

What Extremist Groups Pose a Threat Worldwide?

Chapter Preface

Twenty-first century extremist groups, especially those with political agendas, are either reviled as terrorists or hailed as freedom fighters—with the label entirely dependent on who is doing the labeling. Thus, the cliché, “One man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.” Defining terrorism—and who is a terrorist—is crucial to understanding extremist groups, their goals and tactics. Though difficult, finding an objective, internationally agreed upon definition of terrorism is central to the struggle against it. Boaz Ganor, director of the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, a research organization that develops public policy solutions to international terrorism, insists that “without a definition of terrorism, it is impossible to formulate or enforce international agreements against terrorism.”

Violent extremist groups often use an “ends justify the means” argument to win support for their activities. They claim that if they are struggling for peace and the freedom of their country, they can use any means necessary—including terrorism—and not be labeled terrorists. The problem arises when both parties involved in the conflict claim to be fighting for the same cause. For example, both Israelis and Palestinians insist that they are fighting for peace and the security of their land. Each side calls the actions of the other terrorism. Clearly whose claim to the land is more valid cannot be considered when determining which party engages in terrorism. In this case, as in so many others, the cause and justification cited by both entities are the same. The key to defining terrorism, then, is not whether the use of violence is justified. Another distinguishing element must be found.

Ganor argues that targeting civilians is the dividing line between a freedom fighter and a terrorist. The definition he proposes says that “terrorism is the intentional use of, or threat to use violence against civilians or against civilian targets, in order to attain political aims.” According to Ganor’s definition, only violent acts can be considered terrorism, the aim must always be political regardless of the motivation, and the target of the violence must be civilians. An objective definition such as this would allow the international community

to dispassionately evaluate the acts of extremist groups to determine which constituted terrorism and which were legitimate freedom-fighting activities.

An objective, internationally agreed upon definition of terrorism would go a long way toward helping nations distinguish terrorists from freedom fighters. Authors in the following chapter debate which extremist groups pose a threat worldwide. As the case of the Israelis and Palestinians shows, judging whether these extremist groups are terrorists is impossible without a clear distinction being made between terrorists and freedom fighters.

Editor's Note: This article was written prior to the September 11, 2001, attacks on America carried out by members of Al-Qaeda.

[In May 2001,] a federal jury in New York returned a guilty verdict against the four defendants accused of plotting the terrorist bombing, [in 1998], of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The successful prosecution of these murderers represents a great victory for the United States, for the principle of justice, and for the rule of law. We are all in debt to the brave and capable prosecutors.

Operational Range

Unfortunately, the trial does almost nothing to enhance the safety of Americans. The Qaeda group, headed by the notorious Osama bin Laden, which perpetrated the outrages in East Africa, will barely notice the loss of four operatives. Indeed, recent information shows that Al-Qaeda is not only planning new attacks on the U.S. but is also expanding its operational range to countries such as Jordan and Israel.

In Israel, for example, bin Laden has begun to develop a network among the terrorists of the Hamas organization. Last year [2000], Israel arrested a Hamas member named Nabil Aukel who was trained in Pakistan and then moved to Afghanistan and Kashmir to put that training into practice. He returned to Israel with well-honed skills in the remote detonation of bombs using cellular phones, and was detailed to carry out terrorist attacks in Israel.

Perhaps the real importance of the New York trial lies not in the guilty verdicts but in the extraordinary information made public through court exhibits and trial proceedings. These have given us a riveting view onto the shadowy world of Al-Qaeda—though you'd never know from following the news media, for this information was barely reported. Tens of thousands of pages from the trial transcript provide a full and revealing picture of Al-Qaeda, showing it to be the most lethal terrorist organization anywhere in the world. They demonstrate that Al-Qaeda sees the West in general, and the U.S. in particular, as the ultimate enemy of Islam. Inspired by their victory over the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s, the leaders of Al-Qaeda aspire to a similar victory over America, hoping ultimately to bring Islamist rule here.

Toward this end, they engaged in many attacks on American targets from 1993 to 1998. One striking piece of information that came out in the trial was bin Laden's possible connection to the World Trade Center bombing in New York in 1993. A terrorist manual introduced as evidence was just an updated version of an earlier manual found in the possession of the World Trade Center defendants.

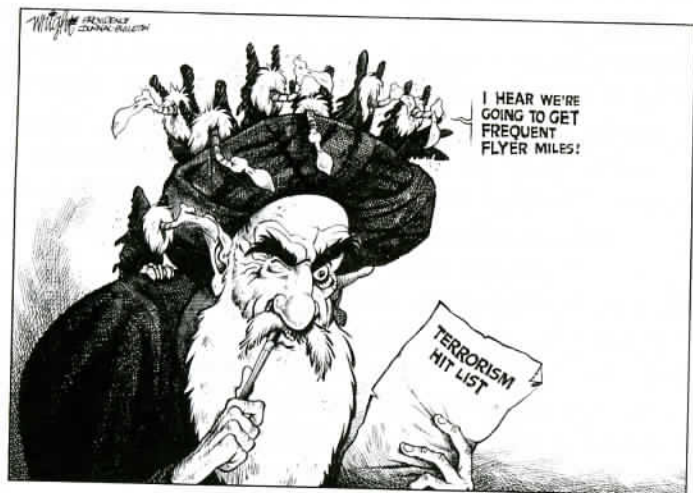
An Umbrella Organization

The court evidence shows how Al-Qaeda is an umbrella organization that includes a wide range of Islamist groups, including Hezbollah (Lebanon), Islamic Jihad (Egypt), the Armed Islamic Group (Algeria), as well as a raft of Iraqis, Sudanese, Pakistanis, Afghans and Jordanians. Each of its constituent groups has the capability to carry out its own independent recruiting and operations.

The groups coordinate through Al-Qaeda's "Shura Council," a kind of board of directors that includes representatives from the many groups. The groups meet on a regular basis in Afghanistan to review and approve proposed operations. Most of them have maintained close relationships with each other since the end of the war in Afghanistan against the Soviets. They know each other well and work together efficiently.

