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LOW-LEVEL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM

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Before discussing the issue of potential or actual threats of sub-state violence within the Mediterranean region, there is a fundamental problem of definition with respect to the terms used to describe modes of violence below the level of intensity of modern warfare[1] that must be addressed. This is that such definitions tend, first, to be distorted in common - and even official - usage to into political propaganda and, second, these patterns of violence cover a wide and heterogeneous range of different circumstances and situations such that simple definitions are often not possible. The phenomenon of terrorism provides a good example of the first case, for it is a term which has been subject to considerable and consistent misuse. As Gearty points out, the essential component of terrorism originally was that it promoted the use of terror to achieve specifically political ends but the term has today become a convenient label by which governments lambast their opponents in any violent confrontation (Gearty 1991: 8-16; 44). Indeed, "For many governments the word "terrorism" in general means any form of violent activity with which that particular government happens to disagree." (Aaronson 1986, cited in Heiberg 1988: 29)

On the other hand, US military strategists have, since the 1980s, defined three levels of conflict when determining what military threats the USA might face in the future: high intensity, such as nuclear war; medium intensity, such as conventional and inter-state

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[1] According to the **New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary** (page 3624), warfare is "the action of going to war or of engaging in war" while war (page 3621) is "The state of...armed conflict between nations or states". This is clearly far removed from terrorism, which the dictionary defines (page 3258) as, "...the systematic employment of violence and intimidation to coerce a government or community, especially into acceding to specific political demands...".

wars; and low intensity, such as irregular, guerilla and unconventional conflicts (Freysinger 1991: 322-323). Halliday argues that the concept of low intensity conflict is simply a modernised version of 1960s US counter-insurgency doctrine, combined with British concepts of low intensity operations, largely developed from British experience in Northern Ireland (Halliday 1989; 70-71). Of course, this classification of violence has been designed for the purposes of formal military strategic analysis and, indeed, US strategists have defined six areas for which responses would be required, ranging from counter- and pro-insurgency, through terrorism to peacekeeping (Freysinger 1991: 324). From the point of view of perpetrators of violence, however, the term also has a utility for it is usually taken to describe violent activity inferior in intensity to warfare and thus is equivalent to what is more popularly known as "low-level violence". Despite official US usage, it is also conventionally distinguished from terrorism in terms of its purpose and **modus operandi**.

A definition of terrorism

The important point in this distinction is that the definition of low intensity conflict will then include violence that might otherwise be construed to be terrorist but which differs from it because it is related to specific military objectives and is thereby limited in its effect in the same way as warfare is. Of course, this distinction is of little use unless there is also a clear definition of terrorism available to us. This, however, is more difficult to achieve, precisely because of the inevitable propaganda use of the term and its misuse for political purposes, particularly by governments who tend to construe all forms of violent resistance to them as "terrorist". There is also a plethora of definitions available to us[2], which further confuse the issue since few of them cover all aspects of terrorism.

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[2] There appear to be around 120 definitions of the term available to sociologists! (Heiberg 1988: 27n3, citing Miller (1987).

Nonetheless, for working purposes, it is possible to find a definition which is sufficiently broad to apply to the circumstances under study; namely the situation amongst the Mediterranean basin states. The most generally accepted definition of terrorism is that proposed by Paul Wilkinson (Wilkinson 1986: 51):-

> Political terrorism may be briefly described as coercive intimidation. It is the systematic use of murder and destruction, and the threat of murder and destruction in order to terrorise individuals, groups, communities or governments into conceding to the terrorists' political demands.

Other forms of terrorism, of course, will also fit inside this definition, since the ultimate demands will simply cease to be political and will correspond, instead, to the terrorists' real aims. It might be added, that, unlike other forms of violence, terrorism is non-specific in its targets, in that the persons, groups or organisations which are targeted do not have to have any connection with the aims expressed. A more explicit definition of terrorism might there be:-

> Terrorism is, therefore, the use of violence, or the threat of violence, to achieve specifically political ends against a target or victim who has no necessary correlation with the factor exciting the terrorist activity originally and the primary means for achieving the desired end is fear. (Joffé 1989: 161)

Wilkinson, however, also provides a useful typology of terrorism which can be applied to the modern situation (Wilkinson 1986: 58). He generates four categories: sub-revolutionary terrorism which has objectives which stop short of trying to create fundamental revolutionary change; revolutionary terrorism which is directed towards outright revolutionary change; repressive terrorism which seeks to coerce individuals or groups to alter behaviour which the terrorist finds undesirable; and epiphenomenal terrorism which has no specific political aim but is a by-product of a wider situation of violence. Interestingly enough, the definitions given above do not preclude states from being terrorist themselves, either by giving material support to terrorist groups or by acting in ways

designed to achieve their objectives through the use of indiscriminate threat and fear. It is also worth noting that, although these definitions and typologies were constructed to describe the situation in Europe and the Middle East in the 1970s and 1980s - in the context of the Cold War, where the Soviet Union was seen (largely wrongly) as being one of the major factors encouraging the use of terrorist violence - they would fit equally well the situation today. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that, therefore, the causes and explanations of low-level violence are the same today as they were then.

The theoretical background

The concept of terrorism is relatively new, for, although terror has long played a part in warfare, hostilities and other forms of social violence, terrorism as a definable concept, with a theoretical rationale and a specific purpose, has not. Although there were clear examples of terrorism throughout history, such as the Sicarii in the first century AD and the Assassins who operated between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, they tended to be isolated over time. There was no systematic use of terrorism as part of a programme of hostilities designed to achieve a specific set of political objectives until the nineteenth century at the earliest (Wardlaw 1989: 18). Indeed, the first example of political terrorism is usually considered to be the **"Regime de la terreur"** of 1793-94 which also gave rise to the modern terms of "terrorist" and "terrorism".

