No Longer Safe

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May 1993

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as stipulated by the 1989 Baker-Shamir-Peres plan, which has yet to be discussed in the US mainstream.[30]

The essence of "Western logic" was expressed with admirable clarity by Nestor Sanchez, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Reagan years, after the UN Truth Commission report exposed huge atrocities by US clients in El Salvador — exposed, that is, some of the atrocities that had long been known to anyone who cared, including the media, which now profess to be shocked. Sanchez considers the whole exercise ridiculous:

"We won. Why do we have to beat a dead horse? You go into a prize fight and the winner knocks out the contender, and then you question the blow? That's stupid."[31]

Any Nazi would nod his head in approval. The logic is impeccable, and a leading principle of statecraft.

On other matters, the American people have questioned crimes that their government commits against the people of the traditional colonial domains, with salutary consequences. On the matters reviewed here, that has yet to happen. The beginning of wisdom is willingness to face the facts. From there, the road is not an easy one, but refusal to follow it only guarantees further torment.

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[30] For extensive detail, see Necessary Illusions App. V, sec. 4, and refers of note 15.
[31] Christopher Marquis, Miami Herald, March 21, 1993.

1. "The Current Crisis in the Middle East"

For some time, I've been compelled to arrange speaking engagements long in advance. Sometimes a title is requested for a talk scheduled several years ahead. There is, I've found, one title that always works: "The current crisis in the Middle East." One can't predict exactly what the crisis will be far down the road, but that there will be one is a fairly safe prediction. That will continue to be the case as long as basic problems of the region are not addressed.

Furthermore, the crises will be serious in what President Eisenhower called "the most strategically important area in the world." In the early post-War years, the US in effect extended the Monroe Doctrine to the Middle East, barring any interference apart from Britain, assumed to be a loyal dependency, and quickly punished when it occasionally got out of hand (as in 1956). The strategic importance of the region lies primarily in its immense petroleum reserves and the global power accorded by control over them; and, crucially, from the huge profits that flow to the Anglo-American rulers, which have been of critical importance for their economies. It has been necessary to insure that this enormous wealth flows primarily to the West, not to the people of the region. That is one fundamental problem that will continue to cause unrest and disorder. Another is the Israel-Arab conflict with its many ramifications, which have been closely related to the major US strategic goal of dominating the region's resources and wealth.

For many years, it was claimed the core problem was Soviet subversion and expansionism, the reflexive justification for virtually all policies since the Bolshevik takeover in Russia in 1917. That pretext having vanished, it is now quietly conceded by the White House (March 1990) that in past years, the "threats to our interests" in the Middle East "could not be laid at the Kremlin's door"; the doctrinal system has yet to adjust fully to the new requirements. "In the future, we expect that non-Soviet threats to [our] interests will command even greater attention," the White House continued

in its annual plea to Congress for a huge military budget. In reality, the "threat to our interests," in the Middle East as elsewhere, had always been indigenous nationalism, a fact stressed in internal documents and sometimes publicly.[1]

A "worst case" prediction for the crisis a few years ahead would be a war between the US and Iran; unlikely, but not impossible. Israel is pressing very hard for such a confrontation, recognizing Iran to be the most serious military threat that it faces. So far, the US is playing a somewhat different game in its relations to Iran; accordingly, a potential war, and the necessity for it, is not a major topic in the media and journals of opinion here.[2]

The US is, of course, concerned over Iranian power. That is one reason why the US turned to active support for Iraq in the late stages of the Iraq-Iran war, with a decisive effect on the outcome, and why Washington continued its active courtship of Saddam Hussein until he interfered with US plans for the region in August 1990. US concerns over Iranian power were also reflected in the decision to support Saddam's murderous assault against the Shi'ite population of southern Iraq in March 1991, immediately after the fighting stopped. A narrow reason was fear that Iran, a Shi'ite state, might exert influence over Iraqi Shi'ites. A more general reason was the threat to "stability" that a successful popular revolution might pose: to translate to English, the threat that it might inspire democratizing tendencies that would undermine the array of dictatorships that the US relies on to control the people of the region.

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[1] See my Deterring Democracy (Verso, 1991; updated edition, Hill & Wang, 1992), chap. 1, and sources cited.

[2] See David Hoffman, "Making Iran Public Enemy No. 1," Washington Post Weekly, March 22–28, 1993, reporting from Jerusalem on Israel's efforts and those of two of its US propaganda agencies, the Anti-Defamation League and American Jewish Committee. Also Israel Shahak, "How Israel's strategy favours Iraq over Iran," Middle East International, March 19, 1993.

of this astonishing pronouncement, adding with equal perspecuity that "Until some Arab state showed a willingess to separate from the Soviets, or the Soviets were prepared to dissociate from the maximum Arab program, we had no reason to modify our policy" of stalemate. Of the two major Arab states, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, it is true that the former had not separated from the Soviets, nor could it, since it did not even have diplomatic relations with the hated Russians — who had never associated themselves with the "maximum Arab program." And Egypt had not really separated from the Soviets either, both having adopted the official US policies that Kissinger rejected. But analyzing Kissinger's pronouncements by the standards of "Western logic" is a pointless exercise; his real goal, as he makes clear, was to undermine his despised enemy Secretary of State Rogers.[29]

Since then, the US has always insisted on two basic conditions: first, there can be no international involvement, the Middle East being US turf; second, the Palestinians, being useless for US strategic purposes, have no right of self-determination. The latter condition was in flat contradiction to the international consensus by the mid-1970s, reflected in the 1976 Security Council resolution vetoed by the US which called for a two-state settlement. The Camp David agreement under Carter was tolerable because it satisfied the US conditions, also preparing the ground for Israel's accelerated integration of the territories and attacks against Lebanon, as was obvious at once, and is now conceded in retrospect. The record of US rejectionism is what is technically called "the peace process." That process now continues, satisfying the US demands: the current negotiations are run unilaterally by the US, with only a token presence by other powers, and the Palestinians are offered nothing,

