

A Relentless War: America, Israel, and the Fight Against Terrorism

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Abstract

For Israel, terrorism has plagued the nation since its beginning. Terrorism rears its ugly head in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons; however, in both the United States and Israel, Islamic extremism has presented itself as the largest threat. Since its birth as a nation, the United States has been involved in numerous conflicts, from the Revolutionary War to World War II and beyond. These wars were fought between nation-states and traditional powers, but since the attacks on 9/11, the United States finds itself in a new kind of conflict against a different kind of enemy. As a conflict between a nation-state and an ideological group, it is unlike anything the United States has participated in before. On the other hand, Israel has spent most of its history battling Islamic extremism, even beyond its time as an official state. Ultimately, this thesis explores the approaches of the United States and Israel take against radical Islamic terrorism and seeks lessons to be learned from Israel to further solidify the United States' dominance against terrorist threats. Military might and diplomacy have been enough for the United States to be successful in the past but those techniques are not proven against an ideology like Islamic extremism, which is so radical that its followers strive to be martyred for it. Until now, the United States led the rest of the world in military and intelligence capabilities but under pressure from this immediate and continuous threat, understanding how to adapt to the everchanging fight against terrorism will be crucial.

A Relentless War: America, Israel, and the Fight Against Terrorism

What are some phrases that describe the United States of America? Large in landmass and population, dominant in military and economy, land of the free, home of the brave. Now, what are some phrases to describe Israel? Tiny, controversial, the holy land. These nations, on opposite ends of the earth with vast differences between them, have one thing in common: terrorism is a priority threat. Islamic terrorism is a new kind of threat to the United States, but Israel is experienced in this realm. Israel and Islam could almost be included in the definition of terrorism, they are so closely associated. They are so closely associated that Bruce Hoffman, a political analyst who specializes in the subject of terrorism and counterterrorism, identifies a terrorist attack by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine on an Israeli airliner in 1968 as the first-ever example of modern terrorism.¹ For the United States, while the United States dominant militarily, its fight against terrorism may not be one that can be fought with sheer military might. By taking a look through Israel's and America's respective history with terrorism and comparing the approaches they use to counter terrorist threats, it becomes clear that there are lessons Israel has learned in its many years of fighting terrorism that the United States can apply to be more effective.

Though the word "terrorism" finds its origins in the French Revolution, decidedly not an Islamic conflict, and has several meanings beyond radical Islam, for purposes of this paper and brevity of phraseology, the use of the word "terrorism" will refer strictly to the violent actions by Muslims taken against a nation and innocent civilians to bring about political or religious

¹ Hoffman, Bruce. *Inside Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006. Accessed March 4, 2020. DOI:10.7312/hoff12698.

change. Notice that the term "Muslims" is included in the definition rather than limiting the definition to "jihadists" or "radical Muslims." This is intentional for two reasons. First, "jihad" in Arabic means something entirely different than the Western connotation. When a Muslim hears themselves referred to as a jihadist, they hear themselves being called a freedom fighter.²

Second, those who commit terrorist acts in the name of Allah are not radical Muslims; they are those devoted to their faith. There are several examples in the Quran that support the idea that to be a good, true Muslim, one must violently rid the world of the infidel, referring to anyone who does not believe in Allah, most specifically Christians and Jews. One example comes from Surat Muhammad 47:4: "So when you meet those who disbelieve, strike [their] necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure their bonds."³ Another particularly relevant example is in Surat Al-Baqarah 2:191: "And kill them wherever you overtake them and expel them from wherever they have expelled you."⁴ Moreover, similar to Christianity, to be a good Muslim, one must live a life like Muhammad. Unlike Christianity in which Jesus lived a life of love and ultimately brought grace to mankind, Muhammad lived a life of violence, specifically against Jews. An example is an incident in 627 AD between Muhammad and the Banu Qurayza, a Jewish tribe. When Muhammad had been disowned from his Arab tribe, he found a new home with the Banu Qurayza tribe where they accepted and took care of him. However, Muhammad heard a rumor that one of the Jews in the tribe was planning to kill him and Muhammad reacted by arresting all of the Jewish men and brutally slaughtering 650-700 of them. If that was not bad enough, he also enslaved sixteen of the women for himself.⁵ This is the

² Waller, J. Michael. 2007. *Fighting the War of Ideas like a Real War*. Institute of World Politics Press.

³ Qur'an 47:4

⁴ Qur'an 2:191

⁵ Brother K. *Ethics of God and Ethics of Allah: Are They the Same?* S.I.: Advancing Native Missions, 2018.

man that Muslims worship and strive to emulate. When Jesus knew that there was a plot to kill him, what did he do? Jesus peacefully surrendered to his captors, even rebuking Peter who used violence to attempt to save Jesus.⁶ To say that Islam is not a violent faith is incorrect. To say that those who commit terrorism in Allah's name are "radical" is inaccurate. Evidence of this is in the targeting of moderate Muslims by Islamic terrorist groups.⁷ Otherwise, why would Islamic terrorists kill fellow terrorists?⁸ This has been a long, but necessary, calibration of definitions that will hopefully add clarity to this discussion moving forward.

Israel and Terrorism

For a nation smaller than Lake Michigan,⁹ Israel is the subject of significant conflict. The roots of this conflict began even before Israel was officially recognized as a state in 1948. Looking back at the Old Testament, it is clear that Jews have a long history of fighting in the Middle East. When the Islamic faith was founded by Muhammad in the 7th century,¹⁰ Israel's enemy took on a new name and face but was still the same battle they had been fighting for as long as Israel was first created. It is not a secret that Muslims and the Jewish people have been enemies since the days of Muhammad and the animosity has only grown stronger due to the strong alliance between the United States and Israel. It is also not a secret that terrorism is Islam's weapon of choice. Israel has been under attack and endured terrorism for the entirety of

⁶ John 18:10-11 (ESV)

⁷ Herrera, Jack. "Most Terrorist Victims Are Muslim." Pacific Standard, Last modified March 18, 2019. <https://psmag.com/news/most-terrorist-victims-are-muslim>.

