

## Chapter Eleven

### International Incident Response

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#### Introduction

“Terrorism is at the top of the American agenda, and it should be at the top of the world’s agenda.” President Clinton, address to the UN General Assembly, September 1998.

As President Clinton made clear in 1998, terrorism is very much a global problem, and one of paramount concern to the government of the United States. The US Government and American citizens abroad are often targets, but terrorism threatens everyone. Like drug abuse, poverty, or disease, terrorism is a pervasive transnational problem. Because of the worldwide menace terrorism represents to national and international security, it demands a well-conceived, thorough, and robust international incident response.

Terrorist attempts to influence American policy have been among the most vexing problems for the United States. Today, the growing capability of terrorist groups to inflict mass casualties and capture public attention complicates an already acute policy dilemma, especially in an era of rapid globalization. The speed and reliability of both transportation and communication are factors driving the dispersion of terrorist networks. Terrorist organizations are subsequently more linear, more loosely defined, and harder to track. While these realities certainly work to the advantage of terrorists, globalization also presents opportunities to those tasked with responding to the terrorist threat. It is critical that we adapt our countermeasures to meet the changing dimensions of international terrorism.

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The problems and imperatives inherent in organizing responses to international terrorist incidents today are the subject of this chapter. Against the backdrop of certain watershed terrorist incidents in American history, we will briefly review some of the ways in which the terrorist threat has changed and discuss how US policy principles have developed. We will then look at the ways government responses to terrorism are improving, and discuss whether these strategies adequately address the types of threats seen today. Finally, we will identify some important factors that can be expected to shape international responses in the coming decade.

Although we will focus on international terrorism, it is worth noting that the lines between international and domestic terrorism are blurred and cut across many functional areas, making interagency coordination a critical component of any comprehensive US strategy to combat terrorism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Learning the Lessons of International Response**

#### **No Concessions**

Current US counterterrorism policy is the result of many often painfully learned lessons. America's experience with international terrorism is as old as the United States itself, and many of our presidents have faced difficult choices in crafting appropriate responses. The Barbary pirates were a famous early example. During the late 1700s and early 1800s, seaborne bandits from Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers frequently raided American ships off the Mediterranean's Barbary Coast. It had become routine US practice to negotiate with these pirates and to pay the huge ransoms they demanded. By 1801 the United States had paid over \$2 million in this manner, or over one-fifth of the US annual revenue at the time.<sup>1</sup> President Thomas Jefferson finally put a stop to this with an early version of our current no-concessions policy, by refusing ransom demands of the Barbary pirates. He observed: "This is cruelty to the individuals in captivity, but kindness to the hundreds

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that soon would be so, were we to make it worth the while of those pirates to go out of the straits in quest of us.”<sup>2</sup>

Jefferson famously followed up his no-concessions policy with military action; in 1801 he dispatched a squadron of US Navy and Marines to protect American shipping in the Mediterranean. When in 1803 pirates acting under the order of the Pasha of Tripoli seized the *USS Philadelphia*, took the ship’s crew hostage and demanded \$3 million in ransom, the stage was set for one of the first ever uses of US military force abroad. In response to the seizure, US Navy Lieutenant Stephen Decatur’s forces blockaded Tripoli, set fire to the *Philadelphia*, and bombarded the city. The operation was a success, and the pirates released the hostages.

The United States later directed similar action against the Algerian navy in 1815 in response to its sponsorship of piracy. Decatur, by then a commodore, defeated a number of Algerian vessels and killed the commander of the Algerian navy. This compelled Algeria to release all of its American hostages, to sign new agreements insuring the safety of American ships, and even to pay a \$10 thousand indemnity for its sponsorship of piracy.

Notwithstanding such historic policy victories, the US Government continues to face a terrorist threat nearly 185 years later. The face of most modern terrorism may only dimly recall the days of Barbary pirates, but the fact remains that the United States and many other states continue to face pernicious threats from criminal groups seeking to influence policy and gain concessions through violence. The United States has learned (and occasionally has had to re-learn) important lessons in how to counter the threat.

