



HORIZONS

The Wheels of Terror

"Terrorism" has become a catchword for international media. Often it is the minor variety which gets most publicity. But major acts of terror are often portrayed "legitimate retaliation". In the process the whole concept takes on decidedly political overtones. **Mohamed Hassan** attempts to unravel the media and real terrorism

IN the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, it emerged that the US Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, had actually egged the Zionists on. After initial murmurings of protest the US finally showed its hand by offering Israel even more military hardware and financial credits. Indeed for the first time, a large part of the US defence expenditure on weapons

development was to be spent in Israel. The Lebanese invasion was thus approved and amply rewarded. The bloody Lebanese response to this blatant disregard for them, was used as justification for the initiation of the genocide by the US and Israel.

As the Lebanese finally got round to bombing the US out of their country, the Americans decided to

show their muscle by invading tiny Grenada. The world community could not work up much enthusiasm for condemning US adventurism in Grenada and the matter rested there.

Prior to this US-supplied Israeli fighter bombers had crossed over Saudi airspace (guarded by US-manned AWACS), and flattened Iraq's nuclear facilities. The US not

only did not protest, it forced its Arab allies to lodge very muted complaints just enough to assuage public opinion. Iraq was rewarded by US support for its invasion of Iran, and removal from the list of states deemed to be sponsoring terrorism. A little later diplomatic ties were resumed with Baghdad. Strings were pulled to stultify the issue and world forums like the International Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC), thus stretching their credibility to breaking point.

Last month the Israelis, again using US-supplied planes and most likely US air-to-air refuelling facilities, razed the Tunis headquarters of the PLO to the ground. This time President Reagan was quick to gloat over the issue and give his full blessing to this "legitimate retaliation". Shortly afterwards the US itself hijacked an Egyptian airliner bound for Rome over Italian airspace. Israel applauded the US action.

While all this was happening the World Court in the Hague was hearing a case from Nicaragua alleging that the US has mined the approaches to its harbours and provided arms and training to contra terrorists. To date the US has failed to adduce a single argument for unleashing a reign of terror on the people of Nicaragua whose only 'crime' was to do away with the tyrannical but fanatically pro-US Somoza. The US Congress has on occasions been reduced to threatening all kinds of retaliation to a handful of desperate Palestinians for hijacking a plane to focus world attention on their plight and in the same breath authorising massive funding for sustaining the terror campaign on the Nicaraguan people. And now the US, which had cajoled the court to issue a summary condemnation of Iran during the hostage crisis, now refuses to recognize the jurisdiction of the court. It is also to be noted that under Patrick Moynihan and Jean Kirkpatrick as US Representatives to the United Nations, the US has launched a crusade against all democratic UN institutions. UNESCO, because of its lead in spelling out the racist nature of Zionism, was obviously the first target and the US is scheduled to go out from it shortly. All other one-man-one-vote forums are being manipulated to ensure that the principle of 'might is right' is uniformly enforced. Recalcitrant members are threatened with cut-off of US aid and arms supplies. Soon there will be precious few venues in which even mention of US/Zionist terror may be made, let alone action taken to rectify it.

This is not to mention the ongoing



tragedy of Palestine, where for the best part of the last fifty years the US had funded, equipped and encouraged the Zionists to literally obliterate the native Arab population. It acknowledged that Israel has acquired territory by force ever since its inception and certainly in the 1948, 1967 and 1973 wars. It has ignored every UN resolution to return these territories back to its rightful owners, and it has continued to humiliate and terrorise the inhabitants of these occupied lands. Even pro-Zionist media in the west have not been able to ignore the killing and maiming and the destruction of property belonging to the Palestinians. Alfred Lilienthal, in his book *The Zionist Connection: What Price Peace?* (North American, Inc., New Jersey, 1982) refers to the anomaly "by which the once-persecuted have adopted the philosophy of their chief persecutor".

Gradually even the sham barriers to Israeli expansionism are being dropped. Before the Zionist invasion of Lebanon, much hew and cry was made about the creeping Israeli annexation of the West Bank. Even the US had to concede that the occupation was illegal. Israel, under Begin - a terrorist of Irgun fame - began a policy of creating tens of settlements in the West Bank to create irrevocable barriers to its ultimate return. The interlude provided by the Lebanese invasion, has enabled the Israeli occupa-

tion armies to consolidate their hold on the West Bank out of the light of adverse media publicity. Since Israel's ignominious exit from Lebanon, not a word of protest has been heard from US, European or Arab quarters about the West Bank and other occupied territories.

It is in this situation that the international community is having its arms twisted by the US to insist on a complete renunciation of violence by the Palestinians as a pre-condition of including them into any agenda for negotiating an end out of the tragedy. Even the most moderate and pro-western members of the PLO have found this a ridiculous and absurd proposition. They argue that Israeli terrorism is on the increase - nobody even raises an eye at the routine Israeli bombing of "Palestinian positions" in the Bekka Valley in which hundreds are killed - and the main victims are forced to tie their hands behind their backs and wait for the US to deliver a way out. But if, as we have seen the US is equally involved in the crime this would be tantamount to suicide. On the contrary the Palestinians have a right to seek an extension of the struggle to US interests since it unreservedly funds and arms the Israeli terror.

A similar condition is beginning to be imposed on the African National Congress (ANC), fighting the evil of apartheid in South Africa. Oliver Tambo has come under increasing pressure to renounce violence unconditionally. South Africa, it should be remembered, has also been armed with nuclear weapons by the USA via Israel. Like Israel it has also terrorised its neighbours under the standard pretext of "hitting terrorist targets" or as "legitimate retaliation".

