

# THE DARKEST SIDES OF POLITICS, II

STATE TERRORISM, "WEAPONS OF MASS  
DESTRUCTION," RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM,  
AND ORGANIZED CRIME

JEFFREY M. BALE



“I know of no other expert worldwide with the depth and breadth of knowledge of extremist ideologies possessed by Dr. Bale. *The Darkest Sides of Politics* reveals what for many readers – even seasoned scholars – will be new facets of the complex undercurrents of political extremism that plague global society.”

– **Gary Ackerman**, *Ph.D., Director, Unconventional Weapons and Technology Division, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), USA*

“Professor Bale has followed for a long-time developments on the European extreme right with particular emphasis on the violent groups and ‘groupuscles.’ His books can be recommended without any reservation.”

– **Walter Laqueur**

“This volume contains a number of carefully researched, well-written, and thoughtful essays on both the nature of terrorist communities and, perhaps even more significant, the passive response of democratic governments in recent years. Professor Bale brings together a constellation of evidence from a wide variety of sources, and he makes a convincing case that our representatives continue to ignore that evidence. This is a remarkable work by a remarkable scholar.

– **Rudi Paul Lindner**, *Professor Emeritus of History and Astronomy, The University of Michigan, USA*

“Jeffrey Bale’s collected articles are a tour de force of clear-headed analysis which demonstrate the close relationship between Salafi-jihadis’ operations and their ideology. His work provides a detailed, well-argued and meticulously documented case for taking the jihadists at their word, and seeing through mainstream media (and often governmental) obfuscation about their goals. Taking materials from a wide range of jihadist fronts, including the Caucasus, the Islamic State, and Europe, Bale presents a vivid picture of jihadi methods and goals. This book is a must-read for anyone who is interested in the murky world of Salafi-jihadism as it plays out both in full view as well as behind the scenes. Bale’s qualifications for the study of terrorism, both in its jihadi manifestation, as well as other variants, are unmatched, and this book brings together much of his significant work from the recent past.”

– **David B. Cook**, *Professor of Religion, Rice University, USA*

“Jeffrey Bale’s collection attests to a highly disciplined, morally-oriented, incisive mind that unflinchingly dissects the erroneous thinking of many of today’s self-described experts on terrorism and Islamism. Anyone who wants a clear window into the misleading portrayal of Islam’s role in the global Jihad that has come to dominate the Western public sphere over the last two decades, including among intelligence and policy makers, owes him- or herself the bracing experience of Bale’s painstakingly documented analysis. Despite being harshly critical of these now hegemonic (mis-) interpretations, which unwittingly give aid and comfort to our Islamist enemies, he shows great patience and even respect for those whose reasoning he challenges. For independent minds who have begun to suspect that they have been badly misinformed about these very important security threats, this is your *Guide for the Perplexed*.”

– **Richard Landes**, *Professor, Boston University, USA*



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# THE DARKEST SIDES OF POLITICS, II

This book examines a wide array of phenomena that arguably constitute the most noxious, extreme, terrifying, murderous, secretive, authoritarian, and/or anti-democratic aspects of national and international politics. Scholars should not ignore these “dark sides” of politics, however unpleasant they may be, since they influence the world in a multitude of harmful ways.

The second volume in this two-volume collection focuses primarily on assorted religious extremists, including apocalyptic millenarian cults, Islamists, and jihadist terrorist networks, as well as CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear) terrorism and the supposedly new “nexus” between organized criminal and extremist groups employing terrorist operational techniques. A range of global case studies are included, most of which focus on the lesser known activities of certain religious extremist milieus.

This collection should prove to be essential reading for students and researchers interested in understanding seemingly arcane but nonetheless important dimensions of recent historical and contemporary politics.

**Jeffrey M. Bale** is Professor in the Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies Program at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, USA.

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*Jeffrey M. Bale*

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# NOTES ON THE MATERIALS INCLUDED IN THESE VOLUMES

The materials collected in the two volumes of this book derive from a variety of sources. Most have already been published in academic works or journalistic magazines devoted to covert politics, whereas two were prepared for contractors for agencies of the U.S. government and have not yet been published. The reader should be warned, however, that most of the materials herein are examples of “old school” historical scholarship, which means that they are densely packed with rich, empirical details, are based as much as possible on a careful evaluation of the existing corpus of primary sources, and contain very extensive reference notes. Thus those who have become accustomed to reading modern “social science” literature, with its excessive emphasis on theories and models, obsession with quantification, and embarrassingly limited use of primary sources, may find some of them rough going. On the other hand, traditional historians should feel themselves right at home. That is entirely intentional.

## Volume 1

The introductory chapter was mostly prepared for a separate book-length study (provisionally entitled *Where the Anti-Democratic Extremes Touch: Patterns of Interaction and Collaboration between Islamist Networks and Western Left- and Right-Wing Extremists*) that I had planned and begun to write. However, the emotional fallout from the sudden death of my longtime girlfriend interrupted the process of writing that book, which therefore may never be written. Hence I have added some new prefatory paragraphs to a chapter focusing on the nature and importance of extremist ideologies.

The second chapter was first published in the 1990s in *Lobster: A Journal of Parapolitics*, and then expanded and republished in the academic journal, *Patterns of Prejudice*.

The third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters were all originally prepared in the early 1990s for my doctoral dissertation in Late Modern European History at the University of California at Berkeley. Although several academic publishers expressed an interest in publishing a book version of that 600+-page dissertation, I instead moved on to work on other research topics since I felt that I would have had to add a very large chapter on the 12 December 1969 Piazza Fontana massacre, an extraordinarily complicated case. As a result, only the sixth chapter on the May 1973 attack on Milan police headquarters was subsequently published, in the journal *Terrorism and Political Violence*. For this collection, I have slightly augmented the third chapter, significantly updated sections of the fourth and fifth chapters (since a wealth of new sources have since appeared on those topics), and added a brief paragraph addendum to the sixth chapter. I am very pleased and proud to say that my detailed reconstructions and close analyses of these murky events over three decades ago proved to be extremely accurate and indeed prescient, since the new information that has subsequently appeared has not only confirmed, but further reinforced, virtually all of my narrative accounts and conclusions. This goes to show, yet again, that comprehensive scholarly research generally stands the test of time, unlike the trendy, fashionable theoretical drivel that too many people in the humanities and “social sciences” have been peddling in recent decades.

Chapter 8 was originally published in the *Bulletin of the Turkish Studies Association*, and then republished sometime later in *Lobster* so that it would reach a specialized non-academic audience. It has not been altered.

Chapter 9 was previously published in *Patterns of Prejudice*. It has not been altered.

## Volume 2

Chapter 1 originally appeared in an edited volume entitled *Making Sense of Proxy Wars*, edited by Michael Innes. It has not been altered.

Chapter 2 was published in the journal *Democracy and Security*. I am happy to say that the fears of many analysts (myself included) that some toxic chemical or biological agents produced in connection with “Project Coast” may have been smuggled out of South Africa appear not to have materialized. The reconstruction of the actual details of this covert program, including special operations assassinations carried out with the use of these agents, has proven to be accurate. It has not been altered.

Chapter 3 was originally written for a graduate seminar course at UC Berkeley and then published in *Lobster*. It has been slightly amended and updated.

Chapter 4 is an unpublished report that I prepared under contract for a U.S. government entity. It contains no classified information.

Chapter 5 was first published as a chapter in a book entitled *Jihadists and Weapons of Mass Destruction*, edited by Gary Ackerman and Jeremy Tamsett. It has been slightly altered.

Here I would like to emphasize that I would have preferred to devote most of my research efforts in recent years to reconstructing particular jihadist terrorist plots and attacks, on the basis of an in-depth examination of judicial materials and other

primary sources, which is the same methodology I employed for many years while doing research on neo-fascist terrorism. I did indeed adopt those tried-and-true methods in connection with both the 1999 Ahmad Rassam “Millennium” bomb plot (see Chapter 9 in this volume) and the 2004 Madrid train bombings (in a monograph entitled *Jihādīst Cells and I.E.D. Capabilities in Europe: Assessing the Present and Future Threat to the West*, which was published by the United States Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute in 2012). Unfortunately, given the proliferation of ill-informed nonsense being peddled after 9/11 by so many newly minted “terrorism experts,” most of whom had no prior academic background in the study of terrorism, Islamic history, Islamic religious and legal doctrines, or Islamist ideologies and movements, I increasingly felt compelled to try to promote more conceptual clarity about these broader issues. This seemed all the more necessary because naïve and erroneous ideas about Islam and Islamism were exerting an ever-growing influence on the counterterrorism policies adopted by the United States and other Western nations, with predictably disastrous real-world consequences.

The next three articles included herein were therefore designed to counter widespread but misleading claims that a) Islam is inherently a “religion of peace” (despite numerous Qur’anic *suras* that explicitly enjoin warfare against non-believers, Muhammad’s own “exemplary” behavior as a warlord, and centuries of brutal Muslim conquests of “infidel” territory); that b) Islamism, an intrinsically literalist, strict, and puritanical but in most respects orthodox interpretation of core Islamic doctrines, can be “moderate” with respect to its goals (as opposed to its methods); that c) jihadist terrorism has “nothing to do with Islam” despite the fact that its Islamist sponsors and perpetrators correctly insist otherwise; and that d) Western counterterrorist policies should be based on promoting these absurd revisionist fictions instead of acknowledging reality. In these three chapters, my growing exasperation about the West’s stubborn refusal to acknowledge the nature of our Islamist adversaries is at times on display. Then again, this sort of denial of reality is rarely if ever a problem when one writes about fascism and neo-fascism. Although Islamist apologists are currently omnipresent in academia (and the media), as are communist apologists and cult apologists, fascist apologists have fortunately not been common there since the 1920s and 1930s. How does one explain the seemingly never-ending willingness of supposedly educated people to engage in such apologetics for totalitarian ideologies and movements? As George Orwell once wryly noted, “[t]here are some ideas so absurd that only an intellectual could believe them.” American literary critic Lionel Trilling helped to explain why when he observed that “[t]hose members of the intellectual class who prided themselves upon their political commitment were committed not to the fact but to the abstraction.” Sadly, this is no less true today.

Chapter 6 was published in a special issue, devoted to Islamism, of the journal *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* (now *Politics, Religion, and Ideology*), which was edited by myself and my colleague Bassam Tibi.

Chapter 7 was published in the leading online Terrorism Studies journal, *Perspectives on Terrorism*. It is now being republished, as I always prefer, in a hard copy format.

A shorter version of Chapter 8 was published as a special report for the Investigative Project on Terrorism (IPT) website. The longer, slightly updated version appears here for the first time.

Chapter 9 is a previously unpublished segment that I originally prepared for a larger research report for a U.S. government agency. It has been slightly modified.

Chapter 10 was first published in a 2014 McGraw-Hill “e-book” edited by Russell E. Howard, *The Terrorism-Trafficking Nexus: Clear and Present Danger?* and is now being republished in a hard copy format. It has not been altered.

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I only wish I could blame my mentors and colleagues listed above for any shortcomings found herein, but unfortunately I cannot.

# 1

## TERRORISTS AS STATE “PROXIES”

### Separating fact from fiction<sup>1</sup>

*[State-sponsored terrorism is] the most important component of the international terrorism problem.*

– R. James Woolsey<sup>2</sup>

*A terrorist organization requires more than money and guns . . . indispensable services [such as logistics and secure facilities] could only come from states.*

– Michael A. Ledeen<sup>3</sup>

*Today, state sponsorship of terrorism continues unabated.*

– Bruce Hoffman<sup>4</sup>

*In today's world, the main threat to many states . . . no longer comes from other states. Instead, it comes from small [terrorist] groups and other organizations which are not states.*

– Martin van Creveld<sup>5</sup>

*Despite the Western view (and specifically the American view) that without state-sponsorship there will be no terrorism, reality proves otherwise.*

– Ghada Hashem Talhami<sup>6</sup>

One of the most contentious and misunderstood issues surrounding modern terrorism is the extent to which diverse nation-states have been involved in using violence-prone extremist groups as surrogates or proxies. This theme was particularly salient during the Cold War, especially from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, when governments on either side of the Iron Curtain repeatedly accused each other of sponsoring or supporting terrorism and, indeed, often of secretly directing or controlling the actions of ostensibly autonomous terrorist groups. Despite the fact



## 2 Terrorists as state “proxies”

that these Cold War-era themes were disseminated primarily for partisan political, if not explicitly propagandistic, purposes and often rested on incomplete, unverifiable, contaminated, spurious, or even manufactured evidence, similar sorts of themes have not only survived the end of the Cold War but also have either been updated and reprised or assumed new, politically convenient guises in today’s post-Cold War, multipolar international environment.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold: to subject current efforts to claim that “rogue” regimes are the primary drivers of contemporary Islamist terrorism – and thus to portray Islamist terrorists as being effectively the “proxies” of states – to critical scrutiny; to highlight some illustrative aspects of the actual history of state interactions with terrorist groups; and finally to develop a new categorization scheme for better identifying and distinguishing between different levels of state involvement in terrorism.<sup>7</sup> Although the aim herein is simply to present a scholarly analysis of what has always been a very fluid, dynamic, and complex pattern of state interaction with extremist groups, the conclusions have clear policy implications. After all, if Western democratic nations and their allies genuinely wish to lessen the present and future threat of jihadist (and other forms of) terrorism, they must understand the real sources of that threat and the actual objectives of the groups involved rather than uncritically adopting or cynically peddling a host of politically convenient but often spurious explanatory paradigms that are bound, if accepted at face value, to lead to the continued adoption of misguided and counterproductive policies.

### **Factors promoting state-centric perspectives on terrorism**

Before turning to the main topic, however, it is necessary to discuss some factors that have led policymakers, scholars, and journalists to adopt a state-centric perspective regarding terrorism. Perhaps the most mundane but influential of these factors has to do with certain disciplinary biases associated with the field of political science, in particular those that have for decades underlain its international relations (IR) subfield. The primary premise in much of that subfield, especially its “realist” schools, is that the key actors in the international system are nation-states, a focus that was largely warranted in earlier decades given the overwhelming prominence, power, and influence of states in the international arena. Starting from such a state-centric premise, it is hardly surprising that so many IR scholars would emphasize the importance and preeminent role of nation-states, that they would focus on developing theoretical models and research methodologies designed to explain the behavior of states in the “anarchic” international system, and that they would consequently overlook or at least minimize the role of non-state actors, including extremist groups and terrorist organizations.<sup>8</sup> There is no doubt that state-centric biases have persisted up to the present day, both within IR and in other subfields of political science, including comparative politics and even political theory. This is in spite of the fact that (1) the rise of the nation-state was a relatively recent phenomenon in historical

terms; and (2) these long-standing disciplinary biases, theoretical preferences, and favored interpretations in the IR subfield have increasingly been subjected to criticism by both older and younger generations of scholars – especially those among the latter who are concerned, e.g., with the study of international organizations such as the United Nations, regional supra-state quasi-governments such as the European Union, nongovernmental lobbying organizations such as Amnesty International, or subnational groups of various types.

