

United States Department of State



PATTERNS OF GLOBAL TERRORISM

1989



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Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1989

Introduction

The year 1989 saw a steep decline in the number of terrorist acts committed worldwide—one of the sharpest yearly drops we have recorded since the advent of modern terrorism in 1968. The number of people killed or wounded by terrorists also fell significantly. This is good news. But terrorism remains a serious problem on the international agenda.

Despite the decreased level of activity, the citizens or property of 74 countries were attacked by terrorists last year. The attacks took place in 60 countries in every region of the globe. Terrorists have the capability to inflict massive casualties, as they did last September when they blew up a French airliner killing all 171 innocent persons aboard. The use of terrorism by new criminal and insurgent groups, such as the "extraditables" in Colombia, is cause for concern.

We cannot become complacent. Terrorism is an ongoing threat in today's world, and we must continue to oppose it vigorously.

US Counterterrorism Policy

The US Government has developed a comprehensive strategy to respond to the problem of international terrorism. The first element of our counterterrorism policy is that we do not make concessions of any kind to terrorists. We do not pay ransom, release convicted terrorists from prison, or change our policies to accommodate terrorist demands. Such actions would only lead to more terrorism. And we vigorously encourage other countries to be firm with terrorists, for a solid international front is essential to overall success.

The second element of our strategy is to make state sponsors of terrorism pay a price for their actions. This policy was most graphically demonstrated by the April 1986 bombing raids on terrorist support facilities in Libya. But there are also political, diplomatic and economic actions, public diplomacy, and sanctions—all peaceful measures that can be crafted to discourage states from persisting in their support of terrorism.

Third, the US Government has developed a program of action based on practical measures to bring terrorists to justice, to disrupt their operations, and to destroy their networks. These involve working with our friends and allies to identify, track, apprehend, prosecute, and punish terrorists by using the rule of law. They also include measures designed to protect our citizens abroad by strengthening security and research to develop equipment to prevent terrorist incidents.

The final element of our counterterrorism policy is the Department of State's Anti-Terrorism Training Assistance Program (ATA) which gives training in antiterrorism techniques to law enforcement officials around the world. Given our country's strong commitment to human rights, ATA promotes a thorough understanding of the importance of human rights in all aspects of law enforcement. More than 9,000 police and security personnel from 60 countries have participated in this program since its inception.

This strategy has made possible a number of successes. Individually they are modest, but collectively they do suggest that we are gaining ground. The margins between success and failure are thin; they depend greatly on the diligence and persistence of the individuals here and in friendly governments charged with responsibility for intelligence collection, law enforcement, and diplomatic efforts directed against terrorism.

Legislative Requirements

This report is submitted in compliance with Section 140 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1988/89 [P.L. 100-204], which requires the Department of State to provide Congress a full and complete annual report on terrorism for those countries and groups meeting the criteria of Section (a) (1) and (2) of the Act.

As required by legislation, the report includes detailed assessments of foreign countries where significant terrorist acts occurred, and countries about which Congress was notified during the preceding five years pursuant to Section 6 [j] of the Export Administration Act of 1979 (the so-called terrorism list countries that have repeatedly provided support for international terrorism). In addition, the report includes all

relevant information about the previous year's activities of individuals, terrorist groups, or umbrella groups under which such terrorist groups fall, known to be responsible for the kidnaping or death of any American citizen during the preceding five years, and groups known to be financed by "terrorism list" countries.

Definitions

No one definition of terrorism has gained universal acceptance. For the purposes of this report, however, we have chosen the definition commonly used by the US Government for the past 21 years, which also is widely accepted and one which we have used in previous reports.

Accordingly, we consider "terrorism" to be premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine state agents, usually intended to influence an audience. "International terrorism" is terrorism involving the citizens or territory of more than one country.

