

The Syrian Strategy on Terrorism:

1971 - 1977

by

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INTRODUCTION

In October 1986, Nizar Hindawi, a Palestinian of Jordanian extraction, was found guilty by the British courts of concealing explosives in a secret compartment of his pregnant girlfriend's suitcase with the intent of blowing up an El-Al flight on its way from London to Israel. During an internationally publicized trial, the British government had alleged that Hindawi had acted under instructions from the Syrian intelligence service, traveled to London under a false name on a Syrian diplomatic passport and had received active cooperation and encouragement from the Syrian embassy staff. As a result, two days after the trial the United Kingdom announced the severance of diplomatic relations with Syria. The United States, Canada and Austria, supporting Britain, withdrew their ambassadors from Damascus in protest of the Syrian government's involvement in terrorism.

The Hindawi trial and the subsequent "punishment" of Syria was the culmination of increasing frustration among Western states, and the United States in particular, with terrorism in the Middle East. During 1985 and 1986 the United States led efforts to punish states which supported or approved of the use of terrorism. In various speeches and publications, the American administrators singled out Iran, Libya and Syria as the main "criminals" behind terrorism and advocated a tough policy of fighting terrorists through diplomatic isolation, intelligence gathering, economic pressures, strong condemnations and, as a last resort, military reprisals to punish "these perpetrators of violence."

Any policy to combat the use of terrorism in the Middle East cannot ignore the fact that there has been a continual state of war in the region for forty years. Every state and every group in the Middle East has committed an act of terror as part of a larger strategy towards the war. Solutions to the problem of terrorism will come only with an understanding of the various strategies towards the larger conflict. This is particularly true of Syria which is an important front-line state in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

To understand the Syrian use of terrorism, it is necessary to examine Syrian strategy within the context of its policy towards the Arab-Israel conflict. This research attempts to deepen this understanding by addressing three main questions: when does Syria use terrorism and against whom; what is Syria trying to accomplish when it does use terrorism; and is Syrian terrorism related to the Arab-Israeli conflict? The patterns that emerge from an exhaustive study of terrorist events suggest that during the period studied, Syria used terrorism in four instances: 1) to create

pressure in specific situations of negotiation; 2) to express adamant rejection of policy which would leave Syria regionally isolated; 3) to alleviate strain caused by internal disagreement over the regime's Arab-Israeli policy; and 4) to keep the Arab-Israeli conflict simmering when there are no international or regional plans for war or peace. Conversely, Syria cut back on terrorism under three circumstances: 1) to comply with a specific agreement such as the Golan I agreement; 2) when the regime is feeling strong internally and not isolated externally; and 3) when it needs to avoid the risk of premature war. The strongest conclusion of this study is that Syria's use of terrorism is related to the Arab-Israeli conflict and that Syria can, does and has controlled the use of terrorism when other viable options towards its conflict with Israel are presented.

METHODOLOGY

The conclusions about Syrian terrorism were reached through a detailed analysis of Syrian policy and action from 1971 to 1977. There were several reasons for choosing this six year period. It was necessary to limit the range of years studied because no work has been done specifically on Syrian terrorism and therefore no public data bank exists. Limiting the time-span allowed for detailed examination of each terrorist incident. Secondly, 1971 was chosen as a good starting point because it marks the beginning of the Asad regime and thus conclusions would still have relevance as long as Asad maintains power. Finally, the period from 1971 to 1977 is a fruitful time to study Syrian policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict because it was a period of great activity and allows for a look at Syrian action both under conditions of conflict and negotiation.

Once the time period was established, information was gathered. Hard evidence of Syrian involvement in terrorism is fragmentary and difficult to come by both because of the professionalism of the operations and the intelligence nature of the information.² The only way to gather information is to comb through newspapers and terrorism chronologies with a list of assumptions about acts that were either Syrian sponsored or, at the minimum, Syrian approved. Information was collected from FBIS, *Arab Report and Record*, *New York Times*, *an-Nahar Arab Report* and Mickolus' *Transnational Terrorism: A Chronology of Events, 1968-1979*.

The assumptions determining Syrian acts were developed through a survey of the literature on Syrian-Palestinian relations, analysis of Syrian press commentaries and official speeches, and a survey of official visits and military maneuvers. During his sixteen years in power, Asad has built up an enormously complex intelligence network with several secret services and agencies assigned to work with various Palestinian terrorist organizations. Syria has generally carried out terrorism in three ways: 1) through Saiqa, the Syrian/Palestinian group which is virtually an integrated part of the Syrian army; 2) in collaboration with and giving logistical support to Palestinian groups which remain largely their own masters when outside of Syria;³ and 3) using 'cutouts' or lone terrorists to accomplish a specific action. The list of specific assumptions guiding

this research and derived from the above information is included in the appendix.

Over 200 separate incidents were gathered and organized into a monthly chronology briefly describing each event. (See attached appendix.) The amount of activity was totaled by month to give a general indicator of an increase or decrease in activity.⁴ The chronology of Syrian terrorism was then analyzed by comparing the monthly terrorist activities to other political activities and to the foreign policy goals being pursued at that time. What follows is a yearly summary from 1971 to 1977 of Syrian policy towards the Israeli dispute, highlighting the use of terrorism in order to ascertain when and why Syria uses terrorism as a tactic.

