Chapter 1

An Introduction to Terrorism

The Federal Bureau of Investigation reports that in the decade after 1985 there were only two terrorist incidents on U.S. soil with substantial foreign involvement (i.e., "international terrorism"): the bombing of the World Trade Center in February 1993, and an all-but-ignored occupation of the Iranian Mission to the United Nations by five opponents of the regime in 1992. During the first half of the 1990s we had 32 domestic incidents of terrorism, of which 9 occurred in a single night in 1993 when small incendiary devices were placed in department stores by one of the most active domestic terrorist groups, animal rights activists. The number of attacks on U.S. individuals abroad has fallen to less than a third of what it was in 1986, with 66 attacks in 1994, a year in which there were no domestic terrorists incidents in the United States.

Why then the immense attention to terrorism in the later 1990s in the United States? It is true that U.S. citizens have been among the leading victims of international terrorist events, including the downing of Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988 over Lockerbie, Scotland; the 1985 hijacking of the *Achille Lauro*; the machine gunnings in the same year of the airports of Rome and Vienna; and the 1983 suicide bombings of U.S. marine headquarters in Beirut. Still, home felt safe. That feeling of security at home was shattered by the bombings of the World Trade Center in 1993 with nearly 1000 injured and of the Oklahoma City federal building in 1995 with 169 killed. These events, terrible enough in themselves, raised the possibility of a sustained

campaign of violence on U.S. soil. This side of the Atlantic suddenly seemed to be exposed to political violence of the sort that the United States had escaped while other democracies had not. Germany, Italy, and Spain, for example, lived through sustained terrorist campaigns in the 1970s and 1980s; France, Great Britain, and Israel had suffered the same in the 1990s as well.

Added to this was a fear that a terrorist repertoire that had been limited to assassination, conventional bombing, hostage-taking, and hijacking might be dangerously expanded. American apprehensions, reflected in dramatic Congressional hearings, grew with the use of poison gas in Tokyo subways by the Aum Shinrikyo cult in Japan. The possibility that the use of nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons might be added to the terrorist arsenal is chilling. At the end of 1995, John Deutch, then the new director of the CIA, described terrorism as one of the major threats facing the United States.[1]

Such events, the fears they excite, and the reactions they invite are the subject of this book. It is about violent activity designed to create grave public apprehension in order to convey, with awesome force, the terrorists' message. And it is about governmental responses. Deep and broad national fears of terrorism create grave political problems for a government. Immense popular concern makes acts of terrorism exceptionally tempting occasions for political opponents of the administration in power to make the evil appear far clearer and the danger far greater than they are. The Iranian taking of 52 U.S. citizens as hostages in 1979 and the futility of efforts to free them may have cost U.S. President Jimmy Carter an election. In the context of a terrorist act or campaign, the political risks to an administration of inaction or even caution are very grave. But wise policy may counsel restraint. In terms of national well-being, the gravest national dangers from a terrorist act (short of an immense escalation of terrorist tactics) are that the interplay of terrorism, public reaction, and governmental response may sharply separate one significant group from the rest of the society or severely undermine the nation's democratic traditions.

Violence as politics has been a subject of great concern in many other democracies for generations. Although the word "terrorism" dates only from the time of the French Revolution, the acts it em-

braces go back to biblical times. Nor is political violence new to the United States. We have lost four presidents and two senators to assassination. We have also had our share of famous bombings, including the Haymarket Square bombing in 1886; the *Los Angeles Times* bombing in 1910; the San Francisco Preparedness Day bombing in 1916; and the Wall Street bombing in 1920. And we have had groups such as the Ku Klux Klan dedicated for decades to terrorizing an important segment of our population—black Americans.

