of its clarity

it is useful to repeat it: No resistance movement in Nazi-occupied Europe conducted or condoned terrorist attacks against German civilians, attacking military and government targets instead. But today's terrorists need the flimsiest pretexts to perpetrate their crimes, targeting the innocent with particular relish.

The root cause of terrorism lies not in grievances but in a disposition toward unbridled violence. This can be traced to a world view which asserts that certain ideological and religious goals justify, indeed demand, the shedding of all moral inhibitions. In this context, the observation that the root cause of terrorism is terrorists is more than a tautology.

The "root cause" argument is especially popular in explaining away PLO and other Arab terrorism. That this terrorism was already raging during the 1920s, decades before the current grievances of Arab terror even existed (territories controlled by Israel after 1967 or, earlier, Arab refugees), is overlooked. Recently, a new variation has been introduced. It is argued that the absence of progress toward a peaceful settlement between Arabs and Israelis induces terrorism. The truth is exactly the reverse. Arab terrorism is not the result of breakdowns of peace negotiations; it is, more than any other factor, the *cause* of such breakdowns. (Arab leaders showing the slightest inclination toward peaceful coexistence risk immediate assassination by the terrorists.)

The second platitude blurring the true nature of terrorism is the "cycle of violence" argument, raised whenever governments contemplate action against the terrorists. It is proffered not only to warn of a possible practical consequence—an ensuing spiral of violence (an argument I will address later)—but as a moral injunction as well, i.e., responding to the terrorists with force lowers one to their level. As if military strikes aimed at the terrorists and terrorist attacks on civilians belong on the same moral plane. They do not. Safeguarding that distinction is central to prosecuting and winning the war against terrorism. For the terrorist's ultimate victory is to control our thinking and to assign the term "terrorists" to those of his victims who fight back.

Terrorists have been successful in propagating this false symmetry because of the sloppiness of the West's thinking about the use of force. America's loss of clarity in the wake of Viet-

nam has become engagement have jacket themselves not suggesting the relevant today in not. Governments of their actions, even with a wave of repression whether to respond individual incidents means, and, of course, or both).

These questions, principle: Under *rogatorically rule out* a of civilian casualties this position. In practice civilian casualties v possible. (This brings observation that the Antarctica.) Knowing even greater length terms, an absolute demns to death or in undeterred, will in

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nam has become a general Western malaise. The rules of engagement have become so rigid that governments often strait-jacket themselves in the face of unambiguous aggression. I am not suggesting that prudence and proportionality are any less relevant today in deciding on a response to aggression. They are not. Governments must weigh the political and military effects of their actions, even when they are fully justified. When dealing with a wave of repeated attacks like terrorism, they must judge whether to respond at all, when to do so (for example, after each individual incident or after an accumulation of attacks), with what means, and, of course, against whom (the terrorists, their backers, or both).

These questions, however, should not obscure a fundamental principle: Under no circumstances should governments *categorically rule out* a military response simply because of the risk of civilian casualties. There is a practical and a moral basis for this position. In practical terms, an inflexible rule against risking civilian casualties would make any military action virtually impossible. (This brings to mind Edward Luttwak's memorable observation that the only sure exception is aerial combat over Antarctica.) Knowing our inhibition, the terrorist would go to even greater lengths to put civilians at maximum risk. In moral terms, an absolute prohibition on civilian casualties today condemns to death or injury many future victims of a terrorism that, undeterred, will inevitably increase.

Responsible governments seek to minimize civilian casualties. But they do not grant immunity to an aggressor simply because their response might endanger civilians. If this is true in normal combat, it is truer still in the case of terrorism. An absolute prohibition on civilian casualties affords the terrorist an invincible shield. This is not only true in cases in which he fears retaliation following his attacks (when the terrorist seeks immunity by planting his bases among civilians). It is also true during the classic terrorist operation, the taking of hostages, when the terrorist even more brazenly seeks immunity by daring the authorities to take action and risk the lives of innocent victims.

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Why have I called hostage-taking the classic terrorist act? More than any other type of terrorist violence, it reveals two underlying characteristics of terrorism. First, it is an unmistakably *deliberate* assault on the people who are seized, precisely because they are noncombatants and outside the pale of acceptable conflict. There is simply no way to argue that the victims are accidental, as terrorists sometimes pretend when they bomb shops, airline offices, or other public places.

Second, it affords a stage for dramatization and distortion. The prolonged siege is one of the most effective ways in which terrorists propagate their message. Through media coverage and the negotiations to resolve the crisis, they seek to achieve legitimacy. What would normally be regarded as criminal extortion is transformed into a political act. It is important, therefore, to consider in some detail the appropriate response to the taking of hostages. For the principles that guide our response in this case pertain to all other forms of terrorism.

Hostage-taking places a government in a terrible dilemma: If it uses force to release the hostages, it might end up with more people killed than if it gives in. If it yields, the terrorists emerge victorious. Sometimes the terrorists resolve this dilemma by killing a few hostages and threatening to murder the rest if their demands are not met. The government can then argue that since more hostages are about to be killed anyway, it must take action immediately. But what if the terrorists do not begin killing their victims? Does that make a military response less necessary? The answer is no. The terrorist must believe that the authorities are prepared to take forceful action whether or not hostages have been killed. The mere act of *taking* hostages warrants such a policy. It is a fundamental error to let the terrorists believe there are instances when they are completely safe from military action.

The more terrorists believe that such action is likely, the less prone they will be to continue their siege. During the hijacking of the TWA airliner to Beirut and of the cruise ship *Achille Lauro* in 1985, a principal reason that the terrorists released their hostages was their belief in imminent intervention—retaliation afterward in the case of TWA, and military rescue in the case of the *Achille Lauro* (a correct assumption in the latter case, as

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The belief in the has a tremendously best demonstrated from this form of at of hostage-takings, seizing of schools, a cases the government mands. Soldiers ov tages. This was by ernment painfully r casualties unavoidable hostages were killed were massacred by selves killed.

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both American and Italian forces were poised to storm the ship on the day the pirates surrendered).

The belief in the certainty or likelihood of military intervention has a tremendously inhibiting effect on hostage-taking. This is best demonstrated in the case of Israel. No nation suffered more from this form of attack. In the 1970s, Israel experienced a spate of hostage-takings, including the hijacking of planes and the seizing of schools, apartments, hotels, and buses. In all of these cases the government refused to capitulate to the terrorist demands. Soldiers overcame the terrorists and liberated the hostages. This was by no means an easy course to follow. The government painfully recognized that its policy made some civilian casualties unavoidable. Indeed, there were several cases in which hostages were killed. In one, Maalot, twenty-one schoolchildren were massacred by the PLO before the terrorists were themselves killed.

But what was the result of this determined refusal to yield? Incidents of hostage-taking gradually became a rarity inside Israel. This was not because the PLO was unable to stage such incidents; it is not particularly difficult to organize a handful of terrorists for this purpose. What limited the PLO's hostage-taking was the certainty that there would be no surrender and that the terrorists would fail and probably be killed. (Contrary to popular myth, cases of suicidal terrorism are rare; overwhelmingly, terrorists want to live, in fact, to escape unpunished.)

