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CIA Director Casey Speaks On War Against Terrorism

Ed. Note: Terrorism, no matter how repugnant the word may be, is on everyone's tongue after the *Achille Lauro* incident. It was commented on by Senator Durenberger at the most recent breakfast of the Standing Committee on Law and National Security (see separate story this issue) and in our October issue which reviewed a Senate committee report on terrorism and briefed a plenary session on "International Cooperation Against Terrorism" sponsored by the ABA in London.

On Monday, October 14, your editor was invited to sit in on a conference entitled "International Terrorism: The Threat to Industry." The audience was comprised primarily of American businessmen who have to cope with terrorism here and in foreign countries—be it kidnapping or attacks on their factories or banks.

The conference was sponsored by Stanford Research Institute International in cooperation with the World Power and Terrorism Project, Georgetown Center for Strategic Studies, and the State University of New York's Institute for Studies in International Terrorism. That's quite a mouthful for multiple sponsorship but let me hasten to add they brought together some of the world's experts on the organization, training and execution of terrorist acts. They ranged from Sir John Hermon, Chief Constable for Northern Ireland, to the former Governor for Civil Administration, Basque, Spain, and included two Israelis who have experience with terrorism.

The attention of the businessmen was captured straight off by the keynote speaker, Joel Lisker, chief counsel and staff director of the Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary. He told the businessmen that the infrastructure to implement terrorism in the United States exists today and only awaits a Shiite signal to go into action. If that didn't grab their attention a statement by Dr. Yonah Alexander did—that of 2,781 terrorist incidents between 1968 and 1985, 1,698 were directed against businessmen!

There will be more reported on this conference when the transcript is available. This brief description is meant to serve only as an appetizer to the "piece de resistance" which was served up at lunch by Bill Casey, the director of Central Intelligence. With his permission, excerpts from his text are reprinted below. No one can fail to understand the threat of terrorism to our country after reading it.

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In this conference, we have undertaken examination of one of the critical issues of our day, for perhaps no other topic poses as much of a threat to the orderly functioning of democratic societies as does international terrorism. The grim reality is that terrorism is on the rise worldwide, and we can expect only more violence and death during the closing years of this century.

Whatever his specific political program, the terrorist always pursues one general goal—to fix in the public consciousness a sense of the terrorist's omnipotence and the public's helplessness. To do this, the terrorist takes advantage of the very civilization he seeks to destroy.

Factors Favoring Terrorism

The terrorist depends upon two factors for success in conducting his war on the mind. Both of these factors, ironically, are found only in the urban centers of open societies like ours and those of our friends around the world. The first, and most important of these, is coverage by the media. In this decade more people can be addressed by newspaper, television, radio, and magazines than ever before in history. What is more, the media is so effective that millions of people may learn of a terrorist attack that has taken place half a world away in a matter of minutes—or at most, hours.

The terrorist hopes that his deeds will be bannered on the six o'clock news throughout most of the developed world, will be commented on at length in the world's leading newspapers, and perhaps become the subject of everyday conversation.

Even if an attack fails, as in the case of the assassination attempt on Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the terrorist will nonetheless gain the maximum psychological impact of his deed by a bold public threat. As many of you may recall, the I.R.A. in a public notice told Mrs. Thatcher that, "This time you were lucky. But you have to be lucky all the time. We only have to be lucky once."

The second factor that aids terrorists in their campaign is the nature of modern urban society. The concentration of population offers anonymity to the terrorist. Weapons and money can be obtained through an infinite number of channels, thus preserving the terrorist's operational security. The variety and efficiency of transportation enhances the terrorist's mobility. Moreover, industrialized societies have more vulnerable high-value targets—such as computer centers, airlines, factories, shopping arcades, and even apartment complexes.

The Importance of Defense

Moreover, for the first time, terrorist attacks directed at American private businesses and businessmen overseas outnumbered terrorist attacks against U.S. military and diplomatic facilities. I speculate that this shift may be due in part to the greatly improved physical security measures taken by the State and Defense Departments. Terrorist groups may have concluded that American-owned businesses present "softer targets" that nonetheless yield very high-visibility headlines when hit.

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In my view, the Congress acted very wisely when it voted $360 million to improve security at our various facilities around the world in the wake of the October 1983 tragedy at the marine barracks in Beirut. Clearly, thought needs to be given to assisting U.S. businessmen to improve physical security at their facilities as well.

The risks and difficulties associated with terrorism are greatly diminished when regimes like those of Colonel Qadhafi's Libya and Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran actively involve themselves in the planning, financing, training, documentation, and providing of safehaven for terrorist groups.

With the help of a sponsoring state, terrorist groups are able to use more sophisticated techniques because of state-funded training programs and technical expertise. Moreover, the groups can employ more deadly, more difficult to detect equipment and arms such as remotely detonated devices. They also receive intelligence, and get official travel documents—sometimes used as diplomatic cover—to hide their true identities. This support makes it easy for terrorists to mask movements and munitions deliveries—and then find safehaven in a sponsoring state after an attack. So the backing of governments enormously escalates the scope and power of even the smallest terrorist groups.

