Christopher C. Harmon
Illustrations of Discrete Uses of Force

An insurrection in the Philippine Islands in 1901 brought prominence to a talented but relatively inexperienced general of US Army volunteers: Frederick Funston. He demonstrated that good intelligence and deception were still as valuable as when the Chinese commander Sun Tzu called them the very essence of war some twenty-three hundred years before.1 Brigadier General Funston of the Army Reserves had just enough fighting experience with the nationalist guerrillas of Emilio Aguinaldo to know that jungle pursuit with baggage trains and field guns would be far less likely to yield success than sleight of hand. By capturing an enemy courier, and then deciphering the coded messages the man bore, American officers learned that the Filipino insurgents were in serious need of reinforcements—and were calling for them to assemble close to the hitherto-secret rebel headquarters. General Funston studied the matter and determined to oblige his foe. After much work with forgers, he sent out a faked dispatch that replied favorably to Aguinaldo’s call. He then prepared his “reinforcements.”

Philippine Scouts—that is, specially trained indigenous fighters on the American side2—were schooled carefully in the appearance, dress, weaponry, and methods of the rebel army. The culling and training process yielded eighty-one of these newly baptized “nationalists,” who then made a long overland march to Aguinaldo’s jungle lair in North Luzon. Funston solved the problem of how this unit would be commanded by accompanying them as a “prisoner,” as did two other white US officers. Within a few hours of arrival, the false “relief force” had shot up Aguinaldo’s personal guard and captured the man himself. 3 After that, the rebellion was easily defeated.

In the parlance of modern low-intensity conflict, this was a “pseudo-gang,” created and used with unusual swiftness to “decapitate” an insurgency. Admirers of Homer’s Odyssey would see a parallel between Funston’s pseudo-gang, inserted into a movement to eviscerate it, and the wooden “gift” of a Trojan horse the Achaean Greeks built to get into Troy. Traditional students of war cannot but appreciate the boldness and guile of the US general’s plans and his demonstration of personal leadership.

An equally fascinating Trojan horse appeared in the field in rural Colombia on 2 July 2008. Its shimmer caught the eyes of Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) terrorists holding parliamentarian Ingrid Betancourt and numbers of helpless civilians unlawfully.

Colombian army forces showed a cleverness that would have made Frederick Funston smile. They infiltrated the communications net of a regional FARC commander, won his confidence with false messages, and then set a trap. They sent a false order through now-accustomed channels, ordering the local FARC commander to assemble Betancourt and some other hostages for a heliborne-relocation.

But it was a fake. The FARC had made hostage releases in January and February 2008 and were thus accustomed to white helicopters with the Red Cross.
The Colombian army played on this, and other aid flights by humanitarians, by sending in two “helos” painted white—though without any red cross.4 Their flight crews were manifestly unmilitary, festooned with cameras, unruly hair, and even one Che Guevara tee shirt. FARC personnel loaded aboard their hostages and climbed in. Only as the aircraft lifted off were the communists overcome, without a single gunshot, by those they thought to be “aid workers.” “Cesar,” a thug who had personally abused Mrs. Betancourt for years in the jungle, found himself naked and bound on the steel flooring, flying into deserved captivity.5 Colombia’s triumph underscored a pattern of psychological, political, and military progress yielding sharp gains against the insurgents in the previous two years. The revolutionaries had grown steadily over decades, enriching themselves with narco-wealth, enjoying training in at least one case in explosives by Irish Republican Army (IRA) Provisionals, and equipped with communications gear and weapons as good as what most states own. But Colombia’s military, in both size and professionalism, was growing in the new millennium, and was enhanced by US training and assistance under “Plan Colombia.” The years 2007 and 2008 yielded ever-better news from the field. Intelligence, skill levels, and attention to human rights all improved. The capture and killing of senior FARC operatives became frequent, and this was supplemented with a shocking pattern of defections—that supreme metric of an insurgency’s decline. Ultimately it was military guile that saved the wan, gifted Betancourt and her fourteen fellows. High-level diplomacy had failed, for years. A French president had made an election campaign promise to see her released. Her natural appeal, a published autobiography, status as a member of Parliament, and dual French-Colombian citizenship combined to make her a central public focus in France. But all that did not win her release; her release came with a scheme by Colombian counterterrorists.

A Multitude of Such Success Stories
Although perhaps few have noticed, modern times have offered several dozen examples of ingenious, well-crafted forcible rejoinders to terrorist crimes. Dogged with South Moluccan terrorism beginning in 1970, the Dutch government developed negotiation strategies but also turned to their Marines, who brilliantly ended several hostage-barricade situations involving masses of civilians at a school and aboard a train. Germany did not break the Baader-Meinhof communists by installing a social welfare regime—they had already done that, beginning with Bismarck, and elaborated it in the 1950s and 1960s to a degree still striking to pure-market capitalism. It was arrest powers under German domestic law, and one decisive commando action by the border guards/special forces GSG-9 in 1977, that killed the spirit of Andreas Baader and the first generation of his Red Army Faction. It was not negotiation that ended Sendero Luminoso’s long drive toward power in rural Peru—the Maoist fanatic Abimael Guzman was interested in victory, not peace talks. But a clever major in the Peruvian police ranks assembled enough intelligence on the whereabouts of this reclusive ideologue so as to capture him, without a shot. There followed the collapse of the elaborate communist machinery that had come to rule at least a third of Peru’s countryside.6 These operations, effected during what most observers would call peacetime, highlight the need for counterterrorism professionalism to be resident in some capacity in the modern state. These successes in the discrete7 use of force tend to showcase thorough training and technical capabilities, as well as a determination to outthink the terrorist and then outdo him in boldness when the right moment comes. The counterterrorist successes also occurred
because of willingness by leaders (political and military) to take the calculated risks and send
the technical experts into action. These permissions and decisions do not come easily;
bureaucracies
and leaders may often discover unending reasons to avoid such a choice. J. Q. Roberts
instructs us in the following chapter that “capability” and “intelligence” must be deployed by
“leadership” willing to engage with terrorism. Dr. Richard Shultz Jr.’s study of internal papers
of the US Joint Staff in the Pentagon before 9/11 reveals how many grounds there are for
reluctance,
and how many times good men will prefer to pass, to play it safe.8
This chapter dwells in most cases on specially trained or elite forces, be they military,
paramilitary, or police; space will not permit us to deal broadly with all types of forceful
action, or all types of security forces, deployed against terrorists. There are indeed many.
Most actions are routine and even banal; others—much more rare—are hyper-dramatic. An
analyst could argue, for example, that uses of force fall into three categories: preventative,
preemptive, and reactive. The first encompasses both routine and unexceptional uses of
force to limit a problem, check an unsafe political movement, etc. Preemption takes place
under pressure of time or imminent enemy terrorist action, using force to interrupt or defeat
planned terrorist acts. The third type, the reactive, responds to a crime of terrorist violence
quickly (e.g., action to pursue, capture, or kill hostage-takers, murderers of a politician,
etc.). Another sound approach is the usual American military one of distinguishing antiterrorism
measures from counterterrorist ones. The first includes improving security with better
awareness, routine protective details, hardening of physical targets, or emplacement of
an antiaircraft missile atop a center of government. Counterterrorism, by contrast, includes
much more proactive options and operations, many of which take the struggle directly to
the enemy: examples include removal or sabotage of an infamous terrorist website, sabotage
of a weapons supply, rendition, or raids on terrorist encampments.
US security documents of 1984 through 1986 suggested a mild variant to this distinction
when they began referring to “active” defense—by correct implication relegating to
the category of “passive” most US practices up until the surprising April 1986 bombing of
Libya.9 That military raid proved unusual for the future, not just the past; it was no initiator
of a trend; it was no precedent; the like of it would not be employed for another thirteen
years (the Clinton administration’s 1998 missile strikes on installations in the Sudan and
Afghanistan). For the United States, as for nearly all governments around the globe,
counterterrorism
remained a law-enforcement problem. It was defined that way and treated that
way. Only the rise of al Qaeda and its fierce fatwahs ignited discussion of a real “war”
against terrorism. However analysts proceed, they find that counterterrorism forces do
more work in peace, on the training grounds, and in the classrooms than they do in milieus
featuring the bloody use of arms and violent shock. Preparation, intelligence collection and
analysis, cultural and political awareness education, and other undramatic duties prevail.
Or at least they did for most North Atlantic Treaty Organization members up to the start of
hostilities in Afghanistan (October 2001) and Iraq (March 2003).
Reservations Against Using Force

There are evident and myriad reasons that democracies are disinclined to use force against terrorism—even when it comes from abroad. One, settlement of disputes by means other than arms, is, for many, at the heart of the democratic ideal. Two, terrorism is normally and should normally be a responsibility for police, experts in minimal use of force, not martial experts trained to kill. Thus, the elaborate “turnover” procedures are used twice in each case when a military unit assumes tactical control of a terrorist incident within most democratic societies—a very deliberate legal action suspends civil authority, and another takes it back as soon as possible. Three, excess is possible and even likely given how danger and violence can escalate. Use of excessive force concerns all citizens and may alienate many. Invariably, use of force brings lawsuits and recriminations. This is closely related to a fourth reason for reluctance to use force: legitimacy. Legitimacy is critical to civil government, and even a single excess in use of force has sometimes discredited years of good and normal law enforcement work and management of problems. Five, once heavy deployments of force, or use of force, delegitimize an elected government, these may serve the extreme minorities.

