

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
Digital Library Collections

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

Collection: Fortier, Donald: Files
Folder Title: “The Facts about Terrorism” Charles
Horner – *Commentary*, June 1980
Box: RAC Box 20

To see more digitized collections visit:
<https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digital-library>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library inventories visit:
<https://reaganlibrary.gov/document-collection>

Contact a reference archivist at: reagan.library@nara.gov

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/citing>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

90572
framed

The Facts About Terrorism

Charles Horner

Suppression of info on state sponsored terrorism - + (Manning) + (Manning) + (Manning)

IN THE February 1980 issue of *Encounter*, there is a small item drawn from the London *Daily Mail* which appends a footnote to last August's murder of Lord Louis Mountbatten. Two of the sentences stand out: "Thomas McMahon, aged 31, was found guilty of Lord Mountbatten's murder by three judges at the anti-terrorist Special Criminal Court in Dublin. The loss of McMahon, whose remote control bomb-making skills were perfected under Russian supervision during a spell of training in Libya, is a big blow to the provisionals." Russian supervision; training in Libya: a clause between commas is dropped on us in a way that makes it seem entirely matter-of-fact.

Mountbatten's death was a horrifying crime, an event of international significance, "propaganda of the deed" which touched the British royal family. One would think that the possibility, even a remote one, of Russian and Libyan complicity belongs in something other than a subordinate clause. For questions come immediately to mind. What is the source of the statement? Is it a piece of information that emerged during McMahon's trial? Is it the result of an inspired leak from "intelligence sources"? Is it something that McMahon himself has admitted? And, if there is any truth whatever to the allegation, has it caused any strain in the diplomatic relations between Britain and the Soviet Union?

A researcher sufficiently curious and energetic could probably track down the answers to all these questions. But why is that necessary? If it is true that two sovereign governments were patrons of the man who murdered Mountbatten, why has this made such a slight impression on us?

It is not, surely, because no one is interested in terrorism. On the contrary: terrorism has been studied almost to death. We know its history and its "philosophy." The terrorist as a "type" is present in our literature and in our motion pictures; he has held our attention during extended live television coverage. There have been hundreds of

pages of congressional testimony on the subject, and experts have sketched out in great detail the composite psychological profile of the air pirate, the bomber, the assassin, the hostage-taker.

But just when we think there is nothing left to know, we encounter what may be a new phenomenon, one upsetting to the various stereotypes built up over the years. The Arab "rejectionist," the Uruguayan "liberationist," the Basque "separatist" are, of course, frightening. But they are by now familiar. Certainly, we do not think of them as carefully created constructs of someone else's "grand design." We think of terror as an activity for deranged amateurs, however cold-blooded, a problem for painstaking police work more than a subject for foreign policy. We have found a place on our agenda for the "grievances" of terrorists, but no place as yet for the apparent role that certain governments play in their deeds. Allegations of government involvement, even on those rare occasions when they are "sensationalized," are invariably dropped. In an era where nothing having to do with government seems to remain secret very long, investigations into any "terrorist international" quickly succumb to a general lack of public interest.

It has been suggested that there are those who know more than they are telling, and that information about state-supported terrorism is being suppressed by Western governments for reasons of state. Robert Moss of the *Economist* has spoken of a "conspiracy of silence" about the evidence of Soviet involvement in terrorism, which operates in order to preserve the appearance of *détente*. The presumption is that democratic publics would be appalled if they knew the facts, that they would generate pressures on their respective governments for firmer policies against the Soviet Union which those governments, for one reason or another, do not wish to pursue. If this is so, one need only get the facts out and things will change in response.

But, unhappily, there is also much to suggest that such implied faith in the good sense of the public is misplaced, and that what we are dealing with is not so much a conspiracy of silence as a popular will to obtuseness. As in the case of Thomas McMahon, the international connections may be well known—worse, they may even be taken for granted—but the public outrage which the Foreign Office ought to fear fails to materialize.

CHARLES HORNER is adjunct professor in Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Washington, D.C. His article, "America Five Years After Defeat," appeared in our April issue. A somewhat different version of the present piece was prepared for a conference on "Terrorism and Totalitarianism" held in Washington, D.C. this past April under the sponsorship of the Foundation for Democratic Education.