SYRIAN STRATEGY UNDER HAFIZ AL-ASAD

The challenge of Syrian foreign policy under Hafiz al-Asad has been to end the costly conflict with Israel while guaranteeing domestic stability and regime survival. The recovery of the Golan Heights has always been the main priority because the Baath Party's and the military's domestic prestige is perceived by Syrian policy-makers as being tied up in the Golan. As a military regime, Asad and his advisors are conscious of the defense posture of Syria.⁵ Asad's legitimacy is also linked, via the Baathi heritage of his regime, to Arab nationalism. All Syrian actions must therefore, at the minimum, be rhetorically rooted in Arab unity.⁶

Syria, under Hafiz al-Asad, has cautiously accepted the principle of negotiation to resolve the conflict with Israel.⁷ It has always insisted, however, that this be conducted in an international arena and in partnership with others. Syria is a small country (a population of approximately 9.5 million) and a poor country (per capita income is below \$2000). It is easily dwarfed by the size of Egypt, the wealth of Saudi Arabia, and the development of Israel and has always feared being ignored because of that. The only card Syria has felt it holds in bargaining is the ability to insure nothing succeeds without its participation. Syria's strategic position, its military strength, and the territory from which that strength can be directly deployed (Lebanon, Golan) allows it to influence decisively any option against Israel. However, alone, it cannot defeat Israel nor can it hope to persuade Israel to bargain. Syria therefore seeks partners.⁸ Operating in partnership with other Arabs also allows Syria to bolster its Arab legitimacy.

A negotiated solution to the conflict with Israel is not an easy option for Syria because of the nature of its political system. It is much more difficult for Damascus to think of contracting out of the conflict than it was for Cairo. Syria has no reason to believe the Israelis can easily be persuaded into returning the Golan and Syria has not yet had the desperate economic problems which would force the regime to choose butter over guns. Syria is also more geographically enmeshed in the conflict and the Palestinian ties are stronger because of the "Greater Syria" idea left over from colonial days and revived in the late 70s. Most importantly, the legacy of radical nationalism and a strong party system

which curtails the president's freedom of action in foreign policy, coupled with a regime dependent on a minority and iron-fisted rule, has made reaching a negotiation consensus difficult.⁹

Embedded in the recent history of the Baath Party in Syria is a division over the means of resolving the conflict with Israel.¹⁰ Ideological orthodoxy, represented prior to Asad in Salah Jadid and his radical civilian supporters, calls for a people's war of liberation against Israel in association with the Palestinians. The more pragmatic Asad and his military supporters argue for a strengthened army and a conventional battle against Israel in alliance with other Arabs.¹¹ Although Asad preempted the debate through a coup, ideological purity remains in the Baath Party and in the Palestinian alliance to continually pressure moves towards a negotiating stance. The challenge of Syrian foreign policy towards the conflict with Israel is to develop a negotiating position that will not only yield results (regain the Golan), but that will insure the security of Syria and of the regime while maintaining credible radical ideological orthodoxy. A year by year analysis of Syrian policy from 1971 to 1977 will demonstrate some of the tactics used to further these goals.

1971: Hafiz al-Asad did three things upon coming to power in November 1970. He sought to end Syria's isolation by joining the Tripoli Charter, an alliance between Egypt, Sudan and Libya, which signalled his intention to wage a conventional battle against Israel. Secondly, he subtly accepted the principal of a negotiated solution by turning to the Soviet Union for arms.¹² Finally, he ordered the reorganization and control of the fedayeen groups. The year of 1971 was spent implementing these actions. In January, the presidents of the Tripoli Charter states met and agreed "to mobilize their various resources and capabilities in order to eliminate the effects of the aggressor [and] liberate Arab territory."¹³ Preparations for battle included military union with Egypt, putting all forces under one command in March, visiting the Soviet Union for arms in February and a series of crack-downs on the Palestinians in January, at the end of June, early July and October.¹⁴ Sadat later revealed that war was intended for the end of November or December.

The terrorist activity during 1971, when Syria was planning the battle with Egypt and when, for a short period of time in November and December, the battle was imminent, was lower than the previous three years (not included in this study). In November and December, when war was expected, the activity was at its lowest of the year. The highest months of activity, January, July and October are all followed by months of dramatic decreases in activity and coincide with the crack-downs on fedayeen freedom. It suggests that the Asad regime, as it was increasing controls on fedayeen, allowed a brief increase in action to defray internal opposition to such a policy. There is also a slight increase in action at the end of March when the Baath Congress and general elections were being held. From 1971 it can be concluded that terrorism increased for internal reasons and decreased when conventional battle plans emerged.

1972: This was a year of frustration for Syrian strategy. The 1971 war plans had fallen apart because of lack of supplies and organization

and, according to Sadat, because superpower attention had been diverted by the Indian-Pakistani war. In February, Asad met with Sadat and Qaddafi to discuss options towards Israel. Libya and the Palestinians were pressuring Asad to "take a true stand on the battle . . . every state has the duty to let Palestinians operate from its territory . . . escalation of the fedayeen is an essential step so long as we cannot wage a decisive battle."¹⁵ Syria was also having problems with Egypt because of Sadat's Soviet dispute. Lacking the cohesive alliance needed to wage a conventional battle, Syria renewed the non-conventional warfare option. In June, *al-Ahram* reported secret resolutions between the three federated states "providing support for the fedayeen action and approving its operations from all fronts."¹⁶ Although Syria accepted the short-term strategy of terrorism until conventional battle plans could be arranged, it changed the nature of the attacks so as to avoid triggering a surprise retaliatory attack on the Golan. Lt. Colonel Izz ad-Din Idris, Assistant Director of the Political Bureau of the Syrian Army (the branch in charge of supervising Palestinians), called upon the fedayeen to "adopt the principle of mobile bases instead of fixed bases . . . [noting] maneuverability, flexibility and initiative are among the most important tactical qualities of guerrilla warfare."¹⁷ Many of the restrictions imposed on the guerrillas in 1971 were temporarily lifted during this period.

March 1972 was an important month for policy because it was the first time Asad publicly stated his regime's cautious commitment to a negotiated or "political" solution to the conflict. While at the same time searching for a battle alliance and while still determined to fight, the Asad regime was also introducing the negotiating option.

The highest amount of terrorist activity of the six years studied was in 1972. The activity in the second half of the year is notable because it reflects the tactic of mobile bases. In August the first sign of Syrian involvement outside the immediate war region is seen. September, a month of intense activity, mostly because of the flagrancy of the acts (Munich and the letter bombs),¹⁸ was the lowest point in Syrian-Egyptian relations because Sadat had expelled the Soviets and thus erased any chance of acquiring sufficient arms for war. The Asad regime was caught during 1972 in the difficult position of trying, but failing, to maintain a semi-moderate position towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. As long as there was no positive action towards a conventional battle in alliance with Egypt, to maintain internal stability and credibility, non-conventional tactics were used. The only two months of low activity were March and May during which time Syria was talking to Egypt and the Soviet Union about renewing battle plans.