We learned from the trial that when operations in one place are shutdown, the rest of the network soldiers on, virtually unaffected. Even if bin Ladin himself were to be killed, this Islamist network would survive and continue to expand, sustained by its ideological adhesion. Islamism is the glue that keeps these groups together, and fired up. The court documents also revealed that although bin Laden has had a leading role in formulating and paying for Al-Qaeda, the organization did rely heavily on state sponsorship as well. For example, Sudanese President Omar Bashir himself authorized Al-Qaeda activities in his country and gave it special authority to avoid paying taxes or import duties. More remarkably, he exempted the organization from local law enforcement. Officials of the Iranian government helped arrange advanced weapons and explosives training for Al-Qaeda personnel in Lebanon where they learned, for example, how to destroy large buildings.

Perhaps the most disconcerting revelations from the trial



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concern Al-Qaeda's entrenchment in the West. For example, its procurement network for such materiel as night vision goggles, construction equipment, cell phones, and satellite telephones was based mostly in the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, Denmark, Bosnia and Croatia. The chemicals purchased for use in the manufacture of chemical weapons came from the Czech Republic.

A Global Islamist Network

In the often long waits between terrorist attacks, Al-Qaeda's member organizations maintained operational readiness by acting under the cover of front-company businesses and non-profit, tax-deductible religious charities. These nongovernmental groups, many of them still operating, are based mainly in the U.S. and Britain, as well as in the Middle East. The Qatar Charitable Society, for example, has served as one of bin Laden's de facto banks for raising and transferring funds. Osama bin Laden also set up a tightly organized system of cells in an array of American cities, including Brooklyn, N.Y.; Orlando, Fla.; Dallas; Santa Clara, Calif.; Columbia, Mo., and Herndon, Va.

First, we should think of Al-Qaeda not as an organization dominated by one man but as a global Islamist "Internet" with gateways and access points around the world. Second, Al-Qaeda has a world-wide operational reach. Especially noteworthy is its success in the U.S. and Europe, where it recruits primarily (as this trial showed) among Muslim immigrants. The legal implications of this fact are as serious as they are delicate. Clearly, this is a major new area for law enforcement to grapple with.

Finally, this trial shows that trials alone are not enough. In conceptualizing the Al-Qaeda problem only in terms of law enforcement, the U.S. government misses the larger point: Yes, the operatives engage in crimes, but they are better thought of as soldiers, not criminals. To fight Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups requires an understanding that they (along with some states) have silently declared war on the U.S.; in turn, we must fight them as we would in a war.

Seeing acts of terror as battles, not crimes, improves the U.S. approach to this problem. It means that, as in a conventional war, America's armed forces, not its policemen and lawyers, are primarily deployed to protect Americans. Rather than drag low-level operatives into American courtrooms, the military will defend us overseas. If a perpetrator is not precisely known, then those who are known to harbor terrorists will be punished. This way, governments and organizations that support terrorism will pay the price, not just the individuals who carry it out. This way, too, Americans will gain a safety that presently eludes them, no matter how many high-profile courtroom victories prosecutors win.

"Al Qaeda attacks are more likely to occur abroad, but the danger of this group is being exaggerated overseas as well."

The Threat of al Qaeda Is Exaggerated

John L. Scherer

John L. Scherer asserts in the following viewpoint that while small-scale terrorist attacks may occur over the next ten years, major al Qaeda attacks are over in the United States and rapidly diminishing throughout the rest of the world. Thus, he argues that the worldwide threat of terrorism perpetrated by al Qaeda—including acts of bioterrorism—is exaggerated. John L. Scherer edited the yearbook *Terrorism: An Annual Survey* in 1982–83 and the quarterly *Terrorism* from 1986 to 2001.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. Why does the author argue that intelligence agencies are unlikely to uncover impending terrorist attacks?
2. What is the author's opinion of reports that al Qaeda plans one hundred attacks at a time?
3. In Scherer's opinion, what poses a greater threat to the food supply than terrorism?

John L. Scherer, "Is Terrorism's Threat Overblown?" *USA Today Magazine*, January 2003. Copyright © 2003 by the Society for the Advancement of Education. Reproduced by permission.

The threat of terrorism in the U.S. is not over, but [the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks] may have been an anomaly. Intelligence agencies are unlikely to uncover an impending attack, no matter what they spend on human intelligence, because it is virtually impossible to infiltrate terrorist cells whose members are friends and relatives. At least five of the 19 [September 11] Al Qaeda hijackers came from Asir province in Saudi Arabia, and possibly eight were related.

The U.S. was not defended on 9/11. As soon as the aircraft were hijacked, helicopters armed with missiles should have risen to protect coastal cities. Two F-16s dispatched from Langley and Otis Air Force bases in Virginia and New Jersey, respectively, were too distant to reach New York and Washington, D.C., in time. On a cautionary note, the penetration of White House air space by a Cessna aircraft in June, 2002, and by several other flights since the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks, indicates nothing much has been done.

Although there will be small-scale terrorist attacks in the U.S. in the next 10 years, major Al Qaeda operations are over. Of the more than 1,200 people arrested after 9/11, none has been charged in the conspiracy. This suggests the hijackers did not and do not have an extensive operational American network. Some intelligence officials have estimated that up to 5,000 “sleepers”—persons with connections to Al Qaeda—are living in this country, including hundreds of hard-core members, yet nothing significant has happened in more than a year. The arrests in the Buffalo, N.Y., area back up the possibility of such sleeper cells.

Al Qaeda attacks are more likely to occur abroad, but the danger of this group is being exaggerated overseas as well. Members of Al Qaeda cells have been arrested in Spain, Italy, England, Germany, Malaysia, and elsewhere, but scarcely more than a score anywhere except Pakistan.

The Threat of Terrorism Has Diminished

The threat of terrorism in the U.S. has greatly diminished, but Al Qaeda and Taliban prisoners realize they can terrorize citizens merely by “confessing” to plans to blow up bridges in California, attack schools in Texas, bomb apartments in

Florida, rob banks in the Northeast, set off a series of "dirty bombs," and have scuba divers operate in coastal areas.¹

A recent book on Al Qaeda states that the organization plans 100 attacks at any one time. This is nonsense. There have been a handful of small-scale attacks with fatalities linked to Al Qaeda since Sept. 11, nothing near 100. These include a church bombing in Islamabad (five deaths); the explosion of a gasoline truck and bus outside a synagogue on Djerba Island, Tunisia (19 dead); a bus bombing outside the Sheraton Hotel in Karachi (14 killed); and a bombing at the U.S. consulate in Karachi (12 fatalities). Three of these incidents occurred in Pakistan. In addition, Al Qaeda links are suspected in late-2002 bombings in Bali and Kenya. The claim by Sept. 11 terrorist suspect Zacarias Moussaoui of an ongoing Al Qaeda plot in this country is a subterfuge to save himself.