It is clear to all and sundry that had the Black people of South Africa renounced all forms of 'violence' there would be tens of repetitions of Sharpeville and Soweto without as much as a murmur from the international community. It is only the courageous resistance manifested in hundreds of lives given, that has shaken the international community to move fast lest white hegemony in South Africa disappears altogether.

For the Palestinians and the Black South Africans to regard Israel and White South Africa as legitimately constituted regimes is tantamount to a total negation of their very being. Their very struggle is of an exclusive nature. It is either Palestine or Israel and either White South Africa or a South Africa ruled by the majority

Blacks. The US is trying its level best to convince them otherwise.

The last minute cancellation of talks between a joint Jordanian-PLO delegation and the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, provides a graphic illustration of the kind of arms twisting the US indulges in. The Jordanian stance was evident immediately after the cancellation, when King Hussein put the blame on the PLO delegates and saved Mrs Thatcher's skin. Knowing Mrs Thatcher's total servitude to US dictates, King Hussein only exposed his own weak position. On the PLO side, it is difficult to envisage a more moderate and pro-western set of delegates. As expected the US/Israeli stance has now hardened and requires King Hussein to sign a Sadat type capitulation with the Zionists if he wants more US arms.

US-supplied Israeli bombers have

now reached Baghdad in the east and Tunis in the west. Their capacity enables them to reach Pakistan in the east and Nigeria in the west, with full nuclear payloads. Indeed, every so often Pakistan is threatened with 'pre-emptive' strike on its nuclear facilities if it were to develop an atomic bomb. The Israelis have already been furnished with the capacity to carry out the task when the US deems it desirable. Having subdued the Muslim people of Palestine, the US is likely to deploy its Zionist ally more forcefully to try and 'tame' the rising tide of Islam, if necessary by threatening nuclear genocide.

When the ordinary Arab Muslim sees King Hussein sitting meekly in front of President Reagan as he gloats over the Israeli terror raid on the PLO headquarters in Tunis, or sees President Mubarak shedding crocodile tears

at the humiliation inflicted on his country by US terror, or sees President Bourguiba satiated by the simple fiat of US abstention in a Security Council censure motion, or ponders over the ever increasing US-Arab ties despite the former's unconditional support for expansionist Zionism, then he can be excused for taking matters into his own hands. It is thus that a 'mad' Egyptian soldier shot a handful of Zionists in the Sinai and a Tunisian did the same in Tunis. In the face of the total disdain from the international community, the ordinary Muslim Arab must also be excused for thinking that the only way out of the quagmire is via the Lebanese solution of blasting one's exit route inch by inch. Vietnam, Iran and Lebanon all point to a singular route for Palestine, South Africa and Nicaragua, the semantics of terror and terrorism notwithstanding.

From the Receiving End

A Special Correspondent in Tunis

THE hijacking last month of the Italian liner Achille Lauro by four Palestinians and the death of one US citizen on board were met with the harshest anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian coverage in the Western Press lasting more than two weeks. Whereas the murderous Israeli raid on 1st October on P.L.O. headquarters in Tunis, which left nearly 100 dead and over 100 injured, was quickly forgotten at best, and frequently gave vent to outright pro-Israeli laudatory comments.

Mr Reagan immediately, spontaneously and loudly supported the Israeli action. That was the American President's truly sincere reaction in which he 'forgot' Tunisia's sovereignty. Whatever statements were made after that by the White House were mere hypocrisy called diplomacy. Meanwhile, on 2nd October French Prime Minister Laurent Fabius - a 'former' Jew, but still pro-Israeli - in an answer to a parliamentary question over the issue, emphasised: 'France is Israel's friend.' Whatever mild condemnation of the attack came afterward was largely offset by cogent condemnation of the 'odious' killing of these Israelis in Larnaca, and by

renewed support for 'Israel's right to live within secure, recognized frontiers.' While other western countries thinly condemned the bombing of the P.L.O. offices, not one Jewish personality in the world denounced the Israeli raid.

Washington's immediate support for Israel was diplomatically a blunder and utterly humiliating to its surrogate rulers in the Arab world - including President Bourguiba of Tunisia. The Israeli aggression and its White House blessing put the Bourguiba regime in a difficult situation vis a vis the Tunisian people.

Bourguiba, who has ruled the country with an Iron fist, has for long been pro-West and America's ally repaying the meagre aid received many times over. Last July the United States even 'promised' to protect his regime against any attacks by Colonel Qadhafi. But the Tunisian people have never approved the regime's pro-American stance and have always seen Washington as Israel's friend and protector and the enemy of the Muslims and Arabs.

The authorities blacked out immediate news about the 10 a.m. Israeli bombing for fear of anti-American demonstrations. It was not

until all measures were taken to protect US interests (including the American Embassy) and the Jewish quarters, that the news was casually and briefly released at the 13.00 hours main bulletin, prefaced by seven trivial news items. Late that afternoon a television news reader again casually announced that 'French radio stations had announced that Israeli planes had bombed the PLO headquarters'. By that time the Tunisians had seen the extent of the damage, heard Reagan's support for the Israeli operation, known the the number of victims and heard interviews with Yasser Arafat first on the grape vine and then on the Libyan, Algerian, French and Iranian radio and television stations which they can tune into. Meanwhile the government issued no official communique or addressed the public for three days.

Yet from the first day the population was sithering with anger. On the second day demonstrations broke out spontaneously in Tunis, the capital. They were closely cordoned by riot police and constantly watched by a helicopter. Tunisians were sure that Washington was behind the Israeli raid. Whence 'Israel assassin' and 'America enemy of the people' were two main slogans repeated by the demonstrators. Many a time secondary and university students attempted to march towards the American embassy but were firmly pushed back. Soon the Islamic Trend Movement (ITM) was joined by the other opposition parties in a rally which condemned the Israeli-US aggression. In a joint communique issued on the occasion, the