1973: The year of the battle was the high point of the early Asad strategy. At the beginning of 1973, Syria was in the difficult position of having allowed fedayeen action escalate to the point of subjecting civilians to retaliatory IDF bombing. There were reports of open tension between local residents and fedayeen because of civilian deaths and property damage.¹⁹ In response, Syria attacked Egypt and Libya for failing to support it in 'the battle' and threatened to withdraw from the alliance

unless conventional war plans were put into motion. The Syrian army once more imposed controls over fedayeen activity and ordered the evacuation of the Golan area.²⁰ On April 22, 1973, Asad and Sadat secretly agreed to launch a surprise attack against Israel across the Golan and Sinai cease-fire lines in the coming fall. The attack was launched in October. Although Syria lost rather than gained territory, the success involved in the surprise and in achieving international attention placed Syria in a relatively strong bargaining position but only for as long as the partnership with Egypt could be maintained. Syria accepted the UN-sponsored cease-fire and November and December were dedicated to working out the Syrian position towards an international conference.

The pattern of Syrian terrorism in 1973 is simple. It abated from 1972 levels in January because the cost of Israeli reprisals was threatening the regime. Once a war decision was made in April, terrorism practically disappeared except for two outrageous acts in July and September which were clearly meant to goad Israel and distract attention away from the Golan as war preparations were being put into place. During November and December, while the decision about Geneva was being made, there were continual cease-fire violations but these were all carefully controlled conventional violations. The terrorist activity in 1973 demonstrates that when civilians were threatened or when conventional war plans were in place, Syria lowered and carefully controlled fedayeen action.

1974: January through May of 1974 was a time of intense consultation and negotiation for Syria, the purpose of which was to solidify Syria's position with regards to negotiation. There was strong internal disagreement over the position Syria should take in the Kissinger peace efforts. One approach insisted on coordinating policy with Egypt, accepting a disengagement agreement, and attending Geneva without demanding prior Israeli withdrawal from the Golan. The second group argued for a policy independent of Egypt, coordination with the Palestinians, and a continuation of the boycott of Geneva until Israel withdrew from the Golan. Syrian generals were said to be particularly suspicious of talks at a time when Israel was reasserting that its forces would never withdraw from the Golan.²¹ These differences were eventually overcome; on April 9, a Syrian delegation left for Washington to begin negotiations with Kissinger on the Golan. It took two months of arduous diplomacy but on May 29, 1974, the Golan I agreement was signed which included a tacit Syrian promise (via a note from the United States to Israel) not to allow further fedayeen action from the Golan.

The remainder of 1974 was spent trying to move towards a Geneva conference by first settling the Palestinian issue. Syria's policy was to insure control over any Palestinian delegation to Geneva. In the latter part of the year a serious rift developed between Syria and Egypt as it became clear Sadat meant to go ahead with the second stage of disengagement without a concomitant agreement on the Golan. Syrian strategy then turned from alliance with Egypt to the international front where it began a European diplomatic offensive emphasizing Syria's negotiating stance.

Arafat's address before the United Nations was seen by Syrian policy-makers as a victory for this strategy.

Terrorist activity during 1974 is closely related to the negotiating position and internal politics. During the entire five month negotiation period, Syria and Israel carried on high level artillery and air battles. Although terrorist forces may have participated in this activity, it was all waged on a conventional level. Syria's tactic of fighting while talking is a product of its political system designed to reduce the strength of domestic groups opposed to negotiation while simultaneously pressuring Israel and demonstrating the unacceptability of the status quo. In April, two days after the Syrian delegation arrived in Washington to open negotiations, there was a flagrant terrorist attack on Qiryat Shemona²² which was clearly meant to pressure Israel and to relieve inner hostility against negotiation. The same is true of the dramatic Maalot attack in May. By allowing these attacks Syria could send a dual message—one to Israel and one to its radical critics. The other attention getting attack on a Beit Shean apartment house in November, a few days before the UNDOF six-month mandate was about to expire, served the same emphatic purpose. Terrorist action increased in August and September but it no longer came from the Golan. The data shows that except in two instances, one in 1975 and one in 1976, Syria held to the Golan agreement on terrorism. The activity in August and September came from Jordan and was meant to pressure Jordan, in addition to Israel, because at the end of July Jordan had signed an agreement with Egypt concerning the status of the PLO which excluded Syria. Terrorism decreased again in November and December when there was a serious threat of war with Israel. (Kissinger warned Syria of a possible Israeli attack during his November visit.)

1975: During the first half of 1975, Syria continued attempts to negotiate a resolution by going along with Kissinger's efforts in January and February and, when those broke apart, by asking the Soviets to reconvene Geneva. Syria also continued its public relations offensive in the Western press as a way of seeking alternatives to superpower mediation. In March, Asad gave an interview and declared that Syria was "seriously and explicitly interested in reaching a final peace settlement with Israel provided that it included the creation of a Palestinian state."²³ Syrian policy in the latter half of the year began to change as it became clear that the alliance with Egypt was not going to settle the conflict in Syria's best interests. Increased involvement in Lebanon led to a more ambitious strategy designed to gain hegemony over the immediate Arab environment in competition with Egypt rather than cooperation. As relations with Egypt worsened, due to Egypt's separate negotiations with Kissinger, Syria began to seek other partners in the Palestinians and King Hussein. This would lead to the Lebanese invasion in 1976.

