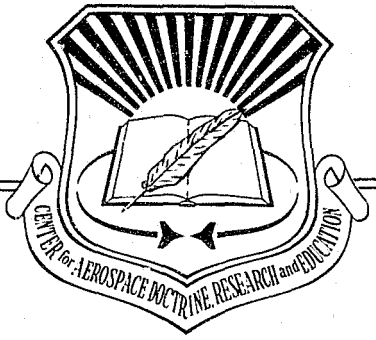
BEATING INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

An Action Strategy For Preemption and Punishment

STEPHEN SLOAN



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An Action Strategy for Preemption and Punishment

by

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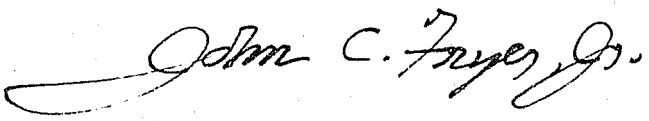
FOREWORD

Terrorism has become the scourge of the 1980s. It has spread worldwide as independent political groups and minor states attempt to press their internal and international claims against the establishment. And, as Dr Sloan notes in his preface, the struggle against terrorism is not going well.

This study proposes a bold new approach to the problem which includes the involvement of the United States military in preemptive operations. Such an approach differs radically from past policies and will certainly be very controversial. However, it does provide a basis for the discussion of new ideas badly needed to counteract this sinister, protracted, global war being fought in the shadows.



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Dr Sloan has served as a consultant for military, police, and corporate officers dealing with the threat of terrorism. He has conducted simulations of terrorist incidents in the United States and abroad.

He has authored three books on political violence and terrorism; the latest, *Simulating Terrorism* (1981), is published by the University of Oklahoma Press.

PREFACE

The war against terrorism is not going well. Despite the bold pronouncements by the current administration, the United States essentially reacts—and often, badly—to attacks on its citizens and interests overseas. To the American public the coverage of such incidents has often projected an image of a government whose strong rhetoric to bring the war home against terrorists and their sponsor states has not been translated to meaningful action. Equally alarming is the fact that the media, rightly or wrongly, has also projected to foreign audiences the image of an often truculent and self-righteous superpower that is ineffective in countering skilled and determined adversaries who have taken the offensive in an increasingly violent form of armed conflict.

While these images may not be correct, they do highlight an unpleasant reality. Despite the bold policy statements, those who engage in attacks on the United States have carried out their operations with relative impunity. Furthermore, despite the proliferation of security measures and increased training in counterterrorist tactics, despite the development of a highly sophisticated antiterrorist technology, and despite its stated desire to go on the offensive, Washington still finds itself in an essentially passive and reactive posture.

While there are a variety of reasons for this reactive posture, there is a central omission in the US desire to engage the terrorists offensively. This omission is the absence of a systematic doctrine to counter terrorism in general and, more specifically, a doctrine of terrorism preemption that can form the foundation for developing the necessary capabilities and policies to take the initiative away from the terrorists.

To those who are understandably concerned with the pressing operational requirements of responding to immediate threats or acts of terrorism, a discussion of doctrine may appear to be a luxury that cannot be considered by policymakers, officials, and officers who live in what they view to be "the real world." But unless doctrinal issues are addressed, Washington will continue essentially to react to short-term crises instead of developing the capacity to engage in both short-term operations and long-term campaigns against the practitioners of modern terrorism.

As we shall see, terrorism can be viewed to be a form of criminality, an aspect of intense political competition and subversion, a manifestation of the changing nature of warfare, or indeed a new form of warfare. Depending on the

perspective, one can stress the importance of the law enforcement function, the use of diplomacy, the crucial role of the intelligence community, or the requirement to engage in military action against terrorists and their sponsors. Unfortunately, until now the use of military force has been considered only as a last-resort option in response to an ongoing incident. Moreover, discussing retaliation after the fact continues to generate more heat than light in the ongoing debate of how the United States should combat terrorism.

The reluctance to use the military option to reactive missions, much less in preemptive ones, is a ramification of a fundamental omission in developing a meaningful capability to engage the terrorists. That is, despite the call for concerted forceful action against terrorists on the part of the current political leadership, terrorism is still *not* viewed by various civilian policymakers in general and by the military in particular to be a form of warfare that requires action by the military services. If there has not been a counterterrorism doctrine, and more specifically a doctrine of terrorism preemption, it is in large part because the services are unwilling to accept that terrorism is a new form of warfare that requires a military doctrine to combat it. Various military officers have dodged the issue altogether by suggesting that they cannot be involved in formulating counterterrorism or terrorism preemption doctrine unless there is guidance from the civilian leadership. One can suggest however that this may be a convenient means whereby the military can avoid facing the disquieting fact that they may not have the desire or capability to engage in this new form of warfare. The senior officers and officials in the defense establishment would perhaps rather fight the old wars or hopefully be prepared to fight the most unlikely type of future wars. But even as they talk, the terrorists have already declared a war on and initiated action against the United States and its allies. Therefore, like it or not, the military must evolve doctrine that will enable it, along with the law enforcement community, the foreign policy establishment, and the intelligence community, to take an active and when necessary a preeminent role in using the tactics and strategies of the art of war not only to respond to but to take the initiative against those who are now practicing terroristic warfare. Indeed, it is an obligation of the services to develop the necessary doctrine and force for use if and when Washington and the public call upon them to search out and destroy an increasingly dangerous and sophisticated enemy in a global theater of operations.

This is not to suggest that such a doctrine should deal solely with the use of armed force. Since terrorism has many characteristics, is fought on many fronts, and is constantly changing, the military must work very closely with all those organizations and agencies responsible for combating terrorism. However, this study posits the view that the military, like it or not, must provide the doctrinal leadership in what has become a very real war.

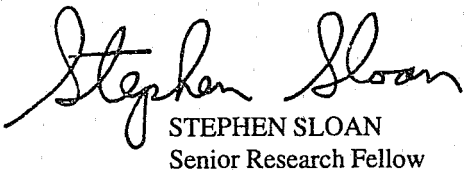
The ensuing pages present a discussion of how such a doctrine can be evolved and implemented into a framework for action. Neither the discussion nor the framework should be taken literally. They are primarily meant as a base point for further necessary discussion on an area of investigation that has largely been ignored because of a concern over immediate exigencies. Furthermore, the

framework does not provide specific operational requirements to engage effectively in terrorism preemption. Such a discussion falls within the realm of those with the operational experience within both the intelligence community and the services who are capable of planning and conducting the necessary operations and campaigns. Moreover, even if the author were capable of engaging in such a discussion—given its sensitive nature, it would hardly be appropriate to deal with the operational arts in an open publication.

Finally, this study relates both doctrine and capabilities—present and future—to a brief evaluation of existing policy. The policy dimensions of course are vital, for in the public discussion in Washington insufficient attention is given to the new reality: the military must learn to fight a new form of warfare. It may not be the type of war they would prefer to fight, or a war of their making, but it is a real and ongoing war.

This study is written primarily for senior and middle-level officials and officers who will be responsible for conducting the war against terrorism if and when they are called upon to do so. The author is deeply appreciative of the opportunity to conduct his research at the Center for Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education (CADRE), Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. His association with CADRE has given him the opportunity to gain insights through discussions with dedicated officers from all of the services who have shared knowledge and viewpoints that are not readily available in the academic community. In turn, the author hopes that his perspective as an academic with operational and policy concerns dealing with terrorism can assist those who must engage the adversary by providing a different viewpoint that may help focus on the measures necessary to bring the war home to the terrorists.

The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions and support of the following people: Col Donald D. Stevens, commander, Center for Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education; Col Dennis M. Drew, director, Airpower Research Institute; Col Keith W. Geiger, chief, Airpower Doctrine Division; and Lt Col Fred J. Reule, deputy director for research and chief, Command Research Division. Special thanks to Lt Col Jerome W. Klingaman, USAF, Retired, for his insights on low-intensity conflict, and Col James P. Nance for introducing me to the complexities of special operations; and finally, to my editor, Thomas E. Mackin, for his great assistance in revising the manuscript and to the personnel of the Production Division for their efforts in preparing my study for publication.



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INTRODUCTION

The modern age of terrorism was ushered in by the massacre of 11 Israeli athletes at the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972. Since that time the fleeting electronic images of hooded terrorists holding hostages and authorities at bay have been projected on the television screen with depressing regularity. The skyjackings, bombings, hostage takings, assassinations, and other acts of carnage continue to seize the world's headlines and reinforce a public perception that the international community is unwilling or unable to respond to—much less take the initiative against—those who are engaging in an increasingly destructive assault on the fragile civil order.

Unfortunately, that perception is essentially correct. Despite general statements of condemnation, the drafting of treaties, and other diplomatic initiatives, a unified international approach to combat terrorism is not even remotely in sight. As the bloodletting continues, the semantic battle over what constitutes terrorism often takes precedence over concrete action to combat it.

On the regional level the responses to terrorism have been more encouraging. Cooperation has taken place, particularly between the United States and its Western allies. The sharing of intelligence and the refinement of security measures to prevent or respond to incidents has increased. But the cooperation has rarely resulted in concerted unified action against terrorists and, when appropriate, their sponsor states.

When there have been successful actions against terrorists, as in the case of Entebbe or Mogadischu, such successes were primarily the result of the resolve of individual states not to give in to terrorist blackmail. Experience sadly confirms that in the struggle against terrorism, each government in the final analysis must depend on its own will and resources in responding to terrorist attacks against its citizens and interests.

The United States record in meeting the challenges posed by terrorism is undistinguished. The brief moment of national euphoria that resulted from the interception of the aircraft carrying the perpetrators of the *Achille Lauro* affair in 1985 and the bombing of Libya in 1986 cannot obscure the fact that America's own war on terrorism has been characterized primarily by a national sense of helplessness and rage during and after each incident. The seizure of the American Embassy in Iran, the bombing and resultant loss of 241 lives at the Marine Landing Team headquarters in Beirut, and the continuing assaults on citizens and interests overseas have left scars on the national psyche.

Since President Nixon, the official policy of no concessions to terrorists' demands has been violated in incident after incident. The current administration has maintained the same fiction, as witness the negotiations and concessions that led to the freeing of the passengers on TWA Flight 847 in Lebanon in 1985. Yet, President Reagan and a number of his senior advisers have stated publicly that they will take an even stronger position against international terrorism than previous administrations. Bold rhetoric has been enunciated, including the call for an "active strategy" and "preemptive measures" against "state sponsored terrorism." Yet current programs to combat terrorism remain essentially defensive and reactive with emphasis still being placed on expensive target-hardening programs and the refinement of crisis management techniques.

The reasons for this reactive and defensive stance are complex and interrelated. At the most senior official level, there are still no consistent long-term policies. Each situation determines the response, and even if military action has been taken it has only been initiated after the terrorists have struck. Furthermore, the memory of the abortive Iranian hostage rescue attempt raises serious questions concerning the ability of the United States to react to, much less go on the offensive against, the terrorists. With each new crisis the same scenario is played out with little variation in theme. The concern over the fate of the hostages, heightened by extensive media coverage, leads to drawn-out negotiation instead of effective military action against the perpetrators. The lack of policies and action is also the result of the fact that the so-called war on terrorism often degenerates into a partisan debate within Congress. Polemics over "left wing terrorists" and "right wing freedom fighters" have promoted political disunity in the face of skillful and determined adversaries. Finally—and perhaps most fundamentally—despite the outcry that accompanies each incident, terrorism is still not viewed by the public as a serious threat to national security and one that requires decisive action. Terrorism is still primarily perceived to be a form of violence that happens to other people in other countries. The general climate of opinion does not provide the type of support that is necessary if the war is to be brought home against terrorism.

But even if the resolve developed within the political leadership and the public not only to react strongly but indeed to seize the initiative against terrorists and their state sponsors, it is by no means clear whether the military—who might be called on to engage in offensive preemptive operations and campaigns against terrorists—would be capable of carrying out such missions. The uncertainty is based in part on whether the services, individually and jointly, have the capability to take the offensive. But, more significantly, the uncertainty is predicated on a more basic question: Does the military have a counterterrorism doctrine, a doctrine that can provide the basis for the development of the necessary forces and strategies to take the initiative in both short-term operations and long-term campaigns against enemies who are growing in strength and sophistication? This study takes the position that present doctrine associated with combating terrorism is significantly flawed, that it is essentially reactive in nature, and consequently cannot be used effectively as the foundation for the development of the necessary organizations and forces that must be created if the

cycle of crisis and reaction is ever to be broken. It discusses the major elements required to develop a doctrine that can assist the services in bringing the war home against the terrorists if and when they are called upon to do so by the political leadership and the American people.

Chapter 1, "A Matter of Definition," presents the major characteristics of modern terrorism and discusses how they have been transformed by changes in technology and in the international system into a potent weapon of political, psychological, and armed conflict that has yet to be fully appreciated by the military establishment. Chapter 2, "A Matter of Doctrine," suggests that current concepts are inadequate in laying the groundwork for an offensive capability. It then discusses how a new conceptualization can provide the basis for preemptive military initiatives against terrorism. Chapter 3, "Force and Target Selection," addresses how different types of doctrine can drive the acquisition of the kinds of forces capable of taking the offensive against terrorists and their sponsor states. Chapter 4, "The Policy Dimensions," presents an analytical framework for the selection and use of existing forces as well as the development of new forces against different types of terrorist targets. Chapter 5, "Conclusion," suggests changes required before policymakers can develop or implement a counterterrorism capability. The suggestions are directed to those people who may be called on to direct US offensive forces in the very real, if undeclared, war in the shadows—the war against terrorism.

CHAPTER 1

A MATTER OF DEFINITION

To develop a doctrine of counterterrorism, we must understand the nature of the threat. Unfortunately, subjective factors intrude that impede such understanding. The term "terrorism" is often used in a pejorative manner, and the debate over what constitutes it is largely based on different definitions that are used either to condemn or justify the act. "Terrorism" is an emotion-laden term that is often employed as a rhetorical weapon by those who hold different political ideologies. The adage "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" may be true, but it does not contribute much to the discussion. Whether they are terrorists or freedom fighters, their victims face a grim and often final reality.

While there are conflicting definitions over what constitutes terrorism, a number of them suggest common characteristics; and an understanding of how these characteristics have been transformed by modern technology can provide the basis for appreciating the major elements of the threat. Such an appreciation provides the foundation for the development of a counterterrorism doctrine.

Despite numerous incidents of what often appear to be brutal and mindless violence, terrorism is the premeditated, calculated use of force to achieve certain objectives. Terrorism can be defined as

> a purposeful human activity primarily directed toward the creation of a general climate of fear designed to influence, in ways desired by the protagonists, other human beings, and through them some course of events.[1]

Terrorism therefore is goal-directed violence. Those who practice it may not appear rational, but their actions are far from mindless. Terrorism is used to promote certain responses from the immediate victims and from a larger audience. It is a weapon that is used in different types of conflict.