The PLO sought to overcome Israel's resolve by seizing Israeli planes or hostages outside Israel. But these attempts were defeated as well. The hijacking of Israeli planes or the taking of Israeli hostages anywhere became an extremely difficult proposition. For example, the hijacking of an El Al flight from London to Tel Aviv was foiled by security guards on board who killed one of the terrorists. In the most celebrated example, the case of Entebbe (1976), Israeli troops flew over 2,000 miles, liberated the hostages, and killed their captors. The effect on the terrorists was long-lasting. For a decade after Entebbe, not a single Israeli plane was hijacked, and virtually no attempts were made to seize Israeli hostages abroad.

The refusal to capitulate, and the decision to apply force, was

adopted in several important instances by other governments. The German government forcibly liberated German hostages in the hijacked Lufthansa airplane in Mogadishu (1977), the Dutch successfully stormed a train hijacked by the South Moluccans (1979), and the British freed the occupied Iranian embassy in London (1980). For years afterward, these countries experienced no further hostage-takings. Experience shows that far from engendering a cycle of violence, the application of military force, or the prospect of such application, inhibits terrorist violence.

We can see this principle at work in the locations terrorists select to play out an act of hostage-taking. They choose places where they believe rescue is impossible. The hijackers of the Kuwaiti airplane landed in Tehran airport after killing two American hostages. In the TWA case, the Shiite gunmen deliberately brought down the airplane in Beirut airport, where the presence of heavy Shiite militia made rescue extremely difficult. In the case of Entebbe, the PLO hijacked the Air France plane to Uganda, where it was heavily guarded by Idi Amin's troops and was seemingly safe from any possible military action. In the case of the hijacked Egypt Air plane, the terrorists apparently chose Malta because they believed that the Maltese government, closely tied to Libya, would not permit a rescue attempt. The terrorists, in short, *fear* forcible intervention, and prefer to operate only when they think none will be forthcoming.

Given this reality, what should be the response of attacked governments? Clearly, the question should be one not of *policy* but of *means*. The only sensible policy is a refusal to yield and a readiness to apply force. This is a policy that in effect says to the terrorist: I will not yield to your demands. I demand that you release the hostages. If you do not do so peacefully, I am prepared to use force. I am proposing a simple exchange: your life for the lives of the hostages. In other words, the only "deal" I am willing to make with you is that if you surrender peacefully, I will not kill you.

Obviously, there can be complicating circumstances. What if military intervention truly does endanger the lives of most or all of the hostages? This is not quite as frequent as might at first

appear. Many governments have overcome the terrorist. On occasion the attempt in Malta to storm the terrorists in 1985. In both cases operational consequences, lives, an obligation

Rescuing hostages is of great importance of military an enclosed space. The procedure is to show the hostages, look first and show necessary. This saves lives at greater however, some very important, to the in the accumulation that special units the techniques. As the experience land show, more must face the state and that a tragedy is no guarantee only be sure how

But let's take even nonexistent hostages but had case is the kidnapping of Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades. Aldo Moro was was, it was the immediate aftermath it later showed government military Brigades and to

appear. Many governments have specialized forces trained to overcome the terrorists before they kill most of their hostages. On occasion they fail, as was the case in the Egyptian rescue attempt in Malta and the Colombian government's decision to storm the terrorists occupying the Ministry of Justice in Bogotá in 1985. In both cases the decision to act was correct, whatever the operational consequences. But how to reduce the loss of innocent lives, an obligation that governments simply cannot ignore?

Rescuing hostages requires impressing on military forces the importance of *minimizing* firepower. In storming a building or an enclosed space held by an enemy, the normal military procedure is to shoot (or detonate) first and look later. But in rescuing hostages, the soldier's job is exactly the opposite: he must look first and shoot later, and even then only when it is absolutely necessary. This means that the rescuers must always put themselves at greater risk than they would otherwise do. They can, however, somewhat reduce the risk to themselves—and, more important, to the hostages—by repeated training and immersion in the accumulated experience of earlier rescues. This requires that special units, which over time develop expertise and perfect the techniques of rescue, be charged with liberating hostages. As the experiences of Israel, West Germany, Britain, and Holland show, more often than not, such units succeed. Still, one must face the stark reality that there are no guarantees of success and that a tragic loss of lives may indeed occur. Equally, there is no guarantee of failure. The military cliché is true: You can only be sure how a military action begins, not how it ends.

But let's take a case where the chances of rescue are faint or even nonexistent. Suppose the terrorists have not merely seized hostages but have hidden them? Perhaps the most celebrated case is the kidnapping of Italy's former Prime Minister Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades. Italy refused to capitulate and Aldo Moro was murdered. As tragic and as painful as the decision was, it was the right one, as was the firm Italian policy in the immediate aftermath of the Moro kidnapping. Unlike the weakness it later showed during the *Achille Lauro* affair, the Italian government mounted a vigorous effort to hunt down the Red Brigades and to improve the effectiveness of its security forces.

(By the time of the next major kidnapping, that of General James Dozier, it was able to apprehend the terrorists and liberate their hostage.) Whether or not such rescue is possible, governments must persist in refusing to capitulate. This is both a moral obligation to other potential hostages and, in the long view, the only pragmatic posture.

Once governments accept this principle, they can deal with other difficult cases. For example, what if the hostages are family members of government leaders? Terrorists sometimes target such relatives, betting that natural human feelings will override conviction. The personal agony notwithstanding, a leader placed in such a predicament should either refuse to give in or, what is kinder, delegate responsibility for making decisions in this matter to someone else.

Perhaps the most complicated case of hostage-taking is that in which the terrorists find refuge in the territory of a hostile country. Short of declaring war, what can be done? It is often difficult, though by no means impossible, to launch a limited military operation to rescue the hostages. In any case, the principle remains the same—refusal to yield, and the threat of intervention or retaliation. Retaliation can take several forms (against the terrorists themselves and the governments that shelter them). The main point to recognize is that both the terrorists and the government that shelters them must believe that they will eventually be punished (preferably sooner rather than later). Such a posture may not deliver the terrorists to justice, but at a minimum, it can secure the release of the hostages without any capitulation. This is essentially what produced the resolution of the hijacking of the Kuwaiti plane to Iran (1984) and the TWA hijacking (1985). When the *Achille Lauro* was seized by terrorists (1985), no government was willing to harbor the ship or the terrorists during the incident, because of a growing concern over some form of American retribution or sanction. The more terrorists and governments believe that they will be punished for taking hostages, the less likely it is that they will seize or accept them.

What is true of hostage-taking is true of other forms of terrorism. Whether it is hit-and-run killings or random bombings,

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the terrorist *always* considers, and fears, a forceful response from his victims. To the extent that he believes that he will be tracked down and punished for his actions, he will curb them. Deterrence works on terrorists just as it does on anyone else.

The cycle-of-violence argument is not only morally wrong; it flies in the face of actual experience. The terrorists may at first respond to a government's policy of firmness with an acceleration of terrorism, but they usually cannot withstand a sustained and resolute policy of resistance and active pursuit. Retaliation and preemption against terrorism are thus acts of self-defense.