Al Qaeda had planned attacks in London, Paris, Marseilles, Strasbourg, Singapore, and Rome, but most of the conspirators were arrested a short time after the Sept. 11 attacks. Meanwhile, no one had hijacked an aircraft in the U.S. using a "real" weapon in almost 15 years, although crashing planes into structures is not new. The Israelis shot down a Libyan jetliner they said was headed for a building in Tel Aviv in the 1980s. A Cessna 150 fell 50 yards short of the White House in September, 1994. French commandos prevented a jumbo jet, hijacked in Algeria by the Armed Islamic Group, from crashing into the Eiffel Tower the following December. In the mid 1990s, terrorist Ramzi Yousef plotted to have his friend Abdul Hakim Murad fly a light plane loaded with chemical weapons into CIA headquarters at Langley, Va., or to have him spray the area with poison gas. A Turkish hijacker attempted to crash an aircraft into the tomb of former Pres. Kemal Ataturk in Ankara in 1998. With enhanced security on at airports and passengers on commercial airliners who will react to any danger, this threat has diminished.

Terrorists have attacked on holidays, but authorities are now especially alert on those occasions, and the number and

1. The Taliban is a fundamentalist Islamic militia that ruled Afghanistan until ousted by the United States in 2001. The Taliban government gave asylum to Al-Qaeda terrorist leader Osama bin Laden.

violence of anniversary attacks have lessened. Al Qaeda has never staged an incident on a holiday.

Bioterrorism Attacks Are Unlikely

Chemical, biological, and nuclear (CBN) attacks are possible, but difficult and unlikely. Only one has succeeded over the last two decades—the 1995 Sarin incident on the Tokyo subway. Thousands were injured, but just six people died.

There have been no CBN attacks with mass fatalities anywhere. Terrorist “experts” simply have thought up everything terrible that can happen, and then assumed it will. Terrorists would encounter problems dispersing biological toxins. Most quickly dilute in any open space, and others need perfect weather conditions to cause mass casualties. Some biological agents, although not anthrax, are killed by exposure to ultraviolet light. The Washington, D.C., subway system has devices that can detect biological toxins. New York has the highest-density population of any American city, and for this reason might have the greatest probability of such an attack, but it also has the best-prepared public health system.

The Threat of Terrorism Is Overblown

The response of U.S. policymakers to the Sept. 11 [2001] terrorist attacks is based upon an overestimate of the threat of terrorism, and ignores the lessons that can be gained from an interdisciplinary approach to the problem, according to some think tank experts who are analyzing the issue.

“I basically think we are really overreacting to this in a fairly large way,” said George Mason University economist Roger Congleton. “I think it would be useful for the press and the government to be reminded that the risks are not as gigantic as we seem to have been encouraged to believe over the last year [2001–2002].”

Christian Bourge, United Press International, August 10, 2002.

In one instance, Essid Sami Ben Khemais, a Moroccan who ran Al Qaeda’s European logistics center in Milan, Italy, received a five-year prison sentence in February, 2002. His cell planned to poison Rome’s water supply near the U.S. embassy on the Via Veneto. This group had 10 pounds of

potassium ferro-cyanide, a chemical used to make wine and ink dye, but extracting a deadly amount of cyanide from this compound would have proved extremely difficult.

Americans are rightly concerned about a strike against a nuclear power facility, but terrorists would have to get through a series of gates and fences, bypass motion sensors, and outfight a heavily armed security force to enter a containment building. Once inside the structure, they would need to know the exact sequence to shut down a reactor. An aircraft diving at a nuclear station would have to hit a small target, nothing like the World Trade Center buildings, which rose 1,400 feet into the air. Containment vessels are 160 feet high by 130 feet wide, and storage casks are even smaller.

Politicians have proposed creating a bureau to protect food from terrorists, but no one in the U.S. has ever died from a terrorist food poisoning. In fact, the nation has experienced just one instance of tampering with agricultural produce, when members of a cult contaminated several salad bars at restaurants in Oregon. The biggest danger to the food supply would be from salmonella, *E. coli* 0157, clostridium botulinum, and cholera, but careless handling and improper preparation of food are far-greater menaces than terrorism.

The Department of Homeland Security Is Unnecessary

There are 168,000 public water systems in the U.S. Some serve as many as 8,000,000 people, while others as few as 25. None has ever been poisoned, although there have been attempts.

The FBI may need reorganization, especially since its failures preceding Sept. 11 resulted from officials making bad decisions. It is well-known that in mid August, 2001, officials at a flight school in Eagan, Minn., told the FBI that a French citizen of Algerian descent, Moussaoui, had offered \$30,000 cash for lessons on a flight-simulator to learn how to fly a Boeing 747. He had no interest in learning how to land the plane. Moussaoui was arrested three weeks before the attacks. One week before the hijackings, French intelligence informed the FBI that he was an Islamic militant who

had visited Afghanistan and had links to Al Qaeda. FBI agents could have entered Moussaoui's computer and obtained his phone records using the Federal statutes already in place, but which were ignored or forgotten by officials.

Reorganizations refuse to acknowledge that some individuals are smarter and more knowledgeable than others, and new personnel will eventually resolve these problems. The new Department of Homeland Security will disrupt normal channels of communication and create even more bureaucratic confusion. It will compete for resources with the National Security Council and it will be costly trying to coordinate 46 agencies and, judging from actual terrorist events in the U.S., wholly unnecessary. Americans must remain vigilant, of course, but there is no need to raid the Treasury or turn the country upside down pursuing phantoms.

"The PLO must engage in terrorism in order to obtain financial and diplomatic support from Arab states."

