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**TERRORISM:
ANALYZING THE THREAT**

BY

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USAWC CLASS OF 1998



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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

Terrorism:

Analyzing the Threat

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ABSTRACT

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TITLE: Terrorism: Analyzing the Threat

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 6 April 1998 PAGES: 23 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

This paper examines the nature of the terrorist threat by analyzing terrorism, terrorist acts, and terrorist groups. It seeks to describe underlying characteristics of terrorist groups and the acts which they commit. Once these characteristics have been established the paper offers suggestions for counterterrorist strategies and assesses the potential effectiveness of these strategies in specific case examples in the middle east.

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GLOSSARY

Terrorist Definitions¹

- Terrorism is premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.

- International Terrorism is terrorism involving citizens (perpetrators or victims) or territory of more than one country.

- Terrorist group is any group practicing terrorism, or having significant subgroups that practice terrorism.

- Noncombatant is a person neither engaged in nor preparing to engage in combat. Personnel performing police or law enforcement duties as well as personnel assigned to peacekeeping/humanitarian missions are generally considered noncombatants.

- Terrorist act is the use of force, violence, or intimidation to achieve terrorists' political ends when hostilities do not exist.

- Antiterrorism is defensive measures to reduce the vulnerability of individuals or property to terrorism.

- Counterterrorism is offensive measures to deter, prevent, and respond to terrorism.

TERRORISM: ANALYZING THE THREAT

Terrorism and the effects of terrorist attacks have been a constant source of anxiety and consternation for public policy makers. The expansion of 24 hour, all news, satellite connected media outlets increases the challenge facing policy makers as terrorist events are broadcast, often while in progress, to a worldwide audience. No longer are these incidents remote or isolated. As the Sarin gas attack in Japan revealed, the effects may no longer be limited, but have the potential for massive destruction. The result is a threat that is commensurately heightened and more pervasive. What are the implications for U.S. national security policy makers of this increasing threat, and what are the appropriate and viable responses that are consistent with U.S. strategy?

Current Policy

The current U.S. policy on terrorism is proactive and aggressive. It directs a multi-agency effort of the U.S. government with the intention of defeating and deterring terrorism. In pursuit of this end the U.S. government has developed and articulated several ways by which it intends to achieve its objectives. The National Security Strategy (NSS) published in May of 1997 states, "U.S. counterterrorism approaches are meant to prevent, disrupt and defeat terrorist operations before they occur, and, if terrorist acts do occur, to respond overwhelmingly, with determined efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice." The NSS further states, "Our policy to deter terrorism rests on the following four principles: 1) make no concessions to terrorists; 2) bring all pressure to bear on state sponsors of terrorism; 3) fully exploit all available legal mechanisms to punish international terrorists; and 4) help other governments improve their capabilities to

combat terrorism.” Finally the NSS explicitly states that the U.S. reserves the right to strike at terrorist bases and attack assets valued by those who support the terrorists.²

This proactive policy is more explicitly detailed in Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 39 (U.S. Policy on Counterterrorism) published in June 1995. This PDD commits the U.S. government to “deter, defeat and respond vigorously to all terrorist attacks...”. It further defines terrorism as “ a potential threat to national security as well as a criminal act....” and pledges to “apply all appropriate means to apprehend and prosecute, or assist other governments to prosecute, individuals who perpetrate or plan to perpetrate such (terrorists) attacks.”³

This activist approach to combating terrorism requires a commensurate dedication of resources as a credible means to successfully achieve the stated policy objectives. PDD 39 directs an array of U.S. governmental assets to fight terrorism. Commitment of these broad-ranging assets is designed to enhance U.S. capabilities in several areas:

- Antiterrorism measures are defensive and attempt to reduce U.S. vulnerabilities. These measures include State and Defense Department efforts to reduce the vulnerabilities of their overseas-based personnel and facilities; efforts to improve travel security, particularly air travel; efforts to identify and reduce vulnerabilities of critical national infrastructure; and efforts to exclude or deport from the U.S. persons who pose a terrorist threat.

- Counterterrorism measures are proactive and designed to disrupt and deter terrorist activity. These include efforts to return indicted terrorists to the U.S. or other countries for prosecution; measures designed to undermine state support and sponsorship of terrorism; and multi-agency investments and exercises to enhance counterterrorism capabilities.