Denying the necessity for such self-defense, and blurring the moral basis for it, is dangerous. It undermines a basic principle on which government authority is based. When a government shows weakness toward terrorists, citizens will demand action. If the government does not provide it, segments of the public might well turn to vigilantism and political extremism. Again, a government's first obligation is to protect its citizens. Confusion or vacillation, offered either glibly or high-mindedly, fool no one, least of all the terrorists.

But no policy, however clearly defined, will be worth much without the means and the resolve to carry it out. From everything that has been said so far in this book, one point emerges as central: International terrorism as we know it would simply not be possible without the collaboration of governments which have used terrorism to wage hidden war against their adversaries, especially the West.

These governments have not only supplied terrorists with the means to commit their crimes; they have also provided them with the all-important and indispensable assistance of safe passage and sanctuary. For the distinguishing feature of international terrorism is the perpetration of terrorist attacks across national frontiers. The terrorist must be *launched* from somewhere and he must *go* somewhere after his crimes. For example, in the aftermath of the *Achille Lauro* piracy, Abul Abbas, the mastermind of the operation, skittered from Egypt to Italy to Yugoslavia to Iraq to South Yemen, where he finally found his most suitable haven. Without the collusion or acquiescence of all these governments, he would have been caught and brought

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to trial. The support of friendly regimes, and the passivity of others, is the crucial assumption under which international terrorism operates.

Governments are not only at the root of the problem (the *internationalization* of terror) but are also the key to its solution. For states are no less susceptible than the terrorists they support to a sober calculation of costs and benefits. The very reason they rely on terrorists is to be able to wage war without the risks that war entails. As long as they are successful in denying complicity or involvement, they will easily escape retribution. But once their support of terror is revealed in such a way that the victims can no longer pretend to accept their denials, the rules of the game can change dramatically.

Once this is understood, the democracies can begin to act effectively in three broad areas against offending states.

First, there are political pressures that can be brought to bear. These could range from international condemnation to cutting off diplomatic relations (as the United States and Britain did in the case of Libya). Political pressures are important for several reasons. They signal to the terrorist state that the victim is not only unwilling to be compliant but is prepared to fully expose the offender to the light of public opinion. This could force other states to take a position against the offender, or at least to curb their support for it. Since many states sponsoring terrorism depend on the ability to deny complicity in terrorist crimes, this is not a minor threat. In the case of a severance of diplomatic relations there is an added penalty, the shutting down of embassies. The critical role of embassies, and the abuse of diplomatic privileges and immunities in general, in facilitating international terrorism has not been adequately appreciated. Terrorists simply cannot sustain a concerted campaign of attacks in most Western countries without sanctuary or inviolable means of passing funds, arms, and intelligence. Without embassies, the effectiveness of terrorism in the West would be sharply diminished. Imagine if the amateurish terrorists who kidnapped Patty Hearst could have fallen back on a network of diplomatic missions throughout the United States.

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Libya, South Yemen, and other Middle Eastern states, as well as Soviet Bloc embassies, have turned parts of Western Europe into a veritable playground of terrorists. Weapons, passports, money, safe houses, indeed the full gamut of support, have been made available to terrorists by people hiding behind the designation diplomat and the protection offered by diplomatic immunity. Sometimes, as in the Libyan embassy shooting in London, they do away with the diplomatic masquerade altogether. When irrefutable proof links particular embassies to terrorism, they should be shut down. Offending states will be denied their fortresses of terror in our midst.

The second broad area in which the West can work against states which engage in terrorism is economic pressure. Most of these countries desperately need Western goods, weapons, or credit. There are certain sophisticated products, including advanced weapons, that only the West can supply. The combined purchasing power of the democracies is enormous. If the West used but a fraction of its formidable economic clout, it could cause regimes supporting terrorism to rethink some of their activities. Economic pressure could be a combination of boycott and embargo. For example, in the case of Libya, a prime offender, an effective policy would be: Don't buy and don't sell. Don't buy Libya's oil, don't sell it Western technology. Even a partial boycott and embargo has the effect, because of the need to go through intermediaries and brokers, of raising costs significantly. Of course, this often also has an effect on the countries which undertake these measures, and they must be prepared to shoulder such a burden. The United States, for example, has willingly forfeited hundreds of millions of dollars of trade with Libya in order to send an unmistakable message to that regime. Unlike the more difficult task of taking on a cartel, however, this kind of economic pressure isolates individual governments.

In addition to trade measures, there is another potent sanction that can be readily applied. It, too, has the virtue of not exacting a significant price from the West—the denial of landing rights to the commercial planes of terrorist states. Such states do not care if their planes can land in Moscow. What really counts is that

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their planes have the right to land in London, Paris, and New York. But if they use those planes to ferry terrorists (or their embassies to shield them, or their intelligence services to assist them), these states must know that their planes will not be able to land in the principal capitals of the West. The same could apply to docking rights for the ships of offending states.

May nations lawfully impose sanctions on other nations? They certainly may under any standard of international law, including the United Nations Charter. The fact that there have been repeated attempts in the UN to abuse this measure by applying it against innocent states does not vitiate the principle of sanctions itself. A resort to *mandatory* sanctions is a problematic concept, even though it was incorporated in the UN Charter for the best of intentions. Much preferable is the application of sanctions by a voluntary association of states.

Even without sanctions, the mere *withdrawal* of economic aid or other benefits that would otherwise accrue to governments which promote terrorism can have a sobering effect on them. Iraq, for example, made a conscious effort to curb some of the more egregious acts of terrorism it promoted in order to get itself removed from the State Department's list of nations supporting terrorism (though, as the provision of an Iraqi diplomatic passport and safe haven to the mastermind of the *Achille Lauro* piracy shows, this is by no means a rigorous Iraqi policy). Obviously, political and economic pressures demand a degree of unity among the Western countries. The ability to act in concert is paramount, an issue I will return to.

The third area of response by the West is, necessarily, military action. This cannot be ruled out, nor should we be bashful about discussing it. When we talk about using military force, we must first consider it in a unilateral context, that is, *one* state taking action against terrorists or a state that shelters them. Obviously, if a terrorist action occurs on a government's own soil, it will take action to foil the terrorists, whether during an actual incident (such as a hostage-taking) or on an ongoing basis. There is no question that a state has the right to act; the only question that is raised, and regrettably it is raised only in the West, is

the problem of protecting Britain, West Germany, possible to combat terrorism, infringements on individual liberties, and the courts legal procedures. The legislatures to enact special measures. They have track down terrorists, minimal application of to fighting terrorism in the soldier's; terrorism organized crime; the political

But what about a terrorist installations abroad such Here the authorities fail by definition, are always ernment. That is so even or in the brief periods or a plane's registry is, cation outside national resolve the question of hijacking, piracy, or other securing the release of the soil (or ship, or plane) the such governments would ists, i.e., a refusal to yield governments should be part, the refusal to yield leading countries of the ment for failing to do so

But suppose a government forcibly end a hostage operation broken down. At that jurisdiction over the plane, or ship) are held host country refuses to

the problem of protecting civil liberties. Yet the experiences of Britain, West Germany, Israel, and Italy show that it is perfectly possible to combat terrorism effectively without any significant infringements on individual rights. The police, the security services, and the courts have done so by and large using existing legal procedures. The authorities have on occasion asked their legislatures to enact special, usually temporary and limited, legal measures. They have also created specialized military units to track down terrorists, though, as I have noted, these stress the minimal application of force. On the domestic level the approach to fighting terrorism in the democracies is the policeman's, not the soldier's; terrorism is basically treated as a variant of organized crime; the political trappings of terrorism are irrelevant.

