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Terrorism: A Preliminary  
Assessment

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1986 - INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM: A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT\*

Summary

The level of international terrorist activity probably ran at about the same level in 1986 as in the preceding year, according to our preliminary tally. Analysis based on that early reading indicates that several interesting developments occurred.

- o In 1986 state supported terrorist activity accounted for less than 5 percent of all international terrorist activity. In 1985 it had represented about 12 percent of international attacks.
- o Terrorist incidents of Middle East origin in Western Europe may have declined by as much as 70 percent -- after sharp increases in 1984 and 1985.
- o Total casualties (killed and wounded) from international terrorist activity decreased slightly in 1986, but the number of killed dropped almost 40 percent.
- o Total US casualties in 1986 fell almost 43 percent and US killed about 75 percent, but attacks against US interests jumped, approaching 1982/83 levels. Western Europe remained the most

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\* Data used in this assessment are preliminary and incomplete. We fully expect the numbers to change. We believe, however, that the revised numbers will point to the same statistical trends our preliminary analysis has highlighted.

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dangerous area for US citizens, accounting for two-thirds of US casualties, although Latin America was the scene of most anti-US attacks -- many low-level bombings that caused no casualties.

- o The Middle East was still the favorite venue for terrorist attacks, accounting for about half the incidents recorded in 1986 -- up about 5 percent from 1985. Total Middle Eastern related terrorist activity dropped, however, from about 60 percent in 1985, to about 50 percent in 1986.
- o Latin America replaced Western Europe as the second most popular regional venue on the terrorist hit list; attacks in Latin America rose almost 21 percent in 1986. Attacks in Western Europe fell almost 40 percent. Asia, where international terrorism remains at a relatively low level, nevertheless saw an increase of 60 percent in incidents.

#### International Terrorism -- 1986: A Preliminary Recap

So far, we have recorded almost 725 incidents in 1986, down from last year's 782 incidents. After all incidents have been recorded and checked, however, we expect the total for 1986 to rise and approach the 1985 level. The geographical distribution pattern parallels that of 1985, with one exception; Latin America replaced Western Europe as the second most popular venue for attacks following the Middle East.

Types and nationalities of targets remained generally the same, with private citizens and businesses of over 80 countries heading the list. As in 1985, Israeli and US interests were the terrorists' favorite targets; over 40 percent of the incidents in 1986 involved US or Israeli interests.

French interests experienced the sharpest rise in attacks -- up 65 percent over 1985 -- at least in part the result of two lethal terrorist campaigns carried out by the Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction (LARF) in February/March and September 1986.

Attacks against businesses declined slightly overall, as did attacks against government and military targets. Attacks against diplomats, however, increased slightly.

Terrorists continued to rely on the time worn and proven techniques of bombings, armed attacks, arson and kidnappings; only arson attacks increased in 1986. Terrorist skyjackings fell from 12 in 1985 to 1 in 1986.

Terrorist activity in 1986 caused almost 2,000 casualties -- 495 killed, 1,492 wounded -- down only marginally from the 2,042 recorded in 1985. Citizens of France, Israel, Syria and the US together accounted for almost 55 percent of the total casualties. The large number of Syrian casualties in 1986 may have been the result of retaliatory attacks by Palestinians and Christians fighting Syrian-backed militias in the Lebanese camp wars, and non-Syrian members of the Muslim Brotherhood striking back after the 1982 Syrian crackdown.

Terrorism remained indiscriminate and random, with a large number of attacks still occurring in public places. Attacks against petroleum facilities increased -- particularly in Colombia -- along with attacks against vehicles.

State Support: Biding Their Time

In 1985, approximately 12 percent of the international terrorist incidents were linked to state sponsors -- primarily Syria, Libya or Iran. In 1986, state supported terrorism accounted for less than 5 percent of all international terrorist incidents. Nevertheless, state-sponsored terrorists were responsible for some of the most spectacular attacks, and those with the greatest political fallout.

- o Evidence of Libyan culpability in the bombing of the La Belle Disco in West Berlin caused the United States to launch retaliatory airstrikes against Libya.
- o Syrian complicity in the bombing of the German-Arab friendship building in West Germany prompted West Germany to recall its Ambassador from Damascus.
- o Syrian involvement in the attempted bombing of an El Al airliner at London's Heathrow airport led the UK to break relations with Damascus and to press the European Community to impose economic sanctions against Syria.

State sponsors also may have assisted the terrorists responsible for the bloody attempted hijacking of a Pan Am flight at Karachi airport, the vicious attack that killed 22 in a synagogue in Istanbul and the attack on the British base at Akrotiti, Cyprus.

The apparent falloff in state supported incidents, may in part reflect our inability to attribute to any perpetrator responsibility for more than half the terrorist incidents in the Middle East. Many of these incidents may have been the work of state agents or their surrogate groups.

Perhaps ever more important was the response to the unprecedented military, diplomatic and economic retaliatory measures taken by the United States and West European countries last year. Key state sponsors -- Syria and Libya in particular -- undoubtedly decided to curtail their terrorist activities and those of their surrogates, at least for the near term. Moreover, they almost certainly enhanced their attempts to keep their hands hidden, making it increasingly more difficult for us to trace terrorist incidents directly back to state supporters.

