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THE WHITE HOUSE

National Security  
Decision Directive 138

WASHINGTON

April 3, 1984

COMBATTING TERRORISM (U)

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Authority 4/29/09 /ist  
BY C/J NARA DATE 3/17/10

U.S. citizens and installations, especially abroad, are increasingly being targeted for terrorist acts. These attacks result from activities by state-sponsored terrorist movements, international terrorist organizations and groups, and individual terrorists operating without obvious support. Terrorist activities not only endanger our citizens and interests, but result in the destabilization and polarization of democratic and friendly governments. Of particular concern is the possibility that international terrorist movements and some of those which enjoy state sponsorship are receiving support and perhaps guidance directly or indirectly from the Soviet Union. International terrorist activity, as referred to in this directive, includes conspiring about, planning for or conducting terrorist acts by trans-national groups, whether the activity occurs in the U.S. or abroad. (S)

The U.S. Government program to prevent, counter, and combat terrorism must be significantly enhanced to reduce the threat to U.S. citizens and foreign nationals in the United States who enjoy our protection. We must also seek to ameliorate the subversive effect of terrorism on foreign democratic institutions and pro-Western governments. Our program must include measures which will deter terrorist attacks, improve protection for those threatened, and reduce the effectiveness of those attacks which do occur. Domestic programs to deal with terrorist activities in the United States must be continuously reviewed and assessed in order to identify useful improvements. This policy must be supported by improved intelligence, by political and diplomatic actions, and by improved response capabilities. (TS)

This NSDD provides guidance for developing a long-term, two-phased program for achieving these objectives in accord with the provisions of Executive Order 12333 of December 4, 1981, and other applicable laws and statutes. Phase I will commence immediately and conclude December 31, 1984. Phase II will consist of those measures to be taken after January 1, 1985. The following principles will guide implementation in both phases:

(S)

- The U.S. Government considers the practice of terrorism by any person or group in any cause a threat to our national security and will resist the use of terrorism by all legal means available. (U)

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- Terrorism is a common problem for all democratic nations. We will work intensively with others to eliminate the threat of terrorism to our way of life. States that practice terrorism or actively support it, will not be allowed to do so without consequence. All available channels of communication will be used to persuade those now practicing or supporting terrorism to desist. Assistance and support shall be provided to those democratic nations suffering intimidation because of terrorist threats or activities. (U)
- State-sponsored terrorist activity or directed threats of such action are considered to be hostile acts and the U.S. will hold sponsors accountable. Whenever we have evidence that a state is mounting or intends to conduct an act of terrorism against us, we have a responsibility to take measures to protect our citizens, property, and interests. (U)
- Intelligence collection against groups and states involved in international terrorism must be improved in order to better prevent or counter attacks; warn our citizens, friends, and allies; and, thereby, reduce the risk to them. (U)
- Acts of state-sponsored and organized terrorism should be appropriately exposed and condemned in every available forum. (U)

PHASE I. The following near-term actions, by key departments and agencies of the U.S. Government, are designed to immediately reduce the threat to U.S. citizens, interests, and property in accord with the guidance above. To this end, the following measures are directed to be fully implemented by December 31, 1984:

- The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Director of Central Intelligence, and the Director OMB, shall: (C)
  - Secure expeditious passage of legislative instruments to implement the provisions of extant international accords on terrorism to which the United States is signatory. Measures should also be taken to carry out appropriate bilateral and multilateral exchanges leading toward improved cooperation on combatting terrorism, especially with those states having an established counter-terrorist capability. (C)

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- Provide, through applicable legislative authorities, resources, facilities, and services required to support expanded counter-terrorism training for the civil/domestic security services of other friendly governments. ~~(C)~~
- Develop a full range of options for dealing directly with terrorism, both at the threat stage and after such acts are carried out. This should include a program for expanding existing sanctions against those organizations or states which support or export terrorism. It should also incorporate improved visa processing systems and procedures which will permit the U.S. to deny access to its territory to individuals who represent such organizations or states. ~~(S)~~
- The Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of State, Director of Central Intelligence, and the Attorney General, shall:
  - Continue improvements in the U.S. capability to conduct military operations to counter terrorism directed against U.S. citizens, military forces, property, and interests. ~~(S)~~
  - Develop a military strategy that is supportive of an active, preventive program to combat state-sponsored terrorism before the terrorists can initiate hostile acts. ~~(S)~~
  - Develop a full range of military options to combat terrorism throughout the entire terrorist threat spectrum. ~~(S)~~
  - Develop a broad range of defensive measures to protect military forces, dependents, and facilities worldwide. ~~(S)~~
- The Attorney General shall enhance collection, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence information on terrorist movements, organizations, and activities within the United States. To the extent necessary, the Attorney General and the Director of Central Intelligence shall maintain close liaison in these matters to ensure that the intelligence activities of their respective agencies are properly coordinated. ~~(TS)~~