⁸ Gorka, Sebastian. *Defeating Jihad: The Winnable War*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, A Division of Salem Media Group, 2019, 62.

⁹ "Israel Maps: Relative Geographical Size." Relative Geographical Size of Israel Maps. Accessed February 1, 2020. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/relative-geographical-size-of-israel-maps>.

¹⁰ "Islam." History.com. Last modified January 5, 2018. <https://www.history.com/topics/religion/islam>.

its modern existence and as a result, the nation approaches terrorism more as the air they breathe than an anomaly to be annihilated.

To fully understand how the tension between Israel and Muslims grew to what it is today, one must take a brief step back into history, beginning with Islam's founder, Muhammad. According to a PBS article by Kikim Media, at the time of Muhammad's birth in Mecca around 570 AD, the Jews were integrated into Arab society in the neighboring city of Medina, both cities of which would be in modern-day Saudi Arabia. When Muhammad arrived in Medina to mitigate conflict between two local Arab warring tribes, the Jews were caught in the middle of the violence. Due to the similarity in their beliefs, Muhammad thought the Jews would ally with him. It was not long before the Jews realized that though their beliefs may look similar on the surface, Muhammad's teaching did not line up with the Hebrew Bible. Because of this as well as other political reasons, the Jews rejected Muhammad and his teaching. That was the first blow. The second and third blows came both times that Jewish leadership attempted to kill Muhammad.¹¹ In the tribal tradition of the day, tensions escalated between Jews and Muhammad's new followers, called Muslims, and that tension remains to this day. Besides the history between the two groups, it is mandated in Islam's holy book to kill anyone who does not believe in Allah, especially Jews and Christians. The Quran states this many times, but one example is: "Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture - [fight] until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled."¹² The jizyah was a harsh tax imposed on all non-Muslims, which, if

¹¹ "Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet. Muhammad and Jews of Medina." PBS. Accessed February 1, 2020. https://www.pbs.org/muhammad/ma_jews.shtml.

¹² Qur'an 9:29

paid, was supposed to protect their right to practice their religion. However, from this verse, it is obvious that Islam has no qualms about violently forcing the Jews and Christians to submit to Islamic law through this tax. This is another obvious source of conflict for Christians and Jews who will not follow any religious law except their own. The roots of Jewish-Muslim relations are complicated, and continuing animosity between Israel and the surrounding Arab nations today reflects their complex past.

Flash forward several thousand years to the early 1900s and one finds the Jews displaced in Europe, far from home. At the beginning of the 1900s, Britain conquered the Ottoman Empire and declared Palestine as a haven for displaced Jews. When World War II begins, and with it the extreme discrimination and genocide of the Jews, the Jewish people begin to migrate more heavily to their homeland. Despite Britain's best efforts to mitigate tension between the Palestinians and Jews through migration laws, pressure grows in the region. After several years of mass migration of Jews into Palestine-controlled territory and Jews fighting for their sovereignty there, in 1948 Israel declares its independence and the United States affirms it. Almost immediately, the first Arab-Israeli war begins.¹³ In a time when Israel was seeking refuge from the Nazis, they found not safety, but warfare in their new home. Once again the Jews were under attack for supposedly stealing land and the surrounding Arabs wreaked havoc to recover what they consider theirs. The conflict of the past lands the Jewish people in between Europe and the Middle East, neither of which they can call home. This is where the story of Israel and modern radical Islamic extremism begins.

¹³ "Israel Profile - Timeline." BBC News. Last modified April 9, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29123668>.

A region completely wrought with turmoil, Israel and its neighbors have experienced decades of fighting. It would be difficult to cover all instances of fighting and terrorism in any reasonable amount of time, but fortunately, there are several events since 1948 that stand out above the rest. One of these key events was the Six-Day War that occurred in June of 1967. One might ask, "How could a war only six days long be one of the most significant events in Israeli history?" There are two answers to that question. First, Israel should not have won the war. They were taken by surprise and were fighting nations on all sides, from Jordan to Egypt to Syria. Second, Israel regained territory that would provide vital protection. According to Bregman, Israel now controlled east Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai desert. Israel went from controlling 20,250 square kilometers of land to 88,000 square kilometers.¹⁴ Not only that, but the land they conquered was very symbolic. Bregman states:

The victory had a special historic meaning because of the capturing of territories central to the religious mythical past: the Old City of Jerusalem with the Western Wall, which is the remnant of the ancient Jewish temple destroyed by the Romans...For Israel's religious community, the occupation of these territories established the relationships between what they define as 'People, God, and Promised Land,' strengthening their sense of Jewish identity.¹⁵

It was a significant victory for Israel, but it did not last long. Part of the reason the Six-Day War began was due to the terrorist actions of Palestinians and Syria's failure to stop them and though the war itself was fought in a rather traditional, militaristic style, the consistent terrorist attacks continued.¹⁶ More than that, the Six-Day War set the stage for terrorism on a level that the world had not seen before. Terrorism became not just a local, regional issue between Arab nations and

¹⁴ Bregman, Ahron. *Israel's Wars: A History Since 1947*. 4th ed. London: Routledge, 2016, 95.

¹⁵ Ibid, 96.

¹⁶ Ibid, 67.