Terrorism in 1975 agrees with previously observed patterns. In January and February, as Kissinger was renewing his efforts and while Syria still had hopes of being included in the negotiation process, terrorist action was low. In March, when Egypt decided to go ahead with

Kissinger without Syria an emphatic act was committed clearly designed to embarrass Egypt and remind the United States and Israel that Syria, via the Palestinians, could not be ignored. In April, May, June, and July, terrorist activity was low as Syrian hopes for an international conference grew. However, in September, when Sinai II was signed and Syria was left isolated without legitimate alternatives, action increased. In November another outrageous act occurred in time for the UNDOF expiration as a reminder that Syria still considered itself to be at war.

1976: This was a year of inactivity on the Arab-Israeli front but of great activity for Syrian policy as it attempted to settle the Lebanese problem in a way that would benefit its position *vis-à-vis* Israel. The invasion of Lebanon was, in part, designed to further the Eastern Front strategy where Palestinian leadership would be "restructured to accommodate Syrian policy [so that Syria would] emerge as a dominant factor in the Middle East settlement because it was able to deliver Syrians, Jordanians, Lebanese and Palestinians to a settlement."²⁴

Relations with Egypt continued to be strained in the first half of 1976 as did relations with Saudi Arabia and the Soviet Union who both objected to Syrian interference in Lebanon. However, in October, once its position in Lebanon had been established, Syria acknowledged Arab pressure and reconciled with Sadat. Sadat agreed not to push for Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon and Asad agreed to end criticism of Sinai II and resume diplomatic relations and cooperation with Egypt. Syria had, in a sense, reached a position of equality with Egypt and that, combined with the newly established control over the Palestinians, gave Syria the needed strength to proceed with a bargaining process. With the election of Jimmy Carter, the future for a negotiated solution to the conflict with Israel looked bright.

Terrorist activity in 1976 related to domestic concerns. Heavily involved in Lebanon, Syria and its Palestinian allies could not afford to wage a battle of subterfuge with Israel. The only two months of significant activity are April and July. In April, one of the two acts committed was undertaken against a Palestinian group thus pressuring it to conform to Syrian peace-making efforts. The other brief action on the Golan could be related to the need to divert domestic and Palestinian attention away from Syrian collusion with the United States and rightist elements in Lebanon. The series of explosions in July was designed to defray the growing opposition within Syria to the Lebanese invasion. That the terrorist activity was low is consistent with the observation that when engaged in conventional warfare, Syrian terrorist activity decreases.

1977: January 1977 was a time of optimism for the Arabs and particularly for Syria. The Arab coalition, on the surface, was strong: the Palestinians were chastened and under control; Syrian relations with Jordan and Egypt were good; Israel had indicated a willingness to negotiate (September 1976); and Carter was anxious to try his hand at resolving the conflict.

On March 9, 1977, Carter issued a statement which appeared to

support the Israeli policy of not returning all the land acquired in 1967. This was a change from previous American policy. In reaction, the Syrian government newspaper *al-Thawrah* responded with the strong statement that the only "just solution to the Middle East conflict lay in total Israeli withdrawal."²⁵ This represented a hardening of the Syrian position. However, *Tishrin*, a better indicator of Asad's mood, adopted a more conciliatory tone indicating that the regime, while still probably divided, was willing to give Carter a chance. The Asad government continued efforts towards reconvening a Geneva conference which led to a successful meeting between Carter and Asad in May. However, before the good will of that meeting could be translated into policy, Israeli elections produced a more militant line from Israel which changed the Syrian mood dramatically. Syrian suspicions about a separate peace approach were seemingly confirmed in the summer when, during Vance's tour of the Middle East, Egypt and the United States proposed the idea of a 'working group' of foreign ministers to meet before Geneva as a way of circumventing the Palestinian issue. Syria saw the proposal as an attempt to split the Arab bargaining position. During this period Syria was also facing internal opposition to the Lebanese occupation as well as increased Israeli involvement in Lebanon and therefore did not have the strength to accept change in the negotiation process. As a result, the Syrian line hardened. In November, Sadat made his historic decision to go to Jerusalem.

According to Syrian policy-makers, Sadat's action destroyed everything Syria had been working for. The only cards Syria felt it had in bargaining were the threat of activating the war option, kept believable through Arab unity, Soviet backing in negotiation, and the withholding of the recognition of Israel until Arab demands were met. Sadat erased all three Syrian strengths by going to Jerusalem. Given the nature of its domestic political arrangements and the increasing Israeli challenge in Lebanon, Syria was not capable of following Sadat's initiative. The momentum moved away from an international conference towards a separate Egyptian-Israeli settlement leaving Syria isolated and immobilized. In a sense, Syria was back to the stalemated position of 1972 with no hopes for peace and no potential for war.

Terrorist patterns were consistent with previous years. In January and February, while embarking on a new plan for negotiation, there was no terrorist activity. In March there was a brief flurry of activity in response to Carter's statement which was most likely meant to quell internal disagreement about trusting Carter. Terrorism disappeared again until June and then rapidly escalated in July and August in reaction to rising Israeli militancy and American/Egyptian agreements. The attacks stopped in September and October when Israeli aircraft and tanks entered Southern Lebanon thus directly threatening Syrian conventional forces. Terrorism predictably rose again to high levels in November and December in reaction to the isolation and frustration caused by Sadat's Jerusalem visit and was directed against Egypt as well as Israel.

CONCLUSIONS

The Syrian use of terrorism from 1971 to 1977 can be explained in terms of Syrian strategy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. Several patterns emerge. The most consistent pattern was an increase in terrorism when the failure of Syrian efforts to stir the conflict, either towards war or negotiation, resulted in a period with no coherent alternative being actively pursued. Another discernible pattern is perceptible between domestic disagreements over policy towards the conflict and brief increases in terrorism. A third characteristic of the Syrian use of terrorism was the use of provocative actions to apply pressure on friend or foe in order to achieve a specific negotiating purpose. Such acts can be called 'emphatic' terrorism because they are deliberately dramatic and are designed to focus attention on Syrian purpose. A fourth pattern in Syrian terrorism was the decrease in action when conventional war was planned or on-going. Decreases in action are also seen when negotiation was proceeding to Syria's benefit and when agreement had been reached. A final pattern observed is the temporary decrease in activity, or a change in the pattern of activity, when Israeli retaliation escalated to threatening levels.