Terrorism as a Psychological Weapon

Since terrorism is "directed toward the creation of a general climate of fear,"[2] it must be stressed that terrorism is first a psychological weapon, for those who

use it play on the most elemental fears. As one definition cogently notes, "Terror is a natural phenomenon, terrorism is the conscious exploitation of it."[3]

Those who engage in terrorism seek to exploit both individual and collective fears of what might happen. Terrorists seek to establish a threshold of fear and intimidation by engaging in acts that force individuals and groups to accept the existence of life-threatening scenarios not of their own making. Through bombings, skyjackings, hostage taking, and other acts, the successful terrorist group creates a pervasive agenda of fear—an agenda that becomes salient to the experience of an audience forced to realize after an act of carnage that "there but for the grace of God go I."

Terrorists enjoy ultimate success when they can instill into the target audience a sense of powerlessness and helplessness. Acts of terrorism therefore are employed to create a particular mental state, a state of dread "aimed at the people watching."[4] But beyond individuals, acts of terrorism are also directed at institutions, for as Richard Clutterbuck notes, "Terrorism aims, by the use of violence or the threat of violence, to coerce governments, authorities, or populations by inducing fear."[5]

In the final analysis any doctrine that would counter terrorism must therefore recognize that it is

> a form of psychological operations (PSYOP). . . . Many other characteristics of terrorism are argued by the drafters of competing definitions, but virtually all include words to the effect that acts of terrorism are directed at a target audience and not just the immediate victim. *Without this provision, terrorism would be indistinguishable from other acts of violence.*[6] [Emphasis added]

Since the psychological aspects of terrorism must be dealt with, it is important to reconcile the need for awareness with the equally compelling requirement not to overstate the threat. For as one authority notes, "It is imperative that the distinction between sensitivity and alertness not be blurred; and that the close interdependence between them not be ignored."[7]

But perhaps most significant in developing a doctrine to actively counter terrorism is a recognition of the requirement that the techniques of psychological intimidation as practiced by the terrorists can be turned against them. Gazit and Handel note:

> Psychological warfare is a powerful weapon in the war against terrorism. Its aim is to hit the terrorist organization at its most vulnerable spot—the motivation of its members and the readiness of others to join its ranks and operate within its framework.[8]

If an offensive is to be launched against terrorists, the authorities must engage in their own campaigns to generate fear.

Terrorism as a Form of Communication

Since terrorism as a psychological weapon is aimed at a broader audience than the immediate victims, it is important to recognize that terrorism is also a form of

communication. As another definition puts it, "Terrorism is the threat of violence and the use of fear to coerce, persuade, and gain public attention."[9]

Terrorists engage in "armed propaganda." The terrorist group's aim is to

> communicate something on a small or national scale about its objectives, such as specific demands, simple assertions of its existence, or evidence of its power to control the course of events and to enforce subsequent demands. The terrorist minority needs to demonstrate its ability to weaken, intimidate, or bring down a government, or change the nature of a society or a government policy, in order to gain recognition for itself and its objectives (whether or not the latter is articulated). Thus terrorists seek to control communication for their own use and to deny its use to society.[10]

Any doctrine to counter terrorism must incorporate the means by which the message of fear and intimidation can be not only blunted but also replaced by a signal that the authorities can eliminate the agenda of fear created by terrorist acts. Through overt operations the authorities must convey "to the people watching" that they are meeting the terrorist threat effectively. But equally important, through the use of both overt and covert measures, they must have the capacity to signal to the terrorists that they cannot engage in their acts of carnage with impunity. Just as terrorists seek to force their message on "the world's consciousness,"[11] so must a doctrine of counterterrorism convey to the public and the terrorists that the government is able and willing to take the initiative away from the terrorists.

Terrorism as a Form of Criminality

While terrorism is certainly "a form of violent criminal behavior," it is vital that any doctrine associated with countering terrorism carefully differentiate between the act and the behavior. Terrorism is without question a crime, but those who practice it may perceive themselves to be soldiers in a real, if undeclared, war. Furthermore, various states that engage in or sponsor terrorism view such measures as an element in a strategy of warfare. Finally, the line between differentiating between terrorism as a criminal act and as an act of political or armed conflict is increasingly being blurred, as perhaps best illustrated by the marriages of convenience between drug dealers and terrorist groups that have led to the development of narcoterrorism. Terrorists are criminals, but it is important to recognize that terrorism is also a different order of conflict, and that to win it will require the involvement not only of the law enforcement community but of the military as well. It must be stressed however that recognizing that terrorism may be more than a criminal act does not mean to imply that the perpetrator has some degree of legitimacy for his or her actions. As Jeanne J. Kirkpatrick notes:

> Terrorism is *political* in a way that crime is not; the terrorists act in the name of some political, some public purpose. [However,] while the conception of the actor transforms the act, and while a purpose related to a public goal makes an act political, it does not make it moral. A public purpose does not make a terrorist who has been arrested a political prisoner.[12]

Terrorism as a Form of Political Warfare

Despite the blurring effect between criminality and political action, it is vital that terrorism on an organizational or governmental level—as contrasted to the level of individual motivation—be placed in the context of intense political competition. Terrorism has been and will continue to be used as an instrument of political subversion. Terrorism is therefore one of the tactics and strategies associated with the concept of "indirect aggression" as developed by the Soviet Union and practiced by a number of states. It is "the systematic attempt to undermine a society with the ultimate goal of causing the collapse of law and order and the loss of confidence in the state."[13]

Terrorism has become a major instrument in protracted political warfare that exists within an environment of neither war nor peace. Those who would evolve a doctrine of counterterrorism must develop the capability to engage in their own form of political warfare, and this in turn emphasizes the crucial role of the intelligence community in gathering information and carrying out operations against terrorists and their sponsor states. As we shall discuss, in this type of warfare the arbitrary "Green Door Syndrome" that separates the various intelligence communities must be breached. New forces may have to be developed to integrate both functions. In the war against terrorism the relationship between political warfare and armed conflict is so interdependent that counterterrorist forces may be required to ignore the arbitrary division between intense political competition on the one hand and subversion and armed conflict on the other.

Terrorism as a Form of Warfare

Yet, in the final analysis, while terrorism is a form of psychological and political warfare, it has increasingly become either a manifestation of the changing nature of armed conflict or indeed a new form of warfare that is the result of a technological revolution and accompanying changes in the international political arena. This creates a most vexing problem for those who would develop doctrine not necessarily based on the principles of warfare grounded on historical experience. They face the onerous challenge of developing the necessary forces and appropriate strategies to engage in a form of combat that poses as many unique problems as are now associated with the emergence of space warfare. Brian Jenkins notes that "warfare in the future will be less coherent. Warfare will cease to be finite."[14]

The "less coherent" nature of warfare particularly applies to what Jeanne J. Kirkpatrick has called "terrorist war, [that] is part of a total war which sees the whole society as an enemy, and all members of a society as appropriate objects for violent action."[15] The need to meet the changing nature of warfare in general

and terrorism in particular cannot be overstated. For as Richard Clutterbuck succinctly notes: "Guerrilla warfare and terrorism, rural and urban, internal or international, has undoubtedly become the primary form of conflict of our time."[16]

The problems associated with countering terrorism as a new form of warfare are the central concern of the following chapters. For only now is the military being forced to address the question of how to take the field against adversaries who may have drawn on traditional legacies of hatred and conflict to wage a new type of armed warfare through the utilization of modern technology.

Terrorism as a Strategy in a New Type of Warfare

As a result of the joint technological revolution in transportation and communication, the psychological and political attributes of terrorism have been transformed and magnified. Even though terrorism has evolved from an old tradition, contemporary terrorism is indeed a new form of conflict. Since Munich there is something new and invidious in the annals of human conflict.

The introduction of jet aircraft in the 1950s and early 1960s gave terrorists a degree of mobility and a field of operations undreamed of by their most dedicated and skillful predecessors. They could literally strike at targets of opportunity on a global basis in a matter of hours. As a result of technological change, a new form of terrorism emerged. Terrorism was no longer essentially a tactic associated with campaigns of political or armed subversion whose primary goal was the seizure of state power in a territorially based conflict. Modern, technologically enhanced terrorists could now engage in operations thousands of miles away from their base of operations or from a disputed strife zone. In effect the last decades have been marked by the development of nonterritorial terrorism which has become strategic in nature (fig. 1). It is a form of terrorism not confined to a specific geographical area.[17] It is essential to differentiate between it and the terrorism associated with the tactics of an insurgency. Modern, nonterritorial terrorism does not fit neatly within that part of the spectrum of conflict now commonly referred to as low-intensity conflict. The following statement should be kept in mind by those who would develop doctrine to combat this new form of violence.

> Terrorism is an important aspect of low-intensity conflict. A proper definition should specify *local internal terrorism* to distinguish this form of violence from nonterritorial terrorism, a form that is not necessarily low intensity in nature. Local internal terrorism is properly described as a tactic employed in the low intensity phase of guerrilla warfare and insurrection. International terrorism has strategic implications in the field of armed diplomacy.[18]

Therefore, as we shall see existing doctrine, strategy, and forces that have been developed to engage in low-intensity conflict may not be appropriate to counter modern, nonterritorial terrorism.

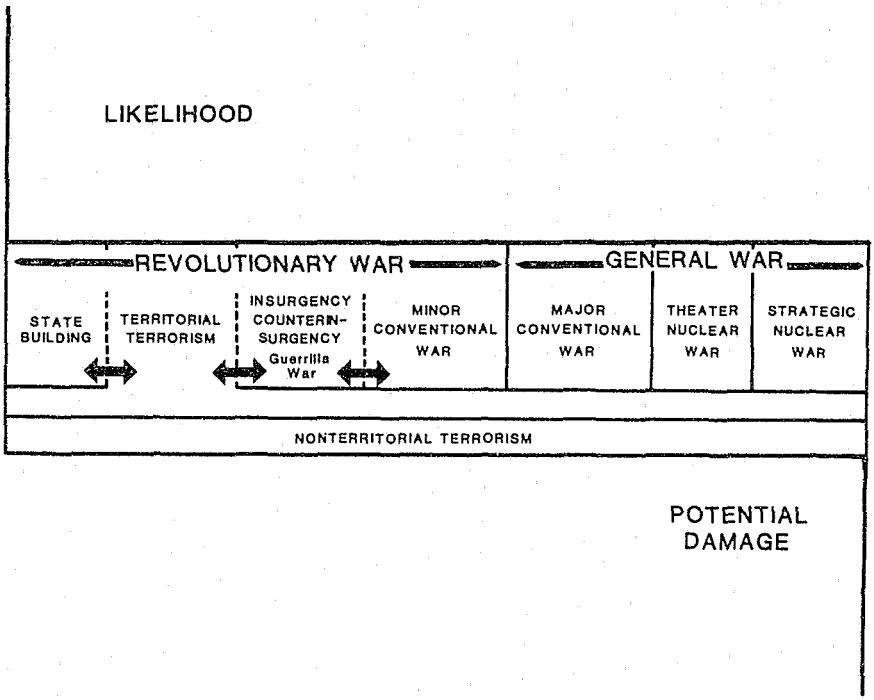

Figure 1. Spectrum of Conflict.

Placed in an even broader perspective, it is important to recognize that the strategic, as contrasted to tactical, importance of international terrorism is largely the result of the fact that the technology that transformed terrorism has also transformed the international system. Both superpowers and smaller states have employed terrorism as a significant weapon in the changing international environment.

At the level of superpower confrontation, the massive destructive power of both nuclear and conventional weapons limits the behavior of the United States and the Soviet Union based on their mutual recognition that unless alternatives to direct military confrontation can be found, the ultimate result could be global holocaust. (Interestingly, this condition has been termed the "balance of nuclear

terror.'') The confrontation experience of the Cuban missile crisis may explain in part why the United States resorted to only limited action in the attempt to free the hostages in Iran. The superpowers have sought to limit their use of military force at a lower level in order to avoid direct confrontation. The Soviet Union in particular has supported client states who in turn have trained and equipped various groups to use terrorism as a form of ''indirect aggression'' that can challenge Washington's global strategic position. This is not to suggest that Moscow is behind the unified ''terror network,''[19] but it serves to underscore how the Soviet Union has employed terrorism as a strategic weapon through the use of ''active measures [which] constitute a dynamic and integrated array of overt and covert techniques for influencing events and behavior in, and actions of, foreign countries.''[20]

To the USSR, terrorism is not narrowly defined as simply a form of violence. It is placed within a very broad spectrum of political warfare and armed conflict that ranges from overt and covert propaganda to ''paramilitary operations, composed of a wide variety of Soviet activities in support of terrorist groups and insurgent movements.''[21] Terrorism is therefore an offensive weapon in what is ultimately a systematic campaign of intensive political conflict. It is just one element in an approach that integrates the tactics and strategies of political and armed conflict. In combating terrorism, the United States will have to address whether it can develop its own variation of ''active measures,'' Soviet style, as one means of taking the offensive against terrorist groups and their state sponsors.

If the Soviet Union has employed terrorism as a way of avoiding the technological nightmare of nuclear war, other states have used it to compensate for the preponderance of military power held by Washington and Moscow. The seizure of the hostages in Iran points to another ominous characteristic of modern terrorism: states are not only sponsoring terrorist groups but are emulating their tactics as an instrument of foreign policy. It is not significant in the Iranian case that the act may have been initiated by nongovernmental groups. What is important is that holding those Americans in Iran became a state-sanctioned and state-sponsored terrorist act employed as a means of dramatizing a cause and attempting to pressure a more powerful state to overreact or acquiesce to a number of demands. The Iranians were highly successful. The title of the American Broadcasting Company's long running coverage of the incident, ''America Held Hostage,'' effectively conveyed the similarity between an act conducted by an international terrorist group and by a government employing the tactics of international terrorism.

The Iranian seizure of the US embassy was not the traditional ''state terrorism'' or ''enforcement terrorism'' of the past aimed at controlling or intimidating the local population.[22] It was directed at a foreign adversary and audience whose representatives were held in captivity. Moreover, beyond their own frontiers such rogue or outlaw states as Iran and Libya have supported nonterritorial terrorist groups as a technique in what can be viewed as a new

diplomatic method—"armed diplomacy"—for carrying out foreign policy.[23] To these states, acts of terrorism are as surely a part of this new and perverse diplomacy as the exchange of ambassadors of the past. What we are now witnessing is a variant of the gunboat diplomacy practiced by the major imperial powers during the last century. Now smaller states can threaten major powers with relative impunity; and when and if these rogue states and the terrorist groups they support achieve a nuclear capability, they can engage in a form of intimidation undreamed in the past.

