

The face of terrorism is changing. New adversaries, new motivations, and new rationales have surfaced in recent years to challenge the conventional wisdom on both terrorists and terrorism. More critically, perhaps, many of our old preconceptions—as well as government policies—date from terrorism’s emergence as a global security problem more than a quarter century ago. They originated and took hold during the Cold War: when radical left-wing terrorist groups then active throughout the world were widely regarded as posing the most serious threat to Western security.<sup>2</sup> What modifications or “fine-tuning” have been undertaken in Western responses since then are no less dated, having been implemented a decade ago in response to the series of suicide bombings against U.S. diplomatic and military targets in the Middle East that underscored the rising threat of *state*-sponsored terrorism. The potential irrelevance of much of this thinking is perhaps clearest with regard to potential terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD, e.g., nuclear, chemical or biological weapons). The difficulties in assessing both actual and potential threats in this particular area of terrorism studies are compounded by the academic community’s historical lack of attention to terrorism linked to WMD.

Although the literature on terrorism in all its manifestations is now extensive, there is an absence of serious, non-alarmist, and non-sensationalist studies considering the WMD dimension. Moreover, the majority of the handful of publications that have more authoritatively addressed this issue are themselves now seriously dated,<sup>3</sup> having been conceived and written in some instances nearly two decades ago when very different international dynamics existed. Indeed, much of the research on potential uses of WMD during the Cold War understandably concentrated on nuclear confrontation involving almost exclusively the two superpowers and their allies. Potential terrorist use of such devices was either addressed within the Cold War/superpower paradigm or else dismissed, given the prevailing patterns of sub-state violence and the aims and objectives of violent non-state groups active at the time.

Today, the threat of a general war—both nuclear and conventional—between the Cold War-era superpowers and their respective alliances has faded. But, at the same time, it has arguably been replaced by new security challenges of potentially far more amorphous, less quantifiable, and perhaps even

more ominous characteristics that may also be far more difficult to prevent.

This essay focuses specifically on one of the most important changes affecting international terrorism today: the proliferation of terrorist groups motivated

in part or whole by religious imperatives, rather than the more familiar ideological and ethno-nationalist/separatist groups that have dominated international terrorism in the past. It argues that the growth of religious-inspired terrorism has already contributed to international terrorism’s increasing lethality and also that many of the constraints (both self-imposed and technical) that previously prevented terrorist use of WMD are eroding as well. In this respect, the different characteristics, justifications, and mindsets of religious and quasi-religious—as compared to secular terrorists—suggest that religious-inspired terrorists will be the most likely non-state perpetrators to use WMD. This essay concludes that this combination of new motives, different rationales and increased opportunities coupled with enhanced terrorist capabilities may lead to a new era of terrorist violence more dangerous and deadly than in the past.

#### **THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM’S CHANGING CHARACTERISTICS**

In the past, terrorist groups were recognizable mostly as a collection of individuals belonging to an organization with a well-defined command and control apparatus, who had previous training (however rudimentary) in the techniques and tactics of terrorism. Such groups were en-

## **VIEWPOINT: TERRORISM AND WMD: SOME PRELIMINARY HYPOTHESES**

by Bruce Hoffman<sup>1</sup>

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gaged in conspiracy as a full-time avocation, living underground while constantly plotting terrorist attacks. At times, they were under the direct control, or operated at the express behest of, a foreign government.<sup>4</sup> Radical leftist (e.g., Marxist-Leninist/Maoist/Stalinist) organizations such as the Japanese Red Army, the Red Army Faction in Germany, the Red Brigades in Italy, the 17th of November Organization in Greece, and Dev Sol in Turkey, as well as such ethnic/nationalist and separatist terrorist movements as the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Provisional Irish Republican Army, and the Basque ETA, conformed to this stereotype of the “traditional” terrorist group. These organizations, moreover, engaged in highly selective and mostly discriminate acts of violence. They targeted for bombing various “symbolic” targets representing the source of their animus (e.g., embassies, banks, national airline carriers, etc.). Alternatively, they kidnapped and assassinated specific persons whom they blamed for economic exploitation or political repression in order to attract attention to themselves and their causes.

However, as radical or revolutionary as these groups were politically, the vast majority were equally conservative in their operations. These types of terrorists were said to be demonstrably more “imitative than innovative”: having a very limited tactical repertoire directed against a similarly narrow target set.<sup>5</sup> They were judged as hesitant to take advantage of new situations, let alone to create new opportunities. Accordingly, what little innovation was observed was more in the terrorists’ choice of targets<sup>6</sup> or in the methods used to conceal and detonate explosive devices and not in their tactics or especially in their use of nonconventional weapons—particularly chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear.<sup>7</sup>