From the patterns observed from 1971 to 1977, a tentative conclusion about Syrian use of terrorism can be reached. Syria uses terrorism as a tactic when it lacks viable alternatives either for war or peace. As a result, two policy options to curb Syrian use of terrorism are available. The first option is intensive retaliation which threatens regime stability. Israeli retaliation against civilians and conventional forces has worked to inhibit Syrian terrorism temporarily because the Asad regime cannot afford a war it has not started itself on its own terms. However, the patterns of this research suggest retaliation is only a transient solution. It is also not an appropriate response for non-Middle Eastern states whose roles in the Middle East have been, and should be, that of mediators in the Arab-Israeli conflict rather than combatants. The premise of mediation is that "sufficient respect and good-will exist toward the mediator for the antagonist to be amenable to his interpretations of their differences" ²⁶ Western retaliation against Syria as a solution to the Syrian use of terrorism, although temporarily effective, will only serve to destroy what little good-will there is towards the West and will promulgate the very conflict which needs to be resolved.

A second, but more difficult, policy option remains. The patterns of this research project suggest that Syrian terrorism declines when negotiation is ongoing or when a satisfying agreement has been reached. Any negotiated solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict which involves Syria will be an arduous and lengthy process. The emphatic use of terrorism can be expected to continue up to the last minute; however, if an acceptable settlement is reached, Syria can be expected to abide by it. The Asad regime has very carefully outlined its position on negotiation; the flexibility of that position has never been tested and, in the last ten years, the possibility of a negotiated solution involving Syria has been ignored. By emphasizing Syria's terrorism and ignoring the larger context of the Arab-

Israeli conflict, the Western world is losing the opportunity to resolve one of the world's most troubling conflicts. Although it may seem a circuitous solution to the problem of terrorism, re-opening negotiation on the problem of the Palestinians and the Golan Heights in an international conference will be more effective in stopping Syrian terrorism than any threat or punishment.

Endnotes

1. An address by Caspar Weinberger to the International Conference on Terrorism, January 21, 1987, is a concise statement of the Reagan administration's policy towards terrorism. A copy is available through the author.
2. There is a large body of literature discussing the semantics of terrorism. See, for instance, Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State* (New York: New York University Press, 1986), especially pp. 23-68; Walter Laqueur, *Terrorism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977); and A.P. Schmid, *Political Terrorism: A Research Guide to Concepts, Theories, Data Bases and Literature* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co., 1983). Most definitions distinguish between guerrilla warfare [tactics involving conventions of war but with small numbers and inadequate weaponry (see Wilkinson, p. 53)] and terrorism ["a special mode of violence which . . . involves the threat of murder, injury or destruction to terrorize a given target into conceding . . ." (Wilkinson, p. 53)]. Terrorism in this research paper is meant to include both the guerrilla and psychological aspects of terrorism. It is defined very loosely as the use, or threat of use, of violence, against civilian and military targets for political purposes which does not involve the conventional Syrian forces.
3. Syrians work with these groups by setting down guidelines and delineating objectives of what to attack and what to avoid and approving or disapproving autonomously planned attacks.
4. Included in the chronology are several incidents which do not fit the definitional criteria. They are marked with two stars ** to indicate that they have not been counted as terrorist activity. They are included only to demonstrate how the terrorist activity can escalate activity involving the conventional Syrian forces.
5. Vulnerability to Israel results from the fact that there are not one, but three plausible land invasion routes Israel could use. The Golan is the most obvious route but, from the Israeli point of view, the most costly. One route could proceed past Irbid in Jordan and strike north of the Dera-Damascus access road. The other invasion route could proceed north from Galilee through the Bekaa Valley.
6. For an excellent discussion of the roots of Syrian Arab nationalism and Arab nationalism in general see Tawfic Farah, *Pan-Arabism and Arab Nationalism: The Continuing Debate* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1987).
7. There is, admittedly, a debate about how committed Asad's acceptance of the principle of negotiation is. For a good review of the ambiguity of Syrian policy see footnote #24 in Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "Revisionist Dreams, Realist Strategies: The Foreign Policy of Syria," in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, edited by Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Dessouki (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984), p. 319.
8. Syria's relationship with the Soviet Union has been cultivated for just this purpose. For a discussion of the Syrian-Soviet relation see Galia Golan, "Syria and the Soviet Union Since the Yom Kippur War," *Orbis*, 21, 4 (1978), pp. 777-802.
9. For a thorough analysis of Syrian foreign policy from a decision-making perspective seen Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "Revisionist Dreams, Realist Strategies: The Foreign Policy of Syria," in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, edited by Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984), pp. 283-322.
10. As Adeed Dawisha has carefully shown (*Syria and the Lebanese Crisis* [New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980]), Syria's presidential system includes a powerful sub-system in

the form of the Baath Party within which the remnants of the debate over the battle with Israel still exist.

