Passive Sponsors of Terrorism

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PROOF

Open and active state sponsorship of terrorism is blessedly rare, and it has decreased since the end of the Cold War. Yet this lack of open support does not necessarily diminish the important role that states play in fostering or hindering terrorism. At times, the greatest contribution a state can make to a terrorist's cause is by not acting. A border not policed, a blind eye turned to fundraising, or even the toleration of recruitment all help terrorists build their organisations, conduct operations and survive.

Such passivity in the face of terrorism can be deadly. In conducting the 11 September 2001 attacks, al-Qaeda recruited and raised money in Germany with relatively little interference, enjoyed financial support from many Saudis unobstructed by the government in Riyadh, and planned operations in Malaysia. None of these governments are active sponsors of al-Qaeda – indeed, several are bitter enemies – but their inaction proved vital to al-Qaeda's success. Despite the importance of what I call 'passive sponsors' of terrorism, we lack any comprehensive understanding of their role. As a result, attention has been paid almost exclusively to active sponsors, and we often try to solve the problem of passive support with the same instruments we use against active sponsors, leading to the failure of coercion and, at times, making the problem worse.

The list of countries that tolerate at least some terrorist activity is long, and is not confined to the Middle East or even to states ruled by aggressive dictators. For example, France allowed various Middle Eastern terrorist groups, as well as Basque separatists, to operate with impunity in the 1980s; the United States permitted an umbrella group representing the anti-Tehran Mujahedin-e Khalq to lobby in the United States until 1997; the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam raised money with little interference in Canada and the United Kingdom; and Venezuela allowed the FARC to operate on its territory.[1]

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Active state sponsorship involves a deliberate regime decision to assist a terrorist group, often in the form of arms, money, training or sanctuary. Passive support, however, is a different animal. A regime can be said to be guilty of passive support if it *knowingly allows* a terrorist group to raise money, enjoy a sanctuary, recruit or otherwise flourish without interference, but does not directly aid the group itself. Passive support has the following characteristics:

- the regime in question itself does not provide assistance but knowingly allows other actors in the country to aid a terrorist group;
- the regime has the capacity to stop this assistance or has chosen not to develop this capacity; and
- often passive support is given by political parties, wealthy merchants or other actors in society that have no formal affiliation with the government.

This definition excludes regimes that deliberately provide government support to a group – such backing would qualify as active support. This definition also excludes governments that try to quash terrorism but fail (e.g. Spain and the Basques) and governments that are not aware that significant support is occurring within their borders (e.g. Indonesia and al-Qaeda before 2001). Most important, this definition excludes countries that lack the capacity to counter terrorism effectively even though they seek to do so.

Saudi Arabia's relationship with al-Qaeda and other jihadist causes; Pakistan's indirect ties to al-Qaeda; and the United States' experience with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) offer three contrasting cases of state sponsorship of terrorism. All three illuminate the general problem. First, the passively supported groups represent the two most common types of terrorist groups today: jihadist and ethnonationalist. Secondly, the problems all three governments encountered offer insight into the interplay between a regime's desire to crush terrorism and its ability to do so. Thirdly, in all three instances the attitude toward the terrorist group changed, leading to a decline in passive support. Finally, the regime type of the sponsoring state varies, with one democracy, a monarchy and a military government.

Saudi Arabia and Islamic radicalism

Saudi Arabia is often painted as an open patron of Islamic radical groups, including al-Qaeda. Former CIA operative Robert Baer, for example, notes that 'Saudis fed the ATM machine for the [9/11] hijackers'.[2] In July 2003, 191 members of the House of Representatives supported a bill to add Saudi Arabia to the official US list of state sponsors of terrorism.

Other observers, however, portray the kingdom as al-Qaeda's leading target and note the deadly enmity between Saudi Arabia's ruling family,

the al-Saud, and Osama bin Ladin. These defenders emphasise al-Qaeda's repeated denunciations of the al-Saud, attacks on US and Saudi targets in the kingdom, and reports that Saudi Arabia tried to assassinate bin Ladin in Sudan.[3] Summing up this perspective, former US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Charles ('Chas') Freeman declared, 'You can be damn sure that any al Qaeda operative is on the Saudi wanted list.'[4]

Both perspectives contain elements of truth. Al-Qaeda did draw considerable assistance from the people of Saudi Arabia even as the Saudi regime tried to defeat the movement. The vast majority of support, however, fell into the passive category. Riyadh's tolerance declined after 11 September, and fell even further after the May 2003 attacks that occurred in the kingdom itself.

The al-Saud's bargain

The modern Saudi regime has worked with religious leaders since its inception. Saudi Arabia's founder, Abdel-Aziz bin Abdel Rahman al-Saud, forged an alliance with the followers of Mohammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab, who practiced and sought to spread a puritanical version of Islam.

To legitimise their leadership, to unite Saudi Arabia's fractious tribes, and because of a genuine belief in Wahhabi teachings, the al-Saud made religion a centrepiece of their rule. The kingdom followed sharia (Islamic law) as interpreted by the Wahhabis, and religious officials had a tremendous say in education and other issues. Religious leaders became important state employees and intermarried with royal family members. King Abdelaziz and his successors turned to them to legitimise major decisions, such as the 1990 invitation to the United States to send forces to defend the kingdom against Iraq. The royal family also supported mosques, schools and preaching in Muslim communities around the world. Throughout the century, the al-Saud drew on this relationship and portrayed themselves as a pious Sunni Muslim alternative to rival ideologies such as Arab nationalism, communism or Iranian-backed Shia fundamentalism.[5]

Since 1975, Saudis have spent an estimate $70 billion to spread Wahhabism outside the kingdom through mosques, schools and Islamic centres. US officials claim that Saudi Arabia for many years allowed money to flow into the hands of terrorist organisations. The range of causes was wide, from Kashmir and Chechnya to Bosnia, Afghanistan and, of course, the Palestinians.[6] David Aufhauser, the Treasury Department's general counsel who also led the Bush administration's interagency process on terrorist financing, declared in June 2003 that Saudi Arabia was the 'epicenter' for the financing of al-Qaeda.