Their propagandists are gratified; their militants feel vindicated and encouraged. Overall violence might increase, rather than be tamped down, by martial action.

Excesses of force, spurred by terrorism worries, have profoundly embarrassed many a good government in recent years. After 11 September 2001, for example, the United States worked hard to train and deploy sky marshals, rebuilding a program that began for good reasons and was let to dwindle away to mere tokenism. But in December 2005 an unarmed man, probably afflicted with schizophrenia or related mental illness, raced about on an aircraft and approach ramp until he was shot dead by skittish security forces. These edgy lawmen had apparently not learned from a tragedy five months earlier in the London “Tube.”

There, Metropolitan Police made lethal errors in identifying a suspect and mis-assessing his intentions. Piling on him in the subway tunnel, officers discharged five rounds into his head. The first of these stories, in the United States, has been forgotten; the second collected press attention for years, haunting the British public and policing establishment.10

If individuals may rattle police officers and more specialized counterterrorism experts, armed groups more easily do so. Religious and racial minority status is a guaranteed “stress enhancer.” The long story of difficult relations between American police officers and black militants is replete with illustrations. These include the Black Panthers, leftist who armed themselves heavily and enunciated a doctrine of “defense of the black community” vis-à-vis predominantly white US urban policing forces. Many Panthers died in shoot-outs with police; some fled to Cuba or Algeria; others abandoned armed struggle.

May 1985 brought crisis to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where a black activist group calling itself MOVE fortified a building and made of it a compound, collected arms, and acted belligerently toward the whole neighborhood. A disastrous operation by skill-free authorities saw the building burned and the city sued for damages.11 The experience is doubtless not forgotten by authorities now observing Al Fuqra. Jamaat al Fuqra is a black Muslim (Sunni) sect, founded by Sheik Mubarak Ali Jilani Hashemi 12 during a 1980 visit to New York City. There are at least several hundred members in the United States today, in as many as thirty-five encampments. Some send money to the sheik in Lahore, Pakistan; some travel to Pakistan for indoctrination or prayer. There are al Fuqra centers in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Tuscon, Denver, and even Canada; headquarters are said to be in Hancock,
New York. The group’s doctrine is to “purify Islam through violence,” and in Colorado and other states al Fuqra “Soldiers of Allah” committed crimes, or even murder. One member was arrested in the mass-lethality terrorist plots that frightened New York City in 1993. Yet, apparently, US authorities have taken little to no concrete action—perhaps because it has been some time since a sect member has been caught in violent acts. The bombing record of 1979 to 1990 has not been continued, for whatever reasons.
Planned Inadequacy, Extremes of Restraint:
The US Sky Marshal Program

The Federal Air Marshal Service places armed experts aboard some flights with
the mission to “detect, deter and defeat hostile acts.” The program was begun by
President Richard Nixon and known as the Sky Marshal Program. So why were there
no air marshals on any of the four flights hijacked on 9/11?

Air piracy began a few decades after air travel began. Skyjackings, often for political
reasons, occurred as early as the late 1950s— Cuba was a favorite destination for
US skyjackers.

Israel responded the earliest to air piracy, as El Al was one common tactical target
of attackers, especially George Habash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of
Palestine (PFLP). In 1970, when two Arabs seized a flight, Israeli guards shot one and
arrested one. In 1972, security forces uniformed as aircraft maintenance crew retook
a captured airliner, killing two PFLP terrorists and saving ninety-seven passengers in
a complex, dangerous, and brilliant assault.

But the American program was doomed, always facing bureaucratic resistors, costcutters,
and, occasionally, experts with dissident opinion. The Federal Bureau of Investigation tried to kill the little program, according to
the National Security Council’s leading terrorism expert of the 1990s, Richard A.
Clarke. “The Bureau was concerned that if an aircraft were hijacked, any Marshals
on board would just get in the way of the FBI’s Hostage Rescue Team (HRT), which
was trained to seize a hijacked aircraft.” But, rejoined Clarke, the aircraft would have
to have landed first. A marshal might conceivably help get the plane down safely.
Certainly the plane would have to be landed safely and in a place assessable to the FBI
before its HRT could do anything but negotiate over radios, and suicide artists would
never open negotiations.

Other experts had their own considered reasons for opposing a serious air marshal
program. Fears of a gunfight starting at 30,000 feet put off many who might be
expected to approve the arming of pilots and marshals. Critics of the air marshal concept
include a top Marine Corps expert, who held to his views even after 9/11.17

The result of all this careful argument, indolence, and saving of money was that no
more than “a few dozen” marshals were deployed each day18 on US carriers before
11 September 2001. The Federal Aviation Administration had (and the Transportation
Safety Administration now uses) elaborate mental gymnastics to place the handful
available on the most endangered air routes. But this would not be enough to deter
terrorists’ planning.

Citizens might imagine that everything has changed. But they may be wrong. If
press reports are accurate, at best 5 percent of US aircraft are staffed by an armed officer
or pilot. Pilots can now legally carry a gun, and some do. But silliness still survives.
Hundreds of federal air marshal service agents work on the ground, in offices, as on
the Joint Terrorism Task Force teams, and at airports. Few actually are in the air. Three
years after 9/11, readers of the Washington Times learned that due to internal regulations,
TSA marshals were held to strict dress and grooming codes that made them all look just like, well, air
marshals.19 In 2006, a directive by Mr. Dana Brown, Director
of the Federal Air Marshal Service, relaxed this code covering appearances.20

Intelligence expert William Stephenson wrote in his 1977 book on the hijacking
to Entebbe: “the public is far ahead of governments in wishing to arm against the
new danger” of air piracy.21 One suspects that if the public were offered the option of
tripling the number of “covered” flights for an across-the-board passenger tax of ten
dollars, they would overwhelmingly approve. But no one ever asks.
Hostage Rescues

Rescue operations are among the most challenging and intriguing of all forcible counterterrorist actions. They sometimes require something of the hitting power of a raid; they are as complicated as a rendition on a large scale. The dangers inherent in large-scale rescues are so evident that far more such operations have been conceived and planned than executed. Nonetheless, review of many cases of recent decades yields grounds for confidence: They may succeed, and there are basic principles of planning and action that help enhance the chances of success. A hostage rescue can become a counterterrorist triumph. Among the instructive cases are two air rescues—one forgotten, one better known: the Congo (Zaire) problem handled by Belgium and the United States (1964); and the Entebbe, Uganda, problem solved by Israel (1976).