Although various terrorist groups—Germany’s Red Army Faction, Italy’s Red Brigades, and some Palestinian organizations—had occasionally toyed with the idea of using such indiscriminately lethal weapons, none had ever crossed the critical psychological threshold of actually implementing their heinous daydreams. Admittedly, in 1979 Palestinian terrorists poisoned some Jaffa oranges exported to Europe in hopes of sabotaging Israel’s economy, and nearly a decade later, minute traces of cyanide were discovered in Chilean grapes shipped to the United States following threats made by a left-wing Chilean group opposed to the Pinochet dictatorship. But these two isolated incidents were largely the extent of

actual terrorist use of such “nonconventional” weapons and tactics. Most terrorists seemed content with the limited killing potential of handguns and machine-guns and the slightly higher rates that bombs achieved. Like most people, terrorists appeared to fear unfamiliar contaminants and toxins that they were uncertain how to fabricate and safely handle, much less effectively deploy and disperse. Indeed, of more than 8,000 incidents since 1968 recorded in the RAND-St. Andrews University Chronology of International Terrorist Incidents, less than 60 evidenced any indication<sup>8</sup> that the terrorists plotting such attacks attempted to use chemical or biological agents or intended to steal, or otherwise fabricate their own nuclear devices.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, there was a general acceptance of the observation made famous by terrorism expert Brian Jenkins more than two decades ago that, “Terrorists want a lot of people watching and a lot of people listening and not a lot of people dead.”<sup>10</sup> Despite the events of the mid-1980s—when a series of high-profile and particularly lethal suicide car and truck-bombings were directed against American diplomatic and military targets in the Middle East (in one instance resulting in the deaths of 241 Marines)—Jenkins still saw no need to revise his thinking, reiterating that, “simply killing a lot of people has seldom been one terrorist objective.... Terrorists operate on the principle of the minimum force necessary. They find it unnecessary to kill many, as long as killing a few suffices for their purposes.”<sup>11</sup> This maxim was further applied to potential terrorist use of WMD and used to explain the paucity of actual known plots, much less verifiable incidents. Within the context of potential terrorist use of radiological or nuclear weapons, for example, Jenkins noted in 1985 that:

Scenarios involving the deliberate dispersal of toxic radioactive material...do not appear to fit the pattern of any terrorist actions carried out thus far.... Terrorist actions have tended to be aimed at producing immediate dramatic effects, a handful of violent deaths—not lingering illness, and certainly not a population of terminally ill, vengeance-seeking victims.... If terrorists were to employ radioactive contaminants, they could not halt the continuing effects of their act, not even long after they may have achieved their ultimate political objectives. It has not been the style of terrorists to kill hundreds or thousands. To make hundreds or thou-

sands of persons terminally ill would be even more out of character.<sup>12</sup>

In recent years, however, these long-standing assumptions have increasingly been called into question by terrorist attacks that involved either a weapon of mass destruction or caused large numbers of fatalities. Three unrelated incidents in particular have generated heightened concern that terrorism may be entering a period of increased violence and bloodshed<sup>13</sup>:

- the 1993 bombing of New York City's World Trade Center by Islamic radicals, who deliberately attempted to topple one of the twin towers onto the other while simultaneously releasing a deadly cloud of poisonous gas;
- the March 1995 nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway system, perpetrated by an apocalyptic Japanese religious cult that killed a dozen persons and wounded 3,796 others,<sup>14</sup> and the reports that the group also planned to carry out identical attacks in the United States<sup>15</sup>; and
- the bombing a month later, in April 1995, of an Oklahoma City federal office building, where 168 persons perished, allegedly by two anti-government, Christian white supremacists hoping to foment a nationwide revolution.

The connecting thread in each (although not necessarily the sole motivating factor for the attack) of the above is religion.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, in addition to these incidents, some of the most serious terrorist acts—either in lethality or political implications—of the past two years have similarly had a salient religious element present.<sup>17</sup>

### **A NEW TYPE OF TERRORISM AND A MORE SERIOUS THREAT**

As the above three incidents demonstrate, the more “traditional” and familiar types of ideological and ethnic/nationalist and separatist organizations that dominated terrorism for the past 30 years—and upon which analysts like Jenkins based many of our most fundamental assumptions about terrorists and their behavior—have now been joined by a variety of rather different terrorist “entities” with arguably less comprehensible nationalist or ideological motivations. This “new generation” of terrorist groups frequently embrace not only far more amorphous religious and millenarian aims but are themselves less cohesive organizational entities, with a more diffuse structure and membership.<sup>18</sup> Even more disturbing is that in some instances their aims go far beyond the es-

tablishment of some theocracy amenable to their specific deity (i.e., the creation of an Iranian-style Islamic republic in either Algeria, Egypt, or Saudi Arabia). Their goals embrace mystical, almost transcendental, and divinely-inspired imperatives or a vehemently anti-government form of “populism” reflecting far-fetched conspiracy notions based on a volatile mixture of seditious, racial, and religious dicta. In this respect, the emergence of either obscure, idiosyncratic millenarian movements (such as the Japanese Aum Shinri Kyo religious sect, which committed the March 1995 nerve gas attack on the Tokyo underground and the militantly anti-government, Christian white supremacist militias<sup>19</sup> that have surfaced in the United States and been connected to the April 1995 bombing of a federal government office building in Oklahoma City) alongside zealously nationalist religious groups (such as the Islamic extremists who carried out the World Trade Center bombing, the Algerian Armed Islamic Group, and the Lebanese Hezbollah with its links to various shadowy Egyptian and Saudi extremist groups) represents a very different and potentially far more lethal threat than the above-mentioned more familiar, “traditional” terrorist adversaries.