Israel; rather, it began to cross borders and bleed into the world outside of the Middle East. Before Israel's decisive victory over the Arab nations in the Six-Day War, Palestinians assumed that the Arab armies would eventually regain their land. That all changed when Israel emerged the unlikely victor. Now that Israel had authority over the majority of the territory, Israel was better equipped to respond to the Palestinian attacks. In the media, news about Israel and Palestine started to die down and Palestine was running out of options to turn the tide of international opinion in Palestine's favor. In response to Israel's steady success in combatting Palestinian attacks after the Six-Day War and less media attention, Palestine turned toward international terrorism. It was a win-win situation for them; it was easier than managing an army, had a bigger impact, and got them the attention they craved. Civilians became legitimate targets when they had never been so before under just war theory.¹⁷ Those conducting terrorist attacks showed the world they did not care about just war theory or innocent lives. All of a sudden, terrorism went from Israel's problem to the world's problem, and there is no better example of this shift than the Munich Massacre.

On September 5, 1972, the 20th Olympic Games entered their second week of games and festivities in Munich, Germany. The Olympics Games are a treasured international tradition and one that had always been sacred. It is intended to be an event that brings nations together under one roof, regardless of the politics or warfare occurring outside of the event. Though a prime opportunity for maximum effect from an attack or to use the widely publicized event as propaganda, nations generally avoid using them in such a way, with a few exceptions. For instance, the Nazis used the 1936 Olympics Games in Berlin as a propaganda tool, but despite all

¹⁷ Byman, Daniel L. 2017. "The 1967 War and the Birth of International Terrorism." *Brookings*. Brookings. May 31. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/05/30/the-1967-war-and-the-birth-of-international-terrorism/>.

the unrest across the world, the Olympics had remained safe from attack. That is, until 1972. Early in the morning on September 5, perpetrators entered the Olympic Village unnoticed. They were disguised as athletes but had nefarious intentions. Before anyone knew what was going on, two Israeli athletes were killed and nine more were taken hostage. When demands for the release of 200 Arab guerillas from Israeli prison came through, it was evident that these were terrorists, members of Black September, a Palestinian guerilla group associated with the Palestinian Liberation Organization. By the time the massacre was over, all of the Israeli hostages, eleven in total, had been killed along with five of their captors. Only three terrorists were captured.¹⁸ This event was horrific and appalling to everyone watching, making it a well-known piece of history. However, Israel was already living under the threat of this kind of attack every single day. It just made the news in 1972. The Munich Massacre brought terrorism into the world's eye and initiated a further shift into using terrorist tactics in war, as was to be seen in the First Intifada.

Israel's control of the volatile territory was firmly in their grasp following the Six-Day War and remained relatively undisputed until the First Intifada, when the Palestinians rose up in response to Israel's presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This is not to say that tension was not growing though, particularly in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem. The wildfire that was the Intifada itself began very suddenly, its catalyst a seemingly accidental car crash that happened at the wrong place at the wrong time. In December 1987, an Israeli hit a car of Palestinians, killing four of them, and that was enough to set fire to the tension between the two people groups once again. The Palestinians believed that this car accident was an intentional attack against them.¹⁹ The truth about the incident did not matter because tensions were so high

¹⁸ Hay, Jeff, ed. *The Munich Olympics Massacre*. New York, NY: Greenhaven Publishing LLC, 2014. Accessed February 4, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁹ Bregman, Ahron. *Israel's Wars: A History Since 1947*. 4th ed. London: Routledge, 2016, 189.

at the time that anything could have sparked the Intifada. This one minor accident set off about six bloody years of war between Palestine and Israel, a major surprise to most in the area. According to Bregman, the war was such a surprise that Israel's leadership at the time thought of it as nothing more than a mere violent but contained scuffle.²⁰ They would soon find out they were wrong. The Intifada represented a whole new kind of threat to Israel. They found their usual tactics were no longer effective and that no amount of technologically advanced weapons systems would keep them safe if they did not adapt to this new way of war. The Palestinians resorted to stoning, arson, tire-burning and other similar tactics that the Israeli Defense Force could not combat effectively. Moreover, every time an Israeli troop would kill someone while protecting themselves, the dead Palestinian became a martyr in the rebels' eyes, further bolstering their passion for their cause.²¹ The Jewish Virtual Library reports that in just the first four years of the Intifada, there were over 3,600 Molotov cocktail, 100 hand grenade, and 600 gun and explosive attacks. Additionally, 16 Israeli civilians were killed and over 1,400 were injured while 1,100 Palestinian civilians and soldiers were killed, all during only the first four years.²² War is violent and ruthless, and traditional warfare crosses the line into terrorism when innocent civilians are being targeted indiscriminately. As if the Intifada was not bad enough, Hamas, a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and currently considered a terrorist organization by the United States,²³ was born and set their sights on Israel. Even when Israel and Palestine grew

²⁰ Bregman, Ahron. *Israel's Wars: A History Since 1947*. 4th ed. London: Routledge, 2016, 190.

²¹ Ibid, 195.

²² "Israel's Wars & Operations: First Intifada." Jewish Virtual Library. Accessed February 1, 2020. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/first-intifada>.

²³ "Foreign Terrorist Organizations - United States Department of State." Accessed January 28, 2020. <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>.

wearied of the war and attempted to pursue peace, Hamas would use terrorism to be divisive and distract from peace efforts.²⁴ Finally, the Oslo Declaration, an agreement that allowed Palestinians to govern themselves, marked the official end of the first Intifada.²⁵ Unfortunately but not unsurprisingly, this agreement did not discontinue all violence and tension between the two entities remains today.