11. In the words of Moshe Ma'oz, the Asad wing "conceived the war against Israel as a classical, ordinary, military campaign to be launched at the right moment by all Arab confrontation states." See Moshe Ma'oz, "Syria Under Hafiz al-Asad: New Domestic and Foreign Policies," Jerusalem Papers on Peace Problems (Jerusalem: Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, 1975), p. 21.
12. Asad took power after a Baath National Conference where civilian and military factions clashed angrily over the policy of accepting the principal of peaceful resolution which the Soviet Union was calling for (see Paris AFP report, FBIS, November 10, 1970, p. F1). The military and Asad were in favor of responding to Moscow's call in order to gain weapons for a conventional battle.
13. MENA, FBIS, January 25, 1971, p. A1.
14. Crack-downs consisted of forbidding shipments of arms to Fateh (Jerusalem Domestic, FBIS, July 6, 1971, p. A3), banning operations against Jordan (Reuter, FBIS, July 16, 1971, p. F1), and issuing travel documents, censoring publications and supervising training bases and refugee camps (Cairo DPA, FBIS, October 22, 1971, p. F3).
15. Tripoli Domestic, FBIS, March 10, 1972, p. H2.
16. Tripoli Domestic, FBIS, June 26, 1972, p. F2.
17. Damascus MENA to Cairo, FBIS, June 29, 1972, p. F1.
18. Although there is no direct proof of Syrian collusion in the Munich Act, it is clear that Syria was at least aware of the plans in advance. Syrian intelligence closely monitored Black September as it did all Palestinian groups at that time and communications with Libya (heavily implicated in the attack) were extensive.
19. Tel Aviv Davar, FBIS, January 10, 1973, p. I6.
20. Paris AFP, January 23, 1973, p. F1.
21. *New York Times*, January 6, 1974, p. 10:1.
22. Although this attack may not have been Syrian planned, it counts as a Syrian act because it was carried out from Syrian controlled territory at a time when fedayeen groups were under very close supervision. Iraq claimed 30 such attacks were planned by the fedayeen during this period and yet only two were carried through, thus demonstrating the Syrian ability to control the fedayeen.
23. *Arab Report and Record*, February 15-29, 1975, p. 72.
24. Ronald McLaurin, Mohammed Mughisuddin and Abraham R. Wagner, *Foreign Policy-Making in the Middle East* (New York: Praeger, 1977), p. 241.
25. *Arab Report and Record*, March 15-30, 1977, p. 183.
26. William R. Brown, *The Last Crusade: A Negotiator's Middle East Handbook* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1980), p. 143.

APPENDIX

The assumptions guiding the collection of information in the chronology are as follows:

1. Fedayeen action carried out in the Golan after Asad's rise to power is assumed to be Syrian-approved because the Asad regime made it a clear policy as of February 1970 that there was to be no fedayeen action from Syrian-controlled territory without prior Syrian approval. This is true of attacks carried out from Mt. Hermon and the Arquob region of Lebanon which was dominated by Syrian-backed PLA after September 1970.
2. All acts carried out from Jordan after the summer of 1971 are assumed to be Syrian-approved because all the fedayeen were expelled from Jordan in September. To infiltrate Jordan it was necessary to come from Syria. Because of an agreement with King Hussein, the Syrian authorities carefully controlled the border with Jordan to prevent infiltration. Any fedayeen operating from Jordan did so with Syrian approval or suffered punishment.
3. Actions claimed by Damascus Radio are assumed to be Syrian-approved.
4. Actions carried out and claimed by Syrian-supported groups such as Saiqa, PLA and ALF are always included in the chronology.
5. Actions carried out by other Palestinian groups such as the PFLP-GC, the PDFLP and the PFLP are assumed to be Syrian-approved when those groups are in harmony with Syria. The relationship between these groups and Syria fluctuates back and forth. It was therefore necessary to determine whether they were in favor with Syria by monitoring whether their communiqués and publications were censored or not, whether their spoken goals conflicted with Syria's and whether they were included in Syrian-sponsored Palestinian meetings or not.

CHRONOLOGY OF SYRIAN INCIDENTS

DATE(S)	ACTION	MONTHLY TOTAL
1971		
January		
1,2,6,10	Guerrilla attacks on Israeli posts in Golan.	8
2	Guerrilla attack on UN Observer post.	
25	Guerrillas and Israeli soldiers clash on Golan.	
28, 30	Exchange of fire involving guerrillas.	
February		
5, 9,	Seven fedayeen infiltrating Golan captured and killed.	4
21, 22	Clashes with infiltrators on Golan.	
March		
3, 4, 8, 9	Rocket and other attacks on Golan.	5
22	Four captured, four killed in largest of recent attacks on Golan.	
April		
24	Outbreak of firing on Golan.	1
May		
9	Three infiltrators killed in Golan clash.	2
18	Two killed, one wounded in Golan clash.	
June		
22	Guerrilla firing in Golan.	2
25	Eight fedayeen, one Syrian officer killed in clash on Golan.	
July		
8	Exchange of fire on Golan.	8
20, 22-24	Highest number of fedayeen incidents in Golan in recent months including mortar fire.	
26, 27,		
28		
August		0
September		
1, 10, 12	Border action in Golan.	6
9	Three separate infiltration attempts.	
9	Fedayeen from Syria damage Trans-Arabian pipe-line.	
15	More damage to pipe-line on Syrian border.	
October		
6	Assassination attempt on Arafat while visiting Golan.	9
7	Exchange of fire on Mt. Hermon.	
16, 19		
21-23	Fedayeen incidents reported on Golan.	
29, 30		
November		
27	Clash in Golan.	1
December		0

DATE(S)	ACTION	MONTHLY TOTAL
1972		
January		
1, 3, 6, 11	Mine and rocket attacks in Golan reported by Damascus Radio.	15
6, 11, 12	Rockets fired from Lebanese border at Kfar Blum and Qiryat Shemona reported by Damascus Radio.	
16	Damascus Radio reports fedayeen attack on camp in Golan with rockets.	
19, 20	More rocket attacks near Qunaitra.	
23	Clash of fedayeen and Israeli patrol.	
26	Fedayeen rocket attack on Tal Abu Qithat.	
28	Israeli patrol ambushed.	
30	Katyusha rockets fired at Israeli positions.	
31	Fedayeen lay and detonate minefield in Golan.	
February		
2	Damascus communiqué announces fedayeen attack on camp in Firdawi area.	12
4	Rocket attack in Khushniya area.	
11	Shells fired at Israeli positions in Golan.	
21	Mortar fire from Kfar Shuba (SW Lebanon)	
15	Fedayeen attack post near Qunaitra.	
19	Fedayeen attack observation post in Golan.	
20	Attack on Israeli position near Jukhdar in Golan.	
22	Firing in Nahal Golan region.	
24	Fedayeen clash with patrols after setting fire to Israeli plants in Yaqouta area.	
27	Fighters of Abu Ali Iya (Damascus) attack El-Al settlement in Golan. Later undertook rocket attack.	
28, 19	Damascus communiqués on mortar and rocket attacks near Qunaitra.	
March		
2, 3,	Heavy rockets and shells fired at camps in Qunaitra.	4
26, 27	Fedayeen attack posts in Golan.	
April		
7	Firing reported from Syrian territory in Golan.	8
10	Clash in Dubbasiya in Golan with machine guns and rockets.	
18, 19	Fedayeen attack Israeli positions in Golan.	
26-30	More attacks in Golan including destruction of electronic fortifications at Qunaitra.	
May		
9	Attacks on pipeline and reports of fighting between PFLP and PFLP-GC.	3
16	Firing south-west of Sea of Galilee.	
17	Fedayeen shell machine-gun emplacements in Golan.	