Much of this money flows through charities and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Some, probably most, of the charities' money

went to legitimate humanitarian or standard missionary work, but terrorists diverted some of it. Terrorists used the money to purchase weapons, recruit new radicals and run training camps. In addition to diverting money, radicals often subverted local branches of these charities. NGOs offer terrorist operatives a legitimate job and identity, as well as access to local communities. The CIA found that one-third of the Muslim charities in the Balkans helped various Islamic terrorist groups.[7]

Even when money did not go directly into the hands of terrorists, critics also blast the Saudis for supporting charities, mosques, educational institutions and other activities that provide places for terrorists to recruit, train and, most importantly, be indoctrinated in a virulent, anti-Western ethos. Although much of the purpose of many of these charities is financial assistance, they also endorse the value of violent jihad, a hostile view of US policy, and a sentiment that Arab regimes are not legitimate. Such proselytising enables al-Qaeda to appeal to recruits already sympathetic to its worldview. Juan Zarate, a Treasury Department official, noted that 'Al Qaeda has taken advantage of state-supported proselytising around the world'.[8]

The Saudis also promote ideas that accept violence, particularly against non-Muslims, at home. Sermons praise jihadist causes and criticise American and Jewish influence. In Saudi textbooks, the portrayal of the world echoes that of many jihadists, extolling martyrdom, criticising the imitation of the West, calling for restrictions on non-Muslims, and contending that Islam is on the defensive and is undermined by modern trends such as globalisation and modern science.

Motivations

Saudi support for radical Islamists may be significant and widespread, but it is far different from the type of backing given by Iran, Pakistan or other more traditional state sponsors of terrorism. Saudi motivations include a fear of offending domestic support for jihadist causes; a sense that the al-Qaeda threat was limited; and a belief that the danger might actually increase through confrontation. As a result, the regime did not develop its counterterrorism capacity.

Saudi leaders step gingerly in the world of Islamist politics

Saudi leaders step gingerly in the world of Islamist politics. Jihadist causes, many of which are linked directly or indirectly to al-Qaeda, are popular in the kingdom. Islamist insurgencies in Kashmir, Uzbekistan, Chechnya and elsewhere for many years were viewed as legitimate struggles that deserved the support of fellow Muslims. The Palestinian cause enjoys particular sympathy. When jihadists champion these issues, they stand with

many Saudis behind them. The Saudi regime has backed several of these causes, including supporting Islamic radicals in Afghanistan after the end of the anti-Soviet jihad, in part to curry favour with Islamists at home.

The strength of this popular viewpoint comes in part from the widespread backing given to the anti-Soviet jihad in the 1980s. The Saudi regime actively backed this struggle, and it encouraged other Saudis to provide financial support. It also praised many of the Saudis who fought in Afghanistan, while more extreme elements of Saudi society lionised them. Thus, individual participation in jihad was widely viewed as admirable.

Support for al-Qaeda itself appeared strong in much of the kingdom even after 11 September. Indeed, the Interior Minister Prince Nayif himself declared that 'we find in our country those who sympathise with them', an unusually candid reference from a regime that often denies any domestic problems whatsoever.[9] Saudis comprise one of the top nationalities within al-Qaeda. Almost half of the Saudis polled in early 2004 had a favourable opinion of bin Ladin's sermons and rhetoric.[10]

Anti-Americanism in the kingdom is strong. Polls taken in early 2003 indicated that an astonishing 97% of Saudis hold a negative view of the United States, a dramatic increase from previous years. Saudi media, with the tolerance of Saudi officials, regularly criticised the United States, highlighting civilian deaths during the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan and the second Gulf War, and the mistreatment of Arabs in the United States. These specific grievances related to terrorism build on the tremendous hostility toward US support for Israel and perceived mistreatment of the Iraqi people through sanctions during the Saddam Hussein era.[11]

Although the Saudi regime is a monarchy that draws legitimacy from its religious credentials, it does respond to public opinion. The result was a measure of tolerance for radical activity in order to avoid public measures that would discredit the regime. This has proven a problem for actions against al-Qaeda even after the organisation's 2003 attacks on the kingdom.

A limited threat?

The Saudi regime has a history of successfully managing dissent. The regime weathered pan-Arabism and the Iranian revolution by both suppressing sympathisers and co-opting them. Opposition of any stripe is not well organised in Saudi Arabia, making it hard for the al-Saud to be dislodged. The regime also tries to take the wind out of their critics' sails by endorsing, on the surface at least, many of their proposals for change. Moreover, the regime enjoys support from Saudi religious leaders, who repeatedly issue decrees backing the regime's controversial decisions such as introducing television, inviting US forces to protect the kingdom in 1990, and participating in peace talks with Israel.[12]

On the surface, many Islamist causes, even those linked to violent groups, did not appear to pose a direct threat to the al-Saud. Most of these groups have a national focus rather than a global one. Despite the different objectives and theatres of operations of these groups, however, aiding one often indirectly supports another. These groups share a broad ideology that emphasises anti-Western themes, the value of jihad, and hostility toward secular Muslim regimes. Moreover, they often share logistics cells, drawing on the same individuals to procure passports and weapons. Part of al-Qaeda's mission, moreover, was to knit these disparate causes into a broader struggle.[13]

Saudi officials believed that they had eliminated al-Qaeda in the kingdom itself in the mid-1990s through their own security efforts. In the early 1990s, Islamist political activists tried to press the regime for reform, but this pressure did not shake the al-Saud's grip on power. In 1993 and 1994, it detained militants who criticised the government and co-opted others, often through financial support. The regime also pushed many senior religious figures to retire.[14] With these successes in mind, the royal family probably judged that shutting off support for various Islamist causes, including those with close links to al-Qaeda, was not worth the cost to its self-proclaimed image as the defender of the Muslim faithful.

Fear of retaliation

The al-Saud also may have perceived that the threat from al-Qaeda would increase if the family confronted the organisation. Simon Henderson, a critic of the Saudi regime, claims that after the 1995 bombings in Riyadh, which killed five Americans and two Indians, the Saudi interior minister and the minister of defence and aviation paid bin Ladin and al-Qaeda to not conduct attacks in the kingdom. They were willing to offer the terrorists money even though they recognised that they would attack US targets overseas.[15]

Judging such a claim is difficult, as evidence is understandably sparse. Most who make these claims do so with almost no specifics to support their evidence. Moreover, bin Ladin funded anti-Saudi causes early on and otherwise directly challenged the al-Saud – activities that usually lead the al-Saud to confront a threat more directly. Indeed, there are numerous claims that the Saudis tried to kill bin Ladin in Sudan. The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (the '9/11 Commission') reports that it 'found no evidence that the Saudi government as an institution or senior officials within the Saudi government funded al Qaeda'.[16]

However, Saudi Arabia did pay protection money to various Palestinian groups that threatened to kill regime members and that challenged its nationalist credentials. In addition, in diplomacy it has tried to buy off or

co-opt threats from Nasser's Egypt and Saddam's Iraq – though was also willing to confront them directly when co-optation failed.

