

Part I: The Origins and Evolution of Terrorism

Today, the word "terrorism" inevitably conjures up images of the World Trade Center on fire or attacks by Muslim extremists in the Middle East. But, terrorism is neither new nor confined to the Middle East or Muslim extremists.

Throughout history, terrorists have come from many places with various motivations. States, groups seeking self-determination (self-rule) or the end of colonial rule, and left and right wing ideologues have all used terror to advance their goals. In almost all of these cases, groups acted for political reasons, not merely out of a desire to commit senseless acts of violence. While terror has often been a weapon of the less powerful against the state, states have also used terror to intimidate populations and to weaken and destroy political opponents. Often the psychological effects of terrorism—fear and uncertainty—are as powerful and longer-lasting than the physical effects.

What is terrorism?

Experts struggle to agree on a definition of terrorism. The U.S. State Department defines terrorism as politically motivated violence directed at civilians and perpetrated by nonstate groups.

Some argue that this definition of terrorism is too narrow. They claim that definitions of terrorism should include violence that governments perpetrate against civilians. For example, many argue that state violence during the French Revolution was a form of terrorism. From 1793 to 1794, during what became known as "The Reign of Terror," the revolutionary government harnessed its power to eradicate its enemies and arrested or executed thousands of people. Similarly, some experts claim that the Soviet Union under Josef Stalin used terrorism to strike fear into the hearts of its citizens. During Stalin's reign, dissent was repressed, millions were executed, and tens of millions were arrested and impris-

Part I Definitions

State—A state is an entity that has a defined territory and a permanent population under the control of its own government. A state controls its territory and its nationals. States can enter into international agreements, join international organizations, and pursue and be subject to legal remedies.

Nonstate Actors—Historically, international politics has focused on national governments. In recent decades, groups and individuals have played a greater role in international relations. These groups and individuals (such as businesses, charities, individuals, or even terrorist organizations), are called nonstate actors.

Some twenty million Soviets died. This period of Soviet history has been referred to as "The Great Terror."

Others argue that the definition of terrorism should not be limited to acts against civilian targets. Instead, they claim that violence against political leaders and targets can be a form of terrorism. For example, some argue that the violence of Anarchist International in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries should be classified as terrorism. A worldwide movement of groups operating in secret cells, Anarchists murdered the president of Italy in 1894, the king of Italy in 1900, the prime ministers of Spain in 1897 and 1912, the empress of Austria in 1898, and U.S. President William McKinley in 1901.

Nearly all experts agree that terror has always been used as a violent means to a political end. Examining the evolving means and methods of terror and terrorists reveals a shifting political landscape that may help you understand the motivations behind these acts.

Terror Becomes More Visible

After World War II, terrorism spread as a political instrument of revolutionaries seeking independence from colonial powers, and those struggling for self-determination. For example, the states of Israel, Kenya, and Algeria owe their independence in part to nationalist political groups that used terrorism against colonial powers.

It is important to note that groups that use terror tactics do not necessarily have international aims. Groups may have strictly national goals, such as a change in government in their home country or ending an occupation. Others may have both national and international aims. For many people today, the current conception of international terrorism and terrorists was shaped by the hostage crisis at the Munich Olympics in 1972.

How did the Munich Olympics of 1972 affect the world's view of terrorism?

During the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, Germany, a group known as Black September seized Israeli athletes inside the Olympic Village. The Palestinian group demanded the release of Palestinian prisoners held in Israel in return for the hostages they held in Munich. The Israeli government refused the terrorists' demands. German police allowed the terrorists to leave the Olympic Village, but eleven Israelis, one German policeman, and five of eight terrorists were killed in a failed German-led rescue attempt.

Advances in satellite technology meant that much of the world was able to watch on television as the drama unfolded. Terrorists began to understand that they could capture the world's attention if they chose the right targets—the wider the audience, the greater the impact of their actions.