In fact, modern terrorism really only starts at the end of the nineteenth century and depended heavily then for its theoretical justification on the violent Russian anarchist and nihilist traditions (Wardlaw 1989: 19-24). This was supplemented in the mid-twentieth century by the argument that terrorism had a liberating and cleansing effect on communities under repression, thus reinforcing other aspects of their struggles for liberation. The major theoreticians in this regard who were primarily concerned with the use of terrorism within the anti-colonialist struggle were Jean-Paul Sartre and Franz Fanon (Wardlaw 1989: 40-41; Wilkinson 1986: 71-80). To some extent, they mirrored the national liberationalist views of the Irish

Republican Brotherhood which, despite its commitment to mass action, nonetheless also invoked terrorism as a technique through its shadowy offshoot, the Invincibles (Gearty 1991: 22-23).

Apart from this psychological role for terrorism within the anti-colonial struggle, Sartre and Fanon also drew on other political traditions connected with Marxist socialism, for both Leninism and Maoism advocated the use of terror in their overall prescriptions for the seizure of power. This was, however, only one element in the armoury available to the anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist fighter. In reality, both Leninism and Maoism stimulated another form of low-level violence - guerilla warfare (Gearty 1991: 28-32). Leninism has tended to stimulate urban guerilla activities, whilst Maoism has been the preserve of the rural guerilla and has given rise to the concept of "revolutionary warfare" which was further developed by Che Guevara and the Vietnamese leader, General Giap (Wardlaw 1989: 46-47). It is, in fact, important to distinguish between guerilla warfare and terrorism, for the former has the characteristic, which it shares with conventional warfare, of having a defined enemy and of (usually) engaging in operations directed solely against that enemy whereas, as we have seen, terrorism is by definition indiscriminate. Nonetheless, as Wilkinson points out, guerilla action, particularly urban guerilla warfare has "...a far higher terrorism potential than any other mode of unconventional warfare." (Wilkinson 1986: 59). Indeed, this was manifest in the views of Guillen and Marighela, the theoreticians of Latin American urban guerillas, such as Tupamaros in the 1960s and 1970s (Gearty 1991: 37-44).

The situation today

Interestingly enough, this theoretical background seems almost completely irrelevant, at least as far as the contemporary situation in the Mediterranean basin is concerned. One reason for this is that, with the end of the Cold War and of the major anti-colonial struggles, one of the major background factors encouraging classical terrorism and guerilla warfare has disappeared. The Palestinian movements, for

instance - once one of the main sources of terrorism - have effectively accepted that their struggle against Israel has been unsuccessful and, although there remain twelve rejectionist movements alongside the mainstream PLO which has reluctantly accepted the Oslo Accord, these movements are controlled by Syria and now exercise autonomous control only over the rhetoric, not the substance, of struggle. The collapse of armed Palestinian resistance to Israel, coupled with the apparent abandonment of state-sponsored terrorism, at least by Syria, is a direct consequence of the end of the Cold War and was catalysed by the UN-authorised and US-led Multinational Coalition's successful war against Iraq in 1991 (Joffé 1993: 3-9; Joffé 1994: 251). The PLO, in fact, had long renounced terrorism as a weapon, although it continued to support unconventional warfare against Israel up to the Oslo Accord.

The second reason for the obsolescence of the original theoretical background to terrorism and guerilla warfare was the radical change in the ideological climate that developed during the 1980s and reached its apogee with the end of the Cold War. Socialism and ideologies derived from it have been in large measure abandoned in the past five years. There is also a growing consensus within the developed world that the use of violence to resolve disputes is inadmissible, certainly at a sub-state level. At the state level there has, paradoxically been an increased resort to violence, but this has generally been manifested through conventional forms of warfare. Violence, however, has not disappeared from the political and diplomatic discourse of the developing world. Indeed:-

> ...the European world, the world of the Paris Charter of 1990 is a Grotian one, observing norms of cooperation and perhaps even has its Kantian element: a civil society of civil societies, with sovereignty fraying at the edges; while at least parts of the world beyond are still Hobbesian, with force still a very active final arbiter within and between countries, and sovereignty loudly proclaimed. (Roberts 1991: 522)

Of course, this quotation was written before war erupted in the former Yugoslavia, but it is still

substantially true. In such a context, where the developed world has become "a civil society of civil societies" and has substantially renounced the socialist option, recourse to terrorism with the kinds of theoretical justifications described above has also virtually disappeared. All that remains are irredentist issues such as the Provisional IRA and Northern Ireland, or ETA and the Basque Country. More importantly, such movements appear to be recognising that their pattern of operations is becoming increasingly irrelevant. The IRA, for example, has now called a cease-fire as a preliminary step to renouncing violent action altogether and even ETA has intimated that it might consider a similar path. The revolutionary terrorist option, in Europe at least, seems to be moribund.

This is not to say, however, that recourse to terrorism itself has disappeared. Indeed, it could be argued that two new kinds of political terrorism have appeared, particularly in Northern Europe, and they may eventually find an echo in the southern part of the continent as well. The first of these reflects the ways in which mainstream politics are developing throughout the European Union as ideological differences between major political movements decline. The second reflects the growth in xenophobia throughout the continent and its exploitation by right-wing movements which are essentially undemocratic in nature. There is a third category, too - the growth in criminal terrorism, a problem which has particularly affected Southern Europe, but, since this is essentially an issue of domestic policing and, except in the context of scandals such as the **tangentopoli** political crisis in Italy, has no political significance, it will be excluded from this discussion.