The Efforts to Define Terrorism

Only relatively recently have there been attempts to define "terrorism" as clearly as we define murder, robbery, or rape. The effort has been less than successful. Germany's internal security agency, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, says terrorism is the "enduringly conducted struggle for political goals, which are intended to be achieved by means of assaults on the life and property of other persons, especially by means of severe crimes [such as murder, kidnapping, arson]."[2] The British "Prevention of Terrorism Act" of 1974 described terrorism as "the use of violence for political ends, and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public or any section of the public in fear." The U.S. State Department treats as terrorism any violence perpetrated for political reasons by subnational groups or secret state agents, often directed at noncombatant targets, and usually intended to influence an audience. Our federal statutes (18 U.S.C. 3077) define an "act of terrorism" as any activity that involves criminal violence that "appears to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by assassination or kidnapping." The group of European Interior Ministers working together to deal with terrorism made a point of excluding traditional warfare: "Terrorism is . . . the use, or the threatened use, by a cohesive group of persons of violence (short of warfare) to affect political aims."

There is an appealing neutrality about state definitions of terrorism. That may not be surprising. States use violence themselves for political purposes—in wartime even against civilian populations.

The state definitions suggest that terrorists are a hostile force pursuing political ends. But other definitions, often by academics, have far more of a moral or criminal flavor.

An extremely comprehensive review of possible definitions was conducted by Professor Alex P. Schmid of Leiden University in the Netherlands. After consulting 50 scholars, he came up with a definition far too lengthy to be useful but then found a far shorter definition that was almost as accurate and more useful. Noting that there is a strong degree of consensus about what actions count as war crimes—including attacks on persons taking no active part in hostilities and also hostage-taking—and that just such attacks on the undefended are "not an unsought side-effect but a deliberate strategy" of terrorists, Schmid proposes defining acts of terrorism as "peacetime equivalents of war crimes:" acts that would, if carried out by a government in war, violate the Geneva Conventions."[3]

The various definitions differ in two ways. First, "political" and "moral" definitions differ immensely in the amount of hatred they seek to arouse. Benjamin Netanyahu, prime minister of Israel, leader of its Likud party, and author of a 1995 book, *Fighting Terrorism*, emphasizes that "terrorism is the deliberate and systematic assault on civilians to inspire fear for political ends." As such, he argues, "*nothing* justifies terrorism . . . it is evil *per se*." To his mind, "terrorism attacks the very foundations of civilization and threatens to erase it altogether by killing man's sense of sin. . . . The unequivocal and unrelenting moral condemnation of terrorism must therefore constitute the first line of defense against its most insidious effect."[4] The cold and analytic definitions of the Western governments can not convey such fury.

Second, the variety of definitions reflects very different practical and administrative reasons for defining terrorism. Consider the variety of reasons. The term is the basis of U.S. statutes that allocate money and authority for dealing with certain problems. A finding of "terrorism" determines that the U.S. government (specifically, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Justice) will take the lead in investigating and prosecuting certain crimes that might otherwise fall within the primary jurisdiction of state or local

governments. If it is "terrorism," the intelligence agencies may be involved because the crime is also a matter of national security. In international settings, the need to define terrorism may arise because some crimes, such as assaulting or killing an American abroad, are only subject to U.S. prosecution if they occur for terrorist purposes. Western allies meet to discuss what is defined, for their purposes, as terrorism, and they grant and deny cooperation in intelligence and extradition on the basis of such definitions.

Two things are clear from this list of occasions where a definition of terrorism is needed. First, we cannot escape the task of defining terrorism for each of these purposes unless we are prepared to treat politically motivated and directed violence as no different from other crimes—a decision that would be risky business and strongly contrary to public reactions in almost every country. Second, the definitions are likely to differ, not only because of different judgments about the centrality of the moral issue, but also because definitions are meant to serve the particular purposes most relevant in the setting where they are being used.

Secret state violence against its own citizens is unlikely to be treated as state terrorism in meetings of allies. This is not because there is any great moral difference from secret state terrorism directed against citizens of another government, but because such violent repression of individuals in the home country is generally a far lesser concern to the governments of countries unaffected and unlikely to be affected by the practice. So in this setting, secret state violence against its own citizens is unlikely to be called "terrorism." Violence against civilians, particularly government officials, in the context of guerrilla warfare or during a war between states is not considered terrorism in many contexts simply because it is not subject to the same remedies (which are designed for times of peace). Many modern states have resorted to aerial bombing of civilian targets in order to induce fear in wartime. For similar reasons of practicality, violence that is carried out as a mere expression of anger without expectation of changing the conduct of any group or government, might or might not be included within the responsibilities of the agency that deals with "terrorist" crimes, depending on whether

it posed a continuing danger and on whether it raised the same unusual public fears as more calculated political violence.

