

Remarks at Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith

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It's a pleasure to be with you at such an early hour. I appreciate your turning out to hear what I have to say. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to talk to the national leadership conference this morning. The last time I had the pleasure of addressing a group of B'nai B'rith members was in Chicago in 1985 when I was Director of the FBI. And in the late 1970s, I was invited to the annual meeting of the ADL in New York City. I have one special memory of that meeting in New York that I'd like to share with you. After I had finished my speech, I was given a note and someone whispered that the White House was calling and that Dr. Brzezinski, the President's national security adviser, wanted to talk to me. I was told I could take the call at a public telephone just outside the room where I was speaking. The area around the phone booth had been cordoned off, and the call was being held for me. I went out and faced about 20 television cameras with their lights glaring. I walked down the hall, got into the telephone booth, and answered the call. Dr. Brzezinski said, "Where are you?" I said, "I'm in New York." He said, "That's too bad, I was looking for a tennis game this morning." Try to imagine what you'd tell the press when you came out of a situation like that!

That Sunday morning in New York was the morning after the Jonestown tragedy in Guyana, and I was talking about terrorism, which was then an emerging concern. Confronted at that time with certain criticisms, I was able to set the record straight on why the FBI had furnished the government of Israel with information that an American national, then in Israel, had received terrorism instruction in a PLO camp in Africa. It seems incredible to me 10 years later that anyone would have questioned our right, or indeed our obligation, to inform a friendly government of that important fact. Nevertheless, the criticism was intense.

International cooperation in the ensuing years has become indispensable in the worldwide battle against terrorism. Such cooperation has enabled the United States to penetrate some foreign terrorist groups, and has probably helped avert more than 200 terrorist attacks in the last three years. While that number may seem impressive, it represents a very small victory—terrorism continues to flourish under its self-proclaimed banner of political and social revolution.

Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov summed up the problem this way: "No matter how high the aims predicated by terrorists . . . their activities are always criminal, always destructive, throwing humankind back to a time of lawlessness and chaos, providing international and internal complications, contradicting the goals of peace and progress."

I happen to agree with Sakharov, and in my comments to you today, I want to talk about the problem of terrorism from my present perspective as Director of Central Intelligence. I'd like to focus on an area of the world where terrorist activity has been increasing, then examine the specific threat to the interests of the United States citizens both at home and abroad, and finally I'd like to tell you what we in intelligence are doing to help counter the problem of terrorism.

Terrorism has been with us for centuries, but its nature has changed in recent years. It has become more intense and more widespread, and its targets have grown. Terrorists have attacked diplomats in embassies, passengers on airplanes, travelers on trains and ships, tourists in hotels and restaurants, and clerics in churches and synagogues.

Today, terrorists take advantage of sophisticated weaponry, advanced electronics, and improved communications. But more important, terrorism has become a tool of international politics because we continue to see some countries directing, or sponsoring, terrorism as a part of their foreign policies. State-sponsored terrorism is more difficult to deal with because such sponsorship, among other things, means that terrorists gain access to diplomatic pouches—essentially secure means for moving funds, weapons, and messages. They get real and false documentation for travel and cover. They receive training and intelligence. They gain a safe haven in the sponsoring country, reducing their vulnerability. And, of course, they get funding.

While I have been speaking of terrorism in general, I want to focus for a moment on terrorism in the Middle East, because it is in this region that we have seen a great increase in international terrorism over the past five years. Middle Eastern terrorism also represents a grave danger to the United States, and has had and will continue to have the most severe impact on U.S. foreign policy concerns.

In 1983, Middle Eastern groups accounted for about one-fourth of all international terrorist incidents. By 1985, their share had reached about one-half, and through 1987 terrorism of Middle Eastern origin continued to account for half of all international terrorist incidents. The majority of U.S. casualties abroad occur in incidents involving Middle Easterners. This stands in remarkable contrast to the United States, where to date I believe we have experienced no casualties inside the U.S. from Middle Eastern terrorists. Middle Eastern terrorist bombs tend to be larger, more sophisticated, and use higher-grade explosives. Terrorists from the Middle East are generally quite professional and proficient in clandestine operations and are more difficult to direct, detect, and stop.

And in the Middle East, we have seen an increase in terrorist activity by Palestinian groups. Despite the lack of dramatic incidents in 1987—such as the hijacking of the Achille Lauro in 1985, or the attempted hijacking of a Pan Am jet in

Karachi in 1986—certain Palestinian elements have not forsaken terrorism as a means to focus attention on their grievances, obstruct political solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict, or pressure Israel and its supporters.

Palestinian terrorist attacks declined slightly in 1987—down from a total of 224 incidents in 1986 to 219 last year. However, the number of incidents within Israel and the occupied territories—as well as attempted raids into Israel—increased. And they increased in spite of the generally effective Israeli counter-measures. Several of the Palestinian factions that attempted strikes across the Israeli borders in 1987 were able to inflict more damage than in previous years.