- Responses to terrorist acts in the U.S. will be rapid and decisive wherever they occur.

The U.S. will respond with all appropriate instruments against sponsoring organizations and governments and will provide recovery relief to victims as permitted by law.

In addition to the antiterrorism/counterterrorism measures discussed above the U.S. is committed to “developing effective capabilities to detect, defeat and manage the consequences of nuclear, biological or chemical materials or weapons used by terrorists.”⁴

This vigorously stated policy is sensible and tough-minded and involves the Department of Defense as a key player in formulating an effective counterterrorism strategy to support the national security strategy. The challenge for those tasked with implementing these policy directives is significant and requires a comprehensive understanding of the nature of terrorism, terrorists, and the threats involved.

Terrorism, Terrorist Acts and Terrorist Groups

Terrorism is distinguished from criminal activity by its combination of political motivation and violent means. The purpose of terrorism is to change the status quo. Violent methods are employed as a means to gain widespread notoriety, to inflict a high cost on the targeted group, and to signal the seriousness of the cause or grievance being pursued. Terrorism is not a monolithic threat. It can take many forms and terrorist groups can employ a variety of tactics or modus operandi. There is no dearth of material attempting to categorize and label terrorism. Most of the analyses seek to reduce terrorism to distinct or discrete categories with these categories having, at times additional sub-categories. This type of analysis must be conducted with caution. There is danger in providing too few categories so as to be superficial in assessing the character of a terrorist threat or conversely in developing too many categories so

that each terrorist group or attack is seen as a unique and highly varied threat which then defies a systematic method of pursuing policy aims. Terrorism is in reality the sum of the effects of terrorist acts. Ultimately the forms which terrorist acts takes are a direct result of the methods employed by the particular terrorist groups. The nature, character, and attributes of the terrorist group will determine the nature and severity of the terrorist threat. Although there are many types of terrorist groups, there are sufficient similarities between a number of these groups that generalizations can be made about the groups and the threats posed by them. Ultimately the ways in which our policy of deterring, defeating, and responding to terrorist threats will be implemented will have to be tailored to the particular terrorist group and the nature of the threat posed by that group.

Terrorist groups have a number of characteristics, which predispose them to certain tactics, and targets and which create imperatives to which the groups respond. Cordes, Jenkins, and Kellen⁵ offer a lengthy list of these key attributes in their effort to formulate a model for developing comprehensive terrorist group profiles. These attributes range from geographical reach of the group, to relative homogeneity of the members, to the tactics and weaponry utilized, to the manner in which the group obtains its support and resourcing. Although this model is of great use for analyzing individual terrorist groups it is of less value in assessing macro trends and in performing a broad-based threat analysis. Fortunately other authors have made contributions in this area. Joseph Goldman,⁶ in his work focusing on terrorism that has a national security component for the United States, postulates that there are six factors associated with terrorism. These are the historical, psychological, and strategic factors surrounding a terrorist act as well as the diplomatic, economic and military elements associated with the specific act. He further describes four categories of terrorism: civilian vs. military and conventional vs. nuclear. Civilian

terrorism is terrorism where the target is the civilian population. Military terrorism is terrorism involving professionally trained soldiers or amateur guerrilla fighters who use terrorism to retain a regime's power or to seize power. It also can involve two countries at war with one another who resort to needless violence targeted at the civilian population of the enemy country.

Conventional terrorism merely describes the type of weapons employed by the terrorists (bombs, hand grenades, guns, etc.) while nuclear terrorism (an as yet unrecorded occurrence) would involve the use of nuclear devices. This latter category could be expanded to include biological and chemical agents that fit the scenario currently describing weapons of mass destruction.

Goldman's factors and categories are useful, but still do not provide a complete understanding of the terrorist phenomenon. He, and others, do provide a description of state terrorism. This is terrorism practiced by a state against its own population. This type of terrorism can affect United States security interests in that it may destabilize or otherwise result in a change in government of an undemocratic but friendly, U.S. ally. However for the most part, this type of terrorism does not directly affect U.S. national security interests.