The practical result is that the overwhelming majority of scholars and academicians – apart from those in the interdisciplinary field of terrorism studies, historians of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary groups, security specialists who focus on covert operations or counterinsurgency, and some “social movement” theorists in sociology – have never seriously studied extremist milieus or terrorist organizations.<sup>9</sup> For that very reason, they generally find it difficult, if not impossible, to understand the nature, ideologies, motivations, and objectives of such groups, to adopt appropriate methodologies for studying them, or to assess their importance and role in international affairs accurately, even within the narrower context of national or international security studies. Given these entrenched state-centric approaches and prejudices, it is hardly surprising that so many political scientists, and the pundits and policymakers they have influenced, have overemphasized the role that states have played in sponsoring terrorism.

A second, but far less excusable, factor that has contributed to the exaggeration of the role of states in fostering terrorism is the prevalence of political biases, whether pro-government or anti-establishment, in the terrorism field. Many terrorism specialists tend to be conservatives, Cold War liberals, or realists who have all too often adopted the self-serving perspectives of their own governments concerning the origin and nature of terrorism. As a result they have generally assumed *a priori* that Western governments are the innocent victims of terrorism and mistakenly portrayed modern terrorism as either an exclusively non-state, insurgent phenomenon or, paradoxically, as one that is really being “sponsored” behind the scenes by hostile enemy states, even when particular terrorist actions appear to have been carried out independently by small groups of political extremists.<sup>10</sup> Alas, these distorted and rather contradictory perspectives can themselves be traced in large part to the pernicious cumulative impact of disinformation and propaganda disseminated by what some left-leaning analysts have labeled as the “terrorism industry,” a supposed coterie of co-opted terrorism experts and organizations that, consciously or not, have promoted the interests of hawkish factions in various Western intelligence agencies.<sup>11</sup> A good deal has already been written about some of these individuals and the network of research centers and funding institutions with which they have been associated, but the essential point is that they have collectively promoted one of the most politically influential interpretations of contemporary terrorism, one that depicts hostile enemy regimes – previously communist regimes but nowadays rogue Middle Eastern regimes – and their alleged non-state surrogates as the primary disseminators of terrorism.

In response to this one-sided and at times simplistic establishment literature on terrorism, an increasing number of left-wing or nonconformist academics and

#### 4 Terrorists as state “proxies”

journalists have presented an alternative but no less Manichaean picture. In their view, right-wing governments and para-state apparatuses, with the backing of the United States and other Western nations, have been the main perpetrators of terrorism during the past sixty years.<sup>12</sup> Some have explicitly contrasted the “retail” terrorism carried out by insurgent left-wing groups with the “wholesale” terrorism carried out by authoritarian right-wing regimes.<sup>13</sup> Although they justifiably call attention to the prevalence and importance of right-wing state and non-state terrorism, topics that were systematically neglected by most terrorism specialists during the Cold War, these anti-establishment analysts have in effect only succeeded in reproducing and inverting mainstream biases by portraying Western democracies and allied Third World regimes, rather than hostile states and non-state actors, as the principal terrorist villains.<sup>14</sup>

In other words, there has long been a perverse sort of symmetry observable in the extant literature on terrorism, a symmetry rooted in political partisanship. In pursuit of their respective political agendas, both the establishment and anti-establishment terrorism analysts have consistently displayed similar degrees of blindness, albeit in different eyes, by exaggerating the role of state sponsorship of terrorism. With rare exceptions, neither faction has made a serious effort to assess the evidence presented by the other. Their approach has been either to ignore one another entirely or to accuse each other of serving as conduits for intelligence-generated propaganda themes, which has unfortunately been true more often than one might think. They then stop, as if they had already proved their point, without actually examining and evaluating the substantive arguments or the evidence marshaled by their political opponents.<sup>15</sup> Given this polemical context, it is hardly surprising that diverse parties with vested interests have uncritically accepted or cynically exploited so many problematic and misleading claims concerning state-sponsored terrorism or the alleged role of terrorists as proxies.

#### **The mythology: autonomous terrorists as the simple agents of nation-states**

This toxic combination of built-in disciplinary biases within academia and blatant partisanship in the subfield of terrorism studies (which has often reflected, if not actually emanated from, state-sponsored propaganda or disinformation initiatives) has served only to obfuscate the fluid, dynamic, and highly complex nature of the interaction between nation-states and terrorist groups in recent decades. Indeed, it has resulted in the establishment of a mythology based on the notion that non-state terrorist groups are essentially the simple agents – or at least the proxies (i.e., confederates who can be relied upon to act on the sponsors’ behalf) or surrogates (i.e., substitutes who can facilitate the maintenance of “plausible deniability”) – of states. In creating this mythology, its proponents have failed to make a crucial analytical distinction between autonomous extremist groups with their own ideological and operational agendas that may decide, usually temporarily and often reluctantly, to collaborate with states, and pseudo-independent terrorist organizations that are

secretly created and controlled by states and therefore tend to function as their genuine agents. It is patently obvious that these two types of relationships are fundamentally different, especially regarding the amount of de facto control that a state will likely be able to exercise over a non-state group. Yet the conspiratorial alarmists have often sought, for no valid reason, to deny this distinction. For example, Roberta Goren has written that “the sponsor state must have certain political or strategic goals in mind which may or may not be identical to those of the terrorist group. *In either case it can be said that the group is being used as a proxy*” (italics added).<sup>16</sup>

One of the most straightforward formulations of the theory of state sponsorship of terrorism is provided in Ray S. Cline and Yonah Alexander’s book *Terrorism as State-Sponsored Covert Warfare*. Therein the term “terrorism” was defined – in contradistinction to the many official definitions that (no less erroneously) restrict the term to violence by non-state actors – as “the deliberate employment of violence or the threat of use of violence *by sovereign states or sub-national groups encouraged or assisted by sovereign states* to attain strategic and political objectives by acts in violation of law” (italics added).<sup>17</sup> In short, for these authors and many others, terrorism was virtually inconceivable in the absence of state involvement on some level. However, a number of contrasting and competing versions of this mythology exist. Two of these have special salience because they seemed superficially plausible in a bipolar Cold War context in which both superpowers tended to view all localized conflicts as mere “fronts” in the larger global struggle against their main enemy.<sup>18</sup>

The most common mythology about terrorism during the Cold War era, at least in the West, is that the Soviet Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti (KGB: Committee for State Security) and its client secret services in Eastern Europe and the third world were secretly and systematically directing the activities of ostensibly autonomous left-wing and ethno-nationalist terrorist groups, not only in Europe but also in various other parts of the world.<sup>19</sup> This theme was widely disseminated, especially during Ronald Reagan’s administration, even though it assumed diverse forms ranging from alarmist and conspiratorial versions to relatively restrained and nuanced versions. Inveterate Cold Warriors who supported the rollback rather than the containment of communism, neoconservatives, and other foreign policy hawks who were ideologically predisposed to see the sinister hidden hand of the Soviet Union and its allies behind virtually every threatening development in the world, including international terrorism, promoted most of the overly simplistic and conspiratorial versions of this theme.<sup>20</sup> A few emblematic quotes should suffice to illustrate this one-dimensional perspective. According to Hans Josef Horchem, an official of the West German Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV: Office for the Protection of the Constitution), the “KGB is engineering international terrorism.”<sup>21</sup> For Cline and Alexander, Moscow served as the “nerve center” of the “international infrastructure of terrorism.”<sup>22</sup> For journalist Claire Sterling, a diverse array of violent non-state groups – ethno-nationalist, religious, anti-colonial, criminal, and leftist – all came to “see themselves as elite battalions in a worldwide Army of Communist Combat.”<sup>23</sup> Hence from this perspective, terrorists of all kinds, perhaps even ostensibly right-wing terrorists such as the Turkish would-be papal

## 6 Terrorists as state “proxies”

assassin Mehmet Ali Ağca, were effectively considered agents of the Soviet Union or its allied states.

Although the Soviet KGB was viewed as the chief “puppet master” behind international terrorism, in cases where the Soviets themselves were not secretly sponsoring or controlling terrorist groups, they allegedly relied on their client regimes in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia to do so, mainly by contracting out these tasks to the secret services of East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Cuba, North Korea, Libya, Syria, or Iraq.<sup>24</sup> Many of these intersecting theories about supposed Soviet, communist, and rogue state sponsorship of different types of terrorism neatly converged in the case of the plot to kill the pope, according to which the KGB, with the help of the Bulgarian secret service, the Iranians, and the Turkish mafia, purportedly sponsored the 1980 assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to viewing the world through unabashed ideological filters, the proponents of these theories – many of whom were former intelligence and military officers – tended to rely heavily on anonymous government insiders, inaccessible documents, or unreliable defectors as their primary sources of information, which they supplemented with unconfirmed and often sensationalistic media reports, without consulting other available sources to verify the accuracy of that information.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, a strong circumstantial case can be made that the authors of these reports, whether intentionally or unwittingly, were serving as conduits for propaganda or disinformation that hard-line factions within the Western intelligence community had generated. Hence it is not surprising that their methods and conclusions were criticized, sometimes harshly, both by more circumspect academicians and by serving or former intelligence officers associated with more moderate rival factions.<sup>27</sup>

However that may be, it is undeniable that during the Cold War the KGB and other Eastern Bloc secret services provided extensive tangible assistance – above all, funding, weaponry, hands-on training, and sometimes even operational direction – to a vast array of dictatorial client regimes and brutal self-proclaimed “national liberation” movements in various parts of the Third World.<sup>28</sup> They did so for the same reason that Western secret services supported similarly unsavory anticommunist regimes and insurgents: they viewed these indigenous local struggles as fronts in the global conflict between the two superpowers. Many of those Soviet-backed guerrilla movements (and, for that matter, states) did in fact employ terrorism as one of their operational techniques or tactics. Nevertheless, since terrorism was often not their primary tactic, much less their sole tactic, they cannot be legitimately referred to as terrorist movements *per se*. It is only on the basis of such a misleading and unwarranted conflation between insurgents in general and terrorists in the strict sense that the proponents of the “KGB-sponsored terrorism” thesis have been able to buttress their exaggerated claims.

On the other side of the Iron Curtain, pro-Soviet secret services, a worldwide network of communist “fellow travelers,” and Western left-wing activists promoted a parallel but diametrically opposed mythology. In this version, the U.S. Central

Intelligence Agency (CIA) and other Western secret services were the primary sponsors of terrorism in the world, in particular the terrorism carried out by right-wing regimes and paramilitary groups.<sup>29</sup> However, the idea that American intelligence agencies were secretly orchestrating and directing all the counterrevolutionary terrorism against the world’s “progressive” forces was as much of a propagandistic, conspiratorial fantasy as the notion that the Soviets were controlling international terrorism. This claim was based upon most of the same false premises concerning the alleged omnipresence and omnipotence of secret service puppet masters (in this case the CIA and its affiliates) and the supposed pliability of all the entities that received some sort of assistance from those services. An illuminating example of this unsophisticated, reductionist perspective was the notion that Operación Cóndor – a mid-1970s agreement between the secret services of authoritarian southern cone regimes in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay to wage a collaborative, continent-wide covert war against real or imagined communist subversives – was a scheme that the CIA hatched and directed.<sup>30</sup> So sinister was this agency that it was even purportedly able, operating behind the scenes, to direct “pseudo-leftist” terrorist groups.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, according to pro-Soviet sources, the CIA itself sponsored the attempted assassination of the pope in order to implicate Bulgaria and the Soviet Bloc and thereby sabotage détente.<sup>32</sup>

Ironically, there is more reliable documentary evidence, at least in the public domain, about the covert support offered by Western democracies to authoritarian client regimes and civilian paramilitary groups that have engaged in terrorism, though this may well be an artifact of the greater openness and accessibility of information in free societies. Although some have conveniently attributed all such claims to communist and left-wing disinformation given that Soviet operatives and their “useful idiots” in fact systematically disseminated these themes, there is no doubt that the United States actively or tacitly supported numerous anticommunist regimes and right-wing vigilante groups that engaged in acts of terrorism against real and imagined subversives.<sup>33</sup> One may note, as examples, the brutal campaigns of state terrorism that the U.S.-backed juntas and affiliated death squads in El Salvador and Guatemala carried out; the antidemocratic violence perpetrated by some components of the clandestine “stay-behind” networks, which the secret services of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members established in various European countries to resist a possible Soviet invasion; and the logistical if not operational support that American intelligence provided to anticommunist “freedom fighters” who regularly resorted to terrorism, such as right-wing Cuban exiles from the organizations Alpha 66 and Omega 7, *contra* elements from the Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense (FDN: Nicaraguan Democratic Force), and select groups of fanatical Afghan *mujahidin*.<sup>34</sup>

Sadly, many of these partisan left-wing claims about Western state-sponsored terrorism were subsequently confirmed after various repressive military regimes collapsed, especially in cases where their archives were opened or when former members of their security forces began offering firsthand accounts of their past misdeeds.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, if one honestly applied the same loose criteria that are used

nowadays to determine which rogue countries should be added to the U.S. State Department’s list of state sponsors of terrorism, many Western client regimes during the Cold War would easily fit those criteria. Still, it would be absurd to claim that the CIA was – to appropriate the colorful phrase that foreign policy analyst Michael Ledeen applied to hostile regimes – the “terror master” behind such states and organizations.

Despite this long, sordid history of Cold War-era exaggerations and distortions, similar mythologies about state sponsorship of terrorism are still being peddled, most recently in connection with jihadist terrorism. Once again, there are two competing variants of this mythology.