Incapacity

The Saudi government is highly personalised, and its ability to act decisively is limited. Decision-making is highly centralised, and the number of competent bureaucrats is low. Saudi Arabia's military forces remain inept, even by regional standards, despite having billions of dollars lavished on them over the course of several decades and being trained by American, British and other Western forces.[17] The Saudis have a limited capacity to crack down on terrorist financing in particular. Before 11 September, the Saudis lacked a financial regulatory system and did not oversee their charities. Because the kingdom does not impose taxes on its citizens, it often did not collect basic financial data that allow for the enforcement of financial controls.[18] Capacity and regime priorities are intimately linked. Many of the problems above have long been known, but the al-Saud made few efforts before 11 September to address them.

An end to passive support?

Saudi Arabia's willingness to tolerate support for radicals linked to al-Qaeda and, to a lesser degree, other Islamist groups ranging from Chechens to Hamas, fell considerably in recent years. The 11 September attacks on the United States dramatised the lethality of al-Qaeda and greatly increased American pressure on the Saudi regime to halt any support for the attacks. Saudi Arabia has long depended on the United States for security, and the two governments, though not the two peoples, are very close.[19] Not surprisingly, the regime responded to the tremendous US pressure after 11 September by stepping up cooperation on counterterrorism and reducing its tolerance for many activities related to violence. The failure to act risked serious costs for the Saudi government, endangering a vital relationship that was at the core of its security. Moreover, it feared the political embarrassment occurring on a daily basis, as critics around the world blasted the al-Saud for its links to terrorism.[20] The scale and lethality of the attacks also led some members of the al-Saud to recognise that al-Qaeda posed a direct threat to their own position.

Efforts to crack down on support climbed far more dramatically, however, after the 12 May 2003 attacks where 34 people died in multiple attacks on compounds housing US security personnel in the kingdom. The 8 November 2003 attacks, where 17 died and another 100 were wounded, kept the momentum going. Because the victims of the November attacks were largely Arab, the attack had little popular support, even among those who

might be sympathetic to an anti-Western strike. The 2003 attacks removed any vestige of hope that the al-Saud could divert al-Qaeda and focus it outside the kingdom. The subsequent investigation further dispelled any lingering illusions. Saudi security forces uncovered a large network of well-armed radicals in the kingdom.

After these attacks, the Saudis implemented a number of unprecedented measures to fight terrorism, greatly increasing overall counterterrorism capacity. The Saudis excised much, though not all, of the material denigrating other religions from school textbooks. They increased their regulation of informal money transfers, stepped up fund-management responsibility and increased prohibitions on charitable donations outside the kingdom. The regime publicised a list of names and photos of the most-wanted terrorist suspects and visibly increased security – very public measures for a regime that prefers to operate in the background. Crown Prince Abdullah travelled to Russia and condemned the Chechens' violence. These measures suggest that the al-Saud recognised the connections among disparate Islamists, even those not directly attacking the kingdom, and how their proselytising bolsters al-Qaeda. Testifying in March 2004, Ambassador Cofer Black, then the US special coordinator for counterterrorism, declared that the Saudis understood the threat they faced and were closely cooperating with US officials.[21]

Prince Abdullah travelled to Russia and condemned the Chechens' violence

The May and November attacks also helped the regime work with the conservative religious establishment in the kingdom. The clerics were highly critical of extremists for attacking fellow Muslims, in contrast to past attacks that targeted Americans primarily. Even former firebrands such as Safar al-Hawali and Salman al-'Awda – sheikhs whom bin Ladin himself had praised in the early 1990s – condemned the May attacks.[22]

Counterterrorism capacity remains a problem for the kingdom, though it is improving. Saudis are working with American intelligence and law enforcement officials, who are training them on tracking terrorist financing, investigating techniques, and other aspects of counterterrorism. Despite these improvements, the kingdom remains a developing nation, where inefficiency is often the rule rather than the exception. Oversight of charitable giving remains incomplete, and many of the kingdom's new initiatives have not been tested.[23]

Taken together, the main motivations behind Saudi tolerance – domestic sympathy, perceived low risk of attack, limited costs for inaction, and incapacity – all diminished. Although some support, particularly financial support, almost certainly continues, the regime is far more energetic

in trying to stop it and is building its capacity to do so. As a result, Saudi Arabia has gone from a major passive sponsor of terrorism to a regime that is committed to crushing it.

Pakistan and al-Qaeda

Like Saudi Arabia, Pakistan indirectly facilitated al-Qaeda, but in a far different way. Saudi Arabia's primary contribution was financial. Pakistan, in contrast, assisted al-Qaeda by allowing other militants it backed in Kashmir and Afghanistan to work with the organisation, thus providing it with additional manpower and tremendous freedom of action. For Pakistani leaders, al-Qaeda was a means of harnessing the global jihad, to direct it against India's rule in Pakistan and to further Islamabad's interests in Afghanistan. Over time, support for al-Qaeda became bound up in the regime's legitimacy at home. In the face of heavy US pressure, Pakistan turned against al-Qaeda after 11 September, but its efforts to crush the organisation remain fitful at best.

Al-Qaeda as a tool: Kashmir and Afghanistan

Pakistan's links to al-Qaeda cannot be separated from Islamabad's efforts to support militants in Kashmir against India and its relationship with the Taliban. In both instances, Pakistani leaders appear to have tolerated al-Qaeda, hoping to exploit the movement for their own purposes. Numerous regime figures active in Pakistan's policy toward Afghanistan and Kashmir may have interacted with al-Qaeda to advance Islamabad's interests in these areas. Even more important, Pakistani officials knowingly allowed numerous substate groups, particularly Islamist ones, to work with al-Qaeda with regard to Kashmir and Afghanistan.

Since the outbreak of violence in Kashmir that has claimed perhaps 60,000 lives, Pakistan has worked with a range of militant organisations – most of them Islamist ones – active against Indian rule there. These organisations have regularly split, merged and changed names, but among the most important are Jaysh-e-Mohammad, Harkat-ul-Ansar/Harkat-ul-Mujahedin, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Hizbul Mujahideen. With the support of the government, these jihadist groups raise money and recruit militants to fight in Kashmir and have access to training and weapons for their volunteers. Equally important, they have worked with Islamist political movements in Pakistan.