But what about a terrorist attack on a country's citizens or installations abroad such as embassies, businesses, or airlines? Here the authorities face a stiffer problem. For the terrorists, by definition, are always under the jurisdiction of another government. That is so even in the case of piracy on the high seas or in the brief periods when a hijacked aircraft is aloft (a ship's or a plane's registry is, in the legal sense, its national identification outside national jurisdictions). I propose a simple way to resolve the question of conflicting jurisdictions: In the case of a hijacking, piracy, or other hostage-taking, the responsibility of securing the release of the hostages is the government's on whose soil (or ship, or plane) the incident takes place. One would hope such governments would adopt a firm policy against the terrorists, i.e., a refusal to yield and a readiness to apply force. Such governments should be held to this standard, at least to the first part, the refusal to yield. It is well within the means of the leading countries of the West to powerfully censure a government for failing to do so.

But suppose a government cannot or will not undertake to forcibly end a hostage crisis when the tactical negotiations have broken down. At that moment it forfeits a certain measure of jurisdiction over the event. The country whose nationals (or plane, or ship) are held hostage has the right to act when the host country refuses to do so. Take the case of Entebbe. Uganda

had an obligation to intervene and end the hijacking. When it refused to do so (or, as was in fact the case, when it collaborated with the terrorists), the right to act automatically passed to Israel and to France (most of the passengers were Israeli; the airplane was French). Since France was not considering any military move (although it helped in gathering intelligence), Israel had a perfect right to take action.

This is at odds with a widely held view that national sovereignty is absolute and cannot be violated. But of course it is not absolute. Countries do not have the right to do *anything* within their borders. They risk the intervention of other states if they fail to live up to their *international* (and sometimes, in the case of intolerable human rights violations or wholesale murder, their *domestic*) obligations. Once a government agrees to receive a hijacked plane or ship, it is imposing upon itself an obligation to end the crisis without capitulation.

But what if the government has not yet developed the military competence to cope with a hostage crisis? Although this is no longer the case practically anywhere in the West, the question is worth considering. Sovereignty does not in any way preclude a government from asking another government to assist in or carry out a rescue operation, as, for example, the Somalis did when they requested the intervention of West Germany's anti-terrorist unit in the Mogadishu incident, or as other governments have done in several crises by inviting the British SAS unit to advise and assist them. In most cases of international hostage-taking, therefore, even weak or hesitant governments have a choice. Bluntly put, they either do it themselves or let someone else do it. Most of the time the real question is not one of means but of courage.

It is precisely in terrorist crises of this type that military cooperation between states could prove especially useful. By definition, ad hoc arrangements are flawed. They risk confusion, poor coordination between units of different countries, and the inevitable competition over who does what. A good way of thinking about this problem is to inquire what would happen to Western Europe in the event of a sudden Warsaw Pact onslaught—without NATO. The purpose of NATO is a common defense

through two near *command*. In addition, command is less important than making that link between the value of coordinated forces to address the next hostage crisis. Forces must be trained together, for air and transport, and for exchange techniques.

Obviously, those of each country work for themselves. Even with shared resources. And yet there is on this shared information a gathering place among states outside NATO and has helped to expand and formalize

International terrorism that vast geographical retaliation. But in South America, Europe gird the globe. Europe, America, when at in 1979, could have Israel or, possibly, deprive terrorists immunity which shared military loyalty as a deterrent. It terrorism. The definition would cement assumptions of the other way around broad NATO-like

through two means, *coordination* of disparate forces and unified *command*. In addressing the problem of terrorism, unified command is less important. (The political reality of the West does not make that likely.) But the concept of common defense and the value of coordination are equally pertinent to the worldwide fight against international terrorism. Rather than wait, say, for the next hostage crisis, governments could prepare plans and forces to address future emergencies. They could, for example, train together, familiarize themselves with each other's bases and transport, agree on military communications methods, and exchange techniques.

Obviously, those exchanges will not be complete. The military of each country will understandably keep certain things to themselves. Even within NATO, for example, not all intelligence is shared. And yet the pooling of intelligence, and decisions based on this shared intelligence, has tremendous value. Such cooperation in gathering intelligence against terrorists is already taking place among many of the democracies, including several states outside NATO. It has prevented countless terrorist attacks and has helped foil many others. What I am proposing is to expand and formalize this cooperation.

International terrorists are emboldened when they believe that vast geographic distances protect them from any possible retaliation. But among them, the democracies of North and South America, Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia could gird the globe. Even a cursory glance at the map tells us that America, when attempting the rescue of the hostages in Tehran in 1979, could have been assisted greatly by cooperation with Israel or, possibly, Turkey. Institutionalized cooperation could deprive terrorists and terrorist states of the assurance of military immunity which they have too often enjoyed. But it is not only shared military logistics, even of a few countries, that would act as a deterrent. It is the creation of a *common doctrine* against terrorism. The development and refinement of tactical cooperation would cement the common resolve and the common assumptions of the West in this battle. It should of course work the other way around—the Western countries should create a broad NATO-like structure, and then work out the details. But

it does not. The West is unlikely to unify overnight. What is entirely feasible, however, is for the United States to begin, with two or three or possibly more countries, such an anti-terrorist alliance. Others would soon join.

How fast that happens depends on the interaction between the terrorist challenge and the Western response. Terrorism follows an inexorable, built-in escalation. To be effective, it must continually horrify and stupefy. Yet once we have become accustomed to a particular level of violence, a new outrage is required to shock our sensibilities. It used to be enough for terrorists to hijack a plane to attract international attention; next it became necessary to kill a few hostages; in the future, more violence will be required. Unchallenged, terrorism is thus likely to grow. It may achieve dimensions, in violence and in threats to the international order, which we have not yet encountered.

But equally, these new outrages are likely to induce, and may have already begun to induce, the very responses necessary to galvanize the West. For beyond a certain level of violence, the public demand for resolute action against terrorists becomes too strong to be ignored even by the most timid governments. Western governments that will lag too far behind this public sentiment will be open to sharp attack from abroad and, more important, from domestic critics and adversaries. They will come under heavy pressure to alter their policies and be more receptive to international initiatives. The escalation of terrorism thus produces the seeds of its own demise. Still, even with the likely accumulation of pressures, the actual start of an effective international campaign against terrorism is up to a *decision* of the victims, to the summoning of their collective will.

Terrorists and the states that support them are serious adversaries. They are devious, ruthless, and persistent. But I do not believe that I am in any way underestimating the threat they pose when I say that in fighting them the major problem confronting the West is its own disunity. For too long terrorists have succeeded in the strategy of divide and conquer. Governments have cut separate deals with terrorists, allowing them, for example, freedom of movement in exchange for promises of

immunity. But terrorism is a notion of law and treaty. Western countries must deal with terrorism as possible with terrorism. The world encourages terrorism as an indivisible problem, and terrorism is indivisible as well.

This means that you understand," terrorism will be opposing it when direct action is the foundation of lawful order. It thrives on weakness. It takes note of periodic failures. It applies for the Red Brotherhood and its dealings with America.