The definitions of terrorism thus differ markedly in what they include. In this book, I focus on the core of the problem by looking only at conduct that satisfies almost all the definitions. The violence I discuss involves in most instances politically motivated activity by groups, not individuals. It is more than a nonpolitical expression of rage, and it is meant to work by raising concerns and fears, and not just by the isolated assassination of a government leader such as Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin or U.S. President John F. Kennedy. Borrowing from our State Department's definition, it is violence conducted as part of a political strategy by a subnational group or secret agents of a foreign state (although secret and violent repression of political opponents by an authoritarian government is just as bad).

The political violence I emphasize is plainly directed at noncombatant targets; I set aside the hard question of where to place off-duty soldiers or the industrial managers producing weapons of war. The violence is directed at people, not just property, and carried out for a political purpose, although that purpose may only be partially formed. Like the Committee of Interior Ministers of the European Union, I would exclude situations of warfare. And, to preserve moral fervor, I limit "terrorism" to political violence in or against true democracies.

Every state would consider activities fitting this core definition to be "terrorism." It overlaps very substantially with Alex Schmid's definition of terrorism as behavior that would amount to war crimes if it occurred during war. Like Netanyahu, I can think of very little excuse for an assault on civilians to advance political purposes. But an excessive moralism is likely to get in the way of clear thought about what the United States should do. I favor a more sophisticated strategy than Netanyahu's recommendation that we unleash "security services to take the vigorous action needed to uproot the terror in the midst of [our society]," and use our "operational capacity to eviscerate domestic terror."[5]

Not only Netanyahu's prescription, but also his moral judgements are simpler than many would adopt. Terrorism is inexcusable in a democracy, but would it have been "evil *per se*" for a German resistance group to adopt the same targets as Allied air forces chose in Hitler's Germany? The African National Congress, Provisional Irish Republican Army, and the radical organizations of the Jewish settlers before the creation of Israel all engaged in attacks on civilian targets, and yet their leaders have been treated as heroes.

The Difficulties of Categorizing Terrorism Sensibly

The fundamental difficulties of defining terrorism are compounded by the difficulties of shaping policy for a type of behavior that fits poorly into more familiar categories. Terrorist acts are both crimes and forms of warfare, and in both respects are unlike what we are used to. Terrorism involves unique psychological phenomena—no less real for being poorly understood—used as part of a totally unfamiliar type of political strategy based on violence. The likelihood and strength of a terrorist campaign depends upon sociological factors we are not accustomed to examining; the danger to the society in which the terrorism takes place depends upon the divisions within it before the terrorism occurs. Consider each of characteristics in turn.

As a crime, terrorism is different. Most crimes are the product of greed, anger, jealousy, or the desire for domination, respect, or position in a group, and not of any desire to "improve" the state of the world or of a particular nation. Most crimes do not involve—as part of the plan for accomplishing their objectives—trying to change the occupants of government positions, their actions, or the basic structures and ideology of a nation. Some would argue that violence carried out for political purposes is more altruistic; others would vigorously deny that. But all would agree that political violence is different from ordinary crime, in that it is planned to force changes in government actions, people, structure, or even ideology as a means to whatever ends the perpetrators are seeking with whatever

motivations drive them towards those ends. It is in that sense that the U.S. State Department definition says that the violence is usually "perpetrated for political reasons."

As a form of combat, terrorism falls into the category of violent ways of pursuing political ends, a category that includes war between states, civil war, guerrilla warfare, and coup d'état. It differs from these other forms of violent combat for political ends in that it is carried out during peacetime in secret, without occupying or claiming to occupy any significant territory, and without organizing large groups to defy government authority openly. Indeed, for many, the same violent acts have a different status when they accompany a civil or guerilla war. Nor are they considered "terrorism" when they accompany a war between nation states, for then they become a part of the normal craft of spies or bomber pilots rather than a form of politics or secret warfare that works primarily or exclusively through its own terrifying means.