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[29] David Korn, Stalemate (Westview, 1992), epilogue. On Kissinger's geopolitical fantasies, see Towards a New Cold War, chap. 6.

including readers of this journal, the US has undermined the international consensus on a diplomatic settlement since 1971, when Henry Kissinger took control of US policy and introduced his policy of "stalemate." The US has scarcely deviated since from this rejectionist stand, in virtual international isolation, vetoing Security Council resolutions, voting alone (with Israel) against General Assembly resolutions, barring peace initiatives from Europe, the Arab states, and the PLO. Most of this record has been suppressed in the media and journals of opinion, often grossly falsified, a fact extensively documented elsewhere. Again, the population has been ill-served by the "manipulation of truth" by the doctrinal managers, who have, once again, "devalued political language so thoroughly, as George Orwell understood, that no [American intellectual or political figure] thinks twice about saying whatever words are most convenient"; the Erlanger paraphrase is a bit of an exaggeration, as was his original, but not by much. The comparison to the perversion of the record on terrorism is striking.

Until Kissinger's policy coup, the US was well within the international consensus. The State Department's Rogers plan of December 1969 called for a settlement in terms of UN 242 as understood throughout most of the world, with nothing for the Palestinians, and a full peace agreement on the (pre-June 1967) international borders, perhaps with minor and mutual adjustments. Israel rejected the territorial arrangements, Egypt and other Arab states the conditions on a full peace agreement. In February 1971, Egypt accepted a UN initiative virtually identical to the Rogers Plan. Israel recognized it as a genuine peace offer, but rejected it, anticipating further territorial gains. The USSR accepted the same plan in November 1971.

By then, however, Kissinger had taken over, with his lunatic insistence on "stalemate until Moscow urged compromise or until, even better, some moderate Arab regime decided that the route to progress was through Washington." The facts were an utter irrelevance, even eight years later, when Kissinger delivered himself

Recall that Washington's support for its former friend was more than tacit; the US military command even denied rebelling Iraqi officers access to captured Iraqi equipment as the slaughter of the Shi'ite population proceeded under Stormin' Norman's steely gaze.

Similar concerns arose as Saddam turned to crushing the Kurdish rebellion in the North. In Israel, commentators from the Chief of Staff to political analysts and Knesset members, across a very broad political spectrum, openly advocated support for Saddam's atrocities, on the grounds that an independent Kurdistan might create a Syria-Kurd-Iran territorial link that would be a serious threat to Israel. When US records are released in the distant future, we might discover that the White House harbored similar thoughts, which delayed even token gestures to block the crushing of Kurdish resistance until Washington was compelled to act by a public that had been aroused by media coverage of the suffering of the Kurds, recognizably Aryan and portrayed quite differently from the southern Shi'ites, who suffered a far worse fate, but were only dirty Arabs.

In passing, we may note that the character of US-UK concern for the Kurds is readily determined not only by the timing of the support, and the earlier cynical treatment of Iraqi Kurds, but also by the reaction to Turkey's massive atrocities against its Kurdish population right through the Gulf crisis. These were scarcely reported here in the mainstream in virtue of the need to support the President, who had lauded his Turkish colleague as "a protector of peace" joining those who "stand up for civilized values around the world" against Saddam Hussein. But Europe was less disciplined. We therefore read, in the London Financial Times, that "Turkey's western allies were rarely comfortable explaining to their public why they condoned Ankara's heavy-handed repression of its own Kurdish minority while the west offered support to the Kurds in Iraq," not a serious PR problem here. "Diplomats now say that, more than any other issue, the sight of Kurds fighting Kurds [last fall] has served to change the way that western public opinion

views the Kurdish cause." In short, we can breathe a sigh of relief: cynicism triumphs, and the Western powers can continue to condone the harsh repression of Kurds by the "protector of peace" while shedding crocodile tears over their treatment by the (current) enemy.[3]

Israel's reasons for trying to stir up a US confrontation with Iran, and "Islamic fundamentalism" generally, are easy to understand. The Israeli military recognizes that, apart from resort to nuclear weapons, there is little they can do to confront Iranian power, and are concerned that after the (anticipated) collapse of the US-run "peace process," a Syria-Iran axis may be a significant threat. The US, in contrast, appears to be seeking a long-term accommodation to "moderate" (that is, pro-US) elements in Iran, and a return to something like the arrangements that prevailed under the Shah. How these tendencies may evolve is unclear.

The propaganda campaign about "Islamic fundamentalism" has its farcical elements — even putting aside the fact that US culture compares with Iran in its religious fundamentalism. The most extreme Islamic fundamentalist state in the world is the loyal US ally Saudi Arabia, or to be more precise, the family dictatorship that serves as the "Arab facade" behind which the US effectively controls the Arabian peninsula, to borrow the terms of British colonial rule. The West has no problems with Islamic fundamentalism there. Probably the most fanatic Islamic fundamentalist group in the world is led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the terrorist extremist who has been the CIA favorite and prime recipient of the $3.3 billion in (official) US aid given to the Afghan rebels (with roughly the same amount reported from Saudi Arabia), the man who has recently been shelling Kabul with thousands killed, driving hundreds of thousands of people out of the city (including all Western Embassies), in an effort to shoot his way into power; not quite the

vices elsewhere. Those who see Israel's future as an efficient Sparta, at permanent war with its enemies and surviving at the whim of the US, naturally want that relationship to continue — including, it seems, most of the organized American Jewish community, a fact that has long outraged Israeli doves. The doctrine is explained currently by General (res.) Shlomo Gazit, former head of Israeli military intelligence and a senior official of the military administration of the occupied territories. After the collapse of the USSR, he writes,

"Israel's main task has not changed at all, and it remains of crucial importance. Its location at the center of the Arab Muslim Middle East predestines Israel to be a devoted guardian of stability in all the countries surrounding it. Its [role] is to protect the existing regimes: to prevent or halt the processes of radicalization and to block the explanion of fundamentalist religious zealotry."[28]

To which we may add: performing dirty work that the US is unable to undertake itself, because of popular opposition or other costs. The conception has its grim logic. What is remarkable is that advocacy of it should be identified as "support for Israel."