The first category of modern terrorism is derived from the growth in single-issue political movements, particularly in the context of the environment, human rights and animal rights. Such movements, which are often essentially moral in inspiration, face a major potential contradiction. Since their objectives, claims and arguments are based on moral principle, it is extremely difficult for them to admit of compromise. Yet the very nature of the democratic discourse relies on compromise and flexibility in

practice, whatever the essential moral core of the debate. Furthermore, by their very nature, such movements are minority movements and cannot thus use their electoral weight effectively unless national political preferences are relatively equally balanced. They then might have a degree of influence as potential political allies for one or other mainstream party. The Greens in Germany have, on occasion, been able to do this at a **länder** level.

The inability of such movements to force their case to the top of the political agenda has resulted in the growth of "extra-parliamentary" political protest. In one sense, this is nothing new, for it means, in essence, the use of public demonstrations or public disorder to explicate a political argument and to force the formal political system and institutions to respond. There is, however, another tendency, which corresponds to sub-revolutionary terrorism in Wilkinson's typology and which, in certain fields of political activity, is becoming increasingly frequent. This is the use of terrorist attacks against institutions and individuals which have some connection with the political issue in question. The terrorist quality of these attacks is implicit in the fact that they involve and knowingly involve individuals and groups which are completely unrelated to the particular issue at stake, even if they have some general connection with the general field of concern. Such movements are still minuscule, but in Britain there are groups concerned with animal rights that have had recourse to such methods and, as frustration grows with the formal political process on a wider scale, recourse to similar tactics must be anticipated - indeed, has been threatened in connection with environmental issues.

The second renewed manifestation of terrorism in Europe is much more immediate and threatening. This is the use, by extreme right-wing Fascist or National Socialist groups of terrorism specifically directed against migrants. The worst examples of this have occurred in Germany, but there have also been outbreaks elsewhere, and, although there is a clear interrelation between the political demands of such groups - the exclusion or removal of migrants - and the targets they attack - migrant families or migrant hostels - such incidents are terrorist in nature and

intent, and examples of repressive terrorism, because they are designed to create terror and are indiscriminate in the specific targets they choose amongst migrant communities. They are also overtly political as they are designed to pressure public opinion and government into altering the legal status of migrants in Europe.

At present, such incidents are treated as being primarily criminal in nature. This is, however, an approach which could be flawed because there is growing evidence of strengthening covert links between such groups, together with the use of sophisticated information technology to maintain them and to generate political propaganda on a very wide scale. They will, eventually require a predominantly political response unless they can be properly mastered in the immediate future, a development that appears to be unlikely to be realised. Theoretically, too, these movements have a coherent ideology based on racial hierarchies and corporate institutions which is revolutionary in intent. To this extent they differ from purely criminal cartels which may also engage in epiphenomenal terrorism in the pursuit of their interests.

Behind both types of terrorism described above there lies an acute disagreement over the nature and role of the state. As Heiberg points out (Heiberg 1988: 29-29), states arrogate to themselves a monopoly of violence and determine legality on the basis of their control of power. Actions involving violence are treated within the state context through the sanction of law, which reflects the lack of symmetry in the control of power between individual and state. Individuals, however, normally make moral and political judgements based on matters of personal conviction. However, whereas such judgements and actions in the service of the state - particularly if it is a nation-state - are acclaimed, if they are directed against the state their perpetrators are legally disenfranchised by the state and morally disenfranchised by public opinion, whilst the cause they represent is politically disenfranchised. This is particularly true of political terrorism and explains the intense condemnation such acts stimulate, as opposed to other aspects of violence. In short, there is a powerful official and public tendency to

condemn outright the cause on behalf of which the acts were performed, whatever its intrinsic moral and political status. Alternatively public opinion splits into two diametrically opposed moral factions - hence the frequent ambiguity in popular responses towards terrorist acts, where, "One man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter".

The ambivalence of the state towards the intrinsic moral nature of political acts has a further consequence. This is that, in the ultimate analysis, acts which it legally condemns in one context are approved in another - particularly if they involve violence. This is because such acts, when approved, serve a purpose considered superior to that served by law; namely the preservation of state sovereignty or even of the state itself. This is particularly true of warfare where, outside the "rules of war", the majority of usual legal norms are set aside. If, the state can, in the last analysis, base its approval of individual acts of violence on principles outside the legal system which find, moreover, their moral justification in the innate and integral nature of nation which itself legitimises the state - because the normative nature of the European state is that it is a nation-state - it follows that nations are likely to arrogate the same rights to themselves, whether they are constituted as states or not. The only difference will be that, whereas the state enfranchises those acting in its own interests, it disenfranchises those that do not and thus the national claim which they embody. Conversely, that nation will justify acts of violence designed to achieve statehood as inherently morally justified.

It must also be the case that any group which claims access to an ideology that legitimises the concept of the state will use a similar justification for recourse to violence. Indeed, the fact that such violence may be terrorist in nature becomes irrelevant because its moral justification is superior to that of any legal system which can only be legitimised by the state's monopoly of violence. Indeed, that monopoly in itself is the justification for the use of any kind of violence against it. This type of justification of terrorism, which harks back to the principles of nineteenth century anarchism, is of crucial importance when the contemporary situation along the southern

shore of the Mediterranean is considered.

The Middle East and North Africa.

It is precisely arguments such as these which lie behind the three types of terrorism that characterise the Middle East and North Africa today - state or state-sponsored terrorism; national liberational terrorism; and the revolutionary terrorism associated with political Islam. Largely because of the changes in the international landscape associated with the end of the Cold War and the destruction of Iraq's regional aspirations, the first two of these three categories are in decline today. This is not, however, true of the third category, which, ironically enough has substantially benefitted from the earlier experience of its predecessors!

