

A POSITION PAPER ON

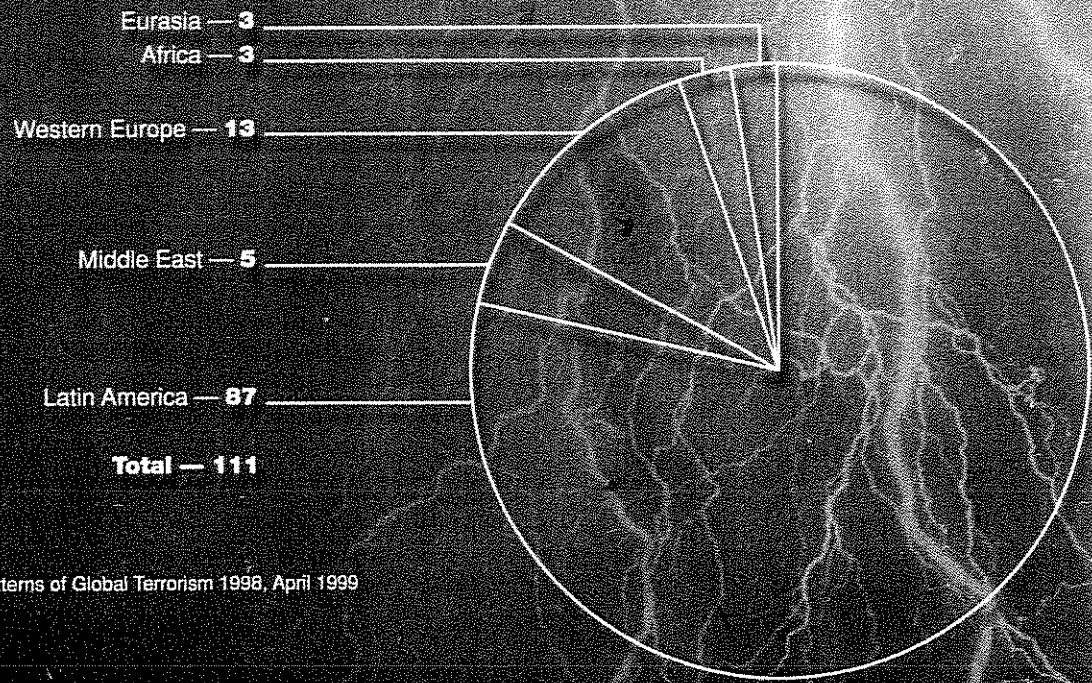
U.S. Counterterrorism

POLICY

Total Anti-US Attacks, 1998

Region*

*Includes attacks against US facilities and attacks in which US citizens suffered casualties.



Source: United States Department of State, Patterns of Global Terrorism 1998, April 1999

Goldstein's massacre of Muslims worshipping at the Tomb of the Patriarchs.¹⁰ Second, is Lebanon's Hezbollah, which calls for the creation of an Islamic Republic, a terrorist organization? Again, most of its members are not actively involved in terror. Yet, again, certain elements have certainly engaged in terrorist acts. Most notoriously, Hezbollah affiliates systematically kidnapped Americans and other Westerners in Beirut during the 1980s, and demolished the U.S. embassy in Lebanon with a car bomb. These actions, however, like those of the Gush Emunim underground, were considered highly controversial by many Hezbollahis and were apparently not organized by the movement as a whole but by radical factions within it.¹¹

These two organizations are far more similar than their adherents would ever care to admit. But of course, there is one outstanding difference between the two organizations: Hezbollah has systematically attacked Americans, while Gush Emunim has not. Certainly this forms a huge political difference between the two groups, and it is not surprising that most Americans shiver in loathing at the very mention of Hezbollah while they hardly recognize the name of Gush Emunim. However, does this political difference make the actions of one somehow less terroristic than the other?

Certainly, the U.S. government seems to think so. It condemns Hezbollah as the very epitome of terror, yet has not ever denounced Gush Emunim by name.¹²

¹⁰ For a discussion of these actions in the wider context of the Israeli settlers movement, see Ehud Sprinzak, *The Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 94-99.

¹¹ See Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

¹² See U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1997* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998).

Washington's animus is not surprising. Hezbollah organized the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut in October 1983 killing 241 marines, the largest number of American troops killed in a single operation since the end of the Vietnam war. Yet this attack, for all the pain it caused, was not in a strict sense, a terrorist operation. It was a military operation, producing no civilian casualties -- exactly the kind of attack that Americans might have lauded had it been directed against Washington's enemies. (Indeed, in the World War II Film "Fighting Seabees" a similar operation is portrayed as a fully legitimate military operation and John Wayne is idolized for his suicide attack against "the Japs."¹³) Similarly, Washington might legitimately denounce Hezbollah's campaign against the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon as an attack on a U.S. ally, but its spokesmen often move beyond this and imply that these conventional military strikes are somehow acts of terror.

The point here is not to propose that Gush Emunim and Hezbollah be treated identically, or to make some refined legalistic point, or to whine against American hypocrisy. There is a serious issue at stake. Generating and sustaining international cooperation against terror, whatever its source, is in everyone's interest. But such collaboration is undermined by a universal tendency for states and individuals to apply the concept of terrorism in a partial and self-serving manner. If the U.S. invokes the stigma of terrorism only when it deals with its political opponents, and rejects applying

particularly Appendix B. This report does, however, list two other Israeli political movements as engaged in terrorism: Kach and Kahane Chai.

¹³ The Fighting Seabees (1944), starring John Wayne and Susan Hayward.