4. A Way Out?

Is there a way out of this morass? As the years pass, the prospects dim, but it remains possible to imagine a diplomatic settlement which, while satisfying no one's sense of justice and guaranteeing nothing, nevertheless provides at least some hope for peace and moves towards the closer integration across national boundaries that is a necessity if the region is to have a healthy future.

One problem — not the only one but a central one nonetheless — is the conflict over the occupied territories. As well-known to those familiar with primary sources and the dissident literature,

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[3] John Murray Brown, FT, March 23, 1993.

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[28] Gazit, Yediot Aharonot, April 1992, cited by Israel Shahak, Middle East International, March 19, 1993.

the effects of the decline of British power in that area." Close intelligence links were established at that time. By the mid-1960s, Israel's role as a barrier to Nasserite influence in the Gulf became more salient, and the alliance was firmed up as Israel destroyed Egypt's military forces in 1967, also conquering the West Bank, the Sinai and Gaza Strip, and the Syrian Golan Heights, and expelling several hundred thousand Palestinians (200,000 more were expelled in subsequent months, in what was cynically called a "voluntary" migration; Dayan's projected 200,000 would be in addition to these).[27]

By then the "hatred of the people" had more tangible reasons than in 1958. It became more firmly established as Israel pursued its policies of integrating the territories with lavish US support, and attacking Lebanon from the early 1970s, with a huge civilian toll.

When we add to the balance the US support for the dictatorships that ensure the flow of oil riches to the West, instead of to the people of the region, and other US actions (for example, the bombing of Libya, the support for Israel's terror bombing of Tunis, and much else), we begin to perceive that "terror's logic" may not be entirely "senseless," however inexcusable the means employed, and that it is a pea on a mountain when compared with the regular US practice of international terrorism. The fear that Americans may no longer be mere "voyeurs to sustained terror campaigns" are not groundless. The population, as usual, is ill-served by the intellectual culture, with its remarkably totalitarian strains, which provides a version of history so radically at odds with reality that its victims can scarcely understand what is happening to them.

The historically unique US-Israel alliance has been based on the perception that Israel is a "strategic asset," fulfilling US goals in the region in tacit alliance with the Arab facade in the Gulf and other regional protectors of the family dictatorships, and performing ser-

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[27] See note 15; Andrew and Leslie Cockburn, Dangerous Liason (Harper-Collins, 1991).

same as Pol Pot emptying Phnom Penh, since the US client has been far more bloody in that operation.

Similarly, it is not at all concealed in Israel that its invasion of Lebanon in 1982 was undertaken in part to destroy the secular nationalism of the PLO, which was becoming a real nuisance with its persistent call for a peaceful diplomatic settlement, which was undermining the US-Israeli strategy of gradual integration of the occupied territories within Israel. One result was the creation of Hizbollah, an Iranian-backed fundamentalist group that drove Israel out of most of Lebanon. For similar reasons, Israel supported fundamentalist elements as a rival to the accommodationist PLO in the occupied territories. The results are similar to Lebanon, as Hamas attacks against the Israeli military become increasingly difficult to contain. The examples illustrate the typical brilliance of intelligence operations when they have to deal with populations, not simply various gangsters. The basic reasoning goes back to the early days of Zionism: Palestinian moderates pose the most dangerous threat to the goal of avoiding any political settlement until facts are established to which it will have to conform.

In brief, Islamic fundamentalism is an enemy only when it is "out of control." In that case, it falls into the category of "radical nationalism" or "ultranationalism," more generally, of independence whether religious or secular, right or left, military or civilian; priests who preach the "preferential option for the poor" in Central America, to mention a recent case.

2. "Terror's senseless logic"

A lesser potential crisis is the initiation of terrorist activities within US borders. As recognized at once, the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York on February 26, which killed 6 people and caused great damage, may be a portent of things to come. Many questions arise about that terrorist act. Let us put them aside for

the moment, and take the official accounts at face value. There are, then, two contrasting interpretations of this event. The first interpretation was expressed in the huge media coverage, which struck a single chord; the second in a letter attributed to the perpetrators.

News reports and commentary were so uniform as to make extensive sampling superfluous. "Americans Feel Terror's Senseless Logic," a typical headline read, introducing a New York Times commentary by Douglas Jehl that sought to probe the deeper meaning of the atrocity. Jehl writes that the search for a rational explanation is misguided, a "particularly American" error. We are "a culture attuned to the straightforward"; but "terrorism represents a confrontation with the oblique." We must learn not "to assume that terrorist attacks will always reflect Western logic." They may "appear to the outside world as senseless," terrorologist Brian Jenkins explains, "but within the little community, they will be satisfied." Americans are "unfamiliar with such geometry," Jehl continues, "because of a fortunate insulation. Until the World Trade Center bombing, such attacks seemed to flare primarily on far-off horizons. Americans have largely been voyeurs to sustained terror campaigns," carried out by strange people out there who don't comprehend Western logic and the "civilized values" to which the West has always been dedicated.[4]

True, Jehl notes, "the most violent acts of international terrorism have generally reflected some clear logic." He gives one example: "the 1983 bombing attacks on the American Embassy and Marine barracks in Beirut," which were "attempts to drive the United States from Lebanon." It is also possible that the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am airliner "was revenge for the 1986 raid on Tripoli" in Libya, and therefore had a certain twisted rationale. But we have to learn that others are not like us, and regularly act in ways that have no "clear logic."