For example:

- In mid-April—on the eve of the Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers—Fatah operatives staged a raid into northern Israel. Israeli security officials indicated the terrorists had planned to take Israeli hostages to exchange for Arab prisoners held in Israel. Two Israeli soldiers and three terrorists were killed in the brief firefight that followed after Israeli troops cornered the Palestinians just inside the Israeli border.
- In June of last year, one month after I took office, I visited Israel. I went to the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and the security area on the Lebanese border. The Israelis had just detected, apprehended, and killed Palestinians trying to penetrate the area by boat.
- In late November, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command launched a hang-glider attack against Israel's northern border. Six Israeli soldiers were killed and seven others were wounded in one of the bloodiest cross-border incidents since 1978. This raid was at least the second attempt to infiltrate Israel by a Syrian-backed Palestinian group in 1987.
- In late December, three terrorists from Abu Abbas' Palestine Liberation Front penetrated Israel via the Jordanian-Israeli border. Israeli troops intercepted the Palestinians shortly after their incursion into Israel, capturing the three after a brief confrontation. This raid was almost certainly an attempt by the PLO to capitalize on the wave of sympathy generated in the wake of violent Palestinian protests in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that began December 9.
- Earlier this month, on March 4, while Secretary of State Shultz was in Jerusalem to discuss the U.S. peace initiative, a bomb-laden car was discovered near his hotel.

- And three days later, three Arab gunmen hijacked an Israeli commuter bus in the Negev Desert, killing three passengers before Israeli forces stormed the vehicle and killed the hijackers. This was one of at least a half-dozen attempts by Palestinian groups to carry out attacks since the Palestinian uprising began over three months ago.

Since December, we have seen an escalation from the previous stone and bottle throwing to violent attacks, and escalation that has spread violence to broader sections of the Palestinian and Israeli populations.

As I have suggested, international terrorism by Middle Eastern groups owes much to state sponsorship—particularly by Iran, Libya and, until very recently, Syria. These states use terrorism and support to international terrorist groups as instruments of domestic and foreign policy. These states train, finance, and arm numerous dissident and terrorist groups. They send agents and surrogates on missions around the world using terror to attack opponents and the personnel and installations of the United States and of pro-Western Arab states. They use diplomatic and cultural missions to support terrorists. We know, for example, that several senior officials of the Iranian government are directly involved in terrorist activity.

Both Syria and Libya have provided aid and comfort to the notorious Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal, whose followers were responsible for the September 1986 massacres in Karachi and Istanbul.

But in mid-1987, one of the most dangerous Palestinian terrorist groups appeared to suffer logistic setbacks. In early June, the Syrian-based facilities of the Abu Nidal organization were closed and the group's known operatives were expelled. Before the expulsion, Damascus served as the group's principal sponsor and host. The Syrian action temporarily disrupted the group's activities, forcing a relocation of resources and operational activities from Syria to sites in Lebanon and elsewhere in the Middle East.

These past 12 months also witnessed the trials of Palestinians responsible for some of the most devastating attacks of 1985 and 1986.

- In May, an Italian appeals court upheld the sentences of the Palestine Liberation Front members convicted in the Achille Lauro hijacking.
- Later that month, a Vienna court sentenced two Abu Nidal organization members to life imprisonment for the attack in the airport in Vienna in December 1985. As you will recall, the grenade and machinegun attack against the El Al counter at the airport killed four persons and injured 40 others.

- In mid-July, the trial of five Abu Nidal organization terrorists, who attempted to hijack a Pan Am jet in Karachi in 1986, opened in Pakistan. Twenty-one persons died and more than 100 others were injured in the abortive hijacking. The trial is still in progress.
- And in February of this year, the surviving terrorist of the Abu Nidal group that attacked Rome's Fiumicino airport in 1985 was sentenced to 30 years in prison. Abu Nidal and a top aide were sentenced—in absentia—to life in prison. The assault at the Rome airport killed 12 persons and wounded 72.

The trials held over the past 12 months are significant not only because they have focused international attention on the crimes of terrorists, but because they have been held throughout the world—in Italy, Austria, and Pakistan. I think we are beginning to see the international cooperation that is so essential in countering terrorism.

Persuading other nations that international cooperation is necessary to fight terrorism has not always been easy. Part of the problem lies in the fact that many countries are not opposed to all acts of terrorism, but only to the acts of certain terrorist groups. Some nations have found occasional terrorist activity to be convenient because it is unsettling to their opponents. Others in the past have sought accommodation with terrorists in exchange for the terrorists not striking at them. This is the principle of sanctuary that we have been trying so hard to defeat.