Middle East Spillover: Down But Not Out?

Terrorist incidents of Middle Eastern origin in Western Europe dropped drastically in 1986, reversing a five-year trend. The 22 incidents so far recorded for 1986 represent an almost 70 percent drop from 1985's record number of 74 incidents. Although Middle Eastern terrorist activity in Western Europe was down significantly in 1986, some 42 people were killed and 400 wounded as a result of those spillover incidents a much higher kill ratio per incident than in 1985. On average, the 22 incidents in 1986 produced about 200 casualties per incident, whereas in 1985 the 74 incidents produced fewer than 90 casualties per incident.

The Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction (LARF) was the most active of the Middle Eastern groups in Europe in 1986, accounting for over one-fourth of the incidents. Fourteen of the incidents were bombings, many carried out by LARF in France. The spectacular wave of bombings last spring and fall rocked Paris as LARF members attempted to pressure the Chirac government into releasing their jailed leader George Abdallah.

The sharp reduction in Middle Eastern terrorism in Europe may reflect the overall drop in state supported incidents, improved European security measures, and the reduced support from several European indigenous terrorist groups to Middle Eastern groups they may previously have assisted.

### Anti-US Activity

The United States again was a prominent target of terrorists in 1986. Fully one-fourth of the international terrorist incidents recorded in 1986 involved US interests -- up from 22 percent in 1985. Although US casualties were down 40 percent in 1986, the number of anti-US incidents rose from 170 in 1985 to about 190 in 1986. Roughly half of the anti-US attacks occurred in Latin America -- primarily Chile, Colombia, and Peru -- but two-thirds of the casualties were a result of incidents in Western Europe. Nearly 40 percent of the anti-US attacks in 1986 were against US business interests.

### Regional Capsules

#### Middle East

International terrorism in the Middle East continued at about the same level as in 1985 -- around 360 incidents. The majority of incidents were unclaimed, or responsibility was unclear. The Abu Nidal Group, the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia, Fatah, and Hizballah were the principal culprits for those incidents whose perpetrator we could pinpoint. Two trends -- with implications for the efficacy of counterterrorist programs -- became evident: increased freelancing by terrorist mercenaries or groups, and fewer, but more sophisticated, and indiscriminate attacks.

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The hostage situation continued to be one of the major stories in 1986, with the release of some American and French hostages followed by the taking and holding of new hostages. Violence in Lebanon escalated as various militia groups battled for control of the country. Hizballah, Amal and various Palestinian factions, backed variously by Syria, Iran and Libya competed for influence in Lebanon. The return of the PLO to Lebanon, and the increasing power of Hizballah probably will have the greatest impact on the course of terrorism in 1987.

#### Western Europe

International terrorist incidents in Western Europe declined significantly in 1986 -- almost 40 percent. Most of the activity occurred in Spain, France and West Germany. The Basque separatist group, ETA, carried out 22 attacks in 1986, slightly more than in 1985. The Red Army Faction and the Revolutionary Cells in West Germany together staged 27 attacks, including the assassination of an important German industrialist. In France, the Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction and Action Directe carried out a number of attacks, mostly bombings, contributing to a 65 percent increase in attacks there compared with 1985.

Terrorist activity in Portugal, Belgium and Italy was almost negligible. The Portugese FP-25 carried out two attacks in 1986 compared to 10 in 1985. The Belgian CCC staged six attacks in 1985, but were unheard from in 1986. Italy's Red Brigades surfaced long enough to carry

out one assassination, and attempt another -- a far cry from its more heady days. There was, however, an increase in Kurdish Worker Party (PKK) violence -- from two incidents in 1985 to six in 1986 -- as the group continued to eliminate and intimidate its rivals for leadership of the Kurdish movement in Europe.

### Latin America

In 1986, Latin America surpassed Western Europe to become the second most popular regional venue for international terrorist attacks. Most of the activity was centered in Colombia, Peru and Chile. In Colombia, the National Liberation Army (ELN) flexed its muscles as the premier terrorist group, carrying out 32 attacks -- many against Colombia's vulnerable oil pipelines in the eastern departments. In Peru, both the Sendero Luminoso (SL) and the Revolutionary Movement Tupac Amaru (MRTA) increased their terrorist activity. The SL carried out 20 attacks in 1986, compared with four incidents in 1985. The MRTA was responsible for some 38 incidents, up from eight in 1985.

In Ecuador, government counterterrorist successes severely crippled the operational capabilities of the Alfaro Vive, Carajo! terrorist group. In Chile, General Pinochet narrowly escaped an attempt on his life, but terrorists suffered a setback with the seizure of several extensive arms caches. In Central America, urban terrorism was down sharply as the major terrorist groups worked to rebuild after government counterterrorist successes.