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[4] NYT, March 7, 1993; Week in Review.

version). While Egypt was the publicly-designated culprit, US officials believed that Syria was more "nearly under the control of international communism," Little concludes. Several clandestine operations sought to subvert the government of Syria, leading finally to a bungled CIA effort again penetrated by Syrian intelligence. The end result was great hostility to the US, close Syrian relations with the USSR, and much hysteria in Washington about "losing the whole Middle East to Communism."[25]

Eisenhower's rueful comment on the "hatred of the people" was made on July 15, 1958, as he sent 10,000 Marines to Lebanon to shore up a right-wing government, in response to the nationalist coup in Iraq that was taken to be Nasserite in inspiration, the first break in the Anglo-American rule over the oil-rich states. That caused renewed hysteria in both Washington and London, leading to secret decisions to grant nominal independence to Kuwait to prevent the nationalist rot from spreading, while Britain reserved the right "ruthlessly to intervene, whoever it is has caused the trouble...if things go wrong." The US adopted the same stand with regard to the richer prizes in the Arabian peninsula. The primary motive was to ensure that profits from Kuwaiti oil would maintain the health of Britain's ailing economy, a problem that was to arise for the senior partner too not long after.[26]

Some months earlier, in January 1958, the National Security Council had concluded that a "logical corollary" of opposition to radical Arab nationalism "would be to support Israel as the only strong pro-Western power left in the Middle East." Ten years before, Israel's military successes had much impressed the Joint Chiefs of Staff, leading them to consider Israel to be the major regional military power after Turkey, offering the U.S. means to "gain strategic advantage in the Middle East that would offset

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[25] Little, Op. cit. For further details based on US and British records, see Freiberger, op. cit.

[26] See Deterring Democracy, chap. 6.

We might ask why there should have been "a campaign of hatred against us by the people" already in July 1958, when the US had just unceremoniously expelled Israel from the Sinai and its allies from the Canal Zone after the Israeli-French-British invasion of Egypt, and well before the "special relationship" with Israel was in place. It's easy to explain the hatred in Iran, where a CIA coup overthrew the conservative parliamentary regime and restored the Shah in 1953. A decade of CIA operations in Syria may help explain the matter further. Syria had traditionally been pro-American, but clandestine US intervention "helped reverse a century of friendship," Douglas Little observes in a review of these operations. In 1948, the CIA approached Chief of Staff Husni Zaim to discuss the "possibility [of an] army supported dictatorship," a result achieved when Zaim overthrew the goverment a few months later. Zaim called for peace talks with Israel, offering to resettle 250,000 Palestinian refugees, and approved an ARAMCO oil pipeline concession. Israel chose not to pursue the diplomatic opportunity. Zaim was overthrown a few months later. In 1951, Col Adib Shishakli overthrew the government and set up a military dictatorship, with clandestine US support. Matters drifted out of control again, and in March 1956, Eisenhower approved Project Omega, which aimed to overthrow the increasingly pro-Nasser regime in Syria as part of a more general plan to undermine Nasser by supporting the Gulf dictatorships and scuttling the Aswan Dam project. Operation Straggle, organized jointly with British intelligence to overthrow the government of Syria, was timed (apparently, under British initiative) exactly on the day of the invasion of Egypt, which France and Britain had kept secret from the US. Possibly the British goal was to keep the US preoccupied elsewhere. In any event, Syrian counter-intelligence had uncovered the plot, and it quickly unravelled. The "Eisenhower Doctrine," approved by Congress in 1957, authorized the President to dispatch US troops to counter "Soviet subversion," the usual code word for independent initiatives (which, naturally, tended to lead to reliance on the USSR, given US hostility and sub-

A Boston Globe editorial found "two unnerving portents in the arrest of a Muslim fundamentalist" suspect. "The first, and most general, is that Americans can no longer assume they are safe from the terrorist pathology that has afflicted other countries." The second is that the US may "become a target for the kind of political violence practiced elsewhere by fanatic Muslim fundamentalists," a fact driven home by the "unique cruelty" of the World Trade Center bombing.[5] Many others drew similar conclusions about the foreign plague, unaccountably reaching our own shores.

A different interpretation of the bombing was given in a letter from "the LIBERATION ARMY" received by the New York Times four days after it occurred, allegedly written by the group of Islamic fundamentalists who had carried it out. "The American people must know, that their civilians who got killed are not better than those who are getting killed by the American weapons and support," the letter reads: "The American people are responsible for the actions of their government and they must question all of the crimes that their government is committing against other people." If they do not, they "will be the targets of our operations…"[6]

Still adopting the official version without question, we take the letter to be authentic and to express the views of the terrorists. Comparing these two diametrically opposed interpretations, a number of questions arise.

One question is factual. According to the US version — virtually universal — terrorist atrocities are carried out by fanatics who despise democracy and freedom (or are inspired by Third World pathologies, without any "clear logic"). Therefore, the scholarly literature concludes, they occur "almost exclusively in democratic or relatively democratic societies," in an attempt to destabilize or undermine them (Walter Laqueur, in a much acclaimed study of the plague). The perpetrators are the kind of people who bombed the

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[5] March 6, 1993.
[6] NYT, March 28, 1993.

"Marine barracks in Beirut" in one of "the most violent acts of international terrorism," as the New York Times and its colleagues see it. The "unique cruelty" of the World Trade Center bombing shows that we too may be "afflicted" by the horrors that are conducted by "Palestinians, [Colombian] M-19s, and other Third World detritus" (Joe Klein, Esquire, 1986), and now "Islamic fundamentalists."[7]

According to the radically conflicting version presented in the Liberation Army letter, the US is a major perpetrator of international terrorism, its victims being mostly the despised "Third World detritus."

Which version is correct?

I posed this as a question of fact, and on the surface, that is what it seems to be. But the appearance is misleading. The factual question arises only after we decide what counts as terrorism. Here, we face problems. There are explicit definitions of terrorism, more or less the same in content (though with interesting differences, to which we return). But these are not the ones adopted in the literature on terrorism. Here some care is necessary.