Now I want to outline for you a strategy for dealing with this problem. Basically, there are three broad fronts on which we can challenge the terrorist. First, we can improve our intelligence capabilities and work together more closely with other countries victimized by terrorism. Second, we can work toward a stronger legal framework to deal with terrorist acts. Third, the international community can work together to isolate terrorist gangs and the states that sponsor these gangs. In this way, the community of civilized nations can more effectively prevent terrorist violence, preempt plans and operations, and—when we can—respond swiftly and appropriately to attacks.

The Role of Intelligence

Now, terrorist groups are very tough nuts for intelligence to crack. That is almost self-evident. They are small, not easily penetrated, and their operations are closely held and compartmented. Only a few people in the organization are privy to specific operations. Moreover, terrorists move quickly and place a very high premium on secrecy and surprise. Yet prompt reporting and follow-up action does frequently forestall terrorist incidents. The most common example is forewarning to U.S. and foreign embassies or other institutions of actual threats, or strong indications of planning for attacks on institutions and individuals. The usual response to this kind of knowledge is heightened alert, increased protective measures, or changes in plans and schedules which frequently disrupt the terrorists' plans and result in a failure or a decision not to make the attempt.

Recently, for example, intelligence on a threatened hijacking of a foreign commercial airliner, combined with effective police work, resulted in a change of travel plans which prevented the intended hijacking. In other instances, in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, U.S. officials and businessmen directly targeted by terrorists have been temporarily removed from their posts.

Through intelligence exchanges, training and operational cooperation and technical support, we have, with the intelligence, security and police organizations of scores of countries around the world, developed a widespread counterterrorism network which needs to be strengthened and improved upon. American intelligence, as the only worldwide apparatus other than the KGB, is at the heart of this. So far this year there were something like 80 terrorist acts around the world where preventive action was taken based on advance information from U.S. intelligence.

The Role of Law

The second major part of our program is to continue working—as a community of nations subject to law—to construct a viable international legal framework for dealing with terrorists and their sponsors. This framework must be transnational in character and supported by vigorous legal action.

International law requires a state to control the activities of persons within its jurisdiction or territory which cause injury to the citizens of other states, and to punish any persons engaging in such activities.

During the last two decades, international agreements have repeatedly restated and expanded this basic duty of all countries. For example, the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, otherwise known as the Hague Convention, imposes obligations on states to establish criminal jurisdiction over the offense of air piracy and requires that countries extradite hijackers or submit hijacking cases to competent authorities.

Despite these agreements, the existing legal obligations by themselves are insufficient to thwart terrorism. First, not all states are signatories to these conventions.

Second, state signatories face little or no possibility of being penalized for failure to adhere to their international obligations. Libya, for example—one of the world's leading fomenters of terrorist violence—hypocritically is a party to the Montreal, Hague and Tokyo Conventions.

Third, there has been no appropriate articulation of a formal definition of terrorism. Efforts to obtain general acceptance of the 1972 U.S. Draft Convention on Terrorism were linked to an intentional avoidance of the issue of definition and thus focused only on a narrow

common interest among nations. However, even this focus has not led to formal adoption of the convention.

The legal framework is there. What is needed is the will to make use of it—the will to put teeth into these international agreements by severely punishing violations. Many nations have been slow on this.

And there are still other initiatives that might be taken bilaterally and multilaterally if we are to deal with terrorism effectively. For example, we should review international treaties and agreements that define diplomatic privilege to identify standards of diplomatic practice and behavior which should be vigorously enforced. We may need new international measures to counter misuse of diplomatic privileges by those regimes sponsoring terrorist activities. We should think about developing multilateral treaties whereby persons who commit terrorist acts against citizens of any signatory state could be routinely extradited or perhaps tried by an international tribunal. Rules also should exist whereby individuals known to be involved in terrorism can be prevented from entering any signatory state or apprehended on an international arrest warrant.

Isolating the Terrorists

The third major part of our program requires that all victimized governments should impose political and economic isolation on states like Iran and Libya that sponsor terrorism. I find it incredible that certain of our friends and allies still have dealings with these criminal states, while at the same time suffering terrorist atrocities cooked up in Tehran, Tripoli, and other such centers. And, as long as they permit Libyan and Iranian agents to move about freely—and indeed pay huge sums into the treasuries of those two countries—we have no leverage whatsoever. Simply put, states that sponsor terrorism must be quarantined from the rest of the international community until their behavior changes.

We must deny the terrorist the fruit of his labors—namely, the ability to exploit the media to instill in the public feelings of uncertainty and fear. The media itself must play the leading role in this effort by treating news of terrorist incidents in a more reserved fashion. Imagine if you will the terrorist's reaction if he and his exploits were downplayed or even ignored!