It is therefore important that in the development of a counterterrorism doctrine and capability, emphasis be placed in a broader political context than the use of force; and it must also be recognized that terrorism is a manifestation of the changing nature of war. For as Brian Jenkins perceptively notes in placing the tragedy of Lebanon in a broader comparative perspective:

> The conflict in Lebanon is likely to be representative of armed conflict worldwide in the last quarter of the twentieth century: a mixture of conventional warfare, classic guerrilla warfare, and campaigns of terrorism, openly fought and secretly waged, often without regard to national frontiers, by armies, as well as irregular forces, directly or indirectly.[24]

If the United States is to develop an offensive doctrine of counterterrorism, it must learn to fight a new form of warfare in which it may not be able to draw on the experiences of the past.

NOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. H. H. A. Cooper, *Evaluating the Terrorist Threat, Principles of Applied Risk Assessment,* Clandestine Tactics and Technology Series (Gaithersburg, Md.: The International Association of Chiefs of Police, 1974), 4. Terrorism always poses an unacceptable challenge to the principles on which organized society rests, for those acting in this way seek to arrogate to themselves, and use in perverse ways, powers exclusively reserved to the state. Terrorism as an autonomous concept manifests itself through the distinctive deployment of a variety of criminal acts calculated to harm human life, property, and other interests.

2. Ibid.

3. National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, *Report of the Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1976), 3.

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CHAPTER 2

A MATTER OF DOCTRINE

If the ability to engage in offensive operations against terrorists and their sponsor states is to be realized, questions of definition and doctrinal issues must be addressed. If these two factors are ignored, the foundation for the development of the necessary strategies, organizations, and forces capable of bringing home the war against terrorism will not be realized. The purpose of this chapter is therefore twofold. In the first place, it is necessary to discuss the meaning of the terms employed by the services to provide guidance about the types of measures that are used to meet the threat. Do the existing terms essentially perpetuate a reactive and defensive posture despite the call for an "active strategy"? Or, are they subject to a reinterpretation more in keeping with the objective of seizing the initiative? Should new terms be developed to provide the necessary direction for moving beyond the posture of reaction that has characterized United States' actions against threats and acts of terrorism? In the second place, the reinterpretation of existing terminology or the development of a new terminology to meet the terrorist challenge will have meaning only if such an endeavor is placed within the broader context of doctrine development. For unless there is a clearly enunciated and integrated doctrine to combat terrorism, the government in general and the armed services in particular will not have the basis to initiate effective action systematically against modern nonterritorial terrorism.

The Semantics of Counterterrorism: A Quasi-Offensive Posture

A lack of semantic clarity in terminology used to provide guidance for measures to combat terrorism can be discerned in Department of Defense Directive 2000.12, *Protection of DOD Personnel and Resources Against Terrorist Acts,* which "updates established uniform DOD policies responsibilities and gives guidance on dealing with assassinations, bombings and other terrorist threats."[1]

This directive enunciates two types of measures to deal with the threat:

> *Antiterrorism.* Defensive measures used by the Department of Defense to reduce vulnerability of DOD personnel, their dependents, facilities, and equipment to terrorist acts.

> *Counterterrorism.* Offensive measures taken to respond to terrorist acts, including the gathering of information and threat analysis in support of those measures.[2]

The definition of antiterrorism is clear enough, but that of counterterrorism is contradictory in nature—perhaps symptomatic of a lack of conceptual agreement on how terrorism should be combated. While counterterrorism is defined as "offensive measures," such measures are taken "to respond to a terrorist act." Consequently, DOD has set the requirement to develop measures which, although apparently offensive in character, are at best quasi-offensive and in effect simply reinforce the defensive character of the programs directed toward dealing with terrorism.

The question of terminology is further complicated by the implications of the development of a more offensive posture by the Army. The introduction to FC 100–37, *Terrorism Counteraction,* says that

> antiterrorism and counterterrorism are two major areas of the US Army role in terrorism counteraction. Antiterrorism refers to defensive measures taken to reduce vulnerability to terrorist attack. Counterterrorism refers to offensive measures taken in response to terrorist acts. It is stressed, however, that there is no distinct separation between the two areas, and considerations that apply in one area also apply to the other. Intelligence, for example, as discussed in antiterrorism, has equal importance in counterterrorism.[3]

Thus, although terrorism counteraction may appear to suggest a more dynamic posture on the part of the Army, the definitions of antiterrorism and counterterrorism are essentially the same as they are in DOD Directive 2000.12, and they retain the reactive posture of the past. There may indeed be a justification for "no distinct separation between the two areas" in regard to having an integrated approach in dealing with what are essentially defensive measures, but such an integration may not be applicable for offensive measures against terrorists. There is a difference in how the intelligence process should be used in offensive as contrasted to defensive operations against terrorism.

The Department of Defense may, however, be slowly moving in the direction of developing a more aggressive posture in combating terrorism. In the current edition of JCS Pub 1, *Directory of Military and Associated Terms,* the only term used in reference to terrorism is Terrorist Threat Condition, defined as a level of terrorist threat to US military facilities and personnel (THREATCON).[4] The forthcoming edition, now in draft, will also incorporate a new definition of counterterrorism: "Offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism."[5] This definition may be a step in the right direction, because most current counterterrorism measures are passive ones taken primarily to prevent terrorism; they are neither offensive nor responsive to a particular act.

The more active connotation of the new definition is closer to the type of measures that Israel has used in the conduct of offensive measures against terrorists, their organizations, their supporters, and their sponsor states. That is:

Counterforce Measures: Countermeasures taken to reduce terrorists' resources and hence their capability to strike.

Impeding: Countermeasures designed to intercept a particular strike before it is carried out.[6]

It should be noted however that the term "counterforce" has a different meaning to Israelis than to the US military. As defined in JCS Pub 1, counterforce is

> the employment of strategic air and missile forces in an effort to destroy, or render impotent, selected military capabilities of an enemy force under any circumstances by which hostilities may be initiated.[7]

While it is possible to consider the theoretical use of strategic forces against terrorists, it is unlikely that those forces would meet the unique requirements of engaging in a war against terrorism. In addition, it may be advisable to broaden the definition of counterterrorism based on the Israeli model. Indeed, there have been attempts to change the definition in this direction. Thus, in a draft version of Air Force Manual 2-5, *Tactical Air Operations—Special Air Warfare,* counterterrorism operations are described as

> those offensive operations conducted to alleviate an in-being or potential terrorism or hostage situation, including the gathering of information and threat analysis in support of those operations. Operations may be overt or clandestine in nature, and may take the form of swift surgical operations or protracted campaigns. Operations may use anything from subtle persuasion to overwhelming force.[8]

The use of the words "alleviate an in-being or potential terrorism . . . situation" suggests that operations can be conducted before an incident occurs. The statement that such operations may involve "protracted campaigns" properly implies that the United States must move beyond the realm of ad hoc hostage rescue attempts and into the arena of the grinding war of attrition required to defeat terrorism. And as we shall see, the use of the words "subtle persuasion" recognizes the importance of psychological operations in the protracted war against terrorism.

Capt Willard L. Elledge comes even closer to developing a concept that places counterterrorism (CT) in a distinctly offensive mode.

> CT involves much more than the "raid" or "rescue" that sometimes culminates a CT operation. The entire process is a continuous one, involving intelligence gathering, force planning, interagency coordination, and unique logistic requirements. This ongoing characteristic separates CT as a concept distinct from the "one shot" direct action mission.[9]

Even more to the point is his definition of counterterrorism as

> those activities conducted by an individual or an agency to pre-empt or terminate a terrorist act. CT is generally offensive in nature as compared to anti-terrorism, which is generally defensive.[10]

Yet the author falls short in developing a basis for operations that would truly seize the initiative, for he notes that CT is "generally offensive." The definition does not completely cut the conceptual tie between antiterrorism and counterterrorism, although it is a quantum leap forward from the confusion created by the term "terrorism counteraction."

If a truly offensive doctrine and capability is to be realized, it may be necessary to recognize the requirement for a new third category of measures to combat terrorism which could be placed under the heading of *terrorism preemption*. The term could be defined as "those offensive military and associated actions by the services and other appropriate agencies that are initiated against terrorists, their organizations, supporters, and sponsor states to prevent or deter acts or campaigns of terrorism directed against US citizens and interests."

The introduction of a new category of measures would dictate succinctly the need for pure offensive measures against terrorists and their state sponsors. However, it is doubtful that the concept of the associated term "terrorism preemption" will be realized unless we recognize that contemporary nonterritorial terrorism has become a form of warfare that requires the development of the necessary doctrine, strategy, and forces to combat it. Until there is the recognition of the changing nature of terrorism, the United States and the armed services will continue essentially to *react* to future incidents. The reasons for this are discussed in the next section.

Counterterrorism: A Matter of Doctrine

If the ability to engage in offensive operations against terrorists and their sponsor states is to come to fruition, whether such operations are placed within an expanded definition of counterterrorism missions or under a new heading of terrorism preemption, the definitional questions must be addressed in the broader context of doctrine development. Doctrine provides the theoretical core for the steps that are necessary to effectively engage those groups and states that are now practicing a new type of warfare that has become a growing threat to national security. While there are many definitions and interpretations of what constitutes doctrine, the term as employed here refers to beliefs and assumptions on the nature and conduct of war that are based on a study of the past and an analysis of current and future changes in the international environment.

Doctrine, of course, does not exist in a vacuum. Overemphasis on short-term policy and politics can impede sound doctrinal development; it can also prevent the proper consideration of fundamental changes in the nature of warfare and the way Americans must react to those changes over the long term. Furthermore, while such changes in policy from the civilian leadership do largely direct doctrine, particularly in the short term, it is incumbent on the respective services to address necessary adjustments in order to be able to understand and strategize

effectively in the changing environment of warfare. Thus, while the constraints in civilian policy making must be taken into account, there is a need to formulate

> an unconstrained doctrine [which] offers more continuity. . . . (There are always real world restrictions: civilian policy is just one of them.) But it is a risky matter to allow outside influences to hinder the formulation of basic military truths.[11]

The services have the obligation to evolve the necessary doctrine to prepare to fight wars that may not be fully recognized by the existing leadership and the public. The services must stand ready with a body of concepts and capabilities if and when they are called upon to protect national security from adversaries and threats that even now may not be fully appreciated.

Lt Col Dennis Drew has provided an excellent framework for the understanding and application of different types of doctrine that can be used to formulate a foundation for an integrated capability to engage in terrorism preemption. He suggests that there are essentially three types of doctrine: fundamental, environmental, and organizational.[12] These will be employed in the following pages to enunciate an overarching doctrine of terrorism preemption.

Fundamental Doctrine: Is Terrorism a Form of Warfare?

In dealing with acts of terrorism, it is first important to place the nature of the act in the most basic context. Here is where one must address the question of fundamental doctrine, which

> as the name implies forms the foundation for all other types of doctrine. Its scope is broad and its concepts relatively abstract. Essentially, fundamental doctrine consists of beliefs about the purpose of the military, the nature of war, the relationship of military force to other power instruments and similar subject matter on which less abstract beliefs are founded.[13]

The development of fundamental doctrine on terrorism in general and, more specifically, of an offensive doctrine of counterterrorism or terrorism preemption has been hindered by the continuing lack of agreement on whether terrorism should be seen as a form of warfare that is therefore subject to doctrine related to the art and science of warfare. Recently, senior civilian officials and military officers have enunciated the view that terrorism has indeed become a form of warfare. Thus, Robert C. McFarlane, former assistant to the president for national security affairs, stated:

> Our problem for the future is that below the threshold where deterrence works, below the strategic level, we face an insidious new threat. This threat is not war as we have known it, not the threat of nuclear attack, but this new form of warfare, of terrorism.[14]

Adm James Watkins, chief of naval operations, shared this point of view.

> Like it or not, we and our allies are engaged in a new form of global warfare, unlike other traditional forms of warfare, which is difficult to deal with in a coherent and planned fashion.[15]

CIA Director William J. Casey also offered his view of terrorism as a form of war when he said: "We are engaged here in a new form of low-intensity warfare against an enemy that is hard to find and harder still to defend against."[16]

The *Long Commission Report* on the events surrounding the deaths of the 241 marines in the bombing of the Marine Battalion Landing Team headquarters in Beirut also placed that event in a broader perspective than an act of terrorism. The report noted that the bombing

> was tantamount to an act of war using the medium of terrorism. Terrorist warfare sponsored by sovereign states or organized political entities to achieve political objectives is a threat to the United States and is increasing at an alarming rate.[17]

Finally, former Secretary of the Air Force Verne Orr not only addressed the fact that terrorism has become a form of warfare but also related this development to the crucial importance of doctrine in discussing different challenges now faced by the military leadership.

> A third challenge to the our military leadership is to make sure doctrine keeps pace with the evolving threat. We need only to go back in history to illustrate that we must never again prepare to fight "the last war." Future warfare may not exist in the traditional sense. It may be nothing more than well-organized and coordinated terrorism, perpetrated by highly dedicated and heavily armed terrorists on a mass scale.[18]

Secretary Orr raised and answered a question that is the major concern of this chapter: "Does our current military doctrine accommodate this threat? I think not."[19]

The reasons for this absence of accommodation, despite the pronouncements of senior officials that terrorism is a form of warfare, may be based on the following considerations. In the first place, the political pronouncements do not address military doctrine. Indeed they do not necessarily reflect what policy is. Rather, they are primarily declaratory statements of what policies toward terrorism should be. (The disparity between the public official position on meeting the terrorist threat and the actual policy formulation and implementation is discussed in chapter 4.) In the second place, despite the rhetoric, the respective services still view terrorism essentially as a criminal act and not a form of warfare.

This position can be readily seen in the definition of terrorism used by the Department of Defense:

> The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence by a revolutionary organization against individuals or property, with the intention of coercing or intimidating governments and societies, often for political and ideological purposes.[20]

There is certainly no question that terrorism is a criminal act that falls largely under the purview of the civilian and military law enforcement community. But such an approach does not meet the current challenge. Since nonterritorial international terrorism has increasingly become an act of war, it is necessary to develop military doctrine associated with combat arms to counter the threat. Until the change of emphasis is made—to apply military rather than police operations against terrorists—preventive and reactive measures will continue to take precedence over preemptive measures by different types of combat forces and associated agencies. It should be stressed, however, that although the line between domestic and international terrorism will increasingly be blurred, incidents of domestic terrorism should continue to be treated as criminal acts to be dealt with by the law enforcement community under the leadership of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the "lead agency" in dealing with terrorism. Grant Wardlaw effectively discusses why the police and not military forces should be used against threats or acts of domestic terrorism when he discusses traditional police doctrine in a democratic society from a British perspective.