Al-Qaeda has interwoven itself with these jihadist organisations and with the Pakistani religious groups that back them. It also has forged ties to militant groups that focus on Pakistan itself, including Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, both of which are virulently anti-Shia. The extent of these ties is considerable. These organisations share an ideological affinity with al-Qaeda, believing in the need for Islamic government, the

importance of jihad as an individual duty, the corruption of most Muslim regimes, and the fundamental hostility of India and the United States. In addition, bin Ladin has provided them with both material and operational aid in their struggle in Kashmir, helping direct money to them from the vast network of charities he influences throughout the Muslim world. Al-Qaeda also trained members of these groups in its camps in Afghanistan.[24]

Afghanistan policy also played a vital role in Pakistan's attitude toward al-Qaeda. The extent of Pakistan's role in the Taliban's creation and initial successes around this time remains unclear, but as the Taliban swept through Afghanistan in 1994 and afterwards, the movement gained the support of much of Pakistan's political establishment. For Islamabad, the Taliban represented a force that could unify Afghanistan while keeping it close to Pakistan. Moreover, the Pashtun-dominated movement sat well with the Pakistani officer corps and intelligence services, which also had many Pashtuns.[25]

Al-Qaeda proved an important prop for the Taliban, helping it gain and consolidate power in Afghanistan – and thus advancing Islamabad's interests as well. As the 9/11 Commission contends, 'It is unlikely that Bin Ladin could have returned to Afghanistan [in 1996] had Pakistan disapproved.'[26] Bin Ladin channelled tens of millions of dollars a year to the Taliban, twice the movement's official budget. Much of this money came through Islamic charities and other private donations that bin Ladin was able to influence.[27]

Equally important, al-Qaeda trained and recruited fighters to help the Taliban in its struggle to control Afghanistan. The majority of al-Qaeda's training camps in Afghanistan focused on training fighters to help defeat the Northern Alliance, not to conduct sophisticated terrorist attacks against the West. Indeed, one of the most important units to the Taliban was Brigade 055, a military unit composed of Arab fighters loyal to bin Ladin.

In practice, support for Afghanistan and Kashmir began to blur. The Pakistani government worked with the Taliban and with international jihadist organisations such as al-Qaeda to send foreign fighters to Kashmir.[28] Afghanistan became important as a place to house, train and recruit them. Islamabad sent many fighters bound for Kashmir to Afghanistan to train and to gain combat experience. Al-Qaeda members forged personal ties with Pakistani radicals in Afghanistan. Groups fighting in Kashmir and sectarian groups forged ties in Afghanistan that later shaped their activities in Pakistan itself.[29]

The quest for legitimacy

Al-Qaeda has links to key elements of Pakistani society that go beyond its particular activities in Kashmir and Afghanistan. Support from several religious groups of varying degrees of radicalism is especially strong. This

support has made it difficult for the Musharraf government (or any conceivable alternative) to crack down on the organisation.

Successive Pakistani governments have courted the favour of religious groups in Pakistan, increasing the value of al-Qaeda's ties to these organisations. From 1977 until his death in 1988, Zia ul-Haq's government tried to co-opt the Islamists through concessions in order to prevent them from challenging the regime and existing elites.[30] Successive civilian governments also tried to woo the Islamists. Al-Qaeda has made inroads into Pakistan's military and intelligence service.[31]

Bin Ladin and his followers also enjoy genuine popular support in Pakistan. Many poorer Pakistanis see him as a modern-day Robin Hood, a man who combines 'both faith and action', in Pakistan-expert Stephen Cohen's words. Many middle- and upper-class Pakistanis also support the organisation, seeing it as one of the few Muslim movements that successfully stands up to the United States.[32] Reflecting this popularity, pilgrims visit the sites where al-Qaeda members died, and those who cooperate with the Pakistani government against the organisation are often ostracised.[33]

Bin Ladin enjoys genuine popular support in Pakistan

As in Saudi Arabia, al-Qaeda also basks in the glow of the other causes it champions, particularly in Kashmir but also in Afghanistan. In addition, the United States in particular is deeply unpopular in Pakistan, further bolstering al-Qaeda's popular appeal. An August 2003 poll taken by Herald-Gallup indicated that 69% argued for hurting Americans 'where possible' in response to US strikes in Iraq.[34]

A double-edged sword

By supporting the jihadist cause, Pakistan has weakened its own stability. Many Islamists, including those not linked to violence, do not separate domestic Pakistani politics from their actions in Afghanistan and Kashmir.[35] The result has been tremendous sectarian violence. Many of the Islamist activists also want a new regime in Islamabad. As one member of Lashkar-e-Taiba commented, 'We won't stop – even if India gave us Kashmir … We want to see a Taliban-style regime here."[36] And several groups are good to their word. Even before the post-11 September crackdown, in 1999, one Sunni group, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, tried to assassinate Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. Musharraf also suffered repeated assassination attempts after 11 September.

This growth in the Islamists' strength has if anything accelerated in recent years, bolstered by the collapse of other political parties and causes. Various secular leaders who stressed nationalism or reform became discred-

ited by rampant corruption and economic stagnation. In the October 2002 elections, the Islamists made their strongest showing ever, gaining 60 seats in parliament (out of 342) and taking control over the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan.

Changes after 11 September

In response to US pressure, Islamabad moved against al-Qaeda after 11 September, but there were limits. Keeping various groups fighting against India in Kashmir while moving against al-Qaeda proved a fine line that is difficult to walk.

The 11 September attacks made supporting al-Qaeda, even indirectly, far riskier for the Musharraf government. Angering Washington might have moved the United States permanently into India's camp and risked destroying Pakistan's wobbly economy. Siding with the United States halted the tilt toward India and provided a sorely needed financial infusion. Pakistan's military in particular benefited. The United States pledged $3bn to Musharraf's government in security and development aid and waived many sanctions that had been imposed due to Pakistan's nuclear programme.[37]

In exchange, hundreds of Pakistani officials worked with the United States in making key arrests, including such senior figures as Abu Zubaydah and Khalid Shaykh Mohammad. In addition, Pakistan ended its support – at least its overt support – for the Taliban.

In response, al-Qaeda has struck out at the Musharraf government, which in turn engendered a cycle of escalation. The organisation repeatedly tried to assassinate Musharraf, and several times came quite close to success. In addition, it attacked Western targets in Pakistan. The Musharraf government increased its effort against al-Qaeda and even made military forays into hitherto inviolable tribal areas in winter 2003 and 2004 in an attempt to root out operatives there.