Terrorism has traditionally used relatively unsophisticated weapons in a limited number of ways to inflict relatively little damage. Within these constraints terrorism can only hope to produce limited political results, since in almost every country the government controls vastly superior military and civilian security forces. Even such limited actions may occasionally force a change in particular occupants of office by carefully planned assassinations like those of Anwar Sadat and Yitzhak Rabin. They may even bring about a change in a particular policy by simply imposing sufficient costs upon a government that the government will choose to abandon a weakly held policy, as when the United States left Lebanon after the truck bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut. But any broader objectives, such as pulling out of places of considerable strategic or political importance or abandoning important alliances or polices, are far more difficult and far less likely. And changing the government itself would require the politically violent group either to overpower the government's military force or to shift the loyalties of the government security forces or the public at large sufficiently that they would broadly deny their support to the state. Overthrow of a government may be the result of a civil war or a coup d'état, but it is

a highly unlikely result of the relatively small-scale violence by those outside of government that we associate with terrorism.

Combining crime and armed combat, terrorism is an illegal form of clandestine warfare that is carried out by a sub-state group to change the policies, personnel, structure, or ideology of a government, or to influence the actions of another part of the population—one with enough self-identity to respond to selective violence. (The burning of African-American churches in the American South in 1996 would fall in the latter category.) Throwing domestic politics into this witches' brew, terrorism is also a form of violent domestic politics (directed at democratic regimes, if we are to retain for our definition of "terrorism" some moral clarity) carried out without organizing mass opposition.

The Politics of Violence

From the terrorists' perspective, the major force of terrorism comes not from its physical impact but from its psychological impact. Terrorism is rarely an effective form of insurgent violence in the sense of achieving its sponsors' ultimate goals, but it can cause enormous problems for democratic governments because of its impact on the psychology of great masses of citizens, the "audience" referred to in the U.S. State Department's definition. Terrorist bombings, assassinations, and hostage-taking have, in nations with a free press, the ability to hold the attention of vast populations. By generating a combination of fear and fascination, terrorists have been able to capture important parts of the agendas of great nations.

Realistic policymakers take this power of terrorism over the imagination of vast parts of the public, and the reaction to that power first by a free press and then by responsive elected officials, to be central facts of political life, whether or not the fascination and anxiety produced by terrorism can be adequately explained. The unusual power to generate mass concerns by relatively easily accomplished bombings, killings, or hostage-taking is useful to terrorists because it allows them to send extremely forceful messages to audiences who would otherwise be unaware even of their existence. That

is the unusual politics of terrorism. To whom is the message sent and for what purpose? Despite what I have so far suggested, the answer is not always "the government."

The goals of terrorist groups are unrealistic in terms of the ordinary, mainstream politics of the country. To change this, terrorists sometimes address their frightening message to the center of a democratic political spectrum, to those who have been indifferent to the cause that is bringing forth violence. Part of the center's support of government policy flows from an assumption that the government can maintain order and security, and that it reaches fair results through an orderly process of decision. Terrorism can undermine this assumption. A sustained course of acts of political violence can show that safety does not necessarily flow from support of government policies.

The costs imposed by even small-scale political violence may cause people relatively indifferent to the merits of the cause to urge the government to pursue a policy of accommodation with the insurgent group in order to eliminate those costs. This objective seems to explain the long history of terrorism in Northern Ireland and Israel, which in both cases has had some measure of political success. Both the Provisional IRA and the Palestine Liberation Organization have achieved a legitimacy and encountered a spirit of accommodation that might not have been present without their campaigns.

Alternatively, the political violence may be addressed more directly to the government and its supporting elites. A campaign of assassinations may aim to cause resignations by bringing fear to those in particularly crucial positions, such as judges or prosecutors. The Italian mafia's killing in 1992 of the great anti-mafia magistrates Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Boisellino had this purpose. Threats to kill mayoral candidates by guerrilla forces opposing the government in Colombia in 1997 had this intended effect. Terrorism may simply demand so much of the attention of government leaders that they find it necessary to compromise so that they can direct their energies elsewhere. For terrorists of the law-and-order Right, acts of random violence, disguised as acts perpetrated by insurgent radicals, can be

"addressed" to the attention of security forces in the hope of provoking a coup and a military takeover. Such an effort occurred in Italy in the 1970s, most dramatically with bombings of crowded facilities.