The Palestine Liberation Organization Promotes Violence and Terrorism

Paul Eidelberg

In the following viewpoint Paul Eidelberg argues that Palestinian terrorism is not a desperate response to oppression but part of the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) strategy to destroy Israel. He asserts that the PLO uses terror to gain recruits and secure financial aid and diplomatic support from Arab states, which seek Israel's destruction. Moreover, Eidelberg maintains that the PLO promotes terrorism as a means of psychological warfare to weaken the Israeli will and make Israelis more likely to capitulate to Palestinian demands. Paul Eidelberg lives in Israel and is a member of the board of directors of the Freeman Center for Strategic Studies, a pro-Israel research organization.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. In the author's opinion, why did Yasir Arafat use schools, mosques, hospitals, and other civilian structures to store arms in Lebanon?
2. According to Eidelberg, what purpose does the PLO serve in the Islamic world?
3. How is terrorism used as an instrument of economic warfare against Israel, in the author's opinion?

Paul Eidelberg, "PLO Terrorism and Grand Strategy," www.freeman.org, April 2001. Copyright © 2001 by Freeman Center for Strategic Studies. Reproduced by permission.

[Israeli] Foreign Minister Shimon Peres wants to continue the policy of negotiating with [Palestinian leader Yasir] Arafat despite on-going PLO- [Palestine Liberation Organization] Palestinian violence. Prime Minister [Ariel] Sharon rejects this policy, or so he would have us believe. The present writer will argue that negotiating with Arafat is a grave error. To explain, allow me to recall an article I wrote about the PLO back in March 1985, almost four years before Arafat renounced violence in Geneva.

1. Like all terrorist organizations, the PLO uses terror to gain recruits. Terrorist leaders know as well as Hollywood move-makers that violence and bloodshed are alluring to no small number of men. They do not harbor a softheaded view of human nature.

2. To attract recruits the PLO must of course succeed, from time to time, in killing Jews, especially in Israel. Only by murdering Jews can the PLO obtain from Saudi Arabia the financial means with which to buy arms. Only by murdering Jews can Yasir Arafat's PLO obtain diplomatic support from the Moslem world . . . above all from Egypt, the creator of the PLO and the most steadfast champion of this organization's claim to represent the so-called "Palestinian people."

3. Unlike Western politicians, Moslem leaders think in long as well as in short terms. Jewish children in Israel eventually become Jewish soldiers. Murdering one is eliminating the other. No less a "moderate" than [the late] King Hussein of Jordan urged Moslems to "kill Jews wherever you find them, kill them with your hands, with your nails and teeth."

Terrorism Is Part of a Grand Strategy

4. Now let us go a little deeper. Operating under the leadership of Yasir Arafat, another "moderate," the PLO [then ensconced] in Lebanon used schools, Mosques, hospitals, and other civilian structures for storing arms and other military purposes. The object was not only to inhibit Israeli retaliation against terrorist attacks, say on Israel's northern towns and resort areas. To the contrary, Arafat surely knew that such PLO attacks would compel Israel, at some point, to strike at the PLO's civilian sanctuaries with the consequence of killing Lebanese civilians, but of thereby alienating Amer-

ican public opinion and triggering U.S. military sanctions. Viewed in this light, terrorist attacks are instruments of grand strategy, the subject of the next consideration.

5. It was said above that the PLO must engage in terrorism in order to obtain financial and diplomatic support from Arab states. If the PLO were to go [purely] “political”—and not merely for the purpose of wresting Judea and Samaria from Israel in preparation for a mortal blow [by Arab states]—it would self-destruct; it would be of use to no one. The Islamic world uses the PLO to keep alive American fear of another Middle East war. This fear aligns the United States with Egypt and other Moslem autocracies against Israel’s retention of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza [as well as] the Golan Heights. I am referring to the key strategic function of the PLO. . . .

6. Consistent therewith, Islamic autocrats have foisted on the U.S. the fiction that the “Palestinian problem” is the “core” of the Middle East conflict. PLO terrorism serves to dramatize this fiction because nothing gains the media’s attention more than violence. The short-term pragmatism of American politicians enables Moslems to pander to one of America’s worst instincts: the belief in “quick-fix” solutions . . . for all problems. And what is the neat solution to the so-called Palestinian problem? Simply Israel’s return to her pre-1967 borders. Within those borders, however, are 600,000 [now almost 1.2 million] Moslems. These Moslems are not only related by blood to the mythical Palestinians in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, but they identity with . . . the PLO. This unpleasant but strategically significant fact is conveniently ignored by sheltered American commentators on the Middle East [to say nothing of Shimon Peres].

PLO Terrorism Is Psychological Warfare

7. Consider, now, the impact of repeated terrorist attacks on Israeli morale [and this was written 8 years before Oslo].¹ Moslem leaders know very well the value Jews place on a single human life. . . . [Hence] one aim of terrorist attacks

1. According to the 1993 Oslo Accord, Israel recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization and gave them limited autonomy in return for peace and an end to Palestinian claims on Israeli land.

against the people of Israel is to break down their will and perseverance, their political sobriety and national solidarity. Jewish realism may give way to Jewish wishful thinking: the . . . desire for peace may move softhearted and shortsighted politicians to enter into unwise and dangerous agreements. Here PLO terrorism functions as a form of psychological warfare.

Many Palestinians Support Terror

Many in the Arab world either seek Israel's destruction or consider suicide bombings, shootings, mortar attacks, ambushes, and other attacks—aimed not only at Israeli soldiers and settlers but at civilians living within Israel proper—legitimate “resistance” to Israel's occupation of much of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Polls show that Palestinian belligerence rose as the peace process collapsed. Israelis say [Yasir] Arafat's rejection of what they considered a generous peace offer at the 2000 Camp David summit showed that the PA [Palestinian Authority] remains committed to terror, not diplomacy. . . .

Many members of the al-Aqsa Brigades [West Bank militia], including some commanders, receive paychecks from the PA for working in one of its security services. In the spring of 2002, Israeli troops said they had found documents in Arafat's Ramallah headquarters showing that PA funds had paid for some of the brigades' terror operations, and [George W.] Bush administration officials say Arafat's reported approval of a \$20,000 payment to the brigades spurred the White House to call for Arafat's removal.

Council on Foreign Relations, www.terrorismanswers.com, 2004.

8. Terrorism is also used as an instrument of economic warfare. Planting bombs in Jerusalem cannot but diminish tourism, on which Israel's economy to no small extent depends.