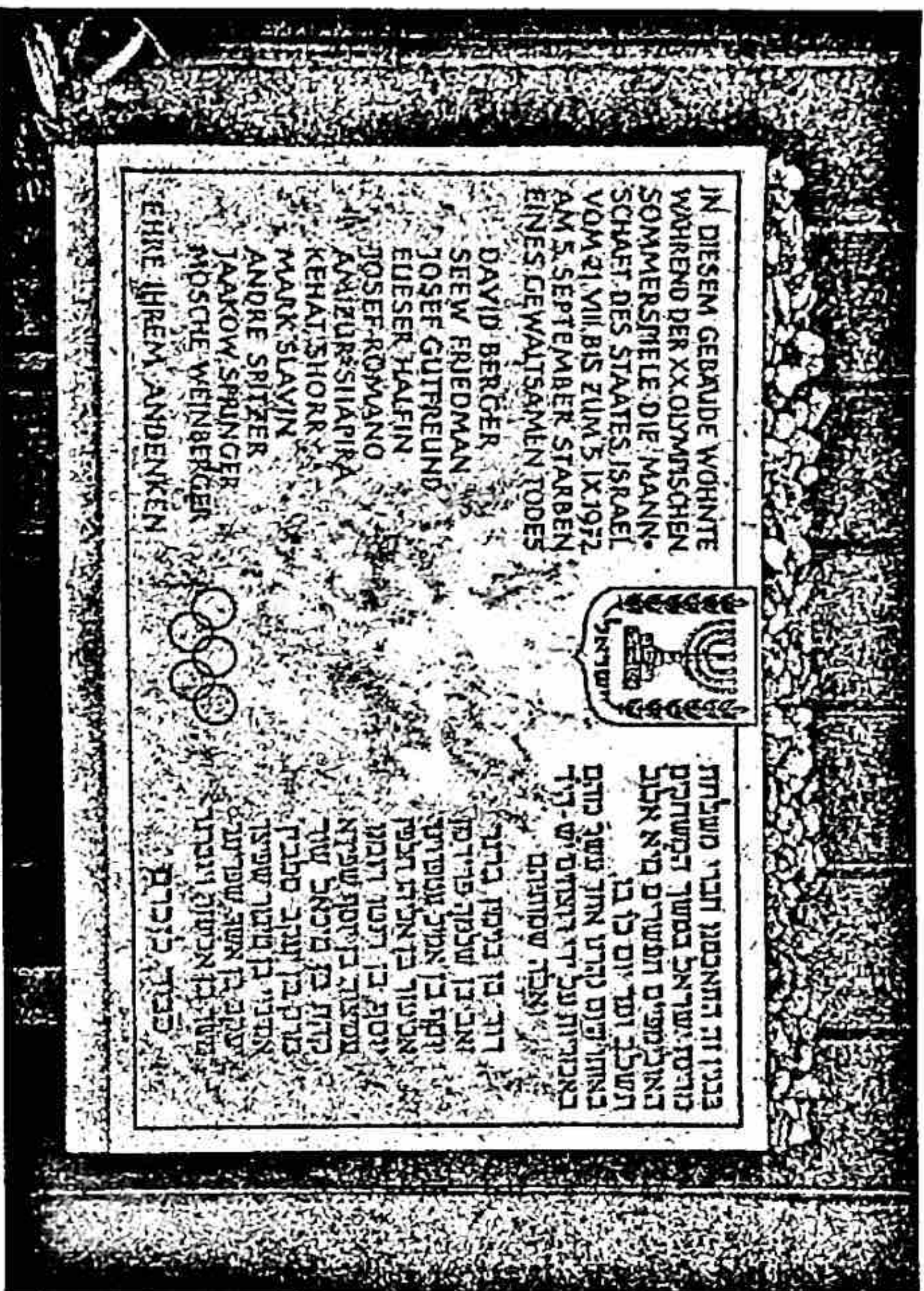
Ed Slem, *The Rocky Mountain News*. Reprinted with permission of Newspaper Enterprise Association, Inc.

6 In our assessment, and in light of the result, we have made one of the best achievements in Palestinian commando action.... The Olympiad arouses the people's interest and attention more than anything else in the world. The choice of the Olympics, from the purely propagandistic view-point, was 100 percent successful. It was like painting the name of Palestine on a mountain that can be seen from the four corners of the earth."
—Black September, September 13, 1972

The events of Munich made a lasting impact. Terrorism became more prominent in the world's consciousness. Throughout the 1970s, terrorism experts concluded that when terrorists acted, they did not necessarily want a lot of people dead—but they did want a lot of people watching.

Terrorism Becomes More Deadly

Following the events in Munich, the international community debated the best response to terrorism and produced several agreements addressing specific types of terrorist activity, including aircraft sabotage and hijacking, attacks on diplomats, and hostage taking. Despite these efforts, state-sponsored terrorism,



A memorial to the Israeli athletes killed by terrorists at the 1972 Munich Olympics. In German and Hebrew, the memorial lists their names and reads, "The team of the state of Israel lived in this building during the 20th Olympic Summer Games from 21 August to 5 September 1972. On September 5, they died a violent death. Honor their memory."