Note

Adverse mention in this report of individual members of any political, social, ethnic, religious, or national group is not meant to imply that all members of that group are terrorists. Indeed, terrorists represent a small minority of dedicated, often fanatical, individuals in most such groups. It is that small group—and their actions—that is the subject of this report.

Ambassador Morris D. Eusby
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eastern border and into Mozambique to combat RENAMO. Because of RENAMO atrocities, the authorities have resettled local residents into protected villages away from the affected border areas.

There were three noteworthy court cases involving terrorism in 1989. South African agent Charles Beahan was convicted of infiltrating Zimbabwe from Botswana as part of the abortive June 1988 attempt to free six suspected South African agents who were in prison awaiting trial. Three alleged South African agents sentenced to death for their participation in the 1986 bombing of ANC targets in Harare are appealing their sentences. A Zimbabwean national who was involved in a plot to murder ANC members received an 18-year prison sentence.

State-Sponsored Terrorism

Involvement in terrorism by sovereign states, although in decline and better concealed since 1987, continues to be a serious problem. In its various forms — direct involvement, instigation and encouragement, support to terrorist groups through provision of safehaven, financial resources, arms, technical expertise, and documentation — state sponsorship makes a significant contribution to international terrorism. Some states, although not direct sponsors of terrorist organizations, contribute to the groups' capabilities by giving them unimpeded transit, permitting them to engage in commercial enterprises, allowing groups to recruit members, and carry out other support activities. Support in its various forms enhances the capabilities of a variety of groups with differing political objectives: radical Shia groups throughout Western Europe, the Middle East, and Africa; Latin American insurgents; European separatists; radical and fundamentalist Palestinians; and the JRA.

The total incidents of state-sponsored terrorism declined steeply in 1989, primarily because the Afghan regime stood down from its terrorist campaign to destabilize Pakistan. We detected 18 incidents of terrorism attributable to Afghanistan, down from 118 in 1988. Iran was the most active state sponsor in 1989, backing 28 attacks. The majority of these were connected with Ayatollah Khomeini's death threat against *The Satanic Verses* author Salman Rushdie and retaliatory attacks against Saudi Arabia for Riyadh's execution of 16 Kuwaiti Shias convicted of bombings during the 1989 hajj. In addition,

three incidents involved the assassination of Iranian dissidents. We have not detected Syrian and Libyan direct sponsorship of international terrorist actions in 1989, although they continue to provide safehaven and other support to terrorist organizations.

North Korea continued to provide funding and training for terrorists. The Soviet Union and several East European governments continued to provide military and economic support to several radical regimes involved in terrorism, while some East European governments provided weapons, explosives, and other types of support indirectly to groups that have conducted terrorist operations in the past. Such support may stop following the overthrow of many of these regimes and their replacement with more open governments. Cuba and Nicaragua provided weapons, training, and safehaven, mostly to Latin American groups that employ terrorism. South Yemen continued to be a safehaven for radical Palestinian groups. South Africa attacked ANC and other dissidents outside its borders, although embarrassing public revelations about police "death squads," a recent change in government, and current political developments in the region may stem these activities.

The United States has maintained its formal designation of six countries as state supporters of terrorism — Cuba; Iran; Libya; North Korea; South Yemen; and Syria. This list is maintained pursuant to Section 6 (j) of the Export Administration Act of 1979, which imposes certain trading restrictions on countries determined by the Secretary of State to have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism. The list is provided annually to Congress, although countries can be added or deleted at any time when circumstances warrant.

Cuba

Cuba has trained and supported radical groups from around the world, including Palestinian groups that have often used terrorism to advance their political causes. It has maintained a large and complex apparatus to support guerrilla movements and extremist groups throughout Latin America. Many of Latin America's radical leftist organizations look to President Fidel Castro for guidance and advice. Havana has particularly longstanding ties to guerrillas in Chile and Colombia, including the National Liberation

Army—a group that has carried out more international terrorism than any other in Latin America in recent years. In El Salvador, the Farabundo Marti Liberation Movement, which receives support from Cuba as well as other radical countries, has publicly threatened Americans assisting the Salvadoran Government as "legitimate targets of assassination." Because of its continuing involvement in support to radical groups conducting terrorist actions, the US Government placed Cuba on its official list of state supporters of terrorism in 1982.

