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MEMORANDUM

THE SUPPORTERS OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

Summary

Few international terrorist groups operate by themselves. They seek links with other groups and with patrons to enhance their credentials, improve their operational effectiveness, and assure themselves of a continuing base of financial and logistical support.

States support terrorist groups for a variety of reasons, including the need to establish or strengthen revolutionary credentials in order to gain greater regional or global influence. No state admits to supporting terrorism; the language is almost always couched in terms of support for "national liberation movements." Likewise, no known terrorist group has ever publicly admitted that it is a terrorist group or that it practices terrorism.

States which become patrons of terrorist groups have to reckon with the potential costs of such support. Most of the states that support terrorism have also been attacked by terrorist groups or members of hostile intelligence services.

Despite a number of international conventions designed to reduce international terrorism, a generally permissive international environment exists, particularly among third world nations. This permissiveness allows patron states, in the self-avowed pursuit of "national liberation," to continue to support international terrorism with relative impunity.

Libya

The government of Colonel Qadhafi has the dubious distinction of being the most prominent of all patron state supporters of international terrorism. Despite Qadhafi's repeated public pronouncements that he does not support terrorist groups, there has been a clear and consistent pattern of Libyan aid to almost every major international terrorist group, from the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

Libya's support for terrorism includes: financing for terrorist operations, weapons procurement and supply, the use of training camps and Libyan advisors for guerrilla training, use of Libyan embassy facilities abroad as support bases for terrorist operations, and the use of the Libyan Intelligence Service as an instrument of international terrorism. Qadhafi's major interests are in the Middle East; in particular the destruction of the state of Israel and the overthrow of conservative and moderate Arab states in the region. Therefore, most of his efforts are directed toward aiding Middle Eastern terrorism. His second concern is to serve as a champion of national liberation movements, particularly those of an Islamic cast. Qadhafi's final concern is with silencing those Libyan expatriates who have criticized his regime. He has no compunctions about using his intelligence organizations in campaigns to assassinate Libyans living abroad.

Groups which have benefited from Libya's patron state support include:

- PIRA
- all major Palestinian groups, particularly the PFLP and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC).
- Baader-Meinhof Gang/Red Army Faction
- Various Latin American terrorist groups
- Carlos

- Moro National Liberation Front (Philippines)
- Polisario
- various Iranian terrorist groups during the pre-revolutionary period.

Libyan terrorist training camps have hosted terrorists and members of "national liberation movements" from Latin America, Western Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia. Libyan financial aid derived from their oil revenues and Soviet weapons given originally to Middle East states and national liberation movements provide the logistical support for the operations of these groups.

South Yemen

The Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen makes camps and other training facilities available to a number of international terrorist groups. The PFLP maintains a major terrorist training camp there, and members of the Baader-Meinhof Gang/Red Army Faction, the Dutch Red Resistance Front and the Basque Fatherland and Freedom (ETA) have all participated in PFLP training. South Yemen also hosts radical leftist groups dedicated to the overthrow of moderate and conservative governments of the Middle East and Persian Gulf.

In addition to supporting international terrorism through its training camps, South Yemen has been used as a refuge for airline hijackers, and has permitted hijacked planes to land there. Although the Government of South Yemen couches such support in terms of "humanitarian concern for the passengers," hijackers know that South Yemen is a safehaven for them.

Iraq

In recent years, the Iraqi government has dropped its support for some terrorist groups. During the mid-1970's there were reports of various West European terrorist groups receiving Iraqi aid, including training and other logistical support. While it still provides assistance to some radical Palestinian organizations, Iraq is no longer a major patron state supporter of terrorism. However, the Iraqi intelligence service regularly perpetrates acts of international terrorism against enemies of the Baghdad regime living abroad and uses its diplomatic facilities as terrorist bases.

Syria

As a major promoter of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Syria has played an increasingly important role in Palestinian activities. It has backed radical elements within the PLO, including the PFLP, the PFLP-GC, and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP--the Soviet surrogate in the Palestinian movement).

The Syrian Intelligence Service and Syrian diplomatic facilities abroad have been used in support of various assassination campaigns against the enemies of Syrian President Assad.

Iran

Despite its radical, anti-Western rhetoric, the Tehran government is not presently an active patron state supporter of international terrorism. Many groups would like to receive Iranian largess, but internal difficulties and the war with Iraq seem to be Iranian priorities at the moment.

The Government of Iran, however, has permitted its intelligence service to perpetrate numerous acts of international terrorism. (These acts do not include the seizure of the American embassy in Tehran.) Its agents have attacked Iraqi and other targets in the Middle East, Western Europe, and probably the US.

The Palestinians

Over the past ten years, the larger Palestinian groups have become patron state supporters of international terrorism. Al-Fatah, the DFLP and the PFLP have provided training, arms, and other logistical support to the entire spectrum of international terrorism. Soviet weapons and Libyan and Syrian support have been funneled through the Palestinians at least to the following groups:

- PIRA
- Dutch Red Resistance Front
- Baader-Meinhof Gang/Red Army Faction
- Basque ETA
- Armenian terrorists
- various Turkish terrorists
- most Latin American terrorist groups
- Iranian terrorists in the pre-revolutionary period
- Japanese Red Army

USSR

The USSR has long been on record as opposing political terrorism as an instrument of international revolutionary activity. For both political and ideological reasons, however, the Soviets support what they regard as legitimate national liberation movements even though they know that some of that aid, including weapons, is diverted to international terrorist groups. Additionally, the Soviets know that some weapons and other aid given to states such as Libya will be passed on to terrorist groups.

The argument that the Soviets put forth about not supporting international terrorism is a semantic one. It is true that there is no evidence that the Soviets have directly instigated or carried out acts of international terrorism in recent years. It is also true, however, that without indirect Soviet assistance many terrorist groups would find their operations severely hampered. The major go-betweens in the Soviet-terrorism connection are:

- Libya
- Cuba
- South Yemen
- Syria
- Various Palestinian groups

Cuba

In Latin America, the Soviets use the Cubans as middlemen for funneling weapons and training to various insurgency movements or terrorist groups. While Cuba may maintain some of these links without specific guidance from Moscow, it seems clear that Cuba plays the same role in Latin America as do the Palestinians and the Libyans in the Middle East.