> Probably of foremost importance is the doctrine of "minimum force *versus* maximum violence." The principle of the use of minimum force is central to all British-tradition police forces. In essence it has meant the use of minimum force to deter, restrain, or if necessary, contain violence, and to preserve the public order. The aims of minimum force are to protect the public, avoid the escalation of violence or confrontation when it can be avoided, foster public support for the police by displays of restraint and impartiality, and bring about the termination of a threatening situation with a minimum amount of personal and physical damage possible.[21]

Wardlaw then notes that in addition to democratic constitutional constraints, the military should not be involved unless it is absolutely essential in dealing with domestic incidents.

> This ethos may be contrasted with that which pervades the action of the army. As a rule the army is trained to apply the maximum force that is necessary to take the objective and eliminate an enemy. The army need not usually be worried about causing damage or loss of life, gaining or maintaining public support or avoiding confrontation. It seems obvious that in a society which is not accustomed to the sight of heavily armed detachments on public order duty with the public, the army is unsuited in both training and doctrine for an internal security role.[22]

While Wardlaw's statements certainly have validity in combating domestic terrorism, what he refers to as "the military ethos" may very well be the appropriate means by which the respective services can and should engage in terrorism preemption against international terrorists. However, it should also be noted that Wardlaw's description of "military ethos" may be too simplistic. For, if the correct forces and strategies are employed, the military and associated agencies can engage in different operations against terrorists that can range from the use of "maximum force" to covert or clandestine campaigns employing the

techniques of psychological warfare and the skills of special operations forces to engage in the very selective threat or use of "minimum force."

Finally, the line between domestic and international terrorism is being further eroded by the development of the relationship between various terrorist groups and those involved in the narcotics trade. With the development of narcoterrorism, which does not recognize national boundaries, the role of the military in assisting domestic and foreign law enforcement agencies is being expanded by revising *posse comitatus* legislation to lessen constraints on the military.[23]

But even with these changes, the services have yet to cross the bridge and develop a war-fighting doctrine related to actively combating terrorism. The military services still treat terrorism as criminal activity unrelated to the conduct of warfare. Until there is a change in emphasis, a doctrine of reaction will act as a barrier to the development of a dynamic doctrine of expanded counterterrorism or terrorism preemption. It should also be noted, although the subject is beyond the scope of this study, that just as the military faces the onerous task of redefining its role in combating terrorism, so does the law enforcement community face the challenge of adjusting to the reality that domestic terrorism may be a serious threat to national security when it is supported by foreign adversaries who are now practicing this form of "indirect aggression" against the United States.

Environmental Doctrine: The Impact of Technology

Environmental doctrine is "a compilation of beliefs about the employment of military forces within a particular operating medium."[24] Since modern terrorism is very much a product of technology, we cannot overstate the importance of environmental doctrine in developing a capacity for terrorism preemption. Such a doctrine is "significantly influenced by factors such as geography and technology."[25]

The "operating medium" in which terrorists engage in their own form of warfare has become increasingly complex. Since technology has led to the development of nonterritorial terrorism, those who would engage in terrorism preemption have to operate in a multidimensional medium, for the terrorists can strike at targets of opportunity thousands of miles away from a disputed strife zone. Furthermore, through skyjacking they can conduct operations that transcend and ignore the arbitrary legalistic boundaries of the nation-state system. In a very real sense, modern terrorists can be said to be engaging their own limited strategic form of "aerospace warfare." Those who must address the complexities of possibly waging war in the "aerospace medium . . . the total expanse beyond the Earth's surface"[26] can draw on the experience of those who *are now* faced with combating nonterritorial terrorists. In both types of war the field of operations is not limited, the line between offensive and defensive

measures is not clearly demarked, targets are numerous, and new forces may have to be created to operate in a new battlefield environment. Finally, in this multidimensional medium, just as in the case of potential future space warfare, the necessity to coordinate the application of sea, land, and air power creates serious organizational questions concerning the roles and missions of the respective services in converting a doctrine of terrorism preemption into a reality.

Organizational Doctrine: The Bureaucratic Battle

In the final analysis, terrorism preemption will never be realized unless the proper mix of existing forces and the development of new forces progresses to meet the unique challenges of modern terrorism. The requirement is for an organizational doctrine of terrorism preemption, a doctrine that is "best defined as basic beliefs about the organization of a *particular* military organization, or group of closely linked organizations."[27] Unfortunately, the formulation of this type of doctrine can generate the most heated debates within and among the respective services as parochial interests, fueled by the competition for increasingly scarce financial resources, may take precedence over a unified approach to terrorism preemption. This is to be expected, for

> organizational doctrine is *very* narrow in scope [and] tends to change relatively frequently in order to remain current. This contrasts sharply with the almost timeless qualities of fundamental doctrine. Environmental doctrine would also seem to have considerable staying power.[28]

If and when the strong declaratory statements calling for a war against terrorism are transformed into an action-oriented policy, all the services, as well as concerned civilian organizations and agencies, will seek to stake out their own bureaucratic turf. In so doing, they might replicate, on a tragically grander scale, the problems that contributed to the failure of Desert One—the aborted Iranian hostage rescue mission. The next chapter addresses the means by which proper force selection can be achieved in order to lessen the dangers of engaging in an ineffectual bureaucratic war rather than in effective military action to combat and preempt terrorism.

NOTES

CHAPTER 2

1. DOD Directive 2000.12, *Protection of DOD Personnel and Resources Against Terrorist Acts*, 12 February 1982, 1.

2. Ibid.

3. US Army Field Circular 100–37, *Terrorism Counteraction*, 15 July 1984, 1.

4. Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication (JCS Pub) 1, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 1 April 1984, 370.

5. HQ USAF/SPO Message 0217027 December 1985, subj: DOD Approved Terminology—Terrorism Terms.

6. Hanan Alon, *Countering Palestinian Terrorism in Israel: Toward a Policy Analysis of Countermeasures* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1980), ix.

7. JCS Pub 1, 94.

8. Draft revision of Air Force Manual 2–5, *Tactical Air Operations—Special Air Warfare*, 1985, 3.

9. Willard L. Elledge, "Sorting Out the Semantics of Low-Intensity Conflict," a paper prepared for presentation at the Ninth Air University Air Power Symposium, *The Role of Air Power in Low-Intensity Conflict*, Maxwell AFB, 11–13 March 1985, 7.

10. Ibid.

11. Charles D. Friedenstein, Lt Col, USAF, "The Uniqueness of Space Doctrine," *Air University Review* 37, no. 1 (November-December 1985): 16.

12. Dennis M. Drew, Lt Col, USAF, "Of Trees and Leaves: A New View of Doctrine," *Air University Review* 33, no. 2 (January–February 1982): 43.

13. Ibid.

14. Robert C. McFarlane, "Terrorism and the Future of Free Society," address to the National Strategy Information Center, Defense International Forum, 25 March 1985, 14. News Release, National Strategy Information Center.

15. James D. Watkins, Adm, USN, "Terrorism: An Already Declared *War*," *Wings of Gold*, Summer 1984, 19.

16. William J. Casey, "International Terrorism: Potent Challenge to American Security," *Vital Speeches of the Day*, 15 September 1985, 713.

17. "Holloway Commission Report," Joint Special Operations Planning Workshop, reprint of "Special Operations Review Group," *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 15 (16–17), 22 (140–44), 29 (84–91) September 1980.

18. Verne Orr, "Perspectives on Leadership," *Air University Review* 36, no. 6 (September–October 1985): 53.

19. Ibid.

20. DOD Directive 2000.12, 1. *Protection of DOD Personnel and Resources Against Terrorist Acts*, DOD, Washington, D.C., 12 February 1982, 1.

21. Grant Wardlaw, *Political Terrorism: Theory, Tactics, and Countermeasures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 90. Quote on "minimum force" from Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State* (London: Macmillian, 1977), 43.

22. Ibid.

23. For a discussion of the constraints on military involvement under the *Posse Commitatus Act*, see William Regis Farrell, *The US Government Response to Terrorism: In Search of an Effective Strategy* (Boulder: Westview Publishers, 1982): 52–59.

24. Drew, 44.

25. Ibid.

26. Draft of AFM 1–1, *Basic Aerospace Doctrine*, 27 November 1985, 3.

27. Drew, 45.

28. Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

FORCE AND TARGET SELECTION

Since terrorism can be considered a new form of warfare, problems associated with developing organizational doctrine related either to an expanded counterterrorism capability or the development of terrorism preemption forces must be addressed. Unless such doctrine is enunciated, neither existing nor new forces will be able to engage in preemptive operations against the terrorists or their organizations, supporters, and sponsor states.

The problem of developing doctrine is exacerbated by a number of factors that have been briefly noted earlier. In the first place, since nonterritorial terrorism takes place in a multidimensional medium, forces who would be required to initiate offensive operations would have to have the capacity to function in such a medium. Secondly, since nonterritorial terrorism takes place across the spectrum of armed conflict, close coordination among a mix of forces—both conventional and unconventional—would be essential to counter or preempt terrorism campaigns and missions. Thirdly, since terrorism preemption does not simply refer to the offensive use of armed force against terrorists, assets that are capable of engaging in political and psychological warfare against nonterritorial terrorists might be essential components of any preemptive operation.

The formulation of organizational doctrine does not take place in a vacuum. Indeed, such doctrine is exceedingly sensitive to existing institutional arrangements and competition among various bureaucratic structures—be they civilian or military in nature. This competition is particularly intensive in current efforts to combat terrorism. Since the Reagan administration has placed fighting terrorism high on its declaratory policy agenda, and since incidents are likely to increase and become more destructive, the bureaucratic infighting to stake out a role and therefore justify the acquisition of additional resources has intensified and will continue to do so. Moreover, a number of studies have indicated that the war on terrorism has been characterized as primarily a bureaucratic battle among those agencies and departments that may be more concerned with maximizing their position in Washington than with systematically addressing the short- and long-term implications of modern terrorism's threat to national security. As a pioneering study of the US government's response to terrorism notes:

> Bureaucratic and organizational imperatives common to all agencies—i.e., factoring of problems, parochial priorities, goals and the sequential attention to them, standard operating

procedures, concern over uncertainty, resistance to change, and much more—hinder needed cooperation.[1]

The lack of cooperation based on a desire to keep "current" in the bureaucratic arena certainly can be applied to the superheated administrative environment in which the war against terrorism is being conducted in Washington. Yet organizational doctrine, while inherently sensitive to existing bureaucratic realities, should not be solely dependent on them. As employed in this chapter, organizational doctrine is a means of developing the necessary administrative and armed capability to take the offensive against terrorism predicated on long-term goals instead of short-term bureaucratic competition and resultant constraints.

The development of an organizational doctrine of terrorism preemption in this chapter will address the following questions: (1) How can existing large-scale organizations and forces adjust to operating in the ambiguous field of operations that marks terrorism as a form of less "coherent" warfare? (2) What types of forces, either jointly or individually, should be used in preempting different types of targets—ranging from the individual terrorist cell to the organizational infrastructure or, when appropriate, the sponsoring state? (3) Is it necessary to develop new forces to counter what can be regarded as the organizational structure of modern terrorism?

Fighting in the Gray Area of Conflict: The Problem of Ambiguity

Because modern terrorists operate in a multidimensional medium, in a condition of neither war nor peace, where the adversary and his supporters may not be clearly detected, existing forces face serious problems in conducting offensive operations in an inherently ambiguous battlefield. If there is a fog of war, there is now also a smog of terrorism. Two often contradictory approaches have been used to address military roles and missions in counterterrorism and terrorism preemption. On the one hand there are those who would suggest that existing conventional forces could be used with relatively few modifications to combat terrorism. On the other hand, there are those who would maintain that counterterrorism in general and, more specifically, terrorism preemption require an emphasis on the employment of special operations forces. The doctrinal issue in such debates may not necessarily relate to fundamental questions of warfighting in reference to selecting the right force or forces to combat terrorism. Rather, it may relate to the means by which we can justify the use of existing forces within and among the military and intelligence services to engage in what the current administration has increasingly called a vital mission. Thus, the proponents of aerospace power could stress the importance of the application of both conventional and unconventional air power through the planning and launching of operations against terrorist installations or the installations of the

states that sponsor them. For example, one author "supports the proposition that the full range of air power capabilities should be explored"[2] in countering terrorism and makes an interesting case for the use of the B-52 in such missions.

The proponents of sea power have also suggested that the Navy may have a role in combating terrorism. The deployment of the fleet against a state that sponsors terrorism as a form of coercive diplomacy, or a naval bombardment against suspected terrorist installations whether effective or not, have been postulated to justify a Navy counterterrorist mission. In regard to land-based operations, certainly the Marine Corps and the Army have had to address whether their conventional forces could or should be involved in counterterrorist operations. In the case of the Corps, the tragedy of the bombing of the Marine Battalion Team headquarters in Lebanon illustrated how a service may be forced to take on a mission it is ill equipped to deal with. In contrast, one of the ways the Army has sought to justify the development of the light infantry division is to note its utility in engaging in different types of potential counterterrorist operations.[3]

This is not to suggest that there are not missions which require the use of both conventional and special forces to counter different types of terrorist threats and acts. However, given the current concern over terrorism, there is a real danger that within and among the respective services, organizational doctrine associated with counterterrorism and terrorism preemption is and will be driven by the current capabilities of both conventional and special operations forces of the respective services and their desire to justify the expansion of their roles and missions in an area of major policy concern without adequate attention to the real nature of the threat. In effect the services may be in search of a counterterrorist mission for their existing organizations rather than being willing to tailor new units to this new style of warfare.

But in a war that may have to be conducted on an inherently ambiguous battlefield, organizational doctrine should be based on war-fighting requirements that can effectively counter or preempt terrorists and their sponsors, and not on bureaucratic competition. Therefore, there are some initial guidelines that should be considered in developing effective organizational doctrine to meet threats and acts of terrorism. In the first place, since terrorists often operate in a nonterritorial battlefield, it is essential that there be very close coordination—indeed, possibly integration—among those forces who would combat terrorism. Secondly, while there is a requirement for the specialization of function among forces who would be involved in terrorist preemption missions (since terrorism does span the spectrum of conflict), it is also important that there be a unity and a flexibility that will enable the necessary forces to coordinate their effort in meeting a form of armed conflict that is not neatly categorized as either low-, medium-, or high-intensity conflict. In order to achieve this goal, the following operational doctrine and accompanying analytical framework may assist both planners and policymakers in selecting the proper forces to conduct terrorism preemption against the proper targets.

Target and Force Selection in Counterterrorism and Terrorism Preemption

It is not the purpose of this section to discuss the measures that should be employed in terrorism preemption missions and campaigns. Such a discussion belongs to those schooled in the tradecraft of intelligence operations. Moreover, given the sensitive nature of the topic, such a discussion would hardly be appropriate for inclusion in an open publication. It can be assumed, however, that the intelligence community has and is refining a capability to engage in terrorism preemption if or when it is called upon to do so. The answer to the question whether such a call will be made depends on changes in national policies toward combating threats and acts of terrorism. The policy dimensions are examined in chapter 4. Nevertheless, a basic guideline for target and force selection can be stated as follows: The more ambiguous the terrorist target, the more likely the requirement for a preemptive operation of a covert nature.