The role of state-sponsored terrorism

Six states can today be considered to be involved with, or to have been involved with state-sponsored terrorism in the South Mediterranean region. They are the USA, Israel, Iran, Syria, Libya and Sudan. Other states, such as Iraq and Lebanon, have also had such links in the past but do not contribute significantly towards the contemporary situation.

The presence of the United States on such a list might seem surprising in view of the determination of all American governments to deal firmly with manifestations of terrorism, wherever they appear (see Bremer III 1988: 7-15). This has been particularly true since 1990, because the formal global hegemonic stability of the United States in the wake of the Paris Charter has clearly made a major contribution towards controlling terrorism worldwide. The disappearance of Communist Eastern Europe alongside the Soviet Union has meant that terrorist groups such as the Red Army Faction and some Palestinian groups have lost a safe base area and source of logistical support. This has, no doubt, contributed significantly to the dramatic decline in national liberational terrorism, as has the American sponsorship of the peace process between Israel and the Arab states on the one hand and between Israel and

the Palestinians on the other.

In one respect, however, the United States appears to have acted outside this rubric. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the American government under the Carter administration made a decision to provide material and logistical support to the Afghani resistance to Soviet occupation. Under the Reagan administration, this fell under the rubric of engaging in low intensity conflict as part of the process of proinsurgency (Freysinger 1991: 324). Saudi Arabia was also engaged in the process and the CIA was placed in charge of the actual management of the operation, alongside the Pakistani security services. Under the Zia ul-Haq regime in Pakistan, the Pakistani authorities were anxious to foster the Islamist resistance to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan to the disadvantage of other factions within the resistance movement and the American government made no effort to prevent this; indeed, even encouraged it on the grounds of efficacy.

The result is that American aid throughout the decade-long struggle in Afghanistan not only supported the resistance against Soviet occupation, it also indirectly fostered a radicalised, extremist and militarily-skilled Islamist movement trained in Pakistan by some of the Afghani factions, particularly that controlled by Gulbakian Hekmatyar, and drawn from all over the Middle East and North Africa. Since the end of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and particularly since the assassination of the Pakistani leader, Zia ul-Haq in 1988, the Pakistani authorities have forced such Middle Eastern and North African Islamists to leave. They have become, instead, a potential well of terrorist and guerilla fighters throughout the Mediterranean region. They have formed a major component of the Islamist resistance in Bosnia, now estimated to be a few thousand men strong. Their activities have been reported from Egypt and, most importantly, they have played a major role within the Algerian crisis where they have created a major terrorist organisation, the **Groupe Islamiste Armé**.

Israel's involvement in state terrorism has been quite explicitly linked to its struggle with the PLO. Quite apart from actions directed against Palestinian groups, leaders and activists in Europe and the Middle

East by Mossad and associated agencies throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (see Seale 1992), the Israeli armed forces have engaged in operations in Lebanon explicitly designed to be indiscriminate and to cause terror in order to coerce their opponents (see Fiske 1990). The latest stage of these operations, which go back to the early 1960s, began in 1982 with Operation Peace-for-Galilee - the invasion of Lebanon which brought the Israeli army to the outskirts of Beirut and which began in response to the near-fatal wounding of Israeli Ambassador Orlov in London by the Abu Nidal group (Gearty 1991: 58-62). After the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, indiscriminate air and ground strikes were used to intimidate Palestinian and Lebanese guerillas after every incident in which Israel itself was attacked. The process still continues today, as the shelling of Southern Lebanon in July 1993 and the revenge attacks on Southern Lebanon after bombings of Israeli-occupied buildings in Buenos Aires and London in June and July 1994 demonstrate. It is a tragic irony that, far from achieving their object of deterring attack on Israel, these actions, while they may have defanged the PLO, have created a far more resolute and intransigent Lebanese opponent - **Hizbullah** - which is quite prepared to use terrorism and guerilla techniques against Israeli interests worldwide (see below).

The other four states implicated in state or state sponsored terrorism in the Middle East have quite different motivations. As far as Libya is concerned, the primary motivation has been two-fold: on the one hand to support Palestinian aspirations as part of Libya's Arab nationalist responsibilities which the Qadhafi regime has, until recently, made a central feature of its ideology; and, on the other, to destroy its opposition abroad. Both aspects are also derived from the fundamental principles of the political doctrines developed by Colonel Qadhafi in **The Green Book** and reflect the view that the Third Universal Theory provides the absolute theoretical justification for anti-imperialism and for an unremitting struggle against imperialism by any means available.

The Palestinian struggle is one aspect of this basic issue and Libyan dissidents, who by their opposition have placed themselves beyond the

revolutionary pale and thus may be exterminated, form the other. It should also be borne in mind that many of the groups labelled by the West as terrorist are, within this doctrinal definition, concerned with national liberation and thus Libyan support for them has never been construed as support for terrorism by Tripoli. This was certainly the case with Libyan support for the IRA in the 1970s and for Palestinian movements in the 1970s and 1980s.

The elimination of Libyan dissidents began in 1980, after Colonel Qadhafi, addressing a Revolutionary Committee congress in February 1980, called on them to, "...exterminate the stray dogs of the revolution." For a period of four years there were regular attacks on Libyan dissidents in Britain, Italy, Greece and the USA. The attacks stopped only after the St James's Square seige in London in April 1984, when Libya began to realise the implications of the weight of Western hostility directed against it. This culminated in April 1986 with American air attacks on Tripoli and Benghazi in retaliation of alleged Libyan sponsorship of an attack on a discotheque in Berlin frequented by American servicemen stationed there.