“Dragon Rouge”22 was as flamboyant as its name but now is rarely mentioned in contemporary accounts of counterterrorism. Four years after Congolese independence from Belgium, Simbas (lions) of the antigovernment Popular Army of Liberation (APL) led by General Nicholas Olenga initiated the problem in August 1964. This unfolded a thousand miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean, and alongside the Congo River, in the rebel capital of Stanleyville, now called Kisangani. Within the Democratic Republic of Congo these forces massacred some seventy Europeans and captured the US consulate, taking thirty American hostages. The case was burdened by colonial history and burned with race tensions too: the hostages, alive and dead, were white; the insurrectional APL was all black. And the hostage-barricade situation went protracted, lasting 111 days. Belgium had the solemn duty to extract its countrymen. Just as important, it had the resolve to do so—despite the US ambassador’s advice against a military operation. But ultimately the United States provided transport aircraft and pilots, and the small North Atlantic Treaty Organization country prepared a joint air-ground operation. All began 17 November with a flight of fourteen C-130 transports. They left Klein Brogel, Belgium, for Stanleyville by way of Moron, Spain; Las Palmas, Canary Islands; Ascension Island; and Kamina, Republic of Congo to drop 545 Belgian paratroopers at the airfield nearest Stanleyville with its captives. Operational secrecy was lost along the way, but the fighting power of the Belgians remained formidable, from a Congolese guerrilla’s point of view. During all this, a ground force marched swiftly eastward through the Congo to link up with the Paras. The column moved at night, in the rain, amidst fighting; commander Frederick Van de Waele and a famed mercenary Michael Hoare had doubts about the progress and the prospects. But by 26 November, Belgians were fighting their way, street by street, into Stanleyville. The rebels retreated slowly while massacring hostages—always a grave risk known to intervening forces. Some two thousand Europeans and other hostages were however saved; most were moved to the secured airport and flown away on 27 November. A wild parade in Brussels greeted returnees. Coached by President Lyndon Johnson, all US officials and air crew remained quiet—“in the background.”23 US silence included nothing of mercenary Mike Hoare and the “Wild Geese” whose expertise was central to saving innumerable hostages. Remarkably, only three Belgian soldiers died in the complex and extended operation; seven more were wounded. It was a stunning national success for the Belgians. It was fully twelve years before a similar counterterrorist operation would unfold—but when it did, the parallels were striking. At Entebbe in 1976, Israel took a flight of air
transports, over immense distances, landed in a most hostile environment, killed terrorists, rescued masses of hostages by air evacuation, and suffered precious few casualties. Boldness, speed, and skill were at a premium, and their successful combination was rewarded, and measured by historians, under such rubrics as risk-taking, public morale, and repudiation of the methods of terrorism.

PFLP air piracy occasioned the events. George Habash’s team of four hijackers included people close to “Carlos the Jackal”; two were Euro-leftists, and two were Palestinians; all were to die in the operation.24 The skyjackers set out on Air France flight 139 leaving Athens, Greece, already discolored by a reputation for laxity on air security. Taking control of the crew and plane, with its scores of Israelis and some 175 other hostages, the four-person gun team announced itself as the “Che Guevara Group” of the “Gaza Brigade” of the PFLP.25 They had an ally on the ground in Idi Amin, coup-leader and now Ugandan head of government. His army shielded the party at Entebbe. Hostages were kept in the main hall of the terminal and were divided by race to accentuate the terror for the Jews. Unlike in the Congo, no one was executed—but that threat remained palpable.

Meanwhile in Israel a special air reconnaissance unit planned and built a mock-up of the hangar and rehearsed rescue concepts. The operation would require airplanes that could reach some 2,200 miles, action on ground held by a hostile army force, and safe loading and evacuation of lumbering jet aircraft with long runway requirements.

Israel accomplished all this with surprise and deception. They knew that Mr. Amin moved about in a dark black Mercedes and so acquired the same model. Once the first plane had landed, at the far end of a runway, this “VIP car” rolled down the transport’s ramp and drove right up to the main hall. Some Ugandans did not react, and those who did were shot down. The surprise bought key moments and placed the first Israelis inside the main building quickly. From the C-130s flowed more men, overwhelming the confused indigenous force in the night. Three minutes after the Israelis landed, most of the terrorists were dead and nearly all hostages were secured. These included the Air France crew who heroically had turned aside the invitation to escape, staying with their passengers instead. Casualties included three hostages, and one soldier: terminal building assault force commander.

Jonathan Netanyahu, brother of a future prime minister of Israel.

At Entebbe, so many citizens were rescued, and with such audacity, that it made for a strategic triumph. The nation was elated; the armed forces were vindicated in their dedication to readiness and intense training. Success pushed to the background certain earlier failures in countering terrorism—as at Ma’alot, where a school had been captured by Palestinian nihilists and retaken with great bloodshed. Entebbe seemed a kind of bookend to the gory Olympics in Munich; it competed a cycle in government learning. Now, governments might not merely take precautions, as against air piracy, they might promise to recapture “lost” civilians. Germany, for example, was supremely well prepared, and would prove it only one year later, retaking the Lufthansa jet hijacked to Mogadishu, Somalia, in October 1977.

Germany’s readiness in 1977 was the result of the fallout from the Munich Olympics of 1972. The Games were a disaster in part because the modern German republic was deliberately decentralized by its creators, and no national special force could be called upon to deal with the well-armed and trained Palestinian terrorists. Bavarian police—earnest
men untrained for such encounters—had to suffice. The messy legacy of Furstenfeldbruck Airport in September of 1972 was to be much more than lethal tragedy; it commenced creation of German counterterrorism capabilities, from the “nearly nonexistent” to among Europe’s very best. The Grenzschutzgruppe 9 (GSG-9) emerged under the command of Colonel Ulrich Wegener, 27 from the Border Police—it is deliberately not an army unit. Initially it worked with and learned from the British Special Air Service and other expert forces. Soon it would teach, as well; GSG-9 is one of the units the US Army studied before creating Delta Force, for example.

Andreas Baader and the Red Army Faction (RAF) coleader Gudrun Ensslin were in jail on 13 October 1977 when a Lufthansa Boeing was hijacked en route from Majorca to Frankfurt. The plan was a joint one by PFLP and RAF—the latter had advanced connections to Iraq and Lebanon, not just East Bloc states. The terrorists’ mission had been to free RAF principals and other named convicts and political personalities. A fanatic and sadist named Zohair Akache, who had murdered top Yemenis and also operated in London, led the team of hijackers, and personally murdered pilot Jürgen Schumann. By the time GSG-9 had to act, it knew some of the details, for just months before the Border Police unit had worked out a kind of verbal code by which German pilots could pass along vital information. If the terrorists had their Middle East connections, so too did the German government. When Lufthansa flight 181 landed in Somalia with its eighty-two passengers plus crew, local authorities proved willing to let German commandos follow. This was vital; Cyprus had shamefully rejected such a German request when the jet was stopped at Larnaca. 28 Twenty-eight handpicked GSG-9 men disgorged from a jet identical to the hijacked airliner and made a stealthy approach in the dark on the night of 17–18 October. With listening devices, they established the whereabouts of the four terrorists. They broke into the aircraft, deployed “flash-bang” grenades to stun, and shot the terrorists, killing three and wounding the fourth.

Deception was used at several levels. In communications, Bonn signaled that the RAF hostages in Stammheim would be released, so in Somalia, the terrorists were awaiting good news. Second, Somali Rangers performed well in an ancillary role on the ground at the airport, creating a timely distraction as the German GSG-9 made the critical move from their airliner to the hijacked plane. But the earlier effort to pass under the gunmen’s noses in ground crew uniforms did not deceive. Arabs would have expected Somalis in ground crews, or perhaps British (who used to occupy Somalia); German accents disturbed them, and the team leader fired upon the fake “aircrew” with his pistol. Nor did all else in “Operation Feuerzauber” go perfectly. The assault team’s ladders were too short. One airplane door resisted the experts’ efforts to force it open for agonizing minutes. The German commandos also needed the help of sheer luck: Doorways inside the aircraft had been fitted with Semtex plastique, but it never detonated. And two grenades were deployed by terrorists, but aircraft seats largely absorbed their explosions.29

Impressive tactics that rendered all four terrorists immobile and a long operational reach yielded within one half-hour a strategic-level success that deserves study and restudy three decades later. Many assume that the “Fall of the Wall” in 1990 killed the Red Army Faction. But the hopes of many in the RAF died on that much-earlier day, 17 October 1977. Suicides followed within hours inside Stammheim Prison near Stuttgart. Baader, Ensslin, and Jan Carl Raspe all took their own lives; Ulrike Meinhof had already committed suicide a year earlier. A third generation of RAF would still operate in Germany, but
without real success. They were all that remained to surrender after the communist states collapsed. The tenth of April 1992 is the date of the formal document in which these holdouts for communism admitted they had no warm relations with the German proletariat, and their violent tricks were not strong enough to reach the average German.32 The ill repute of the last of the Baader-Meinhofs makes a counterpoint to the wild popularity with which Colonel Wegener and his German police were received upon return from Somalia. The success of counterterrorist methods, skillfully deployed and ending in deaths of terrorists, not their captives, was a profound lesson. It effaced the shame of German politicians who had appeared terrorism, or failed to save hostage Hanns-Martin Schleyer.33 The success also inspired Europe—the nascent counterterrorist forces had a valuable new lesson. After 1977, GSG-9 went on to perform scores of further operations. Since 1996 its capabilities have been supplemented by the Kommando Spezialkräfte (KSK), an army unit under the Special Forces Command. KSK is designed for operations beyond German borders, and has seen and done much in Afghanistan. GSG-9, while still focused primarily on German matters, has had much work to do in Iraq and conducted year-2008 operations in Sudan and off the Somali coast, where Berlin often felt need of the elite unit’s skills at hostage rescue.34

More recent air pirates who ended in spectacular failure were well handled by France; a fifty-four hour drama ended in late 1994 in successful and forceful intervention on the ground in Marseilles. France was a country alleged to be “appeasing” terrorists in the 1980s. But France had since 1974 possessed other options, including a prepared police unit called the National Gendarmes Intervention Group (GIGN). The top operator of GIGN, then-Major Denis Favier,35 had a brilliant reputation from schools and the field; he was fully ready to handle the provocations of the Armed Islamic Group, GIA, initially an armed wing of the political Front for Islamic Salvation.