A third potential audience for terrorist acts consists of those who are potential supporters of an insurgency. Acts of terrorism can show these people that the government is not as powerful as it portrays itself, but rather is weak and vulnerable. Or terrorist acts may generate a response by the government that is repressive enough to make allies of those who would otherwise be neutral. When the terrorist cause is to create a separate state, a particularly important subcategory within the audience of potential supporters consists of foreign governments that may be brought, by public accounts of repression, to support their separatist brothers. An act of terrorism—the assassination by a Serbian nationalist of Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand in 1914—was a major factor in precipitating World War I because it led Austria and Germany to declare war on Serbia and Russia.

Acts of small-scale political violence can deepen social divisions within a society by increasing anger, fear, and suspicion between groups, thereby furthering the cause of an insurgent group that wants to broaden demands for a separate state for its members. And once the society is severely divided along racial, religious, or ethnic lines, acts of terrorism may allow one group to claim leadership where there are many contestants for this post. After all, violent actions can show power and ruthlessness, two attributes generally sought in leaders in difficult times. This too was a part of the terrorist strategies in Northern Ireland and Israel.

A final audience of terrorist violence may be the active members of the terrorist group itself. Setting aside the ordinary crimes that may be committed to finance the violent organization, terrorist group members may engage in violence because dramatic actions are necessary to maintain the group's morale and self-esteem. In addition, the threat of punishment at the hands of the government for playing a role in violent acts of terrorism may lock in members who might otherwise quit. Violence is also frequently the means of punishing informers and even those who have merely left the group, and

the means of sending a message to others who might contemplate the same actions.

However, it may be a mistake to classify audiences and messages too finely. Many acts of political violence are relatively uncalculated, and represent a desperate effort to be heard, i.e., to push a handful of people or their concerns onto the national stage, where attention is generally monopolized by presidents and senators, governors and mayors, cabinet officers and media stars. For many people there is no other way to get onto the stage of national attention for their policies, resentments, or personality. Most of us agree not to be on that stage and to be satisfied with the role of voters or contributors or persuaders. But a determination to be a far more central player can lead individuals to take the only readily available shortcut to world-wide prominence, and that may be to link a violent act to a deeply felt cause.

The Effectiveness of Terrorism

How can limited violence to convey a message hope to affect the policies of a modern democratic state? Often, it cannot. The terrorists are simply mistaken about their prospects or, perhaps like Timothy McVeigh, so angry that they are indifferent to them. But in two situations, terrorism can and does affect the policies of modern democratic states. First, it can be effective when it is operating in a country whose population is already severely divided into suspicious and hostile groups. That has been the situation, for example, in Northern Ireland, Israel, India, Sri Lanka, Spain, and a number of other states. Second, terrorism can work when a government deems acceptance of the terrorist demands, even considering the effect of acquiescence on the frequency of future demands, as far less onerous than the ongoing campaign of terror.

Nations whose populations are already severely divided against each other

One factor is of greater importance than any other in predicting the consequences of political violence, the likely durability of a terrorist campaign, and the helpful or harmful effects of the steps the govern-

ment may take. That factor is the extent to which the terrorists' cause is sympathetic to a sizeable, disaffected portion of the population in the place where they are operating. When a society is already dangerously divided, terrorism can do great damage and is likely to be resistant to government efforts—far more than in relatively healthy democracies that enjoy strong support across the broad spectrum of their populations. Fortunately, the United States is not a severely divided society with regard to any present domestic or foreign terrorist threat. Still, it is worth pausing to look at the risks faced by countries such as Israel, Northern Ireland, and Spain.

No extended explanation is necessary for the increased difficulties of capturing the members of a terrorist group or preventing their violent actions in a situation where sizeable numbers of a population sympathize with their cause. At a minimum, law enforcement will find it far harder to get information about what occurs among people and in areas sympathetic to the terrorists. Beyond this, the terrorists will find it far easier to secure communications channels, physical facilities, money, and recruits. This is particularly true when the societal divisions are not purely political but are also ethnic, religious, or racial, pulling on deep strands of group loyalty that rival national allegiance.