9. Finally, reluctant as the free press may be [to] say killing Jews is a religious obligation for Moslems so long as Israel remains a sovereign and independent state, ponder the words of Dr. Abdul Halim Mahmoud, rector of Cairo's al-Ashar University, theologically and politically the most influential university in Islamdom: “Allah commands Moslems to fight the friends of Satan wherever they are to be found. Among the friends of Satan—indeed, among the foremost friends of Satan in the present age—are the Jews.”

To begin to fathom this venomous hatred of the Jews, let us cite Professor Abd al-Rahman al-Bazzaz of the University of Baghdad: "The existence of Israel nullifies the unity of our civilization which embraces the whole region. Moreover, the existence of Israel is a flagrant challenge to our philosophy of life and a total barrier against the values and aims we aspire [to] in the world."

Support for Israel's Destruction

Not the "Palestinian problem" but the "Jewish problem" is the core of the Middle East conflict. For Islam there is but one "Final Solution" to this problem, which is why all Moslem states support the PLO Covenant calling for Israel's destruction. . . .

It is hard for men of good will to take implacable hatred seriously, which is why Adolph Hitler was chosen *Time's* Man of the Year in 1939.

Thus my 1985 article. Only a postscript is necessary. Sharon will either make war with the PLO or succumb to its minister in the cabinet, Shimon Peres.

"Let me be very clear. I condemn the attacks carried out by terrorist groups against Israeli civilians."

The Palestine Liberation Organization Condemns Violence and Terrorism

Yasir Arafat

Until his death in 2004, Yasir Arafat was head of the Palestinian Authority, the governing body established by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the 1990s. In the following viewpoint, first published in 2002, Arafat claims that groups who commit acts of terrorism against innocent Israeli civilians do not represent the Palestinian people or their legitimate desire for freedom. He argues further that although Palestinians are oppressed by Israelis, no degree of oppression and desperation can justify terrorist attacks. Moreover, Arafat insists that terrorism will disappear once Israelis are willing to see the Palestinian people as equals and negotiate a just peace with them.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. What is the Palestinian vision of peace, according to Arafat?
2. What does Arafat insist is the Israelis' purpose in attacking him personally?

Yasir Arafat, "The Palestinian Vision of Peace," *The New York Times*, February 3, 2002. Copyright © 2002 by The New York Times Company. Reproduced by permission of the author.

For the past 16 months [since November 2000], Israelis and Palestinians have been locked in a catastrophic cycle of violence, a cycle which only promises more bloodshed and fear. The cycle has led many to conclude that peace is impossible, a myth borne out of ignorance of the Palestinian position. Now is the time for the Palestinians to state clearly, and for the world to hear clearly, the Palestinian vision.

But first, let me be very clear. I condemn the attacks carried out by terrorist groups against Israeli civilians. These groups do not represent the Palestinian people or their legitimate aspirations for freedom. They are terrorist organizations, and I am determined to put an end to their activities.

The Palestinian vision of peace is an independent and viable Palestinian state on the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, living as an equal neighbor alongside Israel with peace and security for both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. In 1988, the Palestine National Council adopted a historic resolution calling for the implementation of applicable United Nations resolutions, particularly, Resolutions 242 and 338. The Palestinians recognized Israel's right to exist on 78 percent of historical Palestine with the understanding that we would be allowed to live in freedom on the remaining 22 percent, which has been under Israeli occupation since 1967. Our commitment to that two-state solution remains unchanged, but unfortunately, also remains unreciprocated.

The Palestinian Refugee Problem

We seek true independence and full sovereignty: the right to control our own airspace, water resources and borders; to develop our own economy, to have normal commercial relations with our neighbors, and to travel freely. In short, we seek only what the free world now enjoys and only what Israel insists on for itself: the right to control our own destiny and to take our place among free nations.

In addition, we seek a fair and just solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees who for 54 years have not been permitted to return to their homes. We understand Israel's demographic concerns and understand that the right of return of Palestinian refugees, a right guaranteed under international law and United Nations Resolution 194, must be im-

plemented in a way that takes into account such concerns. However, just as we Palestinians must be realistic with respect to Israel's demographic desires, Israelis too must be realistic in understanding that there can be no solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict if the legitimate rights of these innocent civilians continue to be ignored. Left unresolved, the refugee issue has the potential to undermine any permanent peace agreement between Palestinians and Israelis. How is a Palestinian refugee to understand that his or her right of return will not be honored but those of Kosovar Albanians, Afghans and East Timorese have been?

There are those who claim that I am not a partner in peace. In response, I say Israel's peace partner is, and always has been, the Palestinian people. Peace is not a signed agreement between individuals—it is reconciliation between peoples. Two peoples cannot reconcile when one demands control over the other, when one refuses to treat the other as a partner in peace, when one uses the logic of power rather than the power of logic. Israel has yet to understand that it cannot have peace while denying justice. As long as the occupation of Palestinian lands continues, as long as Palestinians are denied freedom, then the path to the "peace of the brave" that I embarked upon with my late partner [Israeli prime minister] Yitzhak Rabin, will be littered with obstacles.

The Killing of Civilians Is Never Justified

The Palestinian people have been denied their freedom for far too long and are the only people in the world still living under foreign occupation. How is it possible that the entire world can tolerate this oppression, discrimination and humiliation? The 1993 Oslo Accord, signed on the White House lawn, promised the Palestinians freedom by May 1999. Instead, since 1993, the Palestinian people have endured a doubling of Israeli settlers, expansion of illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian land and increased restrictions on freedom of movement. How do I convince my people that Israel is serious about peace while over the past decade Israel intensified the colonization of Palestinian land from which it was ostensibly negotiating a withdrawal?

But no degree of oppression and no level of desperation can

ever justify the killing of innocent civilians. I condemn terrorism. I condemn the killing of innocent civilians, whether they are Israeli, American or Palestinian; whether they are killed by Palestinian extremists, Israeli settlers, or by the Israeli government. But condemnations do not stop terrorism. To stop terrorism, we must understand that terrorism is simply the symptom, not the disease.