A variant of state terrorism, state sponsored terrorism, often does affect U.S. security interests. State sponsored terrorism is terrorism directed against targets within one country where the terrorist group is directly, but often covertly, supported by a different country. The political cause advanced by the terrorist group may also be supported by the sponsor country, or the sponsor country may simply desire to destabilize the target country. Terrorist groups need not be state sponsored in order to create significant effects. The characteristics of political motivation and violence are still key to the "terror" phenomenon. Many independent (non-state sponsored) terrorist groups represent this type of terrorism. Often they have a domestic political agenda. They seek to alter the existing political status quo and frequently do so in an

environment where legal political opposition is severely restricted if not downright nonexistent. Domestic terrorists may be full-fledged revolutionaries in the early stages of a revolutionary war against the government. Taylor⁷ describes terrorists of this type as operating in the first stage of revolutionary war by "destroying the confidence in the government's capacity to exercise control, thereby making it possible for a guerrilla army to recruit with some semblance of potential success. Taylor adds that terrorism also has a role to play in latter stages of guerrilla warfare by completing the destruction of confidence in the government and destroying local opposition to the development of guerrilla forces. On the other hand domestic terrorists may have more limited objectives, perhaps merely to influence policy. This may particularly be the case where there is little opportunity to legally express political opposition. In some cases the domestic terrorist also exists where there are legitimate, legal means of expressing political opposition. In these cases the terrorist group has simply been unable to garner sufficient support through this mechanism. These types of terrorists groups are posturing themselves in opposition to the system as a whole.

To this point our discussion has focused on politically motivated violence. This violence is thus, by definition, purposeful and implies a certain rationality. In virtually all of these cases terrorism is a means to an end. Often this is a rational end and it is frequently communicated by the terrorists to the population at large as well as the targeted groups. Another distinct form of terrorism is irrational terrorism. This type of terrorism is often difficult to link to known political objectives and can be both pernicious and exceedingly violent. Schechterman⁸ offers three general criteria for labeling terrorists as irrational: A consistent failure to define or stress sought-after political goals; a capacity to resort to their own defined (self-confirming) code of behavior; and the act of terrorism is in itself an ultimate satisfaction. He further describes six variations of

irrational terrorism. These are 1) terror as personality fulfillment; 2) terror as hatred; 3) terror as majority acceptance; 4) terror as vengeance; 5) terror as non-political power seeking; and 6) terror as fad. Violent terrorism disconnected from political motives may at first appear to be a fringe activity, but experiences in peacekeeping and humanitarian relief operations suggest it is pervasive and a phenomenon likely to continue to be encountered. It clearly is a major contributing element to the ethnic conflicts, which can be the most intractable and violent forms of terrorism. Furthermore, irrational components may also contribute or add to the effects of rational, politically motivated terrorism and present ongoing challenges to U.S. national security interests.

An additional aspect of terrorism that merits discussion is the nature of the terrorist act itself. As previously mentioned, Goldman distinguishes between civilian and military terrorism in large part by the group being targeted. Symbolism may be a significant factor in selecting a target, or violence may simply be perpetrated by calculating groups simply to maximize the effects on the greatest number. The strategy may be to target a few victims in order to effect the many within a broader target population. The distinguishing feature of terrorist violence in this regard is whether it is discriminate or indiscriminate. Violence directed at a discriminate target is of a different nature than violence indiscriminately directed at society as a whole or simply those who randomly, and unfortunately, happen to be in the way. Indiscriminate violence does not imply that it is irrational or without a purpose. Random acts of violence designed to undermine the authority, legitimacy, or affect the perception of competency of a government, can be deliberately purposeful and succeed in debilitating the targeted regime. There is no demonstrated link between discrimination of targets and success. Indiscriminate attacks such as car bombs in urban areas may strike committed supporters, those who are indifferent, and those who are

opposed to a terrorist group equally. Likewise discriminate attacks on selected targets may gain the terrorist group support, or may result in a backlash of opinion and a successful counter-strategy by the targeted regime.

The concept of legitimacy applied to terrorist activity is one which is bound to raise considerable controversy. It is of course a difficult notion to reconcile with respect for the rule of law and a stated national security strategy that commits the resources of the United States government to "deter, defeat, and respond vigorously to terrorist attacks." However, as we have seen terrorism is not a monolithic threat and terrorist groups are diverse. Some terrorist groups will succeed in their efforts to change the political systems within the targeted countries and some will actually wrest control of the political process. This may ultimately come about exclusively through the use of force and violence or may result in liberalizing the political system which then eventually leads to democratic and peaceful changes. It is likely that some of today's terrorists will emerge as national leaders tomorrow. This has occurred in the past and is the ultimate confirmation of the expression "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." The follow-up to this sentiment is that the successful freedom fighter will become the new national leader. This cannot occur without some notion that terrorist activities, especially those which are long enduring or those which ultimately prove successful have a basis of legitimacy. The study of that legitimacy is beyond the scope of this analysis, however, all terrorist activity is not devoid of some elements of legitimacy and national security analysts and planners must consider relative aspects of legitimacy when assessing terrorist activity.

