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DANIEL L. BYMAN

Executive Summary

For many terrorist groups, a state's tolerance of or passivity toward their activities is often as important to their success as any deliberate assistance they receive. Open and active state sponsorship of terrorism is 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 policing a border, turning a blind eye to fundraising, or even tolerating terrorist efforts to build their organizations, conduct operations, and survive.

This passivity in the face of terrorism can be deadly. In conducting the September 11 attacks, al-Qa'ida recruited and raised money in Germany with relatively little interference, enjoyed financial support from many Saudis unobstructed by the government in Riyadh, planned operations in Malaysia, and sent operatives to America. None of these governments are "sponsors" of al-Qa'ida—indeed, several were and are bitter enemies of the organization—but their inaction proved as important, if not more so, than the haven the group enjoyed in Afghanistan in enabling al-Qa'ida to conduct the attacks.

This Saban Center analysis paper analyzes the vexing issue of passive support for terrorism by looking at four countries that have passively supported, or at least tolerated, terrorism: Saudi Arabia's backing of radical Islamist causes and organizations, Pakistan's indirect links to al-Qa'ida, Greece's tolerance of the 17 November Organization, and the United States' blind eye for Provisional Irish Republican Army fundraising. In each of these instances, the government allowed terrorists to operate, and at times flourish, despite being aware of their activities.

Explaining Passive Support

Passive support has a different set of motivations and a different set of solutions than does conventional state assistance. Regimes may turn a blind eye for a variety of reasons, including strong popular support for the terrorist group's cause, a lack of direct threat, and limited costs to the government that tolerates the terrorists' activities—and at times all three.

Passive support for terrorism can contribute to a terrorist group's success in several ways. Passive support often allows a group to raise money, acquire arms, plan operations, and enjoy a respite from the counterattacks of the government it opposes. Passive support may also involve spreading an ideology that assists a terrorist group in its efforts to recruit new members.

Passive support may be a more intractable problem than open support for terrorism. Passive support introduces new actors beyond the supportive regime into the counterterrorism equation, several of which

are not typical interlocutors for states. Diasporas, for example, often play a vital role in passive support. In addition, public opinion plays a vital role in motivating passive support.

Many of the measures used to fight state sponsors such as sanctions or military strikes would even prove counterproductive, alienating an already hostile populace when better solutions might involve wooing popular sympathy. Outside governments can affect these motivations by trying to sway supportive populaces against the terrorist group and by imposing costs on the government for failing to act, as well as for action. However, it is often difficult for outside governments to convey the necessary sense of threat or to sway domestic opinion sufficiently to change a government's tolerance of terrorism, particularly if the group does not pose an immediate danger to the regime that tolerates its activities.

Lack of counterterrorism capacity is linked to passive support, but it is not identical to it. Some governments simply cannot act. However, many governments do not develop their police forces, strengthen counterterrorism laws, increase intelligence, or otherwise develop counterterrorism capacity because they do not see terrorism as a serious problem or due to sympathy for the terrorists' cause. Outside powers, however, can have a tremendous impact on counterterrorism capacity, both through direct assistance and by pressing the government to improve its ability to fight terrorism.

Recommendations for Halting Passive Support

Shutting down passive support is vital. To do so, the United States must go beyond its traditional emphasis on direct state support to terrorist groups and instead recognize the many dangers of inactivity.

Force is of at best limited utility in stopping passive sponsorship. Strikes on Saudi Arabia before September 11, for example, would have alienated a partner in the Middle East peace process, a source of basing for U.S. 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. Even if there were no issue in the bilateral relationship other than counterterrorism, military strikes would be likely to backfire when used on passive sponsors. The strikes would increase popular resistance to cooperation with the United States and reduce government incentives to do so.

Indeed, military assistance rather than military strikes may be the most important way to fight passive sponsorship. If regimes do seek to turn the corner on fighting terrorism, U.S. assistance in training and equipping local military and security forces can be exceptionally useful.

Economic pressure can also backfire, but it nevertheless should remain on the table. 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, sending a diplomatic signal and acting to embarrass rather than inflict significant economic pain. 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.

Bolstering other states' intelligence capacity is also often necessary. This can range from technical assistance, such as helping improve databases or information systems that track terrorists and their activities to advice on intelligence reorganization 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.

Shaping the information environment is another means of reducing passive support. Simple embarrassment

proved surprisingly effective in the case of Saudi Arabia, though by itself it was not sufficient to end support. The spotlight held on Saudi Arabia after September 11 humiliated the Al Saud, making them scramble to at least appear cooperative. The United States should also consider creating a list of passive sponsors and their activities in an attempt to "name and shame" them into better behavior.

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. Propaganda campaigns are notoriously difficult, however, and U.S. efforts to demonize al-Qa'ida have conspicuously failed. Given the deep unpopularity of the United States in Saudi Arabia, it would be more effective if respected Muslim authorities would criticize the organization, as these voices have credibility with the key audiences.

Ensuring a common standard for what constitutes support for terrorism is necessary for an effective strategy against passive sponsorship. Most important, we need the international community to recognize that sponsorship includes far more than when a regime arms, trains, or hosts a group: it should also include states that turn a blind eye when their citizens permit such activity.

A better legal standard is difficult due to disagreements over what constitutes passive support and the possible infringement on legitimate political behavior. Nevertheless, considerable progress is possible. All governments must prohibit any citizens' support that knowingly goes toward a group using violence. Any support for obviously violent activities, such as arms purchasing or military training, must also be prohibited. To prevent groups from taking advantage of individuals' ignorance (whether willful or not), charities should be required to disclose the recipients of their patronage. The United States should also establish a formal category for states that refuse to renounce passive sponsorship and link various economic and diplomatic penalties to it.

The above steps cannot be done by the United States on its own: they require working with other governments to change their legal codes, improve their intelligence gathering, shape popular opinion, and so on. A first step is to convene an international convention that will identify state obligations to combat terrorism within their borders. At such a forum, the United States should highlight existing 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. The presumption should be on governments to do all that they can do.

For any of the above steps to have credibility, the United States must also ensure that its own citizens are not providing passive sponsorship to any existing group. Even if the terrorist group is not harming Americans, U.S. citizens' support for groups like the Irish Republican Army would damage U.S. efforts to curtail others' support for terrorists.

Passive support is an old problem, but our understanding of its importance is new. Addressing it requires dramatic changes in U.S. institutions, policies, and ways of doing business. Until then, passive sponsorship is likely to remain one of the leading challenges in the war on terror.

The Author

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Passive Sponsors of Terrorism

Saudi Arabia has few friends in America today. Members of Congress and the American media have lambasted the Kingdom for backing al-Qa'ida and promoting hatred of the United States. Senator Bob Graham, the former chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence who co-led an investigation into the September 11 attacks, argues that the September 11 hijackers "were actively supported" by "our supposed friend and ally, Saudi Arabia."[1] As he accepted the Democratic Party's nomination for President, Senator John Kerry declared, "I want an America that relies on its own ingenuity and innovation—not the Saudi royal family"[2]—a remark that generated perhaps his biggest applause of the evening. Across the aisle, William Kristol, a leading neoconservative close to the Bush administration, has declared that "it is time for the United States to rethink its relationship with Riyadh."[3] In July 2003, 191 members of the House of Representatives supported a bill to add Saudi Arabia to the official U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism. Reflecting this deep anger at the Kingdom, polls indicate that fewer than one third of Americans have a favorable opinion of Saudi Arabia.[4]

Other observers, however, portray the Kingdom as al-Qa'ida's leading target and note the deadly enmity between Saudi Arabia's ruling family, the Al Saud, and Usama bin Ladin. These defenders emphasize al-Qa'ida's repeated denunciations of the Al Saud, attacks on U.S. and Saudi targets in the Kingdom, and reports that Saudi Arabia tried to assassinate Bin Ladin in Sudan.[5] Summing up this perspective, former U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Charles ("Chas") Freeman declared, "You can be damn sure that any al-Qa'ida operative is on the Saudi wanted list."[6]

Both perspectives have elements of the truth. Saudi Arabia was both a deadly enemy of al-Qa'ida and its best friend. Perhaps surprisingly, Saudi Arabia's seemingly paradoxical approach to al-Qa'ida is fairly

1 Graham, *Intelligence Matters: The CIA, the FBI, Saudi Arabia, and the Failure of America's War on Terrorism.*
2 Kerry, "Speech to the 2004 Democratic Convention."
3 Kristol, "Testimony before the House Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia."
4 Fabrizio, McLaughlin, and Associates, Inc., "Saudi Arabia Image by Americans Very Negative."
5 Michael Scott Doran, for example, argues that Bin Ladin's primary goal is revolution within the Muslim world, with Saudi Arabia being at the top of the list. Attacks on America are designed to weaken regimes such as the Al Saud, not to defeat the United States. Doran, "Somebody Else's Civil War," p. 23. For reports on the supposed Saudi attempt to kill Bin Ladin in Sudan, see Weiser, "Plot to Kill Bin Laden Disclosed" and Weaver, "Blowback."
6 As quoted (derisively) in Baer, *Sleeping with the Devil,* p. 202.

typical of states' relationships with terrorist groups. Even as the Saudi regime actively tried to quash al-Qa'ida, the Al Saud looked the other way as al-Qa'ida-linked individuals and groups raised money and otherwise drew on the Kingdom for support. The regime's passivity toward many al-Qa'ida activities was often as important to their success as any deliberate assistance they received.

Passive support such as that provided by Saudi Arabia is a different animal from traditional state support of terrorism, but it has received little serious attention during the Global War on Terror. Iran typifies a traditional, active, state supporter: Tehran has armed, trained, organized, and at times directed the Lebanese Hizballah as an instrument of regime policy. Passive support, in contrast, involves regimes that support terrorism by not acting. A regime can be said to be guilty of passive support if it *knowingly allows* a terrorist group to raise money, enjoy sanctuary, recruit, or otherwise flourish without interference but does not directly aid the group itself. Often passive support is given by political parties, wealthy merchants, or other actors in society that have no formal affiliation with the government.[7]

Many terrorist groups thrive through such passivity. A border not policed, a blind eye turned to fundraising, or even the toleration of recruitment all help terrorists build their organizations, conduct operations, and survive. 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 to operate with impunity in the 1980s, as well as Basque separatists; 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.[8]

Shutting down passive support is vital. To do so, the United States must go beyond its traditional emphasis on direct state support to terrorist groups and instead recognize the many dangers of inactivity. Washington should press governments around the world, including many close allies, to tighten their restrictions on many less overt activities of groups linked to terrorist organizations. In addition, the United States should try to reach out to hostile publics, as their backing of causes linked to terrorism is one of the main reasons for passive support because so many passive sponsors are America's friends and allies. Military tools will be far less important in this fight than diplomacy, information campaigns, intelligence measures, and other less aggressive forms of national power.

Four Instances of Passive Support

A comparison of passive support in several countries suggests the daunting nature of this problem. Saudi Arabia's backing of radical Islamist causes, Pakistan's indirect links to al-Qa'ida, Greece's tolerance of the 17 November Organization, and the United States' blind eye for Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) fundraising all allowed terrorists to operate, and at times flourish, despite being aware of their activities. In all four cases, however, passive support

7 At the high end, passive support involves governments that are knowledgeable about a terrorist group and have the capacity to quash it but do not do so; at the low end, it often involves a government that misjudges the level of the threat or deliberately does not develop the capacity to counter it. This definition excludes a regime that deliberately provides 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-Qa'ida before 2001). Most important, this definition excludes countries that lack the capacity to counter terrorism effectively even though they seek to do so. Thus, failed states such as Somalia or Tajikistan would not be considered passive supporters of al-Qa'ida, even though the organization has been active in these countries, because the regimes are far too weak to confront the movement.

8 For an overview of the changing French attitude toward support for terrorism on its soil, see Shapiro and Suzan, "The French Experience of Counterterrorism." For an excellent overview of the Tamil diaspora in supporting the LTTE, see Gunaratna, *Dynamics of Diaspora-Supported Terrorist Networks.*

diminished (though, notably, did not end—for Pakistan in particular) over time, suggesting that well-crafted policy can reduce this problem.

Saudi Arabia and Islamic Radicalism

The tale of Saudi Arabia and al-Qa'ida cannot be divorced from the broader story of the role of religion in Saudi Arabia. The modern Saudi regime has worked with religious leaders since its inception.[9] 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. Using Ikhwan fighters to defeat his enemies, Abdel-Aziz conquered what is now modern Saudi Arabia and established a state where the Wahhabis held considerable sway. Wahhabism was used to unite Saudi Arabia's fractious tribes and to legitimate Abdel-Aziz's rule.