### **INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM'S INCREASING LETHALITY AND ITS GROWING RELIGIOUS DIMENSION**

While some observers point optimistically to the decline in the number of international terrorist incidents during the 1990s as an especially noteworthy and salutary development in the struggle against terrorism, at the same time the proportion of persons killed in terrorist incidents has paradoxically increased. According to the RAND-St. Andrews University Chronology of International Terrorist Incidents,<sup>20</sup> a record 484 international terrorist incidents were recorded in 1991 (the year of the Gulf War) followed by 343 incidents in 1992, 360 in 1993, 353 in 1994, and falling to 278 incidents in 1995 (the last year for which complete statistics are available). But, while terrorists were becoming less active, they were also becoming more lethal. For example, at least one person was killed in 29 percent of terrorist incidents in 1995: the highest percentage of fatalities to incidents recorded in the Chronology since 1968—and an increase of two percent over the previous year's record figure.<sup>21</sup> By comparison, only 17 percent of international terrorist incidents on average killed anyone in the 1970s and just 19 percent in the 1980s. Whether this development rep-

resents an enduring or an inchoate trend remains unclear. It nonetheless highlights the observation that international terrorism is more lethal today than it has been in the past and therefore raises the question: why this is so?

Among the various reasons that account for terrorism's increasing lethality,<sup>22</sup> the most significant perhaps is the dramatic proliferation of terrorist groups motivated in part or whole by a religious imperative.<sup>23</sup> In 1968, for example, none of the 11 identifiable international terrorist groups active that year (the year credited with marking the advent of modern, international terrorism), for example, could be classified as religious. Not until 1980 in fact—as a result of the repercussions from the revolution in Iran the previous year—do the first “modern,” religious terrorist groups appear,<sup>24</sup> but they amount to only two of the 64 groups active that year. Twelve years later, however, the number of religious terrorist groups had increased nearly six-fold, representing a quarter (11 of 48) of the terrorist organizations who carried out attacks in 1992. Significantly, this trend has not only continued but has accelerated. By 1994, a third (16) of the 49 identifiable international terrorist groups could be classified as religious in character and/or motivation. In 1995, their number increased yet again, now to account for nearly half (25 or 42 percent) of the 58 known, active terrorist groups.

The trend of terrorism motivated by a religious imperative causing higher levels of lethality was borne out by the pattern of international terrorism during 1995 (the last calendar year for which complete data from the RAND-St. Andrews Chronology is currently available). Although religious terrorists committed only 25 percent of the recorded international terrorist incidents in 1995, they were nonetheless responsible for 58 percent of the total number of fatalities recorded that year.<sup>25</sup> Viewed from another perspective, those attacks that caused the greatest numbers of deaths in 1995 (e.g., all the terrorist incidents that killed at least eight or more persons) were all perpetrated by religious terrorists.<sup>26</sup>

## CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGIOUS TERRORISM

The reasons for the higher levels of lethality found in religious terrorism may be explained by the radically different value systems, mechanisms of legitimization and justification, concepts of morality, and Manichean world view that the religious terrorist embraces compared with

his secular counterpart.<sup>27</sup> For the religious terrorist, violence first and foremost is a sacramental act or divine duty executed in direct response to some theological demand or imperative. Terrorism thus assumes a transcendental dimension,<sup>28</sup> and its perpetrators are thereby unconstrained by the political, moral, or practical constraints that seem to affect other terrorists. Whereas secular terrorists generally consider indiscriminate violence immoral and counterproductive,<sup>29</sup> religious terrorists regard such violence not only as morally justified, but as a necessary expedient for the attainment of their goals. Religion, therefore, serves as a legitimizing force—conveyed by sacred text or imparted via clerical authorities claiming to speak for the divine. Clerical sanction is important to religious terrorists, and religious figures are often required to “bless” (e.g., approve) terrorist operations before they are executed. For example, the group of Jewish messianic terrorists, who in 1984 plotted to blow up the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (Islam's third holiest shrine) in hopes of provoking a cataclysmic, nuclear “holy war” that would result in the obliteration of all Israel's Arab enemies,<sup>30</sup> had made it clear to their leaders that they could not implement the group's battle plan without specific rabbinical blessing.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, the World Trade Center bombers specifically obtained a *fatwa*, or religious edict, from Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman (who is now also imprisoned in the United States) before planning their attack.<sup>32</sup> In the case of the American Christian white supremacists, the leaders of these groups are often themselves clergymen—like the Michigan Militia's<sup>33</sup> founder and “general” Pastor Norman Olson, the Idaho-based Aryan Nations' leader Reverend Richard Girnt Bulter, and the Ku Klux Klan's Pastor Thom Robb—who deliberately cloak themselves with clerical titles in order to endow their organizations with a theological veneer that condones and justifies violence.

Religious and secular terrorists also differ in their constituencies. Whereas secular terrorists attempt to appeal to a constituency variously composed of actual and potential sympathizers, members of the communities they purport to “defend,” or the aggrieved people they claim to speak for, religious terrorists are at once activists and constituents engaged in what they regard as a “total war.” They execute their terrorist acts for no audience but themselves. Thus, the restraints on violence that are imposed on secular terrorists by the desire to appeal to a tacitly supportive or uncommitted constituency are not relevant to the religious terrorist. Moreover, this absence of a constituency in the secular terrorist sense leads to a sanc-

tioning of almost limitless violence against a virtually open-ended category of targets—that is, anyone who is not a member of the terrorists' religion or religious sect. Thus, the rhetoric common to "holy terror" manifestos describes persons outside the terrorists' religious community in denigrating and dehumanizing terms such as, "infidels," "non-believers," "children of Satan," and "mud people."<sup>34</sup> The deliberate use of such adjectives to condone and justify terrorism is significant, in that it further erodes the constraints on violence and bloodshed by portraying the terrorists' victims as either "sub-human" or "unworthy" of living.