What is less obvious is how terrorist acts can affect the familiar dynamics of transition from a secure, multi-ethnic society into a dangerously divided society characterized by high levels of violence, hatred, and mistrust among ethnic groups. The steps of this process can be encouraged and accelerated by targeted political violence such as we have seen in Northern Ireland, Israel, Sri Lanka, and Bosnia. A dangerously divided society is thus, for many separatist groups, a promising stage on the way to a separate national government, and terrorism can force the pace of this dangerous transition.

How then does terrorism change the dynamics of social division? First, although ethnic tensions escalate into hatreds and then violence between members of opposing groups even without the encouragement of terrorists, the process can be speeded by terrorist attacks on an opposing group, inviting tit-for-tat responses and fanning the flames of hatred and fear. This was long common in

Northern Ireland and in Israel. Indeed, retribution by members of the victim group against innocent members of the group from which the terrorists come—one of the most divisive of actions—is likely to be seen, mistakenly, as a deterrent to the terrorist attacks.

Second, a cycle of intergroup violence makes it difficult for members of either group to occupy a middle ground of tolerance and understanding. Even moderates may come to need an intense ethnic solidarity to remain secure, and the more violent members of each ethnic group are the natural leaders in providing that security. These processes can even be speeded by terrorists secretly attacking members of their own group. The process continues with increasing segregation of frightened ethnic communities. With this, prejudice grows and rumors are accepted as truth. Fewer members of either group find it comfortable to urge understanding of the other.

Third, each group will seek to bring the government to its side. The government may try to remain "neutral," but even the most natural steps—such as focusing investigation on the members of Group A if an attack was directed at a group they hate—are likely to solidify divisions, create deep distrust, and invite attacks on government security forces that can add a whole new dimension to the cycle of violence.

Accompanying all these forces are several others that sometimes produce still more threats. The group less favored by the government may turn to foreign enemies of the government for support. Others in the population may become less and less willing to consider ameliorative measures demanded by a besieged but combative portion of the population. Terrorist groups are likely to begin policing and enforcing their own demands on members of their ethnic group.

All of these paths towards hatred, fear, and division can be greased by the acts of even a few terrorists. The assassination of a leader of the opposition, an attack on one's own group falsely attributed to others, the killing of moderate rivals for leadership of a particular group, and attacks on law enforcement authorities—all of these can play major roles in speeding the dissolution of a multiethnic society. Thus, such societies are the most promising setting for

important political "successes" for that form of violent politics accessible to even small groups—terrorism.

Where the damage of terrorism is unusually great compared to the costs and risks of giving in to the terrorists' demands

Understanding the relative costs to the government of giving in and of holding out is also critical to understanding the contest which terrorism is all about. The violent group's demands of the government determine in part how likely the government is to give in—only "in part" because giving in once will likely encourage further demands by this group or others using the same threat of violence. Moreover, looking at the contest from the terrorist side, the terrorist group is likely to hold together and pursue its course longer if it sees its prospects for success as substantial. It will see them as substantial if it believes that the cost of political violence to the government far exceeds the costs to the government of compliance with the terrorists' demands, even when the government takes into account the likelihood of encouraging future terrorist demands.

The simple fact is that a handful of people can use murder, arson, and kidnapping to create public concerns strong enough and widely enough held to affect the policies and politics of the United States in ways totally disproportionate to their numbers, but far less because of the damage they can actually impose than because of its psychological, political, and social effects.

Some explanations of the great psychological impact of the limited damage generally caused by terrorism are helpful. As a start, social scientists have noted that people give far more weight to events that are vivid.[6] We do not have to search far for what makes terrorist acts "vivid." They are particularly frightening because terrorists purposely kill or maim otherwise uninvolved citizens. They also deprive us of a safeguard, neutrality, which we normally consider sufficient for our safety: the protection obtained by avoiding active or prominent involvement on either side in situations of conflict. A further explanation for the great psychological impact of terrorism is that terrorist attacks *seem* to present an immediate as well

as violent challenge to the existing governmental structure of order and authority and may herald the prospect of escalating disorder and a forcible change in government.