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- The Director of Central Intelligence, in consultation with the Secretaries of State, Treasury, and Defense and the Attorney General, shall: ~~(C)~~
  - Enhance foreign collection, analysis, and dissemination of information on state-sponsored terrorist organizations and anti-Western international terrorist movements/ groups including relationships with hostile intelligence services. This effort shall include a prioritization of those terrorist organizations (whether or not state-sponsored) which are most threatening to the U.S. and an assessment of their potential vulnerabilities. ~~(S)~~
  - Develop, in coordination with other friendly security services, capabilities for the pre-emptive neutralization of anti-American terrorist groups which plan, support, or conduct hostile terrorist acts against U.S. citizens, interests, and property overseas. ~~(S)~~
  - Develop a clandestine service capability, using all lawful means, for effective response overseas against terrorist acts committed against U.S. citizens, facilities, or interests. ~~(TS/S)~~
  - Provide a new Finding on combatting terrorism which includes, inter alia, lawful measures to:
    - Increase cooperation with the security agencies of other friendly governments. ~~(S)~~
    - Unilaterally and/or in concert with other countries neutralize or counter terrorist organizations and terrorist leaders. ~~(TS/S)~~
    - Develop an information exploitation program, aimed at disrupting and demoralizing terrorist groups. ~~(S)~~

The Director of Central Intelligence is charged with the overall responsibility for developing a comprehensive and coordinated action plan to implement the steps above during CY-84. This action plan shall include milestones and attainable objectives aimed at commencing an active campaign to combat terrorism as soon as practicable. This plan shall be fully consistent with all provisions of Executive Order 12333 and other applicable laws and statutes. ~~(S)~~

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Recommendations for increased resource requirements should accompany the plan. This plan, finding, and resource recommendations shall be forwarded for review by the NSPG no later than May 31, 1984. (S)

Once this plan, prepared by the DCI, has received Presidential approval, its implementation during Phase I will be monitored by the Terrorist Incident Working Group (TIWG), established in NSDD-30. The mandate of the TIWG is hereby amended to include these responsibilities and the TIWG Chairmanship is hereby modified to include the Assistant to the President and Director of Special Support Services as co-Chairman. The TIWG will meet on a regular basis on these matters and provide periodic reports to the NSPG on implementation of these measures. (S)

A coherent effort and plan to combat terrorism requires that the United States Government not only take action against known terrorists, but improve its ability to protect its people and facilities as well. These initiatives shall be implemented concurrently to preclude unnecessary risk. Accordingly, in addition to those steps outlined above, the following protective, security, and enforcement measures are directed for implementation during Phase I: (S)

- The Secretaries of State and Defense shall accelerate security improvements in overseas locations to reduce the threat of terrorist action. (S)
- The Secretaries of State, Defense, and Treasury, in coordination with the Attorney General, and other appropriate agency heads, shall take action to improve protection/security of personnel and facilities in the U.S. under their purview to reduce their vulnerability to terrorist attack. (C)
- The Secretaries of State and Defense, in coordination with the Director of Central Intelligence, shall strengthen procedures for dissemination of terrorist warning information to threatened missions and units. To ensure the effectiveness of these measures, the Director of Central Intelligence shall develop improved procedures for the continuous, systematic assessment of intelligence on terrorist groups, movements, and individuals. (C)
- Departments and agencies with personnel in areas vulnerable to terrorist action shall pursue mandatory programs for improved awareness and security training. (S)

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- The Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Treasury, and other agency heads as appropriate, shall develop streamlined operational plans for deterring and responding to terrorist threats against prominent locations/events in the United States which could be likely targets for terrorist attack. ~~(C)~~
- The Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Treasury and other appropriate agency heads, shall also continue to:
  - Enhance coordination, analysis, and dissemination of federal law enforcement information regarding terrorist activities and the presence of foreign or international terrorists in the United States. ~~(S)~~
  - Enhance cooperation among federal law enforcement agencies and state and local authorities in the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed by terrorists. ~~(C)~~

A consolidated plan to implement these Phase I security, protection, and enforcement initiatives shall be prepared by the Interdepartmental Group on Terrorism (IG/T) for review by the NSPG no later than May 31, 1984. This plan should include recommendations for increased resources required by the departments and agencies to implement this program. ~~(S)~~

All plans submitted for review by the NSPG should describe actions already taken and resources applied in 1983, legislative initiatives, and programs currently planned and underway for 1984-1989. The strengths and weaknesses of currently planned programs should be delineated and analyses should be provided explaining the need for additional resources. Where appropriate, financing alternatives, including offset proposals, should be provided. ~~(S)~~

#### Phase II

A second phase of this national program to combat terrorism shall commence on January 1, 1985. This phase is designed to improve capabilities, organization, and management that will further protect U.S. interests, citizens, and facilities from acts of terrorism. ~~(S)~~

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The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs will convene an interagency group comprised of representatives of the departments of State, Treasury, Defense, Justice, the DCI, OMB, and White House Office of Special Support Services to develop recommendations on improving the overall management of national programs for assessing, combatting, and countering international terrorism. This group shall also recommend any changes that should be made in the planning, integration, and oversight arrangements for terrorism countermeasures. These recommendations to improve the program during Phase II should be presented for review by the NSPG by July 31, 1984. (S)

*Ronald Reagan*

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Extract of NSDD 138

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Acts of state-sponsored and organized terrorism should be appropriately exposed and condemned in ever available forum,

Secure expeditious passage of legislative instruments to implement the provisions of extant international accord on terrorism to which the United States is signatory.

Carry out appropriate bilateral and multilateral exchanges leading toward improved cooperation on combatting terrorism.

Develop a program for expanding existing sanctions against those organizations or states which support or export terrorism.

Departments and agencies with personnel in areas vulnerable to terrorist action shall pursue mandatory programs for improved awareness and security training.