What is required is a change in attitudes toward terrorism. Rhetorical opposition to terrorism. United Nations resolutions. In practice they fall into one of three categories: they actually oppose terrorists; they support terrorists; but they are neutrals. They either act to oppose it. A proper account each of these types.

I have already discussed states that support terrorism. They need to do away with their force a dichotomy. Governments that if they acquiesce in supporting it. For example, offering terrorists (such as offered Lauro) should be considered tantamount to offering a territory in time of war. A moral posture in wartime. This case. Similarly, accepting the concomitant

immunity. But terrorists, who by their very nature ridicule the notion of law and treaties, *always* violate their agreements. The Western countries must face up to a simple truth: *No* deals are possible with terrorism. The success of terrorism in one part of the world encourages terrorists everywhere. Terrorism is an indivisible problem, and the fight against terrorism must be indivisible as well.

This means that you cannot condone or accept, or even "understand," terrorism when directed against someone else while opposing it when directed against yourself. Terrorism threatens the foundation of lawful and humane existence everywhere. And it thrives on weakness. It is naïve to think that the IRA does not take note of periodic British courtings of the PLO. The same applies for the Red Brigades vis-à-vis the Italian government and its dealings with Arab terrorists, and so on.

What is required is a basic realignment of international attitudes toward terrorism. While all governments uniformly offer rhetorical opposition to terrorism, including the adoption of a United Nations resolution condemning terrorism in 1985, in practice they fall into one of three categories: A few governments actually *oppose* terrorism, and do so consistently; others actively *support* terrorists; but most fall into a third broad category, the *neutrals*. They either acquiesce in terrorism or refuse outright to oppose it. A proper policy toward terrorism must take into account each of these types of states.

I have already discussed measures that can be taken against states that support terrorism. But equally fundamental is the need to do away with the middle ground of neutrality. We must force a dichotomy. Governments must be made to understand that if they acquiesce in terrorism they are in practice supporting it. For example, the provision of safe passage to foreign terrorists (such as offered by Egypt to the hijackers of the *Achille Lauro*) should be considered an act of simple collusion. It is tantamount to offering a foreign army passage through your territory in time of war. The claim of neutrality, a problematic moral posture in wartime anyway, breaks down completely in this case. Similarly, accepting a hijacked airplane or ship without accepting the concomitant responsibility of preventing the

escape of the terrorists is also an act of collusion; as is the refusal to extradite or punish terrorists, or, in many instances, to rescue hostages.

The provision of sanctuary for terrorists is also an act of collusion. I am not talking about taking in refugees (such as France did after the Spanish Civil War). I am talking about letting armed bands wage terrorist war from one's borders against a neighboring state. This is *not* one of the privileges of sovereignty. It is a clear act of aggression. It can and should be treated as such by the attacked state, which has every right to take action against the terrorists or the government that shelters them. It may do so either in hot pursuit, in retaliation, or when faced with a mounting threat, in preemptive action. Just as terrorists must be deprived of the civilian shield afforded by the absolute inhibition against civilian casualties, they must be deprived of the political sanctuary afforded by an absolutist definition of sovereignty. The right of self-defense takes precedence over the claim of territorial sovereignty.

Thus, Morocco's action against the terrorists launched from Algeria is justified. As was Oman's action (assisted by the British) against terrorists launched from South Yemen in the 1970s. Nor is this type of action limited to contiguous borders. Israel's strike against the PLO headquarters in Tunisia in 1985 was based on exactly the same principle.

When a state deliberately employs terrorists, the distinction between striking back at the terrorists themselves or at the governments that shelter them is one of practical consideration, not of principle. There is certainly no moral imperative to *confine* the retaliation to the actual perpetrators; the terrorists, after all, are merely servants of the government. In war, limiting a counterattack to exactly those soldiers who fired at you would be the height of folly. For one thing, military units change their positions frequently, especially after they launch an attack (such as a bombardment or an armed foray) to avoid a counterstrike. No military commander in his right mind would accept the notion that unless he can locate the exact artillery battery, the exact commando base from which an attack was launched, he may not

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Yet this is precisely the notion that the governments sponsoring terrorism are trying to foist, not without success, on the West. (Part of that success may be attributed to a willingness by some to seize this argument as a pretext for avoiding action.) If a government has harbored, trained, and launched terrorists, it becomes the legitimate object of a military response.

The public discussion on this matter typically falls into a legalistic pitfall. We are told we cannot prove conclusively such involvement with terrorists. This very often is simply not true. Western governments already possess ample intelligence evidence (such as satellite photos of training camps, interception of communications, reports from agents in the field) of continuous support for terrorists from certain governments. Such a record of complicity is more than strong enough to morally justify punitive action against these criminal states. There are plenty of military or strategic targets that can be struck to inflict sharp damage, while avoiding excessive, if any, civilian casualties.

Two objections are frequently raised. First, the prospect of reprisals. Qaddafi, for example, who harbored Abu Nidal prior to his attacks on Americans and others in European airports in 1985, promised to retaliate if the United States took any action against him. (He went so far as to promise to set the Mediterranean ablaze and even to precipitate global war.) Such bluster should be viewed realistically. It is more than mere grandstanding; it emanates from fear. It also at times may be partly realized. We should recognize a sober truth: A successful war on terrorism will involve a succession of blows and counterblows, and some unavoidable casualties along the way. What is required is a commitment to a *continuous* campaign against its sponsors, not just erratic responses to individual terrorist acts. There are no one-shot solutions. A forceful response against aggression may very well elicit reprisals initially. But over the long run, it is the only way to make governments stop launching terrorist killers. They need to know, they *must* know, that the West will not sit back and take it.



The second objection raised against military action against states sponsoring terrorism is that it will induce political consequences unfavorable to the West, such as, in the Middle East, the weakening or collapse of friendly regimes. The point is often lost that these very regimes, notwithstanding their public pronouncements, would secretly welcome such action; after all, they too are frequent victims of the terrorist war. Still, what about unfavorable political developments? In many regions of the world, especially the Middle East, anger precedes respect. There may be a lashing out at Western or pro-Western targets following a military action, but there is a concomitant, if grudging, assessment of new limits. A posture of weakness, a repeated refusal to confront and punish the regimes behind the terrorists, not only invites further aggression but ultimately *weakens* the West's position, and consequently the position of its allies, in these regions and throughout the world.

But what if a state is *coerced* by terrorists to offer its territory for attacks? That is, in fact, what happened to Lebanon when the PLO effectively turned it into a terrorist base against Israel. The answer is quite clear. Sovereignty imposes not only the right but the obligation to control one's territory. This is, in fact, what Hussein had to do in Jordan in September 1970, when he was in danger of losing control of the country to the PLO. If he had not defeated the PLO, Israel would have had to do so. In contrast, when Lebanon could not discharge its obligation in 1982, Israel had every right to forcibly intervene to remove the PLO bases in Lebanon.