By contrast, the Musharraf government's record against groups active in Kashmir is uneven at best. Many of the radicals arrested were released, and several of the banned organisations simply reformed under different names – though a year later several were again banned. Much of Pakistan's support for various jihadist causes, particularly those linked to Kashmir, has simply become more covert.[38] Most religious schools still have not been registered, and little curriculum reform has occurred. Because the apparatus that supports the militant groups in Kashmir is also the one that works with al-Qaeda, keeping it intact enables bin Ladin's organisation to continue.

Because of continued popular and Islamist support for al-Qaeda, there are limits to what the Musharraf government would do. The regime does see al-Qaeda as a genuine threat and, after each assassination attempt on Musharraf,

tries harder to suppress it. However, the Musharraf administration is weak domestically and wants to avoid alienating Islamist groups and being seen by military figures as a puppet of the United States. As a result, as a senior US intelligence official wrote in 2004, 'President Musharraf will move army units into the tribal areas to placate Washington – as he did in the fall of 2003 and early 2004 – but odds are they consistently will be just a bit tardy when opportunities arise to capture or destroy major al Qaeda or Taleban targets'.[39]

A lack of capacity is yet another problem. Much of al-Qaeda's activities take place in remote tribal areas or hidden in cities. Pakistan's security forces have limited influence in many of these areas, making it hard for them to act – particularly as such actions would be seen as part of an unpopular, US-directed crackdown. Pakistani military forces are also poorly trained and equipped to fight in rugged terrain, being short of helicopters and other vital systems. Thus, even if the Musharraf government had the will to move against al-Qaeda and its numerous affiliates decisively, its capacity to completely extirpate the movement is doubtful.

The United States and the Provisional IRA

America's self-image as a staunch opponent of terrorism and its closeness to London make it all the more ironic that for many years the United States tacitly allowed Irish republican terrorists to raise money and organise on US soil with relatively little interference. Like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, the United States allowed terrorists to flourish due to domestic sympathy, limits on capacity (in this case for legal reasons), and little sense of threat.

The United States was long a hotbed of Irish resistance to British rule. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, waves of immigrants left Ireland for America, bringing with them an accumulated hatred of the British for their brutal rule and a strong sense of Irish nationalism.

The modern chapter of the IRA's history and its link with America began as the so-called 'Troubles' engulfed Northern Ireland in 1969. Sympathy from the United States – followed by money and weapons – grew dramatically. Numerous organisations sprang up to advance the Irish cause. The IRA received considerable funding from the Irish Northern Aid Committee (often known as NORAID), an organisation that collected private financial contributions from US citizens. The Irish-American diaspora provided important financial assistance to the IRA, including between three and five million dollars raised by NORAID. Contributions were especially high after high-profile British violence, such as the 30 January 1972 'Bloody Sunday' killing of 14 Irish Catholic protesters by British troops.[40]

Much of this money went for weapons, either directly or indirectly. In the 1970s, NORAID played a major role in sustaining the families of IRA prisoners

and freed up almost £200,000 to spend on arms each year. NORAID was the most public organisation linked to the Irish nationalist cause, but much of the arms procurement and other illicit activities went through low-profile groups. US operatives helped procure the IRA's signature weapon, the Armalite, as well as the full-automatic M-16 (and later the M-60) and other weapons. The US network provided several hundred weapons to the IRA a year – a large number, as the number of full-time IRA fighters averaged perhaps 500 in the

The diaspora acted as a haven for IRA fugitives

1970s and 200–300 in the 1980s. This steady supply was vital, as the British often seized weapons as they disrupted operations or killed IRA members. The US connection was particularly vital in the early years, as the movement sought to establish itself as a viable resistance force.[41]

The diaspora also acted as a haven for IRA fugitives. NORAID helped IRA operatives find new identities and jobs in the United States, enabling them to escape justice in Northern Ireland.[42] This sanctuary boosted the morale of operatives, and it frustrated British intelligence by decreasing their ability to gain information from arrested IRA members.

In addition to money, arms and a haven, IRA supporters also placed political pressure on the British government through their political influence in America. Many Irish-Americans opposed violence but saw the IRA and its republican supporters as a key to Northern Ireland's future and believed it should be part of negotiations over the future of the north. For example, during hunger strikes by IRA activists, Thomas ('Tip') O'Neill, the speaker of the House of Representatives, demanded that Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher recognise the hunger strikers' demands. Speaker O'Neill at times allowed legislation to pass that went against the British position.[43]

The diaspora's pressure served several purposes. Thatcher, for example, often moved away from hardline positions against negotiations with Irish nationalists in response to US pressure or even to offset potential criticism. In addition, US pressure made her and other British leaders more willing to press Protestant opponents of negotiations to make concessions.[44] Constant Congressional scrutiny and criticism also embarrassed the British government and the local administration in Northern Ireland and emboldened the IRA. Finally, this pressure helped generate political protection for IRA fundraising and other activities, making it politically more costly for politicians to crack down on the IRA's support network.

The US government interfered only fitfully with the IRA's efforts to raise money or acquire weapons. Needless to say, the IRA's struggle against the British government posed no direct security threat to the United States. For part of the 1970s, the FBI ignored IRA efforts.[45]

Domestic politics explains much of why the United States did not act to shut down fundraising and other activities. Irish-American political clout in the United States can be considerable. Over 40m Americans claim at least some Irish heritage, and much of the Catholic Irish population is concentrated in the northeast and north central part of the country.[46] The broader perception among Irish Americans that the British were backing a discriminatory Protestant government made it harder for the US government to crack down on IRA supporters.

