



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

S/S

October 4, 1973

To: The Secretary  
From: S/CCT - Lewis Hoffacker *LH*

Major Problems in Combatting Terrorism

Over the next year the outlook is not promising for a diminution of terrorist incidents affecting Americans or others whose security is our responsibility (22,000 foreign officials in this country and their immediate families). In fact, our people abroad and official foreigners here continue to be targeted, to an alarming extent, by terrorist groups of different nationalities. Such groups seem to be moving farther and farther afield, often have access to sizeable financial sources (including some governments), and are collaborating more and more among themselves (e.g., Japanese-Arab, Arab-European).

While Arab terrorist extremists may continue to suffer political defeats vis-a-vis Arab governments and while some fedayeen leaders do not endorse some of the more extreme international terrorist actions, the unresolved Middle East question still spawns sufficient Arab frustration to produce a steady flow of the type of terrorist who perpetrated dastardly crimes such as the murder of Belgian and American diplomats in Khartoum. Latin America, for other reasons, remains the other major area where political terrorism affecting our people and interests remains endemic. The still unsolved Washington crimes which struck down an Israeli Military Attache and a British Embassy secretary this summer are further indications that international terrorists may have already arrived on our shores.

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### Major Problems.

We have sought the widest possible international consensus in coping with this threat. In ICAO, the UN, NATO, INTERPOL, the OAS and in other international gatherings we have made limited progress. We have been restrained from broader agreement by such factors as the poisonous Middle East question, the perennial debate over terrorists' "rights" of self-determination and other ideological aims, the intimidation of otherwise friendly governments by overriding considerations for personal safety of hostages, and the financing, directly or indirectly, of terrorists by intimidated governments (Kuwait) or by ideologically motivated ones (Libya). While the Soviets may agree in private with our approach to the problem, their follow through has not usually been in the same spirit.

Governments naturally react to terrorism in the light of their own special interests and are often reluctant to adapt to requests from the US which may be incompatible with such interests. For example, few countries can accept our policy opposing ransom and blackmail. In short, while we prefer to act in concert with other nations, we often find ourselves having to fall back on our own resources. This, of course, increases our vulnerability from the individual terrorists and groups who prowl the earth's surface.

We realistically appreciate that we cannot achieve 100 per cent security. Our objective is to reduce, to a respectable minimum, the risk to those for whom we are responsible.

### Mandate and Continuing Programs.

The Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism, established by the President on September 25, 1972, under the chairmanship of the Secretary of State, has been supported by a Working Group which has made some progress in fulfillment of its dual mandate to prevent terrorism here and abroad and to respond swiftly and effectively should acts of terrorism occur. The agencies and departments represented on the Committee, either individually or collectively, have done profitable work in the following areas:

-- Focused government-wide attention and resources

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(intelligence, personnel, and programs) on the challenge of international terrorism and created an increasingly responsive inter-agency mechanism to cope with the continuing threat.

-- Tightened visa, customs, and immigration procedures to plug loopholes in our security screen in this country.

-- Implemented a special program to alert post offices and likely targets of letter bomb activities.

-- Stiffened the anti-hijacking program in the US with encouraging results: only one domestic hijacking and one attempt that failed thus far this year whereas there were 16 hijackings and 16 attempts last year. (Despite these favorable statistics, it is too early to relax on screening and other security measures which have contributed to this result at this time.)

-- Improved protection of American officials abroad through better security procedures. Requested from Congress a \$21 million supplement for additional security personnel and materials primarily for our overseas posts.

-- Welcomed and began to implement a law (PL 92-539) providing federal "protection" for some 22,000 foreign officials and dependents in this country.

On the diplomatic front, we have pursued the following courses:

-- Pressed for adoption of three existing ICAO conventions dealing with hijacking and related crimes. Achieved what was feasible in this same respect at recent joint conferences in Rome.

-- Urged UN action (with no success as yet) to curb the export or internationalization of terrorism.

-- Supported an INTERPOL resolution at that organization's assembly last September condemning the holding of hostages for blackmail purposes.

-- Arranged two special consultations in NATO, involving some 60 experts, to expand cooperation in anti-terrorist

measures, including exploitation of scientific technology.

-- Effected increasingly close cooperation on counter-terrorism with the British, Canadian, Japanese, German, and other governments.

#### Tactics and Policy.

We as a government should remain cool, sensitive, and tough in responding to attacks against our innocent citizens or against our foreign official guests. We are not unmindful of the motivations inspiring frustrated political terrorists, but they must be dissuaded, by reason or by preventive measures, from striking at innocent bystanders.

While we are primarily responsible for our citizens and foreign guests, we attempt to exert leadership even where there may be no direct US interest involved. In the recent Austrian case, e.g., we have attempted to stiffen Chancellor Kreisky's spine. We believe that terrorists should not succeed in reversing governments' policies and that capitulation to terrorist demands, by any government, can only make the situation worse.

#### Priority Areas of Initiative.

We shall improve on the initiatives cited in the previous section (Mandate and Continuing Programs). During the current year we shall give priority to the following areas:

-- Subcommittees of the Working Group of the Cabinet Committee are engaged in studies which are expected to lead to recommendations from you to the President in these problem areas: 1. The New York problem - how to enhance the security of foreign diplomatic personnel at the UN; 2. The Washington problem - how to improve the security of foreign diplomatic personnel in the Washington area; 3. Consular and quasi-official establishments elsewhere in the U.S. - how to afford better protection to these foreign entities; and 4. Legislation - to ensure that the DC Code, the new public law, and other statutory authority suffice to satisfy our obligations vis-a-vis our foreign guests.

-- State and Defense Departments have concluded a contract with the Rand Corporation to conduct a confidential study of hostage situations with a view to preparing our personnel better for overseas duty involving possible terrorists' threats.

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-- At the UN our primary objective is adoption of a Convention for Protection of Diplomats. Hopefully we shall get Congressional implementing legislation in support of a similar convention adopted in the OAS, thereby strengthening our negotiating position at the UN and elsewhere.

-- In view of the modest achievements at the recent ICAO conference in Rome, we are pursuing the following courses: a. reminding ICAO members that security measures should be tightened in the absence of new enforcement measures which did not materialize at Rome; b. asking our posts to urge maximum ratifications by host governments which have not yet adhered to The Hague and Montreal conventions; c. expanding our bilateral collaboration in civil aviation security areas where we are not yet able to achieve multilateral agreement; and d. maintaining already good relations with the Airline Pilots Association, whose influence might be a useful option in future contingencies.

-- We shall continue our already high priority efforts to counter the use by terrorists of Soviet-built Strella missiles, as well as similar weapons from other sources.

-- We shall press for what is feasible in other international forums such as NATO, the Council of Europe and INTERPOL (where we currently have a delegation headed by Treasury Assistant Secretary Morgan.)

-- We are making a special effort to expand bilateral cooperation with like-minded governments in fields other than ICAO-related matters. This is a long, slow, quiet process in most cases requiring especially careful diplomacy.

#### Public Relations Stance.

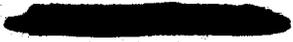
We shall continue a balanced public affairs policy - acquainting the public with the solid inter-agency effort underway without raising undue expectations about our

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ability to counter each terrorist before he strikes and without revealing the confidential elements which make our present efforts as effective as they are.

  
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Concurrences:

IO - Mr. Herz *HT*

EB/OA/AVP - Mr. Silberstein *HT*

SY - Mr. Gentile *HT*

M - Mr. Carter *HT*

*ARAC*  
cc: EB/OA/AVP - Mr. Ortman