As seen in the ancient history of the Jews, the Six-Day War, the Munich Massacre, and the First Intifada, terrorist actions have plagued the Jewish people and Israel throughout the generations, even if it was not called terrorism in the ancient times. As its name implies, the First Intifada was not the end of the violence. Since the Oslo Declaration in 1993, violence has continued and terrorism has progressed. Significant events since 1993 are Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and the West Bank in 1993 and again in 2005, Hamas winning the Palestinian parliamentary elections in 2006, and the murder of an Israeli couple in the West Bank in 2015 which sparked a rise in terrorist actions against Israelis. The topic of Israel has been particularly fiery since President Trump entered office in 2016. Within a year of his inauguration, he declared Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and moved the United State embassy there. Soon after that, President Trump recognized the Golan Heights as Israel's territory, and then in 2019, he said that the United States considers Israeli settlements on the West Bank as legal.²⁶ Of course, this just scratches the surface of Israeli-Arab tension in the occupied territory, but it is enough to recognize the impact terrorism has had on Israel and their response to it. Constantly under attack, Israel has learned how to thrive under fire.

²⁴ Bregman, Ahron. *Israel's Wars: A History Since 1947*. 4th ed. London: Routledge, 2016, 209.

²⁵ "Israel Profile - Timeline." BBC News. Last modified April 9, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29123668>.

²⁶ Ibid.

America and Terrorism

To the untrained eye, America seems the opposite of Israel in almost every way. Perhaps some of the politics are the same, but in size and geopolitical position, among other factors, the United States and Israel are at opposite ends of the spectrum. America is large, in landmass and population, while Israel is small in both those categories. America has relatively safe borders; the only countries the United States directly connected to its borders are Mexico and Canada. Israel, on the other hand, is surrounded by enemies. Another way the United States and Israel are different is in their counterterrorism efforts. To understand the United States' current conflict with terrorism, one must take a brief jaunt through several of the most significant events in the relatively short but loaded history between the United States and terrorism.

The United States has been through its fair share of wars, but one of the first times it was exposed to the new kind of war that terrorism is, was in 1983 when U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon were attacked. Tensions between the United States and the Middle East were slowly rising, with the notable Iranian hostage crisis, in which 52 Americans were held hostage for 444 days by Iranians,²⁷ occurring before Reagan's presidency and ending as soon as he was elected. This had been a shocking moment for a nation in the middle of Cold War anxiety; the Middle East was far from everyone's mind. Three years went by without major incident. Then, early in the morning on October 23, two trucks entered a Marine compound in Beirut, Lebanon, bent on destruction. The first truck drove straight into the Marine barracks with 2,000 pounds of explosives, killing 220 Marines and 21 others, making it the deadliest attack on United States Marines since the infamous battle of Iwo Jima during World War II. The second truck drove near

²⁷ History.com Editors. "Iran Hostage Crisis." History.com. Last modified June 1, 2010. <https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/iran-hostage-crisis>.

where some French paratroopers, there on a peacekeeping mission, were staying and exploded. This part of the attack killed 58 French soldiers. It was suspected that Iran ordered the terrorist organization, Hezbollah, to carry out the attack.²⁸ This terrorist attack was significant for a few reasons. First, it was one of the first events that made the United States stop and consider that terrorism was a real threat that was not going away any time soon. A 1984 publication by the Rand Corporation detailing a briefing about the Beirut bombing states the following:

We may be on a threshold of an era in which limited conventional war, classic guerilla warfare, and international terrorism will coexist, with both governments and subnational entities employing them individually, interchangeably, sequentially, or simultaneously. As a result, the United States will be compelled to maintain capabilities for defending against and, with the exception of terrorism, waging all three modes of conflict.²⁹

It was dawning on the United States what major threat terrorism posed. The threat of terrorism had broken through the borders of the Middle East, where it had been mostly contained until that point, and had potential to become an international challenge if governments decided to add terrorism to their arsenal, as they suspected Iran did in this instance. Little did the United States know just how true that prediction would be. Another reason this attack was significant was that it drew awareness to the obvious vulnerabilities in the rules of engagement as they were established at the time. Though many after-action reports concluded that the event was unstoppable, it was brought to the attention of military leadership that those who saw the trucks arriving could not do anything about it because there was a very specific and extensive process they had to go through to defend themselves. According to the Pentagon's report on the Beirut bombings, if an entity trespassed on the compound, the first course of action for the U.S. service

²⁸ "Beirut Marine Barracks Bombing Fast Facts." CNN. Last modified November 13, 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/06/13/world/meast/beirut-marine-barracks-bombing-fast-facts/index.html>.

²⁹ Jenkins, Brian Michael. "THE LESSONS OF BEIRUT: TESTIMONY BEFORE THE LONG COMMISSION." Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, 1984.

members would be to tell the trespasser they are trespassing and should not proceed. If that did not deter the trespasser, then a commanding officer would be informed and choose the next course of action. Moreover, service members were not allowed to use force unless responding to a hostile act by the trespasser.³⁰ These steps, meant to keep the United States on the moral high ground, came into question when it seemed like they may have cost American lives that day. Several changes were requested to the rules of engagement and a few were accepted, such as the change that now allowed service members to fire upon any civilian vehicle that approached compounds at a high rate of speed and did not stop when instructed to.³¹ However, the edits to the rules of engagement would fall short seventeen years later when a U.S. Navy ship was crippled by a small vessel of terrorists.