The relationship, however, was not completely peaceful. In 1929, King Abdel-Aziz's forces turned on the Ikhwan, and crushed them because they demanded the continuation of *jihad* abroad (particularly against regimes in Jordan and Iraq that were protected by the Christian power Britain). This broke the Ikhwan's power, but Islamic radicals remained a force of opposition to the Al Saud, particularly when it tried to introduce modernizing reforms. In 1979, religious zealots captured the Grand Mosque in Mecca and called for an uprising against the corrupt Al Saud in the name of Islam.[10] In response to the Al Saud's decision to invite U.S. troops into the country in August 1990 to defend it against Iraq, a movement calling itself *Sahwa* (Awakening) emerged and began to criticize the regime harshly for its supposedly un-Islamic decision.[11]

Both to legitimate their role and because of a genuine belief in Wahhabi teachings, the Al Saud made religion a centerpiece of their rule. The Kingdom followed *shari'a* (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 Abdel-Aziz and his successors turned to them to legitimate 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 Shiite fundamentalism. The Al Saud would try to increase their identification with religious causes and issues after events that had the potential to discredit their legitimacy, such as the original crushing of the Ikhwan in 1929, the 1979 mosque seizure, and the 1990 invitation to U.S. troops.[12]

Saudi Financial Support for Islamic Radicalism

The Saudi largesse that helped secure the Al Saud in power is now under intense scrutiny. Many individuals in Saudi Arabia control massive amounts of money: several economists and bankers working in Saudi Arabia estimate that only 85,000 Saudis control perhaps $700 billion dollars. Since 1975, the Saudis have spent an estimated $70 billion to spread Wahhabism outside the Kingdom through mosques, schools, and Islamic centers. U.S. officials claim that Saudi Arabia for many years allowed money to flow into the hands of terrorist organizations. The range of causes was wide, ranging from

9 For a superb assessment of Islamist movements in Saudi Arabia today, see International Crisis Group, *Saudi Arabia Backgrounder: Who are the Islamists?*

10 Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent,* pp. 21–60; Holden and Johns, *The House of Saud,* pp. 1–109, 511–526; Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia,* pp. 139, 201–299.

11 Kepel, "The Origins and Development of the Jihadist Movement," p. 98.

12 See Lippman, *Inside the Mirage,* pp. 208–209, 303.

Kashmir and Chechnya to Bosnia, Afghanistan, and of course the Palestinians.[13] 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-Qa'ida. Former CIA operative Robert Baer has been even harsher, noting that "Saudis fed the ATM machine for the [9-11] hijackers."[14]

Much of this money flows through charities and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which operate on a massive scale. Al-Haramayn, a large charity, claims that it has printed millions of books, founded over 1,000 mosques, and sends over 3,000 missionaries out to spread its message.[15] The Saudis have used organizations such as the World Muslim League, the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) and the al-Haramayn Islamic Foundation.[16] These organizations are not entirely private. Charities such as the IIRO or the Muslim World League are overseen by Saudi Arabia's grand mufti and enjoy the patronage of the government and many royal family members. Islamic Affairs bureaus of Saudi embassies often aid and coordinate the charities' activities.[17] Al-Haramayn has two government ministers that supervise it, and some of its branch offices have ties to Saudi officials. Moreover, the Saudi government itself provided some of the organization's money for many years.[18]

Much, 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.[19] The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States contends that Saudis were the primary donor to al-Qa'ida and that many donors knew they were giving to the organization.[20]

Even when money did not go directly into the hands of terrorists, the Saudis supported 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 U.S. policy, and a sentiment that Arab regimes are not legitimate. Such proselytizing enables al-Qa'ida to appeal to recruits already sympathetic to its worldview. Juan Zarate, a Treasury Department official, noted that "al-Qa'ida has taken advantage of state-supported proselytizing around the world."[21]

The Saudis also promote ideas that accept violence, particularly against non-Muslims, at home. Sermons praise jihadist causes and criticize American and Jewish influence. In Saudi schools, textbooks often denigrate non-believers and urge violence against them. One ninth grade text, for example, contends, "The last hour [Judgment Day] will not come until the Muslims fight against the Jews and the Muslims kill them. If the Jew hides behind a stone or tree, the stone or tree will say: 'Oh Muslim, Oh worshipper of God,

13 Meyer, "Cutting Money Flow to Terrorists Proves Difficult;" Mintz, "Wahhabi Strain of Islam Faulted," p. A11; and Kaiser and Ottaway, "Enormous Wealth Spilled into American Coffers." The Saudis reportedly have provided perhaps $50 million to Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups. Saudis spent perhaps $400 million in Bosnia in the last decade, both to help Muslims fight the Serbs and to proselytize.
14 Baer, *Sleeping with the Devil,* p. 21.
15 Mintz, "Wahhabi Strain of Islam Faulted;" Kaplan, "The Saudi Connection;" Beyer, et al., "Inside the Kingdom."
16 U.S. Congress, *Prepared Statements of Matthew Levitt.*
17 Kaplan, "The Saudi Connection."
18 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, "Monograph on Terrorist Financing," p. 115; Kaplan, "The Saudi Connection."
19 The United Nations offers a valuable overview of al-Qa'ida financing, see "Second Report of the Monitoring Group." See also Kaplan, "The Saudi Connection" and Isikoff and Hosenball, "The Saudi-Al Qaeda Connection.
20 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, "Monograph on Terrorist Financing," p. 20.
21 Schmidt, "Spreading Saudi Fundamentalism in U.S."

there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.'"[22] In addition, their portrayal of the world echoes that of many jihadists, with the texts extolling martyrdom, criticizing the imitation of the West, calling for restrictions on non-Muslims, and contending that Islam is on the defensive and that modern trends such as globalization and modern science are undermining Islam.[23] Indeed, the Kingdom's foreign minister noted that a post-September 11 review of curriculum revealed that 10 percent of the material in textbooks was questionable and another 5 percent was "abhorrent."[24]

Before September 11, the Saudis also did not cooperate with many U.S. efforts to shut down this financing and other forms of support. The Saudis often did not respond to information requests on the activities of charities linked to al-Qa'ida.[25]

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-Qa'ida 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.

Strong Domestic Support for Jihadist Causes

Saudi leaders step gingerly in the world of Islamist politics. Jihadist causes, many of which are linked directly or indirectly to al-Qa'ida, 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 Islamists 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 favor with Islamists at home. Riyadh also worked closely with Islamabad for much of the 1990s, providing it with massive financial support and helping it support jihadists in Kashmir and, initially, the Taliban and other radical groups in Afghanistan.[26]

In addition, proselytizing is exceptionally important for Wahhabism and for the Saudi religious leadership. It is not simply enough for believers to be just in their own lives: they must also turn others away from deviancy. Because the religious elite is important for the regime's legitimacy, the Al Saud have felt compelled to please them on this key issue.

The strength of this 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 lionized them. Thus, individual participation in jihad was widely viewed as admirable.

Support for al-Qa'ida itself appears strong in much of the Kingdom. Indeed, the Interior Minister Prince Nayif himself declared that "we find in our country those who sympathize with them," an unusually

22 Doumato, "Manning the Barricades: Islam According to Saudi Arabia's School Texts," p. 241.
23 Doumato, "Manning the Barricades," pp. 233–238. Doumato contends, however, that much of the criticism of Saudi texts is overstated and takes particular lessons out of context.
24 Beyer, et al., "Inside the Kingdom."
25 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, "Monograph on Terrorist Financing," p. 115. The Commission, however, also notes that the United States often did not provide sufficient information for the Saudis to act against charities and often did not make such action a priority (p. 116).
26 Coll, *Ghost Wars,* pp. 217, 296–97.

candid reference from a regime that often denies any domestic problems whatsoever.[27] Saudis comprise one of the top nationalities within al-Qa'ida. The carnage of the September 11 attacks appear to have had little impact, as donations to al-Qa'ida reportedly increased after the U.S. campaign in Afghanistan began.[28] Many of the organization's arguments are widely accepted. Not only is U.S. support for Israel and intervention in Iraq condemned, but many Saudis believe that in general the United States seeks to oppress and humiliate Muslims and that many unpopular regime policies are done at Washington's behest. A leading U.S. observer of the Kingdom, F. Gregory Gause III, contends that "any elections in Saudi Arabia would now be won by people closer to bin Laden's point of view than to that of liberal democrats."[29]

Anti-Americanism in the Kingdom is strong. Polls taken in early 2003 indicated that an astonishing 97 percent 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 criticized the United States, highlighting civilian deaths during the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf War, and the mistreatment of Arabs in the United States. These specific grievances related to terrorism build on the tremendous hostility toward U.S. support for Israel and perceived mistreatment of the Iraqi people due to sanctions on Iraq during the Saddam Husayn era.[30]

This anti-Americanism has tremendous implications for U.S. counterterrorism efforts, as well as for U.S.-Saudi relations in general. Responding to U.S. entreaties to help in counterterrorism, particularly if it involved public measures, would be depicted as backing U.S. foreign policy in general. To avoid provoking a backlash, the regime has had to take care in implementing strong measures to fight radicals at home unless it can justify it for its own domestic reasons. The regime feared after the September 11 attacks that an open increase in cooperation would lead to charges that it was simply an American pawn.

Although the Saudi regime is a monarchy that draws legitimacy from its religious credentials, it is sensitive to public opinion. Political activity in the Kingdom is modest, but Gause notes that in recent years increased education, urbanization, and high population growth rates have increased political activity in the Kingdom. Until the regime feels directly threatened, it avoids taking steps that would offend the public, preferring instead to co-opt dissent. Thus, even as it suppressed religious dissidents, it has tried to co-opt their issues, in part by supporting Islamic causes abroad, backing Muslim charities, and otherwise displaying its religious *bona fides.* It was particularly difficult for the Al Saud to back any initiatives supported by the U.S. government, including those related to counterterrorism.[31]

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-Qa'ida even after the organization's May 2003 attacks on the Kingdom. Almost half of the Saudis polled in early 2004 had a favorable opinion of Bin Ladin's sermons and rhetoric.[32]

A Limited Threat?

The Saudi regime has a history of successfully managing dissent. The regime weathered pan-Arabism and

27 *Al-Hayat,* October 19, 2001, pp. 1, 6. As quoted in Gause, "Be Careful What You Wish For," p. 50.
28 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, "Monograph on Terrorist Financing," p. 22.
29 Gause, "Be Careful What You Wish For," p. 48.
30 Gause, "Be Careful What You Wish For," pp. 40–41; Dobbs, "U.S.-Saudi Alliance Appears Strong;" Dobbs, "Saudi Rulers Walk Political Tightrope." Polling data before 2003 is not available. However, numerous observers of the Kingdom contend that anti-Americanism is far stronger than ever before.
31 Gause, "Be Careful What You Wish For," pp. 41–42; Byman and Green, *Political Violence and Stability in the States of the Northern Persian Gulf,* pp. 29–31; Pollack, "Anti-Americanism in Contemporary Saudi Arabia," pp. 33–39; Yamani, "Saudi Arabia," pp. 145–147; *Through Our Enemies Eyes,* p. 145.
32 Obaid, "A Measure of Democracy," p. A18.

the Iranian revolution, both by suppressing sympathizers and by co-opting them. Opposition of any stripe is not well organized 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 Saudi regime enjoys support from Saudi religious leaders, who repeatedly issued decrees backing the regime's controversial decisions such as introducing television, inviting U.S. forces to protect the Kingdom in 1990, and participating in peace talks with Israel.[33]

On the surface, many Islamist causes, even those linked to violent groups, do not appear to pose a direct threat to the Al Saud. Most of these groups have a national focus rather than a global one: Hamas and the Palestine Islamic Jihad, for example, focus their attacks on Israel (and on rival Palestinian groups), the Harakat-ul-Mujahedin confines its strikes to Kashmir, and so on. Despite the different objectives and theaters of operations of these groups, however, aiding one often indirectly supports another. These groups share a broad ideology that emphasizes anti-Western themes, the value of jihad, and hostility toward secular Muslim regimes. Moreover, they often share logistics cells, drawing on the same individuals for passports and weapons. Part of al-Qa'ida's mission, moreover, was to knit these disparate causes into a broader struggle.[34]

Because of this superficial calm, the Saudis took many years to realize that some of their friends had become enemies. Thus, co-opting the latest threat may have seemed attractive to the Al Saud. Although al-Qa'ida is a vehemently anti-Saudi organization, the threat it posed to the royal family was in many ways quite limited, particularly in the eyes of Saudi leaders. Saudi officials believed that they had eliminated al-Qa'ida 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. Opposition figures submitted petitions, sent faxes denouncing corruption, delivered speeches in mosques, and otherwise tried to incite unrest. The regime, however, clamped down on unrest and arrested various leaders while establishing new bureaucracies to monitor Islamist financial activities. In 1993 and 1994, it detained militants who criticized the government and co-opted others, often through financial support. The regime also pushed many senior religious figures to retire. This limited the contact between dissident religious leaders and the broader population.[35] 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-Qa'ida, was not worth the cost to its self-proclaimed image as the defender of the Muslim faithful.