Capacity was also a problem, in that US laws allowed some fundraising and support for widows and other dependents, even if this activity was indirectly linked to terrorism. Efforts to stop fundraising immediately led to civil-liberties concerns, particularly with regard to freedom of speech. Similarly, a US judge refused to extradite an IRA member who killed a British soldier, noting that this act, while deplorable, clearly fell under the 'political offense exception' and thus the suspect was not subject to extradition.[47]

The British government put pressure on the United States to end the weapons smuggling and to allow suspects to be extradited for trial. Pressure grew in the 1980s, as British Prime Minister Thatcher made action against the IRA an important issue in the close bilateral US–United Kingdom relationship. IRA fundraising proved an embarrassment to the Reagan administration, which had made a tough stance against terrorism a standard part of administration rhetoric.[48]

British pressure, and the IRA's often brutal attacks, produced results. Starting in the mid-1970s, the United States began to deny visas to prominent Sinn Féin and IRA spokesmen. In the early 1980s, members of a leading gun-running network were arrested, as were several other rings. British pressure also led to changes in US laws. In May 1986, President Reagan helped push through the Senate the Supplementary Treaty, which excluded violent acts from being treated as political offenses.[49]

The US government's reinvigorated effort, while incomplete, had a significant impact. Bell argues that 'arms procurement was no longer a patriotic lark' but rather a risky endeavour. By the mid-1980s, large-scale arms procurement in America had collapsed. The collapse of the US network was painful for the IRA, reducing the number of weapons in its hands and the level of violence it perpetrated until it could find alternative suppliers – a move that pushed the IRA toward Gadhafi's Libya.[50]

In addition to direct diplomatic pressure on the US government, the British played to the American people, including Irish-Americans. London painted the IRA as murderers, stressing that their use of violence actually harmed their efforts to advance the northern Irish Catholic cause. Over time, support for the IRA fell and did not increase until the movement began to embrace peace.[51]

PROOF

The Irish Republic's condemnation of the IRA and political pressure on its supporters made the British campaign especially credible. Dublin did not always endorse London's position, but it firmly rejected the IRA's. Dublin saw the IRA as an embarrassment, hurting both the chances for peace and more broadly the image of Ireland in America.[52]

As the Irish struggle wore on – and as the perception of the British changed from that of a hostile occupying force – the Irish-American diaspora became a source of pressure for peace. By the 1980s, many Irish-Americans no longer saw a British withdrawal and a united Ireland as a key to the problem. Leading Irish-American figures, many of whom were not affiliated with NORAID and the armed struggle, pressed Gerry Adams and other IRA leaders to deliver peace in the 1990s.[53]

Explaining passive support

The Saudi, Pakistani and US experiences suggest that passive support usually occurs for three reasons, often in combination: domestic sympathy for the group; a sense that the group poses little threat to the host government itself; and relatively low costs of inaction, or even indirect benefits.

Domestic sympathy for the terrorist group's cause (or at least sympathy among an influential segment of the population) is a common motivation. Both polling and the large number of Saudis in al-Qaeda suggest considerable sympathy for bin Ladin. Support is high for related Islamist causes that al-Qaeda supports and draws on – including Muslim insurgencies in Kashmir, Chechnya, Palestine and elsewhere. Its anti-US agenda is resonant in the kingdom. In addition, al-Qaeda was able to tap into broader Saudi support for spreading its Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, an extremely popular policy and one that the regime repeatedly used to improve its political standing. Al-Qaeda enjoyed a similarly high level of popular support in Pakistan, and its ties to the well-organised and influential Islamist organisations only further magnified its influence. Much of the Catholic Irish-American community sympathised with the IRA's objectives if not its means. This community was well organised and was particularly strong in several key constituencies, including that of Speaker O'Neill.

Terrorist groups often play on the perceived legitimacy of their cause (the defence of Islam, Irish independence) even when the supporting populations do not endorse a more violent struggle. When the cup is passed in the name of these causes, supporters often ask few questions. In particular, providing aid to humanitarian causes linked to the terrorist group is not seen as endorsing violence. In reality, however, NGOs and humanitarian assistance groups play a vital role for terrorist organisations. NGOs are often fronts for operatives to recruit, operate with a legitimate cover, and

PROOF

raise money. Even when the money does not support the operatives them-selves, the humanitarian activities enable the group to extend its support base among the population at large by creating a sympathetic community. This enhances the group's appeal beyond violence and gives it access to additional potential recruits.

Because passive support is far less open than active support, it often is viewed as more acceptable internationally – and thus has fewer diplo-matic costs. Only when nations make it an important bilateral issue do the costs begin to mount. For example, the US decision to crack down on the IRA's more blatant activities in the United States came only after the British government repeatedly pushed Washington.

Passive support appears to require a low level of perceived threat from the terrorist group by the government that hosts it. The IRA, of course, was no threat to the United States. Although al-Qaeda was violently opposed to the al-Saud and made this clear in the early 1990s, the kingdom itself did not see it as a mortal danger until much later. Until the May 2003 attacks on Saudi soil, the Saudi regime appears to have seen al-Qaeda more as a dangerous nuisance that could be diverted rather than as a direct danger that must be confronted.

Islamabad's tolerance of al-Qaeda, of course, went beyond a sense of limited costs and included strategic opportunism. Al-Qaeda's willingness to train and fund jihadists fighting in Kashmir and its close ties to the Taliban made it a useful tool for Pakistan in its struggle against India and its desire to help the Taliban consolidate power in Afghanistan. Islamabad, however, proved more aggressive against al-Qaeda as the organisation emerged as a threat against the Musharraf regime.

Taken together, these factors – the low level of perceived threat, the domestic costs of cracking down on a popular group, and the limited diplomatic price – all combine to make the toleration of terrorist activity preferable to actively trying to confront terrorists. When passive support serves additional policy benefits, it is often particularly attractive.

A lack of capacity

Passive support can also be partly explained by a lack of capacity. Saudi Arabia's ability to crack down on al-Qaeda financing was (and remains) limited, given the poor financial oversight structure in the kingdom. The Saudi regime was also handicapped by a lack of skilled personnel. Pakistan has only limited influence in the North-West Frontier Province, Waziristan, and other areas where al-Qaeda is active today, making it hard for the regime to completely crush the movement.

A lack of capacity can also involve legal restrictions as well as insti-tutional competence. Many activities related to terrorism – proselytising,

fundraising and even recruiting – are at times protected by laws governing free speech and free association. The IRA's ability to enjoy a haven in the United States and to raise money was bolstered by US laws governing the rights of those engaged in political activity, even if such activity involved violence. US protection of IRA murderers on the grounds of their political activity was a particularly glaring weakness.

The desire to invest in and build capacity, however, is directly linked to the perceived costs and threat and the level of domestic support for terrorism. For Saudi Arabia, the effort needed to crack down on support for radical groups abroad – and the domestic political costs this would entail – began tentatively as US pressure skyrocketed after 11 September, but it was not seen as completely worthwhile until the May 2003 attacks posed a direct threat to the kingdom itself. Pakistan made no effort to increase the central government's power over tribal areas until after 11 September, when US pressure made at least some effort necessary.