In addition, where the aims of the "secular political" terrorists can be described as utilitarian—seeking to bring about changes to achieve the greatest benefits for the greatest number—the aims of "religious political" terrorists are more accurately defined as the attainment of the greatest possible benefits for themselves and their co-religionists only. This aim further engenders a tremendous disparity between ends and means. Where the secular terrorist sees violence primarily as a means to an end, the religious terrorist arguably tends to view violence as an end in itself.

Finally, religious and secular terrorists also have starkly different perceptions of themselves and their violent acts. Where secular terrorists regard violence as a way of instigating the correction of a flaw in a system that is basically good or as a means to foment the creation of a new system, religious terrorists see themselves not as components of a system worth preserving, but as "outsiders," and therefore seek vast changes in the existing order.<sup>35</sup> This sense of alienation also enables the religious terrorist to contemplate far more destructive and deadly types of terrorist operations than secular terrorists and indeed to embrace a far more open-ended category of "enemies" for attack.

In fact, during the past decade, religious terrorists or members of various mainstream religious movements or smaller "cults" in the United States and Israel come closest to crossing the threshold of terrorist use of WMD or evidencing the traits and tactical abilities to carry out such attacks. In 1984, for example, Christian white supremacists began to stockpile cyanide, which they planned to dump into reservoirs in Washington, D.C., and Chicago, Illinois, thereby poisoning those cities' populations.<sup>36</sup> That same year, in a far less serious but equally portentous incident, followers of the Bagwhan Shree Rajneesh (an Indian mystic who had established a large religious com-

mune in a small Oregon town in the United States) contaminated the salad-bars of restaurants with salmonella bacteria in order to debilitate the local populace and thereby "rig" a key municipal election.<sup>37</sup> The aforementioned 1984 plot by Jewish terrorists to blow up an Islamic shrine and thereby engineer a nuclear "holocaust" in the Middle East provides another example.

More recently, three incidents reported in 1995 involved persons with connections to various American Christian white supremacist organizations who plotted to obtain deadly toxins and contaminants. In March, two members of the Minnesota Patriots Council, a so-called "militia" organization, were convicted of stockpiling enough ricin<sup>38</sup> to kill at least 129 persons, allegedly as part of a plan to murder Internal Revenue Service agents, U.S. Marshals, and local deputy sheriffs.<sup>39</sup> Two months later, a man described as a "certified microbiologist"—who also had links to the Idaho-based Aryan Nations white supremacist umbrella organization—was able to order lethal quantities of bubonic plague through the mail from a Maryland biological supply firm.<sup>40</sup> Finally, in December 1995, an Arkansas resident with reputed ties to white supremacist "survivalist" groups in that state was arrested at his rural farm on charges of having attempted to smuggle 130 grams of ricin into the United States from Canada.<sup>41</sup>

The potentially catastrophic casualties that might have resulted from any of the above incidents—alongside the consequences in Tokyo had the Aum sect's nerve gas attack reached its true killing potential, the previously cited report of American white supremacists plotting to poison water supplies, and the indications that the November 1995 assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin was but a prelude to a campaign of mass murder by Jewish religious extremists designed to disrupt the peace process<sup>42</sup>—illustrate the religious terrorists' deadly proclivities. Indeed, the Aum sect's 1995 nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway<sup>43</sup> arguably demarcates a significant historical watershed in terrorist tactics and weaponry. This incident clearly demonstrated that it is possible, even for ostensibly "amateur" terrorists, to execute a successful chemical terrorist attack and may conceivably have raised the stakes for terrorists everywhere. Accordingly, terrorist groups in the future may well feel driven to emulate or surpass the Tokyo incident, either in death and destruction or in the use of nonconventional WMD in order to ensure the same, if not greater, media coverage and public attention as that attack generated.

## IMPLICATIONS OF RELIGIOUS TERRORISM AND WMD USE

The proliferation of religious terrorism also raises a number of other disquieting possibilities and consequences given that the members of many of these groups, sects, and cults are what might be described as “amateur” terrorists, in contrast to the relatively small number of “professionals” who dominated terrorism in the past. Previously, terrorism was not just a matter of having the will and motivation to act, but of having the capability to do so—the requisite training, access to weaponry, and operational knowledge. These were not entirely readily available capabilities and were generally acquired through training undertaken in camps known to be run by either other terrorist organizations or in concert with the terrorists’ state-sponsors.<sup>44</sup> Today, however, the means and methods of terrorism can be easily obtained at bookstores, from mail-order publishers, on CD-ROM, or even over the Internet.<sup>45</sup> Relying on such commercially published or readily accessible bomb-making manuals and operational guides to poisons, assassinations, and chemical and biological weapons fabrication,<sup>46</sup> the “amateur” terrorist can be just as deadly and destructive as his more “professional” counterpart.<sup>47</sup>

Terrorism, accordingly, has arguably become accessible to anyone with a grievance, an agenda, a purpose, or any idiosyncratic combination of the above.<sup>48</sup> With regard to WMD in particular, this has already been demonstrated by the three incidents reported in 1995 that involved persons with connections to various U.S. white supremacist organizations. To cite another example of the potentially lethal power of “amateur” terrorists using WMD, it is believed that the 1993 World Trade Center bombers’ intent (as previously noted) was in fact to bring down one of the 110-story twin towers on top of the other as well as release a toxic cloud of sodium cyanide into the damaged tower that allegedly would have killed any survivors of the initial blast.<sup>49</sup> By comparison, there is no evidence that either the secular or “professional” terrorists of the past—the persons we once considered to be the world’s arch-terrorists, such as the Carloses, Abu Nidals, and Abul Abbases—ever contemplated, much less attempted, to destroy completely a high-rise office building packed with people or to enhance their attack by deploying a chemical weapon.