Fear of Retaliation

The Al Saud may have perceived that the threat from al-Qa'ida would increase if the family confronted the organization. The Al Saud may also have allowed support to go to al-Qa'ida—and perhaps even provided it money directly—to avoid attacks on royal family members and targets within the Kingdom. Critics of the regime repeatedly make this argument. Simon Henderson claims that after the 1995 bombings of the Office of the Program Manager/Saudi Arabian National Guard bombings in Riyadh, which killed five Americans and two Indians, the Saudi interior minister and the minister of defense and aviation paid Bin Ladin and al-Qa'ida to not conduct attacks in the Kingdom. They were willing to offer the terrorists money even though they recognized

33 Gause, "Be Careful What You Wish For," pp. 37–38. For an overview of such techniques, see Byman and Green, *Political Violence and Stability in the States of the Northern Persian Gulf*, pp. 71–94.

34 U.S. Congress, *The Global Reach of al-Qaeda*.

35 Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent,* pp. 61–114; Gause, "Be Careful What You Wish For," pp. 39 and 44; Kepel, "The Origins and Development of the Jihadist Movement," p. 99. There is a small liberal movement in the Kingdom that Crown Prince Abdullah has often tried to work with, although he does not endorse many of their positions. For a review, see Dekmejian, "The Liberal Impulse in Saudi Arabia." For a broader overview of charges against the Al Saud, see Aburish, *The Rise, Corruption, and Coming Fall of the House of Saud.*

that al-Qa'ida would attack U.S. targets overseas.[36] Dore Gold, a former Israeli ambassador, claims that Saudi royal family members directly funded Bin Ladin in order to buy protection: in exchange for money, al-Qa'ida would not conduct operations in the Kingdom. He contends, "Saudi Arabia was paying a ransom to be left alone."[37]

Judging these claims is difficult, as evidence is understandably spare. Most who make these claims do so with almost no specific evidence to support their charges. 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 accusations that the Saudis tried to kill Bin Ladin in Sudan. The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States reports that it "found no evidence that the Saudi government as an institution or senior officials within the Saudi government funded al-Qa'ida."[38]

The Commission, however, noted that al-Qa'ida received considerable financial support from the Kingdom. Moreover, 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 Nasir's Egypt and Saddam's Iraq—but was also willing to confront them directly when cooptation failed.

Incapacity

Given the rather nebulous nature of passive sponsorship, it is often difficult to stop even when the regime in question aggressively seeks to end it. However, there is tremendous variation in governments' abilities to act decisively on counterterrorism. The Saudi government is highly personalized, with institutions often being little more than a brittle shell surrounding one individual.[39] Decision making is highly centralized, and the number of competent bureaucrats is low. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, revolves around Prince Saud al-Faisal: others in the Ministry cannot, and will not, make important decisions. Many Saudi institutions barely function or function poorly. For example, 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.[40]

Not surprisingly, the Saudi regime was often unable to respond to repeated requests for counterterrorism assistance. Lee Wolosky, a former Bush and Clinton administration staffer on the National Security Council, noted, "You have to be very careful what you ask for from the Saudis because if you have a list of more than one item you frequently don't get to the second."[41]

The Saudis have a limited capacity to crack down on terrorist financing in particular. Former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Chas Freeman contends, the Saudis are guilty of "negligence and incompetence," not complicity.[42] Before September 11, 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 would allow for the enforcement of financial controls.[43]

Capacity and regime priorities are intimately linked. Many of the problems above are serious, but the Al

36 Henderson, address before the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.
37 Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom,* p. 182.
38 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States. "Overview of the Enemy," p. 10.
39 For a review of Saudi institutions, see Raphaeli, "Saudi Arabia: A Brief Guide to Its Politics and Problems."
40 Pollack, *Arabs at War,* pp. 425–446.
41 Van Natta Jr. and O'Brien, "Saudis Promising Action on Terror."
42 Kaplan, "The Saudi Connection."
43 Kaplan, "The Saudi Connection."

Saud made few efforts before September 11 to address them. As discussed below, the September 11 attacks led to improvements, but it really took the May 2003 strikes on the Kingdom itself for the royal family to decide to build capacity.

An End to Passive Support?

Saudi Arabia's willingness to tolerate support for radicals linked to al-Qa'ida and, to a lesser degree, other Islamist groups ranging from Chechens to Hamas, fell dramatically in recent years. U.S. pressure is one reason. Saudi Arabia has long depended on the United States for security, and the two governments (but not the two peoples) are very close.[44] This relationship predates the first Gulf War, when the United States sent troops to protect the Kingdom from Iraq and, ultimately, to roll back its invasion of Kuwait. In the decades before the war, Riyadh worked with the United States to counter Arab nationalism, to offset Soviet influence throughout the world, to oppose revolutionary Iran, and to otherwise advance their common interests in regional stability.[45] Not surprisingly, the regime responded to the tremendous U.S. pressure after September 11 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, the regime feared the political embarrassment occurring on a daily basis, as critics around the world blasted the Al Saud for their links to terrorism.[46]

The September 11 attacks also led some members of the Al Saud to recognize that al-Qa'ida posed a direct threat to their own position. The scale and lethality of the attacks demonstrated al-Qa'ida's prowess to even the most skeptical. In response, the Al Saud began to move away from many of the causes it had once embraced. Senior Saudi princes criticized the religious establishment for stepping beyond its traditional role, and the *de facto* ruler, Crown Prince Abdullah, on November 14, 2001, called on religious leaders not to exceed "the proper boundaries in religion"—a strong statement for a leadership that had always embraced the role of religion in society. The regime began to investigate terrorist financing, wayward charities, and other forms of support. However, it still did not aggressively confront its Islamist opponents.[47] Many promised steps against terrorist financing were never implemented. The regime still did not consider al-Qa'ida a threat to its position at home, and thus was reluctant to endure the political costs of cracking down on the organization.[48]

Efforts to crack down on support climbed even more dramatically, however, after the May 12, 2003 attacks, when 34 people died in multiple attacks on compounds housing U.S. security personnel in the Kingdom. The November 8, 2003 attacks, in which 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 attacks in 2003 removed any lingering suspicions among the Al Saud that they could divert al-Qa'ida and focus it outside the Kingdom. The subsequent investigation further dispelled any last illusions. Saudi security forces uncovered a large network of radicals in the Kingdom. Many were well-armed, and the

44 For an overview of the U.S.-Saudi relationship, see Thomas W. Lippman, *Inside the Mirage: America's Fragile Partnership with Saudi Arabia*.
45 For a review of Saudi security policy until the 1980s, see Safran, *Saudi Arabia*. Safran argues that the Saudis relied heavily on the United States in times of crisis but often tried to distance themselves from Washington when the immediate danger subsided. For a detailed review of the early years of the security relationship this century, see Hart, *Saudi Arabia and the United States: Birth of a Security Partnership*.
46 U.S.-Saudi relations sunk to perhaps their lowest level ever, with mutual recriminations occurring and widespread public hostility on both sides. See Gause, "The Approaching Turning Point: The Future of U.S. Relations with the Gulf States," pp. 3–6.
47 As quoted in Gause, "Be Careful What You Wish For," p. 44.
48 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, "Monograph on Terrorist Financing," pp. 119–123.

amount of explosives discovered suggested that they were prepared for a long struggle, not simply a terrorist attack or two. The deaths of several regime security officers in the course of the investigation made the regime even more determined to root out the networks and increased popular support for a crackdown.

After these attacks, the Saudis implemented a number of unprecedented measures to fight terrorism, greatly increasing overall counterterrorism capacity. The regime initiated a direct crackdown, arresting between 200 and 500 militants and hundreds of potential sympathizers.[49] The Saudis excised much, though not all, of the material denigrating other religions from school textbooks. David Aufhauser, a former Treasury Department official, noted that the Saudis increased their regulation of informal money transfers, stepped up fund-management responsibility, and increased prohibitions on charitable donations outside the Kingdom. The regime publicized 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 traveled to Russia and condemned the Chechens' violence. A senior Saudi official also claimed that the regime planned to shut down the Islamic affairs section in every embassy, reversing decades of official support for Islamic education and missionary work around the world.[50] The regime has moved forward, albeit in fits and starts.[51] These measures suggest that the Al Saud now recognize the connections among disparate Islamists, even those not directly attacking the Kingdom, and how their proselytizing bolsters al-Qa'ida.

The May and November attacks also helped the regime work with the conservative religious establishment in the Kingdom. The establishment was highly critical of extremists for attacking fellow Muslims, in contrast to past attacks that primarily targeted Americans. Even former firebrands such as Safar al-Hawali and Salman al-'Awda—*shaykhs* whom Bin Ladin himself had praised in the early 1990s—condemned the May attacks.[52]

The Kingdom's determination and its ability to work with establishment clerics continued into 2004, even though al-Qa'ida-linked groups in the Kingdom apparently learned their lesson and focused their attacks on westerners rather than Saudis. Testifying in March 2004, Ambassador Cofer Black, the U.S. Coordinator for Counterterrorism, declared that the Saudis understood the threat they faced and were closely cooperating with U.S. officials.[53] The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States reports that "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is now locked in mortal combat with al-Qa'ida."[54]

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.[55]

49 International Crisis Group, *Saudi Arabia Backgrounder,* pp. 16–18.
50 Aufhauser noted, however, that the Saudis remain reluctant to hold any individuals accountable for financial activity in support of terrorism. Aufhauser, "War on Terror." See also "Saudis List Top Terrorist Suspects" and Schmidt and Murphy, "U.S. Revokes Visa of Cleric at Saudi Embassy."
51 For a critical review, see Levitt, "Waging the War on Terror: Are the Saudis Starting to Turn the Corner?"
52 International Crisis Group, *Saudi Arabia Backgrounder,* p. 10; Dekmejian, "The Liberal Impulse in Saudi Arabia."
53 U.S. Congress, *Saudi Arabia and the Fight Against Terrorism.*
54 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report,* p. 373.
55 U.S. Congress, *Saudi Arabia and the Fight Against Terrorism.*

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-Qa'ida

Just as Saudi Arabia indirectly facilitated al-Qa'ida, so too did Pakistan—but in a far different way. Saudi Arabia's primary contribution was financial. Pakistan, in contrast, assisted al-Qa'ida by allowing other militants it backed in Kashmir and Afghanistan to work with the organization, thus providing it with additional manpower and tremendous freedom of action. For Pakistani leaders, turning a blind eye to al-Qa'ida was a means of directing the global jihad against India's rule in Pakistan and to furthering Islamabad's interests in Afghanistan. Over time, support for al-Qa'ida became bound up in the regime's legitimacy, as Islamist groups with close ties to al-Qa'ida became increasingly powerful in Pakistani politics. In the face of heavy U.S. pressure, Pakistan turned against al-Qa'ida after September 11. However, its efforts to crush the organization remain fitful at best, particularly in areas where the organization is tied to important domestic actors in Pakistan itself.

al-Qa'ida as a Tool: Kashmir and Afghanistan

Pakistan's links to al-Qa'ida cannot be separated from Islamabad's efforts to support militants in Kashmir against India and its relationship with the Taliban. Pakistan's agenda in both regions depended on militant groups that leaned heavily on al-Qa'ida for support. Pakistan was simultaneously an active supporter of terrorist groups in Kashmir and a passive supporter of al-Qa'ida. For Islamabad, the latter served the former: by allowing al-Qa'ida to operate with little interference, the regime could serve its broader goals in Kashmir and use the jihadists to augment its own deliberate and massive support for various groups active in Kashmir.

In both instances, Pakistani leaders appear to have tolerated al-Qa'ida, 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-Qa'ida 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-Qa'ida 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 organizations active in Kashmir—most of them Islamist ones—against Indian rule there. These militant organizations 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 Mujhideen. With the support of the government, these jihadist organizations raise money and recruit militants to fight in Kashmir and have access to training and weapons for their volunteers. Equally important, these organizations have worked with Islamist political movements in Pakistan, such as the Jamiat-e-Islami party, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islami (JUI) movement, and others, many of which are associated with a particular interpretation of Islam.

Although all these groups were active in Kashmir, not all of them are composed entirely or largely of Kashmiris. Pro-Pakistan groups that draw heavily on Kashmiris on the Pakistan side of the border and on foreign fighters include Lashkar-e Tayyiba, the Jaysh-e Mohammed, and Harkat-ul-Mujahedin. Lashkar-e Tayyiba appears to draw primarily on Punjabis, not on Kashmiris.[56]

56 See U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003,* pp. 123, 126–127.

For groups relying heavily on foreign fighters, access to global jihadist institutions linked to al-Qa'ida were particularly important to facilitate recruitment and training. Al-Qa'ida also 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-Shiite. The extent of these ties is considerable. These organizations share an ideological affinity with al-Qa'ida, 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-Qa'ida has also helped train members of these groups in its camps in Afghanistan.[57] Pakistan benefited from al-Qa'ida's support, as it made the groups active in Kashmir more potent.