The four GIA gunmen brazenly entered the Air France jet in Algiers dressed as uniformed security personnel.36 False uniforms are now a classic deception technique of insurgents and terrorists alike. Their other actions were likewise scripted from past international terror incidents. They demanded the freeing of jailed colleagues. They used the black art of alternately terrorizing—and then reassuring—passengers. They executed two hostages early on to prove seriousness to potential negotiators. And they separated hostages by nationality (Algerians from non-Algerians) to enhance the effects of terror.37

Favier’s GIGN flew out of its Satory base near Paris in an Airbus identical to the victim aircraft, and laid over to drill and rehearse “breaking and entering” schemes at Palma de Mallorcoa Spain. Barred from Algiers, they met up with Air France flight 8969 on an airstrip at Marignane Airport, a Marseilles suburb, where it touched down for fuel. “Attendants” (GIGN personnel in airline uniforms) serviced the plane, studying the hijackers up close and perhaps leaving listening devices. What they learned was yet more disturbing—the cockpit contained twenty sticks of dynamite; the terrorists’ fuel demand was two and a half times what the scheduled flight on to Paris required; and their talk suggested they might blow up the plane. This would shower “The City of Light” with flaming wreckage. It all forecast the New York attacks of seven years later.38 As negotiations continued and the terrorists demanded liftoff, GIGN was hidden nearby.

The French police unit moved in on three mobile staircases, standard airport equipment. Compelled to act in daylight, they knew their black “camouflage” gear offered no cover. When they broke the locks and forced the doors, they met “a wall of gunfire” from
the terrorists. Fortunately the homemade grenades of GIA usually failed, while the commandos’ stun grenades worked. After a firefight lasting seventeen minutes—or a quarter of an hour more than they could have wished—the gunmen were dead and most passengers safely descended on slides. GIGN suffered many wounds, but almost all the airline customers escaped with mental trauma, not physical damage.39

Prospects of “A Dutch Approach”
The final series of large-scale rescue operations to be discussed occurred in Holland. In the 1970s, the Netherlands faced hot criticism and occasionally violent tactics from separatists known as South Moluccans. The militants were Asian Dutch, living in Holland; at one time Holland had been their colonial ruler, and now, living in Holland, they sought official Dutch state intervention against the government of Indonesia.40 They terrorized entirely innocent and somewhat unsuspecting ordinary Dutch citizens to advance this cause—an independent “Republic of the South Moluccas.”41 Here was an archetype of terrorism—the illicit use of violence, against the innocent, to reach a larger audience and affect the policy of another state. But they underestimated their opponent—as perhaps Islamist terrorists would later in Holland. The government in The Hague undertook a lengthy counterterrorist campaign that broke the will of the terrorists and yet well preserved the lives and liberties of Dutch citizens. “The Dutch Approach” came to be a term of art in Europe; it meant combining patience, resilience, and the attritional powers of protraction—with use of force only after nearly-endless negotiations. But it has almost been forgotten that, indeed, they would use force when compelled to do so.
The first important terrorist incident came in mid-1970 in Wassenaar, a suburb of The Hague, and at a predictable location: the embassy of Indonesia. A guard there was murdered in a successful seizure of the building; over thirty people were taken hostage by even more south Moluccans. Foreign Affairs Minister Joseph Luns rushed to the scene and personally negotiated—erringly at one point by coming within shooting range of the hostage-takers. The event ended in surrender of the terrorists. Perhaps observers believed peace was restored, as the following years were mostly quiet. But if terrorism had failed, it had not been discredited or disavowed. And Ronald Janse of Utrecht University suggests this attack “shattered”42 hopes of the Dutch government to liaise between the “Republic of South Moluccas” separatists and the government of Indonesia. And yet the Dutch government also had found that firmness and patience could be mixed in response to such a hostage-barricade situation.
From April 1974 through all of 1978 came the more intense and interlinked terrorist events that drove a change in the gentle Dutch temperament. Arson and other attacks were followed by a plot to kidnap the Dutch Queen, who had dared to speak for the independence of Suriname without doing the same for South Molucca. If anyone doubted there was now a severe threat to the state, this ended on 2 December 1975. Seven armed Moluccans boarded a train and, between Wijster and Beilen,43 hijacked it and took hostages. As this drama unfolded, another terrorist group supported the action by overtaking the Indonesian consulate in Amsterdam. Protracted sieges followed on both sites. But there were steady diplomatic efforts, including work with Moluccan intermediaries, while the government stalled on actual concessions. All this yielded a calm result. The idea of the governmental “crisis center” for such an incident caught European eyes and would take hold on the continent. “The Dutch Approach” seemed to be sound—even if it could not bring back life to
the train engineer and two hostages, all murdered.44
When the terrorists went to jail, Holland breathed a sigh of relief. But there were no
far-reaching legal results or dramatic political effects. Prison sentences were stiffer than in
the 1970 case in which Justice all but sheathed her sword; the newer batch of terrorists were
given terms that were adequate without being onerous. The criminal code remained the
main barrier to these new public crimes; the law was not revised despite some legislators
who wanted new tools for opposing terrorism. As some officials saw a connection between
the terrorism and legitimate grievances, the Dutch government did make efforts at dialogue
with the Moluccan community. Certain elements of a grand strategy approach had thus begun
to emerge, but without serious conviction on the question of force. The lessons of Munich
1972 were present. Holland began establishment of the Bijzondere Bijstand Eenheid
(BBE) or Special Assistance Units, a company-size force for close combat, within their
corps of Marines.45 These were to prove vital when negotiations and patience were proving
inadequate, as in a 1974 case of a prison insurrection led by a jailed Palestinian terrorist.
Unsatisfied that Holland would not make demands on Jakarta, South Moluccan terrorists
unfolded another double operation on 23 May 1977. Fifty-four people became hostages
in another train-jacking, this time near De Punt and Assen. After the nine terrorists
released forty hostages, the rest settled into a lengthy siege. Not far away was the second
target—a children’s school. Clearly the Moluccans believed that forceful recapture at either
site would now be beyond Dutch capabilities—for the same reason that, a decade later,
separating western hostages in Beirut deterred attempts to storm any given imprisonment
zone: Few governments are bold enough to “save” one group if it prompts murder at other
sites. However, taking schoolchildren has its own unique risks—starting with loss of all
public appeal. Palestinians had committed such a crime at Ma’alot only three years before,
and some of the Moluccans had taken Palestinian training. The gunmen in the May 1977
crieses also dealt in a smooth and practiced way with government negotiators, foiling their
efforts. By killing no one, they did not trigger a forceful response. Many of the children fell
ill and were released. But both sieges dragged along.
Royal Dutch Marines acquired a duplicate train and began rehearsing a “take down”
on it at Gilze Rijen Air Force Base, close by. Day 20, or 11 June 1977, was portentous. At
De Punt, combat swimmers and other reconnaissance assets approached the train from a
proximate canal. They planted listening devices that provided good data on how the hostages
were bearing up and where the nine captors slept or stood guard. Some forty to fifty
Marines with night vision goggles made their own approach and hid themselves. British experts
on scene coached the Marines on the use of stun grenades but the Dutch took another
tactic: A flight of six combat jets suddenly dropped in just over the train. To this disorienting
thunder46 was added rifle fire from the sizeable ground force, and a forced entry of the cars
with frame charges. Two-thirds of the terrorists died; there were eleven other casualties,
few fatal. “It was a brilliant little operation . . . a nicely balanced mixture of psychology,
force, and technology,” commented Christopher Dobson and Ronald Payne, in one of their
terrorism books47 of those years. The nearby school at Bovensmilde was assaulted at the
same time—just before 5 a.m. An armored personnel carrier went through a wall, and Royal
Marines quickly subdued the groggy terrorists and freed hostages.
A last demonstration of South Moluccan terrorism was to come a year later, and it
would confirm the rise of security forces and the decline of the prospects of hostage-takers
in Holland. Three men of a self-described “Moluccan Suicide Squad” occupied the main
government building of Assen, capital of Drenthe province, on 13 March 1978. Setting aside the obvious point that successful building seizures have usually involved more than three gunmen, these terrorists also showed ill appreciation for the effect of murdering a hostage. Such acts, often done early on, are intended to "show seriousness" about threats of greater harm. But to a much-provoked government it may signal the time for ending chatting on the phone. Counterterrorism's leading Dutch psychiatrist, D. Mulder, tried to manage the talks but the government stepped past him after a hostage was murdered. Even under "the Dutch Approach," negotiations and waiting can only go so far; now the baton passed to the special assistance unit of the Marines. They infiltrated the government building, and then stormed the hostage-holding area while an external force also assaulted. Barely one day after the standoff commenced, it was over. Five of sixty-nine hostages were wounded, but the three terrorists were captured, convicted, and destined for fifteen year sentences. Thus ended Moluccan terrorism within Holland. Sectarian fighting would still be known in Indonesia,48 but the Dutch successfully defeated their indigenous problem.