The explicit definitions we find in the US Code, international conventions, official or quasi-official US documents, and other such sources. These agree that terrorism is "the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to attain goals that are political, religious, or ideological in nature. This is done through intimidation, coercion, or instilling fear" (US Army Operational Concept for Terrorism Counteraction). Still simpler is the characterization in a Pentagon-commissioned study by noted terrorologist Robert Kupperman, which speaks of the threat or use of force "to achieve political objectives without the full-scale commitment of resources," that is, short of outright war.[8]

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[7] Klein, Esquire, Nov. 1986. For a small sample of anti-Arab racist tantrums in respectable US circles, see my Necessary Illusions (South End, 1989), 294f., 314f.

[8] US Code, US Army document, Kupperman, and other sources; see Necessary Illusions, 269f.; my article in Alexander George, ed., Western State Terrorism (Polity, Blackwell, 1991).

to crack. The problem is pervasive, domestically as well. In the Middle East, it arose once again during the 1990–91 Gulf conflict. It was common then to say that the world was united against Saddam Hussein; not untrue, if "the world" consists of its white faces. But in a sector of the world extending from Morocco to Indonesia, and not only there, it would have been more accurate to say that the world was united against the US-UK war, taking "the world" to include its people. It was only the harshest and most brutal US allies, such as Syria and Saudi Arabia, that could efficiently suppress popular opposition; where there was even a minimal "democratic opening" or departure from tyranny, that generally proved impossible. The hostility to functioning democracy that has long been a guiding principle of US policy, peaking in the 1980s, is readily understandable.

That principle has guided US policy towards Iraq throughout. Until his first transgression, in August 1990, Saddam Hussein was a trusted friend, whose "iron fist...held Iraq together, much to the satisfaction of the American allies Turkey and Saudi Arabia," as Times chief diplomatic correspondent Thomas Friedman reported Administration thinking in the months after the war. But Saddam's disobedience could not stand unpunished, so the US sought to find a general who might topple Saddam, "and then Washington would have the best of all worlds: an iron-fisted Iraqi junta without Saddam Hussein" — in effect, a return to the status quo. For similar reasons, the US always dismissed the Iraqi democratic opposition with disdain, including its most conservative elements, such as London-based banker Ahmed Chalabi, who observed in March 1992 that Washington was "waiting for Saddam to butcher the insurgents in the hope that he can be overthrown later by a suitable officer," an attitude rooted in the US policy of "supporting dictatorships to maintain stability." As Friedman later reported, he had perceived State Department reasoning quite accurately.[24]

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[24] See note 15

"persuaded by the Iranians" to destabilize Arab regimes, so guilt is properly assigned; but it is not an easy task.[22]

A final comment on the World Trade Center bombing. The accused left a remarkably transparent trail and chose a curious way to bomb a building. Two possibilities come to mind. The first is that this was an amateur job of the most extraordinary ineptness. The second is that it was a highly professional operation by efficient and practiced hands, using a group of people that was easily penetrated and manipulated for these purposes. At the time of writing (March 1993), both possibilities seem open.

3. "Hatred by the People"

The Liberation Army letter condemns US government crimes, and calls on the American people to question them. Reporting and commentary that is designed to enlighten would make it clear that there is nothing new about such sentiments, and would explore the reasons for them.

In July 1958, President Eisenhower commented on US problems in the Arab world in a staff discussion: "The trouble is that we have a campaign of hatred against us, not by the governments but by the people," who are "on Nasser's side." As for Nasser, he was "an extremely dangerous fanatic," John Foster Dulles concluded in August 1956, because of his stubborn insistence on a neutralist course — though even Nasser wasn't as bad as Khrushchev, "more like Hitler than any Russian leader we have previously seen," Dulles informed the National Security Council a year later.[23]

Typically, governments are not a problem; they can be controlled, or else overthrown. The people are a more difficult nut

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22 Chris Hedges, "Muslim Militants Share Afghan Link," NYT, March 28, 1993. Mubarak, FT, March 30, 1993.

23 Douglas Little, "Cold War and Covert Action: the US and Syria, 1945–1958," Middle East Journal, Winter 1990. Steven Freiberger, Dawn Over Suez (Ivan Dee, 1992), 167, 156f.

We might counterpose to these an Orwellian definition, too cynical to take seriously: "terrorism" is terrorism *that is perpetrated by official enemies*; terrorism that we or our clients conduct does not fall under the concept. Conceivably, a definition of that sort might have been employed in Stalinist Russia, where, as Times correspondent Steven Erlanger remarks in one of the many self-righteous commentaries on our virtue and their awfulness, "The Soviet manipulation of truth devalued political language so thoroughly, as George Orwell understood, that no career Russian politican thinks twice about saying whatever words are most convenient."[9]

Note that if we were to adopt the Orwellian definition, we would have to inquire no further into the doctrine of scholarship, media, and the intellectual community generally: it would be true as a matter of logic that terrorism is conducted by *them* against *us.* But there is a more interesting fact: to maintain the standard doctrine, it is *necessary* to adopt the Orwellian definition, the one we would ridicule if the commissars in a totalitarian state were to sink to this level. If we define "terrorism" simply as terrorism, it is child's play to demonstrate that the authors of the much-reviled Liberation Army letter happen to be accurate in their factual assumptions. Merely to illustrate, note that I cheated in quoting Kupperman; he is defining not "terrorism," but "low intensity conflict," that is, the doctrine to which the US is officially committed, which as both the doctrinal framework and practice show, is simply international terrorism writ large. The US may be the only country that is officially and publicly committed to wholesale international terrorism as a standard policy instrument. Since that conclusion plainly won't do at all, the Orwellian definition must be adopted, as is done uniformly, and presumably without awareness for the most part, a most remarkable phenomenon in a society free from coercion, by comparative standards. Though accurate, the conclusion is so unacceptable that it simply cannot be perceived and never will be in

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9 NYT, March 28, 1993, Week in Review.

respectable circles, no matter how conclusively it is demonstrated. The intellectual culture would have to undergo a profound revolution before such truisms could be considered.