DATE(S)	ACTION	MONTHLY TOTAL	
1972			
June			
5	Bazooka attack from Syrian territory in Golan.	8	
8	Israeli truck blown up near Qunaitra.		
15	Four infiltrators killed in Golan.		
20	Two Israeli soldiers killed by mine in Golan.		
20	PFLP-GC fire rockets at Israeli bus in Golan.		
22	Settlements in Golan attacked with rockets and mortar.		
24	Shelling of Qunaitra.	6	
26	Shelling of Khushniya.		
July			
3	Guerrillas rocketed village of Banias.	6	
7, 10	Bazooka attacks in Golan.		
18	Israeli engineering patrol ambushed in Golan.		
19	Jibbin settlement in Golan rocketed and mortared.		
27	Bridge destroyed in Saluqiya region.		
August			
1, 4, 8	Bazooka attacks and shelling on Golan from Syria.	9	
16	Bomb placed in portable record player stored in baggage on El-Al flight from Rome to Tel Aviv. Record player given to British girl by Syrian boyfriend.		
20	Settlements in Golan attacked by guerrillas.		
21, 22, 29, 30	Rocket and mortar attacks on Nahal Golan.		
September			
7	Munich Olympic attack on Israeli athletes.	8	
13	Shelling, small-arms fire in Mt. Hermon area.		
15	Two Israeli soldiers ambushed in Mt. Hermon.		
16	Fedayeen shell Qunaitra and Nahal Golan.		
18	Jibbin settlement in Golan attacked with rockets and bridge blown up.		
20	Israeli positions shelled in Golan.		
19-20	PFLP-GC letter-bombs to various Zionist organizations in Europe, Israel and US.	7	
October			
24-30	More letter-bombs throughout Middle East.		
24	PFLP planted network of rockets and bombs in Golan.	5	
November			
6	Nahal Golan under mortar fire from Syria.		
11	Israeli patrol ambushed in Golan.		
21	Fierce fighting lasting more than eight hours in Golan.		
17	Two Israeli vehicles hit mine in Nahal Golan.		
18	Israeli soldiers killed by mine in Jordan Valley. Voice of Palestine (Syria) report.		

DATE(S)	ACTION	MONTHLY TOTAL
1972		
December		
3	Two Israeli military vehicles destroyed by mine in Golan.	5
7	Guerrillas attack Israeli position near Dabusiya.	
15	Firing from Syrian territory reported.	
22	Fedayeen attack Israeli troops and vehicles in Golan.	
26	Shells fired at Israeli positions in Golan.	
1973		
January		
7, 8	Fedayeen attack on Golan.	4
20, 27	Three Black September arrested in Vienna with sketches of Schonau camp. One admitted to casing it. Carrying Syrian passports.	
February		
7, 8	Israeli patrols attacked by fedayeen in Golan.	3
15	Clash of forces in Golan.	
March		
April		
10	Three fedayeen infiltrating from Golan killed.	6
11	Fedayeen attack Israeli positions in Golan.	
21	Fedayeen attack patrol in Debusiya.	
25	Rockets fired from Syrian territory at Qunaitra.	
26	Fedayeen/Israeli patrol clash. Fedayeen admit Syrian approval of raid.	
16	PFLP-GC attempt to blow up pipeline in Zahrani.	
May		
June		
16, 20	Clashes in Lebanon between Saiqa and Fateh.	2
July		
1	PFLP-GC kill Colonel Yosef Alon, one of Israel's most famous pilots, in Rome.	1
August		
27	Israeli patrol stumbles into guerrilla ambush in Golan.	2
30	Heavy mortar attack by fedayeen in Golan.	
September		
28	Eagles of Revolution (Saiqa) take five hostages on passenger train from Czechoslovakia to Austria demanding the closure of Austrian Soviet Jew emigration center.	1
October		
6-24	War.**	0
November		
7, 15	Artillery battles in north Golan.	0
6, 8	Air clashes over Golan.**	

DATE(S)	ACTION	MONTHLY TOTAL
1973		
December		
2, 3	Artillery and tank battles in Golan.**	1
10, 11	More clashes in Golan.**	
28	Fedayeen attack Israeli positions in Mt. Hermon.	
1974		
January		
26, 27	Ceasefire violations along Syrian front.**	0
February		
1-14	Tank and artillery battles on front.**	0
15-30	Clashes continue but lessen in intensity.**	
March		
8	Forces clash in Golan.**	0
12-15	More clashes.**	
26	Syrian artillery shell Golan settlements.**	
April		
	Fighting over Mt. Hermon continues through month.	1
11	PFLP-GC enter Qiryat Shemona via SW Lebanese border attacking apartment complex. Saiqa spokesman says "We promise to undertake more such operations."	
May		
	Golan fighting with ground and air forces continue.**	0
15	PDFLP attack on Maalot.	
23	Fedayeen infiltrating from Golan captured with plans for second Maalot-like attack.	
24	Attacks on post on eastern shore of Galilee.	
31	Fighting in Golan ends.**	
June		
		0
July		
		0
August		
24	Three Fateh fedayeen captured infiltrating from Syria near Jordan River carrying six bazookas and machine-guns	3
25, 26	More fedayeen infiltrators from Syria via Jordan captured.	
September		
2-4	PDFLP Damascus communiqué claims attempts to enter Hanita from Western end of Lebanese border killed by Israeli troops—intended to seize hostages.	3
27	Two fedayeen infiltrating from Jordan captured with sabotage equipment and leaflets.	
October		
		0