Moreover, the availability of critical material—in addition to the requisite information—required to undertake WMD attacks, may already have been facilitated by the

proliferation of fissile materials from the former-Soviet Union and the putative illicit market in nuclear materials that is reportedly surfacing in Eastern and Central Europe.<sup>50</sup> Admittedly, while much of the material seen on offer as part of this “black market” cannot be classified as strategic nuclear material (that is, suitable in the construction a fissionable explosive device), such highly-toxic radioactive agents could potentially be easily paired with conventional explosives and turned into a crude, non-fissionable atomic bomb (e.g., “dirty” bomb). For example, a combination fertilizer truck bomb with radioactive agents could not only have destroyed one of the World Trade Center’s towers, but could have rendered a considerable chunk of prime real estate in one of the world’s financial nerve centers indefinitely unusable because of radioactive contamination. The disruption to commerce that would be caused, the attendant publicity and enhanced coercive power of terrorists armed with such “dirty” bombs (which are arguably more credible threats than terrorist acquisition of nuclear weapons) are extremely disquieting. Such a device could not only physically destroy a target, but contaminate the surrounding area for decades to come.

## CONCLUSION: A DISQUIETING TRAJECTORY

The growth of religious terrorism and its emergence in recent years as a driving force behind international terrorism’s rising lethality shatters some of our most basic assumptions about terrorists and the violence they commit. It also raises serious questions about the continued relevance of much of the conventional wisdom on terrorism—particularly as it pertains to potential future terrorist use of WMD. In the past, most analyses of the possibility of mass indiscriminate killing involving chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear terrorism tended to discount it for some of the reasons previously recounted. Few terrorists, it was argued, knew anything about the technical intricacies of either developing or then dispersing such weapons. Political, moral, and practical considerations were also perceived as important restraints on terrorist use of WMD. Finally, terrorists, we assured ourselves, wanted more people watching than dead. Therefore, we believed that terrorists arguably had little interest and still less to gain from killing wantonly and indiscriminately. While some of these arguments perhaps are still pertinent to most secular terrorists, incidents like the nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway and the World Trade Center and Oklahoma City bombings in

particular, would appear to render them dangerously anachronistic.

In sum, there are compelling new motives, such as those raised by religious terrorism, that—coupled with increased opportunities and capabilities (e.g., greater and/or easier access to critical information and key components involving WMD)—could portend for an even bloodier and more destructive era of violence than before. Certainly, this combination of motive, opportunity and capability implicit in religious justifications of violence could launch terrorism on a trajectory towards higher levels of lethality and destruction, perhaps employing WMD.

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was presented at the “Coping with NBC Terrorism: Policy and Technology Approaches Conference,” sponsored by the Center for Science and International Security at Harvard University, the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, and Los Alamos National Laboratory in Santa Fe, New Mexico, 20-21 February 1997.

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<sup>2</sup> Some observers argued that these groups were in fact part of a worldwide communist plot against the West orchestrated by Moscow and implemented by its client states. See especially, Claire Sterling, *The Terror Network: The Secret War of International Terrorism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981).

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Louis Rene Beres, *Terrorism and Global Security: The Nuclear Threat* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1979); Brian Jenkins, *Will Terrorists Go Nuclear?* California Seminar on Arms Control and Foreign Policy, paper no. 64 (Los Angeles: Crescent Publications, 1975) (also published under the same title as P-5541 (November 1975) in the RAND Corporation Paper series); Robert H. Kupperman and Darrel Trend, *Terrorism: Threat, Reality, Response* (Stanford, CA: The Hoover Institution Press, 1979); Paul Leventhal and Yonah Alexander, eds., *Nuclear Terrorism: Defining the Threat* (Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1986); Augustus R. Norton and Martin H. Greenberg, eds., *Studies in Nuclear Terrorism* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1979). The literature on potential terrorist use of chemical and biological weapons is not quite as dated but is even less extensive. See, for example, Joseph D. Douglass, Jr. and Neil C. Livingstone, *America the Vulnerable: The Threat of Chemical and Biological Warfare* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Co., 1987); Neil C. Livingstone and Joseph D. Douglass, Jr. *CBW: The Poor Man's Atomic Bomb* (Cambridge, MA: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Inc., National Security Paper No. 1, January 1984); and, Jeffrey D. Simon, *Terrorists and the Potential Use of Biological Weapons: A Discussion of Possibilities* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, R-3771-AFMIC, December 1989).

<sup>4</sup> To cite the most obvious, and perhaps best known, example: In the late 1980s, Colonel Qaddafi reputedly commissioned the Japanese Red Army (JRA) to carry out attacks against American and British targets (in

retaliation for the 1986 U.S. air strike against Libya). The JRA used the name “Anti-Imperialist International Brigades” in claiming responsibility for these operations.

<sup>5</sup> Brian Michael Jenkins, *International Terrorism: The Other World War* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, R-3302-AF, November 1985), p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> For example, the 1985 hijacking of the Italian cruise ship, the *Achille Lauro*, by Palestinian terrorists as opposed to the more typical terrorist hijacking of passenger aircraft.

<sup>7</sup> Radiological terrorism involves *contamination* with readily available radioactive materials, for example, those that are used in medicine and commerce. In contrast, nuclear terrorism implies an explosion caused by the chain reaction created by fissionable materials.

