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United States Department of State



**PATTERNS
OF GLOBAL
TERRORISM:
1991**

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Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1991

Introduction

Terrorism in 1991 was marked by three major features. First, the number of international terrorist incidents increased 22 percent, from 456 in 1990 to 557 last year. This increase is solely attributable to terrorism associated with the Persian Gulf war. Second, 1991 was the second straight year in which there was no terrorist spectacular. Third, 1991 clearly demonstrated the role of state sponsorship in international terrorism.

A central part of US Government counterterrorism policy is to press countries that sponsor terrorism to cease such support. This is what the international community did last year with great success against Iraq when Saddam Hussein threatened the world with a wave of terrorism following his invasion of Kuwait. The threat failed in large part because of the firm response by the United States and its allies and cooperation among them. The expulsion of Iraqi operatives, cooperation among law enforcement and intelligence services, and enhanced security countermeasures proved effective. In April the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 687 requiring a commitment from Iraq not to engage in acts of terrorism or support terrorist groups.

Another part of US counterterrorism policy is to work with other governments to identify, apprehend, and prosecute terrorists. Following a three-year investigation into the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, US and British authorities indicted two Libyan agents for planting the bomb. We are currently working to have Libya surrender the suspects so that they may stand trial in either Scotland or the United States. Consistent with those indictments, the United States and the United Kingdom announced on 27 November that Libya must surrender those charged for trial to the United States or the United Kingdom; accept responsibility for the actions of Libyan officials; disclose what it knows of this crime; allow full access to witnesses, documents, and other evidence; and pay appropriate compensation to the families. The Government of France made similar demands concerning the UTA 772 bombing for which four Libyans, including the brother-in-law of Muammar Qadhafi, are the subject of international arrest warrants. In a joint declaration, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France demanded that Libya cease all forms of terrorist action and all assistance to terrorist groups.

A third part of our policy is to refuse to make deals with terrorists, and our firm adherence to this was rewarded in 1991 as the last remaining American hostages were freed from captivity in Lebanon. The United States made no concessions to obtain their release. Rather, the terrorists holding them realized that there would be no benefit—political or financial—in continuing to detain the hostages.

Through training provided under the Department of State's Antiterrorism Training Assistance Program, we have improved the ability of other governments to preempt, to investigate, and to prosecute the perpetrators of terrorist attacks. The program has been extremely successful. In 1991, more than 1,190 police and security personnel from 18 countries received such training, bringing the total number of persons trained in the program to more than 12,500 from over 70 countries.

The threat of terrorism, particularly state-sponsored terrorism, remains. Still, the overall trend is positive, and we continue to believe that our counterterrorism policy is working.

Legislative Requirements

This report is submitted in compliance with Title 22 of the United States Code, Section 2656f (a), 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 kidnapping 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 of terrorism contained in Title 22 of the United States Code, Section 2656f (d). That statute contains the following definitions:

- The term terrorism means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.

¹ For purposes of this definition, the term noncombatant is interpreted to include, in addition to civilians, military personnel who at the time of the incident are unarmed and/or not on duty. For example, in past reports we have listed as terrorist incidents the murders of the following US military personnel: Col. James Rowe, killed in Manila in April 1989; Capt. William Nordeen, US defense attache killed in Athens in June 1988; the two servicemen killed in the La Belle disco bombing in West Berlin in April 1986; and the four off-duty US Embassy Marine guards killed in a cafe in El Salvador in June 1985. We also consider as acts of terrorism attacks on military installations or on armed military personnel when a state of military hostilities does not exist at the site, such as bombings against US bases in Europe, the Philippines, or elsewhere.

- The term international terrorism means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country.
- The term terrorist group means any group practicing, or that has significant subgroups that practice, international terrorism.

The US Government has employed this definition of terrorism for statistical and analytical purposes since 1983.

In a number of countries, domestic terrorism, or an active insurgency, has a greater impact on the level of political violence than does international terrorism. Although not the primary purpose of this report, we have attempted to indicate those areas where this is the case.

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 A. Peter Burleigh
Coordinator for Counterterrorism

State-Sponsored Terrorism Overview

The United States and its allies focus on raising the costs for those governments that support, tolerate, and engage in international terrorism. It is widely recognized that government support for terrorist groups enhances their capabilities and makes more difficult law enforcement efforts to counter terrorism.

A number of governments continue to provide terrorists safehaven, travel documents, arms, training, and technical expertise. In addition to support for terrorist groups, some governments engage directly in terrorism as a tool of their foreign and domestic policies. During 1991 Iranian and Iraqi agents carried out international terrorist attacks, and the evidence of Libyan responsibility for the bombings of Pan Am 103 in 1988 and UTA 772 in 1989 was made public. Other governments, though not direct sponsors of terrorist groups, contribute to such groups' capabilities by allowing them unimpeded transit, and permitting them to carry out recruitment and other support activities.