Despite the opening of the so-called Libyan "charm offensive" in 1987, in the wake of the bombing of Tripoli and Benghazi, the incidence of Libyan involvement in terrorism thereafter actually increased rather than decreased. Before the bombing, only two incidents, apart from support for the Palestinians and attacks on Libyan dissidents abroad, were unambiguous Libyan attempts at terrorism, according to the State Department's own statistics. Immediately afterwards, there were fourteen such incidents and a new era in Libyan support for and sponsorship of terrorism opened. This was the use of terrorism for revenge. This was undoubtedly the motive behind Libyan material support to the IRA once again, which began in 1987. It is also the adduced motive for the destruction of Pan Am Flight No. 103 in December 1988 and of a UTA aircraft over Chad in September 1989, if, in fact, either or both incidents were carried out at the

instigation of the Libyan regime[3]. In any case, since 1990, the Libyan regime has not been involved in terrorism of any kind, nor is there any evidence that it will do so again in the near future, despite Colonel Qadhafi's fiery rhetoric at the annual celebrations of the Great September Revolution on September 1, 1994.

Syrian involvement in state-sponsored terrorism has long formed a clandestine element of its policy towards the Palestinian issue, particularly as far as Syrian ambitions to control the PLO are concerned. For the past two decades, Palestinian factions opposed to Yasir Arafat and his **Fatah** movement have received support from the Syrian authorities. Specific instances of Syrian-sponsored terrorism, however, have not always been attributable to the direct instigation of the Asad regime. The Syrian security services also have a tradition of autonomous behaviour since they often form part of the personal clientage groups of leading Syrian political figures and thus articulate the specific policy interests of their patrons, rather than those of the regime itself[4]. In any case, with

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[3] The evidence of Libyan involvement, particularly in the Lockerbie incident is ambiguous. The forensic evidence is not absolutely clear, while the identification evidence is uncertain. Furthermore, even if the two individuals accused were involved, it is not clear that the Libyan regime was automatically thereby implicated. Security services in the Middle East and North Africa are notorious for their autonomy outside the control of central government and links between the Syrian and Libyan security services were at that time particularly strong. Thus the original claim - that Iran was responsible for the destruction of the American aircraft as an act of revenge for the destruction of an Iran Air aircraft by the USS Vincennes in the Persian Gulf the previous July and that Syria cooperated in arranging the attack - could still be correct.

[4] This recalls Hannah Arendt's views on totalitarian state in which rivalries, factionalism, hierarchies and separate centres of power and influence destroy the monolithic nature of the state.

the Syrian decision to abandon its links with the now-defunct Soviet Union in 1989 - when the Gorbatchev regime made it clear that it would not support Syrian ambitions for "strategic parity" with Israel - and to participate in the Multinational Coalition against Iraq, Syrian interest in sponsoring terrorism has declined. Today, Syria's only interests in this regard seem to be to offer moral support to the Palestinian rejectionist groups based in Damascus - although not to allow them any freedom of action - and to continue to permit Iranian contacts with **Hizbullah** in Lebanon, as well as allowing **Hizbullah** to prosecute its own war of retaliation against Israel for actions taken against it in Lebanon.

The case for Sudan's involvement in, or in the sponsorship of, state terrorism seems even weaker. It dates from the arrival of the Wild Bashir regime to power after a coup in June 1989 and the concomitant domination of the political process in Sudan thereafter by Dr Hassan Turabi's **National Islamic Front.** Most of the accusations of Sudanese involvement reflect the anxieties of surrounding states over Sudan's new-found propensity to support violent Islamist movements elsewhere inside the Arab world. These anxieties - felt particularly by Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt - were intensified in 1992 by the evidence of increasingly close links between Iran and Sudan after a visit to Khartoum by Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and the announcement of the formation of a "Green Front" between the two countries. In reality, however, hard evidence of Sudanese involvement in major terrorist incidents is sparse, despite the fact that Khartoum has apparently become a refuge for former terrorist activists, such as Carlos who was recently arrested there and extradited to France.

The one state where there is substantial evidence of state sponsorship of terrorism is Iran. However, here, too, the involvement of the Iranian state is by no means unambiguous. There is evidence of support for Islamic groups and of attacks on Iranian dissidents abroad. There are also claims of Iranian involvement in terrorism for reasons of revenge (as with the Lockerbie affair) and vengeance (as with the case of Salman Rushdie). Most of the claims arise from the policy of the "Export of the Revolution", the

objective of the radical faction inside the Islamic republic during the 1980s. It was at that time that Iranian involvement in and in the sponsorship of terrorism and unconventional warfare became most evident (see Joffé 1991).

The most notable achievement of this involvement was the Iranian support given for the creation of **Hizbullah** as a radical Shi'a alternative to **Amal** in South Lebanon in the wake of the Israeli invasion in 1982. **Hizbullah**, particularly the Mughniya faction of the organisation, became active in hostage-taking, guerilla warfare and terrorism directed against Western involvement in Middle Eastern affairs and against states and individuals seen as supporting Western interests. It is today primarily concerned with confronting Israel through guerilla tactics and unconventional warfare as a result of Israeli involvement in South Lebanon. It is this that explains the **Hizbullahi**-backed attacks on Israeli and Jewish property in Asia, Latin America and Europe in the past two years and the repeated attacks on Israeli forces and on Israel's ally, the South Lebanese Army in the so-called "Security Zone" of South Lebanon. It is a moot question as to whether these incidents, which are reactive, not pro-active, in nature, can really be classed as terrorist, since they involve a measured response to aggression as well as a defined target and involve a declared enemy - whether military or civilian. They are in this sense, at least, not examples of "indiscriminate coercion."