In developing a doctrine to provide the appropriate means to engage in terrorism preemption, an analytical framework can prove useful. The framework is meant to provide a basic overview of how to select forces and targets in terrorism preemption operations and campaigns. Of course, it must be adjusted to meet the unique aspects of different threats and incidents. Constituting that framework, the following factors should be considered in counterterrorism or terrorism preemption: (1) the type of target, (2) the type of force, (3) the constraints on the use of force, and (4) the degree of operational disclosure.

While each situation differs, various patterns can be used as a means of engaging in proper force selection and application (fig. 2). Let us examine several possible situations.

Terrorist State

In this scenario a country is overtly using the tactics of nonterritorial international terrorism against United States citizens and interests overseas. The seizure of hostages, an assault on an embassy or other American installation, the holding of a skyjacked aircraft, and similar incidents would fall under this heading. While this is not a form of state-sponsored terrorism, it is, in effect, a terrorist state practicing the most violent form of "armed diplomacy." Such an act comes perilously close to being, if indeed it is not, an act of war. It would justify counterterrorist operations that should be initiated as quickly as possible, since the action probably does not lend itself to extensive negotiations. Negotiation can be employed, however, not necessarily to seek the release of the hostages but to provide more time to launch operations.

The type of target selected for a retaliatory strike could be a governmental installation, particularly a military base. The type of forces used could be

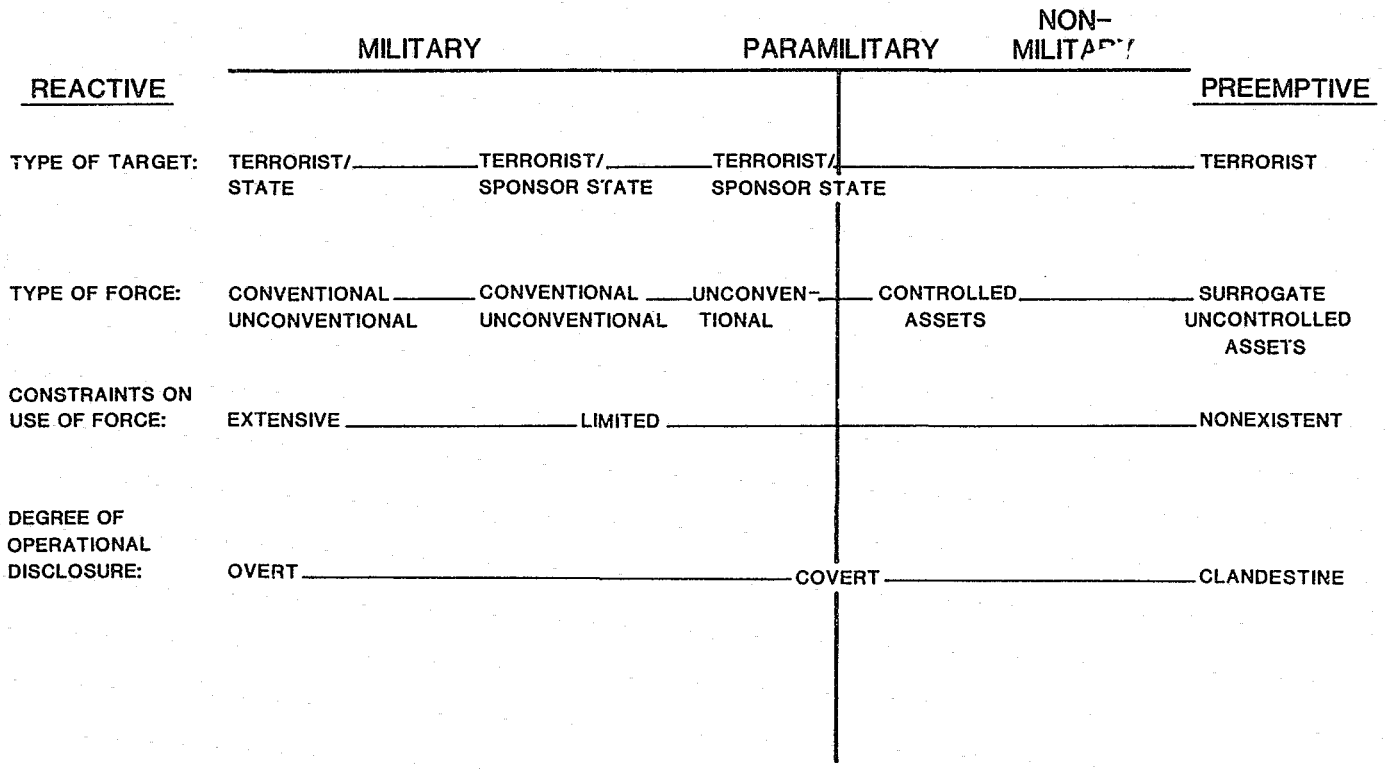


Figure 2. Analytical Framework for Counterterrorism Operations.

conventional or special assets, employed either individually or jointly. Extensive constraints would be necessary on the use of force in "surgical strikes" to lessen the possibility of civilian casualties and retaliation against US citizens, since public disclosure would be widespread once the operation was launched. This type of overt action would signal to the American public the resolve and capability of the government to respond effectively to an incident. It would also signal to the terrorist state that such actions could not be carried out with impunity. The same selection of forces and targets could be applied preemptively when there is overwhelming evidence that the terrorist state is about to initiate an attack against American citizens and interests.

State-Sponsored Terrorism

In this scenario it is more difficult to ascertain whether the state is directly involved in preparing for or engaging in an act of terrorism. It may be doing so while lying about that support to the rest of the world. The state may be actually supporting nonterritorial international terrorist groups as a form of "indirect aggression" against the target state—for our purposes, the United States Nevertheless, if there is a clear indication of the state's culpability, direct action can be taken against the sponsoring state and the terrorist organization just as in the case against the terrorist state. Since the relationship between the state and the terrorist group is less clear, a requirement for covert operations may have to be considered with the provision to engage in "plausible denial" if necessary.

Both conventional and special operations forces could be employed overtly, and so there continues to be a requirement for constraints on the use of force. However, the choice of targets is no longer limited to regular military forces and installations but may include specific terrorist groups and their home installations requiring covert action. Here, Brian Jenkins' observations concerning the need to engage in terrorism preemption against state-sponsored terrorism is particularly well taken:

> Here we confront a campaign of terrorism instigated and directed by a handful of adversary states. Its violence is deadlier and can have a serious effect on American policy. *Here, defensive measures may not be enough.*[4] [Emphasis added]

Terrorist Groups Without State Sponsorship

In this scenario one moves further into the ambiguous area of neither war nor peace. It is difficult to initiate action against a government which is either not willing or not capable of dealing with its own terrorists. Furthermore, the terrorist groups can essentially be viewed to be "nonstate actors" and therefore it is difficult to consider the use of regular military forces against them.[5]

Since there may not be a "smoking pistol" to prove state culpability or involvement, there are serious questions concerning the use of any military forces in either counterterrorism or terrorism preemption operations. However, if we recognize that such terrorists are engaging in a form of warfare, we can consider covert military operations, particularly by personnel and assets drawn from the special forces community. Moreover, as we shall see, it may be advisable to develop a new force to fight this war in the shadows. In such operations, the targets may be irregular forces and terrorist organizations. Since such operations essentially would be covert, there would be fewer constraints on the use of force. The operation would signal to the terrorist groups that they will pay the price for their actions. As the operations would be covert, the signal would not be meant for broad public awareness.

In countering these terrorist groups, long-term psychological operations should also be used to break down the will of the terrorists and their supporters. Further, preemptive measures can be considered before such groups gain the capacity to initiate assaults against United States citizens and interests.

Terrorists

This is perhaps the most difficult type of scenario to consider. While the terrorists may perceive themselves to be engaging in their own nonterritorial, nonstate form of warfare, they nevertheless are civilian actors and therefore it is difficult to justify the use of military forces against them. Moreover, since the targets are human intensive and very small, counterterrorism and terrorism preemption missions might be best carried out by the clandestine services of the intelligence community.

It should be noted, however, that even if the operation is complex, experience has shown that once small terrorist cells go tactical they are difficult to stop, particularly when they select softer targets of opportunity. It is therefore vital to consider terrorism preemption before such individuals initiate their movement to the potential target. As noted earlier, it may be necessary to consider developing a new force to carry out such missions. Terrorism is a form of warfare in a gray area, and a preemption force would have to have the ability to engage in black operations. Given the highly clandestine nature of such missions, the constraints on the use of force would be virtually nonexistent since no operational disclosure would be anticipated. It should be noted that in such operations, it may be difficult not only to target the organizational structure of large terrorist groups but even more challenging to target the individual cells of very small, free-floating terrorist groups.

Finally, one may consider the use of surrogates for counterterrorism and terrorism preemption missions. But it must be kept in mind that while such operations might enhance plausible denial, once surrogates are employed it becomes increasingly difficult to exercise effective command and control over

them. A good case in point is the alleged CIA involvement in the training of a counterterrorist unit implicated in a car bombing in Lebanon that killed more than 80 people and injured 200.[6]

These then, are alternatives that can be considered in moving through the spectrum from a reactive, overt posture to a preemptive, clandestine one against those who engage in terrorist warfare.

The Need to Apply Terrorist Organizational Doctrine to Counter and Preempt Terrorism

As one moves beyond the threat posed by terrorist states and state-sponsored terrorism, there is a serious vacuum in reference to the development of organizational and operational doctrine and capabilities in regard to terrorism preemption. As a result of the experience of the abortive hostage rescue attempt in Iran, there have been impressive advances in the training and equipping of counterterrorist forces. These assets can engage in the inherently complex and risky essentially reactive operations against terrorists and their sponsor states. The issue is not so much one of capability but of resolve on the part of the leadership and willingness by the public to take strong measures against terrorism.

There may be serious questions related to the ability of the intelligence community to conduct covert operations against small, free-floating terrorist groups. But questions and information concerning such operations are beyond the scope of this study. What is clear, however, is that we have yet to see the development of a military capability to conduct covert preemptive operations in the gray area between terrorist state and state-sponsored terrorism. We are not able to employ present counterterrorist forces and strategies against small, free-floating terrorist groups, rightfully the responsibility of the intelligence community. What is missing is the formulation of the organizational and operational doctrine needed to lay the foundation for the development of a military force that can engage in terrorism preemption, the existing gap in the war on terrorism. The development of such a *military force* could signal the recognition that terrorism is a form of warfare demanding new forces to combat it. But developing a capability to fight this new form of warfare will require modification of current organizational structures and resources within the armed services to combine existing special operations capabilities with the ability to conduct covert operations of the type more commonly associated with the clandestine services of the intelligence community.

The key to such an organization would first be its structure, then its personnel and its mission. The structural issue must be addressed first because such a new force will be doomed to failure from the outset unless it employs the "organizational doctrine" of modern terrorism for its own objectives.

In an insightful article discussing the major characteristics of the infrastructure of terrorist groups, J. K. Zawodny defines infrastructure as "internal organization structure, including formal and informal networks within it." He notes:

> On the basis of this writer's thirty years of studies of extralegal violent organizations he would describe the contemporary terrorist infrastructure as *centrifical*. . . . The centrifical infrastructure resembles that of a solar system in which the leader is the sun in the center and the members are like planets around, usually within the range of his direct impact. *Thus, in the ladder system the leader is on the top, in the centifical system the leader . . . is in the center.*[7]

It is precisely because current military organizations emphasize the use of traditional ladder hierarchy that they may lack the organizational doctrine and capabilities necessary to engage the terrorists in their own field of operations—the clandestine cellular structure. Thus, while the centrifical system "secures direct and faster communication" and provides the means for "the intensity, frequency, and facility with which many terrorist organizations interact and cooperate among themselves,"[8] the ladder system often acts as a barrier to fast communication and execution of operations. With the emphasis on a command hierarchy, the differentiation between staff and line function, and problems of coordination with often competing hierarchies, existing forces that might be assigned a preemption mission against terrorist groups may lack the organizational doctrine essential to b ng the war home against the terrorist organizations. The terrorists have effectively used the Jacobin model of political organization, "one of center-periphery relationships where power is concentrated in a single center."[9] If a terrorist preemption force is to be created, it would have to have a similar model to meet its mission requirements of engaging the terrorists in their own battlefield. But the centrifical model has liabilities to terrorist organizations that can be exploited by counterterrorist or terrorist preemption forces.

The fact that a centrifical organization may be essentially self-contained can lead to factionalization, as a local cell may attempt to maintain its independence from a higher authority. The use of psychological operations can create disunity and impair terrorists' ability to act by playing off the small centrifical cells or mini-organizations against each other and against a broader movement. Furthermore, while the centrifical organization might foster faster communication among its own members, the emphasis on local initiative can be a liability in the development of large-scale terrorist campaigns that might be easier to direct from a traditional ladder hierarchy. Nevertheless, despite these drawbacks, a terrorist preemption force would be well advised to consider modifying the centrifical model for use against the terrorists, even if such a model is at odds with traditional military organization and structure.[10]

The Use of Existing Forces in Terrorism Preemption

In addition to considering the development of a new force to engage in terrorism preemption, it should also be noted that the special operations community as it now exists and with possible organizational changes has a significant role in the war on terrorism. Certainly four types of operations that fall under what Captain Elledge calls the special operations umbrella (fig. 3) are essential in combating terrorism.

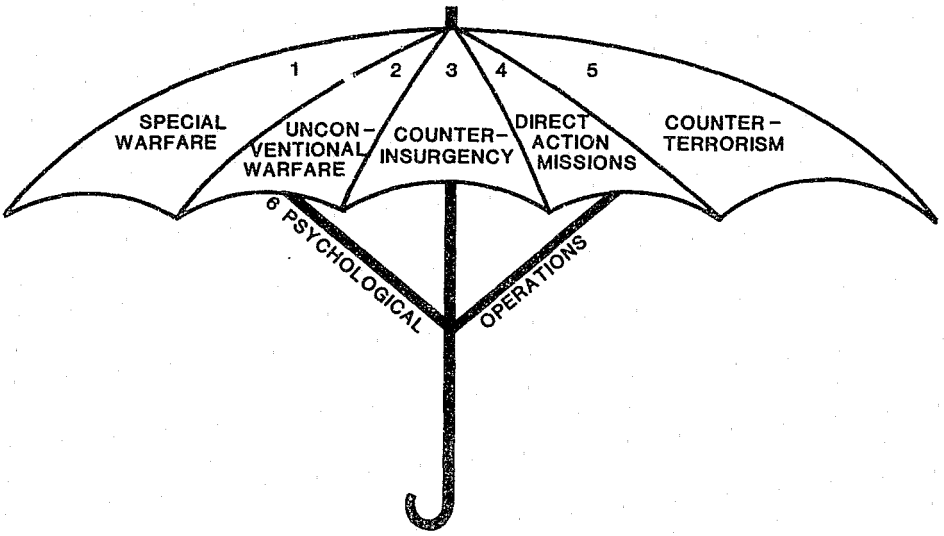
> Direct action missions [which] involve unilateral action by US special operations forces in a hostile environment.
>
> Counterterrorism [which] involves continuous activities dedicated to preempting and terminating a terrorist act.
>
> Psychological operations [which] are activities which enhance the successes of the other special operations subsets by contributing to political objectives and exploiting cultural susceptibilities.
>
> Unconventional warfare [which] involves assisting guerrilla forces engaged in a revolutionary war.[11]

The last type of operation, unconventional warfare (UW), is particularly attuned to providing the basis to counter or preempt those who engage in nonterritorial terrorism. For, as defined in JCS Pub 1, UW not only provides the basis to operate in a nonterritorial field of operations but also recognizes the need for paramilitary operations.