Afghanistan's policy also played a vital role in Pakistan's attitude toward al-Qa'ida. After the withdrawal of the Soviets in 1989, Pakistan backed various *mujahedin* leaders, such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in their struggle for supremacy. By 1994, Islamabad's proxies had shown themselves to be dismal failures: brutal, riven by infighting and—most important, from Pakistan's perspective—incompetent.

The extent of Pakistan's role in the Taliban's creation and initial successes around this time remains unclear, but as the movement gained strength it increasingly became Islamabad's favored proxy. Pakistan's military and intelligence service provided arms, ammunition, supplies for combat, financial aid, and training. Pakistan also helped recruit fighters for the Taliban, often working with domestic religious associations. The Pakistani government at times even tried to represent the Taliban's interests overseas.[58] Support for the Taliban went far beyond official government circles and included major political parties, religious networks, and many ordinary Pakistanis. Indeed, the movement emerged from religious schools run by the JUI. Larry Goodson estimates that Pakistanis comprised one quarter of the Taliban's forces, and other estimates are even higher.[59]

As the Taliban swept through Afghanistan, the movement gained the support of much of Pakistan's political establishment. Even though Pakistan's political factions fought bitterly against each other—and the military, the true power, distrusted politicians of all stripes—they all supported the Taliban when they were in power. 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. Some Pakistani officials also hoped that a stable Afghanistan would enable the export of gas from Central Asia through Afghanistan, which would offer Pakistan cheaper energy and profits as a transit point.[60]

Al-Qa'ida 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

57 Rana, *Gateway to Terrorism,* pp. 100–101; Al-Qa'ida ran at least five camps for Kashmiri fighters before September 11. Hirsh et al., "Al Qaeda's New Threat."

58 Griffin, *Reaping the Whirlwind,* pp. 33–34; Goodson, *Afghanistan's Endless War,* p. 111; Human Rights Watch, *Afghanistan,* pp. 23–26. Taliban officials claim that Pakistan only aided them after they had established themselves, but several sources claim that the Taliban were largely the creation of senior Pakistani officials. U.S. Department of State, "Finally a Talkative Talib."

59 Goodson, *Afghanistan's Endless War,* p. 118; Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.,* p. 148.

60 Rashid, *Taliban,* pp. 27–28, 98; Burke, *Al-Qaeda,* p. 114; Kepel, *Jihad,* pp. 227–228; and Sirrs, "The Taliban's International Ambitions," pp. 64–65. The Taliban drew particularly heavily from the Pashtun tribes in southern Afghanistan near Qandahar. Other Pashtuns were better represented within the movement than were non-Pashtuns, but those from Qandahar dominated. The Taliban's leaders were primarily from the Durrani tribal association, which had dominated Afghanistan before the Soviet invasion but had lost out to Ghilzai Pashtuns as well as to other ethnic groups. Goodson, *Afghanistan's Endless War,* p. 107. However, the Taliban's effort to dominate the community involved assassinations of other Pashtun leaders and other brutal measures, which in turn alienated many Pashtun notables. Coll, *Ghost Wars,* p. 459.

Afghanistan [in 1996] had Pakistan disapproved."[61] Bin Ladin's network maintained numerous safe houses and training camps in Pakistan as well as in Afghanistan, both of which were used to help militants fighting in Kashmir as well as members of the global jihad.[62] Bin Ladin channeled tens of millions of dollars a year to the Taliban, twice the movement's official budget.[63] Much of this money came through Islamic charities and other private donations that Bin Ladin was able to influence. Bin Ladin had an excellent sense of timing, offering money at key moments in the struggle. For example, he provided $3 million to help the Taliban seize Kabul in 1996.[64]

Equally important, al-Qa'ida trained and recruited fighters to help the Taliban in its struggle to control Afghanistan. The majority of al-Qa'ida's training camps in Afghanistan focused on training fighters to help defeat the Northern Alliance, not to conduct sophisticated terrorist attacks against the West. One anonymous U.S. government official declared, "The vast majority of them were cannon fodder."[65] Perhaps 5,000 non-Afghan fighters linked to al-Qa'ida assisted the Taliban's military effort.[66]

Indeed, one of the most important units to the Taliban was Brigade 055, a military unit composed of Arab fighters loyal to Bin Ladin. Although exact numbers are difficult to pinpoint, the unit consisted of perhaps between 300 and 1,000 Arabs. Known for their bravery and their savagery, many members were veterans of the struggle against the Soviets and of conflicts around the Muslim world. The al-Qa'ida-trained fighters were often given the tougher tasks due to their greater experience and expertise. A retired Pakistani general who worked with many Afghan groups noted that "The Arabs are the best fighters they have" and that, in contrast to many Afghans, "The Arab fighters cannot be bought."[67]

Support for Afghanistan and Kashmir began to blur in practice. The Pakistani government worked with the Taliban and with international jihadist organizations such as al-Qa'ida to send foreign fighters to Kashmir.[68] As foreign fighters increased their role in Kashmir, Afghanistan became important as a place to house, train, and recruit them. Islamabad sent many fighters destined for Kashmir to Afghanistan to train and to gain combat experience. Al-Qa'ida 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.[69]

The Quest for Legitimacy

Successive Pakistani governments have courted the favor of religious groups in Pakistan, increasing the value of al-Qa'ida's ties to these organizations. 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.[70] Successive civilian governments also tried to woo the Islamists. Over time, as Pakistani

61 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report,* p. 64.
62 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report,* p. 64.
63 The Taliban in 1995 received perhaps $120 million from smuggling dues and from taxes on narcotics trafficking. Burke, *Al-Qaeda,* p. 115. The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States reports that the Taliban received between $10 and $20 million a year from al-Qa'ida, perhaps two thirds of the movement's budget. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States, "Overview of the Enemy," p. 11.
64 Bartholet et al., "Al Qaeda Runs for the Hills," pp. 20–26 and McGeary et al., "The Taliban Troubles," pp. 46–50. By comparison, it is estimated that the Taliban received about $30 million from taxing poppy growers. McGirk et al., "Smack in the Middle," p. 38.
65 Rohde and Chivers, "The Jihad Files: Life in bin Laden's Army."
66 Sirrs, "The Taliban's International Ambitions," p. 62.
67 Weiner, "'Afghan Arabs' Said to Lead Taliban's Fight." The 055 Brigade, however, is not deployed as a single unit. Rather, its members serve as bodyguards or as an elite force to reinforce or encourage other forces. See Eisenberg et al., "Secrets of Brigade 055," p. 63.
68 Rashid, *Taliban,* p. 137. The Indian government claims that almost 3,000 foreign militants died in Kashmir between 1989 and 2003. Government of India, *Annual Report, 2002–2003,* p. 13.
69 Fair, "Militant Recruitment in Pakistan," pp. 9, 16 of draft.
70 Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir,* p. 77 and Kepel, *Jihad,* pp. 98–103. For an overview of the JI, see Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-I Islami of Pakistan*. Zia's predecessor, the civilian Zulfi Bhutto, also catered to the Islamists in a variety of ways as a means to unite the country.

civilian governments became weaker and as the military government of Musharraf that overthrew it grasped for legitimacy, the religious parties gained in influence.[71] Perhaps more important than their visible influence were constraints they imposed on Islamabad. Pakistan's weak governments could not afford to alienate these increasingly important constituents, limiting their ability to crack down on jihadist activity.

Al-Qa'ida's ties, however, go beyond religious organizations. During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, Bin Ladin and other future al-Qa'ida leaders worked closely with Pakistani military and intelligence officials in developing the global *mujahedin* network, which sent volunteers and money to aid the anti-Soviet effort.[72] These ties were renewed after Bin Ladin relocated to Afghanistan in 1996. Bin Ladin actively courted Pakistan's military, politicians, media, and Islamic figures. Bin Ladin praised many Pakistani leaders for such accomplishments as their nuclear test explosion, using his popular stature added to their legitimacy. He also may have paid off various politicians and reporters to further his influence.[73] Al-Qa'ida has even made inroads into Pakistan's military, gaining sympathizers there. Al-Qa'ida mastermind Khalid Shaykh Mohammad, for example, had ties to various extremist groups in Pakistan and to several members of Pakistan's army.[74]

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 organization, seeing it as one of the few Muslim movements that successfully stands up to the United States.[75] Reflecting this popularity, pilgrims visit the sites where al-Qa'ida members died, and those who cooperate with the Pakistani government against the organization are often ostracized.[76]

As in Saudi Arabia, al-Qa'ida 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-Qa'ida's popular appeal. The sources of anti-Americanism range from standard complaints about U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East (such as support for Israel and the war against Iraq) to local concerns. An August 2003 poll taken by Herald-Gallup indicated that 69 percent argued for hurting Americans "where possible" in response to U.S. strikes in Iraq. Pakistanis also are unsure of U.S. objectives in Afghanistan and are angry at U.S. hot pursuit into Pakistan itself and the presence of U.S. forces in the country in general.[77]

A Double-Edged Sword

By supporting the jihadist cause, Pakistan has worsened its own stability. Many Islamists, including those not linked to violence, do not separate domestic Pakistani politics from their actions in Afghanistan and Kashmir.[78] The result has been tremendous sectarian violence, with Sunni Muslim groups assassinating Pakistani Shiite doctors and community leaders and bombing Shiite mosques. Groups such as Lashkar-e Jhangvi (an anti-Shi'a sectarian group), Jaish-e-Mohammad (a militant group focused on Kashmir), and Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islami (a domestic religious group) increasingly have overlapping memberships. Thus, Jaish-e-Mohammad members have conducted sectarian attacks in Pakistan itself.

71 For a review of this growth and an assessment of the influence of religious parties today, see Nasr, "Military Rule, Islamism, and Democracy in Pakistan."
72 *Through Our Enemies' Eyes,* p. 90.
73 *Through Our Enemies' Eyes,* pp. 161–167.
74 McGirk and Bloch, "Has Pakistan Tamed its Spies?" p. 32.
75 Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan.*
76 McGirk, Bloch, Perry, and Yusufzai, "Al-Qaeda's New Hideouts," p. 25.
77 Fair, "Militant Recruitment in Pakistan," p. 8 of draft.
78 Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan.*

Many of the Islamist activists also want a new regime in Islamabad. As one member of Lashkar-e-Tayyeba commented, "We won't stop—even if India gave us Kashmir.… We want to see a Taliban-style regime here."[79] And several groups are good to their word. Even before the post-September 11 crackdown, one Sunni group, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, tried to assassinate Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in 1999. Musharraf also suffered repeated assassination attempts after the September 11 attacks.

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 discredited 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 Northwest Frontier Province and Baluchistan.[80]

Support for jihadists also hindered many of Islamabad's long-term objectives in both Afghanistan and Kashmir. In both instances, links to jihadists discredited various Pakistani governments, making Washington far less sympathetic to their arguments. The presence of al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan in particular made the United States far less willing to engage the Taliban and, over time, led Washington to view the Taliban as a pariah regime.

The Impact on al-Qa'ida

Before September 11, al-Qa'ida gained tremendously from the free hand the organization enjoyed in Afghanistan. Pakistan did not directly provide this liberty, and various Pakistani regimes almost certainly opposed many of al-Qa'ida's activities, particularly those that worsened stability in Pakistan and created tension between Washington and Islamabad. Nevertheless, the difficulty and political costs of cracking down and the importance of bolstering the Taliban encouraged Islamabad to continue to turn a blind eye to the freedom al-Qa'ida enjoyed. Such a haven enabled al-Qa'ida to plan attacks, attract literally thousands of recruits, train skilled operatives and guerrilla fighters, disseminate its call for global jihad, and otherwise wage its war against the United States and various regimes in the Muslim world it opposed. U.S. officials believe that between 10,000 and 20,000 foreign volunteers trained in Afghanistan after Bin Ladin relocated there in 1996.[81]

In addition to this freedom of action, al-Qa'ida also benefited on an operational level. Like Pakistan, al-Qa'ida sought to advance the Islamists in Kashmir and as such was pleased to help train and support them. In addition, al-Qa'ida expanded its own operational network. C. Christine Fair, in her excellent study of militant recruitment in Pakistan, notes that al-Qa'ida draws on militant networks in Pakistan for logistical support and to gain access to operators for its own attacks.[82]

Changes after September 11

Islamabad moved against al-Qa'ida after the September 11 attacks in response to U.S. pressure, but limits remained on the regime's actions. Pakistan has tried to keep the various groups fighting in Kashmir robust while moving against al-Qa'ida, a fine line that has proved difficult to walk.