This is not very unusual, especially when the netherworld of international affairs comes into play. Though spy stories, for example, comprise a publishing industry all their own, only rarely is espionage in the real world viewed as a serious threat. When scandals emerge, as in the Philby case in England, observers are more apt to be interested in the sociology of the event than in its impact on national security. So too in the United States. In the past few years, there have been two major cases involving Soviet espionage directed against the country's most sensitive satellite reconnaissance capability, but the news stories cause hardly a ripple. In a related realm, no one has paid much attention to the revelation that the Soviets have been using sophisticated electronic equipment to monitor the telephone conversations of American citizens. Probably hundreds of thousands of Americans have been spied on in this manner over the years. Yet neither when Nelson Rockefeller's investigative commission mentioned it in a report on the CIA in 1975, nor when President Carter alluded to it in 1977, nor when Senator Daniel P. Moynihan introduced a bill to oblige the government to deal with this problem, did anyone take much notice.

Much as we seem fascinated by the cloak and the dagger, then, our appreciation of what they may actually mean to us is very underdeveloped. It is not much different with terrorism. For example, it is possible for the public to subscribe to an ongoing series of reports published by the National Foreign Assessment Center of the Central Intelligence Agency. (These "research papers," as many as forty-five per year, cover the gamut of international issues.) In March 1979, the agency reported on "International Terrorism in 1978," providing six graphs, eight tables, and other explanatory material. "For the year as a whole," the CIA found that "there was an increase in the number of international incidents and their attendant casualties, matching the levels observed in the latter part of 1977." Terrorists continue to prefer operations in the industrialized democracies of Western Europe and North America. More than half of all incidents were recorded in these regions.

There were more attacks than the previous year, both in relative and absolute terms, on U.S. citizens and property.

The cumulative figures for the decade 1968-78 concerning the nationality of victims of international terrorist attacks show 1,275 North Americans, 41.9 per cent of the total; 990 Western Europeans, 32.5 per cent of the total; and 150 Soviets and East Europeans, 4.9 per cent of the total. Of the 3,043 terrorist attacks during this period, only 12 occurred in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Of course, this may be a misleading way of looking at even circumstantial evidence, for these terrorist groups have not been all that successful inside the United States either. In the same ten-year period, when there were 1,275 attacks directed

against U.S. "targets," only 84 occurred inside North America. The other 1,200 or so took place in other parts of the world. "Out there," where everyone is fair game, one assumes that there might also have been some attacks directed against Soviet or East European "targets." Unfortunately, the CIA paper does not record how many there were. Yet one has the impression that Communist nationals and property are comparatively safe, even outside the security blanket that can be thrown over them by the police states at home.

It would seem, therefore, that contemporary terrorists, in the main, have few enemies in the East, which is why it is only natural to wonder how many friends they may have there. Interestingly, what appears to hold true statistically on a global basis also holds true domestically. In Italy, for example, there have been, according to one computation, 116 killed and 365 wounded as a result of terrorist attacks in the period 1970-79. Of these, only one of the murder victims and only two of the other casualties were associated with the Italian Communist party.

THE CIA's published study devotes three paragraphs to what it calls "patron state support." We learn that "Radical Arab states opposed to a political settlement with Israel have continued to work closely with extremist Palestinian terrorist groups." Iraq's role is described as "particularly noteworthy." Libya is also mentioned, but surprisingly, as playing an anti-terrorist role. "In November [1978], Colonel Qaddafi met with the West German Interior Minister to discuss closer cooperation against terrorists. In December, the Libyan Interior Minister vowed to arrest and extradite any German terrorists seeking refuge." So far as the Soviets and East Europeans are concerned, the CIA also noted some "favorable signs." "The Bulgarians, clearly with Soviet approval, allowed a West German team to arrest the Red Army Faction member Till Meyer and his anarchist associates. The Yugoslavs also arrested four West German terrorists, but allowed them to travel to an undisclosed country in retaliation for Bonn's denial of Belgrade's request for the return of several Croatian terrorists. . . . [I]t is not clear whether the Soviet and East European governments will extend their concern beyond West German radicals and also help to curb Arab terrorist activities."

Like the case of Thomas McMahon with which we began, these remarks are more disingenuous than they seem at first glance to be. One wonders about the way Soviet and East European "concern" can be made manifest, about the circumstances which allow the Soviets to influence the behavior of groups as different as West Germans and Palestinian Arabs. In short, the reassurance offered by the CIA itself shows why one ought to be worried. What can be damped down by state policies can also be started up again at the convenience of those same state agencies.

