

FIGHTING TERRORISM

Everyone talks about "terrorism," but no one does much about it. There are some things that can be done about it. You can do something about it.

First, let's be clear about the meaning of political "terrorism" as we use it. A madman on the streets with an axe is not such a terrorist. Violence in an open revolutionary attempt to take power is not terrorism. Those are different problems with different remedies.

As Lenin put it, "The purpose of terror is to terrorize," not to directly take power. Terrorism is theatre. It is used by people who do not have the popular support or the strength to achieve political objectives by either democratic means or by open force.

Terrorism can extort concession, or sow confusion, or keep some movement internally alive, or just express anger. But always it is among the most barbaric of violences because it kills as a matter of theatre; and the most frightening because it can be done in this technological age by a handful of faceless people, difficult to confront.

However, the sources and support system for terrorism in the world today are identifiable and can be confronted in certain ways. There is a network of conspiracy, loosely but importantly connected. Two Israelis write that "an operation can be planned in Germany by a Palestine Arab, executed in Israel by terrorists recruited in Japan, with weapons acquired in Italy but manufactured in Russia, supplied by an Algerian diplomat financed with Libyan money."

There are two sets of sovereign nations which provide the most direct source of terrorism and terrorists: Libya/Syria/Iraq/Iran; and Cuba and its sphere of influence in Central America.

But there is an all-important support system for this international network, starting with the Soviet Union. Lenin called terrorism "left-wing infantilism" -- and modern Soviet authorities, among the most conservative in the world, have been uneasy with terrorists. But in 1964 the Politburo decided to increase spending in the field of terrorism abroad by one thousand per cent. As Boris Ponomarev, Soviet director of international affairs said, terroristic groups tended to be "adventuristic," but to neglect them would be to "weaken the anti-imperialist (anti-American) struggle."

Starting with the Tricontinental Conference in Havana in 1966, the Soviet Union set up a number of terrorist training camps, in Cuba under the supervision of a KGB Colonel Kotchergine, in the Soviet Union itself, in the Middle East and elsewhere. Various factions in the PLO have been a constant connective tissue, from Nicaragua to Lebanon.

What can be done? To begin with, the main direct sources of terrorism in the Middle East and Central America must be deligitimated, embargoed, contained, unless or until they desist. Our western allies must do the same. The Libyan embassy should have been kicked out of London long ago. Similar pressure should be put on the so-called moderate Arab states, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, whose support of terrorist forces continues.

The main principle is that capitulation and appeasement only feed terrorism. Terrorism has to be dealt with sternly and politically. Helping to solve the social problems in the world -- hunger and deprivation -- is a prime responsibility for all of us. But solving those problems will not halt terrorism.

In keeping with a non-appeasement policy towards terrorism, there is a specific bill now being considered by the U.S. Senate (Boschwitz) and the House (Levine). It is an amendment to the foreign aid bill which would codify into law the prescription that the U.S. will not deal with the PLO until it renounces terrorism (and recognizes Israel's right to exist). Today, the fight against terrorism starts with your urging your Congressman and Senators to support that amendment.