The September 11 attacks made support for al-Qa'ida, even indirectly, far riskier for the Musharraf government.

79 As quoted in Stern, "Pakistan's Jihad Culture," p. 121.

80 Much of this success involved the Islamists joining forces and ending their traditional squabbling and the Musharraf government's desire to weaken the traditional, more secular, parties. Pooling Islamists' votes magnified their electoral power under Pakistan's procedures. The Islamist parties also were able to campaign unofficially in mosques before the official campaigning season began, giving them an advantage over secular parties. In addition, the Musharraf government made many types of political gatherings illegal while letting Islamists continue to spread their message at mosques.

81 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report,* p. 67.

82 Fair, "Militant Recruitment in Pakistan," p. 12 of draft.

Angering Washington after September 11 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 three billion dollars to Musharraf's government in security and development aid and waived many sanctions that had been imposed due to Pakistan's nuclear program.[83]

In exchange, Pakistan turned on al-Qa'ida. Pakistani officials worked with the United States in making key arrests, including such senior figures as Abu Zubaydah and Khalid Shaykh Mohammad. Hundreds of arrests were made in total. In addition, Pakistan ended its support, at least overtly, for the Taliban. These efforts, however, revealed the scope of the problem as well as the apparent links to many parts of Pakistan's establishment. Khalid Shaykh Mohammad, for example, was arrested in Rawalpindi, where Pakistan's army is headquartered. As one Western diplomat remarked, "What the fuck was this guy doing just down the road from GHQ?"[84]

Even as the Musharraf government changed its policies, al-Qa'ida shifted its role in Pakistan dramatically. When the organization's patron, the Taliban, lost control in Afghanistan in December 2001, many al-Qa'ida and Taliban members set up shop in rural, tribal areas in Pakistan, such as Waziristan and the Northwest Frontier Province. The central government in Islamabad traditionally exercised only nominal control over these areas, leaving day-to-day affairs in the hands of tribal leaders. The Taliban is often popular in these areas, both for its perceived piety and for its strong roots to the areas' mostly Pashtun community. Al-Qa'ida members have also found a haven in the teeming slums of Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, and other cities in Pakistan, many of which are also under at best limited central government control.[85]

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

Although Musharraf has helped crack down on al-Qa'ida, his government's record on groups active in Kashmir is uneven at best. Musharraf's promise to hold back militants in 2002 only lasted for two months. Many of the radicals arrested were released, and several of the banned organizations 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. Lashkar-e-Taiba, which had hundreds of thousands of supporters, was officially banned in 2002, but it operates today with a different name and its leader still speaks publicly. Jaysh-e-Mohammad's leader also operates freely, if more discreetly than before the attacks.[86]

Musharraf had pledged after the September 11 attacks to register religious seminaries that were hotbeds of support for the radicals and to revise their curriculum. However, the religious schools still have not been registered, and curriculum reform has not occurred. In addition, the public school curriculum remains heavily Islamicized, with public institutions also providing considerable support for various jihadists. The

83 International Crisis Group, "Kashmir: The View from Islamabad," p. 13. See also Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*. Congress also allowed the Bush administration to waive the restriction on foreign assistance to governments that attained power in a military coup.
84 As quoted in Bergen, "The Long Hunt for Osama."
85 McGirk, Bloch, Perry, and Yusufzai, "Al-Qaeda's New Hideouts," p. 25.
86 Bergen, "The Long Hunt for Osama."

Musharraf government also has not passed laws that would regulate radical fundraising.[87] Because the apparatus that supports the militant groups in Kashmir is also the one that works with al-Qa'ida, keeping it intact enables Bin Ladin's organization to continue.

Even in areas where al-Qa'ida is more distinct from groups focused on Kashmir, the Musharraf regime's commitment is unclear, particularly at the more junior levels. Pakistani forces did little to stop al-Qa'ida members from escaping Afghanistan after their initial defeats by U.S. forces, and they have since let them return back into Afghanistan to attack U.S. and Afghan targets.[88]

Al-Qa'ida continues to enjoy support from local Islamists and their affiliated insurgent groups. After September 11, al-Qa'ida members received help from groups like the Jaish-e-Mohammad and Laskar-e-Tayyiba, as well as the Islamist administration in the Northwest Frontier Province. Abu Zubaydah, for example, was arrested in a Lashkar-e-Taiba safe house. Some of these organizations also use their operatives in cooperation with al-Qa'ida. For example, attacks in Karachi such as the attack on the U.S. Consulate, the kidnapping and execution of journalist Daniel Pearl, and the killing of several French engineers all were conceived in part by al-Qa'ida members but carried out by local groups such as Jaysh-e-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba.[89]

Because of continued popular and Islamist support for al-Qa'ida, there are limits to what the Musharraf government would do to help the United States fight the organization. The regime does see al-Qa'ida as a genuine threat and, after each assassination attempt on Musharraf, tries harder to suppress it. However, the Musharraf administration is extremely 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 U.S. intelligence official wrote, "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-Qa'ida or Taliban targets."[90]

A lack of capacity is yet another problem. Much of al-Qa'ida'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, U.S.-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 Musharaff government had the will to move against al-Qa'ida and its numerous affiliates decisively, its capacity to completely extirpate the movement is doubtful.

Finally, the United States is asking more of Pakistan than it is of Saudi Arabia. Like the Al Saud, Musharraf is being asked to anger core elements of Pakistani society and risk his legitimacy. Unlike the Saudis, however, he is also being asked in effect to jettison Pakistan's longstanding ambitions in Afghanistan and Kashmir. Not surprisingly, Pakistan is less keen than Saudi Arabia to make such a complete turnaround.

Greece and the Revolutionary Organization November 17

In many ways, Greece is the polar opposite of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Fanatical Marxists, not radical Islamists, comprised the Greek terrorism problem for

87 Khan, "The Waiting Game," p. 37; Fair, "Militant Recruitment in Pakistan," p. 6 of draft. Jones, *Pakistan,* p. 284; International Crisis Group, "Kashmir: Learning from the Past," p. 18; International Crisis Group, "Unfulfilled Promises," pp. 4–6; Watson and Zaidi, "Militant Flourishes in Plain Sight."

88 *Imperial Hubris,* p. 55.

89 Vick, "The Terrorists Next Door: Al-Qa'ida Suspects Posed as Traders before Capture in Pakistan." *Imperial Hubris,* p. 56; Fair, "Militant Recruitment in Pakistan," p. 15 of draft.

90 *Imperial Hubris,* p. 55.

most of the last three decades. In contrast to tens of thousands of radical Saudi and Pakistani Islamists, the number of violent leftists was exceptionally small, probably in the dozens, though many Greeks may have sympathized with their cause. Greek society did not provide the same level of backing as did Saudi and Pakistani societies, and the Greek government did not indirectly aid the radicals' cause as did the Al Saud or various regimes in Islamabad.

Nevertheless, successive Greek governments, like the Al Saud, often failed to act against terrorists and their supporters for many years. The Greek government deliberately took little action to stop the terrorists and did not develop the capacity to act more effectively. The reasons for this inaction are similar to the Saudi experience: a lack of a perceived threat, domestic sympathy for the terrorist cause, and limited capacity. As a result, Greece suffered from one of the worst, and most sustained, terrorism problems in Europe.

From 1967 to 1974, a military junta ruled Greece. The junta used the country's intelligence and military forces to brutally crush dissent, not to stop terrorism or protect the country from external enemies. When civilian control was restored in 1974, many politicians were intensely skeptical of the need for strong intelligence services and retained sympathy for those who supported the use of violence against the right-wing regime, believing that they had justly struggled against tyranny.

Revolutionary Organization November 17 (N17) took its name after the date in 1973 when the Greek military government bloodily crushed students who had seized the Athens Polytechnic and called for democracy. In its many manifestoes, N17 trumpeted both socialism and nationalism. It saw force as the only path to victory, rejecting social reform, democratic politics, and other elements of the strong left-wing movement in Greece that had emerged after the seven year period of military rule ended in 1974. It opposed the Greek establishment of both the left and right and attacked a range of targets that it saw as linked to capitalism, imperialism, and the state. N17 also championed an array of nationalist goals, such as ending Greece's membership in NATO and expelling Turkey from Cyprus.[91]

On December 23, 1975, three gunmen from the leftist Greek terrorist group N17 gunned down Richard Welch, the CIA station chief in Athens. Welch's murder marked the beginning of a violent spree that would last until 2002, when an arrest after a botched N17 attack led to the discovery and collapse of almost the entire group. During this time, N17 committed over 100 attacks, including at least 23 murders. N17 also murdered U.S. and other western officials, Greek politicians of the right and moderate left, and prominent businessmen. Over time, it also conducted remote-controlled bombings and attacked facilities with antitank rockets.[92]

The Greek government's effort to halt attacks from N17 met with no success until July 2002, when a botched bombing in the port of Piraeus led to the arrest and trial of most of the group.[93] For almost three decades the group operated with apparent impunity, with no member of the group ever being captured or killed during this period. As George Kassimeris, a leading expert on N17, notes, "any study of Greece's counter-terrorism effort quickly reveals it to be ramshackle … the ineptitude of the Greek state has been unparalleled."[94]

Explaining Greek Inaction

Greece's attitude toward N17 was mirrored by its broader policies with regard to other terrorist groups. Athens was reluctant to extradite terrorists to other European countries, instead allowing them to go to sympathetic countries after their arrest. For example,

91 Kassimeris, *Europe's Last Red Terrorists,* pp. 106–151.
92 Corsun, "Group Profile," p. 97.
93 For a review, see Szymanski, "Greece: November's Fall."
94 Kassimeris, *Europe's Last Red Terrorists,* p. 152.

in 1988 a Palestinian terrorist wanted by Italy was sent—by his choice—to Libya instead. Many Greeks opposed government attempts to crush N17 and other leftist terrorist groups.[95]

Greek history also offers insight into the seemingly bizarre tolerance of the Greek left and much of the mainstream for political violence. During the years of the military dictatorship, the police and security services focused their activities on suppressing communism, rather than stopping crime. They stifled any form of dissent.[96] Not surprisingly, moderates and leftists were exceptionally sensitive to any bolstering of police power and suspicious of calls to curtail civil liberties in the name of fighting terrorism. A strong state was more of a menace than a few murders. As late as 2000, the U.S. State Department declared that in Greece "Popular opinion makers generally downplayed terrorism as a threat to public order, even as terrorists continued to act with virtual impunity."[97]

In part because of this history, counterterrorism capacity was a tremendous problem. Kassimeris notes that N17's violence "exposed several of the deficiencies of the political system and the state structure: irresolute administrations, unreliable intelligence services, inadequate police forces, and a cumbersome judicial system."[98] The security services took a decade to accept that N17 attacks were not simply the work of disorganized anarchists, but rather part of a coordinated and sustained campaign by a disciplined group. Forensic evidence, which at times was excellent, was not carefully examined. The security services did not properly gather intelligence, let alone disseminate it. The security services often made matters worse by arresting familiar opposition figures whom they said were subversive rather than hunting for the true terrorists.[99]

Such bungling reflects a deliberate design, not incompetence. Security services were deliberately factionalized and kept ineffective in order to limit their political influence. As Kassimeris lamented in 2000, "For most of the past 25 years, anti-terrorist strategy has been carried out by an under-resourced, under-trained, and ill-equipped police force that lacks the motivation, discipline, dedication, and expertise to wage an effective war against the professionalism and sophistication of 17N."[100]

The parliamentary debate over counterterrorism highlights the tension between suspicion of government and greater counterterrorism capacity. The Greek government introduced laws as early as 1978 modeled after Italian and German statutes that had proven effective against their own leftist terrorists. The legislation outlawed various forms of terrorism and activities that would support it. However, government attempts to expand police powers and stiffen penalties for political violence met with considerable resistance. Still reeling from seven years of military dictatorship, left-wing political parties denounced proposed laws as a pretext for subverting democracy. In addition, they condemned attempts to gain informers and otherwise reward betrayal. Moreover, they questioned the government's interpretation of the threat level and argued there was no true crisis that demanded harsher measures. As a result, many measures were not properly enforced or were even abolished. When the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) took power, it abolished the anti-terrorist legislation passed in 1978. One law passed even prohibited the extradition of a terrorist if he is believed to be fighting for freedom.[101]

95 Jongman, "Trends in International and Domestic Terrorism in Western Europe, 1968–1988," pp. 64–65.
96 Kassimeris, *Europe's Last Red Terrorists,* p. 192.
97 U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1999*, p. 18.
98 Kassimeris, *Europe's Last Red Terrorists,* p. 191.
99 Kassimeris, *Europe's Last Red Terrorists,* pp. 193–194; U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1999,* p. 19.
100 Kassimeris, "17N."
101 Jongman, "Trends in International and Domestic Terrorism in Western Europe, 1968–1988," p. 64; Kassimeris, E*urope's Last Red Terrorists,* pp. 156–170. The Greek law, however, did not allow additional police surveillance or detention powers.