<sup>8</sup> Admittedly, these are only those incidents or plots that we both *definitely* know about because they have been reported in open, published sources.

<sup>9</sup> The more noteworthy plots or attempts that have come to light include: reports that in 1979, German Red Army Faction (RAF) terrorists were being trained at Palestinian camps in Lebanon in the use of bacteriological weapons; a police raid of an RAF safe-house in Paris that uncovered a miniature laboratory containing a culture of *Clostridium botulinum*, used to create a botulinum toxin, and earlier threats by the group to poison water supplies in 20 German towns if three radical lawyers were not permitted to defend an imprisoned RAF member; suspicions that in 1986, terrorists in India may have contemplated poisoning drinking water tanks there; and, the letters sent to Western embassies by Tamil guerrillas claiming to have poisoned Sri Lankan tea with potassium cyanide. Source: The RAND-St. Andrews Chronology of International Terrorist Incidents. See also, Jeffrey D. Simon, *Terrorists and the Potential Use of Biological Weapons: A Discussion of Possibilities* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1989, R-3771-AFMIC), *passim*. It has been reported that various terrorist groups—including the RAF, Italy's Red Brigades, and some Palestinian organizations—reputedly had at one time or another “recruited microbiologists, purchased bacteriological experimentation equipment and dabbled in sending toxins such as anthrax to potential victims.” See “Violence: a buyer's market,” *Jane's Defence Weekly*, May 12, 1990, pp. 909-911.

<sup>10</sup> Brian Michael Jenkins, “International Terrorism: A New Mode of Conflict” in David Carlton and Carlo Schaerf, eds., *International Terrorism and World Security* (London: Croom Helm, 1975), p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> Brian Michael Jenkins, *The Likelihood of Nuclear Terrorism* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, P-7119, July 1985), p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Jenkins, *Will Terrorists Go Nuclear?*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, such recent publications as: Brad Roberts, ed., *Terrorism with Chemical and Biological Weapons: Calibrating Risks and Responses* (Alexandria, VA: The Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute, 1997); the “Roundtable Article” in *Politics and the Life Sciences* 15, no. 2, pp. 167-183, especially Jonathan B. Tucker, “Chemical/Biological Terrorism: Coping with a New Threat” and “Measures to Fight Chemical/Biological Terrorism: How Little Is Enough?” and Donald D. Cobb and Walter L. Kirchner (Los Alamos National Laboratory), “Reducing the Threat of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Proliferation and Terrorism,” Testimony presented to the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Committee on Governmental Affairs, the United States Senate, March 13, 1996.

<sup>14</sup> Murray Sayle, “Martyrdom Complex,” *The New Yorker*, May 13, 1996.

<sup>15</sup> Nicholas D. Kristof, “Japanese Cult Planned U.S. Attack,” *International Herald Tribune* (Paris), March 24, 1997; and, Robert Whyment, “Cult planned gas raids on America,” *The Times* (London), March 29, 1997.

<sup>16</sup> For particularly informed discussions concerning the rise of religious terrorism at the end of the twentieth century, see Mark Juergensmeyer, ed., *Violence and the Sacred in the Modern World* (London: Frank Cass, 1992); Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Gilles Keppe, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World* (London: Polity Press,

1995); and, Bruce Hoffman, "'Holy Terror': The Implications of Terrorism Motivated by a Religious Imperative," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 18 (October-December 1995), pp. 271-284 (which was also published under the same title in the RAND Paper series, number P-7834, in July 1993).

<sup>17</sup> Including the assassination in November 1995 of Israeli Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin by a Jewish extremists and its attendant significance as the purported first step in a campaign of mass murder designed to disrupt the peace process; the June 1996 truck bombing of a U.S. Air Force barracks in Saudi Arabia, where 19 persons perished; the Hamas suicide bombers who turned the tide of Israel's national elections with a string of bloody attacks that killed 60 persons between February and March 1996; the Islamic militants who carried out a brutal machine-gun and hand grenade attack on a group of Western tourists outside their Cairo hotel the following month, that killed 18; or the Algerian Muslim extremists who perpetrated the series of indiscriminate bombings that rocked France between July and October 1995.

<sup>18</sup> The "Leaderless Resistance" strategy advocated by the Christian far-right, paramilitary white supremacist movement in the United States today is perhaps the best example of this trend. "Leaderless Resistance," also called "phantom cell networks," lays down a strategy of violence perpetrated by "autonomous leadership units" (e.g., cells) operating independently of one another that, it is intended, will eventually join together to create a chain-reaction leading to a nation-wide, white supremacist revolution. "Leaderless Resistance" is described in the white supremacist adventure novel, *Hunter*, written by William Pierce (under the pseudonym Andrew MacDonald) and published by National Vanguard Books in Hillsboro, Virginia. *Hunter*, it should be noted, is the sequel to *The Turner Diaries* (which Pierce/MacDonald also wrote)—the novel described by the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as the "bible" of the American white supremacist movement. (Quoted in Bruce Hoffman, *Terrorism in the United States and the Potential Threat to Nuclear Facilities* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, R-3351-DOE, January 1986), p. 42.