Drama in Lima, 1996–1997
Peru provides a second country study for masterful resolution of a hostage barricade crisis. The Lima residence of the Japanese ambassador was taken over in 1996 by Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), the Castroite competitor for power in Peru's guerrilla underworld against a larger insurgency, the Maoists of Sendero Luminoso. Both groups used terror freely and fed off the drug trade. MRTA's usual targets were the government, the military, and multinational corporations. A classic treble motive for the present case, an official residence seizure, was freeing imprisoned comrades while garnering publicity in a stab at the Peruvian state. They were to fail—and in a more violent way than did Abimael Guzman, chief of Sendero, who a few years earlier had been quietly arrested and led to jail. Tupac Amaru's second-generation leader Victor Polay Campos had been jailed, escaped, and been re-jailed. He and hundreds of comrades were hoping to win relief in the 1996 Japanese residence operation. Leader Nestor Cerpa and thirteen other MRTA males and females entered the grounds at a time when an embassy party had eight hundred dignitaries on hand, including the brother of the Peruvian president, the chief of the very police agency charged with antiterrorism, and senior military officers and politicians. MRTA knew these numbers were too great to manage and so, having enjoyed initial success and wide effect, gradually released groups of victims. Of course, each such release sought to make the terrorists appear reasonable, and each such release became a "media event"—given the scores of reporters and cameramen who took up positions in the conflict zone. The formidable politician Alberto Fujimori was president and stood between the MRTA's ambitions and its chance of full success. Although he was involved directly in protracted negotiations, it later appeared he had no intention of making concessions, and used his time over the many months of siege to prepare an end to Tupac Amaru's presumptions. Strategic-level intelligence work included taking allies' advice and support; tactical preparations included smuggling in sophisticated devices that literally reached hostages' hands. For example, a microphone was embedded in a Bible, so that an imprisoned admiral49 who paced about daily as if in prayerful reverie could murmur directly into the book, informing the government of precise details of the situation within the residence.
Several electronic pagers were likewise smuggled in, and could transmit messages. Such tricks did not just boost morale and communicate vital information; they unquestionably saved many hostages’ lives. As intelligence work proceeded, so did military preparations. Peru built a mock-up of the residence, on a military base, and far from listening ears a joint armed force rehearsed rescue operations and tested controlled explosions. Years of work against guerrillas in rural and urban Peru had hardened the commandos, who included the country’s gifted graduates of the US Navy’s SEAL training. They were brought to a high pitch, both of skill and psychological intensity, before gathering in tunnels cut under the building for several dry runs. Above them, in the main hall of the official residence, an odd ritual had taken hold: Each day the hostage-takers played football for their exercise. This left too many terrorists together, in too dangerous a place, on too predictable a schedule.

On the 126th day of captivity for the eighty-plus hostages, Peru’s commandos detonated C-4 charges under the building, killing six terrorists and paralyzing more with shock. In other tunnels, ninety commandos heard *Entrando al bravo* (Forward with Courage) and broke into the open to rush the various building entrances. As surviving terrorists ran to execute several high-value hostages, government forces hunted them down, all the while dealing with emplaced charges and rolling grenades—two of the terrorists’ measures against counterattack. Admiral Luis Giampietri, who had trained many of these men, was one of the hostages they saved on 22 April 1997. He called his memoir *41 Seconds to Freedom* due to the swiftness of the commandos’ entry. The innocents’ freedom was purchased with the lives of two commandos, and the wounds of another seventeen. While Admiral Giampietri went on to be vice president of his country, the larger celebrity of the day, President Fujimori, fared badly, as did his intelligence chief Vladimir Montesinos. From prestigious perches, these two fell soon to corruption charges having to do with improper political influences.

The year 2008 found Fujimori in exile in Japan, and Montesinos in jail—the same high-security prison that holds terrorists Victor Polay Campos and Abimael Guzman.

**Are There “Principles” to Use of Force in Counterterrorism?**

When Peru cracked open the building barricaded by MRTA, the government’s explosives sounded the end of the small Castroite group. Its twenty-three-year run all but died on the spot, where property damage was so grave that remnants were bulldozed. The swift resolution of a complicated problem on that day in 1997 was another reminder of the realities: Forceful options must always be present when dealing with terrorism. The use of a clandestine agent, a police SWAT team, or even a military unit can in fact be decisive in certain cases. It is naïve to say otherwise, although more than a few have; those voices tend to depict resort to force as immoral, or as proof of policy failure, or as a stupid invitation to a worsening “spiral of violence.” It need not be. Terrorism is by definition the use or threat of force in illegal ways, usually in peacetime; a legitimate democratic government cannot surrender its own force options in the face of such a challenge. Indeed, it may be an unwise governor whose only thought on the topic is that “Force can only be employed when every other option has been tried unsuccessfully.” Such a posture is a blunder in strategy; announcing such a posture opens up a lengthy waiting period in which the terrorist group is invited to proceed in whatever ways it may choose.
So, if force may be advisable in some circumstances, how should governors and police officials and military leaders think about its exercise? This essay has not sought to address the many and involved strategic-level problems of policy, strategy, and law, or even to reprise the varieties of force that may suit a given problem. These might be portrayed as a continuum, in which, beginning with the least forceful means, the available elements include and are not limited to: antiterrorist training and posture; use of policing powers such as arrest; deployments for deterrence; patrols and other acts that garner intelligence and "show the flag" of local government and of powers; covert action such as sabotage of terrorist weapons stashes, equipment, or property; use of combat forces to displace large violent organizations and their training facilities and command structures; and war against a "repeat offender" state sponsor of terrorism. Instead, this essay restricts itself to dealing with specialized small forces, acting against terrorist units, at times when the counterterrorist country is not at war (actions in low-intensity conflict or peacetime).

Are there operational principles for using special units against terrorists? There may well be—however hard they are to lay down in print.50 One of the more successful efforts to identify and describe principles for using special forces is the work of William McRaven. As a student at the Naval Post-Graduate School in Monterey, California, he grappled with what history seems to advise, based on famous special operations of the mid-twentieth century, such as Italy’s manned torpedo attack in the harbor of Alexandria, Egypt, in December 1941; the German rescue of their ally Benito Mussolini two years later; the failed US effort to seize POWs from North Vietnamese hands at Son Tay; and the Israeli operation at Entebbe, Uganda.51 McRaven’s study added intellectual discipline and backbone to his many personal military experiences. As he rose in rank within the US Navy SEALS, McRaven’s thoughts developed. His book Spec Ops describes the beau ideal as “A simple plan, carefully concealed, repeatedly executed with surprise, speed, and purpose.” He enunciated six principles for this sort of controlled violence: Purpose, Simplicity, Repetition, Surprise, Speed, and Security.52 Purpose means a clear understanding of mission objectives, and a commitment to seeing them achieved, according to McRaven. Simplicity aims at plans and operations that do not bog down in the intricacies and frictions of large martial enterprises. Repetition means many tactical rehearsals, until operatives know their own roles cold and can also step in to other roles—if things go wrong, or if chance is an unkind mistress. Surprise, often hard to attain, is a powerful advantage—in the simple arrest of a perpetrator, as well as at all levels of war. Speed does not suit all aspects of counterterrorism, but during actual forcible operations it is frequently essential, as any expert at raids or rescues would attest. Security is about covering one’s intentions and actions during the preparation phase, to bar the enemy from anticipating an impending move, or seeing it begin to unfold.