The impact of passive support

Passive state support for terrorist groups often transformed weak groups into strong ones or made strong ones even more capable. The logistics of the global jihad were often run out of Pakistan. Al-Qaeda may have raised hundreds of millions of dollars from Saudi Arabia, helping it set up a truly global network and enabling it to back guerrilla movements in Chechnya, Kashmir, Afghanistan and elsewhere. These dollars reinforced the movement's pre-eminence, enabling it over time to direct as well as support movements promoting its ideology over more national agendas. IRA fundraising in America enabled the movement to become extremely well-armed over time, making it far harder for Britain to break its back.[54]

For al-Qaeda, backing from Saudi Arabia also proved vital for recruitment. Not only did many Saudis join the movement directly, but the activities the kingdom supported made recruiting Muslims overseas far easier. Saudi-backed NGOs, including several that had close ties to the regime, helped al-Qaeda operatives find local cover for their activities. Riyadh's efforts to spread Wahhabism created numerous mosques and cultural centres that radicalised local Muslims, making them far more receptive to al-Qaeda's message.

Passive support also greatly aided actual operations, allowing terrorist groups to strike more effectively or to work with relative impunity. Pakistan's willingness to look the other way enabled al-Qaeda to tap into a range of groups active in Kashmir and Pakistan itself. Islamists in Saudi Arabia

Saudi-backed NGOs helped al-Qaeda operatives find local cover

PROOF

ran NGOs that had close links to terrorist groups, helping build a radical network to conduct operations without government interference. For almost two decades, the IRA acquired most of its arms from the United States. The IRA was also able to send its operatives to the freedom of the United States, making it easier to encourage more dangerous activities and preserving its institutions in the face of a very aggressive British counterterrorism effort. In all cases, passive support enabled the movement to survive more easily and discredited the government they opposed – top goals of all terrorists.

Why does passive support diminish?

In all three cases examined, passive support for the terrorist group diminished over time. Such shifts occurred for several reasons. One was that the costs associated with passive support grew because outside pressure greatly increased, because the group itself became more of a threat domestically, or both. Another was a change in popular sentiment, at least in Saudi Arabia, whereby terrorists went from being seen as Robin Hood figures engaged in an admirable struggle to being seen as dangerous and undesirable thugs. This shift in sentiment may occur because of effective public diplomacy on the part of the victim or changes in targeting by the terrorist group.

Saudi Arabia's shift occurred in response to the increased costs of tolerating radical Islamist activities and, eventually, the recognition of the grave threat the movement posed to the kingdom. For many years, the al-Saud was content to let the sleeping dog of Islamic radicalism lie, hoping to exploit rather than confront the movement. The diplomatic costs of such tolerance grew enormously after the 11 September attacks threatened the kingdom's alliance with the United States. Even more important, the subsequent attacks in the kingdom in 2003 demonstrated that the movement being tolerated was more dangerous to ignore than to confront. Pakistan required a shift in the strategic landscape. One of Islamabad's main reasons for tolerating al-Qaeda – advancing its agenda against India – became a liability after 11 September, when continuing such toleration would have led the United States to tilt towards India.

In the United States, a shift in public opinion played a major role in ending passive support. In both cases, the lustre of the terrorists' methods diminished, in part due to the lobbying efforts of other governments. As with Saudi Arabia, both governments also feared the diplomatic costs of alienating key allies over their tolerance of terrorism. Pakistan represents an exception, as key interest groups and much of the populace did not turn against bin Ladin. This continued public support explains many of the limits to Musharraf's current efforts against the organisation.

Change in passive support is often directly linked to the actions of the terrorist group. The American role shifted in response to the IRA's gradual embrace of negotiations over violence. Al-Qaeda's decision to attack Saudi Arabia in May 2003 greatly sped up the slow Saudi shift against the movement. Al-Qaeda's attempted assassinations against Musharraf also made his government more willing to openly confront the group.

Shifts in public opinion, outside pressure and the direct threat the terrorists pose often overlap in practice. For example, outside pressure led the Pakistanis to undertake limited crackdowns on groups linked to al-Qaeda, which then turned against the Musharraf regime, undertaking assassinations and other actions that increased the immediate danger to the regime and threatened their popularity.

The limits of coercion

The recommendations for ending, or at least reducing, passive support are straightforward conceptually but difficult in practice. Whenever possible, outside governments should try to raise the costs to regimes of tolerating passive support and woo popular opinion to reduce their direct backing for the terrorists and to make it politically easier for regimes to act. Such efforts, however, have a different logic than does traditional coercion of state sponsors of terrorism.

Imposing new or increasing existing costs on an adversary regime is a time-honoured tactic, often referred to as coercive diplomacy. The range of influence that governments exercise over other governments is vast and varied: it can range from diplomatic pressure to threats of sanctions and limited military punishment.[55]

Coercers using such instruments on passive sponsors, however, face several challenges beyond what they would face against typical active sponsors of terrorism. The passive sponsors examined in this essay were the coercer's partners on other issues. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are both US allies on a number of vital issues in addition to counterterrorism – and the US–UK relationship went far beyond the British problems on Northern Ireland. Traditional coercive means such as limited military force are thus not on the table, as other forms of cooperation would be jeopardised. Strikes on Saudi Arabia before 11 September, for example, would have alienated a supporter in the Middle East peace process, a source of bases for US military activities in the Persian Gulf, a swing producer of oil that has used its leverage to help ensure price stability, and an important partner on a host of other issues.

Another problem is that a coercer's attempts to browbeat or force a government to crack down on support for terrorism may only reinforce the popular image of the coercer as a bully and of the terrorists as Robin Hood figures. For

example, the August 1998 strikes on Afghanistan lionised bin Ladin at a time when he faced significant problems in Afghanistan. As Maulana ul-Haqq, a senior Pakistani religious leader, told Peter Bergen, a journalist and expert on al-Qaeda, the US strikes transformed bin Ladin into

> a symbol for the whole Islamic world. Against all those outside powers who were trying to crush Muslims. He is the courageous one who raised his voice against them. He's a hero to us, but it is America who first made him a hero.[56]

As a result, the movement's prestige soared, and al-Qaeda was able to greatly expand fundraising and recruiting. In addition, the Taliban felt newly committed to protecting their guest, fearing that expelling him would allow the movement to be painted as a US and Saudi stooge.

Passive sponsors also have the option of escalation by becoming active sponsors. Regime leaders often fear popular anger far more than outside coercion and, if foreign governments cut economic ties or put other forms of pressure on them, they may choose to try to shore up their domestic position by embracing rather than rejecting radicalism.[57] The Musharraf government in Pakistan, for example, would face considerable opposition if it cut all support for the jihadists in Kashmir. If the United States cut aid or otherwise pushed the regime into a corner, it might easily decide to increase ties to the radicals.