*no surprise
countries
targeted!*

*few enemies
in the
East -
now my
friends!*



In other words, what the CIA is implicitly describing is the creation of a significant form of leverage for one state to use against another. It partakes of the classical paradigm of East-West negotiations, and is immediately recognizable: one party starts to do things which should not be done in the first place; then, when it agrees to limit, at least temporarily, its improper activities, it can be praised for its moderation, and even rewarded for it.

IT HAS become customary for the West German government to publish a kind of balance sheet on terrorism at the end of each year. In December 1979, Serge D'Adesky of the Los Angeles Times, drawing on one of these, reported from Munich that "the last of the sensational acts of terrorism in West Germany took place more than two years ago. Since then, the only signs of the continued existence in West Germany of the leftist terror organizations... have been an occasional bank robbery or a bloody exchange of bullets with the police after an attempted arrest." The German government believes that, in the 1970's, much of the financial support for terrorist activity had come from Libya and Iraq. The average terrorist needs about \$50,000 per year to sustain life in the underground—which can require automobiles, several residences, weapons, forged documents, and so forth. When foreign sources dry up—as they evidently did—the terrorists must rely on bank robberies. Therefore, "police hope that the terrorists will make unusual mistakes, leading to their capture."

Even if we can attribute the sputtering state of contemporary West German terrorism—after more than a decade of considerable violence—to greater international "cooperation," what are we to conclude from this? The last thing we seem able to conclude is that this series of events marks a reduced international reliance on terrorism as a method of politics. Terrorism declines in West Germany but it increases elsewhere, reflecting not a new international environment as such, but rather a shifting geopolitical emphasis born of new strategic opportunities.

Thus: on April 16, 1980, U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer Samuel Novello, fifty-six, of Erie, Pennsylvania, was shot and killed in an ambush in Istanbul. The perpetrators, in the judgment of Turkish authorities, were members of the Marxist-Leninist Armed Propaganda Union, an organization which, during the preceding year, had claimed "credit" for the murders of six other Americans in Turkey. In January, the same group took responsibility for the murder of the manager of El Al airline's Istanbul office, a "punishment" to Israel for its "oppression" of Palestinians.

It turns out that in the past two years about 2,500 people have lost their lives in Turkey as a result of political violence of one kind or another, including about 400 political assassinations. And, once again, the violence becomes internationalized.

On March 10, 1980, a bomb explodes in the Piazza della Repubblica in Rome, killing two and injuring eleven others. The Armenian Secret Army takes responsibility, calling the blast "a warning to Turkish fascism and Italian imperialism which ignore the Armenian cause." Predictably, the Turks blame the Greeks, alleging that Greek Cypriots are supporting and even instigating such attacks, especially those which have taken the lives of almost a dozen Turkish diplomats since 1973. The Cypriots deny it. But whatever the precise details, it is apparent that Turkey, a strategically situated country, is under assault from terrorism, both "revolutionary" and "separatist."

Sooner or later, the Turks, like their West German NATO allies, may come to produce a score-board showing their own progress in restoring a measure of stability and personal security to their country. For the Turkish foreign ministry, it is only a question of knowing where to look, how to discover the people who ought to be approached, and then determining whether they are amenable, for reasons of their own, to negotiations. This should not prove all that difficult for a government, especially when we consider how much individual reporters working on their own have been able to unearth. In a compendium prepared for the "Terrorism and Totalitarianism" conference, Thomas Hyde assembled numerous examples from the world press detailing the international connections of terrorist groups. In addition to those, one can also note a not unrepresentative account that appeared in the well-known Milan newspaper, *Corriere della Sera*, on August 30, 1979:

The last congress of the international terrorist groups was held at Beirut in September 1978. Delegates were present from the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Red Brigades (Italy), the IRA [Irish Republican Army] (Ulster), the Baader-Meinhof group (Germany), the Red Army Faction (Germany), the Montoneros (Argentina), the ETA [Basque Socialist Separatist Group] (Spain), and the Red Army Group (Japan)....

[I]t is the PLO that finances the operations of most of the other terrorist groups of the Middle East, distributing among them an amount estimated at \$300 million (about 246 billion lire). Where does this money come from and where does it go? The bank of the terrorist groups of the Middle East is the National Palestinian Fund, created by the PLO, which meets regularly; its last meeting was held at Damascus in January....

The Arab countries that make regular contributions to the Palestinian National Fund are Syria, Iraq, Libya, and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. Syria pays for the most part in kind rather than in cash, arguing that in sheltering the Palestinian Liberation Army the country is contributing as much if not more....