An analyst should notice what McRaven omits. One measure of that is the classic nine principles of war listed by historian J. F. C. Fuller and subsequently adapted by many armies as doctrine. “Mass” goes unmentioned by McRaven, not surprisingly. But also “missing” are the phrases “Unity of Command,” “Maneuver,” and “Economy of Force.” Spec Ops may well embrace such military advantages in its own way. But unconventional war also may have, and deserve, many of its own principles. Carl von Clausewitz did not work to discover more than a few of these; his focus was elsewhere. Of the classical authors on war, Sun Tzu is perhaps the better teacher on our narrow topic; both terrorists and counterterrorists can learn much from study of the twenty-four-hundred-year-old Art of War.53
Emphasizing Intelligence and Initiative

The best list of possible principles of forcible counterterrorism must surely include intelligence. It is as important as surprise, and without intelligence there is no point in speed. While American military officers are prone to joke about “intel failures” dooming good missions, nearly all successful missions depend upon good intelligence—“intel successes.” Planning the Entebbe rescue in 1976 was hardly akin to planning the storming of beaches in Normandy in 1944, but in some respects the intelligence demands were similar. Lives would be saved or squandered by attention to details. How long is that landing strip, and will it be free of flood water, or barriers erected by a ground party? Will that roof support a landing, and if so, by how many men? What might be the subdivisions in the floor plan of building 2-B on map X? Are its walls of stone or the shoddiest of plaster and lathes? Thousands of such questions dwell in planners’ minds, and all seem to demand answers, and many more important ones hover at higher levels of war. So, both for Normandy and Entebbe, intelligence experts went through procedures such as tracking down tourists’ still photos and handheld movie film. This was indeed possible: Both beaches and airports are places human beings take many pictures; it was a matter of locating those, in large enough numbers, in short enough time, to create a composite view of detailed quality. Little to nothing is perfect, especially in the field of intelligence. But to focus on setbacks is to forget how many extraordinary accomplishments there have been, placing the right information in the right hands at the right moment. In the Lima operation, intelligence assets’ implanting of listening devices within the barricaded building allowed not merely listening, but transmission; security forces knew an amazing amount of what went on, month after month, on all floors of Japan’s official residence. In the Philippine Army’s pursuit of Abu Sayyaf, intelligence was able to introduce a device, or track a heat source, and thus follow a delivery right to an elusive leader of the terror group. The same intense offensive spirit was characteristic of the army troopers who relentlessly pursued the Abu Sayyaf cadre in the most difficult landscapes until most of the key figures had been eliminated. They killed the terrorists’ commander in 1998 and then his brother and successor Khadafy Janjalani in 2006; they captured or killed scores of other members in 2007; 54 since then, much less has been heard of this once-cocky ally of al Qaeda. Varieties of electronic intelligence were no doubt key to the Russian killing of Chechen Dzhokhar M. Dudayev in 1996, the assassination by Predator of an al Qaeda leader named Qaed Salim Sinan al-Harethi and confreres in a car on a road in Yemen in 2002, and the Jordanian-American tracking and killing of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq in 2006. Intelligence is also what allows for deception; without the former, the latter seems impossible to plan and to stage. Governments—not just terrorists—should be capable of trickery, if it leads to arrests and saves lives. Governments and negotiators have lied to bloody-handed gunmen about whether the plane has enough fuel, why a bus for the airport is not arriving for yet another hour, and many other unrealities. Part of Germany’s success in the October 1977 operation in Somalia was in tricking the jailed RAF leaders in Stammheim into believing Bonn was negotiating with the skyjackers in place of planning the storming of the Lufthansa jet. Clear intelligence allowed a remarkable deception of a FARC leader in the rescue of Ingrid Betancourt and her comrades in July 2008. Innumerable messages passed, over the preceding days, and one false note in his delicate correspondence
by the Colombian managers of the crisis—who were feigning status of another FARC commander—would have ruined the entire theater piece. The delicacy of such work, the prospect for disappointment, and the elaborate effort deception demands combine as a reason Carl von Clausewitz was reluctant to endorse deception.55 But in counterterrorism, at least, it has often worked, and it should be employed more often than it is. Intelligence has far wider purposes than the tactical, of course. It is needed for the patient “mapping of the human terrain” in fighting insurgents who freely use terror. This work is essential to, and related to, other efforts (by police, military intelligence, and military aid and contact organizations Americans call “civic action teams”) to identify the terrorists and isolate them. In modern history, when counterinsurgent forces have failed at such granular mapping, they have often failed strategically as a result. Another strategic demand for good intelligence arises when governments contemplate negotiations. The apparent resolution of the Irish Republican Army case is but one indicator that negotiations may, in some cases, serve well as a counterterrorist strategy. But here it is vital to decide when to negotiate, and precisely with whom, and to be rather sure about such subjects as the morale of the organization, what weapons it has, or even its financial status. Nor should “talking to terrorists” preclude later using force against them.

As a recent study by Drs. Roy Godson and Richard Shultz Jr. has shown, where government focuses on “intelligence dominance” of the enemy and outperforms him in the human, electronic, video, and other realms of information gathering and management, it is possible to surprise, deceive, and defeat the terrorist organization.56 Israeli and British campaigns over many years have conclusively proven that a state need not be the victim of the substate actor here. And in 2007–2008, as aging Baader-Meinhof jailbirds were singing for freedom or being freed, it was worth remembering that a police official, Mr. Horst Herold, had used manpower, patience, study, and revolutionary computer profiling to outwit them and, one by one, place them behind bars. Mr. Herold is now largely forgotten, but the German people enjoyed years of peace in part because of his years of effort.

The second change that might be made—if one were turning Admiral McRaven’s list of principles of special operations into a list of counterterrorism operations principles—is adding “initiative.” J. F. C. Fuller, and others since, have named “The Offensive” as a principle of war. They did so despite the relative strength of good defense (as established by Clausewitz) and the commensurate and evident abuse of offensive spiritedness in World War I’s trench battles.

Willingness to take the offensive, or otherwise exercise initiative, is essential to effective counterterrorism for reasons special to that field. Perhaps no democratic society can afford to be endlessly in a state of war, without becoming a thing ugly to itself, or a marvel of an unwanted archetype—what Sparta was among ancient Greeks. For the same reason, a democratic society cannot enslave its citizens to a system of pervasive intrusion and intelligence gathering, citizen against citizen. There are limits to what security can justify and there are clear needs for liberty and privacy in civil society. Nor can a democratic society afford to lay about as terrorist groups build and then choose when and where to attack—that is strategic lunacy and neglects the first duty of good government—defense of the polity. But an alternative emerges. It is an alternative that is morally, legally, and politically defensible, and also quite practicable. Facing a violent enemy, democracy should deploy the intelligence resources necessary to firmly establish its capabilities and accurately identify
its vulnerabilities and then move against it smartly.57 Just as grand strategy is about much more than force, “initiative” is not necessarily warlike. In negotiations with terrorists, initiative may be welcomed on all sides, or prove key to establishing a healthy agenda, or it might give a government the clear and deserved lead in public positioning vis-à-vis terrorist spokesmen. In US public diplomacy of 2002 and beyond, it is the very paucity of good initiatives that has made the policy so feeble.58 In international and regional affairs, where a state cojoins with other states against international terrorism, executive initiatives at intelligence exchange and common policing methods, as well as legislative initiatives in rewriting of laws on material support to terrorism are among the many and urgent needs of the present. The point is that government gathers strength for its side and achieves dominance of hardened enemies by frequent renewal of effort and frequent initiative. This is required to carry and convince the polity, and keep morale strong among friendly forces, as surely as it is to keep the terrorist group off balance and ineffective. After assassinations and bombings struck French and US personnel, embassies, and barracks in Lebanon in 1981–1983, the French government showed much spirit in approaching the United States about joint action against Hezbollah military targets in the Bekaa Valley. This was self-defense after the fact, more than aggressiveness, but it was a good idea. They went on with an air strike even though the United States oddly declined.59 France then followed, within a few years, with a new legislative package that strongly enhanced the nation’s ability to resist terrorism, especially domestically. As a following chapter by Raffene and Clair shows, these events set Paris on a track of counterterrorism—for which it did not have a strong earlier reputation. Further reforms and continuing nonpartisan governmental moral resolution led to such strategies as preemptive arrests of terrorist conspirators. Not since 1996 has this oft-bloodied capital seen a major terror attack. Initiative in policing, judicial investigations, and intelligence have all contributed to a safer country. And while some European states seemed content to be suffering victims of Somali piracy of recent years, France twice deployed commandos to recapture sea-jacked vessels during 2008.60 These modest uses of force remind others of the lesson in Thucydides that pirates are likely to rise or fall depending upon navies’ work against them.