These difficulties are illustrated through a closer look at one of the traditional means Washington has used to coerce state sponsors: using the military to target the terrorists and to strike at regime leadership and infra-structure targets. The United States launched cruise missiles at Sudan and Afghanistan in 1998, bombed Iraq's intelligence headquarters in 1993, and conducted air strikes on Libya in 1986. Most dramatically, in 2001 the United States overthrew the Taliban in Afghanistan, blaming it for hosting al-Qaeda and allowing the 11 September attacks.

For passive sponsors, however, military pressure offers little help and indeed would be inconceivable, as many are otherwise allies. Even if there were no issue in a bilateral relationship other than counterterrorism, mili-tary strikes would be likely to backfire when used on passive sponsors. The strikes would increase popular resistance to cooperation with the foreign power and reduce government incentives to do so. US strikes on Libya in 1986 and on Afghanistan in 1998, for example, did little damage to the terrorists but increased their sponsors' determination to support them.[58] As a result, regimes would probably become less cooperative, reducing the level of assistance they provide to the foreign power.

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Indeed, military assistance rather than military strikes may be a better way to fight passive sponsorship. If regimes do seek to turn the corner on fighting terrorism, assistance in training and equipping local military and security forces can be exceptionally useful. At times, foreign forces may even fight alongside local allies, helping them locate, capture or kill terrorists.

While force is often unrealistic or a recipe for disaster, simple embarrassment proved surprisingly effective, though by itself it was not sufficient to end support. The spotlight held on Saudi Arabia after 11 September humiliated the al-Saud, making them scramble to at least appear cooperative. Similarly, the Reagan administration felt, correctly, that its credibility as a staunch foe of terrorism was challenged whenever London criticised its toleration of the IRA activities on US soil. Pakistan, however, was not moved by embarrassment. It took risks to its strategic objectives and economy for Islamabad to change its position.

As with military pressure, economic pressure is often a blunt instrument that can easily backfire. Sanctions, one of the most common forms of punishment against traditional state sponsors, often provoke more anger than they do cooperation and can further decrease a country's incentives to cooperate.

Economic pressure can easily backfire

Economic pressure, however, should remain an option. As this essay argues, passive sponsorship can be an exceptionally powerful form of support for terrorists, particularly when it allows a dangerous group like al-Qaeda to raise money, recruit and otherwise sustain its organisation. If the other recommendations for changing a passive supporter remain unproductive, economic penalties should be introduced as a form of coercion. Initially, they should take a symbolic form at first, sending a diplomatic signal and acting to embarrass rather than inflict significant economic pain. Travel bans for regime leaders fall into this category. If such limited means fail, more serious sanctions may be in order. These should be designed to sway popular opinion and increase the costs for decision makers. Transparency and flexibility are particularly important. It must be clear what, exactly, the sanctions are linked to and that the pressure will end if passive supporters act against the terrorists.

*   *   *

Effective policy to stop passive sponsorship must occur at two levels. Governments should press regimes to end passive sponsorship through embarrassment and, if necessary, limited economic pressure. More important, however, is raising awareness of the concept of passive sponsorship and taking steps to fight it at a popular level. If the government does start to turn the corner, bolstering its capacity is also helpful.

A first step would be to convene an international convention that will identify state obligations to combat terrorism within their borders. At such a forum, Western governments should highlight indirect support for terrorists, as well as more obvious ties. This effort would be part of a broader campaign to lower the high bar for what constitutes state support for a terrorist group. Too often, Iran's ties to Hizbullah or Syria's support for various rejectionist Palestinian groups are depicted as what constitutes state support for terrorism. Yet this approach wrongly assumes that only direct and relatively obvious support matters. For groups like al-Qaeda, and for many lesser groups as well, tolerance of their fundraising and recruitment makes them far more formidable. The presumption should be on governments to do all that they can do.

Bolstering capacity is a more straightforward task. This can range from technical assistance, such as helping improve databases or information systems that track terrorists and their activities, to advice on intelligence reorganisation and legal reform. Training can be particularly important, as many skills related to shutting down passive support, such as financial tracking, are relatively rare in government circles, particularly in the developing world. Money can also be provided to boost the size and skills of security and intelligence services. Passive support may also require going beyond the government. Jessica Stern, for example, contends that the United States can help Pakistan tamp down unrest and support for terrorism by strengthening Pakistan's secular education system, thus weakening the religious schools that are an important base for jihadists.[59]

Many regimes in the developing world, however, have only a limited capacity to absorb US or other outside assistance meant to shore up their ability to fight terrorism. In Saudi Arabia, for example, the myriad new programmes the kingdom has introduced in cooperation with the United States suffer from a lack of skilled and experienced personnel. As a result, even the most dramatic turnaround in the regime's intentions to crush terrorism will produce only modest results for many years.

Diminishing popular support – the core of the problem – is far more complex. Efforts to play up the terrorist group's missteps and atrocities should be done at the popular level as well as at the governmental level. British efforts to play up the IRA's bloodiness, together with London's willingness to work with peaceful opposition figures, helped cut support for the IRA among Irish-Americans. Propaganda campaigns are notoriously difficult, however, and US efforts to demonise al-Qaeda have conspicuously failed.[60] If anything, al-Qaeda may be more popular in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia today than before 11 September.

Working indirectly to diminish support may be essential. The Irish Republic's willingness to criticise the IRA made a profound impression on

Irish-Americans, bolstering the British case considerably. Given the deep unpopularity of the United States in Saudi Arabia, US efforts to diminish al-Qaeda's lustre may only burnish it. It would be more effective if respected Muslim authorities would criticise the organisation, as these voices have credibility with the key audiences.

Although passive support is superficially less menacing than traditional sponsorship, it plays a major role in helping groups sustain themselves and conduct operations. Indeed, as traditional sponsorship has declined, passive support has emerged as one of the leading counterterrorism problems. The experiences of Saudi Arabia and the United States suggest that passive support can be reduced, and even ended, through policy intervention. Success, however, requires rethinking what state sponsorship of terrorism is and reevaluating the means we use to fight it.

Acknowledgements

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57 For an argument on how developing world regimes are more likely to focus on internal over external threats, see Steven David, *Choosing Sides: Alignment and Realignment in the Third World* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. 6.
58 See Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) for a review.
59 Stern, 'Pakistan's Jihad Culture', p. 126.
60 For a highly critical review of US capabilities to influence foreign publics see the Report of the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, 'Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World,' 1 October 2003.

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