> Unconventional warfare—A broad spectrum of military and *paramilitary* operations conducted in an enemy-held, enemy-controlled, or *politically sensitive territory*. Unconventional warfare includes, but is not limited to, the interrelated fields of guerrilla warfare, *subversion*, sabotage, and other operations of a low visibility, *covert* or *clandestine* nature. These interrelated aspects of unconventional warfare may be prosecuted singly or collectively by predominantly indigenous personnel, usually supported in varying degrees by (an) external source(s) during conditions of neither war nor peace.[12] [Emphasis added]

Special forces units therefore could readily adjust their mission to engage nonterritorial terrorists in "politically sensitive territory," conduct "paramilitary operations," and promote "subversion" to counter the subversive actions that are often part and parcel of terrorism; and they have the ability to engage in the war in the shadows through the use of "covert" or "clandestine" operations against the terrorists and their sponsor states.

But while the special operations community does have a vital role to play, it can be suggested that existing forces are primarily concerned with preparing to meet the growing challenge of responding to territorially based low-intensity conflicts or, when necessary, being involved in direct action missions associated with hostage rescue, retaliations, and other essentially reactive counterterrorist



1. Special Warfare involves Special Operations (SO) activities conducted behind the lines during wartime.
2. Unconventional warfare involves assisting guerrilla forces engaged in a revolutionary war.
3. Counterinsurgency involves activities enabling incumbent government forces to protect its society from the effects of an insurgency.
4. Direct action missions involve unilateral action by US SO forces in a hostile environment.
5. Counterterrorism involves activities planned and conducted to preempt or terminate a terrorist act.
6. Psychological operations involve activities planned and conducted to enhance the achievement of strategic or tactical objectives by influencing the attitudes and behavior of a specific population.

Source: Capt Willard L. Elledge, Jr (USAF)

Figure 3. Special Operations Umbrella.

operations. These are such broad mission requirements that, despite the revitalization of SOF, the best answer may be a small new force with terrorism preemption as its primary mission.[13]

A New Force to Fight a New Form of Warfare

In the final analysis, if an offensive war against terrorism is ever going to become a reality, it may be necessary to create a new force that can operate in the gray area of terrorist warfare. Admittedly, there is always the danger that such an approach falls in the old tradition of attempting to solve a problem by creating yet one more organization. However, events have served to underscore that it is now time for the United States to move beyond the reactive phase to meet an enduring and growing threat to national security. It may be necessary to engage in force innovation to meet what can rightfully be viewed as a type of warfare that existing conventional and special operations units alone cannot fight.

Certain factors should be considered in the potential development of a terrorism preemption force. Firstly, the force in question should be exceedingly small. It should consist of a core membership of no more than 200 personnel. In effect, its small size would enable it to adapt the centrifical organizational model that has been used effectively by various terrorist groups—to use terrorist organizational doctrine against the terrorists. The personnel recruited for the force could be drawn largely from the special operations community. As such they would be expected not only to have the ability to engage in covert and clandestine operations in politically sensitive areas, but also to have the necessary language and area expertise to conduct operations in regions where the terrorists could both prepare and initiate operations. Such an organization would require a long-term career commitment of its core members, for only then could they acquire the necessary skills to live and survive in the terrorist environment. Only in this manner could they develop the ability to engage in short-term operations and long-term campaigns of terrorism preemption.

Secondly, because of the vital role of intelligence in conducting offensive operations against terrorists, a cadre of intelligence officers from the Clandestine Service of the Central Intelligence Agency should also be integrated into the force. They too would be dedicated to a rigorous career in combating terrorism. Operationally they would be detached from the agency and become an integral part of the new force, but they would maintain the ability to use agency assets for supplemental assistance when required. In that way, they would meet a vital requirement for the development of a terrorism preemption force. Joe Poyer succinctly makes the case for requiring intelligence dissemination to counterterrorism forces.

> By including an intelligence role as part of the C-T Team, efficient and speedy distribution of information on a controllable need-to-know basis is enhanced over the traditional methods of interdepartmental and interservice cooperation.[14]

The same requirement also would obviously be vital to terrorism preemption forces. It should be noted that there would be a separation of function between the clandestine collectors of the intelligence community and the military who would be involved in carrying out terrorism preemption operations, so that the former would not be compromised; however, there would be a close interrelationship between them.

The need for integration of the necessary assets has been stated in a broader context by Howard R. Simpson, who wrote a pioneering article, "Organizing for Counter-Terrorism." He suggested that the proposed new force must not be wholly military. There should be minimum representation from the civilian departments and agencies involved.[15]

It should be stressed, though, that the requirement for a tightly integrated force requires more than "representation from the civilian departments and agencies involved." Personnel from such agencies should be detached for a very extended period to serve in the terrorism preemption force. In effect such a force would neither be a joint civilian and military unit nor a joint service force. As we shall discuss shortly, such a unit may have to be a "deep purple"—that is, a fully integrated sixth military force to combat terrorism.

Such a proposed force should have very clear and uncluttered lines of communication, command, and control and ideally would report directly to the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It would have top priority on using the assets of conventional forces and the special operations community if particular operations required their involvement. Personnel from the force could also be used to help existing counterterrorist forces—to carry out their essentially reactive missions. However, the sixth force would primarily be concerned with conducting preemption campaigns against terrorist groups and their sponsor states.

The force would not necessarily fall under the coordination of the special operations community since, as noted earlier, the battle against nonterritorial terrorism spans the spectrum of conflict. The broader issues of coordination of operation of this new force within the existing military and organizational framework and potential changes within it that are now being considered are discussed later in this chapter.

The terrorism preemption force could be involved in short-term missions when there are indications that a terrorist state or state-sponsored terrorists are about to initiate an operation. However, emphasis would be on the capacity to engage in long-term operations against the terrorists which would involve conducting disinformation and psychological operations through the process of infiltrating the support mechanisms to the inner core cells. Admittedly, the ability to conduct such operations requires a level of expertise in the arcane tradecraft of covert action as well as profound language and area expertise. But such capabilities can be achieved and such forces succeed if there is a commitment to develop the necessary organization to fight the protracted war of global attrition known as modern terrorism.

Placing the New Force in a Broader Organizational Context

If a new force were to be created, where would it fit in the existing military organization? That determination unfortunately would not be based solely on an objective analysis of the best ways to combat terrorism but also on continuing bureaucratic competition within military and civilian organizations that are or might be involved in fighting terrorism. It is important to note that this study does not have a particular organizational bias. There is no attempt to advocate placing such a force or forces in any existing organization. Yet, the author recognizes that there are those individuals and groups who will fight for their own bureaucratic territorial imperative.

The differentiation between local, internal terrorism and international, nonterritorial terrorism bears repeating. The former is primarily associated with the tactics employed in a low-intensity, territorially based conflict, which would largely fall under the purview of the special operations community. The latter can be strategic in nature and span the spectrum of conflict. Therefore, while special operations forces would certainly be required on various missions to preempt terrorism, special operations does not have a monopoly on such missions. Dr Sam C. Sarkesian has addressed this point indirectly. For, while he notes that special operations are "specifically designed for counterterrorists operations," he also states that

> many special operations can be conducted as a joint civilian-military undertaking. In brief, special operations can tend to be "quick strike and withdrawal" in character, on a target or targets that are identifiable and limited in scope. This also characterizes the missions of units engaged in special operations—limited to achieve a particularly short-range military or political purpose.[16]

The need to differentiate between special operations and terrorism preemption is apparent. In the first place, special operations "tend to be quick strike and withdrawal" and "to achieve short-range military and political objectives." In contrast, terrorism preemption requires in addition the capability to engage in protracted operations and campaigns against terrorists and their sources of support. Furthermore, special operations missions are "designed for counterterror operations," which as noted earlier are essentially reactive in nature in contrast to the offensive character of terrorism preemption missions. Therefore it is by no means clear that terrorism preemption forces should be placed under the staff or operational umbrella of the special operations community.

The reason for the possible requirement of the separation between terrorism preemption and special operations may also be based on another consideration. As matters now stand, while there has been an impressive buildup of special operations forces, that expansion is in part a recognition of the fact that such forces may be called upon to engage in such a wide variety of existing missions as to strain their capabilities against present and future low-intensity threats and

conflicts as well as counterterrorist operations. Would it be advisable to add yet one more area of responsibility to already strained forces?

The correct placement of a terrorism preemption force is further complicated by present organizational constraints and potential tensions within the military in regards to the planning and conducting of special operations. As matters now stand, the major organizational focal point for special operations is the Joint Special Operations Agency (JSOA). A description of its genesis and mission follows.

> The most important organizational step in the Special Operations Forces buildup took place in October 1983, just days before the Grenada invasion. At that time, the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the establishment of the Joint Special Operations Agency (JSOA), an interservice planning agency for special operations. The 61-man JSOA, headed by Major General Wesley Rice, USMC, was activated January 1, 1984, with the mandate to advise the Joint Chiefs of Staff in all aspects of special operations, including strategy, planning, budget, resource development and allocation, doctrine, training and the use of forces. The JSOA has four divisions (Research, Development and Acquisitions; Joint Actions; Special Intelligence; and Supporting Operations) and many branches, including "Unconventional Warfare/Direct Action," "Contingency Operations," "Psychological Operations," "Operational Security/Deception," and "Support Activities."[17]

JSOA primarily has a staff and advisory function to assist the Joint Chiefs of Staff on matters related to special operations. It does not have its own assets to engage in operational missions.

As noted earlier, is it debatable whether a terrorism preemption force should be placed in an organization primarily concerned with special operations, since terrorism preemption does not solely or even primarily fit within those types of missions. Since the JSOA does not have its own assets, it is questionable whether such an arrangement could provide the necessary independence and capability to engage in long-term terrorism preemption missions. Furthermore, such a force would require a great deal of operational flexibility and an uncluttered chain of command. Finally, there may be inherent strains between the JSOA staff function and existing operational counterterrorist forces which could be further compounded if JSOA were given oversight of terrorism preemption force that would engage in activities not solely within the concepts or competence of the existing special operations community.

It might therefore be necessary to return to the consideration that a deep purple force be created, a force designed specifically for terrorism preemption. But where would it fit beyond the ultimate control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff? Noel C. Koch, principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for security affairs, suggests that it is not even advisable to consider the creation of what he calls a "sixth service for special operations."

> No, I don't agree at all that you should put everybody in a purple suit or a pink suit. But the pressure you see on this point really is a reflection of increasing frustration—that everybody sees the necessity for the capability to be in place and adequate for the problem.[18]

Despite his reluctance to entertain the development of such a service, Koch notes that

> we need to create something that doesn't depend on the mercy of the existing services. You need something that makes special operations function jointly. *You need to have a doctrine* that's common, equipment that's common. You can't have people using their credit cards in the middle of a combat zone trying to call Fort Bragg.[19] [Emphasis added]

But it is precisely the lack of conceptual clarity on the differences between local internal terrorism, nonterritorial terrorism, counterterrorism, and terrorism preemption that will hinder the development of "something new." The issue has been joined now that there has been the call for the consideration of the development of a Defense Special Operations Agency (DSOA) that would

> gear up the US military to counter terrorism, to fight low-intensity wars . . . and to prepare to go behind enemy lines in the first days of a major war to disrupt transportation and organize resistance.[20]

It is not yet clear what the organization and mission of such an agency would be. Would it primarily be a replacement for JSOA? Would it have its own assets, or would it still primarily be dependent on the respective unified commands? Would it primarily be concerned with special operations in general and have the mission of engaging in essentially reactive counterterrorism missions or would it also direct forces who would be involved in terrorism preemption? Could DSOA provide the necessary home for both the special forces community and terrorism preemption forces, or may it be necessary to move beyond Mr Koch's view and create a "sixth force"? Another alternative toward achieving a terrorism preemption capability is to expand the mission of existing counterterrorist force within the military. The development of a DSOA with its own assets might be a step in the right direction in developing the ability to fight "dirty little wars."[21] But whether such an organization should also be assigned the mission of engaging in terrorism preemption remains to be seen. For in the final analysis, is the military willing to effect necessary organizational changes to engage the terrorists in the war in the shadows?

Even if the willingness to innovate is there, the final fundamental issue must be addressed. That is, do the United States government and people have the resolve to take the offensive against terrorists? This issue is discussed in the following chapter on the policy dimensions in the war on terrorism.

NOTES

CHAPTER 3

1. William Regis Farrell, *The US Government Response to Terrorism: In Search of An Effective Strategy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), 4. This is a pioneering book on the topic and should be read by those interested in the history of Washington's struggle to combat terrorism.

2. Clarence O. Herrington, Jr, Major, USAF, "B-52s in an Anti-Terrorist Role," *The Role of Air Power in Low-Intensity Conflict, Appendix 2, Symposium Papers* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air University, May 1985), 389.

3. For a finely balanced discussion of the light infantry see William J. Olson, "The Light Infantry Initiative," *Military Review* 60, no. 6 (June 1985).

4. Brian Michael Jenkins, "We Needn't Rule Out the Use of Force Against Terrorism," *Los Angeles Times*, 2 May 1985, 5.

5. For a discussion on nonstate actors as they relate to terrorism see Stephen Sloan, "International Terrorism: Conceptual Problems and Implications," *Journal of Thought*, Summer 1982.

6. "CIA Operation Reportedly Ended With Unauthorized Lebanese Blast," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 13 May 1985.

7. J. K. Jawodny, "Infrastructure of Terrorist Organization," *Conflict Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (Spring 1981): 24.