The USS Cole was a vision of American military supremacy. An American flag waving in the wind, a symbol of America's influence wherever it went. On October 12, 2000, a port in Aden, Yemen found itself in the shadow of the American flag. The USS Cole was making a surprise stop to refuel when a small boat approached the looming figure of the ship. According to Stephen Robinson of *The Telegraph*, nobody thought anything of it, assuming the boat was coming to help with the refueling. There were no suspicious signs until the people in the small craft stood up and saluted and by that point, it was too late to stop the attack. Just seconds later, the small boat exploded, resulting in a 40-foot hole in the ship and the deaths of seventeen American service people.³² Though the United States government blamed Sudan for the attack,

³⁰ "KEY SECTIONS OF PENTAGON'S REPORT ON ATTACK ON THE MARINES." The New York Times. Last modified December 29, 1983. <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/12/29/world/key-sections-of-pentagon-s-report-on-attack-on-the-marines.html>.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Washington, Stephen Robinson. "Bombed US Warship Was Defended by Sailors with Unloaded Guns." The Telegraph. Last modified November 15, 2000.

al-Qaeda claimed responsibility and most likely planned and executed the terrorist action. On multiple different occasions, Osama bin Laden, a key figure in al-Qaeda, was recorded praising the effort to destroy the USS Cole.³³ By this point, the United States was nine years removed from the Cold War, but the frequency of terrorist attacks on United States citizens was increasing. The attack on the USS Cole was another example of the increasing prevalence of terrorism in the world. Similar to the Beirut bombings, the attack on the USS Cole had several implications for the United States. First, this was, once again, an example of rules of engagement standing in the way of self-defense. According to Robinson, the crew aboard the ship was specifically told not to shoot at the incoming unidentified vessel unless they were being shot at in accordance with the rules of engagement. In the article, Petty Officer Jennifer Kudrick was quoted saying, “We would have gotten in more trouble for shooting two foreigners than losing 17 American sailors.”³⁴ Yet despite this apparent consequence of the rules of engagement, the Department of Defense’s USS Cole Commission Report recommended no changes be made to the rules of engagement.³⁵ The other, more important reason the USS Cole bombing was significant was because it foreshadowed the devastating events of 9/11. Bombing a ship, even if it is a U.S. Navy destroyer, and taking down two large skyscrapers in the heart of New York City are considerably different in magnitude. However, the mastermind behind both events was

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/yemen/1374316/Bombed-US-warship-was-defended-by-sailors-with-unloaded-guns.html>.

³³ “USS Cole Bombing Fast Facts.” CNN. Last modified October 5, 2019.
<https://www.cnn.com/2013/09/18/world/meast/uss-cole-bombing-fast-facts/index.html>.

³⁴ Washington, Stephen Robinson. “Bombed US Warship Was Defended by Sailors with Unloaded Guns.” The Telegraph. Last modified November 15, 2000.
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/yemen/1374316/Bombed-US-warship-was-defended-by-sailors-with-unloaded-guns.html>.

³⁵ “DoD USS COLE COMMISSION REPORT.” Department of Defense. Last modified January 9, 2001.
<https://fas.org/irp/threat/cole.pdf>.

Osama bin Laden, and it is stated in the 9/11 Commission that the lack of response from the United States over the USS Cole bombing emboldened bin Laden to consider a bigger attack, leading to the planning and execution of the 9/11 attacks.³⁶ The USS Cole bombing was another stepping stone toward a terrorist attack on the American homeland, a fear which would be realized on September 11, 2001.

At 8:46 a.m. on September 11, 2001, a commercial passenger plane crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center. Was it a tragic accident? Was it mechanical failure or pilot error? At 9:03 a.m., another passenger plane slammed into the World Trade Center, but the south tower this time. The picture became clearer – this was not an accident. At 9:37 a.m., an airline torpedoed into the side of the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. At 10:03 a.m., the final plane crashes in a field in Pennsylvania, the hijackers overtaken by brave passengers. By the time the last plane crashed, it was evident to most everyone that this was an attack on the homeland, one perpetrated by terrorists. The very thing everyone had feared, but suspected was not feasible for a non-state actor like al-Qaeda, had occurred. These attacks changed the course of the United States in many ways. When the World Trade Centers were hit, killing thousands, it was obvious that terrorism had made its way to America's shores. This had significant implications for very nearly every aspect of American life. Security and fear were heightened. Flying on a plane would never be the same. The biggest threat to the United States was now terrorism, which posed a significantly different threat to this nation that the United States had not faced before. The United States was still transitioning out of the Cold War era, and tended to business and gathered

³⁶ Kean, Thomas H., Richard Ben-Veniste, Fred F. Fielding, Jamie S. Gorelick, Slade Gorton, Lee H. Hamilton, Bob Kerrey, John F. Lehman, Timothy J. Roemer, and James R. Thompson. *The 9/11 Commission report: final report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States: official government edition. The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States: Official Government Edition*, The 9/11 Commission report: final report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States: official government edition § (2004).

intelligence as if it were still facing a predictable fellow state actor. It became clear on September 11 that this would no longer suffice. Many pieces of legislation passed through Congress to better equip the United States military and intelligence community to combat this new, transient, ever-changing enemy. The first of the most prominent legislative measures came in the form of the USA PATRIOT Act. This impressive acronym stands for the Uniting and Strengthening American by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act. It is a complex document that essentially allows law enforcement and the federal government more power to investigate terrorist threats, arguably to the point of an invasion of privacy.³⁷ Another important piece of legislation was the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) of 2004. Again, there are many intricate details in the document but it was meant to transform the intelligence community to prevent stovepiping, the unnecessary and dangerous compartmentation of information that grows out of competitiveness between intelligence agencies. Perhaps one of the biggest changes that came from the IRTPA was that the leader of the entire intelligence community shifted from the director of the Central Intelligence Agency to the new position of Director of National Intelligence.³⁸ 9/11 was a sobering event that brought changes about the way only a disaster at this proportion can. Lives were changed forever and the United States was suddenly in a full-blown war with those who could conduct terrorism.