One claims that various anti-American rogue regimes, in many cases the very same villainous states that were earlier identified as Soviet clients, are the principal sponsors of Islamist terrorism.<sup>36</sup> American neoconservatives and Israeli hard-liners have peddled this theme tirelessly. It is Ledeen who has perhaps expressed it most succinctly: “Western intelligence sources have long been reluctant to accept the fact that *modern Islamic terrorism is above all else a weapon used by hostile nation states against their enemies in the Middle East and in the West*” (italics added).<sup>37</sup> Similarly, for foreign policy analyst David Wurmser, the war against terrorism was “an epic struggle between a whole category of nations . . . the seven state sponsors of terror and us.”<sup>38</sup> Basically, their argument is that states making up the so-called axis of evil and other renegade regimes are the principal sponsors of terrorism, including Sunni jihadist terrorism, in the Muslim world, and that without their support these particular forms of terrorism would not constitute a major security threat.<sup>39</sup> Different proponents of this distorted notion, while uncritically accepting that all the regimes on the State Department’s list are actually sponsors of terrorism, have tended to focus their attention primarily on one or more of these renegade states – namely, Iran, Syria, or Saddam Husayn’s Iraq.<sup>40</sup> Other hawks, with far more justification, have laid the blame for supporting global Sunni terrorism primarily on nominal U.S. allies such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.<sup>41</sup>

The second version is that the United States itself has been a principal sponsor of Islamist extremism and jihadist terrorism. The more restrained versions of this theory emphasize the pre-9/11 support that Western secret services provided to diverse Islamist movements, ranging from the Jami’iyyat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin (Society of the Muslim Brothers, or Muslim Brotherhood) in Egypt and Syria to the jihadist opponents of Mu’ammar al-Qadhdhafi’s regime and, through the intermediary of the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) directorate, local and Arab mujahidin in Afghanistan, claims for all of which there is some actual evidence.<sup>42</sup> The more alarmist, conspiratorial, and speculative versions argue that the CIA and other U.S. intelligence services have been secretly directing or manipulating Islamists and even some jihadist terrorists all along as part of a calculated strategy to weaken America’s geopolitical rivals, obtain control of oil pipelines, or justify launching “imperialist” military interventions abroad.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, some of the many delusional 9/11 conspiracy theories suggest that the United States either ordered its jihadist “allies” to carry out the attacks or duped them into doing so.<sup>44</sup>



### **The norm: autonomous terrorists as willing periodic collaborators or unwitting occasional instruments of the secret services of nation-states**

What, then, is the normal nature of the interrelationship between complicit nation-states and terrorist groups? The earlier criticisms of various conspiratorial mythologies about state sponsorship should not be misconstrued as a denial that numerous states, both hostile and friendly, have provided encouragement as well as tangible logistical or even operational aid to non-state terrorist groups. Regime components have indeed frequently offered diverse types of assistance to particular terrorist groups in their efforts to penetrate, manipulate, or exploit them instrumentally. Yet this support does not mean, as many have implied, that those states are actually controlling or directing terrorist organizations or that the latter normally function as the *de facto* agents of states. That is because such mythologies are based upon two naïve beliefs (or duplicitous claims) – that states and terrorist groups both invariably benefit when they collaborate with one another, and that insurgent terrorism of various types develops into a serious threat only when there is state sponsorship. Both of these notions are mistaken for two reasons. First, such collaboration almost always creates difficulties and involves risks, often serious ones, for both parties. Second, several terrorist groups, such as Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) in Peru or Oumu Shinrikyo (Aum Supreme Truth) in Japan, have gravely threatened their own or other societies without any significant state sponsorship.

In fact, most extremist political and religious groups in the world, including those that have relied primarily on terrorism to achieve their goals, have been relatively small, autonomous, sectarian organizations that emerged organically within particular historical and cultural contexts and were established independently in response to specific political circumstances. Moreover, the majority of those that had recourse to violence initially carried out acts of terrorism without having received any significant support from nation-states, depended largely on their own resources to support and sustain their activities, and managed to maintain a considerable degree of ideological, organizational, and operational autonomy even if at some point they opted to forge relationships, overt or covert, with particular regimes. This is clear from the historical record.

Moreover, apart from not being substantiated by the available evidence, these mythologies about the omnipresence of state sponsorship and non-state actors functioning as mere “agents” of states all rest on numerous unstated assumptions that are severely problematic if not manifestly false. The first is that extremist organizations, including those that rely on terrorism as a technique, are stable, disciplined, and internally united. After all, for states to control extremist groups effectively, the members of those groups would have to accept, more or less passively, the decisions made by their leaders who had opted to establish collaborative relationships with those states.<sup>45</sup> In actuality, a fluid, dynamic, and kaleidoscopic process of organizational fission and fusion characterizes all extremist milieus, since the organizations within those milieus are themselves typically divided into factions and riven by



sometimes bitter internal conflicts deriving from personality clashes; disputes over doctrinal, strategic, or tactical matters; and social, if not cultural, ethnic, or national, distinctions.<sup>46</sup> In short, extremist milieus are rarely if ever in a condition of stasis, and extremist groups are often volatile and unstable, making them exceedingly difficult to manage, much less control. This description is even truer of today’s diffuse, horizontal, and “franchised” jihadist terrorist networks than it was of the more centralized and hierarchical organizations during the Cold War.

Second, states are not monolithic organizations either. Even authoritarian regimes and those with totalitarian pretensions are often internally divided and factionalized, if not effectively polycentric.<sup>47</sup> In practice, this means that it is not always clear whether secret service collaboration with extremist and terrorist groups has been undertaken in response to the direct orders of national political leaders, by one or more of those services acting collectively, or on the initiative of officers on behalf of particular factions within those services.<sup>48</sup> Generally, such services are functionally specialized, structurally compartmentalized, and operate clandestinely on a need-to-know basis. Hence it may well be a mistake to assume *a priori* that such secretive initiatives are invariably authorized by the leaders of particular countries rather than by some of their underlings without official sanction.<sup>49</sup>

Third, these theories attribute almost preternatural powers to nation-states and their security agencies in terms of their ability to manipulate and control terrorist groups or their actions covertly. In practice, then, the most alarmist and reductionist of these portrayals of state-sponsored terrorism resemble “conspiracy theories” in the pejorative sense of that term.<sup>50</sup> This conspiratorial approach is precisely the problem, since the kind of omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence that conspiracy theorists attribute to alleged cabals of secret plotters, including the so-called terror masters, does not accurately depict the complicated, variegated nature of actual covert and clandestine politics. In the real world, the apparatuses that initiate covert operations are composed of inherently flawed individuals who, along with everyone else, are prone to commit errors of judgment and other blunders. Moreover, they not only have to cope with the formidable problem of unforeseen consequences, but also have to contend with numerous other more or less powerful groups that are likewise operating secretly, broader social forces that are difficult if not impossible to control, and deep-rooted structural and cultural constraints that place limits on how much they are able to affect the course of events.<sup>51</sup>

Fourth, these depictions ascribe far too much passivity or docility to members of extremist political and religious groups, whose members tend – almost by definition – to be fanatical true believers in their respective causes.<sup>52</sup> Whatever their specific doctrinal tenets, extremist ideologies are generally characterized by Manichaeism (a sharp division of the world into good and evil), monism, authoritarianism or totalitarianism, collectivism, and a penchant for demonizing designated enemies. None of these characteristics of ideological extremism is conducive to the establishment of fraternal coexistence with persons or organizations that do not share their own perceptions and goals. Moreover, the people who are attracted to such radical doctrines tend to be deeply suspicious of anyone outside their own

organizations and ideological milieus, making sustained collaboration with states and other non-state groups problematic and fraught with potential friction. Finally, the often egomaniacal or paranoid leaders of extremist groups tend to be hostile to perceived rivals and obsessed with preserving their own autonomy and influence, which causes them to distrust and resent outsiders, even those with whom they may be temporarily cooperating. These factors all militate against them willingly acting as the pliant, long-term agents of other, more powerful entities that do not fully share their own radical agendas.

This does not mean, of course, that terrorists never collaborate with states that do not share their own ideologies. They have often done so, albeit usually on the realist grounds that “the enemy of my (principal) enemy is my (temporary) friend.” Indeed, resource-poor extremists are likely to accept tangible support from many different quarters – the more the merrier, since variety helps to lessen their dependence on any one sponsor – in order to pursue their objectives or resist common enemies. It does mean, however, that they are likely to be very suspicious and wary of the states that offer them support, since such support invariably comes with certain strings attached, and that they will assiduously strive to maintain their own autonomy, all the more so if the regimes in question do not share their particular worldviews or long-term goals. For their part, states are willing to collaborate with violence-prone extremists for a multiplicity of reasons, ranging from ideological solidarity to supporting co-religionists or co-ethnics to geopolitical *realpolitik*, although in this context ideological factors are arguably less important to states than to extremist groups.<sup>53</sup>

Despite these important qualifications, it is undeniable that the secret services of various states have often sought to infiltrate, manipulate, and instrumentally exploit autonomous extremist and terrorist groups for their own purposes. Some of these efforts may be regarded as basically legitimate (such as gathering information and attempting to prevent such groups from carrying out acts of violence), whereas others could be viewed as illegitimate (such as acting as agents provocateurs by encouraging or manipulating those groups into carrying out acts of violence). It is also true that many terrorist groups have at times tried to obtain tangible support and material aid from states. Although the historical record is replete with examples of these intertwined phenomena, a brief examination of three high-profile cases should make it abundantly clear that the clandestine relations between states and terrorist groups, when and where they have existed, are generally far more complicated and volatile than any of the discussed mythologies would suggest. However, it should be emphasized that evidentiary lacunae in the available sources necessarily make all conclusions about these complex matters tentative and provisional, and that the unanticipated appearance of reliable new information could drastically alter our present understanding.

If one considers the interaction between the terrorist Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF: Red Army Faction) and the East German Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (MfS: Ministry for State Security, better known as the Stasi), it quickly becomes clear that the more simplistic, alarmist interpretations of their relationship are problematic.

Proponents of the “Soviet terror network” thesis had long claimed that Eastern Bloc secret services were secretly sponsoring European left-wing terrorist organizations, and these claims were partially confirmed when information from the MfS archives, former Stasi officers, and ex-terrorists surfaced after the Soviet and East German regimes collapsed. Nevertheless, not much can be said with certainty about the links between the Stasi and West German terrorists. First, in the late 1960s and 1970s some wanted West German terrorists had established contacts with the Stasi and thence had been provided with false documents and allowed to travel freely in the East (despite being kept under surveillance), usually when on their way to training camps in the Middle East.<sup>54</sup> Second, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, under the aegis of the new Hauptabteilung (Main Department) XXII: Terrorabwehr (Defense against Terrorism), ten members of the RAF and other German terrorist groups, most of whom were disillusioned terrorist “mistakes” or “dropouts,” were brought to East Germany and allowed to assume new identities, lives, and jobs (in Operativer Vorgang [OV] “Stern II” [Operational Case “Star II”]).<sup>55</sup> Third, and perhaps most seriously, between 1980 and 1982 Stasi officers in a lodge near Briesen (in OV “Stern I”) provided a few select members of the RAF’s second generation, including its command level, with actual hands-on weapons and explosives training; in some cases, these individuals apparently carried out bomb and rocket attacks against American military officers in West Germany.<sup>56</sup> Finally, other West German terrorists affiliated with Ilich Ramírez Sánchez, “Carlos the Jackal,” or with rival Palestinian factions also periodically took refuge in or transited through East Germany.<sup>57</sup>

However, the fact remains that the MfS always seemed to have had an ambiguous and rather strained relationship with RAF members. On the one hand, its leaders felt some romantic solidarity and sympathy for their supposedly misguided “anti-imperialist” comrades who shared the same class enemies or perhaps viewed them as potential auxiliaries if war should break out between the two Germanys; therefore, they offered them support. On the other hand, they distrusted the RAF so much that they characterized its members as potential enemies of the state in secret documents, kept them under constant surveillance, refused to collaborate in certain adventurist RAF schemes, and systematically exploited both the “new citizens” and visiting terrorists to gather intelligence on extremist milieus and vulnerabilities in the West.<sup>58</sup> In short, although there is no doubt that the Eastern Bloc secret services did periodically provide certain so-called fighting communist cells in Western Europe with logistical aid of various types, the role of those services in actually fomenting, much less directing, left-wing terrorism has frequently been exaggerated.<sup>59</sup>

Another example of conspiratorial alarmism regarding state sponsorship concerns the Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyya (PLO: Palestine Liberation Organization). The proponents of the thesis that the KGB was secretly masterminding international terrorism paid particular attention to the PLO, which allegedly “became the chief and central agency for dispensing terror and death, for supplying fighters, arms, money, training, orders and advice to customers of every shade of political and ideological coloration who were eager or willing to destroy, terrify and kill.”<sup>60</sup> Indeed, for writer Jillian Becker, the power for which the PLO “acted as agent in

its mission of global partisan warfare was the Soviet Union."<sup>61</sup> This formulation grossly oversimplifies and mischaracterizes the real nature of the relationship among the Soviets, their clients, and the terrorist components of the Palestinian resistance movement, a relationship that was far more convoluted.

The first point to emphasize is that the PLO is an umbrella organization that the Arab League originally created in 1964 and that has long encompassed a wide variety of groups and factions, ranging from Islamic nationalists (and even some Islamists) to secular nationalists and Marxists. Such a disparate, fractious coalition has always proved to be extraordinarily difficult to manage and control, and it only held together for so long owing to the political skills of Yasir 'Arafat, the organizational predominance of his own Fatah group, and the collective support for the "Palestine liberation first" policy. Not surprisingly, this "lack of unity within the organization [made] it difficult for the Soviets to control its movements or even influence its policies."<sup>62</sup> Second, the centrist stance, flexible policies, and sometimes moderate approaches that 'Arafat and his loyalists in Fatah adopted periodically led other key components within the PLO to challenge 'Arafat's authority (for example, through the formation of the Rejection Front) or caused radical splinter groups to break away from the PLO.<sup>63</sup> Third, 'Arafat always sought to obtain tangible and intangible support from a diverse array of nation-states, not only to augment his resources but also to avoid becoming overly dependent upon any single state supporter. Over the years the PLO had received extensive support from, among others, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, other Gulf states, and Algeria, as well as Libya, Syria, Iraq, China, the Soviet Bloc, and, more recently, several European countries, the United States, and Israel.<sup>64</sup> Fourth, since 'Arafat and his cronies shrewdly invested money that they had siphoned off from state-supplied funds or had earned from various licit and illicit business activities and thereby became very wealthy, they were able to maintain considerable operational independence for the PLO.<sup>65</sup>

More importantly, a documented history of distrust and friction, both public and private, existed between 'Arafat's organization and the Soviet Union, so much so that the latter periodically sought to moderate the PLO's goal of destroying Israel and to restrain Fatah and other Palestinian factions from launching terrorist actions outside Israel or against civilians.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, according to Professor Galia Golan, "Palestinian terrorism was generally – though not always – perceived by the Soviets as counterproductive."<sup>67</sup> However, this is by no means the entire story, because the Soviets seem to have pursued a two-track strategy with certain Palestinian groups. For example, hard-core Palestinian rejectionists and radicals, especially Marxist factions such as Jurj Habash's *Jabhat al-Sha'biyya li-Tahrir Filastin* (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, PFLP), openly criticized the Soviets for their pusillanimity and for not supporting their terrorist acts, and in return the Soviets publicly characterized them as extremists and adventurers.<sup>68</sup> At the same time, the KGB apparently recruited Wadi' Haddad, a leader of the PFLP's military wing, as an agent (code-named NATSIONALIST), and through him they sought to manipulate the PFLP covertly. In some cases, moreover, the Soviets not only provided advanced weapons to the PFLP but reportedly also instigated certain terrorist attacks carried

out by Haddad and his operatives.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, even though the Soviet Union sold considerable amounts of military armaments to Fatah, provided paramilitary training to select Palestinian fighters at camps inside the Soviet Bloc, and apparently even covertly facilitated certain Palestinian terrorist attacks, it would be absurd to characterize the PLO as a whole, or even entire radical factions within it, as little more than the terrorist agents, surrogates, or proxies of the KGB.