If we can do this, the terrorist will watch in frustration as his power over the media dries up and, with it, his power to assault the mind. If cut off from his sponsors, the terrorist will watch with growing apprehension as he learns that the costs and risks of his operations skyrocket while the impact of his actions plummets. In my view, the futility of terrorism will at last be made obvious to the terrorist himself, and his devastating war on the mind will slowly come to an end.

You might well ask the very pertinent question: But does all this work? I believe it does. And I can mention two success stories in the war on terrorism.

It may surprise you to know that the country having the highest number of terrorist incidents during the late 1970s was not Lebanon or Israel, but Italy. The wanton murder of Premier Aldo Moro and the kidnapping of General Dozier galvanized the Italian government into action. Italian courts have stepped up their effort at prosecuting and convicting captured terrorists, and handing down stiff sentences. The Italian National Police and Security Services have stepped up their activities targeted at penetrating terrorist units or otherwise spoiling terrorist operations. Moreover, European services have been active in sharing information on these terrorists, subsequently leading to the capture of some of those involved.

As a result of excellent intelligence work, vigorous police anti-terrorist activities, and increased court actions, Italy since the early 1980s has been one of the countries in Europe least affected by terrorism. A key factor in this effort was the turn-around in support for the Italian Security Services by most parties in the Italian Parliament and the general public.

Another success story is the Republic of El Salvador. That small country—the victim of both externally-supported aggression and terrorism—has risen to grave challenges posed by purveyors of violence who receive their orders from Managua and Havana.

In the past 12 months, we have witnessed an increase in Marxist-directed terrorism that has included bombings of civilian installations, the mining of public roads, armed robberies, brutal kidnappings, and assassinations. This increasing turn to terrorism has come about in part because of the growing popular support for President Duarte's government and in part because of the rapidly faltering political and military fortunes of the rebels. The insurgents increasingly have fallen back on dramatic acts of violence to draw attention to their cause and force President Duarte's popularly-elected government to share political power.

You may recall that last June a gang of Marxist thugs staged a bloody machinegun slaying outside a sidewalk cafe of 13 unarmed people—including four off-duty U.S. Marines and two U.S. businessmen. The so-called Central American Revolutionary Workers Party—which claimed "credit" for the June slayings—is a member in good standing of the five-group Salvadoran Marxist Alliance and has its command headquarters in Managua, Nicaragua.

The Salvadoran government responded quickly and decisively to this urban terrorist threat. Since the June massacre, the Salvadoran Army has launched operations against these terrorists and other Marxist base camps in the central and eastern mountains. The army's offensive has proved quite successful as a large number of insurgents—including some field commanders—were killed, communication lines were disrupted, and supplies captured. Captured documents and

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prisoners, in turn, provided valuable intelligence which the security forces promptly used in rounding up some 40 urban terrorists, including two of the actual triggermen involved in the June killings. The triggermen will be tried for murder.

The Role of Terrorism

I believe that this network if not a component of, still works in unison with, what the Soviets have developed into the most powerful weapons system the world has ever seen. It consists not only of the missiles capable of striking at the United States and most of its allies plus the overwhelming conventional strength which can be projected into Europe and toward the Persian Gulf, but also of the weapons of aggressive subversion. It has succeeded in installing Communist governments in Angola, Ethiopia, South Yemen, Mozambique, Cambodia and Nicaragua, and has sent its conventional forces for the first time over the border of the Soviet Union to occupy Afghanistan. It consists also of the system of the combination of active measures, political action and propaganda which the Soviets use to influence and manipulate popular opinion and political processes in the open societies of the world.

International terrorism plays a role in this weapons system. A Soviet connection may seem shadowy to some, but it seems very real to me. Iran and the Soviet Union are hardly allies, but they both share a fundamental hostility to the West. When Libya and the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) provide arms and training to the Communists in Central America, they are aiding Soviet-supported Cuban efforts to undermine America's security in that vital region.

Moscow and its allies allow radical groups to maintain offices in Eastern Europe and to grant safe passage to operatives traveling to Western Europe or elsewhere to commit terrorist acts. No one can seriously believe that these activities—which have gone on for at least 15 years—have escaped the notice of the Communist authorities.

The creation and training of terrorists is the primary measure of how severe this problem will be for us during the remainder of this century. This will be determined by the six hundred or so young men who are brought into Moscow every year to be indoctrinated to serve as organizers in other countries around the world and how many other young men are brought into terrorist and paramilitary training camps. Where are the training facilities located? They are heavily concentrated in the Soviet bloc—in the Soviet Union itself, in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany—in South Yemen, Cuba and, increasingly, Nicaragua, and in the radical entente countries of Syria, Libya, and Iran. So as we fight the terrorist threat directly on the ground we also need to bring out the ultimate source of much of this activity.

The reality—the bottom line—is that terrorism aims at the very heart of civilization. We have no realistic choice but to meet it, and that means head on. Nothing else will work. In the absence of a national will to fight terrorism at its roots, we must be content only to cope with terrorism's effects—not its cause. And that will not be enough.