The Russians, either directly or through their Cuban satellites, have always been active supporters of the various liberation movements, both with money and by furnishing services [read: training].

At this very moment in South Yemen, in three camps at Hauf, Mukalla, and Al-Gheidha, about 700 Cubans, backed up by 1,500 Soviets and 116 East Germans, are training terrorist groups from all over the world. Recent trainees at these camps have included members of the German Red Army Faction and of the South Moluccans of the Netherlands. In addition, a new Dutch terrorist group returned home this month after intensive training. It is said that this group, the Rood Verzetsfront, or Red Resistance Front, numbers only a dozen members, and although little is known about them, the anti-terrorist services in Europe expect that within the next few weeks they will put the lessons they learned into practice.

It appears that another terrorist training camp, 300 kilometers south of Tripoli, in the locality of Sebha, has put members of the IRA and of Palestinian groups through its training program.

WITHIN a month, a more detailed account appeared of the most serious of the above allegations, namely, the Soviet-Palestinian connection. Writing in *New York* magazine (September 24, 1979), Herbert Krosney, who had produced a television documentary on the PLO for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, concluded that "there is no doubt that Russia has taken an active role in assisting and providing military aid to the Palestinian terrorists." Since 1974, sources say, as many as 1,000 Palestinians have been sent to the Soviet Union and other Eastern-bloc countries for clandestine training in either Russian military or KGB (secret police) camps.

Krosney's "sources" describe one such training camp at the Soviet foreign-military academy of Sanprobal, near Simferapol on the Black Sea.

There, for the next six months, the Palestinians—along with activists from nations such as Libya, Iraq, South Yemen, and Algeria—were given an arduous course of study, including basic military field exercises, communications techniques, and lectures in theory. But at the heart of all this instruction came extensive "engineering" classes—just the sort which make a terrorist's eyes start to glow.

The syllabus, according to the report, included the following:

- study of regular and electronic detonators;
- training in chemical and biological warfare;
- production of incendiary devices;
- preparation of an electrical charge by means of a detonator;
- study of exploding metals;
- crossing rivers by means of rubber or wooden boats;
- blowing up wood by means of a charge;
- study of fuse types: "detonating cord-red, instantaneous fuse-red, safety fuse-black";
- blowing up vehicles and ammunition dumps;
- preparation of anti-personnel mine fields.

The general point here was confirmed by the

PLO's United Nations Observer, Zehdi Terzi, in an interview with Marilyn Berger of the Public Broadcasting Service, broadcast on September 25, 1979:

BERGER: Can you tell me what kind of support the Soviet Union gives to your organization?

TERZI: Well, the Soviet Union, and all the Socialist countries . . . they give us full support—diplomatic, moral, educational, and also they open their military academies to some of our freedom fighters.

BERGER: And the military equipment, is that support given directly to the PLO or . . . ?

TERZI: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. We're getting our—those machine guns and RPG's and all that.

BERGER: Explosives?

TERZI: . . . Explosives, yes.

BERGER: Well, some American analysts suggest that much of the equipment is funneled through the existing states of the region.

TERZI: Oh, we get our direct consignments that come to the PLO.

BERGER: It is consigned to you?

TERZI: Yes, it is.

This interview, for all its confirmation of a supposedly controversial point, proves to be something of a disappointment. Journalists on at least two continents have been stalking the story, but all that is necessary is for one of them to ask a man who knows, and the "dirty little secret" is affirmed, once again in the most offhand fashion.

Of course, there was another route open to Terzi, which was to deny it all, to strike a pose of righteous indignation, and dismiss the accusations as propaganda and slander. And so we must ask: why does he want us to know that the Soviet Union trains and arms the PLO? More to the point, why do the Soviets want us to know this? For surely, if they did not, they would have spread the word long ago to their friends in the PLO that such matters were not to be discussed.

The answer would seem to be that the assertion of ties between a terrorist organization and the Soviet Union, instead of inspiring outrage and horror, now affords greater legitimacy to the terrorists and greater leverage to the Soviets. So far as the terrorists are concerned, the distinction between serious groups and rank amateurs on the world scene is whether or not they can come to be adopted by the premier Communist power. In the PLO's case, this marks a milestone in its evolution from outlaw status to quasi-state apparatus—almost to a government-in-exile. By implying that it treats with the Soviet Union almost on the basis of "state-to-state" relations, it announces a kind of diplomatic recognition that has been afforded to it, which others can then afford in like measure. An acknowledgment that it receives foreign aid, as it were, makes the PLO a member of the socialist camp.