Our greatest successes against international terrorism have come when we have adhered to the sound policy tenets that Jefferson employed to resolve problems on the Barbary Coast; i.e., when we refuse to make concessions to terrorists, when we isolate and put pressure on states that sponsor terrorism, and when we apply the rule of law to terrorists.

Beginning in the 1960's and continuing today, increasing threats to security forced the United States to strengthen our legal and political tools of counterterrorism. In 1960, a rash of airplane hijackings to Cuba prompted President Kennedy to order tighter security aboard aircraft, including plainclothes law enforcement agents. The US Congress made hijacking, the carrying of concealed weapons aboard aircraft, and the use of weapons to assault, intimidate, or threaten aircrew members federal crimes. Penalties became severe—up to life imprisonment or death; hijacking hoaxes were punishable by 5 years imprisonment.<sup>3</sup>

The United States and other countries have not always played hardball with terrorists, and have not always employed clear counterterrorist policies. Kidnappers released US Ambassador Burke Elbrick when the Brazilian government acceded to the terrorists' demands for a release of prisoners and publication of their manifesto. In April 1970 the US Department of State announced that it was considering payment of ransom as a legitimate policy option in kidnapping incidents.<sup>4</sup> Within a year, however, the United States announced a “no ransom” policy regarding terrorist demands following successful resolution of a March 1971 kidnapping of US servicemen in Turkey. When the Government of Turkey refused to grant concessions, the kidnappers abandoned the hostages. The terrorists were hunted down, arrested, tried, and convicted. Three were hanged, one imprisoned, and a fifth died in a gunfight with the Turkish police.<sup>5</sup>

The consequences of playing hardball have sometimes proven to be just as deadly for American victims as for terrorists. In 1973, the Palestinian terrorist group Black September seized ten hostages, including US Ambassador Cleo Noel and his Deputy Chief of Mission George Moore in Khartoum, Sudan. The terrorists had a long list of demands: the release of 60 prisoners in Jordan and all Arab women detained in Israel; the release of Sirhan Sirhan (Robert Kennedy's assassin); and the release of jailed members of Germany's Baader-Meinhof gang and several other terrorists. The United States and its allies refused to comply, and Black September promptly

murdered the two American diplomats. President Richard Nixon later remarked on the tragedy:

All of us would have liked to have saved the lives of these two very brave men, but they knew and we know that in the event we had paid international blackmail in this way, it would have saved their lives, but it would have endangered the lives of hundreds of others all over the world.<sup>6</sup>

### **Putting Pressure on State Sponsors**

Jefferson's challenges in North Africa were very early examples of "state" sponsored terrorism. As the power of the United States increased, the frustration of marginal regimes with agendas inimical to those of the United States led to an increased use of terrorism to try to influence US policy, gain concessions, and exact revenge. This phenomenon became particularly disturbing during the Cold War. Absent a major global war between superpowers, some states found terrorism to be a cheap and deadly weapon capable of making America and its allies suffer. They used it to try to force changes in policy and to weaken our resolve on larger issues such as the Middle East peace process. Terrorism is fundamentally undemocratic.

The seizure of the US embassy in Tehran is one of the most blatant examples of a state's use of terrorism to date. It became a watershed event in the history of American counterterrorism, as the United States scrambled ineffectually to coordinate an international response to the hostage dilemma. Almost every evening, television news programs kept count of the number of days they had been held. President Jimmy Carter swore not to leave Washington until the hostages were released, virtually imprisoning himself and reassuring the regime in Tehran that it was influencing US policy. America itself became hostage.

The failed American rescue attempt in 1980 resulted in the tragic deaths of many US servicemen, and the hostages were freed only when the government of Iran saw fit, on the inauguration day of President Ronald Reagan. The US Government had endured a rude wake-up call that it was not

well prepared to deal with terrorists or their sponsors, despite its superior economic, diplomatic, political, and military might. Changes were needed.