DATE(S)	ACTION	MONTHLY TOTAL
1974		
November 15-17	Israeli and Syrian forces in Golan on alert but no outbreak.**	1
19	PDFLP enter Beit Shean apartment house killing four civilians. (Announced in Damascus.)	
December		0
1975		
January		
11	Fedayeen ambush Israeli patrol on Mt. Hermon.	2
17	Units of PLA, usually stationed in Syria, arrive in South Lebanon to help guerrillas resist Israeli attack.	
February		0
March		
5	Fateh fedayeen used rubber dinghies to land in Tel Aviv took hostages at Hotel Savoy. Asked to fly to Damascus. Said trained in Damascus. Were told to say from Port Said, Egypt. Slogan: "Kissinger's efforts will fail."	1
April		
4	Three Israelis wounded in clash with fedayeen on Mt. Hermon.	1
May		0
June		
24	Israel reports hundreds of fedayeen crossed into Lebanon from Syria.	0
July		0
August		
5	Rockets fired at Qiryat Shemona from SW Lebanon.	2
11	Fedayeen rocket firing from Jordanian territory.	
September		
5	Four Saiqa members arrested in Amsterdam planning to hijack Warsaw-Amsterdam express to stop Soviet emigration to Israel.	2
15	Four fedayeen (1 Syrian) take Egyptian embassy hostage denouncing Sinai.	
October		
20	Forces clash in Golan.	3
24	Fedayeen cross into Israel via Jordan captured with mortar shells, explosives and small arms. Intended to shell Neo Hakikar and sabotage installations in area.	
28	Fedayeen crossed from Syria into Golan—brief fight.	

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DATE(S)	ACTION	MONTHLY TOTAL
1975		
November		
13	23 pounds explosives inside luggage near coffeehouse in Jerusalem. Damascus Radio claims for Fateh.	2
19	PDFLP attacked Israeli yeshiva farm in Golan at Ramit Magashimim.	
December		
13	Saiqa attacks on Israeli army patrols in N. Galilee. Damascus Radio reports. Also attacks on Qiryat Shemona.	1
1976		
January		
1	Katyusha rockets fired at northern Galilee from SW Lebanon.	1
16-31	Israel reports fewest incidents of fedayeen action since 1966.**	
February		
March		
8	First attack on Israeli patrols since November '75 from Syrian borders; fedayeen fired rockets at patrols.	1
April		
8	PFLP and Saiqa forces clash in Beirut.	2
?	One fedayeen operation reported in Golan sometime in April.	
May		
18	PDFLP (currently friendly with Syria) attack Israeli bridges, infiltrated from Jordan, said to be in retaliation for shooting relative of former Jordanian Premier during riots in Nablus.	1
June		
July		
18	Saiqa claims responsibility for bus explosion in West Bank. There has been continuous light explosion activity in West Bank rumored engineered by Saiqa cell.	1
August		
early	Fedayeen crossing Dead Sea from Jordan clash with patrol.	1
September		
16	Shimon Peres disclosed Israeli and Syrian officers met in presence of UN to discuss reunion of Druze families.	0
October		
26	Syria agrees to help fedayeen return to military bases in South Lebanon. PLA moves into Arqoub region.	0

DATE(S)	ACTION	MONTHLY TOTAL
1976		
November		0
December 24	Fedayeen successfully launched rocket attack from Jordan on Neve Ur, important Israeli target.	1
1977		
January		0
February		0
March		0
April		0
May		0
June		0
July 6	Explosion in Tel Aviv market place claimed by Fateh, PDFLP, Saiqa and ALF.	17
16-31	Bombs daily in public places claimed by above mentioned groups.	
August 4	Israeli forces report killing two fedayeen, injuring third, crossing border and planning attack three miles south of Sea of Galilee.	8
9, 10, 12 16	Nablus explosions claimed by PLO or Saiga. Qiryat Shemona bus explosion (planted from Arqoub region.)	
27, 29, 30	More Nablus explosions.	
September 16	Israeli aircraft and tanks enter South Lebanon on side of rightist. Syrian army positions shelled but did not take up challenge.	0
October		0
November ?	Seven bomb explosions in public places in West Bank, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv similar to previous explosions.	8
17	Two bombs exploded in Egyptian embassy in Damascus; no injuries; slight damage; came after Sadat's departure from Syria.	
December 13	Reports that Syrian authorities plotting to assassinate Egyptian embassy staff in Beirut.	6
18	Explosive-laden suitcase removed from Beirut residence of Egyptian diplomat.	
19	Thirteen pounds of explosives in suitcase found in Egyptian embassy in Beirut.	

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DATE(S)	ACTION	MONTHLY TOTAL
1977		
December		
20	Two rockets, dynamite found in vegetable cart near Egyptian embassy in Beirut.	
22	Bomb damaged three Egyptian organization buildings in Beirut.	
31	Bomb exploded in car belonging to Syrian embassy in front of Egyptian embassy in London.	
1978		
January		
2	Egyptian security official defused four pound bomb hidden in shopping bag by Egyptian embassy in West Germany.	4
10	Intelligence office in Jerusalem blown up.	
13	Explosion in office in Jaffa.	
26	Jerusalem office explosion (all three claimed by SANA 5 Feb. 1978).	
February		
14	Saiqa claims explosion of bus in Jerusalem killing forty.	1
March		
11	PLO attack in Israel announced over Damascus Radio.	1
April		
5	Damascus Radio reported fedayeen operation against soldiers in Jerusalem.	1
May		
June		
July		
31	Two PLO members, in coordination with Syrian intelligence, seize hostages in Iraqi embassy in Libya.	1
August		
2	Attack on Iraqi officials in Pakistan.	3
13	PFLP-GC blow up headquarters of Iraqi-backed Palestinian group in Beirut.	
17	Fateh fedayeen traveling from Damascus shoots Iraqi embassy employee.	
September		
October		
November		
December		