No Terrorism Has Been Committed by the PLO

It is also important to differentiate between Palestine Authority violence and terrorism. While the Israeli right-wingers would have us all believe that the Palestine Authority, or in particular certain factions and forces answering to Fatah and other leading PLO factions are responsible for terrorist acts, when asked to back this contention all they can point at are legitimate acts of self-defense, i.e. gunfights with Israeli troops and armed settler gangs. The PLO renounced terrorism in 1988, and virtually without exception has stuck to this renunciation. Palestinian soldiers and police have engaged in gunfights with Israeli soldiers, police, and settler gangs, but this is legitimate self-defense as is fully endorsed and allowed by international law. The very height of Israeli *chutzpah* has been the condemnation of the assassination of Minister Rehavam Ze'evi as 'terrorism' in view of Israel's current targeted assassination policy in the Occupied Territories. Vilification campaigns notwithstanding, there has been no terrorism committed by the Palestine Authority or the forces under the command of President [Yasir] Arafat.

John Sigler, Essays and Commentary on Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues, www.eccmei.net, February 3, 2002.

The personal attacks on me currently in vogue may be highly effective in giving Israelis an excuse to ignore their own role in creating the current situation. But these attacks do little to move the peace process forward and, in fact, are not designed to. Many believe that Ariel Sharon, Israel's prime minister, given his opposition to every peace treaty Israel has ever signed, is fanning the flames of unrest in an effort to delay indefinitely a return to negotiations. Regrettably, he has done little to prove them wrong. Israeli government practices of settlement construction, home demolitions, political assassi-

nations, closures and shameful silence in the face of Israeli settler violence and other daily humiliations are clearly not aimed at calming the situation.

The Palestinian Vision of Peace

The Palestinians have a vision of peace: it is a peace based on the complete end of the occupation and a return to Israel's 1967 borders, the sharing of all Jerusalem as one open city and as the capital of two states, Palestine and Israel. It is a warm peace between two equals enjoying mutually beneficial economic and social cooperation. Despite the brutal repression of Palestinians over the last four decades, I believe when Israel sees Palestinians as equals, and not as a subjugated people upon whom it can impose its will, such a vision can come true. Indeed it must.

Palestinians are ready to end the conflict. We are ready to sit down now with any Israeli leader, regardless of his history, to negotiate freedom for the Palestinians, a complete end of the occupation, security for Israel and creative solutions to the plight of the refugees while respecting Israel's demographic concerns. But we will only sit down as equals, not as supplicants; as partners, not as subjects; as seekers of a just and peaceful solution, not as a defeated nation grateful for whatever scraps are thrown our way. For despite Israel's overwhelming military advantage, we possess something even greater: the power of justice.

"[Basque separatists] have been blamed for killing more than 800 people . . . making it one of the most feared organisations of its kind in Europe."

Basque Separatists Promote Terrorism

Paul Sussman

The Basques, people who inhabit the Basque region in France and Spain, have long sought from both nations political and cultural autonomy. According to Paul Sussman, a writer for CNN.com Europe, the Basque separatist group ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna) has engaged in a campaign of violent terrorism against the Spanish government for over thirty years. Sussman maintains in the following viewpoint that ETA is responsible for more than eight hundred murders and at least seventy kidnappings, plus countless bank robberies and acts of extortion. He argues further that ETA members have received training from terrorist groups in Libya, Lebanon, and Nicaragua, and that the organization has close ties to the Irish Republican Army.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. According to Sussman, what is the English translation of "Euskadi Ta Askatasuna"?
2. The author reports that the Basque region straddles what two countries?
3. What has been the response of the Spanish government to Basque separatist activities?

Paul Sussman, "ETA: Feared Separatist Group," CNN.com/In-Depth Specials, 2001. Copyright © 2003 by Cable News Network LP, LLLP, A Time Warner Company. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.

For 32 years the Basque separatist group ETA has been fighting for an independent Basque state in northern Spain.

During that period, ETA has been blamed for killing more than 800 people, kidnapping 70 others and wounding thousands, making it one of the most feared organizations of its kind in Europe.

ETA, founded in 1959, stands for Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, Basque for "Basque Homeland and Freedom." It killed what some say was its first victim in 1968.

Since then it has waged a relentless campaign of violence against the Spanish state, targeting politicians, policemen, judges and soldiers. ETA's deadliest weapons are car bombs, which have caused numerous civilian casualties. In 1980 alone ETA was blamed for 118 deaths, and in 1995 it nearly succeeded in assassinating Jose Maria Aznar, then leader of the opposition, now Spain's prime minister.

On September 16, 1998, the organisation declared a "unilateral and indefinite" cease-fire, raising hopes that its campaign was at an end. ETA called off the cease-fire in November 1999, however, and 2000 saw a sharp escalation in violence.

Fiercely Independent

The Basque country, or Euskal Herria as it is known in Basque, straddles the western end of the Pyrenees, covering 20,664 square kilometres in northern Spain and southern France. Spain officially recognizes three Basque provinces, Alava, Guipuzcoa and Vizcaya. A fourth neighboring province, Navarra, is of Basque heritage. Separatists consider these four provinces plus three in France—Basse Navarre, Labourd and Soule—as the Basque country, with a population approaching 3 million.

The area has always possessed a fiercely independent instinct. The Basque people are the oldest indigenous ethnic group in Europe and have lived uninterrupted in the same region since the beginning of recorded history.

Their language, Euskera, which is spoken regularly by about 40 percent of Basque inhabitants, bears no relation to any other Indo-European tongue and dates back to before the Romans arrived in Spain.

Bloodshed and Violence Plague the Basque Region

Since ETA was founded in 1968, some 800 people have died violently in the conflict. Most—617—have been killed by ETA. Significantly, the vast majority of ETA-inflicted fatalities—572—have occurred since the death in 1975 of Spain's longtime dictator, Gen. Francisco Franco. This has happened despite a gradual devolution of powers by successive democratic governments in Madrid upon an increasingly autonomous regional administration in Basque country. "There is no essential difference in powers between those enjoyed by the current Basque government here and that of a Canadian province, especially Quebec," maintains Alejandro Saiz Arnaiz, professor of constitutional law at the Basque University in San Sebastian. . . . The main difference . . . Saiz argues, is "the cancer of bloodshed and violence that, in contrast to Quebec, makes the Basque regional autonomous problem so much more difficult to resolve."

Barry Came, *Maclean's*, October 27, 1997.