If these two claims regarding state sponsorship involving relatively well-known cases are problematic, one is entitled to be even more skeptical of recent allegations that anti-Western jihadist groups are effectively the proxies of rogue regimes such as Saddam Husayn’s Iraq. Indeed, in the period leading to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, many of the very same hawks who had earlier promoted theories about Soviet sponsorship of terrorism began insisting that the Iraqi, Syrian, and Iranian regimes were sponsoring contemporary jihadist terrorism. There is no doubt at all that the revolutionary Iranian regime has provided tangible logistical and operational assistance and even partial direction to Shi’i terrorist groups such as Hizballah (Party of God) and the militias affiliated with their Iraqi clients. Furthermore, Iraq, Syria, and Iran have all actively supported various Palestinian “rejectionist” groups, both nationalist and Sunni Islamist.<sup>70</sup> However, many neoconservatives also ostentatiously claimed that Husayn – together with Syria and Iran – had become one of the “terror masters” behind global Sunni jihadist networks such as al-Qa’ida. Although these alarmists were correct to note that ideological incompatibility would not necessarily prevent such disparate partners from warily cooperating, since both states and non-state actors at times forge at least temporary alliances against dangerous common enemies, in this case the available evidence does not support their more hyperbolic claims.<sup>71</sup>

Only a few points can be made with some confidence about alleged Iraqi relations with al-Qa’ida. First, in early 1996, in connection with Sudanese leader Hasan al-Turabi’s efforts to forge a united Sunni-Shi’i jihadist front against the West, a senior Iraqi intelligence officer named Faruq al-Hijazi met with Usama b. Ladin in Khartoum.<sup>72</sup> Second, on a few other occasions Iraqi intelligence officers were reportedly contacted by individuals linked to al-Qa’ida, but they either rebuffed their approaches or briefly exploited them to gather information. Third, in 1998 Bin Ladin sent an emissary named Abu Hafs al-Mawritani to Iraq. Abu Hafs was to ask Saddam Husayn to provide al-Qa’ida operatives with operational training, including in the use of chemical and biological agents, but the Iraqi leader refused to meet with Abu Hafs and ordered him to leave the country.<sup>73</sup> Fourth, after December 2001 numerous al-Qa’ida “associates” fleeing Afghanistan used Iraq, especially the Kurdish-controlled areas in the north, as a “safe haven and transit area,” or as an operational base, though there is no evidence that Husayn’s regime was complicit in this activity (though it may well have been acquiescent).<sup>74</sup> Fifth, in the summer of 2002, Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi and a dozen other al-Qa’ida-linked extremists who were collaborating with the Kurdish jihadist group Ansar al-Islam (Partisans of Islam) spent some time in Baghdad (apparently, in certain cases, to get medical treatment).<sup>75</sup> It is possible but by no means certain that Husayn provided covert

support to Ansar, which had connections to al-Qa‘ida, in order to make trouble for his secular Kurdish opponents.<sup>76</sup> It is also true, of course, that after the U.S. invasion commenced, elements of the Ba‘thist underground formed insurgent coalitions with local Islamists and arriving foreign fighters.

None of this information demonstrates – unless one has a conspiratorial mindset, an overactive imagination, or a political agenda to promote – that the secular Iraqi regime was a “terror master” controlling al-Qa‘ida; that Bin Ladin was a “proxy” of the Ba‘thist regime, his oft-declared enemy; or, even more fancifully, that Saddam Husayn secretly sponsored the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, or the 9/11 attacks.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, a June 2002 CIA report concluded that “in contrast to the traditional patron-client relationship Iraq enjoys with secular Palestinian groups, the ties between Saddam and Bin Ladin appear much like those between rival intelligence services, with each trying to exploit the other for its own benefit.”<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, according to former CIA director George Tenet, the agency’s “intelligence did not show any Iraqi authority, direction, or control over any of the many specific terrorist attacks carried out by al-Qa‘ida.”<sup>79</sup> Other U.S. government agencies and officials, as well as outside researchers, have reached similarly skeptical conclusions concerning such a proxy or operational relationship between al-Qa‘ida and Iraq.<sup>80</sup>

If one compares these exaggerated claims about the sponsorship of jihadist terrorism by enemy regimes – excluding, perhaps, Iran – with the evidence documenting the involvement of friendly regimes such as Pakistan or Saudi Arabia in sponsoring, supporting, facilitating, or enabling this sort of terrorism, the contrast is glaring. Indeed, as Professor Daniel Byman rightly notes, “Pakistan is probably today’s most active [state] sponsor of terrorism.”<sup>81</sup> There is no doubt at all that Pakistan’s powerful ISI has played a vitally important and sustained role in arming, training, supplying, and even providing operational direction to numerous radical anti-Western jihadist groups, including leading factions of the Taliban, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar’s Hizb-i Islami (Islamic Party), ‘Abdul Rasul Sayyaf’s Ittihad-i Islami Bara-yi Azadi-yi Afghanistan (Islamic Union for the Freedom of Afghanistan), and Jalaluddin Haqqani’s mujahidin network in Afghanistan, as well as Fazlur Rahman Khalil’s Harkat-ul Mujahidin (Mujahidin Movement), Hafiz Muhammad Sayyid’s Lashkar-i Tayyiba (Army of the Pure), Maulana Masood Azhar’s Jaysh-i Muhammad (Army of Muhammad), and Bakht Zamin’s al-Badr Mujahidin in Pakistan and Kashmir, to name only the most prominent.<sup>82</sup> Many of these same groups also developed close links with al-Qa‘ida, indicating that a collusive albeit complicated three-way relationship has long existed among pro-Islamist factions within the ISI, South Asian jihadist organizations, and members of Bin Ladin’s leadership directorate.<sup>83</sup> Such documented links have recently been further confirmed both by the indications that ISI officers were apparently directly involved in training the Lashkar jihadists who carried out the November 2008 terrorist attacks on Mumbai, India, and by the discovery that Bin Ladin had been living undisturbed for several years in a large compound in Abbottabad, right under the noses of the Pakistani military. The latter revelation has understandably given rise to suspicions that the degree of ISI complicity with al-Qa‘ida was even greater than was

previously thought.<sup>84</sup> However, even these ISI-backed jihadist terrorist groups should not necessarily be viewed as the docile proxies of that agency, since most of them have continued to pursue their own extremist agendas and have at times viciously turned on their supposed sponsors or “handlers.”<sup>85</sup>

Yet despite its intimate, decades-long involvement in supporting jihadist terrorists, for geopolitical reasons Pakistan has never been labeled as a “rogue” regime or been added to the official U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism, just as American-backed regimes that directly sponsored and perpetrated terrorism during the Cold War were conveniently never accused of being terrorist sponsors. Moreover, since the United States and Saudi Arabia have themselves provided extensive logistical and material support to the very same jihadist groups in Afghanistan – usually (but not always) indirectly using the ISI as an intermediary – they too were complicit in the facilitation or sponsorship of jihadist terrorism, which in both cases was later redirected, in textbook examples of intelligence “blowback,” against them.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, given the intermittent covert support, dating back to the 1950s, that the U.S. and British secret services provided to Islamists against their mutual Cold War enemies, the State Department should have included the United States and its major ally as sponsors of jihadist terrorism once it began publishing its official annual list of state sponsors of terrorism – if it had fairly applied the same loaded, imprecise criteria that it now uses for designating enemy states.<sup>87</sup>

### **The exceptions: secret service creations, covert penetration, and “Guns for Hire”**

However that may be, in three types of circumstances one can legitimately refer to terrorist groups as agents or proxies of states. The first is when the secret services of particular regimes intentionally create pseudo-independent terrorist groups that remain under those services’ direct control. Some examples are the Syrian-controlled Palestinian terrorist group al-Sa‘iqa (Thunderbolt) and its Iraqi-controlled counterpart, the Jabhat al-Tahrir al-‘Arabiyya (Arab Liberation Front).<sup>88</sup> Other examples are the innumerable “death squads,” or paramilitary groups normally consisting of both off-duty members of the security forces and civilian vigilantes, that have functioned as the terrorist auxiliaries of authoritarian regimes in such places as Sukarno’s Indonesia, apartheid-era South Africa, the Philippines under Ferdinand Marcos, Spain before and after Francisco Franco, and various countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.<sup>89</sup> Using such groups to carry out various “dirty” covert jobs made it easier, at least for a time, for the state security forces to “plausibly deny” that they were perpetrators of terrorism.

In the second case, the regime’s security agencies manage to penetrate a bona fide extremist or terrorist group and gradually assume control from within by maneuvering their own operatives or agents into key positions. When this process is making headway, the entire organization or factions within it may sometimes come under the effective control of the state and can therefore evolve into its de facto tool or agent. Since these types of covert operations are especially sensitive, it



is often hard to obtain reliable evidence about them. Nevertheless, some of them have eventually come to light. Perhaps the best-documented example of this sort of manipulation is the case of Evno Azev, an agent of the tsarist Okhrana who became a member of the central committee of the *Partiya Sotsialistov-Revolutionerov* (Socialist-Revolutionary Party) and the head of its notorious terrorist apparatus, the *Boevaia Organizatsiia* (Combat Organization).<sup>90</sup> In these contexts, agents provocateurs working secretly for regimes can often be found actively instigating violence.<sup>91</sup>

Here is an ideal point to digress briefly and discuss “false flag” operations. In these maneuvers, particular states or non-state groups (which are often either knowingly colluding with or unwittingly being manipulated by elements of certain secret services) secretly carry out terrorist actions that are then falsely attributed to groups from different extremist milieus.<sup>92</sup> One particularly illuminating and well-documented example of this phenomenon was the so-called strategy of tension in Italy, a series of provocations and terrorist massacres carried out in the late 1960s and early 1970s by neo-fascist radicals, operating more or less in collusion with hard-line factions within various security services, massacres that were often subsequently made to appear as if they were of anarchist or Marxist provenance.<sup>93</sup> Several other cases have also come to light, such as in the 1980s when elements from the secret services and neo-fascist groups in Belgium appear to have initiated a mini-strategy of tension, the so-called Mad Killers of Brabant Wallonia affair.<sup>94</sup>

Generally, three techniques are employed to initiate false flag terrorist operations. The simplest and least effective method is merely to claim publicly, in the wake of a terrorist attack, that someone other than the real perpetrators carried it out. The second method involves creating a bogus radical group, staffed by security personnel or complicit civilian extremists from a rival or opposing milieu, and then using it as a “cover” to launch terrorist attacks. Examples of this technique include the British Army – controlled pseudo – Mau Mau “counter-gangs” that systematically perpetrated terrorist attacks in Kenya, the Portuguese secret police’s establishment of phony “national liberation” movements that engaged in terrorism in Mozambique and elsewhere in Africa, and an Israeli special operations unit, Unit 131, that set off bombs in Cairo and then attributed them to anti-Western Egyptians.<sup>95</sup> The third and most sophisticated method involves surreptitiously placing regime agents inside a bona fide extremist organization and thence inducing it, from within, to carry out terrorist attacks that can then be used as a pretext to discredit or destroy the infiltrated and manipulated group. Examples include the bombing of an Air France office in Lisbon by al-Da’wa al-Masih (The Call of the Messiah), a Libyan-backed terrorist group under the secret direction of a French intelligence officer, and several successful attempts by European neo-fascist militants, in collaboration with various secret services, to infiltrate certain far left groups and use them as a cover to carry out acts of terrorism.<sup>96</sup> If the testimony of former Algerian military and intelligence officers can be believed, the Algerian security forces apparently used all three techniques against the *Jama’at al-Islamiyya al-Muslaha*/Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA: Armed Islamic Group) during the “dirty war” they waged against exceptionally brutal jihadist terrorist organizations.<sup>97</sup>



Returning to the main narrative, the third type of genuine proxy situation develops when certain extremist groups, or factions thereof, gradually lose their ideological purity over time and increasingly begin to act on the basis of vulgar materialistic motives, specifically by hiring themselves out to the highest bidder as contract killers or contract terrorists. This development certainly occurred in the case of the Abu Nidal Organization, with elements of the Nihon Sekigun (Japanese Red Army), and apparently also with various ad hoc groups operating under the command of Carlos the Jackal.<sup>98</sup> Once corrupted ideologically and morally, these types of groups tend to shift their “business” from one state “client” to another, having effectively become mercenaries with no real loyalty to any particular cause or paymaster. Needless to say, in such cases both the “guns for hire” and their employers are using each other instrumentally.

### **Levels of state involvement in terrorism: a new categorization scheme**

One of the reasons why misinformation and disinformation have become so prevalent in discussions concerning the relationships between nation-states and terrorist organizations is because the term “state sponsorship” is itself overly vague. At present, it is often applied casually and imprecisely to completely different levels of state interactions with non-state actors, ranging from providing rhetorical support and encouragement, at one pole, to engaging in hands-on logistical or operational activities, at the other. Indeed, the phrase “state sponsor” in relation to terrorism could conceivably signify virtually any type of interrelationship – however trivial, exploratory, or episodic it may be – which only serves to facilitate its partisan and propagandistic usage. Sadly, most existing attempts to categorize different levels of state involvement in terrorism have failed to capture all of its complex historical manifestations.