Each of these three events, the Beirut bombing, the attack on the USS Cole, and the devastating 9/11 attacks, built on one another until the United States finally realized what needed to be done to combat it. With the USA PATRIOT Act and the IRTPA of 2004, the United States

³⁷ “The USA PATRIOT Act: Preserving Life and Liberty.” Preserving Life and Liberty. Accessed January 29, 2020. <https://www.justice.gov/archive/ll/highlights.htm>.

³⁸ Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 § (2004).

attacked the hindrances to fighting terrorism legislatively and allowed more flexibility and collaboration for the Intelligence Community. The United States and its allies needed to seek and erase terrorist sanctuaries.³⁹ Education about terrorism needed to become more prevalent at home and abroad.⁴⁰ These improvements were positive and much needed, but there is still plenty of room for improvement. Though there have been limited and comparatively small terrorist attacks targeting United States citizens and service members recently, terrorism is still running rampant across the world. The United States cannot use its usual approach of high-intensity conflict to get to decisive victory unless it wants to exhaust itself of resources, energy, and willpower. More likely, this is a fight with an indefinite timeline, requiring a variety of creative and low-intensity approaches.

A Comparison of Israel's and America's Approaches to Counterterrorism

As made clear by looking at the histories of each nation, Israel and the United States are both deeply entrenched in counterterrorism efforts. Though Israel and the United States approach terrorism similarly, there are still differences in the way they operate. On one hand, Israel is small and is fighting for its life, allowing it a measure of tolerance for actions that other countries may not have gotten away with. On the other hand, the United States is a superpower and Israel is not, causing the United States to have to play by the metaphorical moral rulebook a little bit more. Many important factors contribute to the nations' success in fighting terrorism. Two of the

³⁹ Kean, Thomas H., Richard Ben-Veniste, Fred F. Fielding, Jamie S. Gorelick, Slade Gorton, Lee H. Hamilton, Bob Kerrey, John F. Lehman, Timothy J. Roemer, and James R. Thompson. The 9/11 Commission report: final report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States: official government edition. *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States: Official Government Edition*, The 9/11 Commission report: final report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States: official government edition § (2004), 367.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 377.

most significant and controversial factors being the use of interrogation techniques, particularly enhanced interrogation, and public opinion.

Enhanced interrogation has been a highly disputed topic in the United States, especially in recent years for several reasons. First, the release of the "Torture Memos" in 2009 revealed the extent to which enhanced interrogation was used by the United States in the post-9/11 era.⁴¹ These documents describe and approve the interrogation of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and Abu Zubaydah, key figures in planning 9/11. The reason people were outraged about the "Torture Memos" was because they described interrogation methods, such as waterboarding, seemingly tortuous in nature.⁴² To an unfamiliar reader, it is not difficult to see how they would misinterpret what the United States government approved through these documents as torture; however, there is a major difference between torture and enhanced interrogation, which is what waterboarding was considered to the leaders of the United States. Granted, it is a thin line, but the major difference between the two is that torture implies bodily harm, whereas the enhanced interrogation programs that the United States participated in had strict legal guidelines with doctors present to prevent any sort of lasting bodily harm.⁴³ Right up front, in the first paragraph of the "Torture Memos," it is stated that "use of these techniques, subject to the CIA's careful screening criteria and limitations and its medical safeguards, is consistent with United States obligations under Article 16 [of the United National Convention against Torture and Other Cruel,

⁴¹ Bradbury, Steven G. Memorandum for John A. Rizzo, Memorandum for John A. Rizzo § (2005). <https://fas.org/irp/agency/doj/olc/article16.pdf>.

⁴² Mazzetti, Mark, and Scott Shane. "Interrogation Memos Detail Harsh Tactics by the C.I.A." The New York Times. Last modified April 16, 2009. <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/17/us/politics/17detain.html>.

⁴³ Bradbury, Steven G. Memorandum for John A. Rizzo, Memorandum for John A. Rizzo § (2005). <https://fas.org/irp/agency/doj/olc/article16.pdf>.

Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment]."⁴⁴ The tactics were meant to scare and affect victims psychologically to get vital information from them. Moreover, many techniques were used besides waterboarding, like confinement, placing harmless insects in a box with the suspect, and sleep deprivation.⁴⁵ None of these explanations convinced Congress or the people of the United States that the enhanced interrogation programs in the post-9/11 era were helping rather than hurting intelligence efforts, and so, because of America's moral rulebook, enhanced interrogation was discontinued.

Israel, on the other hand, is somewhat notorious for its openness about torture. They do not flaunt it, but it is widely known that they do actively participate in conducting enhanced interrogation and what some would consider torture. There are several interrogation techniques they use that get close to the line between torture and enhanced interrogation, but they too hold to the idea that they are not meant to cause permanent psychological or physical damage. Some of the specific interrogation methods they use are slapping, back-bending, shouting, squatting, and raising the suspect's cuffed hands.⁴⁶ Some of these are self-explanatory, like slapping, shouting, and squatting, but clarification is needed for back-bending and raising the suspect's cuffed hands. When using back-bending, the person being interrogated is bent backward over with a stool while their hands and legs are handcuffed to the legs of the stool so they are unable to straighten their back. The use of raising a suspect's cuffed hands is another uncomfortable

⁴⁴ Bradbury, Steven G. Memorandum for John A. Rizzo, Memorandum for John A. Rizzo § (2005). <https://fas.org/irp/agency/doj/olc/article16.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Mitchell, James E., and Bill Harlow. *Enhanced Interrogation: Inside the Minds and Motives of the Islamic Terrorists Trying to Destroy America*. New York: Crown Forum, 2016.