The most important aspect of Iran's involvement in such activities today is that it is not an example of state-directed policy, but rather a consequence of an internal struggle within the Iranian regime. Throughout the 1980s, in the wake of the Islamic revolution in 1979, two factions increasingly fought for the Ayatolleh Khomeini's support. The radicals formed one faction and were associated with his son, Ahmad Khomeini, the one-time minister of the interior, Ali Akbar Mohtashami (who is also credited with initiating Iranian support for **Hizbullah** when he was ambassador to Syria) and the former security minister, Muhammad Muhammadi Reyshahri. The radicals encouraged state control over the economy, the completion of the revolution inside Iran and its export abroad. The second faction, headed by the then **majlis** speaker,

Hashemi Rafsanjani, began to coalesce towards the middle of the decade and consisted of pragmatists within the leadership who knew that the war against Iraq could not be won and that the Iranian economy needed urgent attention if the revolution was to be preserved. Members of both groups, however, stemmed from the same clerical origins as did the regime itself.

During Ayatolleh Khomeini's lifetime, a balance was preserved between the two groups and, with his death and the succession of Ayatolleh Ali Khamana'i as spiritual leader, it appeared that the pragmatists had won the struggle for control of the Iranian state, particularly when Hashemi Rafsanjani was elected president. Ayatolleh Khamana'i had been a close associate of Hashemi Rafsanjani as his predecessor as president. However, it has become increasingly clear that the struggle between radicals and pragmatists has been renewed in the past two years. The radicals have now been joined by a group of religious conservatives who fear, like the radicals but for their own reasons, that the gains of the Islamic revolution are being imperiled by President Rafsanjani's moderate policies which are designed to encourage foreign investment and bring an end to Iran's diplomatic isolation. The president has enjoyed little success in his first objective and none at all in his second, for the American policy of "dual containment" has very successfully ensured that diplomatic isolation will continue, at least until the end of the Clinton administration.

The consequence has been that, first, President Rafsanjani has been forced to be more explicit about Iran's Islamic credentials and his own commitment to them than he might otherwise have been (thus reinforcing foreign prejudices about the unreconstructed nature of the regime) and, second, that the radicals have used whatever weapons they can to discredit him still further in international eyes. Conversely, the president cannot be seen to be betraying the principles of the Islamic revolution by not supporting Iran's more radical commitments, such as the "Green Front" alliance with Sudan and **Hizbullah** in the Lebanon. Even the freeing of Western hostages held by **Hizbullah** in 1990 and 1991 was difficult for the president to achieve, at a time when he was in far

better control of the Iranian government than he is today. Other incidents, such as the visits by Iranian intelligence chief and former information minister, Ali Fallahian, to West Germany and the revelation of Iranian links with the IRA, were deliberately played up by the radical faction in Teheran to embarrass the president, who now cannot be seen by his domestic audience to be weakening in his support of the principles of the revolution, whatever the cost to his moderate credentials abroad. Iranian sponsored terrorism or other forms of low-level violence are, then, merely a manifestation of this internal struggle for control of the Iranian state.

The Islamist option

In fact, the greatest threat of low-level violence today comes from the politicised Sunni Islamist movements now so widespread throughout the Middle East and North Africa. These movements have, of course, been stimulated by the Iranian revolution in 1979, but they have quite different antecedents. They originate from the Islamic reformist movements of the mid-twentieth century, particularly from the **Ikhwan Muslimin** (Muslim Brotherhood) which was founded in Egypt in 1928. Their radicalisation stems from the confrontation with Nasserist Egypt in the 1960s and the writings of their major ideologue, Sayyid Qutb. Qutb not only believed that Islam contained all that was necessary to define an Islamic state as an ideal mode of human political organisation, but that, since both the Islamic and non-Islamic worlds were in a state of **jahiliyya** (ignorance, which in the case of the Islamic world was culpable ignorance), there was an imperative obligation on believers to transform them from their state of **jahiliyya** through **taqfir** (retreat, migration) away from **jahiliyya** and then by **jihad (holy war)** including violence, if necessary (Choueiri 1990:134-143). His arguments were buttressed by similar views developed in Pakistan by Maulana Maududi.

It was only after the discrediting of the Arab nationalist ideal as a result of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, however, that radical Islam began to attract a significant audience:-

> Fundamentalists argued that the Arabs had lost the war not because they were busy worshipping - as the radical caricature would have it - but because they had lost their faith and bearings: disconnected from a deeply held system of beliefs, the Arabs proved easy prey to Israeli power. The argument made by thoughtful fundamentalists was similar to the one made by radical critics: the latter, too, had argued that society needs a system of beliefs, an ideology, to guide it. The fundamentalists' contention was that Islam offered that system of belief, that it could do what no imported doctrine could hope to do - mobilise the believers, instil discipline, and inspire the people to make sacrifices and, if necessary, to die. (Ajami 1981: 52)

The example of the Islamic revolution in Iran persuaded many supporters of this radical Islamic vision that it was not just necessary to confront Israel through Islam but that Sayyid Qutb's vision of the Islamic state was vital for the Muslim world to survive. Thus, during the 1980s, political Islam made considerable strides in amassing popular support throughout the Middle East and North Africa. The increasing degree of Western hostility towards the region, culminating in the war against Iraq, also fed this trend. Furthermore, the success of the Shi'a Islamist movements in Iran (in creating a state) and in Lebanon (in confronting Israel) were also powerful stimulants, as was the assassination of Egyptian President Sadat in 1981. The anticipated dissolution of the Egyptian state was prevented by resolute action by the new Mubarak regime. It was also clear that existing Middle Eastern states would not accept the Islamist alternative without resistance, as the suppression of the Hama uprising in Syria in 1980 and the reaction of the Tunisian government to the **Annahda** party in 1986-87 showed.