Going after individual terrorists in countries that refuse to arrest or extradite them is merely a specific application of this principle. The American interception of the Egyptian plane carrying the PLO terrorists who held Americans hostage and killed one of them was thus both necessary and just. The claim that this was a violation of Egypt's sovereignty and civil aviation rights is nonsense. Such rights are not accorded to shield killers on the run. Embassies, airplanes, ships, and sovereign territory are not endowed with any special dispensation to be used for such purposes. And when they are abused, they automatically forfeit

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any immunities they would normally have. Terrorists and their backers would have us believe that sovereignty and diplomatic immunity are the modern equivalents of the horns of the altar in the Bible. By grasping at them, they think they will be given immunity after the most terrible crimes. Like Solomon, we should simply refuse to obey.

But even lesser forms of tolerating terrorism, such as a laxity or a refusal to maintain proper security safeguards in airports, should be considered a tacit form of collusion with terrorists. It allows them to penetrate the air routes and attack civilians from all countries. Governments that do not uphold their security obligations should be told that their airports will be cut off from the rest of the international aviation system until they improve security.

The broad assortment of states who engage in all, or even some, of these "neutral" acts must be told that they, too, will be held up to a higher standard. If they repeatedly, or as a matter of policy, facilitate the operations of terrorists, they risk being subjected to some or all of the sanctions that outright supporters of terrorists invite upon themselves.

Such a policy of firmness will make it clear that individual terrorists will be pursued, caught, and punished; that the organizations that launch them will be subject to attack; that the governments that shelter them will face political, economic, and, if necessary, military retaliation; that other governments that collude less brazenly will also be held accountable.

What, then, has inhibited the widespread adoption of this policy by the West? I believe it is the persistent effects of two vices. One is greed, or a heedless promotion of economic self-interest, whatever the political or moral consequences. The other is political cowardice, which means sitting it out while your ally is attacked, or responds to an attack, so as not to invoke the wrath of the terrorists. Both tendencies influenced the unfavorable response to the American initiative for sanctions against Libya in 1986 following the attacks on the Rome and Vienna airports. Neither cowardice nor greed will easily disappear. If,

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however, the United States persists in its firm stance, over time a common policy for the West would eventually emerge, pressuring, even shaming, Western states into compliance.

But there is a third, even more pernicious impediment that needs to be overcome: a confusion that is both moral and intellectual. It stems from our nature as citizens of political societies. We believe in the capacity of politics to mitigate, and resolve, all conflict. We automatically tend to endow an adversary with the same assumptions. These could not be more misplaced than in the case of terrorists, who use political language to destroy the concept of politics altogether. And even when we catch a glimpse of this truth, we fail to grasp its essence. For the West is in awe of fanaticism. It is confused before a putative willingness to die for a cause, believing that such readiness must be based on a cause that is at least partially just. Even a cursory reading of history tells us how dangerous a notion that is.

But how do we form our opinions of the present? The West depends in large measure on its media. This is why terrorists, in their war against the West, devote so much of their strategy and their effort to capturing the Western press and using it for their own purposes. But this need not be a one-way street. Terrorism's unique reliance on the press and television of the democracies gives them tremendous power to amplify terrorism's message *or to snuff it out*. It has been said, correctly, that the Western media have a penchant to legitimize terrorists by treating them as respectable political adversaries and their claims as worthy of serious consideration. But the media's capacity to do such damage is the mirror image of their capacity to do good. They can and should refuse to broadcast interviews with terrorists uncritically. They can and should expose the sham of terrorist claims. They can and should expose their grisly acts for what they are. Should? Some say we cannot use that word in relation to a free press. I fail to see why citizens cannot scrutinize and criticize journalists. Scrutiny is not censorship. What the public has a right to demand of journalists is the same scrupulousness and professionalism, no more and no less, that they would show in the case of covering organized crime and its bosses. The proven power of a thorough press investigation to

expose and repudiate opposition against terrorism's most potent weapon against

This is the responsibility to the responsible terminated leadership—great leadership? It can have the capacity to credibly threaten to shed their new precisely in this slow pace. America By the middle of the middle 1980s The more America and their backers join the effort to the entire world resolve.

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expose and repudiate such corruption—indeed, to galvanize public opposition against it—is exactly the power that can be harnessed against terrorism. A thoughtful press can turn terrorism's greatest weapon against the terrorists themselves.

This is the responsibility of the West's press. It is second only to the responsibility of its political leadership. For only a determined leadership can make the West overcome its three impediments—greed, cowardice, and moral confusion. Which leadership? It can only come from the United States, which alone has the capacity to align the West in this matter, alone can credibly threaten the offenders, and alone can impel the neutrals to shed their neutrality. The United States appears to be moving precisely in this direction, albeit sometimes at a maddeningly slow pace. America encountered terrorism in the middle 1960s. By the middle 1970s, it realized it was its principal target. By the middle 1980s, it began thinking seriously about taking action. The more America resorts to action, such as punishing terrorists and their backers, the greater the number of states which will join the effort to combat terrorism. Allies and adversaries alike, the entire world in fact, are waiting to see the depth of American resolve.

The West can win the war against terrorism, and fairly rapidly. It can expose its duplicity and punish its perpetrators and sponsors. But it must first win the war against its own inner weakness. That will require courage. We shall need at least three types of it.

First, statesmen and government leaders must have the political courage to present the truth, however unpleasant, to their people. They must be prepared to make difficult decisions, to take measures that may involve great risks, that may even end in failure and subject them to public criticism.

Second, the soldiers who may actually be called upon to combat terrorists will need to show military courage. They are usually members of special units created precisely for such tasks. It will be up to them to decide whether they can or cannot undertake a particular operation a government is considering. In the special units of the Israeli army, for example, no one has ever been simply *told* by the political leadership that he would have to

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accept a perilous assignment. The commanders of the unit were always *asked*: Is it possible? Do you think you can do it? And if they had said it could not be done, or even if they had expressed doubts, that would have been the end of the matter. The political leaders would have called the mission off. This was the case in Entebbe and in countless other actions that dealt stunning defeats to international terrorism.

But there is also a third kind of courage: the civic valor that must be shown by an entire people. All citizens in a democracy threatened by terrorism must see themselves, in a certain sense, as soldiers in a common battle. They must not pressure their government to capitulate or to surrender to terrorism. This is especially true of public pressure on government by families of hostages. Such pressure can only be called a dereliction of civic duty. If we seriously want to win the war against terrorism, people must be prepared to endure sacrifice and even, should there be the loss of loved ones, immeasurable pain.

Terrorism is a phenomenon which tries to evoke one feeling: fear. It is understandable that the one virtue most necessary to defeat terrorism is therefore the antithesis of fear: courage.

Courage, said the Romans, is not the only virtue, but it is the single virtue without which all the others are meaningless.

The terrorist challenge must be answered. The choice is between a free society based on law and compassion and a rampant barbarism in the service of brute force and tyranny. Confusion and vacillation facilitated the rise of terrorism. Clarity and courage will ensure its defeat.

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## Defining Terrorism

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU

THE WORLD periodically experiences fresh, and well-publicized, spasms of terrorism. For all the millions of words, the hundreds of hours of television time, the legions of experts, there is surprisingly little clarity. What is terrorism in the first place? Is it not really a term that we use to condemn acts of violence with which we happen to disagree? Are these acts isolated incidents, or are they somehow related to one another? Do they pose a fundamental threat to our society, or are they merely sensational news stories? Are they "senseless" killings, or do they have a purpose? Will they intensify or recede? Above all, what can we do about them; in fact, can *anything* be done?