⁴⁶ Levinson, Chaim. "Torture, Israeli-Style - as Described by the Interrogators Themselves." Haaretz.com. Haaretz Newspaper, April 24, 2018. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israeli-style-torture-as-described-by-the-interrogators-themselves-1.5489853>.

position in which the person being interrogated has their hands handcuffed behind their back, then raised above their head for a period of time.⁴⁷ Though, when done carefully, these seem like a matter of discomfort rather than permanent damage, the opposition to such tactics remains strong, especially because Israel might be taking advantage of a loophole. This loophole, called the "ticking time-bomb," is a concept the United States used to justify their use of enhanced interrogation following 9/11 as well.⁴⁸ It is the situation in which the person being interrogated has crucial and time-sensitive information which must be extracted quickly to prevent attacks and loss of life. Considering that Israel's way of life is a ticking time-bomb scenario, there is good reason to believe they are taking full advantage of this loophole. The United States and Israel must strike a delicate balance because public opinion on enhanced interrogation is a significant issue in the success of the interrogation and the overall war against terrorism.

Public opinion is a destroyer of governments. In a debate with Stephen Douglas, Abraham Lincoln illustrated the importance of public opinion well: "In this and like communities, public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed."⁴⁹ In the fight against terrorism, the governments of Israel and the United States require the support of the people in taking actions to combat the threat of terrorism. First, Israel does seem to have the support of its people and this at least in part due to their mandatory service requirements. It is clearly stated on the Israeli Defense Force's website that in Israel,

⁴⁷ Levinson, Chaim. "Torture, Israeli-Style - as Described by the Interrogators Themselves." Haaretz.com. Haaretz Newspaper, April 24, 2018. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israeli-style-torture-as-described-by-the-interrogators-themselves-1.5489853>.

⁴⁸ Bradbury, Steven G. Memorandum for John A. Rizzo, Memorandum for John A. Rizzo § (2005). <https://fas.org/irp/agency/doj/olc/article16.pdf>.

⁴⁹ Zerefsky, David. "'Public Sentiment Is Everything': Lincoln's View of Political Persuasion." *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 15, no. 2 (1994): 23–40. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jala/2629860.0015.204/--public-sentiment-is-everything-lincolns-view-of-political?rgn=main;view=fulltext>.

every Israeli citizen who is eighteen or older and is Jewish, Druze, or Circassian must serve in the IDF. Exceptions to this rule are Israeli Arabs, religious women, those who are married, and those considered medically or mentally unfit, but the website states that many people in the exempt category still volunteer to serve. Men serve at least 32 months, or almost three years, and women serve at least two years.⁵⁰ This does not appear to be a controversial topic amongst Israelis, seemingly because they cannot afford to debate conscription when missiles are too often in the forecast. The people of Israel understand what it takes to defend their nation because they have seen the effectiveness of the military; thus they are supportive of their government and military action. They live their lives wondering when the next attack is going to be and are almost always in a posture of self-defense. The United States, on the other hand, is not consistently under attack nor does it have mandatory service. These are good things and mean that the nation has done an effective job of protecting its homeland. It is important to note that these are major factors contributing to the worldview of American society. As 9/11 gets further away, the pain recedes a little bit and the wounds become scars, the American people are forgetting what it was like to be under attack and what is necessary to prevent a future attack.

Lessons Learned

It was mentioned earlier that the United States has to play by the metaphorical rulebook because it has such prominence on the world stage. This simply means that they are bound to international agreements regarding warfare, standardly accepted Just War Theory, among other limitations because it is a large nation with super-power influence. If the United States did not follow the various agreements and treaties, it is less likely that many countries who currently

⁵⁰ "Our Soldiers." Idf.il. Accessed February 4, 2020. <https://www.idf.il/en/minisites/our-soldiers/>.

regard these standards would take them as seriously, and world order would devolve quickly. With that said, the United States plays by the rulebook and relies on its military dominance to win wars, but terrorism is a conflict that might not be won in this way. If the United States must still have a rulebook - and it should - it needs to be changed to fit the threat. The United States seems almost stuck in a Cold War-era mindset, but terrorism is not a nation-state enemy in the slightest. The creativity it took to win the Cold War will be necessary to be effective against terrorism, but the predictability of battling a nation-state is gone. Following a rulebook is not necessarily a hindrance as it is a reminder that saving human lives is the ultimate goal of every war. Preventing lives lost in battle and protecting lives at home, even if due solely to moral obligation, is still honorable in the conduct of war. However, this kind of rulebook stands on the premise that both parties of any given war have that same objective, as nation-state actors typically do. What happens to the rulebook when there is a party involved in a war that does not have that priority? What happens when one of the parties is hellbent on destroying entire civilizations, no matter the cost? Terrorists have no need or obligation to protect anyone's life; they kill Americans and Israelis, other Muslims, and themselves to further their cause. What does the rulebook say about that?

America's rulebook is less equipped to address these issues than Israel's. As seen in the discussion about their various approaches to counterterrorism, Israel does what it takes to protect themselves. They understand that terrorists are not out to simply advance their tribe's standing in the world, or simply fighting for what they believe in. Rather, the terrorists will attack until Israel is destroyed, America is destroyed, and every person who does believe in Allah is destroyed. These are not people with whom diplomacy or any other civil actions work, and Israel knows that. As a result, they have changed the premise of the rule book they use against terrorists, and

America could take a note out of it. For Israel, terrorists who have committed or are involved in the process of planning egregious acts do not get mercy nor concern for their human rights. History has shown over and over again that the people who commit terrorist acts will stop at nothing, and they certainly will not recognize their victims' human rights. If it is a terrorist's life in return for tens, hundreds, or thousands of lives they have taken, or a terrorist's life to prevent the loss of tens, hundreds, or thousands, then Israel will not spare the one life.