### **Military Responses, and Enforcing the Rule of Law**

The 1980's were a bloody decade in terrorism, and were a period of increased state sponsorship. In December 1979, the US Department of State began designating state sponsors of terrorism, designations that carry harsh penalties in trade and international relations with the United States.<sup>7</sup> Libyan sponsorship of terror, in particular, was pronounced, and Libyan leader Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi earned the dubious distinction of becoming a lightning rod for American counterterrorism efforts. Notable attacks against the United States and its interests included the bombing of the La Belle Discotheque in West Berlin, a known favorite among US servicemen. The attack was sponsored by Libya. President Reagan ordered American warplanes to attack Libya with surgical strikes in retaliation. The US military had returned "to the shores of Tripoli," and for similar reasons.

New bilateral and multilateral treaties on counterterrorism were negotiated between the United States and a number of nations, notably the United Kingdom, in which references to terrorist crimes as "political offenses" were removed. This reflected awareness in the US counterterrorism community and the Reagan administration that enforcing the rule of law was crucial in countering the terrorist threat. In a speech to the American Bar Association on this subject, Reagan recalled that the Latin characterization of "pirates" was *hotes humani generis*, enemies of the human race. He stated: "We must act together, or unilaterally if necessary, to ensure that terrorists have no sanctuary anywhere."

The Pan Am flight 103 bombing, which killed 259 people on the plane and 11 people on the ground, over Lockerbie, Scotland, was another example of Libyan sponsorship, and one of the deadliest terrorist attacks on an airliner. The aftermath of the bombing, however, provides some hopeful guidelines for cooperation in bringing terrorists to justice. A massive criminal investigation by US and British law enforcement authorities yielded a

mountain of evidence that implicated Libya and led to criminal indictments against two Libyan suspects. Years of patience and multinational support from the United Nations and other organizations led to the isolation of Libya and the imposition of harsh sanctions. The two suspects were tried in an independent Scottish court in The Hague.

Other accomplishments in the area of counterterrorism law included the Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986 which, among other provisions, empowered US law enforcement agencies to pursue and apprehend criminals abroad who are wanted for crimes against US citizens. The idea—the so-called "long arm statute"—is simple but critically important: to deny terrorists the sanctuary provided by foreign jurisdictions. In short, they can run, but they can't hide.

The "full court press" against terrorism that began under Reagan included the creation of a special interagency task force on counterterrorism, headed by then-Vice President George Bush. The Vice Presidential Task Force on Terrorism produced a report in late 1985 that was to have a crucial importance in coordinating more efficient and potent responses to the "new" forms of international terrorism that plague the United States today. With better coordination among US agencies, greater cooperation between the United States and other countries, stronger legislation, and innovative efforts like the Rewards Program, the number of terrorist attacks and terrorist groups began to fall.

### **The Current Threat**

#### **Geography**

US citizens and facilities around the world remain targets of choice for terrorists. The economic and international prominence of the United States is often a pretext for resentment and retaliation, perpetrated by non-state groups against non-combatant targets. These groups often turn to violence, wishing to influence public opinion, create havoc, confound US policy, or exact revenge on the superpower they hold responsible for real or perceived injustices.

American businesses, property, officials, and citizens are widely dispersed, and are vulnerable to attack by such groups.

Terrorists operate transnationally in the seams of society. For example, while the Japanese terrorist cult Aum Shinrikyo is best known for its attack on the Tokyo subway, it operates worldwide and has a global, not just regional, agenda. Many organizations have cells on different continents; Hizballah and al-Qa'ida are two prominent examples. Western countries, in particular, are attractive to terrorists in a few respects. The civil liberties that are so important in protecting citizens against government intrusion provide freedoms that can insulate groups or individuals wishing harm on our citizens from government scrutiny. These groups frequently establish "legitimate" businesses to fund their terrorist activities. Indeed, terrorists today frequently take advantage of these circumstances to organize, raise money, establish safe houses, and garner sympathy for their cause. Over time, many groups acquire an above ground presence that is then used to build resources for illicit purposes. The United States has enacted legislation that makes fundraising by these groups illegal by prohibiting any financial transactions with them. We are urging our allies to adopt similar measures.