As a result, by the end of the decade, Islamist movements throughout the Middle East had generally abandoned attempts to capture the state. Instead they turned increasingly towards capturing the loyalties of society by effective social work and small-scale organisation - in Gilles Kepel's phrase, they abandoned the attempt to re-islamize these states "from above", turning instead to a new attempt to re-

islamize them "from below"; although the ultimate objective was the same (Kepel 1994: 45-46). This new emphasis on society, rather than the state, as the immediate object of political Islam did not necessarily, however, mean that the struggle for control of the state was, thereby, abandoned. Three cases currently demonstrate the continuing vitality of this objective: **Hamas** in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the FIS - the **Front Islamique du Salut** (**Jibha Islamiyya li'l-Inqadh**) - in Algeria and the **Gamiat Islami** in Egypt. Interestingly enough, in Lebanon **Hizbullah**, now that it has deputies within the Lebanese parliament, no longer seeks to destroy the Lebanese government by force; if, indeed, it ever did.

Hamas, which was an off-shoot from the **Ikhwan Muslimin**, was created in the 1980s as an Islamic welfare organisation for the Gaza Strip. It soon, however, became directly involved in the struggle against Israeli occupation as a result of the outbreak of the **intifada** in December 1987. As the **intifada** began to wane in the early 1990s, **Hamas** created its own armed clandestine wing, the **Izzadine Qassim Brigades**, named after a charismatic mullah who had lead rural resistance to the British presence in Palestine during the Arab Revolt and who was killed in 1936. This group began a guerilla campaign against Israeli forces and a terror campaign against Israeli civilians, both within the Occupied Territories and in Israel itself. It was certainly very effective and is still in being, for, although **Hamas** has so far avoided confrontation with the PLO administration being set up in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, this clandestine armed group has continued actions against Israeli targets. It now has a two-fold objective: to replace the PLO as the vehicle of the aspirations of Palestinians under occupation and to confront and, if possible, destroy the Israeli state by whatever means that are available. Despite Israeli claims to the contrary, it is not clear that the group can be classified as terrorist, for it is really engaged in guerilla and unconventional warfare. It is, in effect, continuing the **intifada** by other means now that the PLO has signed a peace treaty with Israel.

The same is basically true of the activities of armed groups associated with the FIS in Algeria. The interruption of the electoral process in Algeria in

January 1992 not only forced the FIS to abandon its tactic of being a mass political movement seeking control of the Algerian state through an Islamist rhetoric, it also forced the few leaders of the movement remaining at liberty inside Algeria to consider reviving the same tactics of guerilla warfare as were used during the war of independence against France between 1954 and 1962. The result has been the growth of two separate armed movements: the **Groupe Islamiste Armé** which operates in the capital, Algiers, and in the hinterland towards Blida; and the **Mouvement Islamiste Armé** or, as it has recently become known, the **Armée Islamique du Salut (Jaysh Islamiyya li'l-Inqadh)** which operates widely in Eastern and Western Algeria and is said to have up to 10,000 persons under arms. The GIA was created by the "Afghanistes", members of the FIS who had trained in Afghanistan and who reject any possibility of dialogue with the Algerian government, seeking instead a revolutionary removal of the regime, and depends on the support of the Algerois peasantry who are amongst the poorest and most disaffected peasants in Algeria. The MIA/AIS is quite different; it derives from an earlier attempt to created an armed Islamic resistance movement in Algeria during the 1980s, led by Mustafa Bouyali, and its current leader, Abdelkader Chebouti, was a member of the group. It seeks an evolutionary solution to the situation and uses violence only to persuade the regime to negotiate with the FIS once again - a process that now seems ready to begin.

The GIA, however, wedded as it is to a revolutionary solution of the situation - and probably seriously infiltrated by Algerian military security, elements of which are also opposed to a negotiated solution, but for different reasons (see Roberts 1994a and Roberts 1994b) - is bound to seek to disrupt negotiations. To do this it will continue and intensify the terrorist tactics it began in 1993. These were directed first at the security services, then at public servants, then at intellectuals (eighteen journalists have been killed in the last two years) and finally at foreigners (with fifty deaths during the same period). Despite threats to carry the struggle into France, this is most unlikely to occur simply because the GIA lacks the necessary support base and would have to confront the FIS and its supporters. There have already been clashes between

the two movements which have resulted in several deaths and cooperation between them, given their very different agendas, is inconceivable. Nonetheless, the GIA is a true revolutionary terrorist organisation, despite its stated opposition to the Algerian state, since its violence is clearly indiscriminate coercion. Furthermore, despite its relative isolation within the Algerian political context, it has its imitators elsewhere.

The most obvious parallel is in Egypt, where the Egyptian authorities have been engaged in a low intensity conflict with clandestine Islamist movements since 1986. The conflict stems from the unresolved social situation created in the wake of the assassination of President Sadat in 1981 and the subsequent repression of an attempted Islamist rebellion in the southern town of Assiyut. Thereafter, the Egyptian government attempted to placate Islamist sentiment by cosmetic modifications of the legal code and granting official tolerance of the **Ikhwan Muslimin**, which now has a dominant position in professional organisations and is also influential in the al-Azhar mosque-university which dominates the field of public morality in Egypt. However, worsening economic conditions and the threat of extensive economic reforms required by the IMF which, in the short term, at least, would worsen living conditions, gave birth once again to a clandestine Islamist movement dedicated to replacing the Mubarak regime. The movement has made use of guerilla and terrorist tactics to achieve this end, with the assassination of public figures, clashes with the Coptic population of Egypt, particularly in upper Egypt, assassinations of leading intellectuals and attacks on tourists. The Egyptian government has responded with a massive campaign of repression and the **Gamiat Islami** movement has been forced to significantly reduce its activities. It is still active, however, and has not renounced the use of sub-revolutionary and repressive terrorism.