Rendition is another good example of initiative. When one state declines to extradite a terrorist to a requesting foreign state, sometimes the second state carries out a rendition. Normally this is a covert use of force to extract the terrorism suspect for trial—although on occasion the state of residence may quietly be glad to see an alien criminal go. France may have had Sudanese acquiescence when it rendered “Carlos the Jackal” to Paris. Cleverness and audacity characterized this French enterprise of August 1994. Ilich Ramirez Sanchez was the son of a noted Venezuelan communist, a terrorist operative, and an ally of George Habash’s PFLP. He was snatched from Sudanese refuge61 while under anesthesia for a medical procedure, it is said. Wanted for murdering two police officers in Paris and many other crimes, the once-invincible terrorist personality has since been in a French jail. In this case, as in the seizure of Adolf Eichmann by Israeli agents from a suburb of Buenos Aires in 1960, justice was done: A notorious criminal was caught and put on trial. That offers clear warnings to other terrorists and bears good and general effects. For example, a sovereign state that has feted or harbored international terrorists and endures even one rendition by a foreign counterpart may well think twice when, in the future, that state is asked to extradite an infamous political criminal. It is now largely forgotten that American-instigated
renditions of drug dealers and terrorists were familiar, if unusual, in the decades before 9/11. US actions since then became muddled by charges of deportation to third countries and torture. This does not change the principle. Rendition is not necessarily a shameless attack on international law. When a well-known terrorist, on whom government holds a thick evidence file, would never come to trial and will not be extradited from safe haven, rendering the person for trial might be a forceful but reasonable response of an unusual sort. A US strategic initiative that set international terrorism back was the late 2001 invasion of Afghanistan. Previously it was nearly impossible to find international security analysts arguing for such a course of action, though all knew of Osama bin Laden’s presence there with many other “internationalists.” Conventional wisdom was locked on the idea that the British Empire had failed in Afghanistan, and anyone who had forgotten should have been schooled again during the Soviets’ later decade of misery there. Instead, the CIA and Department of Defense in Washington boldly assembled and implemented an effective plan that worked well with NATO forces but also many Afghan opponents of terrorism and Talibanism. They swept the country nearly clean in a few months, buying precious years for the elected government to get established and become effective, while locking up or killing hundreds of al Qaeda men and allies. Only after 2004 did insurgency begin to recover any strength.

It thus appears that certain principles for successful use of force in countering terrorism do emerge from analysis and from contemporary history. “Intelligence” and “Initiative” well deserve their place in considerations about whether and how to proceed with dangerous and politically charged instruments. This essay suggests that an optimal list of operational principles for good counterterrorism would be “Purpose, Intelligence, Initiative, Simplicity, Repetition, Speed, Surprise, and Security.” The last element refers to counterintelligence and maintaining operational security, not to a determination to protect all our security forces from harm. The latter is as impossible as it is desirable. Terrorism is a drive for power using means of violence. Therefore there is no way to prevent counterterrorism from being very dangerous. There are, however, good ways to protect civil society from terrorists, and some of them involve the use of force. This begins with attention to such obvious yet important needs as training in force protection and the placement of physical barriers in front of endangered public offices. It continues through the range of policing, martial, and covert operations in which assets are placed at risk for high national purposes and for which force may be needed. At the apex of such efforts—where challenges to martial art and science are most acute—are swift and effective special operations by highly trained personnel. Without such forces of intervention, carefully prepared and overseen by civil authorities, decent society is in danger from modern terrorism. By contrast, as a range of cases of the last decade manifests, having and using such forces well can render decisive victories against powerful terrorist groups and cells.
Christopher C. Harmon has long-held interests in the two subjects of this text: strategy and terrorism. His first book, coedited with low-intensity conflict expert David Tucker, was *Statecraft and Power* (University Press of America, 1994), a work in honor of a teacher of strategy, Harold W. Rood. Harmon taught on the Strategy & Policy faculty of the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, and then wrote and directed a strategy syllabus for 200 Marine majors, foreign allies, and US civilians at Command & Staff College, Quantico, Virginia, where he later held Marine Corps University’s Kim T. Adamson Chair of Insurgency and Terrorism (2005–2007). He is the author of two editions of the graduate-level textbook *Terrorism Today*—published by Frank Cass (2000) and Routledge (2007), as well as chapters on terrorism and counterterrorism for *Fanaticism and Conflict in the Modern Age* (2005) and *The American Military Tradition* (2007). Two of Dr. Harmon’s articles have appeared in the journal *Vital Speeches*. The US State Department gave him a Distinguished Public Service Award. From March 2008 through September 2008, Dr. Harmon was executive director as well as curricula chief of the Marshall Center’s Program on Terrorism & Security Studies; he is now Director of Studies.

**Recommended Readings**


**Notes**

1. At differing points Sun Tzu praises deception or intelligence. “All warfare is based on deception.” Invocations of intelligence include “[K]now the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril,” and a later reference to the conquering power of “forsaking knowledge.” See pp. 66, 84, and 144 in *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (Oxford: Oxford University Press [1963], 1971) 1st paperback ed. Yet another principle of war for Sun Tzu is speed: “Speed is the essence of war” (134).


3. The brilliance of Funston’s operation easily withstood a published critique by Aguinaldo...

4. The Red Cross suggested the army’s trick was illegal and that the famous Red Cross was used—a charge President Uribe admitted to only as it pertained to one nervous person’s unauthorized tee shirt. See “Colombia Assailed for Using Red Cross Symbol in Hostage Rescue,” Associated Press, 6 August 2008.

5. This story was covered extensively by the Associated Press and other international media on 3 July 2008. The French newspaper *Le Figaro* had attentive and detailed coverage of the FARC war in Colombia during 2007 and 2008, including a fine story on the counterinsurgents of Omega Force, 21 February 2008, and a guest editorial by the Colombian Vice Minister of Defense (Sergio Jaramillo) on 23 January 2008. *Le Figaro* on 7 July 2008 used the Trojan horse metaphor—doubtless not knowing that in a previous time and very different place Emilio Aguinaldo of the Philippines had also applied the metaphor to his own capture in the Philippines (see above). I thus have public sources for this Betancourt recapture story but also confirmed it with a Lieutenant Colonel in the country’s Special Forces in an interview of July 2009.

6. Before 1992 the US State Department’s admirable annual *Patterns of Global Terrorism* reported Sendero Luminoso’s guerrilla strength as four to five thousand (men and many women). But not long after Guzman’s capture in September 1992, the numbers dropped swiftly, and later fell into the low hundreds. There is thus great significance in the short life of the special police squad (formed within DINCOTE) by Major Benedicto Jimenez.

7. This well-chosen adjective is courtesy of James Wither, whose own essay also forms part of this book. The description “discrete uses of force” sets my case studies apart from the many other ways martial forces are used to deter, prevent, or punish terrorism and its sponsors.


10. The author has long appreciated this useful book, a gift from then-Lt. Col. Werner Hellmar, USMC.


13. Gilani and Hashi are variants of the sheik’s names.


15. A recent disclosure is an al Fuqra training film showing training and killing exercises. Parts of this, and footage reportedly taken near Commerce and Jessup Georgia, were screened on The Sean Hannity Show, which also interviewed Martin Maryer, an investigator of these “Muslims of America” encampments: 16 February 2009; www.foxnews.com/video2/video08.htm?maven_referralObject=3625333&