In which states provide assistance to terrorists, grew during the 1980s.

Why did state-sponsored terrorism increase during the 1980s?

In November 1979, a militant group of Iranian students seized fifty-two U.S. citizens as hostages at the United States embassy in Tehran. The students claimed to be acting without their government's support, but many people questioned whether this was truly the case. The world's attention remained focused on Tehran throughout the crisis. Night after night, television broadcasts devoted programs to the day's developments. After more than a year in captivity, the U.S. government negotiated the release of the hostages.

Whether the Iranian government actually supported the students or not, weaker states realized that supporting terrorist groups

plan and carry out attacks, supplying weapons and training, and providing safe havens out of view of the international community.

The United States has taken a range of measures against states it believes sponsor terror. It has applied economic punishments, such as embargoes and sanctions. It has also taken military action to deter terrorism. The effectiveness of military action has been low. For example, in 1986, the United States led air strikes in Libya in response to the bombing of a disco in Berlin, Germany by Libyan agents. The disco was popular with U.S. soldiers, and the bombing had killed two and wounded two hundred. Instead of deterring further Libyan terrorist acts, the U.S. bombing of Libya was followed by an increased number of Libyan-sponsored attacks against U.S. citizens. Two years after the airstrikes, Libyan-backed terrorists bombed Pan Am flight 103, which was traveling from Germany to the United States, killing 259 passengers and eleven people on the ground when it crashed in Scotland.

Furthermore, despite careful planning, the U.S. airstrikes against Libya killed thirty-six civilians and wounded ninety-three. Critics of the action noted that killing civilians lost the United States the moral high ground it claimed to hold above terrorists.

Why is there concern about a rise of religiously motivated terrorism?

While state sponsorship made terrorism increasingly deadly, another worrying trend in terrorism began to emerge in the 1980s. In 1980, the U.S. State Department's list of international terrorist groups included only one group with a religious affiliation. By 2016, more than half of the fifty-eight international terrorist groups identified by the State Department had some religious affiliation or ideology.

Even prior to the attacks of September 11, 2001, some terrorism experts attributed the increasing lethality of terrorism to attacks by groups motivated by religious extremism.

Most of the religious terrorist groups active in the last twenty-five years were motivated

by the belief that something had gone terribly wrong with the world. These beliefs stem from social, political, cultural, and spiritual issues. For example, foreign military occupation of territory, corrupt secular governments, or the decline of traditional values within a society can all contribute to a sense of crisis. These groups believe violence is authorized by God and necessary to advance their cause. In the terrorist's mind, the stakes are so high and the cause so virtuous that any means may be justified to achieve the ends.

What are some examples of religiously motivated terrorism?

The following are four examples of major terrorist attacks by religiously motivated groups.

The First World Trade Center Bombing: On February 26, 1993, terrorists parked a van loaded with explosives and cyanide in the garage of the World Trade Center in New York City. It exploded and collapsed several floors of the parking garage, killing six people and injuring thousands. The terrorists had hoped that the explosion would collapse one tower, making it fall sideways onto the other tower. The plan, designed to kill thousands, failed because the force of the explosion was not great enough.

An extremist Muslim terrorist group based in the United States carried out the attack. The group, followers of the Egyptian Sheik Omar Abdul Rahman, was angered by U.S. support for Israel and for those it considered enemies of Islam, including Egypt's then-president, Hosni Mubarak. The group's supporters were also angered by the United States' secular culture, which they regarded as hostile to religion in general and particularly threatening to Islam. In 1996, Sheik Omar Abdul Rahman and eight others were convicted of planning the World Trade Center bombing and of plotting to blow up the United Nations, two tunnels under the Hudson River, and the FBI building in Manhattan.

The Trade Center was attacked because of its symbolic significance. In the eyes of the world, it represented U.S. power, technology, and that quintessential American city: New York. Eight-and-a-half years later, this same symbolism made the towers targets again.

Baruch Goldstein: On February 25, 1994, during Islam's holy month of Ramadan, Dr. Baruch Goldstein entered the Ibrahimi Mosque, located in the town of Hebron on the West Bank. He fired 111 shots with his automatic assault-rifle into the congregation of 800 Palestinian Muslim worshippers. He killed twenty-nine people and wounded 150 before being killed.

A follower of the Jewish terrorist group Kach, Baruch Goldstein felt betrayed by his government's actions in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. He believed that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was giving away what God had given Israel and that Israel was in grave danger from Palestinian Arabs.