<sup>19</sup> The white supremacists' expressed *raison d'être*—racism, anti-Semitism, and sedition—is justified and legitimized on theological grounds. It is at once a political and grassroots religious movement. The cement that bonds together this seemingly diverse and disparate collection of citizens militias, tax resistors, anti-federalists, bigots, and racists is the white supremacist religious theology espoused by the Christian Identity movement. The basic tenets of the Identity movement include the beliefs that Jesus Christ was not a Jew, but an Aryan; that the Lost Tribes of Israel are not composed of Jews but of blue-eyed Aryans; that while Anglo-Saxons and not Jews are the true chosen people; and that the United States is the Promised Land. See Bruce Hoffman, *Recent Trends and Future Prospects of Terrorism in the United States* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, R-3618, May 1988), pp. 26-27.

<sup>20</sup> The RAND-St. Andrews University Chronology of International Terrorist Incidents includes a computerized database of international terrorist incidents that have occurred worldwide from 1968 to the present. The Chronology has been continuously maintained since 1972 (when it was created by Brian Jenkins), first by The RAND Corporation, in Santa Monica, California, and since 1994 by the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at St. Andrews University, Scotland.

<sup>21</sup> Terrorist trends for 1994 provide a particularly good illustration of this development, not only in terms of the previous record-setting percentage of fatalities to incidents, but also in the fact that the 423 fatalities recorded that year was the fifth highest annual figure in the Chronology since 1968. Source: The RAND-St. Andrews Chronology of International Terrorist Incidents.

<sup>22</sup> For example, the terrorist's perennial quest for attention; increased state-sponsorship and the greater resources thereby accorded terrorists; that terrorist weaponry is getting smaller, more easy to conceal and more powerful; and the increasing sophistication of professional terrorism and perhaps other explanations.

<sup>23</sup> Admittedly, many contemporary terrorist groups—such as the overwhelmingly Catholic Provisional Irish Republic Army; their Protestant

counterparts arrayed in various Loyalist paramilitary groups like the Ulster Freedom Fighters, the Ulster Volunteer Force, and the Red Hand Commandos; and the predominantly Muslim Palestine Liberation Organization—all have a strong religious component by dint of their membership. However, it is the political and not the religious aspect that is the dominant characteristic of these groups, as evidenced by the pre-eminence of their nationalist and/or irredentist aims.

<sup>24</sup> The Iranian-backed Shi'a groups, *al-Dawa* and the Committee for Safeguarding the Islamic Revolution.

<sup>25</sup> Religious terrorists were responsible for 167 of the 287 fatalities in 1995 and committed 71 of that year's 278 incidents. See Bruce Hoffman and Donna Kim Hoffman, "Chronology of International Terrorism 1995," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 8 (Autumn 1996), pp. 87-127.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> See the comparative discussion of the secular and religious terrorist mindset and legitimizing measures in Bruce Hoffman, "The Contrasting Ethical Foundations of Terrorism in the 1980s," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 1 (July 1989), pp. 361-377.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, David C. Rapoport, "Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions," *American Political Science Review* 78 (September 1984), p. 674.

<sup>29</sup> Brian M. Jenkins, *The Likelihood of Nuclear Terrorism* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, July 1985, P-7119), pp. 4-5.

<sup>30</sup> See Thomas L. Friedman, "Jewish Terrorists Freed By Israel," *The New York Times*, December 9, 1984; Grace Halsell, "Why Bobby Brown of Brooklyn wants to blow up Al Aqsa," *Arabia*, August 1984; Martin Merzer, "Justice for all in Israel?" *Miami Herald*, May 17, 1985; and "Jail Term of Jewish terrorist reduced," *Jerusalem Post* (International Edition), October 12, 1985. The information pertaining to the terrorists' desire to provoke a cataclysmic holy war between Moslems and Jews was verified by an American law enforcement officer, involved with the investigation of Jewish terrorist incidents in the U.S. and knowledgeable of the Jerusalem incident in conversation with the author.

<sup>31</sup> See Ehud Sprinzak, *The Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 98-99.

<sup>32</sup> See Youssef M. Ibrahim, "Muslim Edicts Take on New Force," *The New York Times*, February 12, 1995.

<sup>33</sup> One of the groups with which Timothy McVeigh, the accused Oklahoma city bomber, allegedly had close links.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example the language used by Islamic extremists quoted in ADL Special Background Report, *Hamas, Islamic Jihad and The Muslim Brotherhood: Islamic Extremists and the Terrorist Threat to America* (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1993), *passim*; and, Amir Taheri, *Holy Terror: The Inside Story of Islamic Terrorism* (London: Sphere Books, Ltd., 1987), *passim*; and that employed by Christian white supremacist groups in such publications as, *This is Aryan Nations*, brochure distributed by the Aryan Nations (undated); "To Our New People," Open Letter from Richard G. Butler, Pastor, Aryan Nations (undated), and Roy B. Masker, "An All White Nation—Why Not?," *Aryan Nations, Calling Our Nation*, No. 53 (undated), pp. 2, 23.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Amir Taheri, *Holy Terror: The Inside Story of Islamic Terrorism*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>36</sup> See *Arkansas Gazette* (Little Rock, Arkansas), April 27, 1987 cited in Bruce Hoffman, *Recent Trends and Future Prospects of Terrorism in the United States* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, R-3618, May 1988), p. 61; and, Joseph M. Melnchak, "A Chronicle of Hate: A Brief History of the Radical Right in America," *TVI Report* 6, no. 4 (undated), pp. 41-42. This was also subsequently confirmed to the author by a FBI agent.

<sup>37</sup> The RAND-St. Andrews University Chronology of International Terrorist Incidents.