#### **Ideology and Sponsorship**

The collapse of the Soviet Union left many of the communist terror cells that plagued the United States during the Cold War without the ideological and financial sponsorship, training, and other support they had enjoyed for many years.<sup>8</sup> Over much of the Cold War, the ideologies of most groups threatening the United States were variations on the same geopolitical doctrine. Today the situation is less monolithic.

For much of the last 40 years, most of the terrorist threat to America came from groups that were enemies of capitalism, Arab nationalists, or Islamic extremists whose leftist inclinations were largely a concession for sponsorship. Although some groups crossed religious, cultural, or political boundaries, each was usually aligned with one of the two great superpowers.

Today, however, we see groups and individuals that are more independent and less accountable, with many having ties to other networks, namely organized crime and narco-trafficking. Motivations are still political, but increasingly incorporate religious or apocalyptic motives as well. Loyalties are often bought with social services or extensive propaganda outreach campaigns. Responses to acts of terrorism today must take into account these motivations and capabilities.

Communist organizations like Germany's Red Army Faction and Italy's Red Brigades have declined steadily following the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. and a series of counterterrorist successes. On the other hand, communist terror is by no means dead: Greece's 17 November group remains one of most active and most elusive terrorist groups in Europe, with not a single member prosecuted since its first attacks in 1974.

Responses to terrorist attacks often focus on blocking sponsorship of the perpetrators, and efforts in this area today are directed at a wider variety of sources than in the past. Many terrorists find sponsorship, or at least tolerance, in sympathetic regimes whose agendas or ideologies are inimical to those of the United States. The US Department of State maintains a list of state sponsors of terrorism that is reviewed continuously. Designation as a state sponsor of terrorism carries harsh sanctions in the United States. Ambassador Michael Sheehan, the Department's Coordinator for Counterterrorism, credits the sanctions with success in pressuring sponsors such as Libya to begin reforming their policies, making life for terrorists more difficult.<sup>9</sup>

Groups like HAMAS are today essentially funded by supporters in the general populace, and raise money through mosques and social service institutions, as well as from wealthy private benefactors in Saudi Arabia and other states. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) once was backed by the U.S.S.R., but today needs little outside funding because of its lucrative ties to Colombian cocaine production. Terrorists in Afghanistan, Southeast Asia, and other major areas of drug trafficking also are closely

linked with the illicit activity. Such links can complicate counterterrorism but also create opportunities for greater cooperation among governments, departments, and agencies in the overall counterterrorism, counterdrug, and general law enforcement efforts.

The booming offshore investment industry, where many terrorist organizations hide their financial activity, makes a diffuse target for the counterterrorism efforts of the intelligence and law enforcement authorities. Although the venerable Swiss banking system remains the place of choice to conduct secret banking, there are more than 60 nations offering a variety of untraceable financial services.<sup>10</sup> Osama bin Laden brought much of his considerable personal wealth to bear in financing the activities of al-Qa'ida. Efforts at defeating him have in part focused on eliminating his access to funds and the profits from his farms and other successful businesses worldwide.<sup>11</sup>

### **Technology, Tactics, Capabilities**

Technology has made extraordinary differences in the terrorist threat and the modalities of response. Gadgets and technologies that were far more primitive or totally unheard of only twenty years ago are now commonplace in all kinds of legal and illegal business. Pagers, cellular phones, facsimiles, laptop computers, encryption equipment, electronic mail, web sites, and other tools of the terrorist trade are so commonly seen in daily life for ordinary people that their use by terrorists does not attract attention. Terrorists have become skilled at employing such equipment to their advantage. Cellular phones, in particular, are well suited to the highly mobile, covert operations of terrorists. The Internet is also being exploited by terrorists. "Cyber-Terror," or electronic attacks on government or civilian computer systems, occurs hundreds of times every day, and is often difficult to distinguish from espionage, hacking, and other threats to US information security.