A final consideration for policy strategists is the exact organizational nature of the terrorist group itself. Some groups are highly cohesive and unified in purpose and activity. Others are more loosely associated and may coordinate their efforts or may pursue uncoordinated

actions. These latter groups can be splintered from one historically unified group or they may be a coalition of like-minded terrorist activities. Each type of group presents challenges and opportunities to strategists. The cohesive, unified group is more likely to respond to its leadership structure. Therefore the key to these groups lies in obtaining resolution to the issues which inspire the group leaders toward terroristic ends. Splintered or coalition groups are less susceptible to this means of "management", however, there are opportunities to de-couple some of the less committed or radical factions. This reduces the capabilities of the remaining elements and allows counterterrorism resources to be focused on the more strident elements. Caution should be exercised in assessing terrorist groups with respect to these two categories. An effective strategy by some sophisticated terrorist groups is to appear to be comprised of several diverse factions, some highly violent which operate underground, while other elements appear to be less extreme and operate as open opposition (if the political establishment tolerates such elements). These latter groups should more correctly be viewed as a single unified organization susceptible to the type of counterterrorism measures tailored for cohesive groups.

This analysis has focused to this point on the large scale US counterterrorism policy and some of the theoretical concepts associated with terrorism and terrorist groups. The discussion will now examine three alleged terrorist groups and suggest, in broad terms, counterterrorism strategies that could be employed to reduce or eliminate the threats.

Armed Islamic Group (Algeria)

Algeria faces a devastating, radically violent terrorist threat. This threat is an outgrowth of a five and one-half year civil war which began in 1992 and continues today. Accurate figures are difficult to obtain, but those widely quoted in journalistic accounts⁹ indicate that this has resulted in 60,000 deaths and 400,000 refugees. The majority of these casualties have been at the

hands of the anti-government terrorists. Algeria's descent into the maelstrom began in 1991 when the Algerian military cabal which has ruled the country since its independence from France in 1962 authorized democratic elections with the end of achieving a pluralistic democratic government. The ruling military junta then canceled the election and democratization process when it became clear that the election would be decisively won by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), an exceptionally fundamentalist Islamic party which sought to impose strict Islamic law within the heretofore secular country. This betrayal of the democratic process led to an immediate civil war and a vigorous military response by the government. The military response resulted in a fracturing of the FIS and a new more radical and violent element emerged, the Armed Islamic Group. This anti-government group soon began a terror campaign which targeted aspects of Algerian society not in accordance with their vision of strict Islamic laws. Working women, unveiled women, government employees, Roman Catholic clerics, and Islamic theologians who were not in accord with strict interpretations of Islamic law were the targets. The Algerian government with the support of their former colonial master France insisted that the affair could be handled internally and rejected efforts for outside mediators. The government held new elections in 1997 (minus the outlawed FIS) and, not unsurprisingly, won control of parliament. One positive aspect of this election is that for the first time political opposition was legalized and Islamic parties won control of 25% of the seats in the new parliament. The call for new elections spurred the Armed Islamic Group to greater and greater levels of violence. Throughout the summer and fall of 1997 ghastly and horrific attacks occurred. The death tolls in these attacks are staggering (75, 98, 300, 80, 53, 200). The tactics have changed as well. The murders are indiscriminate, with villagers, suburbanites, and city dwellers alike the targets. Wholesale murder and mutilation follow. Meanwhile the military government is accused of

being slow to respond to the attacks as some polls show that support for the anti-government forces has declined significantly. The government is cynically accused of allowing the terrorists to undermine their own cause. Meanwhile a flawed, but slightly more democratic government continues to hold power and the darkness that is contemporary Algeria sees no light forthcoming. A failed state is in the making and the future may hold greater upheaval with potentially disastrous mass migrations north across the Mediterranean.