In response to another N17 attack in 1989, Greece's parliament passed another tough anti-terrorism bill in 1990. This bill was even more expansive than the 1978 law, allowing the police to detain individuals without charges for 15 days, requiring newspapers to limit the publication of N17 communiqués, as well as measures to encourage informers and punish supporters of terrorism. The law, however, backfired by polarizing the political debate and harming the consensus that was building against N17's activities. In 1993, PASOK abolished the law. A PASOK deputy argued that tough anti-terrorism laws "lead to the undermining of human liberties and the policing of political life."[102] Participating in a terrorist group was relegated to a misdemeanor.[103]

Another tough law passed in 2001 gave significantly expanded powers, including an increase in authority for the police to infiltrate groups, non-jury criminal trials, and other measures. Again, much of the governing Socialist party walked out of the vote itself in an attempt to distance themselves from the legislation.[104]

Popular incredulity, and at times sympathy for the general cause, contributed to the problem, making it harder for the government to act. For many years, many mainstream politicians, journalists, and analysts advanced a welter of bizarre conspiracy theories rather than recognize the indigenous nature of N17.[105] Paul Pillar notes that N17 acquired a "Robin Hood aura" and was admired because of its anti-Turkish, anti-NATO, and anti-U.S. activities.[106]

Rumors abounded of links, or certainly sympathies, between leading socialist politicians and the radicals. Many PASOK members and other leftists were part of the Greek student movement and its struggle against military rule, a background shared by more violent leftists. At the working level in many bureaucracies, sympathy for N17—and thus the potential for police operations to be compromised—was high.[107]

As a result of the popular and elite sympathy and concern over civil liberties, the government was neither able nor willing to make a concerted effort against N17. Counterterrorism capacity was deliberately kept low. Nicholas Burns, who was the U.S. Ambassador to Greece at the time, noted that "One of the problems in the past was the Greek government did not make a concerted effort to track down these terrorists."[108] The State Department's *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1999* report used unusually harsh language for an ally: the report declared Greece's counterterrorism performance to be "feeble."[109]

Sources of Change

Greece faced steady pressure from the United States and others regarding N17, and this grew as the United States and others warned that the threat of terrorism could prove a problem for the 2004 Olympics, which would be held in Greece. The government feared both an actual attack and that U.S. concerns would lead fewer tourists to travel to Greece and attend the games. This pressure eventually bore fruit and contributed to a more aggressive government effort to stop November 17. Greek security services aggressively and competently followed up on the bungled Piraeus attacks, and the judicial system brought the terrorists to trial smoothly.

Over time, public attitudes toward terrorism changed as well. The widow of the murdered British defense attaché led a vigorous public campaign against N17,

102 As quoted in Bakoyannis, "Terrorism in Greece," p. 23.
103 Kassimeris, *Europe's Last Red Terrorists,* pp. 174 and 202; Bakoyannis, "Terrorism in Greece," p. 26.
104 Vlahou, "Greece Launches Attack on Terrorism," p. A11.
105 Kassimeris, *Europe's Last Red Terrorists,* p. 192.
106 Pillar, *Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy,* p. 180.
107 "November 17, Revolutionary People's Struggle"; Pillar, *Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy,* p. 180.
108 As quoted in Vlahou, "Greece Launches Attack on Terrorism," p. A11.
109 U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1999,* p. 16.

drawing wide sympathy. Memories of the military dictatorship became more distant, decreasing both sympathy for N17's agenda and the fear of stronger security services. Archbishop Christodoulos held a memorial service for the victims of terrorism, and in 2000 Greece signed UN counterterrorism conventions and began to work more closely with the United States and Britain.[110]

As with Saudi Arabia, the linked problems of incapacity and popular support for the cause—if not the means—of the terrorists made it hard for the government to act decisively. In Greece, outside pressure and in particular a shift in public attitudes helped change the balance, enabling the government to act more effectively and end the threat N17 posed. This shift, however, took several decades in which N17 and its lethal activities continued with little opposition.

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 surprising that for many years the United States tacitly allowed Irish republican terrorists to raise money and organize on U.S. soil with relatively little interference. Since the advent of modern terrorism in 1968, president after president has condemned it in the strongest language. Moreover, America's relationship with the United Kingdom is among the closest of all its allies in the world. A shared history, shared values, and common strategic interests bind the two governments and peoples closely. Nevertheless, the United States, like Greece and Saudi Arabia, allowed terrorists to flourish out of 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 over the Emerald Isle. Throughout the 19th and early 20th century, wave after wave 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. Over the years various violent resistance movements had branches, or even headquarters, in the United States as they plotted against the British government. The Fenian Brotherhood, formed in the 1850s, helped plan the unsuccessful uprising in Ireland in 1866, providing arms, volunteers, and money. After the rebellion collapsed, a new organization, Clan na Gael, served the cause of independence in the United States. The Friends of Irish Freedom played a similar role, helping gather money and other aid to the Irish Republican Army (IRA) during its struggle for independence from 1919 to 1921. In addition to these formal organizations, many Irish dissidents lived in the United States, having fled from the British authorities. In addition to plotting resistance, the dissidents raised money and gathered arms.[111]

The Irish cause did not die out after the birth of the Irish Free State in 1921. The Irish Republican Army continued to pursue the armed struggle for five years under Eamon de Valera, and when he rejected violence in 1926 and brought his Fianna Fail party into politics, a rump of his movement—the forefather of today's IRA—continued the fight. As the movement faded in the Irish republic, the Irish diaspora in America and elsewhere remained militant. In particular, though many in the new Irish republic reconciled themselves to the partition of Ireland into the Protestant-dominated north and a Catholic south, the small number of diehard irredentists drew on the American diaspora for their strategy of using military force to reverse the partition of the country.[112]

110 "November 17, Revolutionary People's Struggle."

111 Holland, *The American Connection,* pp. xv–xvi; Bell, *The Secret Army,* p. 56; Bell, *The IRA,* p. 35.

112 For a history, see Bell, *The Secret Army,* pp. 29–98. Militants among the diaspora had less patience for purely political strategies. In the 1960s, diaspora support for the IRA fell as the movement abandoned its military campaign in favor a strategy involving peaceful protest. Geraghty, *The Irish War,* pp. 7–8. For more on the role of diasporas, see Shain and Sherman, "Dynamics of Disintegration" and Sheffer, "Ethno-National Diasporas and Security."

The modern chapter of the IRA's history began with the so-called "Troubles" in 1969. The causes of the explosion of violence are complex. Catholics in Northern Ireland were fed up by decades of discrimination in housing, voting, jobs, education, and every other facet of life. Led by younger leaders, many of whom were part of a new, better-educated group of activists, the Catholic community began agitating for more rights. Initial peaceful demonstrations were brutally put down by local security forces, and Protestant mobs rampaged through defenseless Catholic neighborhoods. British troops were deployed to bring order, but they quickly were seen as a prop for the Protestant regime, not as impartial arbiters.[113] The result was widespread violence, with the IRA engaging in a low-level war for almost 30 years.

Initially, the Irish Republican Army itself was at most a minor player in this drama. In the 1960s, it embraced a political strategy, reducing its use of violence in favor of social activism. Its leaders were heavily influenced by Marxist theories of revolution and political action. By 1969, it was neither well-armed nor organized for violence. The social explosion and violence of the start of the most recent round of "the Troubles" in 1969 proved a boon for recruitment, but most of the new recruits favored violence, both to protect their communities and because they believed peaceful means had failed. Angry at the IRA's neglect of self-defense and skeptical of its Marxist bromides, many leaders and new recruits split and formed the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA, also called the "Provos"). The PIRA rather quickly became the dominant nationalist movement, in large part because it could effectively use violence to defend Catholic areas and was eager to bring the war to the British and the Protestant government. Over time, their name became synonymous with the IRA itself.

PIRA was quite active in its use of terrorism. In addition to frequent attacks on British soldiers and rival Protestant paramilitary groups, notable uses of PIRA terrorism including setting off 22 bombs at one time in Belfast, blowing up pubs in England, bombing the Harrods department store in London during Christmas season, assassinating Lord Mountbatten along with his mother-in-law, grandson, and a member of Mountbatten's boat crew, and attempting to kill Prime Minister Thatcher and other members of the British Cabinet.

Despite the PIRA's bloody nature, as the "Troubles" engulfed Northern Ireland, sympathy from the United States—followed by money and weapons—grew dramatically. Numerous organizations sprang up to advance the Irish cause. The Provisional IRA received considerable funding from the Irish Northern Aid Committee (often known as NORAID), an organization that collected private financial contributions from U.S. citizens. Whether diverted through NORAID or supplied privately, the Irish-American diaspora provided important financial assistance to the IRA. NORAID raised between three and five million dollars for the IRA. Contributions were especially high after high-profile British violence, such as the January 30, 1972 killing of 14 Irish Catholic protesters by British troops, known as "Bloody Sunday."[114]

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 a major source of money for weapons. Until the IRA began receiving weapons from Libya in the late 1980s, perhaps 80 percent of its weapons came from the United States.[115]

113 Bell, *The Secret Army,* pp. 355–373.

114 Geraghty, *The Irish War,* p. 9; Holland, *The American Connection,* pp. 28–29; Holland, *The American Connection,* p. xvii; English, *Armed Struggle,* p. 152; and Guelke, "The United States, Irish Americans and the Northern Ireland peace process," p. 524. Bell argues that the impact of diaspora money was important, but that it was overestimated by governments and that the amount given was "never crucial." Bell, *The IRA*, pp. 187–188.

115 O'Brien, *The Long War,* p. 121; Holland, *The American Connection,* p. 61. During the 1970s, much of the IRA's income came from theft.

The IRA played midwife to this support network. Two senior IRA officers, Daithi O'Conaill and Joe Cahill, came to the United States shortly after the Troubles broke out in order to energize potential donors and to restore the now-defunct arms network that had existed before the IRA focused on social activism. The IRA also sent relatives of the victims of British attacks to publicize their plight in the United States. By 1970, NORAID had 2,000 members in the New York area and branches in Chicago, Boston, Detroit, and other cities.[116]

NORAID tried to emphasize its support for the combatants' widows and children, and its ties to Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, rather than its direct connection to the IRA. Sinn Fein, however, was directly controlled by the IRA's army council, and many of the militants occupied senior positions in Sinn Fein. Moreover, the founder of NORAID publicly stated that the organization was created in response to the IRA's requests for help. NORAID members also went to Ireland in 1971 to arrange to finance IRA arms purchases in Europe. Not surprisingly, the U.S., British, and Irish governments all considered NORAID to be a front organization for the IRA.[117]

NORAID was the most public organization linked to the Irish nationalist cause, but much of the arms procurement and other illicit activities went through low profile organizations. George Harrison, a leading IRA operative in the United States who worked with local Mafioso, procured perhaps 2,500 guns during his time, as well as one million rounds of ammunition. The IRA often came to Harrison with a shopping list of requirements, along with money to buy the weapons. Harrison helped procure the IRA's signature weapon, the Armalite, as well as the full-automatic M-16 assault rifle (and later the M-60 machine gun) and other weapons. Harrison's 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 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 U.S. connection was particularly vital in the early years, as the movement sought to establish itself as a viable resistance force.[118]

Arms in small batches were relatively easy to acquire in the United States. In many states, gun laws were lax or non-existent, and civilian versions of military weapons were often available.[119] Indeed, the Armalite was a semi-automatic civilian version of the U.S.-manufactured M-16.

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.[120] This sanctuary boosted the morale of operatives, enabling them to escape and decreasing the number of demoralizing arrests. Moreover, 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. Lobbying groups like the Irish National Congress helped persuade Jimmy Carter to express his support

116 Holland, *The American Connection,* pp. 29–37. Irish-American support for the IRA occurred despite ideological differences. The New York head of NORAID, for example, was Michael Flannery, an archconservative who disapproved of the Marxist tendencies of some IRA leaders in the early 1970s

117 English, *Armed Struggle,* p. 117 and Holland, *The American Connection,* p. 32. NORAID funds went to *An Cumann Cabrach,* which assisted the families of IRA prisoners. Guelke, "The United States, Irish Americans and the Northern Ireland peace process," p. 524.

118 English, *Armed Struggle,* pp. 116–117, 344. Harrison managed to procure weapons for several decades before being caught by the FBI. Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA,* p. 16, 421; Holland, *The American Connection,* pp. 72–113.