For that reason, it is important to present a more granular and sophisticated scheme to distinguish conceptually between varying levels of state involvement in terrorism. The first key distinction that must be made is between *direct state terrorism* and *indirect state terrorism*. Direct state terrorism is terrorism carried out, more or less overtly, by members of the state’s security forces. An example of direct state terrorism would be the terrorist and, indeed, genocidal actions that the Santebal (Keeper of the Peace) secret police or military units of the Khmer Rouge waged against “reactionary” and “counterrevolutionary” segments of the Cambodian population. In contrast, indirect state terrorism is initiated secretly by the security forces in an indirect and deceptive manner by using intermediaries, usually civilian paramilitary groups, to carry out actions on behalf of a state. Those intermediaries can be willing participants, coerced individuals, or manipulated dupes, but whatever the specifics, their employment is normally designed to enable the state to launch especially sensitive or “dirty” operations while maintaining plausible deniability. This conceptual distinction between direct and indirect state terrorism is fundamental,

even though in practice it is sometimes blurred when serving members of the security forces participate undercover in the actions carried out by ostensibly civilian organizations.

However, it is necessary to subdivide the category of indirect state terrorism further to more accurately reflect the different levels of state involvement with, or at the expense of, non-state groups. One can identify at least seven distinct levels of such participation, ranging from the most to the least active forms of engagement:

- 1 State-directed terrorism – elements of the state’s security forces actually guide, supervise, or control the terrorist actions of their intermediaries.
- 2 State-sponsored terrorism – elements of the security forces provide hands-on operational assistance for acts of terrorism carried out by their intermediaries.
- 3 State-supported terrorism – elements of the security forces provide logistical support (training, specialized equipment, weapons, finances, false documents, safe houses, cover), but not operational direction or assistance, to facilitate acts of terrorism carried out by their intermediaries.
- 4 State-manipulated terrorism – elements of the security forces use informants, agents in place, infiltrators, or agents provocateurs to manipulate their intermediaries into carrying out acts of terrorism covertly, without the latter’s knowledge or consent.
- 5 State-encouraged terrorism – elements of the security forces incite their intermediaries to carry out acts of terrorism against mutual enemies.
- 6 State-exploited terrorism – elements of the security forces knowingly attribute terrorist actions to false perpetrators, usually declared enemies, either to protect their intermediaries or to discredit the political opposition.
- 7 State-sanctioned terrorism – elements of the security forces simply ignore or fail to punish acts of terrorism that civilian vigilante groups independently launch against targets that are also perceived to be enemies by the state.

Note, however, that these distinct subcategories are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Elements of a given state’s security forces have often engaged in several of these activities simultaneously.

It should be obvious that devising a more nuanced scheme that better reflects the fluidity, dynamism, and complexity of the actual relations between states and non-state paramilitary groups is preferable to using a single generic phrase – “state sponsorship” – that encompasses all potential levels of state involvement and therefore serves to obfuscate or obliterate vitally important distinctions. It really does matter, after all, if a state is actively helping terrorist groups plan and carry out operations or if it is simply supporting those operations rhetorically. These distinctions are all the more important when one government’s security policies in relation to other states are directly affected by a reference to a generic category whose criteria are so vague and open-ended that they can easily be applied in an imprecise and wholly partisan fashion.

## Conclusion

At this point, it should be clear that the clandestine relationships between components of the security services of various nation-states and extremist groups relying on the operational technique of terrorism do not generally conform to the simplistic notion that the former control the latter or that the latter are simple agents of the former. This concept was severely problematic even during the heyday of the Cold War, and at present it has arguably become increasingly outmoded and even less applicable.

In reality, these types of relationships are best characterized as double-edged swords inasmuch as they have normally been complicated, fluid, deceptive, risky, fractious, troublesome, and potentially dangerous for both parties. After all, the parties involved are usually struggling behind the scenes to exploit and manipulate each other. Terrorist groups are trying to finagle tangible assistance from states while retaining their organizational and operational independence, whereas states are seeking to penetrate, exploit, and use, if not actually control, terrorist groups for their own instrumental purposes. Often the security agencies have the upper hand in clandestine interactions with less powerful extremist groups, especially in their own countries when they covertly “assist” violence-prone radicals.<sup>99</sup> However, when security agencies are sponsoring terrorist organizations operating in more distant regions, the latter are often able to retain considerable autonomy. As such, in practice violent extremists often manage to con regime elements into giving them much-needed resources even as they stubbornly persist in pursuing their own radical, idiosyncratic agendas and goals, which may or may not conform, even in the short term, to the political interests of their state benefactors. Indeed, ideological fanatics of all stripes have sometimes explicitly violated prior agreements by using those state-supplied resources to carry out acts of terrorism that their would-be handlers have not sanctioned and that may well have been directly contrary to their so-called sponsors’ intentions.

In assessing whether a given terrorist group is really an agent, proxy, or surrogate of a given nation-state, which implies that the group has lost some or all of the independence it may have once possessed, the key question is this: is the group now promoting political agendas or attacking particular targets that it would otherwise not have promoted or attacked if it were not receiving support of some type from a state? If the answer to this question is yes, then those terms may be at least partially applicable. However, if the group has not changed its overall objectives or its targeting priorities and if it is essentially still operating as it had previously and would presumably have kept doing so in the absence of state support, labeling the group as a proxy makes little sense. A subsidiary question that should be asked is this: is a given terrorist group now employing weapons or operational techniques that it would not otherwise have adopted had it not been receiving support of some type from a state? In this case, even if the group was using new weapons or techniques provided by a given state, it would be more accurate to characterize that group as the “beneficiary of state aid” rather than

as an actual proxy of that state – unless, of course, in exchange for that aid, the group also shifted its objectives or targeting priorities to conform to those of its alleged sponsor.

In short, it is necessary to devise new policies that more accurately reflect the real, ever-shifting nature of the interactions between states and terrorist groups. After all, implementing security policies that are based on misperceptions or false allegations of state sponsorship only inhibits the U.S. government’s ability to confront “really existing” terrorism and is liable to unnecessarily increase friction between the United States and designated terrorist sponsors. One possible step in this process would be to eliminate the blatantly partisan official list of state sponsors of terrorism, as it is unlikely that the vague criteria used to determine a state’s inclusion on the list will ever be applied impartially – that is, applied to U.S. enemies and allies alike.<sup>100</sup> This action will hopefully make it more difficult in the future for vested political interests, both inside and outside of the government, to make bogus charges concerning state sponsorship of terrorism or to characterize terrorist groups falsely as the simple proxies of states. A second crucial step, however, would be to adopt a more nuanced, precise, and accurate conception that better reflects the multiple varieties and levels of state involvement in terrorism. It is crucially important to de-polemize the entire subject of state sponsorship so that the real underlying phenomena – widespread but usually only semi-effective state efforts to manipulate and exploit terrorists – can be confronted in more effective ways and ultimately countered.

At the same time, it is even more necessary to recognize that the state-centric paradigm concerning terrorism is itself problematic, although admittedly not yet completely obsolete. The real terrorist threat to the world’s security in the twenty-first century will likely emanate less from the clients of “rogue” states and more from a motley, disparate array of non-state entities: left- and right-wing political radicals, religious extremists – including Islamist jihadists, Christian militias in the United States, Jewish fundamentalists in Israel, Hindu nationalists, and apocalyptic millenarian cult-type groups like Aum Supreme Truth – eco-radicals, ethnic gangs, drug cartels, and organized criminal groups. Most of these groups will be operating independently of *de facto* state authority or control.<sup>101</sup> Under these circumstances, the ideologies and objectives of such nongovernmental and often anti-state groups need to be much better understood.

If, however, Western governments persist in maintaining the illusion that jihadist terrorist networks are essentially functioning as the surrogates of certain hostile enemy regimes, they will naturally conclude that the solution to winning the war on terrorism is simply to overthrow those alleged terror masters. Alas, this view not only represents an egregious distortion of the real situation, especially in relation to Sunni jihadist groups with a global agenda, but one that has already encouraged the adoption of counterproductive policies and the initiation of ill-advised military interventions that have significantly damaged the interests and international stature of the United States and its allies.

## Notes

- 1 Reprinted with permission from “Terrorists as State ‘Proxies’: Separating Fact from Fiction” [from Michael A. Innes, ed., *Making Sense of Proxy Wars: States, Surrogates, and the Use of Force* (Washington, DC: Potomac, 2012), pp. 1–29, 153–67]
- 2 “Woolsey: Iran and State-Sponsored Terrorism,” Voice of America editorial, April 29, 1993, available at [www.globalsecurity.org/intell/library/news/1993/14191772-14194893.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/library/news/1993/14191772-14194893.htm). Woolsey was then director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Since his retirement he has suggested that Iraq may have sponsored both the 1993 World Trade Center attacks and the *Bacillus anthracis* letter mailings in the United States.
- 3 Quoted from Michael A. Ledeen, *The War against the Terror Masters: Why It Happened, Where We Are Now, How We’ll Win* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2002), p. 9. On the same page, he identifies the post-Soviet “terror masters” as the “radical regimes of Iran, [Saddam Husayn’s] Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Syria, and Sudan.” Other conservatives have also adopted the cartoonish phrase “terror masters.” See Kenneth R. Timmerman, *Countdown to Crisis: The Coming Nuclear Showdown with Iran* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006), p. 242.
- 4 Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), p. 263.
- 5 Martin van Creveld, “In Wake of Terrorism, Modern Armies Prove to Be Dinosaurs of Defense,” *New Perspectives Quarterly* 13:4 (Fall 1996), p. 58.
- 6 Quoted from Ghada Hashem Talhami, “Muslims, Islamists, and the Cold War,” in *Grand Strategy in the War against Terrorism*, ed. Thomas R. Mockaitis and Paul B. Rich (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 114. Compare Stephen Segaller, *Invisible Armies: Terrorism into the 1990s* (London: Sphere Books, 1987), p. 154. Although I agree with Talhami’s view that non-state terrorism would still constitute a significant security problem in the absence of state sponsorship, I do not subscribe to her argument (on the same page) that it is necessarily an “outgrowth of the perceptions and actions of disadvantaged communities,” which, under pressure, “resort to violence against groups that oppose and oppress them.” By “terrorism” I am referring to the use or threatened use of violence, directed against victims selected for their symbolic or representative value, as a means of instilling anxiety in, transmitting one or more messages to, and thereby manipulating the perceptions and behavior of wider target audiences. Since terrorism is therefore nothing more than a violent technique of psychological manipulation, there is no reason to suppose that one has to be “disadvantaged” to employ it. Note, also, in the interests of terminological precision, that the term “terror” refers to a psychological state marked by fear and anxiety and must therefore be distinguished from “terrorism.” There is no such thing as a “terror network,” only a “terrorist network.”
- 7 For another recent attempt to categorize different types and levels of state support for terrorism, see Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Chapters 1–3.
- 8 For a recent criticism of realist-oriented IR theories on this basis, see Scott M. Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 55–6. Thomas rightly notes (see p. 56) that “the impact of non-state actors, including the role of religious actors, is marginalized from the core of this approach to international relations.”
- 9 Unfortunately, many self-styled “terrorism experts” have themselves never seriously studied extremist milieus and terrorist organizations, since they have typically failed to carry out in-depth research on these topics and have not systematically and comprehensively examined the available primary sources. See, e.g., the critical judgments leveled by Andrew Silke, “An Introduction to Terrorism Research,” in *Research on Terrorism: Trends, Achievements and Failures*, ed. Andrew Silke (London: Frank Cass, 2004), pp. 9–12; and John Horgan, “The Case for Firsthand Research,” in *ibid.*, p. 30. I made similarly harsh criticisms of both the lax scholarship and the political biases in the terrorism field back in the early 1990s. See Jeffrey M. Bale, “The ‘Black’ Terrorist International: Neo-Fascist

- Paramilitary Networks and the ‘Strategy of Tension’ in Italy, 1968–1974” (PhD dissertation: University of California, Berkeley, 1994), pp. 26–33. Sadly, these long-standing shortcomings in the field have become even more pronounced in the wake of the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001.
- 10 Indeed, most governments have formulated official definitions of terrorism that intentionally restrict the term to the violent actions carried out by non-state actors, thereby trying to make it impossible for others to label or characterize their governments as terrorists. In short, they have simultaneously sought to exclude their own regimes from the category of terrorism, by definitional fiat, while also frequently accusing rival states of sponsoring terrorism. On the basis of this inconsistent and indeed contradictory conceptual logic, states can apparently never be terrorists themselves, but only sponsors of terrorism carried out by non-state entities. For the state-centric biases inherent in what he labels “orthodox terrorism theory,” see Jason Franks, *Rethinking the Roots of Terrorism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), especially p. 46.
  - 11 For the Cold War era, see especially Edward Herman and Gerry O’Sullivan, *The “Terrorism” Industry: The Experts and Institutions That Shape Our View of Terror* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989); Alexander George, “The Discipline of Terrorology,” in *Western State Terrorism*, ed. Alexander George (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 76–101; and Philip Paull, “International Terrorism: The Propaganda War” (master’s thesis, San Francisco State University, 1982), pp. 59–94. For the post-9/11 era, see John Mueller, *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them* (New York: Free Press, 2006), pp. 6–7, 33–47; George Kas-simeris, “The Terrorism Industry: The Profits of Doom,” in *Playing Politics with Terrorism: A User’s Guide*, ed. George Kassimeris (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 301–20; Sam Raphael, “In the Service of Power: Terrorism Studies and U.S. Intervention in the Global South,” in *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda*, ed. Richard Jackson, Marie Breen Smyth, and Jeroen Gunning (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 49–65; David Miller and Tom Mills, *The Politics of Terrorism Expertise: Knowledge, Power and the Media* (New York: Routledge, 2011); and Maximilian Forte, “Minerva and the Terrorism Industry: ‘The Rule of Experts as a Means to Covert Imperial Rule’,” *Zero Anthropology*, October 24, 2008, posted by academicians critical of prospective collaboration between scholars and military funders, available at <http://openanthropology.wordpress.com/2008/10/24/minerva-and-the-terrorism-industry-the-rule-of-experts-as-a-means-to-covert-imperial-rule/>. Note, however, that Mueller defines the term “terrorism industry” more broadly than Herman and O’Sullivan originally did and ascribes material rather than ideological motives to it. Likewise, Ian S. Lustick has emphasized that many different types of interest groups have sought to exploit the war on terrorism for their own political or financial purposes. See his *Trapped in the War on Terror* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), Chapter 5.
  - 12 See, e.g., Noam Chomsky, *Pirates and Emperors: International Terrorism in the Real World* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2002); Noam Chomsky, 9–11 (New York: Open Media/Seven Stories Press, 2001); Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism*, vol. 1, *The Political Economy of Human Rights* (Boston: South End Press, 1999), especially Chapters 3–4; Edward S. Herman, *The Real Terror Network: Terrorism in Fact and Propaganda* (Boston: South End Press, 1982); George, *Western State Terrorism*; and Frederick H. Gareau, *State Terrorism and the United States: From Counterinsurgency to the War on Terrorism* (Atlanta: Clarity Press, 2004), Chapters 1–7. Similar sorts of anti-establishment, left-wing perspectives have recently made a resurgence in the form of “critical terrorism studies,” as reflected in Jackson, Smyth, and Gunning, *Critical Terrorism Studies*; and the journal *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, which Jackson edits. The blatant anti-state and anti-Western biases of this new current are well illustrated in Scott Poynting and David Whyte, eds., *Counter-Terrorism and State Political Violence: The “War on Terror” as Terror* (New York: Routledge, 2012).
  - 13 Chomsky and Herman, *Washington Connection and Third World Fascism*, pp. 6–7, 85–95. Elsewhere, Herman contrasts what he calls “lesser” (insurgent non-state) and “mythical”