The US Government, of course, can also exploit the "information superhighway" and other manifestations of the ongoing technology explosion in the fight against terrorism. Cellular phones may be mobile, but they are not

immune to tracking and interception, as evidenced by the use of a cellular phone to locate and kill Colombian drug kingpin Pablo Escobar. Terrorists who think high technology guarantees their safety have forgotten the case of Yehya Ayyash, a HAMAS terrorist and master bomb maker who paid the ultimate price in 1996 for his love affair with his cell phone. It exploded in his ear.

Terrorist groups often aim for high body counts and casualties. This is probably the most menacing trend in terrorism today. It is amply evidenced in current intelligence, but more clearly by such attacks as the World Trade Center in 1993, Oklahoma City in 1995, the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway in 1995, and the simultaneous explosions in Nairobi and Dar Es-Salaam on August 7, 1998. While the number of international terrorist incidents has decreased in recent years, the number of casualties they inflicted was the largest in history in 1998.

Another concern is the threat of instability in the former Soviet Union and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) throughout the world, often in countries that sponsor terrorism and are avowed enemies of America. The Soviet demise led to the weakening, or outright loss, of legal and military control over conventional and unconventional weapons technology, expertise, and actual hardware that had been part of the Soviet bloc's war apparatus. This raises grave concerns about terrorists' access to such deadly resources. Much of the counterterrorism community's effort focuses on foiling terrorist attempts to access and use chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) weaponry, and on preparing to respond if they succeed.

It is difficult to organize for overseas terrorist incidents and to defeat such disparate threats—but it is by no means impossible. While future terrorists are likely to continue employing reliable tactics like kidnapping, assassination, and bombing, there is widespread consensus among experts that terrorist arsenals and tactics are undergoing a disturbing metamorphosis likely to continue in the decades ahead.<sup>12</sup> The counterterrorism community's

preoccupations in this regard are not mere paranoia—all of these developments have been attempted by terrorists, and most are ongoing. US response capability has been growing and must continue to grow at a pace commensurate with the threat in order to prevent attacks on US interests. We must remain flexible enough to manage and mitigate the effects of an international terrorist incident. Our counterterrorism response must be tailored to meet the challenges presented by the threat to be part of an effective policy.

#### **United States Counterterrorism Policy and Response Capabilities**

The United States is well prepared to respond to a terrorist incident overseas, but this has not always been the case. Terrorism in the 1980's was virulent and illuminated deficiencies in America's crisis management and response capabilities; for example, the Beirut Marine barracks bombing in 1983, the TWA 847 and Achille Lauro hijackings of 1985, and a host of other significant acts of international terrorism. They motivated President Reagan to establish the Vice President's Task Force on Terrorism in 1985, which resulted in a recommendation about the development of an Emergency Support Team (EST) to respond to crisis situations overseas and assist the crisis management efforts of both the Chief of Mission and the host government. This recommendation was a core component of National Security Decision Directive 207, signed by President Reagan in January 1986. NSDD 207 provides the foundation for our current crisis response policy.

NSDD 207, entitled "National Program for Combating Terrorism," outlined the basic tenets of our policy for responding to international terrorism. The tenets include the principle of no concessions, applying the rule of law to bring terrorists to justice, pressuring state-sponsors of terrorism, and assisting friendly governments in their efforts to combat terrorism.

Under this framework, the Emergency Support Team (EST) was launched in 1986. The EST was kept very secret, with no unclassified discussion of the team permitted until 1995. However, with the implementation of Presidential Decision Directive 39, the decision was made to de-classify discussion of certain details of the Foreign Emergency Support

Team (FEST) and the Domestic Emergency Support Team (DEST) to advertise more adequately our capability and perhaps achieve some deterrence in the process.

In permissive environments (where host governments request assistance), the current response framework is based on supporting the host government in resolving the crisis in its country under the leadership of the US Chief of Mission (COM). The FEST provides the COM and country team with a twenty-four hour crisis management capability and determines the follow-on requirements in conjunction with the host country and the US Country Team. The FEST is designed to meet the requirements of the particular threat and members are drawn from agencies across the US government. Team members advise on such issues as crisis assessment, disabling, investigation, disposal, evacuation, and medical response. In addition, responding to chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) threats has been a priority for the FEST since the early 1990's and a special response team for this purpose is in place. While the FEST is advisory only, it assists in a wide range of specialized skills not usually available overseas. All teams are available for deployment within four hours. Within just one hour of notification, leadership consultations regarding threat assessment and the make-up of the FEST will occur.