119 Bell, *The IRA,* p. 183.

120 Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA,* p. 16, 421.

for Irish unity and concern over abuses of human rights in Northern Ireland when he was the Democratic candidate for president in 1976. In 1977, Congressman Mario Biaggi established the Ad Hoc Committee on Irish Affairs, which pushed to have hearings on Northern Ireland (which would embarrass London) and to press the State Department to give visas to IRA members. The Ad Hoc Committee had over 100 Congressional members. NORAID members picketed the British consulate in New York for three years following Bobby Sands' hunger strike in May 1981, creating a visible daily reminder of the unpopular British occupation of Northern Ireland. The strike appealed to many Irish-Americans who otherwise rejected the IRA because of its use of violence. During the strike, Thomas ("Tip") O'Neill, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, demanded that Prime Minister Thatcher recognize the hunger strikers' demands. Speaker O'Neill, who often denounced the IRA, at times allowed legislation to pass that went against the British position.[121]

The diaspora's pressure served several purposes. Prime Minister Thatcher, for example, often moved away from hard-line positions against negotiations with Irish nationalists in response to U.S. pressure or even to offset potential criticism. In addition, U.S. pressure made her and other British leaders more willing to press Protestant opponents of negotiations to make concessions.[122] 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 U.S. 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.[123] J. Bowyer Bell declared the arms conduit "blatant."[124] The U.S. government monitored NORAID, watching Cahill, O'Conaill, and others from the IRA, but seldom interfered with its activities.[125]

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 40 million 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.[126] The broader perception among Irish-Americans that the British were backing a discriminatory Protestant government made it harder for the U.S. government to crack down on IRA supporters.

Capacity was also a problem, though the lack of capacity took a far different form than that of Saudi Arabia or Greece. U.S. laws allowed some fund-raising and support for widows and other dependents, even if this activity was indirectly linked to terrorism. Efforts to stop fundraising immediately led civil libertarians to object, particularly with regard to freedom of speech. In response to one attempt, the American Civil Liberties Union noted that "The government's attempt

121 Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA,* p. 209; Holland, *The American Connection,* p. 2; O'Dowd, "The Awakening," p. 67; Guelke, "The United States, Irish Americans and the Northern Ireland peace process," pp. 527–532. The Irish National Caucus, founded in 1974, by the 1980s became the primary political organization for lobbying Congress on behalf of the IRA. Guelke, "The United States, Irish Americans and the Northern Ireland peace process," p. 526. One example of anti-British legislation occurred in 1979, when O'Neill allowed a bill to pass that halted arms sales to the Royal Ulster Constabulary from the United States. Holland, *The American Connection,* p. 139.

122 Holland, *The American Connection,* pp. 145–151; Guelke, "The United States, Irish Americans and the Northern Ireland Peace Process," p. 530.

123 Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA,* p. 16. The Bureau's very investigation of some NORAID activities, however, did discourage some potential members from joining and led to the some branches to collapse. Holland, *The American Connection,* pp. 38–39.

124 Bell, *The Secret Army,* p. 467.

125 Pillar, *Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy,* p. 139; Bell, *The IRA,* p. 187; Holland, *The American Connection,* p. 32.

126 Irish immigrants have intermarried with non-Irish Americans, with the result that only ten million Americans claim an Irish heritage on both sides of the family. Moreover, half of those with an Irish heritage are Protestant. See Guelke, "The United States, Irish Americans and the Northern Ireland Peace Process," p. 523.

to deter and harass such fundraising would still be unlawful" even if the money would eventually be used for terrorism.[127] Similarly, a U.S. 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.[128]

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 U.S.-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.[129]

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 Fein and IRA spokesmen. In the early 1980s, Harrison and other members of his network were arrested, as were several other rings. British pressure also led to changes in U.S. laws. In May 1986, President Reagan helped push the Supplementary Treaty through the Senate. The Treaty excluded violent acts from being treated as political offenses. Because of Thatcher's pressure, the IRA's supporters had little influence with the Reagan administration.[130]

The U.S. 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 endeavor. By the mid-1980s, large-scale arms procurement in America had collapsed. The collapse of the U.S. 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 Qaddafi's Libya.[131]

In addition to direct diplomatic pressure on the U.S. 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. British excesses often hurt their own campaign. Nevertheless, over time it became clear that London was not simply pushing to ensure Protestant domination and was trying to use force more discriminately. Various IRA blunders that killed innocents reinforced the British claims and convinced many Americans to withhold support from the IRA. Over time, support for the IRA fell and did not increase until the movement began to embrace peace.[132]

Perhaps of greater consequence was the decision of the Irish Republic to condemn the IRA. This, coupled with Dublin's political pressure on PIRA's supporters, made the British campaign especially credible. Irish-Americans felt fondly toward the republic, and its opinion carried considerable weight among Irish-Americans. Dublin did not always endorse London's position, but it firmly rejected that of the IRA. The Irish Republic wanted to avoid being associated with the IRA's violence, viewing any implicit endorsement as embarrassing and as a potential spur to increased conflict. Dublin worked to counter Irish-Americans, such as Senator Edward Kennedy, who were initially considered "too green." During the Carter administration,

127 As quoted in Holland, *The American Connection,* p. 40.
128 Holland, *The American Connection,* pp. 161–163. Subsequent judges, however, had different interpretations of the political offense exception. One found that indiscriminate bombing that killed civilians did not constitute a political act. Holland, *The American Connection,* p. 191.
129 O'Dowd, "The Awakening," p. 69.
130 Holland, *The American Connection,* pp. 41, 194–195. Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA,* p. 16. Britain's support for the U.S. bombing of Libya contributed to Reagan's energetic push to have the pro-British legislation passed. However, many of those arrested were found innocent, and much of the network was not unraveled. Bell, *The IRA,* p. 183.
131 Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA,* p. 16; Bell, *The IRA,* p. 185; Geraghty, *The Irish War,* p. 181; Holland, *The American Connection,* p. 110.
132 Bell, *The IRA,* p. 195.

Dublin sought to increase American involvement in the conflict, hoping to have U.S. aid to Northern Ireland conditional on British support for a power-sharing agreement. At the same time, the Irish government actively tried to undermine support for the IRA in the United States. Dublin saw the IRA as an embarrassment, hurting both the chances for peace and more broadly the image of Ireland in America.[133]

As the Irish struggle wore on—and as the perception of the British changed from that of a hostile occupying force to a more positive one—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 the solution 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. The IRA was willing to disappoint more militant supporters in NORAID to do so.[134]

New Irish-American organizations contributed to this shift. Americans for a New Irish Agenda pushed for the United States to become more active in helping negotiate an end to the violence in Northern Ireland and putting pressure on the British government. The group successfully lobbied Bill Clinton as a candidate for the Presidency to support the northern Irish cause, leading him to endorse several political initiatives in October 1992, just before being elected. In 1994, the group helped convince President Clinton to grant Gerry Adams a visa to speak in the United States over the opposition of the State Department and other parts of the bureaucracy—a decision that helped contribute to the IRA's decision to support a ceasefire and move toward power sharing.[135] Again, domestic politics played a major role in this shift. Niall O'Dowd, an intermediary for Adams with the U.S. government, recalls that before the decision was made he: "received a call from the White House asking for the percentage of Irish-Americans in each state of the Union. It took this as a very positive sign that Clinton, the *uber*-politician, was calculating the political odds, and I knew there were no votes whatever in the British position."[136]

The shifting views of the diaspora encouraged IRA leaders to embrace a new direction, and this shift in turn reinforced the more peaceful strains among the diaspora. As the IRA began to abandon the armed struggle in the 1990s, it created a new group to raise money in place of NORAID—the "Friends of Sinn Fein" (FoSF). NORAID's association with the violent side of the IRA was unwelcome after the ceasefire, as the IRA sought to have its representatives work directly with U.S. political leaders. Moreover, many NORAID members had condemned the IRA's decision to accept a ceasefire in August 1994, and the organization itself appeared ambivalent with regard to the decision to end the armed struggle. The FoSF worked directly with the U.S. Department of Justice to ensure that money raised in the United States was not used "for any unlawful purpose," such as helping the IRA directly. Much of the American money thus went to helping back the peace process and to strengthen Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing.[137]

The U.S. government's attitude toward the IRA reflects some of the ambivalence found in Greece and Saudi Arabia as they confronted their own terrorist movements. Popular sympathy and lax laws enabled support. Over time, a change in popular attitudes, successful pressure on successive U.S. administrations, and a shift in the movement itself led the United States

133 Holland, *The American Connection,* pp. 115–133; O'Dowd, "The Awakening," pp. 65–66. At the request of London, the Irish government even opposed U.S. efforts to encourage fair employment practices in Northern Ireland.
134 Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA,* p. 421; Guelke, "The United States, Irish Americans and the Northern Ireland peace process," p. 532.
135 Clinton did not follow through with many of the Americans for a New Irish Agenda's requests when he became President, only doing so after it became clearer that the IRA was willing to move toward peace. Guelke, "The United States, Irish Americans and the Northern Ireland peace process," pp. 533–534; English, *Armed Struggle,* pp. 304–307; O'Dowd, "The Awakening," pp. 73–74.
136 O'Dowd, "The Awakening," p. 74.
137 Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA,* p. 460; Holland, *The American Connection,* pp. 256–258; Bell, *The Secret Army,* p. 656.

to act more aggressively and build its capacity to shut down support for IRA terrorism.

Why Does Passive Support Occur?

The Saudi, Pakistani, U.S., and Greek 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 is a common motivation for passive support. Although the level of Saudi domestic support for al-Qa'ida is unclear, the large number of Saudis in al-Qa'ida suggests at least some sympathy. Moreover, support for related Islamist causes that al-Qa'ida supports and draws on—such as Muslim insurgencies in Kashmir, Chechnya, Palestine, and elsewhere—and its anti-U.S. agenda is high. In addition, al-Qa'ida 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-Qa'ida enjoyed a similarly high level of popular support in Pakistan, and its ties to the well-organized and influential Islamist organizations only further magnified its influence. N17's attacks appeared to have enjoyed some backing from many Greeks, particularly nationalists and leftists. At the very least, many of them did not condemn N17's choice of targets. Much of the Irish-American community at least sympathized with the IRA's objectives if not its means.

Terrorist groups often play on the perceived legitimacy of their cause (the spread of Islam, Greek nationalism, Irish independence, and so on) 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 organizations. NGOs are often fronts for operatives to recruit, operate with a legitimate cover, and raise money. Even when the money does not support the operatives themselves, 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 flagrant than active support, it often has fewer diplomatic costs. Only when nations make it an important bilateral issue do the costs begin to mount. For example, the U.S. decision to crack down on the IRA's more blatant activities in the United States came only after the British government repeatedly pushed Washington. Similarly, the United States pushed the Saudis and Pakistan after September 11, gaining an increase in their cooperation against violent Islamists. The threat to the Olympics in Greece raised the potential costs to the Greek government of a continued terrorist threat, even though the danger to the Greek government and society remained limited.

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 not a threat to the United States. For many years, N17 was not seen as a danger to the Greek regime—at least not as much of a danger as the increased police powers needed to fight it. Saudi Arabia represents the exception that proves this rule. Although al-Qa'ida 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, possible as late as 2003. Until the May 2003 attacks on Saudi soil, the Saudi regime appears to have seen al-Qa'ida more as a dangerous nuisance that could be diverted rather than as a direct danger that had to be confronted.

Islamabad's tolerance of al-Qa'ida, of course, went beyond a sense of limited costs and included strategic

opportunism. Al-Qa'ida'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-Qa'ida as the organization emerged as a threat against the Musharraf regime.

A Lack of Capacity

A lack of capacity also explains passive support, but it is only partly satisfying. Saudi Arabia's ability to crack down on al-Qa'ida 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. Greece was not able to investigate N17's murders and bombings, in part because its security and intelligence services were factionalized and inept. Pakistan has only limited influence in the Northwest Frontier Province, Waziristan, and other areas where al-Qa'ida 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 institutional competence. Many activities related to terrorism—proselytizing, 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 U.S. laws governing the rights of those engaged in political activity, even if it involved violence. U.S. 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. In Greece, there was tremendous resistance to improving the capacity of the intelligence and security services, as many Greeks feared that they would use counterterrorism as an excuse to infringe on civil liberties. 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 after U.S. pressure skyrocketed after the September 11 attacks, but it was not seen as completely worthwhile until after the May 2003 attacks conjured a direct threat to the Kingdom itself. Pakistan made no effort to increase the central government's power over tribal areas until after the September 11 attacks, when U.S. pressure made at least some effort necessary.

Why Does Passive Support Diminish?

In all four cases examined, passive support for the terrorist group diminished over time. The United States became a champion of Sinn Fein's (and thus the IRA's) move toward peace, while Saudi Arabia and Greece became dangerous foes of the terrorist movements they once tolerated. Pakistan is now an opponent of al-Qa'ida, though its level of commitment is still unclear.