- (Soviet-backed) terrorist networks with retail right-wing terrorism and especially with U.S. sponsorship of national security states that rely on wholesale terrorism. See Herman, *Real Terror Network*, pp. 47–82, 110–37.
- 14 Other left-leaning critics of the official line on terrorism have instead adopted different arguments: that the threat of terrorism is minor or inconsequential, that there is no non-state or state-sponsored Islamic terrorist threat, and that the official Western discourses about terrorism since 9/11 are essentially false. See, e.g., Mueller, *Overblown*; Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells, eds., *The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Richard Jackson, *Writing the War on Terrorism: Language, Politics and Counter-Terrorism* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2005), especially Chapter 4; and Adam Hodges and Chad Nilep, eds., *Discourse, War and Terrorism* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2007). However, it is one thing to say that governments or other political interests have oftentimes exaggerated and instrumentally exploited the terrorist threat, which is perfectly true, and another thing altogether to insist that there is no significant terrorist threat, a claim that is manifestly absurd during an era in which terrorists kill dozens or more people in various parts of the world every single month. For a generally less partisan treatment of the political exploitation of terrorism in different countries, see Kassimeris, *Playing Politics with Terrorism*.
  - 15 Bale, “‘Black’ Terrorist International,” pp. 28–31.
  - 16 Roberta Goren, *The Soviet Union and Terrorism* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1984), p. 6.
  - 17 Ray S. Cline and Yonah Alexander, *Terrorism as State-Sponsored Covert Warfare* (Fairfax, VA: Hero Books, 1986), p. 32. Cf. the state-centric definition of “international terrorism” by Israeli hard-liner Benjamin Netanyahu: “the use of terrorist violence against a given nation by another state, which uses the terrorists to fight a proxy war as an alternative to conventional war.” See his *Fighting Terrorism: How Democracies Can Defeat the International Terrorist Network* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), p. 52 (italics in original). Note that Cline was a high-ranking CIA officer and former station chief in Taiwan, where some have suggested that he personally played a covert role in the creation of the World Anti-Communist League, an international private network that eventually encompassed many right-wing terrorist groups. See Scott Anderson and Jon Lee Anderson, *Inside the League: The Shocking Exposé of How Terrorists, Nazis and Latin American Death Squads Have Infiltrated the World Anti-Communist League* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1986), pp. 55–6.
  - 18 For a recent overview, see Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Former East German spy chief Markus Wolf himself emphasized that “many of these unholy alliances” between the two superpowers and repressive regimes and violent non-state groups in the third world were “the tragic product of the Cold War.” See his memoir *Man without a Face: The Autobiography of Communism’s Greatest Spymaster*, with Anne McElvoy (New York: Times Books, 1997), p. 249.
  - 19 An even more simplistic and ludicrous notion peddled in some extreme right circles was that all the world’s terrorist groups were ideologically left wing. See, e.g., Robert D. Chapman and M. Lester Chapman, *The Crimson Web of Terror* (Boulder, CO: Paladin Press, 1980), p. 99, who argued that terrorists everywhere are “very much alike,” including being “Marxist-Leninist.” No doubt that last assertion will come as a great surprise to victims of right-wing paramilitary squads and violent jihadists in various parts of the world.
  - 20 This sort of literature is voluminous. See, e.g., Stefan T. Possony and L. Francis Bouchev, *International Terrorism: The Communist Connection* (Washington, DC: American Council for World Freedom, 1978), pp. 21–40; Robert Moss, “Terrorism: A Soviet Export,” *New York Times Magazine* (November 2, 1980), pp. 42–58; Samuel T. Francis, *The Soviet Strategy of Terror* (Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation, 1981), especially pp. 5–25; Claire Sterling, *The Terror Network: The Secret War of International Terrorism* (New York: Berkeley Books, 1982); Edouard Sablier, *Le fil rouge: Histoire secrète du terrorisme international* (Paris: Plon, 1983); Goren, *The Soviet Union and Terrorism*; Ray S. Cline and Yonah Alexander,



- Terrorism: The Soviet Connection* (New York: Crane Russak, 1984); Jillian Becker, *The Soviet Connection: State Sponsorship of Terrorism* (London: Institute for European Defense and Strategic Studies, 1985); and Michael Ledeen, "Soviet Sponsorship: The Will to Disbelieve," in *Terrorism: How the West Can Win*, ed. Benjamin Netanyahu (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986), pp. 88–92.
- 21 Cited by Sterling, *Terror Network*, p. 286. This claim was made at a 1979 conference held in Jerusalem under the auspices of the Jonathan Institute, which others have identified as an important institutional component in the terrorism industry. See Paull, "International Terrorism," pp. 8–31; and Herman and O'Sullivan, "Terrorism" Industry, pp. 104–6.
  - 22 Cline and Alexander, *Terrorism: The Soviet Connection*, pp. 55–60.
  - 23 Sterling, *Terror Network*, p. 16. The absurdity of this all-encompassing blanket statement should be self-evident. To be fair, to preserve their own credibility, these authors sometimes expressed caveats about whether the Soviets were centrally directing international terrorism. See *ibid.*, pp. 291–2; Possony and Bouchev, *International Terrorism*, p. 1; and Francis, *Soviet Strategy of Terror*, p. 40. Yet they nonetheless made every effort to create that very impression.
  - 24 For the non-European state sponsors of terrorism linked to the Soviets, see, e.g., Roger Fontaine, *Terrorism: The Cuban Connection* (New York: Crane Russak, 1988); Joseph S. Bermudez, *Terrorism: The North Korean Connection* (New York: Crane Russak, 1990); and Uri Ra'anani et al., eds., *Hydra of Carnage: The International Linkages of Terrorism and Other Low-Intensity Operations: The Witnesses Speak* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1986).
  - 25 For the so-called KGB-Bulgarian connection to the 1980 papal assassination plot, see Ray S. Cline, "Soviet Footprints in Saint Peter's Square," *Terrorism* 7:1 (1984): 53–5; Claire Sterling, *The Time of the Assassins: Anatomy of an Investigation* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1985); and Paul Henze, *The Plot to Kill the Pope* (New York: Scribner's, 1985). Henze was formerly a CIA station chief in Turkey. For substantive critiques of this thesis, see William Hood, "Unlikely Conspiracy," *Problems of Communism* 33 (March–April 1984): 67–70; Edward S. Herman and Frank Brodhead, *The Rise and Fall of the Bulgarian Connection* (New York: Sheridan Square, 1986); and Jeffrey M. Bale, "The Ultrationalist Right in Turkey and the Attempted Assassination of Pope John Paul II," *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 15:1 (March 1991): 1–63.
  - 26 Among the most unreliable of those oft-cited defectors, at least with respect to terrorism, are former Czech intelligence officer Jan Šejna and former Romanian intelligence officer Ion Mihai Pacepa. See, e.g., Jan Šejna, *We Will Bury You* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1985); and Ion Mihai Pacepa, *Programmed to Kill: Lee Harvey Oswald, the Soviet KGB, and the Kennedy Assassination* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2007).
  - 27 See, e.g., Harry Rositzke, "If There Were No KGB, Would the Scale and Intensity of Terrorism Be Diminished?," *New York Times* (July 20, 1981), p. A17 (a question to which he responded in the negative); Brian Jenkins, "World Terrorism: The Truth and Nothing but the Truth," *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (May 24, 1981); Richard E. Rubenstein, *Alchemists of Revolution: Terrorism in the Modern World* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), pp. 51–9; Segaller, *Invisible Armies*, pp. 124–48; and Grant Wardlaw, *Political Terrorism: Theory, Tactics, and Counter-Measures*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 55–7, 175–86.
  - 28 See, e.g., Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).
  - 29 For examples of this type of Soviet and communist propaganda, see Boris Svetov et al., *International Terrorism and the CIA: Documents, Eyewitness Reports, Facts* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1983); and Vitaly Chernyavsky, *The CIA in the Dock: Soviet Journalists on International Terrorism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1983).
  - 30 See Soviet propagandist Valentin K. Mashkin, *Operación Cóndor: Su rastro sangriento* (Buenos Aires: Cartago, 1985), pp. 15–22 *passim*. Cf. Stella Calloni, *Los años del lobo: Operación Cóndor* (Buenos Aires: Continente, 1999), p. 17. It is also one of several theories mentioned by Gerardo Irusta Medrano, *Espionaje y servicios secretos en Bolivia, 1930–1980: "Operación Cóndor" en acción* (La Paz: self-published, 1995), pp. 279–88. It is now



clear, however, that the Chilean secret service first proposed this scheme in early 1974. Although U.S. intelligence agencies apparently facilitated the development of some of its precursors, provided those services with advanced communications equipment, soon became aware of Condor itself, and sometimes appear to have supported its activities tacitly, there is no clear evidence as yet that they actually instigated them. For more, cf. J. Patrice McSherry, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), pp. 53–8, 78–83, who arguably attributes too much influence to the CIA and the U.S. Defense Department; and Mark J. Osiel, "Constructing Subversion in Argentina's Dirty War," *Representations* 75:1 (August 2001), pp. 119–58, who rightly gives due weight to the indigenous sources of Southern Cone countersubversion and state terrorism, such as the Catholic integralist ideologies associated with groups such as Tacuara and the military's so-called Doctrine of National Security. For more, see Daniel Gutman, *Tacuara: Historia de la primera guerrilla urbana argentina* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones B, 2003); and José Comblin, "The National Security Doctrine," in *The Repressive State: The Brazilian "National Security Doctrine" and Latin America*, ed. Jean-Louis Weil, Joseph Comblin, and Judge Senese (Toronto: Brazilian Studies, 1978).

- 31 See, e.g., Viktor V. Vitiuk, *Leftist Terrorism*, trans. Andrei Zur and Galina Glagoleva (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985), pp. 196–211. Note that Vitiuk was one of the more sophisticated and intelligent of the Soviet propagandists who wrote on the subject of terrorism.
- 32 See Iona Andronov, *On the Wolf's Track* (Sofia, Bulgaria: Sofia Press, 1983); Iona Andronov, *The Triple Plot* (Sofia: Sofia Press, 1984); Eduard Kovalev and Igor Sedykh, "Bulgarian Connection": *CIA & Co. on the Outcome of the Antonov Trial* (Moscow: Novosti, 1986); and Ivan Palchev, *The Assassination Attempt against the Pope and the Roots of Terrorism* (Sofia: Sofia Press, 1985).
- 33 See, in general, Michael McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Counter-Terrorism, 1940–1990* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992); and Cecilia Menjivar and Néstor Rodríguez, eds., *When States Kill: Latin America, the U.S., and Technologies of Terror* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).
- 34 The literature on these topics is large and often polemical. For the baleful role of U.S. security agencies in Salvadoran and Guatemalan state terrorism, see Michael McClintock, *The American Connection*, vol. 1, *State Terror and Popular Resistance in El Salvador* (London: Zed Books, 1985); and Michael McClintock, *The American Connection*, vol. 2, *State Terror and Popular Resistance in Guatemala* (London: Zed Books, 1985). More generally, see Lesley Gill, *The School of the Americas: Military Training and Political Violence in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004). For the antidemocratic activities of various "stay-behind" networks in postwar Europe, see the analysis of the European literature by Daniele Ganser, *NATO's Secret Armies: Operation Gladio and Terrorism in Western Europe* (London: Frank Cass, 2005). For U.S. support for diverse anticommunist insurgents who relied heavily on terrorism, cf. Christopher Simpson, *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis and Its Effects on the Cold War* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988); Jeffrey Burds, *The Early Cold War in Soviet West Ukraine, 1944–1948* (Pittsburgh: Center for Russian and European Studies, University of Pittsburgh, 2001); Maj. D. H. Berger, "The Use of Covert Paramilitary Activity as a Policy Tool: An Analysis of the Operations Conducted by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 1949–1951" (unpublished thesis, Marine Corps Staff and Command College, Decatur, Georgia, 1995); Anderson and Anderson, *Inside the League*; Don Bohning, *The Castro Obsession: U.S. Covert Operations in Cuba, 1959–1965* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2006); Warren Hinckle and William W. Turner, *The Fish Is Red: The Story of the Secret War against Castro* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981); Sam Dillon, *Commandos: The CIA and Nicaragua's Contra Rebels* (New York: Henry Holt, 1991); Glenn Garvin, *Everybody Had His Own Gringo: The CIA and the Contras* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, Inc., 1992); Jonathan Marshall, Peter Dale Scott, and Jane Hunter, *The Iran-Contra Connection: Secret Teams and Covert Operations in the Reagan Era* (Boston: South End Press, 1987).