18. Clarke, 28.

21. William Stevenson was a top British agent during World War II. With material from Uri Dan, an Israeli journalist and associate of former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Stevenson wrote 90 Minutes at Entebbe (New York: Bantam Books, 1976), 2.
23. President Johnson did not even mention this remarkable episode in his memoirs, The Vantage Point, according to Wagoner, but Hoare told his own story in Congo Mercenary (London: Robert Hale & Co., 1967).
24. Mr. Wilfred Bosse, a Carlos associate, was among the skyjacker, but it is strangely difficult to name the leftist female involved, and most accounts avoid doing so. The book 90 Minutes at Entebbe (op. cit.) identified her as Gabriele Krocher-Tiedemann. But accounts suggest that all four hijackers were killed, whereas Krocher-Tiedemann lived on, until capture in London years later. Jillian Becker, the RAF authority who wrote Hitler’s Children: The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Terrorist Gang (Philadelphia, PA: J.P. Lippincott & Co., 1977) says the European woman at Entebbe was Italian, not a German, but gives no name. Her second edition states that the woman shot at Entebbe by Israelis was a German named Halimeh, later commemorated as “Martyr Halimeh” by the RAF (Herts, London, and New York: Granada Publishing Ltd., 1978), 348.
26. According to A. N. Pratt, and William McRaven, the mission commander was Brigadier General Dan Shomron (d. February 2008). Also on the ground was Sayeret Matkal, the reconnaissance unit of General Headquarters of the IDF, which handled the recapture of the air terminal and its hostages: its action was led by Jonathan Netanyahu, who died of a wound there.
27. In the early 1980s, at a London symposium, Wegener looked back to 1972: “First, there was the lack of an intelligence organization especially designed to combat terrorism, which is absolutely necessary. We know that today, but at the time there were no special units with unconventional, highly trained and selected personnel highly motivated by their mission, and there was a lack of equipment and weapons and an absence of tactical concepts.” Quoted by Christopher Dobson and Ronald Payne, Counterattack: The West’s Battle Against the Terrorists (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1982), 95. During the 1980s Dobson and Payne collaborated on this and several other very good terrorism books.
28. J. Paul de B. Taillon, Hijacking and Hostages: Government Responses to Terrorism (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002); see Chapter 3.
29. Taillon, as well as Dobson and Payne, op. cit., 98. Both volumes offer good analyses of this superb “Operation Feuerzauber.”
30. Instead it is little referred to, and was all but ignored in the lengthy German film The Baader-Meinhof Komplex (Magnolia Pictures, 2008).
31. A fourth RAF member, Irma Riedel, was found with stab wounds in her chest but survived; Becker, Hitler’s Children, 2nd ed., 352.
33. Schleyer was kidnapped in September 1977, five weeks before the Lufthansa hijacking to Mogadishu. He was murdered, and his body was found in Mulhouse, France, just west of the German border.
35. Favier has been promoted to general as of 1 June 2008; “Secret Defense,” a blog of the French daily Liberation, posting of 5 June 2008 (see http://www.specialoperations.com/Foreign/Germany/GSG9.htm). At GIGN training grounds he has kindly received several PTSS classes from Garmisch.

37. For example, these behaviors were in evidence during the June 1985 hijacking of the TWA 847 airliner, which ended up in Beirut, and they recalled previous such actions. I investigated this problem with Rep. James A. Courter, "The TWA Case: Terrorists Put in Practice What They Learned," Christian Science Monitor, 24 July 1985.

38. Few American security professionals appeared to study this 1994 suicide airliner operation or suggest what it meant for the future. An exception, Colonel A. N. Pratt was teaching the case study at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in 1999. Much noted, but only later, was one warning in a 1999 Library of Congress report (ed. Rex Hudson) that "Suicide bomber(s) belonging to al Qaeda’s Martyrdom Battalion could crash-land an aircraft packed with high explosives (C-4 and Semtex) into the Pentagon, the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), or the White House. Ramzi Yousef had planned to do this against the CIA headquarters." The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?, U.S. Library of Congress, September 1999, republished under the subtitle (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press), 15. See also "Terror from the Sky" by Rohan Gunaratna, who in 2001 was one of the world’s few experts on al Qaeda; his article on past terrorist air operations appeared 24 September 2001 on the Jane’s website; a nonsubscriber extract is available at http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/jir/jir010924_1_n.shtml, accessed 7 September 2009.


40. In religious terms, this matched members of a minority Christian community against similar Christian government, with the aim of forcing a Muslim government (Indonesia) to yield to Christian Moluccan separatists.


43. Not Bellen, with an “A.” “Bellen” is often misspelled in English-language accounts of the incidents, and their chronologies for these attacks often err. For example, Leroy Thompson’s The Rescuers: The World’s Top Anti-Terrorist Units is a vigorous and detail-filled little book (Boulder, CO: Paladin Press, 1986) but its dates on incidents in Holland are not reliable.


45. The author thanks Dr. M. J. de Wegter, a civil expert on defense for the Dutch government, for his critique of a draft of these paragraphs. He adds that snipers and members of the national gendarmerie Marechaussee also played an important role in several of these crises. Recent information on Holland’s range of special forces can be found on the website of the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, as at http://english.nctb.nl/.

46. One investigator has noted that given the train’s subdivision into many walled cars, the use of F 104 “Starfighter” engines was more efficient than trying to deploy stun grenades in all the cars; Thompson, The Rescuers, 29–30. This Dutch tactic was a superior example of the principle of surprise in the use of force.

47. Dobson and Payne, Counterattack, 117.
48. For example, at the turn of the millennium there were three years of sectarian fighting between Christian and Muslim communities in the Moluccans; factions signed a peace accord in mid-February 2002, according to John Haseman of Jane’s Defense Weekly, web posting of 14 February 2002.

49. While I’ve seen film and still pictures of the Peruvian CT assault, my best source for these details is the book by Admiral Luis Giampietri, 41 Seconds to Freedom: An Insider’s Account of the Lima Hostage Crisis, 1996–97 (New York: Presidio Press, 2007); coauthors were Bill Salisbury and Lorena Ausújo. The Admiral had been in charge of suppressing an earlier prison insurrection by jailed communist terrorists, an explosive fact never known to his MRTA captors. During the 1996–97 crisis, he managed to lead resistance forces from within, emerging a hero.

50. Carl von Clausewitz was among the many thinkers to wrestle with the concept of “principles of war.” He assembled a list for one royal student, which later appeared as a short book. But when writing On War over many subsequent years, he resisted creating such lists and occasionally ridiculed the concept. He devoted great care to more normal forms of prose, leaving it to the reader to deduce principles from the work.


52. Ibid. Admiral McRaven later commanded US Special Operations Forces in Europe, and now all Joint Special Operations Forces of the US Navy. He might dislike my re-ordering of his list; his book lists, in this order: simplicity, security, repetition, surprise, speed, and purpose. This paragraph of my text, and that following, depend heavily upon McRaven’s work in Chapter 1 of Spec Ops. For a newer American study by civilian experts, it is easy to recommend David Tucker and Christopher J. Lamb, United States Special Operations Forces (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

53. After 11 September 2001 I was a guest at a school where a question from a military officer in the audience was about what to study to prepare the mind for the years to come in the struggle with al Qaeda. My answer was Sun Tzu’s The Art of War. A decade of lecturing on the book had left me convinced that, while Clausewitz is deeper, Sun Tzu may be the preferred source for studying terrorism and counterterrorism. On War is a work of genius with wide applicability to many human affairs, and it offers a chapter on “The People in Arms,” useful for students of insurgency and politics. But it would be a stretch to deduce from Clausewitz many “principles” for counterterrorism.

54. One roster of Filipino successes against Abu Sayyaf is in the US State Department’s annual, Country Reports on Terrorism: 2007 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008). Doubts persist about whether Kadhaffi Junjulani perished; for example, reports accessed in May 2009 in databases of START, the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, themselves conflict on this. But the Philippine Army has announced with certainty that this terrorist is dead, and published reports link that conviction to US DNA testing.


57. In some cases, preemption of known violent threats, skillfully done, is more responsible than awaiting disaster. Some Americans, for example, are critical of the George W. Bush doctrine of preemption—which probably was applied in error in the case of Iraq. On the other hand, one can only regret the previous US administration’s years of failure to preempt the growing threat of al Qaeda, which declared war on the United States in 1996 and 1998.


59. See, for example, David C. Martin and John Wolcott, Best Laid Plans (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), a respected book. The United States would disappoint another ally about twelve years later. After Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was targeted by snipers during a visit to Addis Ababa in 1995, Egypt reportedly sought US help against the terrorist camps in Sudan, which had made the plot possible. Apparently the United States declined. I raised the question with one intelligence officer and regional expert, who opposed any such action against the camps in Sudan. Yet Osama bin Laden was in Sudan, and his other camps there were playing a role in international terrorism of the 1990s, to include a major plot against New York City. The UN Security Council imposed counterterrorist sanctions on Sudan in resolutions 1044, 1054, and 1070.
60. *Le Monde*, 16 September 2008 (Cubic Translation Services); *Le Figaro*, 13 & 14 April 2009; *International Herald Tribune*.


62. When Iran shamelessly broke international law by occupying the US embassy and took scores of hostages in 1979, only inadequate measures were taken in reply. Presidential candidate Ronald Reagan made apparent his intent to do business differently, and upon his election there was a near-instant “breakthrough” and the hostages were released. Reagan welcomed back fifty-two Americans with words that democratic states do well to keep in mind: “We hear it said that we live in an era of limits to our powers. Well, let it also be understood, there are limits to our patience.”