In non-permissive environments, the response would be either a military or intelligence operation. However, support may be provided by members of the counterterrorism community, depending on the nature of the threat and the relationship with the affected country.

The State Department has the lead for crisis and consequence management for terrorist incidents overseas. The Foreign Emergency Support Team is coordinated through the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism at DOS.

International crisis management exercises provide important insights in assessing and sharpening our crisis response capability. These exercises include tabletop crisis simulations to assist the leadership of both the United

States and foreign governments. Some exercises involve large-scale operations. Most of these simulations and exercises are coordinated either through DOD, or by DOS through the Interagency Working Group on Counterterrorism's Subgroup on Exercises. Constant practice, review, and assessment of capabilities are notable features of the US crisis response framework.

The United States Government has implemented a rather successful interagency structure to respond to terrorist incidents internationally, as outlined in Presidential Decision Directives 39 and 62. The Counterterrorism Security Group (CSG), chaired by the National Security Council (NSC), coordinates the interagency process, under the guidance of the Principals and Deputies Committees of the NSC. The national crisis response structure has remained virtually unchanged since the Vice President's task force and it reacts quickly during a crisis to ensure a thorough US Government response.

It is worth noting that an effective crisis response requires success in many other functional areas. Research and development programs must continue to make advances in protection, detection and disablement technologies, for example. Supplies and materials, medical and non-medical, should be adequately stockpiled and located regionally, proximate to potential venues for terrorism. Training programs must increase the ability of foreign governments and US government missions to handle both crises and their consequences. Finally, in order to achieve comprehensive results, these programs must be adequately funded.

Indeed, responding to terrorist incidents in such a complex environment requires extensive interagency coordination and international cooperation. In large measure, we have been successful in that effort, but major issues and points of controversy remain.

#### **An Examination of Our Current International Response Framework: Assessment and Prescriptions**

It is important to review our crisis management and response procedures regularly and offer critiques. It is easy to be complacent after the kind of

progress the United States has made in the area of crisis management and response, but we should avoid such traps.

The FEST has been deployed approximately twelve times since its inception roughly thirteen years ago. In response to the bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, the FEST was deployed post-incident for the first time. This deployment marked a shift in the organization of the FEST, focusing on consequence management operations. The Crowe Report of 1999 on the Embassy Bombings in Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam observed that the consequence management efforts of the FEST were ad hoc. Since April 1999, the Office of Counterterrorism at the State Department (S/CT) has been actively developing new guidelines for the FEST, configuring consequence management teams to include personnel in medical relief, search and rescue, public affairs, engineering and building safety. S/CT has also initiated a program to augment any staff at a post that is debilitated or otherwise unable to perform their regular duties.

For the past six years, the US has been fortunate to have a first-class CBRN counterterrorism capability, unmatched internationally. These capabilities are tested at least twice a year in major full field exercises, and the lessons learned during these simulations are used to constantly improve the program. However, deploying our CBRN counterterrorism resources abroad potentially leaves us vulnerable at home. In order to be insulated from domestic attack while deployed elsewhere, we should consider building some redundancy into our capability.

The threat from cyber-terrorism is increasing, and attacks are becoming more frequent. The United States has not yet determined the best way to respond internationally to support a friendly government experiencing cyber or infrastructure attacks. Perhaps a FEST team will need to be designed specifically to counter such attacks; in any case, more attention should be paid to galvanizing technical and infrastructure experts for inclusion on any FEST responding to these types of crises.