In trying to understand international terrorism, we must first recognize that it is not a sporadic phenomenon born of social misery and frustration. It is rooted in the political ambitions and designs of expansionist states and the groups that serve them. Without the support of such states, *international* terrorism would be impossible. Compared to these governmental forces, the individual terrorists shrink into insignificance; whatever their motives, they could find no effective expression and their actions would have no lasting impact. The attempts to explain away terrorist outrages as the result of the "desperation" of individuals or groups are not only based on a simplistic fallacy; they neatly echo the terrorists' own assertions, which are meant to legitimize their criminal actions and divert public attention from the real

forces behind terrorism. Such manipulation of public opinion is, in fact, central to the terrorist strategy. For this purpose, access to the media, indeed their domination, is indispensable.

And the media, as many journalists realize, have unwittingly played into the terrorists' hands. Newsmen, and their audiences, are mesmerized by the spectacle of it all. First the terrorists seize our attention by committing a brutal act. Only then does the real performance begin: the communiqués, the parading of dazed hostages before the cameras, the endless interviews in which the terrorists are respectfully asked to explain their demands and conditions and, more significantly, the *reasons* for their actions.

Slowly, imperceptibly, the initial horror recedes, and in its place comes a readiness to accept the terrorists' point of view. We in the West, after all, are accustomed to believe that there is always another "point of view" worth looking at, even when it comes to terrorists. Before we know it, the hijackers and killers have spokesmen and commentators of their own, and the terrorists have been transformed into merely another type of political activist, with a grievance that has to be "considered," even given equal time.

We are asked to shed our normal revulsion for murderous acts and accept the notion, endlessly repeated, that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." This is precisely what the terrorists would like us to believe. The ease with which they and their sympathizers succeed in imposing this false symmetry into our language is rooted in our failure to come to grips with the essence of terrorism. Most people, of course, instinctively recognize one distinct aspect of terrorism when they see it—violence directed against persons who have no connection with the alleged grievance the terrorist purports to remedy. When an Air India airplane is blown up in midair or when American passengers are "executed" in the Middle East, no one has any doubt that these are terrorist acts. What do the American passengers of TWA have to do with the Shiites? What do the Canadian passengers of Air India have to do with the Sikhs?

Obviously, anyone with an inkling of moral feeling would consider attacks on such targets outrageous. But not the terrorist.

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He chooses innocent victims precisely because they *are* innocent. By attacking them, he willfully breaks down the limits of acceptable conflict and broadens it to include anyone, especially victims chosen at random. By such actions, the terrorist tells the world that he will go to any lengths to achieve his purpose, which is to make governments cave in to his demands.

Yet some assert that any act of war resulting in civilian deaths is a kind of terrorism. An incident from World War II demonstrates the absurdity of this contention. In 1944 the RAF set out to bomb Gestapo headquarters in Copenhagen. The bombers, however, missed and instead hit a hospital, killing scores of children. This was a tragic accident of war. But in no sense can it be called terrorism. What distinguishes terrorism is the *willful and calculated* choice of innocents as targets. When terrorists machine-gun a passenger waiting area or set off bombs in a crowded shopping center, their victims are not accidents of war but the *very objects* of the terrorists' assault.

I am prepared, at the risk of belaboring the point, to offer a formal definition, the one adopted in Jerusalem in 1979: *Terrorism is the deliberate and systematic murder, maiming, and menacing of the innocent to inspire fear for political ends*. This distinction is no mere quibble, but lies at the heart of the problem. For without a clear understanding of terrorism, the problem cannot be tackled.

The word "deliberate" distinguishes terrorist victims from the accidental civilian casualties in every war; the word "systematic" indicates that terrorism is not an aberration but a methodical campaign of repeated outrages. The violation is the norm.

It is with the clear intention of blurring these distinctions that the terrorists habitually describe themselves as "guerrillas." And the media uncritically adopt their terminology. But guerrillas are not terrorists. They are irregular soldiers who wage war on regular military forces, not on civilians. (The term was first used by the Spaniards in 1810 for the makeshift units they formed to fight Napoleon's army.) Actually, guerrillas are the very opposite of terrorists. While they pit themselves against far-superior *combatants*, terrorists choose to attack weak and defenseless *civilians*: old men, women, children—anyone in fact *except* soldiers,



if they can avoid it. Civilians, then, are the key to the terrorists' strategy. They kill civilians, and more often than not, they hide behind them—hoping that the prospect of more innocent deaths will help them escape retribution.

This indeed is terrorism's most pernicious effect: it blurs the distinction between combatants and non-combatants, the central tenet of the laws of war. There are those who say that war is war, and that any attempt to define ethical limits to war is futile. But short of the rare and difficult case of total war, such as during the last world war, when the Allies took up the tactic of bombing German cities after the Nazis had begun the practice by bombing Dutch and British cities, most people would agree that there is a significant difference between waging war on armed combatants and attacking defenseless civilians. Without this distinction, the concept of war crimes loses any meaning. For if everything is permissible, why *not* gas innocent people or machine-gun schoolchildren?

It is here where the terrorist parts company with humanity. *He declares a total war on the society he attacks.* For him everyone is a legitimate target. A baby is fair game; he may, after all, grow up to be a soldier. So is the baby's mother; she gave birth to this future soldier. No one is spared, ordinary citizens and leaders alike. For in addition to random killing, terrorists often engage in assassinations of a society's leaders, as in the murder of Italian Premier Aldo Moro or the attempted assassination of the Pope. Assassination, in fact, is important to the genesis of modern terrorism, emerging from an older tradition that maintains that a society can be reshaped, or a creed cleansed, by eliminating its leaders or ruling class. But in the case of modern revolutionaries, it soon became apparent that they seldom bothered to define where such a class ends. It could extend from the ruler to his functionaries, to sympathizers and abettors, to class enemies and corrupters of the faith, to counterrevolutionaries and infidels—in short, to anyone. For the terrorist, assassination is the precursor of mass murder, and both constitute the principal weapons in his arsenal. Random or selective, the principle is always the same. The targets are innocent civilians whom no one, except the terrorist, would conceivably classify as combatants.

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Having defined all of society as a field of combat, the terrorist demands that his activity, which would ordinarily be viewed as gangsterism, be treated with the respect given to legitimate warfare. That is why he often takes on all the trappings of a soldier; that is why he issues "communiqués" instead of simple statements; and why he insists that his jailed accomplices, who are in fact dangerous criminals, be accorded the status of prisoners of war.

Thus, in its choice of targets and its demands for legitimacy, terrorism breaks down the pivotal distinctions that define the moral limits of war. It takes us back to the impulses of a savage era before society submitted to the rule of law. Therein lies the first and greatest danger it poses to our civilization.

Though terrorism as such is not new in history, or even in this century, today's terrorism radically differs from earlier forms of terrorism in its frequency and the extent of its violence; it now attacks the territory and nationals of nearly all the democracies. How did this situation come about? What are the forces behind it?