The Hebron massacre had important religious symbolism. Goldstein acted during the Jewish festival of Purim, which celebrates the biblical story of Mordechai destroying the enemies of the Jews.

Some militant and orthodox Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza settlements saw Goldstein as a righteous man and a martyr. They made his grave site a shrine and voiced uncompromising religious fervor against Palestinian Arabs and against the Israeli government. A few months later, a young orthodox Jewish student named Yigal Amir assassinated Prime Minister Rabin. He claimed he acted on God's orders.

Aum Shinrikyo: On March 20, 1995, five members of Aum Shinrikyo, a group with roots in Japanese Buddhism, boarded trains at different ends of Tokyo's subway system. As they approached the city center, each of the men punctured a bag containing Sarin nerve gas and quickly left the train. In the next few

minutes, people on the trains began choking and vomiting. Passengers stumbled out of the trains and collapsed on the platforms in convulsions. Eventually, twelve people died and over 5,500 were injured. This was the first example of the use of weapons of mass destruction (in this case chemical) by a terrorist group. Members of Aum Shinrikyo believed that they were in a dehumanized society threatened by an Armageddon of nuclear weapons and nerve gas. They believed that only members of their organization—those with proper spiritual training—would survive.

Some argue that they conducted the nerve gas attack on the subway system to fulfill their own prophecy of Armageddon or to symbolize its results.

Christian Identity: On June 15, 1985, Richard Wayne Snell was sentenced to death for the murders of a pawn shop owner and a police officer in Arkansas in 1983 and 1984. He also bombed a natural gas pipeline, robbed a pawn shop, and made plans to bomb the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Snell, who was executed by lethal injection on April 19, 1995, refused to apologize for his crimes. According to him, they were part of a just revolution against the U.S. government.

Snell belonged to the Covenant, the Sword, and the Arm of the Lord (CSA), a militant right-wing group that seeks to overthrow the federal government and create a new state governed by Christian religious law. The CSA's beliefs are based on the Christian Identity movement, a system of religious beliefs that blends white supremacy with extreme political and religious conservatism. Its followers believe that the government is run by a Jewish-liberal conspiracy that is determined to deprive citizens of their freedoms and to institute a secular world government. They are often fierce defendants of citizens' right to own firearms, believing that gun control legislation is one of the government's most offensive means of depriving citizens of their freedom.

Timothy McVeigh, who bombed the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on the day Snell was executed, had ties to Christian

Identity followers both in Michigan and in Oklahoma. The attack killed 168 and injured more than 800 people. McVeigh never expressed religious motivations for bombing the attack, but he shared many of Christian Identity's pro-gun and anti-government convictions. He was heavily influenced by *The Turner Diaries*, a novel popular among Christian Identity followers, which describes blowing up a federal building with a fertilizer-gasoline bomb similar to the one McVeigh used. In fact, McVeigh had a passage from the book with him when he was arrested.

Why did U.S. officials grow increasingly concerned about terrorism?

As the violence caused by terrorism grew, U.S. government officials became deeply concerned during the 1990s. It seemed that terrorists did not only want a lot of people watching their acts of terrorism—they now wanted a lot of people dead as well. Law enforcement officials in the United States and around the world noted with alarm cases of groups and individuals who had attempted to acquire the ingredients to make nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons.

66 The acquisition, proliferation, threatened or actual use of weapons of mass destruction constitutes one of the gravest threats to the United States."

—Louis Freeh, former director of the FBI, May 1997

In this section of the reading, you have examined the historical origins and purposes of terrorism as well as its evolution over the years. The next section explores the threats of terrorism. As you read, keep in mind that when you have finished the reading you will be asked to formulate your own U.S. policy on terrorism.



Dale Summers in *The Orlando Sentinel*. Reprinted with permission.

Name: _____

The Origins and Evolution of Terrorism

Directions: Use information from your reading to fill in the boxes below.

Munich Olympics Attack (1979)

What happened?

What motivated the attack?

What were the legacies of the attack?

Iranian Hostage Crisis (1979)

What happened?

What motivated the attack?

What were the legacies of the attack?

First World Trade Center Bombing (1993)

What happened?

What motivated the attack?

What were the legacies of the attack?

Types of Terrorism

List a few of the different types of terrorism.

Ibrahimi Mosque Shooting (1994)

What happened?

What motivated the attack?

Aum Shinrikyo (1995)

What happened?

What motivated the attack?

Murrah Federal Building Bombing (1995)

What happened?

What motivated the attack?