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 were 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 September 11 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 its main reasons for tolerating al-Qa'ida—advancing its agenda against India—made the organization a liability due to U.S. threats.

In both Greece and the United States, a shift in public opinion played a major role in ending passive support. In both cases, the luster 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 organization.

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

Moving Forward to Reduce Passive Support

In concept, the recommendations for ending, or at least reducing, passive support are straightforward. The Saudi, Pakistani, Greek, and U.S. experiences indicate that outside governments should try to establish new rules that recognize the importance of passive support, impose new costs on regimes that tolerate terrorist-related activities, diminish popular support the group enjoys, and bolster the counterterrorism capacity of regimes that seek to end their passive support. In practice, such efforts require using the full range of U.S. national power as should be done with traditional state sponsors of terrorism. However, diplomatic, legal, informational, and intelligence tools are likely to be more important for stopping passive support than traditional military and economic forms of leverage.

The Limited Utility of Force

A traditional means of coercing state sponsors is to use the U.S. military to target the terrorists and to strike at regime leadership and infrastructure 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-Qa'ida and allowing the September 11 attacks.

For passive sponsors, however, military pressure offers little help. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Greece are all U.S. allies, key partners on a number of vital issues in addition to counterterrorism. Strikes on Saudi Arabia before September 11, for example, would have alienated a partner in the Middle East peace process, a source of basing for U.S. 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. Even if there were no issue in the bilateral relationship other than counterterrorism, military strikes would be likely to backfire when used on passive sponsors. The strikes would increase popular resistance to cooperation with the United States and reduce government incentives to do so. U.S. 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.[138] As a result, regimes would probably become less cooperative, reducing the level of assistance they provide to the United States.

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

Economic Pressure: Keep It on the Table

As with military pressure, economic pressure is often a blunt instrument that can easily backfire. Sanctions,

138 See Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism* for a review.

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.[139] 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-Qa'ida to raise money, recruit, and otherwise sustain its organization. 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, 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.

The Intelligence Challenge

Gauging passive support is a far more difficult intelligence challenge than is assessing traditional state support. Intelligence agencies must measure what is not being done by the state sponsor, and the evidence needs to be strong enough to withstand careful scrutiny because we are picking a fight with an ally. As such, they must have a strong sense of the level of terrorist activity in the country as well as knowledge of the state's policies with regard to the particular group. Moreover, much of passive support falls into the category of terrorist logistics, activities that are less glamorous (and seem less dangerous) than those of operatives, but in fact are often a key to a group's success.[140] Such knowledge is often particularly difficult to acquire, as information on terrorist activity often comes from foreign intelligence liaison services, which in the case of passive support are not likely to know the level of activity and, if they do, are likely to minimize it in order to reduce contention in bilateral relations. Saudi Arabia, for example, denied for years that al-Qa'ida was conducting serious fundraising in the Kingdom and often ignored many U.S. requests for information. Penetrating passive sponsors' intelligence services in order to ensure that the United States knows the level of the problem it faces and the level of cooperation it receives is vital.

Bolstering other states' intelligence capacity is a more straightforward task than is assessing the problem in the first place. This can range from technical assistance, such as helping improve databases or information systems that track terrorists and their activities to advice on intelligence reorganization 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, suggests that the United States can help Pakistan tamp down unrest and support for terrorism by strengthening its secular education system, thus weakening the religious schools that are an important base for jihadists.[141]

Many regimes in the developing world, however, have only a limited capacity to absorb U.S. or other outside assistance meant to shore up their ability to fight terrorism. In Saudi Arabia, for example, the myriad new programs the Kingdom has introduced in

139 For a review of sanctions' limits, see O'Sullivan, *Shrewd Sanctions*.
140 On the importance of logistics, See Hoffman and Cragin, "Four Lessons from Five Countries," and Shapiro and Suzan, "The French Experience of Counter-terrorism," pp. 67–98.
141 Stern, "Pakistan's Jihad Culture," p. 126.

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.

The Need for Information Campaigns

Diminishing popular support is far more complex than is influencing a regime, but at times it is even more important. Several of the governments examined in this paper had little sympathy for the terrorists, but they were afraid of a domestic backlash if they acted against them. Only when that fear was minimized were they willing to act.

Thus, shaping the information environment is one means of reducing passive support. Simple embarrassment has often proven surprisingly effective, though by itself has generally not been sufficient to end support. The spotlight focused on Saudi Arabia after September 11 humiliated the Al Saud, making them scramble to at least appear cooperative. Greek leaders feared that their hosting of the Olympics would be ruined. Similarly, U.S. leaders recognized that support for the IRA undercut overall attempts to portray the United States as tough on terrorism. Pakistan, however, was not moved by embarrassment. It took risks to its strategic objectives and economy for Islamabad to change its position.

The United States should also consider creating a list of passive sponsors and their activities in an attempt to "name and shame" them into better behavior. Such a list would affect their tourism industry and, more broadly, their overall reputation. A model would be the "transparency index" that measures the level of corruption in countries around the world. By itself, the index carries no penalties, but a poor score is both embarrassing to responsible governments and affects how others treat it.[142]

Affecting another country's public opinion is difficult, but nevertheless possible. 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. The effort by a British widow of N17's terrorism helped undercut the image of the group as a "Robin Hood" striking out against imperialism. Similarly, British efforts to play up the IRA's bloodiness (and their own willingness to work with peaceful opposition figures) helped cut support for the IRA among Irish-Americans. More generally, the United States should play up the stories of victims of terrorism: it is usually easier (and more important) for other publics to hate the terrorists than to love the United States. In addition, what the United States seeks is for citizens to support their own government in a crackdown, not back a U.S. campaign directly. Propaganda campaigns are notoriously difficult, however, and U.S. efforts to demonize al-Qa'ida have conspicuously failed.[143] If anything, al-Qa'ida may be more popular in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia than before September 11. Shoring up dilapidated U.S. public diplomacy capabilities is more pressing than ever.

Working indirectly to diminish support may be essential. The Irish Republic's willingness to criticize 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, U.S. efforts to diminish al-Qa'ida's luster may only burnish it. It would be more effective if respected Muslim authorities would criticize the organization, as these voices have credibility with the key audiences.

142 See Transparency International's website at <http://www.transparency.org/> for a comparison of corruption levels across the world. An inappropriate model is the current list of state sponsors—a list that includes several countries that currently have minimal involvement in terrorism, such as North Korea and Cuba, yet excludes important sponsors such as Pakistan. In addition, the list is inflexible, being particularly hard to get off of even when regimes make major improvements with regard to support for terrorism.

143 For a highly critical review of U.S. 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 Legal Environment

Ensuring a common standard for what constitutes support for terrorism is necessary for an effective strategy against passive sponsorship. Most important, we need the international community to redefine what constitutes sponsorship of terrorism. Sponsorship includes far more than when a regime arms, trains, or hosts a group: it should also include states that turn a blind eye when their citizens abet such activity. States have a responsibility not only for their actions, but also for their inactions. Unfortunately, there is no accepted international definition of terrorism (despite over thirty years of attempts), let alone an accepted definition for what does and should constitute state support.

Even if a common definition can be found, gaining international support for stopping all dimensions of passive support will be difficult because of the popularity of many causes linked to terrorism enjoy and because support is often linked to legitimate political acts. Two issues in particular stand out. First, groups and individuals can and should be able to endorse a cause (such as the unification of Ireland or independence for Tamil parts of Sri Lanka) as part of their First Amendment rights. Second, aid for affiliated organizations that do not use terrorism, particularly humanitarian ones that provide for widows or engage in other good deeds that can also help sustain a terrorist organization, is a particularly murky area where prohibitions have the potential to harm important humanitarian activities.

Such problems are acute for governments of all stripes. For example, radical groups such as the Lebanese Hizballah and Hamas gain considerable support among Lebanese and Palestinians respectively for their efforts to provide food to the poor, cheap or free medical care, and other humanitarian activities. Few governments in the Middle East could stop popular support to such Palestinian charities without losing legitimacy at home—the same dilemma that the Saudis faced in the 1990s, when al-Qa'ida exploited various NGOs linked to legitimate humanitarian assistance in Bosnia and elsewhere. Similarly, halting rhetorical support of legitimate causes linked to terrorists such as independence for Chechnya will remain difficult for democracies, as support for non-violent ideas is a cherished part of free speech.

Within these limits, however, considerable progress is possible:

- **End open support for violence.** All governments must prohibit any citizens' support that knowingly goes toward a group using violence. Any support for obviously violent activities, such as arms purchasing or military training, must also be prohibited.

- **Charities must become accountable.** To prevent groups from taking advantage of individuals' ignorance (whether willful or not), charities should have to disclose the recipients of their patronage. Indeed, monitoring charitable actions and helping charities police themselves can prevent inadvertent support and make that which does go on far easier to prosecute.

- **Match diplomacy with new categories for action.** The United States should also establish a formal category for states that refuse to renounce passive sponsorship and link various economic and diplomatic penalties to it. Congress passed a law in 1996 that allows the president to designate a country as "not cooperating fully" with regard to terrorism—a category the United States should use when countries resist U.S. calls to stop passive sponsorship. The United States should also try to promulgate this category internationally and encourage other countries to join Washington when it imposes penalties. As with other forms of pressure, any penalties should be transparent and clearly linked to the egregious acts in question.[144] Passive sponsorship, of course, is really a

144 The National Commission on Terrorism (the "Bremer Commission") highlighted this law and called for the President to apply penalties to designated countries in its report, *Counter the Changing Threat of International Terrorism*, p. 23.

continuum and states should be rewarded (or punished less) if they make progress even if this is short of a complete cessation of support. Recognizing this is necessary to ensure that the categories are sufficiently flexible so decision makers are not forced into applying sanctions in a counterproductive way.

Because forging an international consensus on a broad definition of what constitutes sponsorship will be difficult, Washington should initially work with key allies who are the most important in the effort against al-Qa'ida (such as Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, France, and Britain, among others) to set a common standard and then urge others to adopt this. The precedent of financial accounting standards to reduce money laundering is useful here: by forging an agreement among key states, the United States and its allies were able to make considerable progress on improving overall financial standards and reducing the number of lax countries.

The United States also must make clear that the onus is on governments to act. All governments must show they are committed to uprooting passive support: ignorance of terrorist activities should be the rare exception, not the rule. Given the threat they pose to the United States, Washington should focus particular attention on passive support for jihadists.

Diplomatic

The above steps cannot be done by the United States on its own: it requires working with other governments to change their legal codes, improve their intelligence gathering, shape popular opinion, and so on. Recently, the U.S. government has recognized the various problems related to passive sponsorship but so far has not moved to develop an international consensus to address it.[145]

A first step is to convene an international convention that will identify state obligations to combat terrorism within their borders. At such a forum, the United States should highlight existing 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. The presumption should be on governments to do all that they can do.

To both prepare for this effort and to follow it up, the United States should help establish international guidelines for what is acceptable political activity on behalf of causes linked to terrorism and what is not acceptable. Such a task will be politically contentious and analytically challenging. Nevertheless, it is a vital part of forging a lasting international consensus on this issue.

Getting Our Own House in Order

For any of the above steps to have credibility, the United States must also ensure that it is not providing passive sponsorship to any existing group. American support for the PIRA is no longer a serious problem now that the group has turned toward peace. Ensuring that its splinters that continue to use violence, such as the Real Irish Republican Army, receive no aid is an obvious measure. More broadly, the United States should ensure that other diaspora communities in the United States are not aiding terrorist groups. For example, Tamil expatriates living in the United States have donated generously to groups linked to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.[146] Even if the group

145 The *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* declares: "The strategy to deny sponsorship, support, and sanctuary is three-fold. First, it focuses on the responsibilities of all states to fulfill their obligations to combat terrorism both within their borders and internationally. Second, it helps target U.S. assistance to those states who are willing to combat terrorism, but may not have the means. And finally, when states prove reluctant or unwilling to meet their international obligations … the United States … will take appropriate steps to convince them to change their policies." *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism,* p. 17. *The National Strategy* further notes that legislative assistance, technical aid, investigative help, intelligence sharing, and military and intelligence training are appropriate forms of assistance to improve capacity. *National Strategy,* p. 20. These goals are a promising foundation, but there has been no systematic effort to build on this conceptual base.

146 For a review, see Byman, Chalk, Hoffman, Rosenau, and Brannan, *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, pp. 49–53.

is not harming Americans, the United States cannot afford to allow its own poor policies to damage its efforts abroad.

A robust debate on passive support at home and how it interacts with the culture of a free society will help generate the will and hard thinking necessary for success abroad. Passive support is an old problem, but our understanding of its importance is new. Addressing it requires dramatic changes in U.S. institutions, policies, and ways of doing business. Until then, passive sponsorship is likely to remain one of the leading challenges in the war on terror.

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