Iran

Iranian-sponsored terrorist incidents decreased from 32 in 1988 to 28 in 1989. Iran's extensive support for terrorism continued after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in June. The events of 1989 indicate Tehran continued to view the selective use of terrorism as a legitimate tool to achieve specific foreign policy goals. Iranian intelligence has been used to facilitate and in some cases conduct terrorist attacks. In addition, Iran is expanding contacts with Lebanese Muslim extremists, radical Palestinian groups, and other Muslim fundamentalist groups to carry out terrorist operations against Israeli, US, Western, and moderate Arab interests. In the past year Iranian support for terrorism has included:

- Calling for the death of author Salman Rushdie and attacking publishers and distributors of *The Satanic Verses*.
- Assassinating at least five Iranian dissidents.
- Recruiting Shia to carry out attacks in Saudi Arabia during the hajj.
- Inciting radical Shia elements to attack Saudi interests in retaliation for Riyadh's execution of 16 Shia responsible for the hajj bombings.
- Probably involving itself with, if not organizing, Hizbullah terrorist activities in Europe, West Africa, and elsewhere.

Ayatollah Khomeini's denunciation of Salman Rushdie's novel and calls for the author's execution had the effect of a decree, which is binding under the Shia interpretation of Islamic law. Violent demonstrations and attacks against publishers and bookstores occurred throughout Europe, Asia, and the United States. Three British Council library

buildings were bombed in Pakistan, killing one local guard. At least a dozen people died and more than 120 were injured in violent street riots in Pakistan and India. President Rafsanjani's reaffirmation of the death threat rekindled anti-Western fervor and prompted renewed anti-Rushdie demonstrations and attacks. In December 1989, UK authorities arrested and expelled Iranians involved in anti-Rushdie attacks; we believe Iran is continuing to coordinate and plan attacks directed against businesses affiliated with *The Satanic Verses*.

Another indication that terrorism continues to be a feature of the Tehran regime was the public statement in May by then Parliament Speaker (now President) Rafsanjani that exhorted Palestinians to kill Americans and other Westerners in order to avenge those Palestinians killed during the uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Rafsanjani also publicly encouraged the hijacking of airplanes and the blowing up of factories.

During 1989, Tehran continued its campaign to eliminate antiregime dissidents. We believe the increase in these attacks can be attributed to the regime's fear that prominent dissident leaders presented a significant threat to Tehran during the leadership transition following the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in June. The number of attacks against dissidents increased from two in 1988 to three in 1989, resulting in five deaths—three in Austria, one in the United Arab Emirates, and one in Cyprus. These attacks appear to have been well planned and were probably carried out by Iranian intelligence officers.

Iranian-sponsored attacks directed against Saudi interests also increased during 1989. Tehran's anti-Saudi campaign can be traced to Iranian resentment over Riyadh's imposition of restrictions on the number of Iranians permitted to make the annual pilgrimage to Mecca as a result of pro-Khomeini riots during the 1987 pilgrimage. During the 1989 hajj, two bombs exploded in Mecca, killing one and wounding over 20 others; several Kuwaiti Shia confessed to the crime. During their interrogations, the Shia confessed that they had been recruited, trained, and supported by Iran. Riyadh executed 16 Kuwaitis for this attack on 21 September. Shortly after the executions, Iranian and

Hizballah leaders issued numerous statements denouncing the Saudi regime and calling for revenge. As a result, attacks against Saudi interests increased:

- On 14 October, a Saudia Airlines office in Lahore, Pakistan, was damaged by a bomb explosion.
- On 16 October, a Saudi military attache in Ankara, Turkey, was seriously injured when a bomb exploded under the seat of his car.
- On 1 November, a Saudi official in Beirut, Lebanon, was assassinated by three gunmen. Islamic Jihad—a covername used by Hizballah terrorists—claimed responsibility for the attack that was authenticated by a photograph of a US hostage.
- On 24 November, the Saudi official responsible for coordinating aid in Pakistan to the Afghan resistance movement was assassinated.