Hamas (Palestine/Israel)

Hamas, an Arabic acronym for Muslim Resistance Movement, arose as a result of the civil unrest directed toward Israeli control and administration of occupied Palestinian lands. This unrest became known as the "Intifadah", or spasm (upheaval). Hamas is a spin-off of the Muslim Brotherhood¹⁰, a conservative Islamic organization started in Egypt in the 1920's and operating throughout the Middle East over the intervening decades. By the mid-1980's the Brotherhood was operating in the Gaza strip and was present as an organization when the Intifadah started in December 1987. By all accounts the Intifadah was a spontaneous eruption born of the frustration of two generations living in refugee camps with no positive resolution to their status in sight. Hamas arose during these events. The Muslim Brotherhood had an ideology of non-violence, so Hamas organized itself as the military arm of the Brotherhood. After that it operated as a client organization of the Muslim Brotherhood. Israel did not move to vigorously respond to Hamas, in part because they saw this organization as a way to damage the PLO.¹¹ Hamas was in fact a competitor group to the PLO and never sought to join forces with the larger, more politically sophisticated Palestinian organization. Hamas was more Islamically oriented in its ideology than the PLO. Hamas stresses the role of jihad (armed struggle) against non-believers and the concept of the ummah (worldwide) community of Moslem believers. In

this respect they are opposed to secularism and the concept of the nation state, both significant aspects of the PLO agenda. Hamas initially chose as its terrorist targets Palestinians within the occupied territories, whom they identified as collaborators, and Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). These attacks resulted in belated, but vigorous Israeli responses. The effect of the Israeli response over the years has been to eliminate the middle level leaders of Hamas. This leaves Hamas as a group that is very loosely organized. There are a few philosophical leaders, who are not presently in Palestine, and several quasi-independent cells of operatives within the territories. Although the Intifadah essentially ceased when limited Palestinian home rule/administration was implemented in 1994 Hamas continues to wage a terrorist campaign against Israeli targets. This has been expanded from its initial target groups to include suicide bombers who attack civilian targets within Israel proper. To some extent this is in response to the deterioration of the peace process and the expansion of Israeli settlements under the Likud government. The fundamental dilemma in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a four component dynamic. Compromise by either side will simultaneously frustrate both nationalist and religious ambitions¹². This is true for Palestinian and Israeli alike. Those opposing a settlement, or seeking to gain further advantage in a final settlement seek to maintain the current polarized state of affairs. It is still not clear which group Hamas falls into. Sheik Ahmed Yassin, a Hamas leader released on 8 October 1997, by Israel in a prisoner exchange suggested possible truce terms. These included Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, and the removal of Jewish settlements. At present these are unacceptable to Israel, but could represent a basis for achieving a political solution. In the meantime the occupied territories simmer and there is no real peace or security within Israel.

Hizbollah (Lebanon/Israel)

Hizbollah (Party of God) is a violent group comprised mostly of Shiite Moslems operating in southern Lebanon and receiving backing from Iran and Syria. They generally attack Israeli targets in Lebanon, but are perhaps best known to Americans for holding a series of Americans hostage in Lebanon and for being in the middle of the covert arms-for-hostages negotiations during the Reagan administration. Hizbollah draws their recruits from the Shia community in southern Lebanon and have recently adopted a strong nationalistic ideology. This community was heavily battered during the Lebanese civil war (1975-1982). Prior to this time the area had become the operating ground of a large number of Palestinian refugees who had fled Jordan in 1970. The Palestinians were using the region, particularly the area within 40 km of the border to launch rocket and commando attacks into Israel. Israel responded in 1982 with its invasion of Lebanon, ostensibly to rid the border area of the Palestinian threat. This strategy resulted in Israel occupying a sizable security zone in southern Lebanon as well as arming and supporting the Christian sects and their Southern Lebanese Army (SLA). The Shia's suffered heavily during this operation. They saw their homeland threatened to become dominated by the rival Christians and permanently occupied by Israelis. The initial Shia resistance came from Nabih Berri and his Amal group. In the subsequent intrigues and machinations of the 7-year civil war Berri and his forces concentrated on the Beirut area leaving the southern area to the emerging Hizbollah. Hizbollah received support from Syria (as a counter Israel strategy) and subsequently Iran (fellow Shiites). The Israeli forces became major targets of the Hizbollah and with substantial effect. For their part the Israelis resisted the Syrian strategy of coupling security talks with Syria and the "Lebanese front". Instead Israel responded with another invasion of southern Lebanon in an effort to defeat the Hizbollah's militarily. This action has proven

ineffective and Hizbollah continues to receive Syrian and Iranian aid and continues to attack IDF and SLA targets within southern Lebanon. The current slowdown (some would say breakdown) in the Arab-Israeli peace process fuels the fire of Hizbollah. Although external support for this group is of great benefit, the source of its assets, its human capital, comes from the Shia community subjected to occupation and stagnation. This is the key to defusing the violence.