What costs can a terrorist group actually impose on a relatively healthy and stable democracy such as ours? For the United States, terrorism does not pose any great national security threat to our stability or well-being as a nation—unless the traditional reluctance of terrorists to use weapons of mass destruction changes. With a single bomb, the terrorists in Oklahoma City killed as many people as die in homicides in three ordinary days in the entire United States. That is terrible, but even such an immense explosion represents far too small a percentage change in the annual violent death rate in the United States to be considered a threat to the nation as a whole.

Terrorism is, of course, a threat to public order that the national government must address. There is a real risk of the death of some citizens each year. If unpunished, terrorism can also encourage a spread of political violence by imitation as radical political groups compete for public attention or as others attempt to deal with the danger through forms of vigilantism. Psychologically, there is likely to be widespread fear, totally disproportionate to the actual danger, causing changes in economic and social behavior such as people avoiding air travel or downtown stores, or arming themselves unnecessarily.

National politics are also affected. Terrorism has an immense capacity to capture public attention, to cause otherwise ignored issues (such as the U.S. policy in the Middle East or at Waco) to displace others on a national agenda, and to make a few previously anonymous terrorists into relatively major participants in a political debate that would otherwise relegate them to very marginal roles. More fundamentally, terrorism threatens the domestic support for a government whose citizens consider their security its first obligation. Especially because politically motivated violence openly challenges the state's right to a monopoly of the use of force, a sense that the government is ineffective at keeping people safe from those who challenge the state's legitimacy can seriously undermine confidence, generating fear, disrespect, even ridicule. It is costly for a govern-

ment to look impotent when being challenged so directly in its capacity to protect citizens.

All this is compounded by fears of international repercussions. An apparent inability to deal with an open challenge to the power and legitimacy of the government may make a nation look like a less strong and trustworthy ally.

What costs of giving in prevent a government from buying off the terrorist group? In some cases, the terrorist group is asking far too much, when the alternative is bearing the limited costs of terrorism until the group's members can be found, tried, and locked away. Israel would not, for example, comply with any demand that would significantly endanger its national security in order to end terrorist violence, which has never killed as many Israelis as traffic accidents do. Germany, Italy, and France had no adequate reason to change their forms of government to the satisfaction of the Red Army Faction, the Red Brigades, or Direct Action.

Terrorists can anticipate success only if what they are asking is of relatively minor importance to a strong and stable government. For example, the United States left Lebanon as a result of the bombing of the Marine barracks on October 23, 1983, and it secretly sold TOW anti-tank missiles to Iran in 1986 for use against Iraq in the hope of obtaining the release of a handful of American hostages, using the proceeds of the sale to support anti-Sandinista forces in Nicaragua. France promised, at about the same time, to obtain a very short sentence for a terrorist, Georges Ibrahim Abdallah, in order to end a bombing spree on his behalf. Even in such cases, governments must consider seriously the impact of giving in on future political demands and, to a lesser extent, on their relationships with other nations: allies may find them weak or untrustworthy in a shared battle against particular forms of political violence, or—in the case of the U.S. sale of missiles to Iran—hypocritical. So even making deals, as in these three cases, generally makes sense only if the capitulation can be sufficiently obscured. That hope and expectation lay behind the government action in each of these examples.

If the government concludes that the costs of giving in to terrorist demands are too high, compared to the expected cost of political

violence until the group can be caught and dismantled, the terrorist group may try to raise these costs either by escalating the damage from individual attacks or by showing an ability and a willingness to continue a course of violence over months or years or even decades. Even with purely conventional terrorist weapons, the Provisional IRA in Northern Ireland and the Palestine Liberation Organization in the Middle East had the capacity and tenacity to continue a costly terrorist campaign, wearing down the willingness of both Britain and Israel to continue to bear the costs, and building the prospect that the violence would continue for a very long period. The negotiations that have resulted in Northern Ireland and the Middle East surely reflect some success of these strategies. But in both situations, the contest between the government and the violent groups took place in the only truly dangerous setting for resisting terrorism: a society already severely divided along racial, religious, or ethnic lines.