During 1989, Tehran also continued to support—and exert influence over—the radical Shia elements in Lebanon. Iran continues to provide Hizballah with money, weapons, and training and has approved—and in some cases encouraged—the kidnapping of Western citizens. Tehran also continued to develop relations with Palestinian fundamentalist groups, as well as with radical Palestinian groups such as the PFLP-GC, which has been publicly accused of complicity with Iran in the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, as well as with Arab fundamentalist groups.

Libya

Libya continued to show public signs of moderation while maintaining its network of support for international terrorist groups. There were no terrorist incidents in 1989 that were directly attributable to Libya. A Libyan-backed group, however, the MRTA, attempted to bomb the USIS Binational Center in Peru in April to mark the third anniversary of US airstrikes against Tripoli. MRTA bombed the same facility in 1988 on the second anniversary of the air raids

Qadhafi may have put pressure on some Libyan-backed radical Palestinian groups—the PFLP-GC and the ANO—to stand down on terrorist operations not directed against Israel or the occupied territories. Nevertheless, the Libyan leader continues to shelter the ANO's leader, Sabri Al-Banna (aka Abu Nical), and his remaining followers.

Qadhafi continues to provide money, training, and other support to his terrorist clients, despite at least temporarily restricting their activities. The Libyans have sponsored over 30 international groups, including the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), the JRA, M-19, PIRA, and MRTA, in addition to radical Palestinian groups.

In recent speeches, Qadhafi has restated his opposition to US and Western influence in the Third World and reaffirmed Libyan willingness to support armed revolutionary struggles. Qadhafi continues to maintain Libyan contacts with subversive groups in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, possibly in hopes of cultivating surrogate agents. Qadhafi has also used front companies as conduits for financial and materiel support to international terrorist groups in order to obscure Libyan involvement.

North Korea

North Korea was not responsible for any terrorist incidents in 1989. It has continued to provide haven to a small group of Japanese Red Army members who hijacked a JAL airliner to North Korea in 1973. North Korea also continued supplying training and possibly materiel to communist guerrillas in the Philippines in 1989. North Korea remains on the list of state sponsors of terrorism because of its responsibility for the November 1987 destruction of a South Korean airliner and the 1983 terrorist attack against Republic of Korea officials in Rangoon, Burma.

South Yemen

South Yemen has considerably reduced its support for international terrorism since the early 1980s, and we do not believe it sponsored any terrorist attacks in 1989. Aden continues to project an image of moderation in its effort to repair relations with the West and neighboring Arab states. The regime's economic problems and need for economic and technical assistance have encouraged greater pragmatism. South Yemen may have reversed its longstanding policy of issuing South Yemeni passports to Palestinians. However, it has continued to allow some radical Palestinian groups, including the ANO, to maintain a presence in South Yemen.

Syria

There is no evidence that Syrian officials were involved in planning or executing terrorist attacks outside Lebanon since 1987, although they continue to provide support and safehaven to a number of groups that engaged in international terrorism.

Both Syria and Syrian-occupied areas of Lebanon (particularly the Bekaa Valley) remain sanctuaries for a wide variety of international groups that have engaged in terrorism, including the PFLP-GC, Hizballah, Saiqa, Abu Musa, ASALA, the PKK, the JRA, and the Syrian Social National Party. In July, JRA leader Fusako Shigenobu gave a press interview from her group's base in the Bekaa Valley. Many of these groups remain active within the region and elsewhere. Syrian support has enabled some of these groups to carry out acts of international terrorism. For example, the senior PFLP-GC official arrested in 1988 in West Germany and charged in 1989 with attempted murder in the bombing of US troop trains in 1987-88 was travelling on an official Syrian passport.