<sup>38</sup> According to the FBI, ricin is ranked third in toxicity behind only plutonium and botulism. A minute amount can kill in minutes if inhaled, ingested, or absorbed through the skin. See Associated Press, "Man Accused of Possessing Lethal Toxin Hangs Himself," *The Los Angeles Times*, December 24, 1995.

<sup>39</sup> The two men were charged with possession of 0.7 grams of ricin along with a home-made "deliver system" that consisted of a solvent mixed



with skin lotion. See Conrad deFiebre, "2 convicted of possessing deadly poison," *Star Tribune* (Chicago), March 1, 1995.

<sup>40</sup> He had obtained three vials of *Yersinia pestis*—a bacterium credited with having wiped out one-third of 14th-Century Europe. In addition to the bacterium, police also found in his home a dozen M-1 carbines, smoke grenades, blasting caps, and white supremacist literature. See Karl Vick, "Man Gets Hands on Bubonic Plague Germs, but That's No Crime," *The Washington Post*, December 30, 1995.

<sup>41</sup> In addition to the ricin, Canadian customs officials had discovered in the man's car four guns and more than 20,000 rounds of ammunition. When U.S. authorities subsequently searched the man's Arkansas farm, they found a copy of the commercially-available book, *The Poisoner's Handbook*, which explains how to extract ricin from castor beans, and *Silent Death*, which describes how to use toxic compounds to poison people. See Associated Press, "Man Accused of Possessing Lethal Toxin Hangs Himself," *The Los Angeles Times*, December 24, 1995; and, John Kifner, "Antiterrorism Law Used In Poison Smuggling Case," *The New York Times*, December 23, 1995 and "Man Arrested in Poison Case Kills Himself In Jail Cell," *The New York Times*, December 24, 1995.

<sup>42</sup> For Amir's other plans following Rabin's assassination, see John Kifner, "Israelis Investigate Far Right: May Crack Down on Speech," *The New York Times*, November 8, 1995; and John Kifner, "A Son of Israel: Rabin's Assassin," *The New York Times*, November 19, 1995.

<sup>43</sup> The Aum sect's goal in staging the nerve gas attack was (among other aims) to lay the foundations for a revolt against the Japanese government that would result in the creation of a new regime dedicated to the service of the sect's founder and leader, Shoko Asahara. For the most complete account of the Aum sect's aims, motivations, and capabilities see David E. Kaplan and Andrew Marshall, *The Cult at the End of the World: The Incredible Story of Aum* (London: Hutchinson, 1996), *passim*.

<sup>44</sup> For example, the estimated dozen or so terrorist training camps long operated under Syria's aegis in Lebanon's Bekka Valley; the various training bases that have been identified over the years in the Yemen, Tunisia, the Sudan, Iran, and elsewhere and of course the facilities maintained during the cold war by the Eastern Bloc. Information provided to the author by analysts in the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security, January 1997.

<sup>45</sup> In February 1997, for example, British newspapers reported that the PIRA has launched a massive propaganda campaign over the Internet, including detailed instructions on how to make and use Molotov cocktails "to maximum effect" in riots and various "pointers" on counter-intelligence, crafting false identities, forging documents and creating disguises. See "IRA bomb-making guide on Internet," *Sunday Times* (London), February 9, 1997 (based on a story reported in the same day's *The News of the World* [London]).

<sup>46</sup> The detailed, step-by-step, 98-page *The Terrorist's Handbook* "published" by "Chaos Industries and Gunzenbombz Pyro-Technologies" that has been widely available for "down-loading" from various Internet sites for at least two years is but one example of the easy availability of these sources.

<sup>47</sup> See the publications, for example, cited above in endnote 41.

<sup>48</sup> In this respect, the alleged "Unabomber," Thomas Kaczynski is a case in point. From a remote cabin in the Montana hinterland, Kaczynski is believed to have fashioned simple, yet sophisticated home-made bombs from ordinary materials that were dispatched to his victims via the post. Despite one of the most massive manhunts staged by the FBI in the United States, the "Unabomber" was nonetheless able to elude capture—much less identification—for 18 years and indeed to kill three persons and injure 23 others.

<sup>49</sup> According to the judge who presided over the bombers' trial, had they succeeded, the sodium cyanide in the bomb would have been "sucked into the north tower," thus killing everyone there. Tom Hays and Larry Neumeister, "Trade Center Bombers get Life in Prison," *Associated Press*, May 25, 1994; and, Richard Bernstein, "Chemist Can't Pinpoint Bomb Contents at Trial," *The New York Times*, January 21, 1994. See also, Matthew L. Wald, "Figuring What It Would Take to Take Down a Tower," *The New York Times*, March 21, 1993.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, Graham T. Allison, *et al.*, *Avoiding Nuclear Anarchy: Containing the Threat of Loose Russian Nuclear Weapons and Fissile Material* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996); Frank Barnaby, "Nuclear Accidents Waiting To Happen," *The World Today* (London) 52 (April 1996); Thomas B. Cochran, Robert S. Norris, and Oleg A. Bukharin, *Making the Russian Bomb: From Stalin to Yeltsin* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995); William C. Potter, "Before the Deluge? Assessing the Threat of Nuclear Leakage from the Post-Soviet States," *Arms Control Today* 25 (October 1995); Phil Williams and Paul N. Woessner, "Nuclear Material Trafficking: An Interim Assessment," *Transnational Organized Crime* 1 (Summer 1995); and Paul N. Woessner, "Recent Developments: Chronology of Nuclear Smuggling Incidents, July 1991-May 1995," *Transnational Organized Crime* 1 (Summer 1995).