The United States currently lists Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, and Syria as state supporters of terrorism. This list is maintained pursuant to Section 6 (j) of the Export Administration Act of 1979. This and related US statutes impose trade and other restrictions on countries determined by the Secretary of State to have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism. The list is sent annually to Congress, though countries can be added or removed at any time that circumstances warrant.

The international effort to curtail state support for terrorism achieved tangible results in 1991. The United States in concert with the international community responded swiftly and firmly to Iraq and the groups pledging to carry out terrorist attacks on behalf of Saddam Hussein. Messages were sent warning Iraq and these groups of the consequences of a resort to terrorism. Many governments preemptively expelled more than 200 Iraqi diplomatic and intelligence personnel to reduce the threat posed by Iraq's network of support. Many countries also alerted their citizens to the threat posed by Iraqi-sponsored terrorism and upgraded security at facilities likely to be terrorist targets such as airports and the airlines of coalition countries. Cooperation among law enforcement and intelligence services in many different nations increased the effectiveness of national counterterrorist measures against Iraq.

Scottish authorities and the US Department of Justice on 14 November publicly charged two Libyans with carrying out the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 on 21 December 1988 and the resulting murder of 270 innocent people. An exhaustive nearly three-year investigation, relying on cooperation among law enforcement and intelligence services in many countries, resulted in the indictments against a senior Libyan intelligence official, a former manager of a Libyan Arab Airlines office, and unidentified coconspirators. French judicial authorities had issued international arrest warrants two weeks earlier charging four Libyan officials with involvement in the September 1989 bombing of UTA Flight 772. The bombings of Pan Am 103 and UTA 772 are part of a historical pattern of Libyan Government-sponsored terrorist attacks.

Despite these counterterrorism accomplishments, there is a continuing danger posed by state sponsorship. Iranian agents have been charged with the August murder of former Iranian Prime Minister Bakhtiar and his aide outside Paris. Iran has also strengthened its relationship with extremist groups throughout the world by providing advice and financial and material assistance, often through its embassies. Iran's support is increasingly important not only to Islamic extremist organizations but also to Palestinian groups that may have lost some support from other state sponsors. Libya continues to provide financial, logistic, and training facilities for international terrorist groups, including the notorious Abu Nidal organization (ANO), which is headquartered in Libya. Syria continues to allow terrorists to operate within its territory and allows numerous terrorist groups—of both Palestinian and non-Palestinian origin—to have training facilities in the Bekaa region of Lebanon, which is under effective Syrian military control. Cuba and North Korea continue to provide safehaven and training for various terrorist groups.

Cuba

In light of its overwhelming domestic economic problems, Cuba has greatly reduced or suspended its training, arms shipments, and financial support to armed Latin American subversive groups over the past year. Havana also has

downplayed political ties to many of these groups— notably in Honduras and Chile—in hopes of upgrading diplomatic and trade relations in the region. Shortly before a settlement was reached, Havana publicly backed a political settlement between the Salvadoran Government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), a longtime beneficiary of Cuban military aid and training.

Cuba, nevertheless, reportedly continues to serve as a safehaven for some regional and international terrorist organizations. In addition, Cuba continues to provide limited political training to some leftist organizations. We have no information to confirm that Cuba has closed down its training camps for armed insurgents.

Iran

Iran continues to be a leading state sponsor of terrorism, even though the number of terrorist acts attributed to its direct sponsorship dropped to five in 1991, down from 10 in 1990 and 28 in 1989.

Iranian intelligence services continue to facilitate and conduct terrorist attacks, particularly against regime opponents living abroad. This policy is undertaken with the approval of the highest levels of the regime, although the government routinely denies involvement in assassination of dissidents or in terrorist attacks carried out by pro-Iranian groups. Iranian diplomatic and commercial facilities are reported to be used extensively in such operations.

During the past year Iran has further strengthened its relationship with extremists who engage in acts of terrorism throughout the world, with special emphasis on the Palestinians. Tehran often provides these groups with advice and financial and material assistance, often via Iranian embassies.

Iran has not limited its assistance only to terrorists who are Islamic fundamentalist in orientation. It has also provided sanctuary and some aid to the Marxist-Leninist separatist group Turkish Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), a group that has used terrorist tactics in a seven-year campaign to establish a separate Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey.

The outstanding example of Iranian state terrorism in 1991 was the 6 August assassination of former Iranian Prime Minister Shapur Bakhtiar and his aide in a Paris suburb.

French counterterrorism investigating magistrate Jean-Louis Bruguiere has thus far arrested three Iranians and issued an international arrest warrant against Hussein Sheikhattar, a senior official in the Iranian Ministry of Telecommunications. On 31 December France requested the extradition of another suspected Iranian conspirator arrested a week earlier outside the Iranian Embassy in Bern, Switzerland. Swiss officials approved his extradition to France on 24 February 1992, subject to appeals from the suspect. A comprehensive investigation into the case continues amid press reports that Judge Bruguiere could issue additional warrants against more Iranian officials. The linking of the murder to the Iranian Government by Judge Bruguiere has had significant political repercussions for French-Iranian relations, including postponement or cancellation of visits to Iran planned by President Mitterrand and Foreign Minister Dumas.