The United States has repeatedly expressed concern—both publicly and privately—about terrorist groups supported by Syria. To date, the US Government is not satisfied with the Syrian Government's responses, and we think the Syrian Government can do more.

We have discussed with the Syrians, on a number of occasions in diplomatic channels, the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 and public accusations of PFLP-GC's involvement in that attack. We have urged Syria's full cooperation in finding those responsible. Despite Syrian statements abhorring terrorism, Syria considers Palestinian terrorist

incidents directed against targets in Israel and the occupied territories to be part of the legitimate Palestinian struggle for independence.

Syria continues to support subversion against some of its neighbors. It assists the PKK insurgency against Turkey by providing the group with safehaven and safe passage in border regions, as well as sanctuary for its camps in the Bekaa Valley. The PKK insurgency escalated this year, and Turkey has publicly charged Syria with supporting armed violence in violation of the 1987 border security agreement. During 1989, Syria also allowed Iran to send arms via Damascus airport to Hizballah and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards in Lebanon.

Syria has made some effort to improve its record as a state sponsor of terrorism. The Syrian Government continued to indicate its willingness to work closely with Western governments to facilitate the release of the remaining hostages in Lebanon. Syrian President Assad has also stated publicly that Syria will punish any individual or group proved to have been involved in acts of terrorism. In early August, the Syrian Government worked closely with the United States following the revelation of Colonel Higgins' murder, and contributed to preventing death threats against US hostage Joseph Cicippio from being carried out. Senior Syrian officials have publicly reiterated Syria's call for the release of all hostages. In January 1989, Syria was successful in including a clause in the agreement between warring Amal and Hizballah groups in Lebanon prohibiting the taking of UN personnel hostage.

International Organizations

United Nations

The United Nations Security Council and the General Assembly both demonstrated their concern over terrorism in 1989, particularly concerning hostage taking and threats to civil aviation.

UN Secretary General

A major issue Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar dealt with in 1989 was the fate of Marine Corps Lt. Col. William Higgins, who was abducted in the course of his official duties with the United Nations Trust Supervision Organization in Lebanon in February 1989. Despite efforts by the Secretary General to secure his release, the captors of Lieutenant Colonel Higgins announced his execution on 31 July 1989.

The Secretary General and other UN officials continued efforts to confirm the fate and/or find the remains of Lieutenant Colonel Higgins, but they were not successful.

UN Security Council

Among the most significant actions by the Security Council was its Resolution 635 of 14 June 1989 which urged "the International Civil Aviation Organization to intensify its work . . . on devising an international regime for the marking of plastic explosives for the purpose of detection." The passage of this resolution, which was developed by the United States and the United Kingdom, demonstrates international support for action on this complex issue. The resolution vests responsibility for action in an identified UN specialized agency with both the expertise and the appropriate mandate to undertake such an effort.

On 1 August the Security Council adopted Resolution 638 concerning hostage taking. The resolution condemned "unequivocally" all acts of hostage taking, demanded the immediate safe release of all hostages, and called upon all states to use their political influence "to secure the safe release of all hostages and abducted persons." The adoption of this resolution marked the third time in the last four years that the Security Council has made a strong public statement of its abhorrence of hostage taking.

The adoption of this resolution was accompanied by a statement by the Security Council President, on behalf of the Council, deploring the reported execution of Lt. Col. William Higgins.

The US continues to consider the release of American hostages held in Lebanon a national priority. During 1989 we continued to consult regularly with other Security Council members on this vital issue. We took every opportunity to seek Security Council action to bring about the release of all foreign hostages in Lebanon.

United Nations General Assembly

The UNGA on 1 December reestablished the international consensus against terrorism. The resolution states that terrorism is "not justifiable" in any situation. The consensus resolution, which contained the strongest condemnation of terrorism by the international community to date, was the single most important achievement of the 6th Committee and one of the more noteworthy developments at the entire 44th UNGA.