8. Ibid., 26.

9. Daniel L. Elazar, *American Federalism: A View From the States*, 3d edition (Cambridge: Harper and Row, 1984), 55.

10. Major Lonnie R. Mouser has specifically addressed the requirement for the military to develop the necessary organizational framework to counter terrorism through the use of *hybrid organization*, which he defines as "an adaptive structure typically using elements of two or more structures to meet a specific need. Often combines a functional structure with a nontraditional program structure." *America's Unified Military Forces: Toward an Organizational Framework for Terrorism Counteraction*. An unpublished report for the Air Command and Staff College, Air University, Maxwell AFB, Ala., 1986, 58. He suggests that such a hybrid organizational form would be appropriate for the development of a low-intensity warfare directorate at the unified command level to effectively meet the requirements for terrorism counteraction programs and operations.

11. Willard L. Elledge, Jr, Captain, USAF, "Sorting Out the Semantics of Low-Intensity Conflict," *The Role of Airpower in Low-Intensity Conflict, Appendix 2, Symposium Papers* (Maxwell AFB, Ala., May 1985), 12.

12. JCS Pub 1, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 1 April 1984, 383.

13. For a discussion of the revitalization see "The Buildup of US Special Operations Forces," *Asian Defence Journal*, November 1985, 4–30.

14. Joe Poyer, "Countering the Modern Terrorist: Specialized Operations Come of Age," *Combat Arms*, September 1985: 72.

15. Howard R. Simpson, "Organizing for Counter-Terrorism," *Strategic Review* 10, no. 1 (Winter 1982): 8. This is an innovative article. It was among the first to address the need for a fundamental reorganization in Washington's war on terrorism. The author's suggestions that a "central Counterterrorist Office . . . to plan preventive action" and a permanent, self-sustaining,

mobile, counterterrorist force trained and ready for quick deployment under the direction of the Counterterrorist Office, are well taken.

16. Sam C. Sarkesian, "The Open Society: Defensive Measures," a paper prepared for *Conference on Terrorism and Other Low-Intensity Operations,* The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Medford, Mass., April 17–19, 1985, 9.

17. "The Buildup of US Special Operations Forces," 18.

18. "Official Ponders Future of Special Operations," *Air Force Times* 2 (December 1985), 22.

19. Ibid. The event Secretary Koch refers to actually happened in the Grenada operation.

20. "Bill Would Put Special Forces Under Single Command," *The Advertiser-Journal,* 8 December 1985, 1. For an excellent article on the debate surrounding possible reorganization of the special forces community, see Senator William S. Cohen, "Fix for an SOF Capability that is Most Assuredly Broken," *Armed Forces Journal,* January 1986, 38–45.

21. As taken from Neil C. Livingstone's "Fighting Terrorism and 'Dirty Little Wars,'" *Air University Review* 35, no. 3 (March–April 1984), 4–16.

CHAPTER 4

POLICY DIMENSIONS: RECOGNITION, RESOLVE, AND ACTION

In the final analysis the development of and the willingness to use the necessary forces to preempt terrorism will take place only if there is a consensus on the part of the political leadership to enunciate policies that would bring the war home against terrorists and their supporters. The development of such a consensus in turn ultimately can take place only when the public is willing to recognize that the United States is involved in a very real, if undeclared, form of warfare.

Unfortunately, despite the call for stronger measures, Washington still essentially reacts to incidents. The massacres in 1985 at the Rome and Vienna airports and the accompanying charges of Libyan involvement have still to lead to concerted action. Very early in his administration, shortly after the Iranian hostages were released, President Reagan warned terrorists that "when the rules of international behavior are violated, our policy will be one of swift and effective retribution."[1] The April 1986 raid on Libya was the first example of the promised strong action. The US has essentially continued a policy of inaction even though Secretary of State Shultz struck a more dynamic posture on 25 October 1985 when he proclaimed:

> We must reach a consensus in this country that our response should go beyond passive defense to consider means of active prevention, preemption, and retaliation.
>
> Our goal must be to prevent and deter future terrorist acts, and experience has taught us over the years that one of the best deterrents to terrorism is the certainty that swift and sure measures would take place against those who engage in it. We should take steps to carry out such measures.[2]

A later speech perhaps best expressed the Secretary's desire to aggressively take the initiative from the terrorists and their state sponsors. In indirect response to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's view that military retaliation against terrorism would be contrary to international law, Shultz rejoined:

> Some have suggested . . . that even to contemplate using force is to lower ourselves to the barbaric level of the terrorist. I want to take this issue head on.

> It is absurd . . . to argue that international law prohibits us from capturing terrorists in international waters or airspace, from attacking them on the soil of other nations, or from using force against states that support, train, and harbor terrorists or guerrillas.
>
> International law requires no such result. . . . A nation attacked by terrorists is permitted to use force to pre-empt future attacks, to seize terrorists, or to rescue its citizens when no other means is available.
>
> We are right to be reluctant to unsheath our sword . . . but we cannot let the ambiguities of the terrorist threat reduce us to total impotence. . . . A policy filled with so many qualifications and conditions that they all could never be met would amount to a policy of paralysis.
>
> It would amount to an admission that, with all our weaponry and power, we are helpless to defend our citizens, our interests and our values. This I simply do not accept. . . . State-supported terror will increase through our submission to it, not from our active resistance.
>
> We should use our military power only if the stakes justify it, if other means are not available, and then only in a manner appropriate to a clear objective. . . . But we cannot opt out of every contest. We cannot wait for absolute certainty and clarity. If we do the world's future will be determined by others—most likely by those who are the most brutal, the most unscrupulous, and the most hostile to everything we believe in.[3]

Yet this call for an "active strategy" has not been accepted unanimously within the administration. Indeed there has been a public division between Secretary of State Shultz and Secretary of Defense Weinberger. Thus, while Weinberger shared Shultz's desire to act against those who engage in a form of violence that has been particularly directed against American military personnel and installations, he enunciated a series of conditions that he considered essential before military forces should be involved in armed conflict.

> If we decide it is necessary to put combat forces into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly and with the intention of winning.
>
> If we decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined military and political objectives.
>
> Before the US commits combat forces abroad, there must be a reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their representatives in Congress.[4]

Yet, as previously noted, in the war on terrorism there are few if any decisive victories. Moreover, given the state of current doctrine, the US military is still struggling to define both its capabilities and its objectives. Finally, and perhaps most disturbingly, it is by no means clear "that the American people and their elected representatives in Congress" would support the type of actions required to initiate a policy of terrorism preemption in more than name only. Thus, not atypically, no less an elder statesman than George Ball, under secretary of state in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, took issue directly with Secretary Shultz's call for preemptive strikes in even stronger language than that of Secretary Weinberger. Ball placed the issue of preemption in a comparative perspective by noting the Israeli and British approaches in combatting terrorism.

> In . . . recent speeches, Secretary of State George P. Shultz has permitted his obsession with terrorism to distort his normally judicious view of the world. Not only should America, he insists, retaliate with force against terrorist violence; it should not hold back from launching preemptive strikes to thwart terrorist attacks merely because such strikes might entail some innocent civilian casualties. For guidance, he recommends that we look to Israel as "a model of how a nation should approach the dilemma of trying to balance law and justice with self-preservation."
>
> The last comment is singularly revealing because Israel exemplifies not balance but excess. Since it is a small insecure country surrounded by enemies, self-preservation is its dominant imperative. So it is hardly surprising that one reads almost weekly of a bombing attack on some Arab village aimed at destroying a "P.L.O. headquarters" or a "terrorist base."
>
> Because America by contrast [is] a huge nation living in secure borders and obligated by its leadership role to uphold international standards, our problems are sharply different in nature and dimension. Thus, if we need a model, we might more appropriately turn to Britain, which, while suffering terrorist afflictions, has kept faith with the humane principles and practices that are our own common heritage. Had the British followed the Israeli pattern, they might have answered the Irish Republican Army's bombing of the Grand Hotel in Brighton by blowing up part of the Roman Catholic section of Belfast. Or, in the pattern of Israel's performance in Lebanon, they might have attacked Dublin because some I.R.A. members were thought to be hiding there. . . . Let us take care that we are not led, through panic and anger, to embrace counter-terror and international lynch law and thus reduce our nation's conduct to the squalid level of the terrorists. Our prime objective should be to correct or mitigate the fundamental grievances that nourish terrorism rather than engage in pre-emptive and retaliatory killings of those affected by such grievances.[5]

The debate over the use of military force against terrorists is further complicated by current US involvement in Central America. The term "terrorism" has often been used as a partisan weapon by those who either support the existence of what they call "freedom fighters" who wish to topple the Sandinista regime and those who contend that such forces are nothing more than "right wing death squads." The lack of agreement on an offensive policy of armed intervention to combat terrorism is also fueled by the requirement that the war on terrorism calls for the use of covert and clandestine operations that have been looked upon with disfavor by a congressional oversight process that distrusts the ability of the intelligence community to avoid the excesses of the Watergate era. Nor has the intelligence community done much to dispel this concern, as witness congressional objections over not being fully notified about the mining of a Nicaraguan harbor and charges that the Central Intelligence Agency was supporting a terrorist group implicated in the killing of innocent civilians in Beirut.

But on an even more basic level, the public at large has mixed feelings in regards to combating terrorism. A sense of frustration and helplessness is coupled with a desire to take action; but such action must reflect basic American ideals. As a recent report noted:

> Even though those Americans surveyed believe the government is virtually helpless when it comes to catching terrorists, they feel something should be done. Solutions recommended include international cooperation among countries, including economic sanctions, and tighter

> security at airports and aboard aircraft. Active measures such as military actions are much more controversial among those interviewed, although welcomed by many.
>
> With regard to policy on terrorism, most responded that there was no cohesive policy, but said there should be one. There is an awareness that the United States will not negotiate with terrorists. Those interviewed believe a policy on terrorism should reflect national values; respect for individual life, respect for law, and respect for the sovereignty of nations.
>
> Under the umbrella of such a policy, Americans would still welcome actions against terrorists that are swift, forceful and even aggressive. There is growing evidence the American people support timely, well-conceived, well-executed operations, such as the capture of the Achille Lauro hijackers. They endorse similar actions even if inadvertent casualties result.[6]

But how the desire for "action" can be reconciled with "national values" remains to be seen.

This ambiguity ultimately points to perhaps the most fundamental reason for an aversion to engaging in terrorism preemption and other types of "dirty little wars."[7] The American values still call for the initiation of a conflict by a formal declaration of war after an enemy has initiated open hostilities that justify a response—a war that will be conducted under idealized rules of "fair play." These values and ideals were severely tested during the Vietnam era, when a generation that had fought "the good war" and a generation that had not were largely divided over US involvement in a "dirty" unconventional war. In Vietnam the American ideal was at odds with the measures that were necessary in fighting an unconventional, territorially based insurgency where terrorism was a tactic either in support of or against the existing government. Can the American public be expected to embrace the use of force in an even more invidious undeclared war, the war against terrorism itself?[8]

A final question must be raised: Under what conditions would the public accept the need to engage in a covert preemptive war against terrorism? And it is here that a crucial irony must be considered. After there are sufficient bombings, assassinations, and other acts of terrorism directed against US citizens and interests at home and abroad, Americans will accept the need for action. But by then it might be too late to consider limited covert or clandestine operations. Rather there might be the clamor to engage in large-scale conventional operations, thereby escalating the war against terrorism in the spectrum of conflict. As one observer noted regarding attitudes related to the conduct of armed operations against terrorists,

> it is not yet clear what actions would be taken in implementing a preemptive and retaliatory policy nor is it clear how extensive these actions would be. Some maintain that retaliation can best be accomplished by clandestine agents, but this implies a covert capability that some experts argue is not present, *and also does not meet the need to satisfy the public's desire that terrorism be punished.*[9] [Emphasis added]

This "public desire" can lead to an overreaction. Our lack of a capability within the military/intelligence community for clandestine and covert preemptive operations against the terrorists and their sponsor states will

encourage terrorists in even more violent acts, and the possibility of an overreaction to such carnage cannot be ignored; for it is in the national character of the United States to conduct foreign relations and wage war. As George F. Kennan noted in his classic work, *American Diplomacy 1900–1950:*

> A democracy is peace-loving. It does not like to go to war. It is slow to rise to provocation. When it has been provoked to the point where it must grasp the sword it does not easily forgive its adversary for having produced the situation. The fact of the provocation becomes itself the issue. Democracy fights in anger—it fights for the very reason that it was forced to go to war. It fights to punish the power that was rash enough to provoke it—to teach that power a lesson it will not forget. To prevent the thing from happening again such a war must be carried out to the bitter end.[10]

And in so doing the democracy risks fulfilling a goal directly held by terrorists globally—to become a force to be reckoned with, that by its provocative acts can force a superpower to overreact and create an international state of seige that threatens the existence not only of the democracy but (in this age of the balance of nuclear terror) of the world as we know it.

Faced with this threat, policymakers must provide alternatives to such an Armageddon by recognizing that it is necessary now to engage in terrorism preemption at a lower level of conflict in order to avoid escalation. They and the public must learn that it may be necessary to fight a new form of warfare—a war which may be not of their own making and is contrary to their values. The military, which shares these values, has the additional responsibility of developing doctrine that transcends the policies of the moment, a doctrine under which to fight the ongoing war against terrorism.

NOTES

CHAPTER 4

1. Ronald Reagan, *Editorial Research Reports*, 27 March 1981, 3.

2. George P. Shultz, "Terrorism and the Modern World," *Current Policy*, no. 629, 29 October 1984, 5.

3. "Shultz Supports Armed Reprisals," *New York Times*, 16 January 1986, 8.

4. "Frustrating Search for Answers," *US News and World Report*, 24 December 1985, 21.

5. George Ball, "Shultz is Wrong on Terrorism," *New York Times*, 16 December 1984, E21.

6. Public Report of the Vice President's Task Force on Combating Terrorism (Washington: US Government Printing Office, February 1986), 17–18.

7. As taken from the title of an excellent article by Neil C. Livingstone, "Fighting Terrorism and Dirty Little Wars," Air University Review 35, no. 3 (March–April 1984).

8. For an interesting discussion on American values associated with the conduct of war, see Donald Vought, "American Culture and American Arms," *Lessons From an Unconventional War: Reassessing US Strategies for Future Conflict*, ed. Richard A. Hunt and Richard A. Shultz, Jr, (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982).

9. Allen S. Nance, *Anti-terrorist Issues Raised by the Reagan Administration's Proposals, Report No. 84–165F*, Congressional Research Service, the Library of Congress, 27 September 1984, 3.