Suggestions for Counterterrorism Strategies

Before discussing specific suggestions for each of the above terrorist conflicts it is useful to develop generalizations which may be applied in individual cases.

In attempting to counter the political impact of terrorist acts and terrorist groups governments face an array of challenges. Further governments may have limited choices since the terrorist group, by definition, has the initiative. Success in counterterrorist operations is situationally dependent. Governments may be able to resolve the issues terrorist groups seek to alter or alternatively they may not be able to resolve the conditions causing disaffection and may merely be able to suppress the terrorists. In either case though success can be measured by the elimination of the terrorist acts themselves. Certainly there is no formula for this, but there are some possible guidelines which should be considered when devising counterterrorism strategies.

Legitimacy - governments must attempt to determine, and assess the degree to which the terrorist group may have grievances which have a basis of legitimacy. This does not condone the terrorist acts, but governments, particularly those which are not democratic, may be confronted with terrorist groups which seek to influence the political process through the only means available. These governments may be able to mitigate the effects of terrorist acts by providing redress to legitimate grievances which cannot be resolved through the normal political process. In cases where terrorist groups claim legitimacy by attacking the "system" as a whole

governments must ensure that the counterterrorist response is not an overreaction which tends to undermine civil liberties. In cases where civil liberties must be infringed (as in the case of airport travel and security measures) governments must build a consensus for the measures employed.

State Sponsored Terrorism - State sponsored terrorism represents a complex dynamic for the counterterrorist strategist. On the one hand the focus can be on the state sponsor. At a certain level there is a "conventional", Clausewitzian element to the state sponsor. They are pursuing a political agenda through an asymmetrical means. The most likely reason is that the state sponsor does not have sufficient strength to attack the target state, or target civilization directly. However the state sponsor may merely desire to exert increased pressure short of war. In either case the terrorist group can be seen as a guerrilla or unconventional force operating at the behest of the state sponsor. In these cases the objective of the counterterrorism strategy should be to decouple the state sponsor from the terrorist group. Frequently these efforts focus on the state sponsor. Recent American policy has expressly stated a right to strike terrorist bases and attack assets valued by those who support terrorists.¹³ This clearly implies a military option. Eppright¹⁴ cautions on the utility of military strikes. He argues that terrorism seeks primarily a political effect while military force striking directly at terrorist targets may not be as successful a counter within the political arena. There are however some important considerations in the use of military force: 1) military strikes directed at state sponsors may achieve the decoupling effect if the targets are of sufficient value to offset the advantage of continued support to the terrorist group, and 2) military strikes at terrorist targets will reduce the terrorist capability, even if this is a temporary effect. Another strategy to pursue in the state-sponsored terrorist dynamic is to focus on the terrorist group itself. The terrorist group may have a far more limited objective than

the state sponsor. The state sponsor may be conducting a form of asymmetrical warfare against the targeted state for a variety of issues or grievances. The terrorist group on the other hand may have a limited set of objectives that could, theoretically, be settled between the targeted state and the terrorist group. To the extent to which this could be accomplished the targeted country could dramatically reduce the terrorist effects without necessarily resolving the differences between itself and the state sponsor.

Nature of the Terrorist Group/Organization - Not all terrorist groups are organized in the same manner. Some groups are an amalgamation of many factions. Some of these factions are more strident and militant than others. Some groups are organized with an above ground, quasi-legitimate arm, and an underground military arm. Some groups are not associated by anything more than their opposition to the government. Counterterrorism strategies should focus on de-coupling these groups or factions from one another. The objective would be to isolate the most radical elements with irreconcilable differences and suppress these elements separately. The key to this strategy is to recognize that not all opposition has the same set of grievances, or the same ferocity of purpose. Active steps to "repatriate" the less radical elements reduces the terrorist base and may ultimately allow for more severe measures to be employed against the smaller, more radical, and less "reasonable" elements.