This would not be an extreme shift in ideology or strategy for the United States to make. This sort of strategy started to appear at the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020 with the elimination of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader for the Islamic State; Qasem Soleimani, a general in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, declared a terrorist organization in April 2019;⁵¹ as well as Qassim al-Rimi, a leader in al Qaeda. Aside from maybe Soleimani, who was killed partially due to an attack on the United States Embassy in Iraq, these men were targeted because they were known bad actors, not necessarily in response to any particular attack. They were not assassinations, the killing of someone for political or religious reasons.⁵² They were done in protection of the United States and its interests. They were a part of the war the United States is already in and will continue to be in until terrorism is no longer prevalent. President Trump summed this concept up well in his State of the Union speech on February 4, 2020, "Our message to the terrorists is clear: you will never escape American justice. If you attack our citizens, you forfeit your life!"⁵³ The change in mindset under the war against terror is exactly

⁵¹ "Foreign Terrorist Organizations - United States Department of State." Accessed January 28, 2020. <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>.

⁵² "Assassinate ." *Merriam-Webster*. Accessed February 3, 2020. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/assassinate>.

⁵³ Trump, Donald J. "2020 State of the Union Address." *The State of the Union*. February 4, 2020.

that – war – is important not only for the strategies of the government but also in informing the American public.

As discussed, another major difference between the United States and Israel is the will of the people. The level of support for the government from the citizens of each nation is on opposite ends of the spectrum. Israel's people are intimately familiar with the risk they face every single day whereas the American people face relatively less risk in their daily lives, at least from terrorism. Mandatory military service, such as in Israel, is likely not feasible in a state as large as the United States and as such, is not necessarily the answer to America's will-of-the-people problem. However, education is. Educating the American public about what the military and the intelligence community do to protect America from terrorism could make a significant impact on how the public views the war against terrorism and the government's actions. As seen in social media trends, like #NotMyPresident and #WorldWarIII, full of people brutally disparaging the United States government and its actions, negative attitude toward the government, the intelligence community, and the military, seem particularly worse in recent years. When did the American people start hating the very people protecting them? The American people do not understand the rigor and danger involved with being a soldier, especially as a soldier in a war against terrorism. Many of the United States' intelligence agencies, like the Federal Bureau of Investigation,⁵⁴ have great educational programs that seek to educate about what they do, how they do counterterrorism, what to look for to effectively counter-terrorism. For these education programs to work, people need to take advantage of them. It seems like Twitter, social media in general, and the news attempt to cause their users and viewers to sympathize with terrorists and

⁵⁴ “Community Outreach.” FBI. Last modified April 28, 2016. <https://www.fbi.gov/about/community-outreach>.

criminalize the United States government for taking actions against terrorists. When and why did this shift occur in the United States? People in Israel would never sympathize with a terrorist because they know what it is like to fight for their lives against terrorism. They have to because the only other option is extinction. That is the difference between the United States and Israel. Israelites fully understand the threat before them while Americans do not.

If education is the key, then the government and experts in counterterrorism must be intentional about their outreach. Several agencies do this already. For instance, the Defense Intelligence Agency recently published an unclassified report on Iran as a part of their “Military Powers” series.⁵⁵ This is a great resource that anyone can access if they know about it. After doing a little digging, it is clear that they advertise the publication at every opportunity. Though, it is simply a fact that the Defense Intelligence Agency does not have quite the recognition the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation do, making them arguably better candidates to educate the public. While it seems that outward education is a priority for the FBI, the same cannot be said for the CIA. Based on the CIA's website, there are no evident resources specifically about counterterrorism programs they offer. They do have a section specifically related to the CIA's role in the War on Terrorism, which is essentially a timeline of important events the CIA has been involved in.⁵⁶ To be fair, their mission depends on their secrecy and is not necessarily focused on terrorism; however, if the agency spearheaded an initiative to bring their expertise to the public, other agencies would follow suit. Meanwhile, the FBI has an entire section on its website dedicated to community outreach. They offer many

⁵⁵ “Military Power Publications.” Defense Intelligence Agency. Accessed February 4, 2020. <https://www.dia.mil/Military-Power-Publications/>.

⁵⁶ “CIA & the War on Terrorism.” Central Intelligence Agency. Last modified November 1, 2017. <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism>.

different vital educational opportunities, the first listed being their Citizens Academy programs, which are "engaging six-to-eight-week programs that give business, religious, civic, and community leaders an inside look at the FBI" and meet in FBI field offices. The agency also provides Community Awareness Presentations that are essentially shortened versions of the Citizens Academy training and are geared toward any community group that wants to learn. This is an easily accessible program as the only thing one would have to do to set up this kind of presentation is to contact the local FBI field office. Moreover, they start their training young, offering programs for teenagers as well as an entire training course on countering violent extremism that is specifically geared towards youth.⁵⁷ The FBI is a great example of the sort of educational opportunities all counterterrorism experts and organizations should be actively marketing to the American public. As they say, knowledge is power and in this case, knowledge could be the thing that keeps Americans safe.

Conclusion

Terrorism is not a threat of the past but is ongoing for both the United States and Israel. To create a global climate intolerant to terrorism, some level of creativity is necessary. These governments ought to look to the past, to their history, for clues about how to handle the current fight. Despite being a dominant military power, the United States must look to Israel for new and inventive ways of combatting terrorism in the United States. Not all tactics will be able to translate from a nation like Israel to a nation like the United States, but as a nation and a people that have been combatting terrorism longer than the United States has existed, they have insight on how to effectively suffocate terrorism and prevent it from spreading.

⁵⁷ "Community Outreach." FBI. Last modified April 28, 2016. <https://www.fbi.gov/about/community-outreach>.

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