10. George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy 1900–1950* (New York: New American Library, 1951), 66.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

By the time this book is written there doubtlessly will be other terrorist attacks against US citizens and interests overseas. That such assaults will take place affirms the fact that there can never be a totally effective program to deter or prevent a determined adversary from seeking softer targets of opportunity in what he perceives to be a justified war against all. But one can hope, based on a growing concern within the government and the public, that increasingly more effective intelligence can help to stop various terrorist groups before they can initiate operations. It must be recognized however that in the final analysis there will be additional victims; for although effective intelligence coupled with good physical security measures and personal awareness may indeed lessen the availability of particularly significant targets, such measures may at the same time cause the terrorists to seek alternatives in what can be called a grim process of target displacement. This does not mean to suggest that antiterrorist measures are not important; target hardening is not a zero sum game. But the public must recognize that no matter how good the intelligence and associated measures, casualties not only will continue but likely will increase as a result of the terrorists' need to be less discriminate in targeting, given the hardening of particularly symbolic targets. Furthermore, the terrorists now face the challenge of engaging in more dramatic and violent acts of terrorism if they wish to attract the attention of a media that has become somewhat jaded to the "conventional" bombing or hostage taking. It is therefore vital to convey the message to the public that although necessary measures are being taken, there are no fail-safe mechanisms and innocent Americans will continue to be victims of terrorism. Recognizing this fact is essential in order to lessen the shock value of incidents which have aided the terrorists in obtaining publicity and in projecting an image of the US as a paper tiger in the war on terrorism.

Beyond demonstrating that the government has the resolve to deter terrorism and conveying to the public that there cannot be total security, another factor must be considered, particularly in regard to hostage takings. The United States as a government and as a people must address two vexing concerns: (1) the immediate fate of the hostages balanced against long-term security of US interests and (2) the value of protracted negotiations weighed against immediate action to free hostages.

> In the first place, if the seizure is a hostile act against the United States and its policies, Washington itself becomes, essentially the primary hostage. Tragically, the terrorists often view the hostages . . . as no more than cards in a game of armed negotiation. While it is understandable and commendable that Washington will do everything possible to seek the safe release of the hostages, we cannot ignore the long-term ramifications of placing the individual hostages' lives at the forefront in resolving incidents. The freeing of the passengers on Flight 847 (for example) was clearly a tactical victory, but the long-term strategic implications of that incident are still not fully evaluated. In seeking a diplomatic tactical victory, the United States violated the "no concessions" policy, thus encouraging future incidents. Through the media, the terrorists were able to engage in "armed propaganda" and make Washington appear powerless.[1]

Therefore, while it is not an attractive proposition, American citizens must recognize that in the protracted global war of attrition practiced by terrorists citizens will be targeted, but the laudable desire to seek the safe release of hostages can have a negative long-term impact. The fate of hostages unfortunately may have to be placed in a broader perspective of long-term issues of the security of American citizens and questions associated with basic national interests.

A second factor particularly relates to counterterrorist as contrasted to terrorism preemption operations. Until now, conventional wisdom in regard to hostage negotiation techniques and the management of incidents

> suggests that force should be used only as a last resort in responding to an incident [but] the requirement to use force at the outset of an incident relates to [another] axiom of negotiations—one that may not be applicable to politically motivated acts of terrorism similar to the Flight 847 seizure. Conventional wisdom dictates that time is on the side of the authorities because they have the preponderance of force and control the environment beyond the skyjacked aircraft or the barricade. But this axiom did not apply in the case of the seizure of the US Embassy in Teheran, where the Iranian Government engaged in what can be called officially sanctioned hostage taking, nor in the case of Flight 847 where elements of the host government were either incapable of action or were tacitly supporting the government hostage takers. And time will work against the United States in this age of state-sponsored terrorism.[2]

The American public must recognize that any hostage rescue operation or other counterterrorist missions are exceedingly complex and are always on the razor's edge of failure. Such a recognition will enable the public to accept the fact that, as in the abortive Iranian hostage rescue, there may be future failures which would result in the loss of the lives of American military personnel and hostages. But it is also important that the public recognize that such risks may be necessary if the United States is to achieve any credibility in responding to acts of terrorism. As to publicity, there certainly may be successful operations which because of their covert nature may not readily be exposed to public view; but when there are open successes they should be covered extensively to show the American people and the world that the US can engage the adversary effectively.

Beyond these essentially reactive measures, it is vital to reaffirm the need to develop an "active strategy" in more than name only. The development of such a strategy and attendant capability is of course ultimately based on the need for a

policy of strong preemptive measures that can only be achieved when the public recognizes that terrorism is a form of warfare. In large part, that recognition can only be achieved through effective leadership and accompanying public diplomacy that sends a clear, nonpartisan message that terrorism can and must be combated offensively and not treated primarily in an ad hoc and reactive manner. Yet the development of such awareness takes time and, unfortunately, is not likely to happen unless there is a marked escalation of assaults against Americans; in which case there is always the danger of overreaction.

Regardless of whether the awareness develops, the armed services must take on the responsibility of developing the doctrine and forces to combat terrorism and must do so now. While the current organizational format to meet the threat is stated basically in terms of a lead agency concept which places State in charge on foreign incidents, Justice on domestic ones, and the FAA on skyjackings, this arrangement ignores a fundamental fact. If international terrorism is a form of warfare, it should be the Department of Defense that develops the necessary forces not only to react effectively to incidents but to engage in terrorism preemption. Such missions and campaigns, as noted earlier, may require the services to develop and refine not only a conventional and special operations preemptive capability but, even more challenging, an ability to engage in clandestine military operations. In effect, if the terrorists have learned to wage a new form of warfare the United States military has the responsibility to engage in such a conflict. It is not a question of whether the services feel comfortable in taking on such a role. Like it or not, they must learn to take the offensive in whatever ways are possible against those who are now changing the face of conflict and waging war against the United States. In the final analysis the ability to engage the enemy is not based on yet another large scale administrative organization accompanied by bureaucratic conflict, but on an acceptance of the need for a highly trained small force that has adjusted the terrorist organizational doctrine to give it the ability to preempt terorrism. It is not a question of which service should be given what mission: there must be a unity of effort, a unity that until now has been sadly lacking in this war.

Developing a doctrine of terrorism preemption and concomitant capabilities, along with the necessary policy guidance, can enable the United States to demolish the image that it is powerless not only to combat but to seize the initiative from the terrorists. Such a capability will not eliminate terrorism; but coupled with firm resolve, it can enable this nation and its allies to effectively engage those who would seek to destroy the civil order through their acts of carnage. It is time to declare war against terrorism.

NOTES

CHAPTER 5

1. Stephen Sloan, "TWA Flight-847," *Proceedings*, United States Naval Institute, 112, no. 2, 80.
2. Ibid.

EPILOGUE

Since the completion of this study, the *Public Report of the Vice President's Task Force on Combating Terrorism* has been published. In his opening letter, the executive director, Adm J. L. Holloway III, enunciated the mission of the task force.

> When President Reagan asked our Task Force to review the nation's program to combat terrorism, it was not primarily a mandate to correct specific deficiencies, but one to reassess US priorities and policies, to insure that current programs make the best use of available assets, and to determine if our national program is properly coordinated to achieve the most effective results.

The report therefore can be viewed to be the most current and authoritative evaluation of US programs and policies toward meeting threats and acts of terrorism. It is the purpose of this epilogue to discuss selected statements and recommendations in the report that relate to the major theme of this book—the requirement for the US to develop the necessary doctrine, policies, capabilities, and organizations to take the offensive against terrorists and their sponsor states. The epilogue does not specifically address the bureaucratic competition and the related decision-making process that took place during the life of the task force, nor does it examine all aspects of the report. That is beyond the scope of this study. However, a brief analysis of the report can serve to highlight whether Washington is moving to develop an offensive policy and capability or is essentially perpetuating the reactive posture against terrorism.

In the initial section of the task force report under the heading *The Nature of Terrorism* are two statements that bear directly on whether there has been a change in Washington's orientation toward seizing the initiative against terrorism. The first is the definition of terrorism as, still, primarily a criminal act:

> It is the unlawful use or threat of violence against persons or property to further political or social objectives. It is generally intended to intimidate or coerce a government, individuals, or groups to modify their behavior or policy.

The emphasis on the criminal nature of the act is in continuity with existing definitions used by the Department of Defense and other government agencies. Domestic terrorism *should* primarily be viewed as a type of crime that is clearly the responsibility of the law enforcement community on the national, state, and local level. However, the report task force primarily addresses *international terrorism*, which is not only a criminal act but an act associated with intense

political competition and subversion. It is a new form of diplomacy and most significantly a manifestation of the changing nature of armed conflict or, indeed, a new form of warfare.

The report does take into account the fact that terrorism can be viewed to be a form of warfare. "Some experts see terrorism as the lower end of the warfare spectrum, a form of low-intensity, unconventional aggression." But this view is qualified immediately: "Others, however, believe that referring to it as war rather than criminal activity lends dignity to terrorists and places their acts in the context of accepted international behavior."

Thus, while the task force recognizes that terrorism appears at "the lower end of the conflict spectrum," the qualification acts as a barrier to the development of a warfighting doctrine that is crucial in developing a counterterrorism doctrine and a doctrine of terrorism preemption. Moreover, by stating that terrorism can be viewed to be a form of "low intensity, unconventional aggression," the report fails to differentiate between local internal terrorism and nonterritorial international terrorism.

The emphasis on terrorism as essentially a criminal act instead of an act of warfare does not provide a necessary break with past definitions and therefore may continue to act as a barrier to the development of an offensive policy, doctrine, and capability. Since international terrorism is still primarily placed within the purview of the law enforcement community, the report's discussion of the nature of terrorism may reinforce a posture of reaction as contrasted to preemption.

Yet, despite the unwillingness to break with the past and specifically recognize that terrorism has become a form of warfare, the task force has recognized that terrorism is changing—the second indication of a change in Washington's approach to the problem. The report presents three main categories of terrorists:

> Self-supported terrorists [who] primarily rely on their own initiative, such as extortion, kidnapping, bank robberies, and narcotic trafficking to support their activities . . . those individuals who may engage in terrorism for limited tactical purposes and [who] lacking safe havens tend to be extremely security conscious, keeping their numbers small to avoid penetration efforts [and] state-sponsored or aided terrorist groups [who] frequently are larger in number, have the advantages or protection of state agencies and are able to access state intelligence resources. Because of this host country-provided safe haven and the compartmented operations of terrorist organizations, it is extremely difficult to penetrate such groups. Moreover, they are subject to limited control by their sponsors and may be expected to carry out attacks for them.

Nowhere in these categories is there a specific recognition that in addition to "individuals who may engage in terrorism for limited tactical purposes," there are terrorists who use terrorism as a strategic weapon—a curious omission in light of shock waves generated by the bombing of Marine headquarters in Beirut that largely destroyed a crucial aspect of US Middle Eastern policy. Yet, it should be noted that the report clearly recognizes that terrorism has become a

new if perverted form of diplomacy: "Terrorism has become another means of conducting foreign affairs."

In the section entitled *US Policy and Response to Terrorism,* there is a fine statement on current policy and its evolution. The report then discusses what it calls *Range of Responses to Terrorism,* which includes *Managing Terrorist Incidents, Coping with the Threat,* and *Alleviating Causes of Terrorism.* It is only in the management section that preemption is specifically discussed. Preemption is described as

> such action . . . designed to keep an attack from occurring. Preemptive success is limited by the extent to which timely, accurate intelligence is available. Everyday activities that can preempt attacks including altering travel routes or avoiding routine schedules. Successful preemption of terrorist attacks is seldom publicized because of the sensitive intelligence that may be compromised.

Placing preemption under the heading *Managing Terrorist Incidents* creates a conceptual problem at the outset. Preemption, by definition, prevents or deters incidents through offensive measures; it cannot be used to respond to them after they have happened. In addition, while one of the options mentioned is *Counterattacking or Force Options,* it is viewed in an *essentially reactive manner.*

> Counterattacking or Force Options—Forceful resolution of a terrorist incident can be risky, as evidenced by the recent episode involving the Egyptian airliner in Malta; careful planning and accurate, detailed intelligence are required to minimize risk.

Equally vexing is that in regard to retaliation, and especially the requirement for offensive actions, the task force would still wish to fight the terrorists under the ideals of the conduct of a so-called "good" or "clean" war. As the report notes:

> Our principles of justice will not permit random retaliation against groups or countries. However, when perpetrators of terrorism can be identified and located, our policy is to act against terrorism without surrendering basic freedoms or endangering democratic values.

While this is certainly an ideal, in the war on terrorism we cannot afford neatly defined rules of engagement based on idealized values. Finally, under responses, the military option is addressed briefly: "A successful deterrent strategy may require judicious employment of military force to resolve an incident." But in the dirty war against terrorism, it is very difficult to define, much less employ, "judicious" force.

In the heading entitled *Considerations in Determining Responses,* the report effectively addresses the use of military force and a military show of force. It brings to the public attention that "counterterrorism missions are high-risk/high-gain operations which can have a severe impact on US prestige if they fail." Such a concern is valid, but doesn't the statement of the potential negative

risk act as a potential impediment to employing necessary military action? The section also notes that a "US military show of force may intimidate the terrorists and their sponsors." This statement effectively recognizes the importance of coercive diplomacy as a form of psychological operations against terrorism.

In the *Task Force Conclusions and Recommendations* there is the important recognition that "international terrorism is clearly a growing problem and priority, requiring expanded cooperation with other countries to combat it." But the following statement raises questions whether the United States will be able to take the offensive.

> The Task Force's review of the current national program to combat terrorism found our interagency system and the lead agency concept for dealing with incidents to be soundly conceived.

The difficulty with this statement is twofold. First, the conclusion essentially continues to address the means to react to incidents, not to preempt them. Second, it is debatable whether the lead agency concept, which is based on bureaucratic imperatives, can provide the basis for unity of effort necessary to effectively take the offensive against terrorists and their sponsor states. Certainly the suggestions for potential changes under the lead agency concept, including the need for a national planning document to "allow quick identification of agencies responsible for particular aspects of terrorism and their available resources," is well taken. Moreover, the suggestion that "the Interdepartmental Group on Terrorism should prepare and submit to the NSC for approval, policy criteria for deciding when, if, and how to use force to preempt, react, and retaliate" is necessary if we are to avoid the continued ad hoc response that has characterized Washington's actions toward incidents. Furthermore, the call for "a full-time NSC position with support staff . . . to strengthen coordination of our national program" can help to promote the necessary integration of effort to combat terrorism. Despite these valid points, it would appear that although the report may have been the result of, or may have achieved, a bureaucratic consensus by maintaining the lead agency concept, it has not broken sufficiently with the past to address specifically the need for a more tightly integrated force within the Department of Defense. This failure occurs, in part, because the report is reluctant to recognize that terrorism is a form of warfare that may require preemptive military action.

In conclusion, the *Public Report of the Vice President's Task Force on Combating Terrorism* may be a well-written and balanced treatment of present organization, programs, and policies to meet the threat. But one wishes that it had gone further and recommended a series of steps that could be used to provide the basis for the employment of terrorism preemption forces that would make an "active strategy" a reality.

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