The terrorist groups profiled above represent diverse challenges to US national security interests and those of our allies. Each of these groups is unique, with their own set of controlling objectives, interests, constituents and target victims and audiences. However they can be analyzed in accordance with the above characteristics and appropriate counterterrorism responses can be tailored toward each.

Armed Islamic Group (Algeria) - The repressive and undemocratic regime in Algeria shares much of the blame for the deteriorated state of affairs within Algeria. Nevertheless the unfathomably abhorrent conduct of the Algerian terrorists leaves no room for accommodation. The terrorists were spawned by a lack of legal means to express political opposition, but their tactics are totally devoid of legitimacy. A feasible counterterrorism strategy would be to isolate the terrorists from the population. This is partially accomplished by the lack of legitimacy which the terrorists have as a result of their cruelty. Accelerate the process by vastly increasing the security provided the general population. This will tend to increase the legitimacy of the government and satisfy a pre-condition for civil society. Define the terrorists as criminals and vigorously pursue their apprehension. Institute real democratic reforms and move toward a pluralistic democracy.

Hamas (Palestine/Israel) - It is difficult to isolate one element of the Arab-Israeli imbroglio and attempt to devise an effective solution in isolation. The issue of Hamas terrorism cannot be resolved as long as there are hundreds of thousands of Palestinians with no meaningful quality of life. They are cut off from jobs, commerce, and even freedom of movement. Their lives are tenuous and uncertain, their status in constant limbo even as a population explosion swells their numbers. The status quo is unsustainable and yet no clear solution is at hand. Hamas enjoys a high degree of legitimacy. Their objective to improve Palestinian conditions by attacking Israel strikes a chord among the oppressed Palestinians. This is fundamentally the case because the Palestinian people have legitimate grievances. They have been dispossessed of their lands and placed under a political authority where they are worse than second class citizens. These conditions cannot be sustained indefinitely. The Palestinians must have some prospects for an improved existence and this requires accommodation of their grievances. It is however

not clear to what extent Hamas will accommodate Israeli legitimate concerns. As mentioned previously the Israeli-Palestinian dynamic is multi-dimensional. Compromise will infringe on nationalistic and religious ambitions on both sides. Yet compromise and accommodation must be the first phase of countering Hamas's influence. A middle ground must be established and terrorist groups who won't support the compromise must be de-coupled from the large number of people who will. In this way they can be isolated, marginalized, reduced and eventually eliminated.

Hizbollah (Lebanon/Israel) - The issues in Lebanon involve a number of internal and external players and also require progress on long-standing territorial issues in the Arab-Israeli dispute. The first strategy must be to de-couple Hizbollah from their sources of foreign support, Syria and Iran. This can only be accomplished by resolving the territorial issues between Israel and Syria. Until this is accomplished Syria will retain a positive incentive to keep Hizbollah in the fight against their common enemy. Once cut off from their sponsors the legitimate territorial concerns of the Shiite community within southern Lebanon must be accommodated. This will likely include Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and removal of the Christian SLA from Shiite areas in southern Lebanon. These measures are no guarantee of neutralizing Hizbollah or preventing offshoot groups from springing up. Rather they are designed to eliminate the major sources of discontent which provide the wellspring of support for Hizbollah's violent attacks. The remaining terrorist elements that do not yield to these measures will have to be neutralized through military and police forces.

Conclusion

Terrorism is a complex and dynamic phenomenon. It has many varied aspects to it and does not represent a monolithic threat. Tailoring an effective and viable response to terrorism

requires an accurate assessment of the nature of the terrorist group and threat they pose as well as a willingness to engage in a multi-dimensional response. This response includes military, civil police and political components to isolate terrorist groups, accommodate legitimate grievances, and secure the population from violent attacks, and it ultimately includes directly countering terrorists with force.

ENDNOTES

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- ¹¹ Stephen C. Pelletiere. Op. Cit. 14
- ¹² Serge Schmemmann "The Cold Comfort of Hot-Headed Enemies," The New York Times (Aug. 3, 1997) Sec:4 p:1 col:1 UMI ProQuest Newspaper Abstracts [CD-ROM], 1997, item 0447825.
- ¹³ The White House. Op.Cit. 10.
- ¹⁴ Charles T. Eppright. "Counterterrorism and Conventional Military Force: The Relationship Between Political Effect and Utility." Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, October-December 1997. 333.

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