For many centuries the Basques of Spain enjoyed a strong degree of autonomy. In the Spanish Civil War, two Basque provinces—Guipuzcoa and Vizcaya—fought against Gen. Francisco Franco, while the provinces of Alava and Navarra fought for Franco. Under Franco's dictatorship (1939–75), most of the Basque region had its remaining autonomy rescinded. Its culture, people and language were suppressed.

ETA and its demands for an independent Basque state arose in 1959 in the midst of this suppression.

Kidnapping and Bank Robbery Finance the ETA

ETA has focused its activities on the Spanish side of the border. For many years France provided a safe haven for ETA members, a situation that began to change in the mid-1980s.

The organisation finances its campaign through kidnapping, bank robbery and a so-called "revolutionary tax" on Basque businesses—a payment that is widely regarded as plain extortion. No one knows how many businesses make these payments.

According to the counter-terrorism office of the U.S. State Department, ETA members have received training in

Libya, Lebanon and Nicaragua, while the group also enjoys close links with the Irish Republican Army (the Good Friday peace accord influenced ETA to call its cease-fire in 1998).

Active support for ETA is limited, and although no accurate figures are available, its membership is not thought to number more than a few hundred. It is believed to operate in small commando cells of about five people each. The party that many believe to be its political wing, Herri Batasuna (founded in 1978), rarely scores higher than 20 percent in local elections, considerably less than the more moderate Basque Nationalist Party (PNV).

While many Basques support independence—up to 40 percent, according to PNV leader Xabier Arzalluz—the vast majority of Basques oppose the use of violence.

The response of the Spanish government to ETA's activities has been two-pronged.

On one hand Spain has sought to accommodate the region's strong sense of local identity. Since the early 1980s, the Basque provinces of Alava, Guipuzcoa and Vizcaya have been recognised as an autonomous region known as Pais Vasco, with its own parliament and police force, and with Euskera as the official language.

Violence Continues

At the same time Madrid has cracked down hard on anyone suspected of being an ETA member.

From 1983–87, a shadowy organisation called the Anti-Terrorist Liberation Group (or GAL, from its Spanish name), was blamed for killing 27 suspected ETA members. This later proved to be a major scandal for Socialist Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, who was in power from 1982–96. One of his interior ministers served time in jail for his role in a kidnapping carried out by GAL.

In 1997, 23 leaders of Herri Batasuna were arrested and jailed for collaborating with ETA.

Despite the crackdowns and widespread public condemnation of its activities, ETA has continued its campaign of violence. Inaki Azcuna, the mayor of Bilbao, said: "We have too many attacks and not enough dialogue."

It is a situation which, at present, shows no sign of changing.

"While the political rights of the Basque Country remain denied . . . while the renovated tracks of fascism remain, ETA will keep on practising armed struggle."

Basque Separatists Promote Nonviolent Political Change

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna

The Basques are an ethnic group inhabiting the Basque regions in northern Spain and southern France. They seek political and cultural autonomy. Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), the Basque separatist party, argues in the following viewpoint that violence against Spain and France is justified because the Spanish and French governments have failed to recognize the Basques culturally and politically. ETA insists that it has tried repeatedly over the past forty years to end its armed conflict with Spain, but Spain's refusal to give the Basques the autonomy they desire makes peace impossible.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. What does ETA argue is the response of Spain and France to their proposals for a political solution to violence?
2. According to ETA, what has the development of Europe in the past few years shown the Basques?
3. With whom does ETA declare its solidarity?

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, "ETA's Statement to the Institutions and Citizens of Europe," www.baskinfo.org, June 11, 2002. Copyright © 2002 by Baskenland Informatie Centrum. Reproduced by permission.

On 11th June 1995, [Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, the Basque separatist party] (ETA) sent a statement to the European public opinion for the first time. In that document this organisation explained the contents of a peace proposal—known as the Democratic Alternative—that we had published some months earlier and we requested to put pressure on the Spanish government to force them to change their uncompromising attitude.

Seven years later, the Spanish government has been in charge of the Presidency of the European Union for six months. That period will finish [in 2002] with the meeting of the leaders of the member-states in Seville (Andalusia).

Spanish fascism, French jacobinism, the building of Europe and the Globalisation: the Basque Country [is] in a tight spot.

The conflict that sets the Basque Country against Spain and France continues. Despite the power changes in the governments of Spain and France, despite the important steps towards the building of Europe, there is no indication that both oppressive states will give up the colonisation and oppression we endure in the Basque Country.

On the contrary, the Spanish government has imposed a state of siege in the Basque Country: ban on newspapers, increase in the amount of arbitrary detentions, ban on political organisations and groups of the popular movement and the legalisation of savage tortures. Subsequent to the [Arab terrorist] attacks of September 11th, [2001,] they have tried to achieve the complicity of the European institutions. In addition, taking advantage of its economic power—as in the filthiest times of the Spanish imperialism—they had increased the pressure on the countries “under their influence”. Nowadays, the fascism and the restructuring of the Empire are the main features of the Spanish policy.

Increased Repression

During these years, one of the only changes has been the high speed acquired by the renovated Era of the Globalisation. In connection with the undergoing worldwide economic transformation, the building of Europe is just another part of the puzzle. The creation of a giant market has hampered the development and establishment of a social Europe.

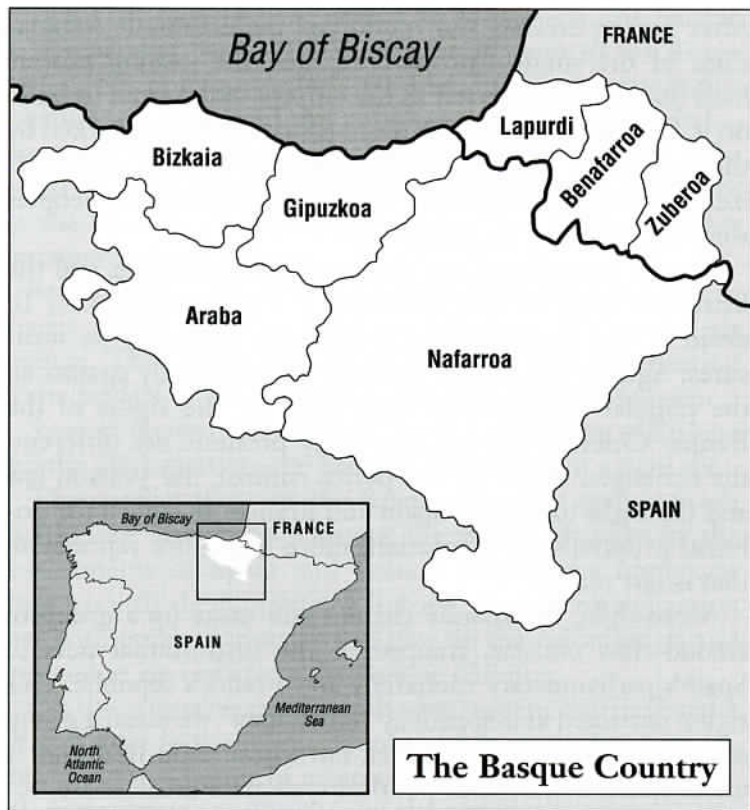
After having created and reinforced the economic foundations of the single European market, the leading powers have [taken] the place left to the citizens and started to build on it. The speed of the European process is being marked by the capital and their financial needs. The Europe of the citizens, Europe's social chart and the Europe of the peoples were abandoned a long time ago.