The doctrinal system is by no means satisfied with "manipulation of truth that devalues political language so thoroughly that no self-respecting commentator thinks twice about saying whatever words are most convenient," to paraphrase the derisive (and accurate) Times description of the official enemy. As already illustrated, standard practice goes even beyond the Orwellian definition of "terrorism." Consider the Times choice for "the most violent acts of international terrorism": "the 1983 bombing attacks on the American Embassy and Marine barracks in Beirut." Recall that international terrorism is terrorism crossing national borders. We are to understand, then, that the victims of the terror (the Marines in Beirut) were in their own country and the Lebanese who bombed their barracks are outside invaders. The assumption passes without comment in a culture that takes it for granted that we own the world, a culture capable of denouncing "the assault from the inside" against us in South Vietnam — JFK's description, 10 days before the assassination, of the aggression by South Vietnamese peasants against the US forces defending their villages with bombs, napalm, and massive expulsions of the aggressors to concentration camps.

We may also ask a further question. Why does the bombing of the Marine barracks count as terrorism at all? The major international convention on terrorism, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, explicitly exempts from the category acts of resistance against foreign military forces and racist and colonialist regimes. True, it was not passed unanimously; only 153–2 (US and Israel opposed, Honduras alone abstaining). Therefore it remained unreported, out of history, and not germane to the discussion of terrorism, which, for the press and other commentators, is defined as Washington construes the concept, in its usual splendid isolation. Furthermore, the entire matter is barred from discussion, a fact with important policy consequences. When the Palestinian Na-

Throughout all these years, Americans remained "voyeurs," observing the mindless evil of others with wonder and dismay.

An honest observer familiar with even a fraction of the shameful record could hardly fail to be amazed by the discipline of the intellectual community, which keeps to the official line without detectable deviation: "Terror's senseless logic" is foreign to American thought patterns, the "unique cruelty" of the World Trade Center bombing reveals that we can no longer be merely observers from afar of the horrors perpetrated by uncivilized wretches who cannot aspire to enter our moral universe, and all the rest. The New York Times editors recommend measures to "Keep Foreign Terrorism Foreign"; understandable, if we think of it as an extreme version of what a minor player like Qaddafi might mean had he said the same thing, calling for measures to keep terrorism away from his shores after the terrorist attack on Tripoli that murdered dozens of civilians — but does not enter the canon.[21]

While some are laboring to establish an "Iranian connection" in the World Trade Center bombing, a CIA connection is much more prominent. As publicly recognized, those charged and suspected are directly involved with the CIA-run operations in Afghanistan, financed by the US and Saudi Arabia, where they learned their trade. In particular, Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, widely reported to be the guru of the group, is considered by specialists to have been close to Hekmatyar, the CIA's favorite terrorist and Islamic fundamentalist fanatic. Other veterans of CIA training have "radically transformed" anti-government activities in Egypt, a senior Egyptian official said, sharply raising the level of violence and terror there, while still others appear to be doing the same in Yemen. Egypt's President Mubarak claims that the CIA clients have been

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[21] Editorial, NYT, March 28, 1993.

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256. The target was the Shi'ite leader Sheikh Fadlallah, who escaped unharmed. The attack was organized by the CIA and its Saudi clients with Lebanese and British assistance, and specifically authorized by CIA director William Casey, according to Washington Post reporter Bob Woodward's book on Casey. That was not the worst terrorist act of the year, however. The prize was taken by the blowing up of an Air India flight, killing 329 people — the worst terrorist air attack ever. It was traced to a paramilitary camp in Alabama where terrorists were trained for actions in Central America and elsewhere. On a visit to India, Attorney-General Edwin Meese tacitly conceded that the operation originated in a US terrorist training camp.[19] Little further is known; such incidents do not fall within the canon, according to the reigning Orwellian doctrine, and therefore merit little attention.

By far the major targets of direct US international terrorism have been Cuba and Nicaragua, as determined by the World Court, in the latter case, in a decision that elicited much derision here. These terrorist operations were extraordinary in scale, vastly beyond those attributed to the officially designated terrorist states. Among them is the terrorist act that should rank as history's most ominous, an act that might have set off a nuclear war. At one of the tensest moments of the Cuban missile crisis, when Cubans may have had operational control of the missiles, one of Kennedy's terrorist teams blew up a Cuban industrial facility killing 400 workers, guided by "photographs taken by spying planes," Fidel Castro alleged. When reported years later by the highly regarded authority Raymond Garthoff, the revelation drew no detectable notice, and the incident — of course — does not fall within the canon.[20]

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[19] Leslie Cockburn, Out of Control (Atlantic Monthly press, 1987, 26); Christian Science Monitor, March 25, 1986; Woodward, Veil (Simon & Schuster, 1987, 396f.). See Pirates and Emperors, 136.

[20] Raymond L. Garthoff, Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis (Brookings Institution, 1987.

tional Council, in 1988, endorsed the UN convention, the editors of the New York Times bitterly condemned the move, ridiculing "the old Arafat hedge," a position affirmed by its leading dissident, Anthony Lewis: "the United States says correctly that the PLO must unambiguously renounce all terrorism before it can take part in negotiations," and recognition of international conventions plainly does not reach those heights. It is not simply that commentators across the board take Washington's stand as correct, which would be startling enough, on any issue. Rather, far more stringent totalitarian standards must be satisfied: there is no conceivable alternative to Washington's stand; the position of the world need not be reported, refuted, nor enter the discussion in any way.