The financing of terrorism

The Egyptian government, in common with its Algerian and Tunisian counterparts, has long claimed that there is effective coordination between clandestine Islamist

groups engaged in guerilla warfare and terrorism which is carried out by Iran and Sudan. This is, however, very little evidence indeed that this is the case. There have certainly been contacts between such groups and Sudan, although there is no evidence of material aid or of coordination. Ironically enough, the only real evidence of aid and coordination has been with individuals and groups inside Saudi Arabia - the original paymaster for the **Mujahhidin** in Afghanistan at American behest and, ostensibly, a close ally of the Egyptian government! It is an open secret that the Saudi Arabian government did provide funds to Islamist movements up to the war against Iraq, although it must be emphasised this was not done to encourage such groups to undermine the governments of the countries in which they operated.

Individuals in Saudi Arabia have, however, actually financed clandestine groups and, in 1994, the Saudi Arabian government had to take action against one such individual, a junior member of the Bin Laden family, because of the financing role he had played. The Bin Laden family, which is one of the leading merchant families in Saudi Arabia, comes, like most of the others, originally from Yemen. Yemen, interestingly enough, has become a training base Islamist guerillas in recent years, largely because of the growth of an official Islamist movement there, the **Islah** party. Associated with the **Islah** is a second movement, **Islamic Jihad**, and this movement has offered Egyptian Islamist activists and, it is believed, activists from other states, training facilities in recent years. There is, thus, evidence of a minor degree of coordination and external financing of such movements but, in general, they have generated their own resources without external aid. This has certainly been true of the MIA/AIS, despite claims of gun-running operations from France to Morocco and then to Algeria.

Conclusion

From what has been said above, it is clear that a potential terrorist threat to the South Mediterranean rim states comes from three sources: the spill-over of the domestic power struggle in Iran; the failure of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians

under occupation; and the struggle between regimes and Sunni Islamist oppositions in countries such as Egypt and Algeria. However, compared with the situation in the 1980s, the threat is far less severe and is closely connected with the clash between legal and moral legitimation of the state there. To a large extent, too, the existence of such tensions is a testament to the continuing economic and demographic crisis facing the region and their removal will require a concomitant solution of the economic dilemma of achieving effective and egalitarian economic development.

Unfortunately, the current patterns of economic restructuring are likely, in the short term at least, to worsen living standards and thus will also intensify political tensions. There is every likelihood, therefore, that guerilla action and terrorism linked to political Islam will increase in the near future. This will be intensified by the extension of the globalised Western culture associated with the global economy that is currently be constructed. Elite groups in the Middle East are likely to embrace such a culture, as they benefit from economic restructuring. The mass of the populations there, who will be excluded, in the short term at least, from such benefits, will also reject the Western cultural counterpart, turning instead towards Islam and increasingly treating governing elites as examples of **jahiliyya**. This, in turn, will intensify the struggle.

The outlook is thus bleak for the region as a whole and it could well be worsened if Western states continue to follow diplomatic patterns which are likely to intensify the confrontation. It is not clear that isolating Iran encourages a reduction in support for state-sponsored terrorism. Indeed, it might even make it more likely. Similarly, treating Libya as a pariah state and continuing the sanctions regime against Iraq merely persuades public opinion in the Arab world of the essential hostility of the West towards them. That, in turn, increases support for political Islam and for violent confrontation with Middle Eastern and North African governments which are increasingly seen as Western allies and surrogates. In this connection, failure in the peace processes between Israel and the Arab world or between Israel

and the Palestinians will intensify such a reaction. It should be borne in mind that Syria ceased, in effect, to support state-sponsored terrorism (even if the United States Congress is not yet prepared to recognise that it has) when it was able to collaborate with Western states in the war against Iraq, not because of its diplomatic and commercial isolation.

The situation in the North Mediterranean region is quite different, for the threat of terrorism and low-level violence arises essentially from the growth of crime and the development of new patterns of political articulation. It seems unlikely that these two sources will ever constitute anything more than a minor irritation to the governments involved, particularly as the old, irredentist political disputes associated with Ireland and the Basque Country seem to be about to be resolved. Nor is there much danger of the political struggles along the South Mediterranean rim being transferred northwards. The European Union has now constructed a series of effective techniques of migration control through the Trevi Group and the Dublin Convention.

The greatest danger seems to be that Europe will increasingly isolate itself from the problems of the Middle East and North Africa just at a time when greater economic integration is about to be introduced. The free trade areas now proposed between the European Union, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia are only intended to be the precursors of a more extensive arrangement involving all the states of the Southern Mediterranean rim. And that, in turn, will have significant political and security implications. Europe cannot, in short, ignore the fact of the potential for terrorism and guerilla warfare in the South Mediterranean region if its economic and security proposals are to bear fruit. It must, instead, seek with the states concerned solutions to the underlying problems from which the terrorism and guerilla warfare stems. That, in turn, may require new and imaginative approaches towards the Arab world and the Gulf from European statesmen, although there is, at present, no evidence that this will be forthcoming.

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