In other words, the PLO does not discredit itself

Strong
intent
to
change
of
equipment
f
Ally
Lipman
D.P.

or the Soviet Union by acknowledging that there is indeed such a thing as state-supported terrorism. Rather, it confirms that it is possible to create a state out of terrorism—a new stage, one suspects, in the theory and practice of revolution. All this has the further advantage of giving to groups like the PLO a form of international respectability. The facts, when finally revealed, do something very different from what was expected of them at the beginning (Far from demeaning the PLO in the eyes of the Western democracies, they elevate it. The Soviets understand that this is true, and they see their own influence grow thereby.) They become our guide in these matters; those whom they “recognize” politically first, we will recognize diplomatically in our turn—sooner or later. Put more concretely, it is at precisely the point when the Western democracies can no longer deny the facts of the relationship between the PLO and the Soviet Union that they begin to afford the organization greater respectability.

IN SHORT, there is something here akin to a repeating decimal. At first, the Western world persists in denying the obvious. Almost in exasperation, one again suspects, both terrorist and patron decide to beat us over the head with it. Understanding the contemporary climate of opinion much better than we ourselves do, they may realize that once Western governments get the message, they will be pressured not to resist, but to succumb. Having succumbed, they can then return to ignoring the obvious.

In this, the PLO may be nothing but the vanguard in a new international trend. Everett G. Martin, writing from Bogota, Colombia, in the *Wall Street Journal* of April 15, 1980, summarizes a debate among knowledgeable observers about the meaning of recent terrorist activity in Latin America (in Bogota, “militants” held as many as nineteen diplomats, including U.S. Ambassador Diego Asencio, inside the embassy of the Dominican Republic between February 27 and April 27, 1980).

The theory of Soviet involvement here in Bogota and elsewhere in Latin America is highly controversial and hotly disputed. The U.S. State Department, for example, officially gives little credence to the idea that Russians or Russian puppets (Cubans, for example) are lurking behind every Latin American bush. True, officials from the State and Defense departments recently told a congressional committee that Cuba has been involved in a plot to help overthrow the government in El Salvador; but Frank Perez, deputy director of the State Department’s office to combat terrorism, says he sees no evidence of an outside hand in the Bogota takeover and suggests that the terrorists are merely “following the fad” of embassy takeovers.

“The degree of Soviet involvement [in terrorist incidents such as that in Bogota] is a major debating point,” says Brian Jenkins of the Rand Corporation, the prominent research firm. “One

extreme says that all terrorist acts are centrally directed from Moscow. The other says that it is all spontaneous, and one group copies another like a fad. I don’t buy either extreme.

“I believe we have a combination of fad and some attempt to control and direct terrorists by the Soviet Union.” . . .

Ernest Evans, research assistant at the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based liberal research organization, has a different viewpoint on the Soviet role in worldwide terrorism. “There is no doubt that they are playing a role,” he says, “but their basic attitude is still one of coordination of the various movements because they are basically uncomfortable with this kind of action, and it is ideologically unpalatable to them.” He adds: “I think that they would really prefer good relations with the established states in Latin America rather than with some group up in the mountains.” . . .

It is indeed more than conceivable that the Soviets wish to do business with the established governments of Latin America. Yet it is their presumed relationship with either “revolutionaries,” or “separatists,” or both which can make that business much easier to transact. Historically, in the Soviet approach to these matters, there is nothing inconsistent about backing separatists on the one hand, so that the Soviets can come to the aid of an embattled central government on the other. We have seen this in Ethiopia, and we certainly see it today in Iran. But its value as a tactic is enhanced precisely when the government in question knows the relationship between its opponents and the Soviet Union.

Once again, this is a case where secrecy as such does not necessarily favor Soviet objectives; rather, a straightforward revelation can make the point far more effectively and convincingly than vague innuendo. As much as we admire the skills of our intelligence organizations in developing the “damning” facts, one doubts that they would know as much as they do without the *de facto* cooperation of the Soviets themselves. Such verification is not so very different from what we know at the highest level of potential violence, nuclear war itself. There, the Soviets cooperate in revealing the size of their forces because, were we to remain ignorant, we would be neither deterred, nor impressed, nor intimidated.