- 35 To cite only two examples, one may note the eye-opening information about covert state-sponsored terrorism found in the archives of the Portuguese secret police and the Paraguayan security forces following the collapse, respectively, of the dictatorial Caetano and Stroessner regimes. See Frédéric Laurent, *L'orchestre noir* (Paris: Stock, 1978), pp. 117–65; and Fabrizio Calvi and Frédéric Laurent, *Piazza Fontana: La verità su una strage* (Milan: Mondadori, 1997), pp. 60–81, for the former; and Alfredo Boccia Paz, Myrian Angélica González, and Rosa Palau Aguilar, *Es mi informe: Los archivos secretos de la Policía de Stroessner* (Asunción: Centro de Documentación y Estudios, 1994); and Gladys Meilinger de Sannemann, *Paraguay y la "Operación Cóndor en los Archivos del Terror"* (Asunción: no publisher, 1994), for the latter. Similarly, information from the East German and Iraqi archives, as will become clear in the following notes, has also shed much more light on covert secret service activities related to terrorism.
- 36 Indeed, some proponents of this notion, such as Ledeen, had earlier been promoters of the "Soviet terror network" thesis. Two other neoconservatives who exerted a significant influence on the Bush administration's post-9/11 counterterrorism policies, Douglas Feith and David Wurmser, had both previously contributed to Ra'anán et al., *Hydra of Carnage*.
- 37 Ledeen, *War against the Terror Masters*, 45.
- 38 Wurmser's remarks are cited in Barton Gellman, *Angler: The Cheney Vice Presidency* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), pp. 224–5.
- 39 See Ledeen, *War against the Terror Masters*, especially pp. 9–28, 45–52; and David Frum and Richard Perle, *An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror* (New York: Random House, 2003), especially Chapter 3. They remained convinced, e.g., that "a bunch of ragtag terrorists in Afghanistan" could not have carried out the 9/11 attacks without a state sponsor. See Michael Isikoff and David Corn, *Hubris: The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2007), p. 108.
- 40 See, e.g., Ronen Bergman, *The Secret War with Iran: The 30-Year Clandestine Struggle against the World's Most Dangerous Terrorist Power*, trans. Ronnie Hope (New York: Free Press, 2008), especially part 3; Doron Zimmermann, *Tangled Skein or Gordian Knot? Iran and Syria as State Supporters of Political Violence Movements in Lebanon and in the Palestinian Territories* (Zurich: ETH Zürich, 2004), pp. 7, 15–22, 71–111; Matthew Levitt, *Targeting Terror: U.S. Policy toward Middle Eastern State Sponsors and Terrorist Organizations, Post-September 11* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2002), Chapters 6–7; Con Coughlin, *Saddam: King of Terror* (New York: Ecco, 2002), Chapter 6; and Stephen F. Hayes, *The Connection: How al Qaeda's Collaboration with Saddam Hussein Has Endangered America* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004).
- 41 Laurent Murawiec, *Princes of Darkness: The Saudi Assault on the West* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005); Steven Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam: Saudi Fundamentalism and Its Role in Terrorism* (New York: Knopf, 2003); and Arnaud de Borchgrave, "Pakistan's Terror Inc.," *Washington Times* (January 14, 2008).
- 42 See, e.g., Robert Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005); John Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America, and International Terrorism* (London: Pluto Press, 2002); and Peter Dale Scott, *The Road to 9/11: Wealth, Empire, and the Future of America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), Chapters 7–10.
- 43 See, e.g., Richard Labévière, *Dollars for Terror: The United States and Islam*, trans. Martin DeMers (New York: Algora Publishing, 2000); Alexandre del Valle, *Islamisme et États-Unis: Une alliance contre l'Europe* (Lausanne: L'Âge d'Homme, 1999); Jürgen Elsässer, *Wie der Dschihad nach Europa kam: Gotteskrieger und Geheimdienste auf dem Balkan* (Berlin: Homilius, 2008); and Maloy Krishna Dhar, *Fulcrum of Evil: ISI-CIA-Al Qaeda Nexus* (New Delhi: Manas, 2006).
- 44 This is certainly the implication in German conspiracy theorist Elsässer's remarks. See Silvia Cattori, "Jürgen Elsässer: 'The CIA Recruited and Trained the Jihadists'," Réseau Voltaire website, August 14, 2006, available at [www.voltairenet.org/article143050.html](http://www.voltairenet.org/article143050.html).

- 45 To put it another way, a state would have to find suitable non-state puppets if it hoped to function as their puppet master.
- 46 For illustrative examples from diverse extremist milieus, cf. Jeffrey M. Bale, “‘National Revolutionary’ Groupuscules and the Resurgence of ‘Left-Wing’ Fascism: The Case of France’s Nouvelle Résistance,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 36:3 (July 2002), pp. 24–49; Goldie Shabad and Francisco José Lleras Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” in *Terrorism in Context*, ed. Martha Crenshaw (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1995), pp. 402–69; and Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- 47 Note, e.g., that many leading scholars have characterized even the structure of the totalitarian Nazi regime as polycentric. See Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State: The Foundation and Development of the Internal Structure of the Third Reich* (London: Longman, 1981), conclusion.
- 48 For examples of just how convoluted this situation can be, see Bale, “‘Black’ Terrorist International,” Chapters 2–3.
- 49 Cf. Byman, *Deadly Connections*, p. 14.
- 50 Indeed, Alex P. Schmid and Albert J. Jongman refer to such notions as “conspiracy theories of terrorism” in their classic work *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories, and Literature*, rev. ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 2004), pp. 101–8. However, the authors make no effort therein to distinguish between conspiracy theories proper and real-world covert and clandestine politics. For that discussion, see Jeffrey M. Bale, “Political Paranoia v. Political Realism: On Distinguishing between Bogus Conspiracy Theories and Genuine Conspiratorial Politics,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 41:1 (2007), pp. 45–60.
- 51 Bale, “Political Paranoia v. Political Realism,” p. 58.
- 52 For the view that extremism is a distinct phenomenon with recognizable characteristics, cf. John George and Laird Wilcox, *American Extremists: Militias, Supremacists, Klansmen, Communists, and Others* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1996), pp. 54–62; Gian Mario Bravo, *L’estremismo in Italia* (Rome: Riuniti, 1982), pp. 7–18; Neil J. Smelser, *The Faces of Terrorism: Social and Psychological Dimensions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), especially pp. 58–80; and Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (New York: Perennial, 2002), though “true believers” are even more common within sectarian vanguard parties than the mass movements they aspire to lead. Cf. also Maxwell Taylor, *The Fanatics: A Behavioural Approach to Political Violence* (London: Brassey’s, 1991), especially Chapter 2, wherein “ten features of fanaticism” are listed that are analogous to several of the characteristics associated with extremism.
- 53 See, e.g., Daniel Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), pp. 23–40. In their opinion, “states are primarily motivated [to support insurgencies] by geopolitics rather than ideology, ethnic affinity, or religious sentiment.”
- 54 Karl-Wilhelm Fricke, *Mfs intern: Macht, Strukturen, Auflösung der DDR-Staatssicherheit. Analyse und Dokumentation* (Cologne: Wissenschaft und Politik, 1991), p. 57; and Tobias Wunschik, *Baader-Meinhofs Kinder: Die zweite Generation der RAF* (Opladen, Germany: Westdeutscher, 1997), pp. 389–93.
- 55 Wunschik, *Baader-Meinhofs Kinder*, pp. 393–95; Butz Peters, *Tödlicher Irrtum: Die Geschichte der RAF* (Berlin: Argon, 2004), pp. 539–53, 556–76; and Michael Müller and Andreas Kanonenberg, *Die RAF-STASI Connection* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1992), pp. 67–103, 140–71, 208–18. For the general activities and organization of Hauptabteilung XXII, see Tobias Wunschik, *Die Hauptabteilung XXII: “Terrorabwehr”* (Berlin: Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik [BstU], 1996); and Roland Wiedmann, *Die Organisationsstruktur des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit 1989* (Berlin: BstU, 1995), pp. 264–77.
- 56 Peters, *Tödlicher Irrtum*, pp. 578–80; Müller and Kanonenberg, *RAF-STASI Connection*, pp. 171–89; Wunschik, *Baader-Meinhofs Kinder*, pp. 396–7; and John Koehler, *STASI: The Untold Story of the East German Secret Police* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999),

- pp. 387–401. Some have argued that MfS chief Erich Mielke may have fantasized that, in the event of an armed conflict between West and East Germany, some RAF terrorists could have been mobilized to serve as auxiliaries for the Nationale Volksarmee's professional "partisan units" from the Arbeitsgruppe des Ministers/Sonderfragen (AGM/S, Minister's Working Group/Special Questions).
- 57 Koehler, *STASI*, pp. 359–86. However, apparently neither the Soviets nor the East Germans trusted Carlos, who they claim to have regarded as an unreliable and decadent adventurer, narcissist, and troublemaker. The MfS kept him under constant surveillance, fearing that he might engage in actions harmful to East Germany.
  - 58 Cf. Peter Siebenmorgen, "Staatssicherheit" der DDR: Der Westen im Fadenkreuz der Stasi (Bonn: Bouvier, 1993), pp. 225–35; Wunschik, *Baader-Meinhofs Kinder*, pp. 390–3, 398–401; Wunschik, *Hauptabteilung XXII*, pp. 44–5; Peters, *Tödlicher Irrtum*, 576–7; John C. Schmeidel, *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 154, 156. Some have even suggested that the MfS secretly alerted the West German authorities about the location of the RAF's arms depot outside Frankfurt, where information was discovered that soon led to the arrest of virtually the entire "second generation." See Schmeidel, *Stasi*, 159.
  - 59 In Wunschik's opinion, e.g., the "unholy cooperation" between the MfS and the RAF had little actual impact or significance. See *Baader-Meinhofs Kinder*, p. 402. One caveat should nonetheless be made. The federal German commission responsible for handling the MfS archives has sealed vast quantities of former MfS records presumably because much embarrassing information could be found therein, not only about the Stasi, but also about the covert activities of the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND: Federal Intelligence Service) and other Western secret services. Hence it likewise remains possible that much more evidence exists of MfS involvement in terrorism than is now in the public domain.
  - 60 Jillian Becker, preface to Goren, *Soviet Union and Terrorism*, p. ix. Cline and Alexander refer to the PLO, with more justification, as the "transmission belt" for disseminating Soviet funds, weapons, and training to other terrorist groups. See *Terrorism: The Soviet Connection*, pp. 31–54. Cf. Yonah Alexander and Joshua Sinai, *Terrorism: The PLO Connection* (New York: Crane Russak, 1989), pp. 186–91.
  - 61 Goren, *Soviet Union and Terrorism*, p. ix.
  - 62 Galia Golan, *The Soviet Union and the Palestine Liberation Organization: An Uneasy Alliance* (New York: Praeger, 1980), p. 250.
  - 63 For the structural complexity, factional infighting, bitter personal rivalries, and underlying processes of organizational fission and fusion that have always characterized the PLO, see the detailed accounts in John W. Amos II, *Palestinian Resistance: Organization of a Nationalist Movement* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980), Chapters 3–6; Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949–1993* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), passim; and Helena Cobban, *The Palestine Liberation Organization: People, Power and Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984), parts 1–2.
  - 64 Cobban, *The Palestine Liberation Organization*, Chapters 9–10; and James Adams, *The Financing of Terror: How the Groups That Are Terrorizing the World Get the Money to Do It* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986), pp. 39–43. Hence, one can only wonder which, if any, of these multiple paymasters constituted the PLO's real "terror master."
  - 65 Adams, *Financing of Terror*, Chapters 4–5; and Loretta Napoleoni, *Terror Incorporated: Tracing the Dollars behind the Terror Networks* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005), Chapter 3.
  - 66 For their "uneasy alliance," see Adams, *Financing of Terror*, pp. 43–9; Golan, *Soviet Union and the Palestine Liberation Organization*, passim; Roland Dannreuther, *The Soviet Union and the PLO* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998); and Cobban, *Palestine Liberation Organization*, pp. 221–8. The Mitrokhin documents confirm that neither the Soviet leadership nor the KGB trusted 'Arafat, in part because he was a manipulator who distorted information and stubbornly maintained good relations with both "reactionary

- Arab regimes” and the communist dictator of Romania, Nicolae Ceaușescu, whom the Soviets also did not trust. See Andrew and Mitrokhin, *World Was Going Our Way*, p. 251.
- 67 Golan, *Soviet Union and the Palestine Liberation Organization*, p. 211.
- 68 See, e.g., Bard O’Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine: A Political-Military Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press/National Defense University, 1978), pp. 197–8.
- 69 Andrew and Mitrokhin, *World Was Going Our Way*, pp. 246–50, 252–5. The KGB had one other agent in the PFLP, Ahmad Mahmud Samman. Both Haddad and Samman died in 1978, after which the KGB was unable to recruit suitable replacements.
- 70 Although much of the literature on Iran’s sponsorship of terrorism is also partisan and tendentious, more than enough reliable evidence exists to justify labeling Iran as a state supporter of terrorist groups.
- 71 The most detailed journalistic efforts to argue for an Iraqi regime – al-Qa’ida link are those of Hayes, *The Connection*; and Ray Robison, *Both in One Trench: Saddam’s Secret Terror Documents* (Charleston, SC: BookSurge, 2007). Unfortunately, their analyses of the available intelligence information is overly alarmist and partisan, and many of the specific claims they refer to as evidence were derived from unreliable sources or subsequently disconfirmed. Interestingly, however, captured Iraqi documents reveal not only that Saddam Husayn’s intelligence services provided funds, suicide belts, and other materials to Palestinian rejectionist groups but also that around the time of the Gulf War they established links to Islamist parties in Pakistan (the Jami’yyat ‘Ulama-i Islami [Assembly of Islamic Scholars]) as well as to actual jihadist groups in Jordan (the Palestinian Jama’at al-Tajdid wa al-Jihad [Renewal and Jihad Organization]), Egypt (the Tanzim al-Jihad al-Islami [Islamic Jihad Organization] and the Jama’a al-Islamiyya [Islamic Group]), and Afghanistan (Gulbuddin Hekmatyar’s Hizb-i Islami [Islamic Party]). See Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA), Joint Advanced Warfighting Program, *Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights from Captured Iraqi Documents, Volume 1 (Redacted)*, Iraqi Perspectives Project (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analysis, 2007), pp. 13–21. In the last two cases, the goal was apparently to find local allies who could make trouble for Iran or for Muslim countries that joined the Gulf War Coalition.
- 72 The most convenient summary of the evidence concerning purported al-Qa’ida links to Saddam Husayn’s regime can be found in Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI), S. Rep. 109–331, at 60–112 (2006). For the reported meetings between Iraqi regime and al-Qa’ida representatives, see 70–73.
- 73 Ibid., pp. 73–4.
- 74 Ibid., pp. 85–6, 89.
- 75 Ibid., pp. 86–8.
- 76 Ibid., pp. 88–94. Here the key figure was Iraqi intelligence operative and Ansar subleader Abu Wa’il, who functioned either as an inside informant, a liaison between the regime and the Ansar group, an Islamist double agent, or a secret operative and possible provocateur for the Iraqi regime.
- 77 Cf. Laurie Mylroie, *The War against America: Saddam Hussein and the World Trade Center Attacks: A Study of Revenge* (New York: Harper, 2001), which argues that Saddam Husayn sponsored the 1993 jihadist bombing of the World Trade Center; and Jayna Davis, *The Third Terrorist: The Middle East Connection to the Oklahoma City Bombing* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Current, 2004), which suggests that the Iraqi regime was in part responsible for the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing.
- 78 CIA report, “Iraq and al-Qa’ida: Interpreting a Murky Relationship,” June 21, 2002, 1. Note that the authors of this report were told to “lean far forward and do a speculative piece . . . [and] stretch to the maximum the evidence that [they] had.” Interview with CIA deputy director of intelligence, cited in SSCI, S. Rep. 109–331, at 61.
- 79 See George Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: The CIA during America’s Time of Crisis* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008), pp. 341. On the same page he likewise suggested that at most the two parties were “trying to determine how best to take advantage of the other.”
- 80 Cf. SSCI, S. Rep. 109–331, at 62–68, 92; IDA, *Saddam and Terrorism*, pp. 41–3, 45–6; U.S. Government, National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *Final*