The current model of crisis response relies heavily on unilateral action and the relationship we have with the affected foreign government. However, multilateral action might add legitimacy and, in some cases, resources to the response. Coalitions help de-legitimize terrorist action and some cooperation might be valuable, especially in areas of technical assistance and the provision of equipment and supplies. However, proprietary inclinations, resource discrepancies, and the difficulty of a coordinated and rapid response all present major obstacles. Proposals like NATO's WMD Initiative should be implemented, but coordinating any international response to terrorist incidents will require much more time and negotiation. In sum, multilateral efforts at responding to terrorism should be explored, but the obstacles remain formidable.

Under the current crisis management policy the US will not use the F-22 without permission from the host country. Efforts are currently under way to formalize relationships for crisis and consequence management. The more bilateral arrangements are negotiated in advance, the smoother the coordinated response in the event of terrorist attack.

One key frustration is the discrepancy between rhetoric and action as it pertains to the level of commitment to building an effective international incident response capability. For example, the F-22 aircraft is thirty-seven years old. The Crowe Commission recommended that a new state-of-the-art aircraft be delivered. However, the counterterrorism community cannot agree on either funding or the type of aircraft.

US counterterrorism officials spend a significant amount of time answering congressional inquiries, assisting the GAO, developing crime and counterterrorism reports for the Department of Justice, and testifying before commissions like the Crowe Accountability Review Board, and yet we see little improvement in funding or focused action with regard to our international response mechanism. We are in the insurance business, but good insurance costs money. Right now, there appears to be a discrepancy between rhetoric and action when it comes to counterterrorism. We are making

progress, and certainly commitment levels would increase after the next major attack, but our sights should be firmly set on acquiring those response capabilities *before* the next terrorist incident.

### **Conclusion**

The United States takes a comprehensive approach to international terrorist incident response. In general, the interagency structure has worked well. Expertise is drawn from multiple agencies at all stages of crisis management—planning, preparation, and deployment. Extensive exercise and simulation programs further refine our crisis response mechanism. Our Emergency Support Teams are easily mobilized and organized by task to meet the requirements of the current threat. America’s CBRN counterterrorism capabilities are cutting-edge and continue to improve.

Many of these capabilities address changes in the nature of the terrorist threat, but as globalization drives the new transnational terrorism, more must be done. Indeed, greater access to technology, looser structures of terrorist organizations, and stronger ties to international financial and criminal networks all demand that we continue to update our crisis response capability. Bilateral and multilateral approaches to terrorism, the cyber-terrorist threat, and research and development on protective, detection, and disablement technologies all deserve more attention. We must also close the gap between rhetoric and action on international crisis response.

The United States should be proud of the progress it has made, but it is important to realize that we must maintain our readiness to counter the changing face of terrorism and to reject any notion of complacency that would leave us less than fully-equipped to fight it.

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<sup>1</sup> This and subsequent historical references come from an unclassified report "Americans Held Hostage, 1784-1987, A Chronology of Incidents," Office of the Historian, US Department of State.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Iran, interestingly, did not make the first list.

<sup>8</sup> There is extensive evidence of Soviet sponsorship of terrorists during the height of the Cold War. Former Chief of Israeli military intelligence Gen. Shlomo Gazit revealed during a July 2-5, 1979 Jonathan Institute conference that "Arab terrorists participated in fifty different military exercises and courses in the Soviet bloc, some forty in the Soviet Union itself." Quoted in the preface to "How the West Can Win," Benjamin Netanyahu, ed. (New York: FarrarStraus Giroux, 1986).

<sup>9</sup> Michael A. Sheehan, Statement at US Senate confirmation hearing, July 23, 1999.

<sup>10</sup> Scott Baldouf, "Why It's So Hard for U.S. to Pick Terrorists' Pockets," Christian Science Monitor, August 27, 1998.

<sup>11</sup> Yael Shahar, "Osama bin Ladin: Marketing Terrorism," Interdisciplinary Center for Counter-Terrorism.

<sup>12</sup> Good recent analyses of future trends in terrorism include: *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1998*, US Department of State, Publication 10610, Office of the Secretary of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, April 1999; Jeffrey D. Simon, *The Terrorist Trap: America's Experience with Terrorism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 347-373; and Jessica Stern, *The Ultimate Terrorist* (Cambridge, MA:Harvard University Press, 1999).