On the other hand, the gap between the citizens and the European institutions is widening, as they recognise too. To avoid it, the European institutions are taking some measures. Against the Basque Country and especially against all the popular organisations that fight for the rights of the Basque Country, the measures they promote are different: the Schengen Space for the police control, the Watson law and the right to veto of Spain and France. In return for political proposals for a solution, more and more repression; that is our reality.

Meanwhile, the Basque citizens still make up a group of second-class citizens, trapped in the institutional nets of Spain's parliamentary monarchy and France's republic. Our rights remained kidnapped; by "kidnapped" we mean a group of citizens free to say whatever, but whose right to decide is undermined within both political systems. Furthermore, according to a new law Spain is planning to adopt, the Basque citizens will not be allowed even to say what they think!

No Future for the Basque Country

The Basque Country has got no future in the current Europe of the States. Lots of majestic sentences, lots of "democratic" rights, but during the last years the building of Europe has just shown us clearly that we do not have the right to think and to act as a people. To prevent the Basques from acting as such, the republic of France uses its false grandness and equity and Spain the democratic label given by Europe for the last twenty years. In the modern reservation for natives they built for us, we are told wickedly we shall only be as souvenirs for the tourists and for the history books; in fact, limited rights that can only be used in a reservation under their control. Up to now, the magnificent future offered by all the governments in Spain and France to the Basques



has been that of a “democratic” segregation.

In addition, the republic of France and the “democracy” of Spain have built the future behind the Basque citizens’ back; and, however, how many are the Basques who lost their lives in the Basque Country fighting in the resistance against the Nazis? How many are those who died in the war against the Spanish fascists? And, finally, we got paid, through their oppression and abuse.

The governments of Spain and France go against History.

ETA confirms its proposition to set the conflict on democratic grounds.

Concrete Proposals to End the Armed Conflict

ETA has usually said that there are ways to overcome the oppression and the armed conflict. Moreover, ETA has launched concrete proposals for the last forty years.

- In 1976, at the time the "Spanish democracy" was being born, the KAS Alternative [eight negotiating points for political recognition] was offered.

- In 1989, the talks in Algiers took place but the lack of political courage of the political party in power undermined the process.

- In 1995, ETA published a concrete proposal we called the Democratic Alternative [a negotiated solution to end violence].

- Later, ETA has left clear its goodwill to overcome the armed conflict through democratic ways in 1996 with a one-week initiative, or in the initiative of 1998.

In fact, we must assert proudly that ETA's strategic objectives remain the independence and socialism, but, at the same time, we make proposals linked to the reality to overcome the armed conflict. ETA will never speak in the name of our people. The members of ETA, instead of being terrorists, are a group of Basque citizens who are tightly tied to their society. Nowadays, ETA keeps on using the armed struggle in favour of the fundamental rights of the Basque Country. However, if those rights are guaranteed, ETA has repeated once and again that it will respect the decision of our people. The respect to our self-determination and to our territory. Both concepts must be guaranteed by a Democratic Process; that is the only condition demanded by ETA to overcome the current armed conflict. In fact, it could also be summed up in the slogan "Give the word to the People and respect it", the fundamentals of the Democratic Alternative. That's the only key to the problem. In addition, we must remember that in 1997, due to a campaign to become known [as] the Democratic Alternative, the judicial-repressive machinery of the Spanish government imprisoned the whole leadership of Herri Batasuna [the Basque left nationalist party]. So, what can we expect from the "democratic" propositions of our two neighbouring states? That is ETA's question to the citizens and institutions of Europe. At this moment in time, the juridical-political structuring of a new Europe is taking place; the European Institutions should know that the building of that Europe would be hampered if they were unable to reply with political courage to the existing conflicts and disputes. The responsibility would be yours too.

Solidarity with Oppressed People

[We are] in favour of a plural world and a fair society [we want to be] free to build the future. We would like to declare our solidarity to all the citizens who are worldwide fighting against injustice. . . .

ETA wants to confirm to the institutions, social agents and citizens of Europe its willingness to overcome the armed struggle. The Basque citizens should discuss, think over and say, without pressures, which is the Basque Country they want and which position in Europe they wish. While the Basque Country is doomed to die, ETA will keep on struggling. As ETA asserts its willingness to overcome the armed struggle, we also confirm that the only way against the obstinacy and arrogance of both oppressing states is the struggle. In any case, peace will only be brought by justice. While the political rights of the Basque Country remain denied; while the willingness to talk and negotiate remain deceitful; while the plans to ban the citizens' organisations, groups and initiatives continue; while there is no willingness to punish their use of torture and other atrocities; while the only truth is that of their despicable media; that is, while the renovated tracks of fascism remain, ETA will keep on practising armed struggle, as for the last four decades. Because the self-defence is our right. The struggle against injustice unites us, the dream of a fair society in the future too.

Efforts to Change

ETA requests to the European Institutions to make efforts to change the attitude of the Spanish and French governments. It requests to the social agents to come to the Basque Country, to meet all the agents here, to analyse the situation in its entirety and, in their working field to spread a view based on reality; because many media in Europe just transmit the view of the despicable Spanish media. We must take steps to set the conflict on democratic grounds. It is about time for each one to assume his/her own responsibility. ETA assumed its own one a long time ago.