We may even have reached a point where embattled governments, given the choice, will prefer state-sponsored terrorism to the more unpredictable homegrown variety. With the former one at least has a way of getting a proverbial handle on the problem. Seen in this light, the expansion of Soviet influence among the world’s terrorist organizations—Soviet help in bringing them to a higher state of development and maturity—will surely be welcomed by some as the way to restrain terrorism. One may have to pay a price for securing Soviet cooperation, of course, but that price may come to be seen as far lower than the price of dealing with individuals and small groups

lacking in discipline. Indeed, one feels that this is what the Soviets hope and expect, which is why they may have gotten into the business in the first place.

THERE is a final question. Is it possible that an examination of state support for the terrorist acts of quasi-independent organizations may in fact be directed toward a transitory phenomenon? Discussion, analysis, and speculation are all being overtaken by events, for certain governments have begun to act directly, without relying on intermediaries.

This is certainly the most conspicuous feature of the current Iran crisis, where the hostage-taking technique, once employed by the isolated cell of the "alienated" and the "powerless," is appropriated by a sitting government, thereby becoming official state policy. It is now respectable to cut out the middleman. The so-called "militants" holding the American embassy in Teheran are, to some extent certainly, willing to do the bidding of the Iranian authorities. More to the point, three American diplomats, including chargé d'affaires Bruce Laingen, are imprisoned in the Iranian foreign ministry itself. The government in Iran has become the terrorist, the server of demands upon the government of its victims.

The government of Libya also seems on the road to transforming its role from one of patron to direct agent. In April, Colonel Qaddafi threatened to "liquidate" all dissident Libyans who did not return home by the middle of May. Since then, four prominent Libyans known to be critics of the Qaddafi regime have been murdered in Europe. Calling them "would-be assassins," President Carter had four Libyan diplomats expelled for engaging in a campaign to intimidate Libyan students living in the U.S. Britain, too, expelled four Libyan diplomats, accusing them of "harassing" Libyan expatriates in England.

A similar progression, leading to the elimination of the middle man by the state, may be seen in the murder of the United States diplomats overseas. In 1968, John Gordon Mein, our ambassador in Guatemala, was murdered in Guatemala City. In 1973, Cleo Noel, our ambassador in the Sudan, and his deputy, George Moore, were murdered in Khartoum. In 1974, our ambassador in Cyprus, Richard Davies, was murdered in Nicosia. In June 1976, Francis Meloy, our ambassador in Lebanon, and economic counselor Frederick Waring, were murdered in downtown Beirut. Most recently, Adolph Dubs, our ambassador in Afghanistan, was murdered in Kabul in February 1979. This

last crime can be taken as the new stage, for it is understood—to borrow a phrase from a February 14, 1979 State Department report on the circumstances—that Soviet advisers played an "operational role" in Ambassador Dubs's death. The significance of this particular act was perhaps not apparent at the time, but given the events that have intervened since, it seems to make more "sense."

Yet while the West engages in a tortuous debate over the degree of Soviet involvement in international terrorism, the Soviet Union cynically portrays the United States as the culprit. On February 19, 1980, the Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives released a report prepared by the CIA on a variety of clandestine Soviet propaganda activities directed against the United States. Among other things, the report alleges that the Soviets have forged documents in order to link the United States with international terrorist acts, including the murder of former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro in 1978. To do this, the Soviets are said to have produced bogus U.S. Army field manuals and State Department documents. One can only speculate on the motives of the CIA in agreeing to the public release of this report. Perhaps it is too much of a comment on the times to suggest that the CIA's desire for self-protection may have been involved. For one could well imagine how such Soviet-inspired allegations could readily find their way into the European press, thence to the United States, leading to heated urgings that Congress investigate the possible role of the CIA in the murder of Aldo Moro.

OVERALL, what has been missing in our confrontation with the phenomenon of Soviet-supported terrorism is not fact, but comprehension. Facts are believed when a framework exists that will allow for their acceptance. Acceptance of facts can lead either to resistance or resignation. After all, the facts of the Soviet build-up of armored, naval, and strategic-nuclear forces have been available for ten years, but grudging acceptance of them has come only recently; and whether those facts will produce rearmament or retreat is far from clear. A concomitant Soviet interest in expanding its chemical and bacteriological warfare capabilities has also been noted, but it has not yet been internalized in the West. Seen in this general context, the fact that Soviet involvement in international terrorism has failed to make any real impression on Western politics—except to increase the pressures for accommodation—is hardly surprising, but no less dangerous.