Those who bombed the barracks in Beirut surely perceived the Marines as a foreign military force supporting their oppressors, not without reason. By world standards, the incident does not qualify as terrorism at all, let alone as the paradigm example of "international terrorism." But such questions are far too subtle to raise in an intellectual culture capable of reflexively adopting the Orwellian definition of "terrorism."[10]

This is not the place to review the ample record of international terrorism by the US and its clients. We might merely recall some highlights, to illustrate what the despised semi-literate detritus may have in mind. The day their letter appeared as the lead story in the Times, AP reported a communique' of the Lebanese army that "a civilian was killed and 10 others were wounded when an Israeli force backing South Lebanon Army militiamen blasted the village of Kfar Milki with tank and mortar fire" north of Israel's "security zone" — that is, the sector of southern Lebanon that Israel occupies in violation of Security Council Resolution 425 (March 1978), controls with terror and torture, and uses as a base for attacking the rest of Lebanon at will with many civilians killed;

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[10] On the bombing and circumstances, see Robert Fisk, Pity the Nation (Atheneum, 1990). On conventions, PNC, etc., see references of note 8.

it is the "security zone" for the US media because such is the decision of Washington and its client.[11]

Such helpful coincidences are not uncommon. A few weeks earlier, Times correspondent Judith Miller had a front-page story on an Arab-American imprisoned in Israel who, under long interrogation by the secret police, "has provided unusually detailed information suggesting that Hamas…has drawn critical financial support and political and military guidance from agents in the United States." On the same day, an inside page reported that "The Israelis and the South Lebanon Army pounded Shiite villages north of the security zone with artillery today after a South Lebanon Army stronghold came under rocket attacks," the regular practice of the occupation army and its mercenaries. Even by the standards of respectable opinion it should be difficult to describe an attack on a murderous military force kept in power by a foreign army as "terrorism," which justifies the bombing of civilians in retaliation. The doctrinal system has risen to the challenge admirably, however.

The hard question that Miller and others ponder is whether Americans should be barred from contributing to Hamas's social and cultural activities, in the light of the confessions extracted by the Israeli secret police in prison interrogations. No question arises to whether Americans should be forced to contribute to Israel's vast and well-documented terrorist practices, as they do directly through US government grants on a scale without precedent, and indirectly through tax-free gifts by others (also without precedent). With regard to Hamas, the question is a legitimate policy concern; with regard to Israel, it is a conclusive proof of anti-Semitism.

Arab prisoners over the years have been most forthcoming under interrogation, perhaps because "It's part of their nature" to

vive the harsh climate of Scorpion Hill in southern Lebanon, and their families.[17]

It would only be fair to add that as Israel expelled 400 "Hamas activists" from their homes, it demonstrated its unique sensitivity to the suffering of Muslims by admitting a group of Bosnians (83, according to a report by Marwan Bishara). In an effort to temper the world reaction to the deportation, the government of Israel adopted an earlier proposal to this effect by Israeli Arab mayors, placing its implementation in the hands of a leader of the parliamentary left, Yossi Sarid; most of those who had initiated the proposal backed out, Bishara reports, given the circumstances. The Bosnians were sent to the Arab village of Tarshiha, the site of a land clearing operation by air and artillery bombardment, then deportation, in 1948–49, leaving some 700 Christians of the original 4–5,000 population (4/5 Muslims), according to Israeli historian Benny Morris. The lands were confiscated and used for Jewish settlement; the former inhabitants and their descendants live in refugee camps in Lebanon. Bishara recommends that "the newly arrived Bosnians should visit the Village of Flowers, and in particular, a certain fascinating villa with 'mysterious' beauty that school children sometimes visit. It was built using the stones of the deserted and destroyed houses of Tarshiha Moslems. It is a post-modern residence in a post-cynical country," known here as "the symbol of human decency," in Times lingo.[18]

The official terrorist plague peaked in 1985, when Mid-East terrorism was selected as the lead story of the year in an AP poll of editors. The worst single terrorist act of that year in the Middle East was a car-bombing in Beirut that killed 80 people and wounded

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[11] AP, BG, March 28, 1993. For regular updates on US-backed Israeli terror in Lebanon since the 1982 invasion, see my *Pirates & Emperors* (Claremont, 1986; Amana, 1988); *Necessary Illusions*; *Letters from Lexington* (Common Courage, 1993).

[17] On Indyk, see Greg Sheridan, "Our Man in the White House," *The Weekend Australian*, Jan. 30–1, 1993. Satloff, Peter Grier, *Christian Science Monitor*, March 18, 1993.

[18] *Issues: Perspectives on Middle East and World Affairs*, vol. II, no. 4, Feb./March 1993. Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (Cambridge, 1987).

The regime of daily humiliation and brutality that ensued is the "benign occupation" lauded by the New York Times and other starry-eyed observers. From the founder, Chaim Weizmann, until Yitzhak Rabin today, the guiding assumption has been that with sufficient force and resolve, the "insignificant Negroes" who were scattered in the Land of Israel will be "crushed" and "broken"; they will "die" or "turn into human dust and the waste of society," Israeli Arabists predicted, "and join the most impoverished classes in the Arab countries." It therefore only makes sense to deny them the means for a decent existence.

Such facts may also have been in the minds of the writers of the Liberation Army letter, who, like poor and oppressed people everywhere, do not need to pore through arcane secret documents to learn about the reality of the world, which they know from their daily experience.