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Asia/Africa

In Asia, most terrorist violence was attributed to the activities of Tamil and Sikh separatists. The year also was marked by increased ethnic violence in Pakistan punctuated by a number of bombings, some probably the work of Afghan state agents. In September Karachi was the scene of the year's bloodiest hijacking. World attention also focused on Tokyo prior to and during last May's economic summit when the Japanese terrorist group, Chukaku-ha, launched rockets at several facilities associated with the summit. In the Philippines, the New People's Army carried out five attacks, three more than in 1985.

We recorded a very low number of incidents in Africa. Sporadic terrorist violence was carried out by South Africa's African National Conference and Angola's UNITA. Many of the incidents involved land mines or bombings. Groups in the Sudan and Ethiopia were responsible for some sporadic low level terrorist violence.

FIGURE 1

International Terrorist Incidents by Region

	<u>1986</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Africa	21	42	-50
Asia	66	41	+60
Latin America	144	119	+21
Middle East	356	357	NoChg
North America	3	4	-25
Western Europe	131	218	-40

FIGURE 2

Nationality of Selected Targets

<u>Nationality</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>Percent of All Intl Incidents</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>Percent of All Intl Incidents</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Israel	199	21	198	19	Neg
US	191	20	170	16	+12
France	76	8	46	4	+65
Palestinian	36	3	44	4	-18
Spain	28	2	37	3	-24
UK	28	2	28	2	--

FIGURE 3

International Terrorist Incidents by Target

	<u>1986</u>	<u>1985</u>
Business	201	227
Diplomats	96	91
Government	90	92
Military	55	67
Other	420	479

FIGURE 4

Selected International Terrorist Incidents by Type of Attack

	<u>1986</u>	<u>1985</u>
Bombings	394	399
Armed Attacks	131	143
Arson Attacks	104	102
Kidnapings	51	87
Skyjackings	1	12

FIGURE 5

Terrorist Casualties by Selected Nationalities

	<u>1986</u>			<u>1985</u>		
	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Total</u>
US	11	101	113	38	157	195
Israel	13	163	176	25	80	105
Spain	--	--	--	28	130	158
France	27	258	285	12	89	101
Syria	271	276	507	--	--	--

FIGURE 6

Selected International Terrorist Targets by Type of Facility

	<u>1986</u>	<u>1985</u>
Business other	42	16
Diplomatic	73	58
Military	29	34
Office	29	52
Petroleum	29	19
Residence	28	35
Restaurant/Hotel	24	28
Retail	21	29
Transportation Terminal	18	22
Vehicle	130	113

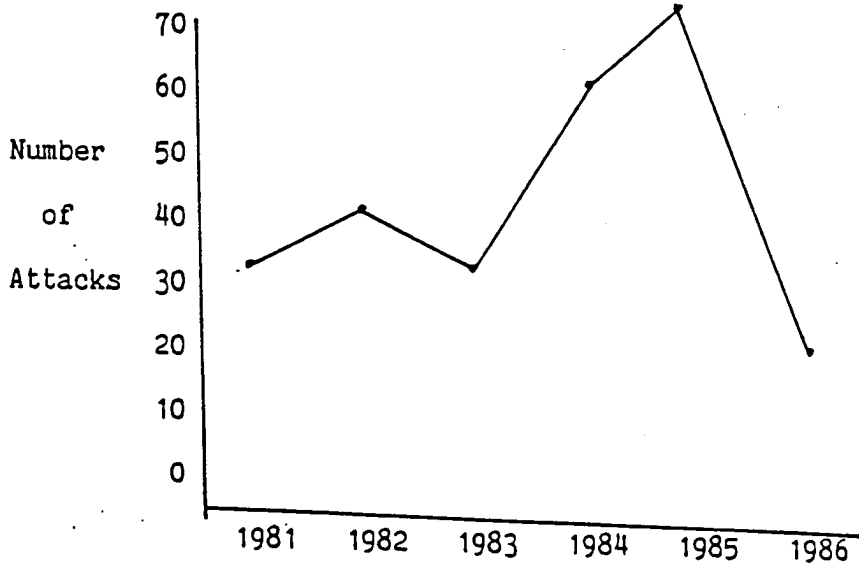
FIGURE 7

Number of Attacks Associated With  
Selected State Supporters of Terrorism

	<u>1986</u>	<u>1985</u>
Syria	3	34
Iran	8	34
Libya	17	14
Others	2	14
TOTAL	30	96

FIGURE 8

International Terrorist Incidents of Middle Eastern Origin  
in Western Europe -- 1981-1986



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FIGURE 9

Anti-US Attacks by Region

	<u>1986</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Africa	10	3	+233
Asia	18	8	+125
Latin America	96	77	+ 24
Middle East	24	17	+ 41
Western Europe	42	63	- 34

FIGURE 10

Anti-US Attacks by Target

	<u>1986</u>	<u>1985</u>
Business	81	65
Diplomat	29	15
Government	26	26
Military	17	31
Other	52	62

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FIGURE 11

Selected Anti-US Attacks by Type

	<u>1986</u>	<u>1985</u>
Bombing	123	96
Arson	23	28
Kidnaping	10	19
Armed Attack	23	11

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