- Report (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2002), pp. 61, 66, 128, 468n55, 470nn74–76, 502n49, 522–23nn69–70; Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004), p. 32; and Council on Foreign Relations, "Backgrounder: Iraqi Ties to Terrorism," April 29, 2003, available at [www.cfr.org/publication/7702/](http://www.cfr.org/publication/7702/).
- 81 See Byman, *Deadly Connections*, p. 155.
- 82 This involvement is apparent even if one excludes the generally partisan and often propagandistic Indian literature on the ISI and its alleged direction of Islamist terrorism, e.g., Srikanta Ghosh, *Pakistan's ISI: Network of Terror in India* (New Delhi: A. P. H., 2000); Bhure Lal, *Terrorism Inc.: The Lethal Cocktail of ISI, Taliban and Al-Qaida* (New Delhi: Siddharth, 2002); and Rajeev Sharma, *Pak Proxy War: A Story of ISI, bin Ladin, and Kargil* (New Delhi: Kaveri, 1999). See the next note for more sober sources.
- 83 For the ISI's sponsorship of jihadist terrorist groups in South Asia, see Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Ladin, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), pp. 67–8, 113, 119–20, 128–9, 131, 157, 165–6, and passim; Bruce Reidel, "Pakistan and Terror: The Eye of the Storm," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 618 (July 2008): 31–45; and Byman, *Deadly Connections*, Chapters 6–7. Of course, in response to U.S. pressure and provision of aid in the wake of 9/11, the Pakistani government has adopted a more circumspect but no less deceptive policy toward jihadist terrorists, one that combines helping the Americans capture or kill certain high-profile al-Qa'ida figures and doing little or nothing to interfere with the activities of the Taliban or Kashmiri jihadists. See, e.g., Shaun Gregory, "The ISI and the War on Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 30 (2002): 1013–31; Ashley J. Tellis, "Pakistan's Record on Terrorism: Conflicted Goals, Compromised Performance," *Washington Quarterly* 11:2 (Spring 2008), pp. 7–32; and Carlotta Gall, "Pakistani Military Still Cultivates Militant Groups, a Former Fighter Says," *New York Times* (July 3, 2011), available at [www.nytimes.com/2011/07/04/world/asia/04pakistan.html?\\_r=3&pagewanted=1&hp](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/04/world/asia/04pakistan.html?_r=3&pagewanted=1&hp). For information about the main ISI-sponsored jihadist organizations in Pakistan, see Muhammad Amir Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan* (Lahore: Mashal Books, 2006), pp. 328–42 (Lashkar, a Wahhabi group), 214–57 (Jaysh and Harkat, Deobandi groups), and 459–68 (Badr, a Mawdudist group); and K. Santhanam Sreedhar and Sudhir Saxena Manish, *Jihadis in Jammu and Kashmir: A Portrait Gallery* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003), pp. 224–30 (Lashkar) and 196–201 (Jaysh).
- 84 For the ISI's reported complicity in the Mumbai attacks, see Jason Burke, "Pakistan Intelligence Services 'Aided Mumbai Terror Attacks,'" *The Guardian*, 18 October 2010 (based primarily upon Indian interrogations of David Headley, a Lashkar operative and onetime U.S. government informant), available at [www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/18/pakistan-isi-mumbai-terror-attacks](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/18/pakistan-isi-mumbai-terror-attacks); and the series of reports on Pakistan's terror connections on the Pro Publica website, [www.propublica.org/topic/mumbai-terror-attacks](http://www.propublica.org/topic/mumbai-terror-attacks). However, some Pakistani journalists have instead emphasized the role of rogue ISI operatives or pro-jihadist ex-military officers in the Mumbai (and other) attacks. Cf. Imtiaz Gul, *The Most Dangerous Place: Pakistan's Lawless Frontier* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), pp. 169–74; and Syed Saleem Shahzad, *Inside Al-Qaeda and the Taliban: Beyond Bin Ladin and 9/11* (London: Pluto Press, 2011), pp. 68–9, 94–8 (former army majors Harun Ashiq and Abdul Rahman, then collaborating with Brigade 313 and Lashkar). For the location of Usama b. Ladin's hideout, the material found therein, and its problematic implications, see Adam Entous, Julian E. Barnes, and Matthew Rosenberg, "Signs Point to Pakistan Link," *Wall Street Journal* (May 4, 2011), <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704322804576303553679080310.html>; and Carlotta Gall, Pir Zubair Shah, and Eric Schmitt, "Cellphone Offers Clues to Bin Ladin's Pakistani Links," *New York Times*, 23 June 2011 (discusses Bin Ladin's links to the Harkat ul-Mujahidin).
- 85 See, e.g., Ryan Clarke, *Lashkar-i-Taiba: The Fallacy of Subservient Proxies and the Future of Islamist Terrorism in India* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute,

- 2010). The most extreme cases of jihadist blowback have involved terrorist attacks directed against the Pakistani military itself.
- 86 Coll, *Ghost Wars*, pp. 63–8; and Cooley, *Unholy Wars*, pp. 2, 5–7, 10. Perhaps the most reckless example, which President Reagan’s national security adviser William Casey instigated in the mid-1980s, was covert American support for terrorist actions carried out inside Soviet Central Asia by some of the CIA’s and ISI’s Afghan jihadist “allies.” Cf. Scott, *Road to 9/11*, pp. 125–7; and Mohammad Yousaf and Mark Adkin, *The Bear Trap: Afghanistan’s Untold Story* (London: Leo Cooper, 1992), pp. 25–6, 189.
  - 87 Cf. John Prados, foreword to Ganser, *NATO’s Secret Armies*, p. xiii: “In this age of global concern with terrorism it is especially upsetting to discover that Western Europe and the United States collaborated in creating networks that took up terrorism. In the United States such nations are called ‘state sponsors’ and are the object of hostility and sanction. Can it be the United States itself, Britain, France, Italy, and others who should be on the list of state sponsors?” Indeed, “what is clear from the examination of state terrorism, mass killings, state repression, and human rights violations is that these actions have been committed by states which are rich and poor, revolutionary and reactionary, expansionist and reclusive, secular and religious, east and west, north and south. In short virtually all types of states have at some time engaged in or promoted behaviors which many neutral observers would characterize as terrorism, either within their own borders or in the wider international system.” See Michael Stohl, “The State as Terrorist: Insights and Implications,” *Democracy and Security* 2:1 (2006), p. 5.
  - 88 For these groups, see Amos, *Palestinian Resistance*, pp. 99–110; and Cobban, *Palestine Liberation Organization*, pp. 157–61, 163–4.
  - 89 See, in general, Jeffrey A. Sluka, ed., *Death Squad: The Anthropology of State Terror* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); and Bruce B. Campbell and Arthur D. Brenner, eds., *Death Squads in Global Perspective: Murder with Deniability* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000). There are also several studies of individual death squads. See, e.g., Ignacio González Janzen, *La Triple-A* (Buenos Aires: Contrapunto, 1986), for the Alianza Anticomunista Argentina (AAA: Argentine Anticommunist Alliance); and Melchor Miralles and Ricardo Arques, *Amedo: El estado contra ETA* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janes/Cambio 16, 1989), for the Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación (GAL: Antiterrorist Liberation Groups) and their precursors in Spain.
  - 90 For more on provocateurs, see Anna Geifman, *Entangled in Terror: The Azeff Affair and the Russian Revolution* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Books, 2000); and Nurit Schleifman, *Undercover Agents in the Russian Revolutionary Movement: The SR Party, 1902–14* (Basingstoke: St. Antony’s/Macmillan, 1988), pp. 113–17 (on provocateurs and terrorism).
  - 91 Gary Marx, “Thoughts on a Neglected Category of Social Movement Participant: The Agent Provocateur and the Informant,” *American Journal of Sociology* 80:2 (September 1974), pp. 402–42; and Jean-Paul Brunet, *La police de l’ombre: Indicateurs et provocateurs dans la France contemporaine* (Paris: Seuil, 1990).
  - 92 See, in general, Philip Jenkins, *Images of Terror: What We Can and Can’t Know about Terrorism* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2003), Chapter 5. Note, however, that nowadays conspiracy theorists of various types claim that virtually every major terrorist incident is a “false flag” operation. Hence one needs to be skeptical of all such claims in the absence of reliable evidence.
  - 93 Gianni Flamini, *Il partito del golpe: Le strategie della tensione e del terrore dal primo centrosinistra organico al sequestro Moro* (Ferrara: Bovolenta, 1981–5), especially volumes 1–3; Bale, “‘Black’ Terrorist International,” Chapters 2–4; Franco Ferraresi, *Threats to Democracy: The Radical Right in Italy after the War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), Chapters 4–6; Philip Willan, *Puppetmasters: The Political Use of Terrorism in Italy* (London: Constable, 1991); Vittorio Borraccetti, ed., *Eversione di destra, terrorismo, stragi: I fatti e l’intervento giudiziario* (Milan: Angeli, 1986); and neo-fascist insider Vincenzo Vinciguerra, *Ergastolo per la libertà: Verso la verità sulla strategia della tensione* (Florence: Arnaud, 1989).
  - 94 See Philip Jenkins, “Under Two Flags: Provocation and Deception in European Terrorism,” *Terrorism* 11 (1989), pp. 275–89; Gilbert Dupont and Paul Ponsaers, *Les tueurs: Six années*

- d'enquête* (Anvers, Belgium: EPO, 1988); René Haquin, *Des taupes dans l'extrême droite: La Sûreté de l'État et le WNP* (Anvers, Belgium: EPO, n.d.); Walter de Bock et al., *L'Enquête: 20 années de déstabilisation en Belgique* (Paris and Brussels: Longue Vue, 1989); and Danny Ilegems, Raf Sauviller, and Jan Willems, *De Bende-Tapes* (Louvain, Belgium: Kritak, 1990).
- 95 See, respectively, (Brig. Gen.) Frank Kitson, *Gangs and Counter-Gangs* (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1960), pp. 72–211; Laurent, *L'orchestre noir*, pp. 148–56; and Yoram Peri, *Between Battles and Ballots: Israeli Military in Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 237–8.
- 96 Pepe Díaz Herrero et al., "French Connection: El jefe de los terroristas libios es un agente francés," *Cambio* 16 755 (May 19, 1986), pp. 36–9; and Miguel Angel Liso, "Paris confirma su infiltración en el terrorismo libio," *Cambio* 16 756 (May 26, 1986), pp. 38–9 (incorrect heading). For neo-fascist infiltration of radical leftist groups in Italy, see Flamini, *Partito del golpe*, *passim*. The most extraordinary examples occurred in connection with a series of neo-fascist infiltrations of anarchist groups and terrorist attacks leading up to the December 1969 Piazza Fontana bombing in Milan. See the detailed recent analysis of Paolo Cucchiarelli, *Il segreto di Piazza Fontana* (Milan: Ponte alle Grazie, 2009). For another possible case, see Jeffrey M. Bale, "The May 1973 Attack on Milan Police Headquarters: Anarchist 'Propaganda of the Deed' or 'False Flag' Provocation?," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 8:1 (Spring 1996), pp. 132–66.
- 97 See, e.g., Habib Souaïdia, *La sale guerre* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), especially Chapters 5–7; and Mohammed Samraoui, *Chronique des années de sang: Algérie: Comment les services secrets ont manipulé les groupes islamistes* (Paris: Denoël, 2003). The units most often blamed for carrying out terrorist attacks that were attributed to the GIA or for covertly directing GIA terrorist cells were the Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité (DRS: Intelligence and Security Department) and the Centre de Conduite et de Coordination des Actions de Lutte Anti-Subversive (CCC/ALAS: Center for the Conduct and Coordination of Activities in the Antisubversive Struggle). No one should conclude, however, that most of the horrendous atrocities and massacres attributed to the GIA, an extreme *takfiri* group (i.e., one that labels other, less militant Muslims as "infidels"), were actually false flag operations carried out by state security forces.
- 98 Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, pp. 259–60. See also, respectively, Patrick Seale, *Abu Nidal: A Gun for Hire* (London: Hutchinson, 1992); Yossi Melman, *The Master Terrorist: The Story Behind Abu Nidal* (New York: Adama Books, 1986); Michaël Prazan, *Les fanatiques: Histoire de l'armée rouge japonaise* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), Chapters 3–6; William Regis Farrell, *Blood and Rage: The Story of the Japanese Red Army* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990); David Yallop, *Tracking the Jackal: The Search for Carlos, the World's Most Wanted Man* (New York: Random House, 1993); and John Follain, *Jackal: The Complete Story of the Legendary Terrorist, Carlos the Jackal* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1998).
- 99 See the analysis in Bale, "'Black' Terrorist International," pp. 568–71, in connection with the strategy of tension in Italy.
- 100 Cf. Lionel Beehner, "America's Useless Terrorism List," *Los Angeles Times*, 20 October 2008; and Daniel L. Byman, *The Changing Nature of State Sponsorship of Terrorism* (Washington, DC: Saban Center Analysis Paper, Brookings Institution, May 2008), available at [www.brookings.edu/papers/2008/05\\_terrorism\\_byman.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2008/05_terrorism_byman.aspx). I do not share Beehner's view, however, that the focus should be on the "socioeconomic causes of why terrorism takes root in the first place," since the historical record has not substantiated any of the structural theories about the so-called root causes of terrorism. There are no root causes that compel states or insurgent groups to adopt particular asymmetric military techniques – e.g., terrorism – anymore than there are root causes that force states to adopt particular conventional operational techniques, such as blitzkrieg tactics.
- 101 Cf., e.g., Robert Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War* (New York: Vintage, 2001); Mark Juergensmeyer, *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State, from Christian Militias to al Qaeda* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); and Carolyn Nordstrom, *Global Outlaws: Crime, Money, and Power in the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).