But over the last few years we have made considerable progress in promoting international cooperation against terrorism—cooperation that has made the conviction of terrorists a reality. I have been a participant in the effort to focus the world's attention on the criminal aspects of terrorism. Without a focus on the criminal aspects, we would continue to treat terrorism as a political issue—an issue in which outside nations have no right to interfere and in which there could be no real basis for international cooperation. I have been a part of building that cooperation—first with the United Nations Congress on Crime in Milan, which I attended; followed by the summit meeting in Tokyo; and then through the United Nations resolution condemning terrorism. Achieving a workable relationship with the Trevi Group, the group of ministers of interior and of justice of the key European countries, has been a remarkable step forward in the law enforcement community. The criminality of terrorist acts is now given a greater emphasis by the foreign ministry groups, and we've seen a great deal of cooperation and sharing of information as a result.

One example that illustrates the value of such information sharing occurred after the U.S. took reprisal against Libya. At the conclusion of that situation, we found that just about every country in Europe had a different understanding of

what had happened. By combining intelligence, these countries were able to see for the first time that Libya was no longer just harassing its own dissidents but was also openly engaging in high-casualty terrorist exercises. These countries realized the importance of sharing on a multilateral basis the available intelligence on terrorism. This information had not been shared before, except by one country to another, and there had been no multilateral right of sharing.

We have also worked with INTERPOL. We've asked them to reinterpret their constitution, to recognize that there are some acts of violence committed against innocent victims away from the scene of the conflict which clearly cannot be justified in any way and are criminal by any civilized nation's standards. By approaching terrorism from this perspective, INTERPOL is now providing assistance in locating and apprehending wanted terrorists. Indeed, it was an INTERPOL red-flash alert that helped us locate Mohammed Hamadi in West Germany.

On the domestic scene it seems unlikely that international terrorists will ever build a solid base of support in our country. From my experience at the FBI and now at the CIA, I can say that this country is indeed well equipped to deal with international terrorist activities that may be imported to the United States. No one can say that such activities will not occur, but I believe that our special capabilities, including very good intelligence, will, in many cases, prevent terrorism from succeeding. We call that getting there before the bomb goes off, and our record within the United States has been outstanding. In 1978 when I came to Washington we had about 100 terrorist incidents a year inside the United States. Today, the number of incidents inside the U.S. has almost disappeared.

Our interests overseas, however, continue to offer very tempting targets. We lack the same resources and the same ability to control the situation overseas that we have here in our own country. Since the beginning of 1982, Americans and American interests have been victims in at least one of every four terrorist incidents overseas. That in turn affects one of our most treasured freedoms—our ability to travel and to move throughout the world without fear.

How is the Intelligence Community coping with terrorism? First we are acquiring as much information as we can about terrorist groups, including their modus operandi, organizational structure, personnel, support, funding, and communications. We are also examining the links terrorist groups have with other groups or state sponsors. International networks for classified and secure communications have been established in the free world for sharing this information on a real-time basis.

In February 1986, the CIA established a Counterterrorist Center to focus on international terrorism. We brought operations officers, analysts, engineers, scientists, psychologists, weapons and explosives experts, and support personnel under one roof and under one chain of command. The governing philosophy of

the center is to combine all the resources that the Agency will need to go on the offensive against terrorist groups and the countries that support them.

Our experience to date has underscored the advantages of having a unit devoted full-time to all aspects of the terrorism problem. Counterterrorism officers have been able to focus all their attention on the terrorism issue, and they have followed up on leads which previously languished due to the press of other business.

I have spoken about the cooperative measures we have taken to deal with terrorism. What about the terrorist himself? We must take vigorous action to isolate him from one of his principal goals—manipulating public perception through the press attention that he receives. In addition, we must instill in the terrorist those same pervasive feelings of fear that he seeks to instill in the public—the feelings of constantly being the hunted, rather than the hunter. The terrorist must at all times have the impression that his movements are known, his plans understood, and his organization penetrated. We must also insure that the terrorist knows that a consistent foreign policy is being applied—a policy which rejects the short-term solution of ransom and denies wherever possible any form of sanctuary to a terrorist fugitive.

If we can do this, 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. If we can do this, our citizens can again exercise their right to move freely throughout the world without fear. And those nations of the world that support the rule of law and accept the norms of civilized behavior will reap the benefits with us, rather than suffer the whirlwind which will surely follow if we fail to cooperate together in a professional, intense, and consistent way.

We need all the help that you can provide. Your sources have been excellent in the past, and we have appreciated your full cooperation. But more remains to be done, because there are people who think they can win the war of their political views by keeping large and powerful nations forever on the defensive. I've tried to outline some of the things we are doing to meet that challenge, consistent with government under law. With your help, I think we will succeed.

Thank you.