Terrorism began its rapid growth in the 1960s. It was sparked by the early successes of two groups of terrorists: the PLO, which introduced airline hijacking as an international weapon, and European radical factions which carried out increasingly bold bombings, kidnappings, and assassinations throughout the Continent. Terrorist groups, seemingly independent from one another, soon proliferated throughout Europe, Japan, North and South America, and the Middle East. But as the evidence piled up, the Arab PLO, the Iranian Mujahdeen, the Armenian ASALA, the German Baader-Meinhof gang, the Italian Red Brigades, the Japanese Red Army, and others were often found to be linked not only to one another but to the Soviet Union and radical Arab regimes as well. Only after the PLO's expulsion from Beirut did captured PLO documents reveal the pivotal role of its terrorist mini-state in Lebanon as a training center and launching ground for what had become a kind of terrorist international.

This collaboration between Marxist and Muslim radicals is not accidental. Modern terrorism has its roots in two movements that have assumed international prominence in the second half

of the twentieth century, communist totalitarianism and Islamic (and Arab) radicalism. These forces have given terrorism its ideological impetus and much of its material support. Both legitimize unbridled violence in the name of a higher cause, both are profoundly hostile to democracy, and both have found in terrorism an ideal weapon for waging war against it. And each has given rise to organizations which put these principles to work.

But these terrorist organizations would not have gotten very far had they not been actively supported by states that were built on the foundations of Marxism and radical Islam. Indeed, international terrorism is overwhelmingly an extension of warfare sustained and supported by these states. The Soviet Union, several of its Eastern European satellites, Cuba and North Korea on the one hand, and Middle Eastern states such as Libya, Iran, Syria, Iraq, and South Yemen on the other, have given terrorists weapons, training, and money. They have also provided sanctuary, safe passage, and safe houses, often using their embassies and diplomatic pouches for these purposes. But this assistance to terrorism is not limited to the operational plane. It is also given on the crucial political level, especially in the campaign to legitimize terrorism and to block international measures against it.

The typical stratagem at the United Nations, for example, has been to justify terrorism by calling it a struggle for national liberation. This is perverse enough in itself, because terrorism is always unjustifiable, regardless of its professed or real goals. But it is perverse in another way. For the real goals of terrorists are in practice related to their methods. History has repeatedly given us advance warning. Those who deliberately butcher women and children do not have liberation in mind. It is not only that the ends of terrorists do not justify the means they choose. It is that the choice of means indicates what the true ends are. Far from being fighters for freedom, terrorists are the forerunners of tyranny. It is instructive to note that the French Resistance did not resort to the systematic killing of German women and children, well within reach in occupied France. A few years later, in Algeria, the FLN showed no such restraint against the French occupation. France, of course, is today a democracy,

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Algeria merely another of the many despotisms where terrorists have come to power. Similarly, the PLO was established years *before* a single Israeli soldier stood in the area it now purportedly wants to liberate; the PLO's charter clearly states its goal: to liquidate Israel. Yet the slogan of national liberation, blithely uttered by the Soviet and Arab blocs and uncritically accepted by many in the West, has been remarkably successful in legitimizing terrorism and neutralizing opposition to it.

Without the support offered by the Soviet bloc and the Arab world, international terrorism would revert to its earlier, localized manifestations before the 1960s and would hardly dominate the global scene. To see what a difference state support makes, consider the political loyalties of today's better-known and successful terrorists. Virtually all are left-wing and Middle Eastern extremists. It is not that terrorists or other political affiliations do not exist. They do. A few groups of right-wing terrorists can be found, mostly in Latin America, some in Italy and France. Their hostility to democracy is just as adamant as that of their left-wing counterparts. Like them, they are offshoots (in this case, remnants) of totalitarianism, this time of the fascist variety that threatened democracy in the 1930s. But there the similarity ends. For unlike the left, their state sponsors are virtually nonexistent. Without governments to offer them intelligence, funds, embassies, and the like, their size and effectiveness are insignificant.

Why have states begun to resort to terrorism? Since the end of World War II and the dawn of the nuclear age, the waging of war has become increasingly risky. For a superpower like the Soviet Union, a direct confrontation with the West entails the unacceptable risks of atomic war. For smaller states, conventional war can also escalate into intolerable conflict, or outright defeat. Terrorism is part of the broader trend toward war by proxy. It permits regimes to engage in aggression while evading retaliation. Nasser, for example, established the PLO in Cairo in 1964 as a means of destabilizing Jordan, and, equally, for continuing his unsuccessful war against Israel.

Foreign governments do not necessarily *create* the domestic conflicts that provide the background to indigenous terrorism.

These can have many origins, such as ethnic, class, religious, ideological, sectarian, and irredentist clashes. But in nearly all instances, when a terrorist group survives and grows, it will sooner or later receive outside support. Terrorism is simply too tempting a weapon to be forsaken. When we see, therefore, an enduring campaign of terrorism in a country, it is not too far-fetched to suspect state involvement. I do not refer, of course, to internal state terror, a practice made infinitely more horrible in this century by the Russian and Chinese revolutions, and by Nazism. I mean the involvement of *foreign* governments in assisting terrorist groups to subvert or topple the home regime. Again, that is the distinguishing feature of terrorism in our time.

And as the number of attacks has increased tenfold in the last decade alone, a clear pattern has emerged. The targets of terrorism have been, more and more, Britain and Germany, Spain and Portugal, France and Italy, Israel and Japan, and, above all, the United States (whose nationals accounted for roughly a third of terrorism's victims since 1968)—in short, the West. The liberal democracies of Europe and North America, the handful of democracies in Asia, and their non-radical allies in the Middle East, Latin America, and the South Pacific, are everywhere under assault. A network of professional terrorists seeks to weaken and demoralize democratic societies by attacking their citizens, their leaders, their institutions, thereby disrupting their way of life and sapping their political will.

And it is a growing threat. Terrorist attacks now kill and injure not one or two, but hundreds at a time. Few can doubt that other, more lethal weapons would be employed. The spread of lawlessness and the blatant disregard of any constraints by governments are, as in the thirties, gradually becoming accepted norms again, and the consequences could be intolerable. By far the most disconcerting prospect would be acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by the principal terrorist states of the Middle East—Iran, Libya, and Syria. These regimes pose a much greater threat to their neighbors, and to the democratic world generally, than has yet been acknowledged.

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ethnic, class, religious, and political. But in nearly all cases, as it grows, it will become more and more. Terrorism is simply too common to see, therefore, an example. In any country, it is not too far from the truth to not refer, of course, to the infinitely more horrible examples of revolutions, and by the various governments in assembly to the home regime. The nature of terrorism in our

has increased tenfold in the last decade. The targets of terrorism include France and Germany, Spain and Italy, Japan, and, above all, the United States. For roughly a third of the century, the liberal democracies of the West. The liberal democracies, the handful of democracies in the Middle East, are everywhere under attack. The world seeks to weaken and destroy their citizens, their way of life, and their way of life.

They now kill and injure. Few can doubt that terrorism is being employed. The spread of terrorism by government constraints by government becoming accepted as a means to be intolerable. By far the most serious acquisition of weapons by the states of the Middle East pose a much greater threat to the world generally,

The democracies have by and large failed to meet the terrorist challenge. They have failed to recognize the far-reaching effects of unbridled terrorism will have on their security and have stood divided rather than united. They cannot afford to do so any longer.