Iranian-backed Shia groups in Lebanon were involved in the continued detention of Western hostages in 1991. Iran played a key role in the UN-sponsored process that obtained the release of six American and three British hostages in 1991 and the recovery of the bodies of two Americans who died while in captivity. Iran probably helped arrange freedom for the hostages out of the belief that continuation of the crisis was detrimental to Iranian President Rafsanjani's attempt to improve relations with the West and obtain foreign assistance in modernizing Iran's economy. The hostage releases still received criticism from Iranian hardliners and elements of Hizballah. Immediately after the August release of British hostage John McCarthy, Hizballah elements opposed to the hostage releases kidnapped a French citizen. He was freed three days later only after what appeared to be significant pressure from Iran, Syria, and Lebanese figures. Iran has also reportedly offered refuge to about 40 former Hizballah hostage holders and may provide them with new identities to prevent retaliation.

Further demonstration of Iran's close involvement in hostage taking is shown by the Iranian Ambassador to Germany invoking the fate of two German relief workers in an attempt to obtain the release of the Hammadi brothers, two Hizballah terrorists jailed in Germany. Iran has indicated its willingness to help bring about the release of two German hostages believed to be held by Hizballah elements in Lebanon.

Iranian-supported groups in Turkey were believed to have been responsible for the 26 March car bombing in Ankara that injured an Iraqi diplomat and the two October car bombings that killed an American serviceman and injured an Egyptian diplomat.

Major international terrorists—including Ahmad Jabril of the PFLP-GC and various prominent members of Hizballah and factions of the PIJ—frequently visit Iran, often meeting with the regime's senior leadership. In October, representatives of these organizations and others attended a conference hosted by Iran on Palestine designed to strengthen opposition to the Middle East peace process. Tehran has in recent years focused on developing its ties to radical Palestinian groups and tried to increase its influence in the Palestinian movement as a whole.

Iran has steadfastly opposed the Middle East peace process and threatened participants. Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, declared on 30 October, "Those who take part in this treason will suffer the wrath of nations." Earlier in the month, Ayatollah Musavi-Ardabili, a senior cleric, called on Muslims to attack American lives and properties as a religious duty.

Iran has continued its death threats against author Salman Rushdie. The bounty on Mr. Rushdie was apparently increased during 1991 to a total of at least \$2 million. In addition, two translators of Mr. Rushdie's works were attacked in 1991. An Italian translator was injured in an attack, and a Japanese translator was killed. Both attacks are believed to be linked to the translators' work with the writings of Salman Rushdie.

Iraq

During 1991 Iraq was a leading state sponsor of terrorism. Iraqi agents and members of pro-Iraqi groups conducted attacks on the United States and other coalition members in a variety of locations around the world. Numerous other planned attacks were frustrated by stringent security precautions imposed by both coalition and noncoalition states in response to the threat of Iraqi-sponsored terrorism.

On 11 June Iraq agreed, in accord with United Nations Security Council Resolution 687, not to support acts of international terrorism or allow terrorists to operate in Iraq. However, Iraq reportedly continues to maintain contacts

with several groups and individuals that have historically practiced terrorism. These include the Arab Liberation Front (ALF), Abu Abbas's Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), the Abu Nidal organization (ANO), and former 15 May organization leader Abu Ibrahim. Baghdad continues to make vague threats of retribution for the military defeat it suffered during Operation Desert Storm.

Iraq was linked directly to only a small number of the more than 200 war-related terrorist incidents that occurred worldwide between mid-January and the end of February 1991, a figure three times greater than the comparable period in 1990. Much of the terrorist activity associated with the Gulf war was attributed to indigenous groups such as November 17 in Greece, the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) in Peru, the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front (FPMR) in Chile, and Dev Sol in Turkey, which was responsible for the death of two US citizens. In the months before Operation Desert Storm began, Iraq reportedly trained terrorists in intelligence activities and sabotage in special camps and prepared operations against coalition targets. During Operation Desert Storm, Saddam Hussein publicly and repeatedly called upon all of his terrorist allies to attack coalition targets, frequently through announcements on Iraq's Mother of Battles radio. The massive wave of anticoalition terrorism did not come to fruition, probably because of the cooperation of several governments in arresting or expelling several hundred Iraqi operatives from their host countries, the disruption in Baghdad's communications, and increased precautions at coalition facilities during the war. The targets hit during the Gulf crisis were typically banks or commercial facilities belonging to members of the coalition; most of the attacks caused only limited property damage.

Iraq was directly involved in the 19 January attempted bombing of the US Cultural Center in Manila by two Iraqi nationals, one of whom was killed when the powerful bomb he was carrying exploded prematurely. The Philippine Government expelled an Iraqi diplomat who directed the operation and his accomplices. Iraq was also responsible for an attempted bombing of the US Ambassador's residence in Indonesia during the same period.