Ehud Yaari's current home, the Washington Institute of Near East Studies, plays an interesting role in American cultural life. Virtually a segment of the Israeli lobby, it enables reporters to present US-Israeli propaganda while preserving their fabled objectivity, keeping their opinions to themselves while citing some "expert" to provide the line they wish to propagate, the standard device. The Institute was established by Martin Indyk, an Australian employee of the registered Israeli lobby (AIPAC), who felt that most Washington think tanks were too pro-Arab and anti-Israel, some even recommending that the US join the international consensus on a peaceful diplomatic settlement. Indyk is now Clinton's main Middle East adviser, having obtained citizenship a few days before his appointment. Another leading expert at the Institute, the much-quoted Robert Satloff, explains that Palestinians should be heartened by the Clinton Administration's determination that Israel is honoring the Security Council resolution on the deportees by flagrantly violating it: "It's to the Palestinians' negotiating advantage that the US and the Israelis have the relationship they have now." That insight should come as a great relief to the men seeking to sur-

confess, as Israeli Supreme Court Justice Moshe Etzioni explained to Amnesty International when asked about the remarkably high level of confessions (under torture, as was later conceded, and of course always known to all but the willfully blind). It was never explained why Jewish prisoners were also confessing under interrogation to crimes they did not commit; this was forgotten several years later when the fact that prisoners were regularly tortured could no longer be concealed, a "revelation" that elicited much outrage among the High Court Justices — because the secret police had been lying to them, a practice intolerable in a democratic society.[12]

Within Israel's "security zone," some 300 expelled Palestinians are now languishing in miserable and worsening conditions, forgotten, because the Clinton administration announced that Israel's decision to leave them to rot there is "consistent" with the Security Council demand that they be returned to their homes immediately. The original 400 were expelled on grounds that they were "Hamas activists" responsible for "terrorist acts"; namely, attacks against the Israeli occupying army. "We should pay heed to the fact that like all Hamas guerrilla operations prior to the expulsion [of the 400], yesterday's operation was targeted at soldiers," a lead article in the Israeli press observed a month later: "We cannot accuse them of practicing random terror which hits innocent women and children, because they don't."[13]

The very knowledgeable Israeli correspondent Danny Rubinstein writes that about half the alleged "Hamas activists" worked in Islamic religious institutions, including preachers, teachers,

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[12] Miller, Ihsan Hijazi, NYT, Feb. 17, 1993. Etzioni, AI Newsletter, Sept. 1977. See my Towards a New Cold War (Pantheon, 1982), 454, also citing law professor Amnon Rubinstein, in Ha'aretz, on false confessions by Jews; these facts were all "forgotten" when, years later, it became impossible to suppress the fact that confessions were obtained under torture, and the Courts professed to be outraged — not so much by the torture, as by the fact that Shin Bet had lied to them.

[13] Clyde Haberman, NYT, Feb. 2; Aharon Barnea, Hadashot, Jan. 31, 1993 (Israel Shahak, Jerusalem, Report no. 116).

"a large number of young people who serve as missionaries for increasing religious practice," and professionals who "helped establish the Islamic movement's network of educational and welfare institutions which includes clinics, kindergartens, kitchens for the needy, and organizations providing aid to prisoners' families, invalids, and orphans." "Members of the military wing of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad organization are not among those deported," he adds.

Israeli intelligence agrees. An important report last December published in Israel's leading journal, Ha'aretz, quoted a "senior government official" who said that the intelligence services (Shin Bet) provided Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin with *six names* of Hamas activists, adding one more when they were asked "to increase the number"; intelligence was "astonished" to learn that more than 400 had been expelled — without any relevant intelligence information. The facts were reported here only by Alexander Cockburn, to my knowledge; the press kept to the version presented in the New York Times by Israeli Arabist Ehud Yaari, an associate of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. According to Yaari, who does not cite the intelligence reports and other Israeli sources that he knows well, "About 300 of the 413 deportees constituted Hamas's command network in the West Bank and Gaza Strip." His account makes some sense on the assumptions expressed by Cabinet Legal Advisor Yossef Harish, arguing for the expulsion before Israel's High Court: asked how many residents of the occupied territories are members of terrorist organizations, he responded "I think all of them."[14]

The expulsions serve to undermine social and cultural work in the occupied territories, much like the fevered propaganda campaign to cut off support from US citizens for such activities. There

is nothing new about these plans. It is worthwhile to recall the longstanding policy guidelines of the Labor doves. These were stated lucidly in internal discussion in 1972 by Haim Herzog, later President:

> "I do not deny the Palestinians any place or stand or opinion on every matter. But certainly I am not prepared to consider them as partners in any respect in a land that has been consecrated in the hands of our nation for thousands of years. For the Jews of this land there cannot be any partner."[15]

Herzog was merely expressing traditional doctrine. "We demand that our inheritance, Palestine, be returned to us and if there is no room for Arabs, they have the opportunity of going to Iraq," David Ben-Gurion declared in 1937, expressing a consensus that reached to the moral heroes of the Yishuv (Jewish settlement), who argued that wholesale "compulsory transfer" by the British was the solution to the problem.[16]

These doctrines were forcefully reaffirmed after Israel's 1967 conquests. Israeli rule over the territories is "permanent," Moshe Dayan held: "the settlements are forever, and the future borders will include these settlements as part of Israel." One of the Israeli leaders most attuned to the needs and concerns of the Palestinians, Dayan advised the cabinet that Israel should tell the Palestinian refugees in the territories "that we have no solution, that you shall continue to live like dogs, and whoever wants to can leave — and we will see where this process leads... In five years we may have 200,000 less people — and that is a matter of enormous importance."

[14] Rubinstein, New Outlook (Tel Aviv), Jan./Feb. 1993; also Julian Ozanne, FT, Feb. 15, 1993. Akiva Eldar and Eitan Rabin, Ha'aretz, Dec. 31, 1992; Cockburn, LA Times, Feb. 7, 1993. Yaari, NYT op-ed, Jan. 27, 1993; Chaim Cooper, Israel Shelanu (Hebrew language American weekly), Jan. 22, 1993.

[15] Here and below, see "Afterword," Deterring Democracy, 1992 edition; for more details, my article in Cynthia Peters, ed., Collateral Damage (South End, 1992).

[16] Nur Masalha, Expulsion of the Palestinians (Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992), 78, 84–5, *passim.*