The International Civil Aviation Organization

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) undertook several initiatives in 1989 to ensure the security of the international traveling public against the threat of aviation sabotage by terrorists.

Following the December 1986 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 and a joint request by the United States and the United Kingdom, a special meeting of the ICAO Council was held on 15-16 February to develop an action plan for improving civil aviation security. Many nations, including the United States, were represented by ministerial-level officials as an expression of the international concern and commitment to action on this critical issue.

One of the major action items identified at the special ICAO council meeting was the need for the international community to draft a convention requiring the introduction of "taggants" into plastic explosives. This will assist in identifying and detecting these substances, which are currently one of the favored weapons of international terrorists, particularly those who sabotage civilian aircraft.

During 1989, ICAO established a technical experts group to review the chemical and theoretical aspects of tagging plastic explosives. At the October 1989 ICAO Assembly meeting in Montreal, the membership unanimously called upon the ICAO council to convene a meeting to draft a tagging convention. An initial drafting session has now been held, and, on the basis of progress made to date on both the chemical and legal foundations of such an agreement, it appears possible that an ICAO conference may convene before the end of 1990 to finish work on an international convention requiring that all states include taggants in all newly manufactured plastic explosives.

Another noteworthy development in response to the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 and similar acts of terrorism was the establishment of a special ICAO fund, composed of voluntary contributions, which is intended to enhance civil aviation security. The intended recipients are those nations that cannot meet minimum ICAO security standards. A number of nations, including the United States, have contributed personnel and/or funds to help establish this program.

A final important ICAO development was the June 1989 adoption of the "no takeoff policy" concerning hijacked aircraft. This new policy commits ICAO members to preventing the takeoff of hijacked aircraft unless the aircraft's departure is necessitated by the overriding duty to protect human life. This standard was originally proposed by the United States and the United Kingdom. Following consideration and comment by the ICAO membership, this policy was made binding on all member states of ICAO. This new standard serves as an additional example of the international community's commitment to deal effectively with aviation hijacking.

International Maritime Organization

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) continued to take action in 1989 to reduce the risk of acts of maritime terrorism. Many of these actions implemented decisions made by the IMO membership in response to earlier acts of maritime sabotage.

Following the October 1985 hijacking of the Achille Lauro, the IMO called for a new convention against maritime terrorism. In March 1988, the Convention for the

Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation and the accompanying protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf were adopted at a diplomatic conference. Twenty-three nations signed the Convention and 21, including the United States, also signed the accompanying protocol. Entry into force of these agreements will require ratification or accession by a minimum of fifteen nations. Five states (German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Seychelles, Spain, and Trinidad and Tobago) have since ratified both instruments. The US Senate provided its advice and consent in November 1989; US ratification awaits the enactment of implementing legislation.

In 1986, the IMO unanimously adopted a comprehensive set of practical guidelines designed to prevent any recurrence of terrorism against ports or passenger vessels on international voyages of twenty-four hours or more. The US Coast Guard published the IMO measures in the Federal Register in April 1987 and called for a program of voluntary compliance by port and vessel operators.

Following the July 1983 terrorist attack against the City of Poros day excursion ship off Greece, the IMO reviewed its published security measures and recommended a program of regional security seminars. The IMO also agreed to review its measures annually to ensure that they remain effective responses to the evolving terrorist threat situation.

During 1989, the IMO continued urging its 133 members to ratify the pending conventions and to implement effective security measures against maritime terrorism. The IMO also sponsored two regional seminar/workshops on maritime security in the Caribbean and the Mediterranean. These seminars increased awareness of the need to improve maritime security, encouraged implementation of the existing IMO voluntary program of security measures and reviewed security procedures already in place. Similar seminars are planned for the western Pacific and Baltic Sea regions.