

The critical nature comes from a yearning for a new variety of knowledge and unbiased perspectives on history, international relations, and foreign policy

## **September 11 And Its Aftermath**

- By Michael Albert and Stephen R. Shalom

We are writing this on September 17, less than a week after the horrific terrorist attacks against the United States. We are still dealing with our grief and trauma and we are still profoundly moved by the many acts of heroism, generosity, and solidarity that have taken place. Some may find it inappropriate to offer political analysis this early, but however discordant some may find it, the time for political Analysis should be before actions are taken that may make the situation far worse. Critics of war across the U.S. and around the world are working hard to communicate with people who, for the moment, mainly seek retribution. Below we address some of the many questions that are being asked. We hope the answers we offer, developed in consultation with many other activists, will assist people in their daily work.

### **Who did it?**

The identity of the 19 individuals who hijacked the four planes is known, but what is not yet known is who provided the coordination, the planning, the funding, and the logistical support, both in the United States and elsewhere. Many indications point to the involvement of Osama bin Laden, but if his role is confirmed, this is the beginning, not the end, of the inquiry: Were any other organizations involved and, if so, which ones? Were any national governments involved and, if so, which ones? The danger here is that the U.S. government may answer these questions based on political criteria rather than evidence.

### **Who is Osama bin Laden?**

Osama bin Laden is an exiled Saudi, who inherited a fortune estimated at \$300 million, though it's not clear how much remains of it. Fanatically devoted to his intolerant version of Islam—a version rejected by the vast majority of Muslims—bin Laden volunteered his services to the Afghan Mujahideen, the religious warriors battling the invading Soviet Union from 1979 to 1989. The Afghan rebels were bankrolled by Saudi Arabia and the United States and trained by Pakistani intelligence, with help from the CIA. The United States provided huge amounts of arms, including Stingers— one-person anti-aircraft missiles—despite warnings that these could end up in the hands of terrorists. Washington thus allied itself with bin Laden and more than 25,000 other Islamic militants from around the world who came to Afghanistan to join the holy war against the Russians. As long as they were willing to fight the Soviet Union, the U.S. welcomed them, even though many were virulently anti-American, some even connected to the 1981 assassination of Anwar Sadat of Egypt. When Moscow finally withdrew its troops from Afghanistan, some of these Islamic militants turned their sights on their other enemies, including Egypt (where they hoped to establish an Islamic state), Saudi Arabia, and the United States. Bin Laden established an organization of these holy war veterans—al Qaida. In February 1998, bin Laden issued a statement, endorsed by several extreme Islamic groups, declaring it the duty of all Muslims to kill U.S. citizens—civilian or military—and their allies everywhere.

### **Where is Osama bin Laden?**

After some attacks on U.S. interests in Saudi Arabia, Saudi authorities revoked bin Laden's citizenship. Bin Laden went to the Sudan and then in to Afghanistan. His precise location is unknown, since he frequently moves or goes into hiding. Afghanistan is led by the Taliban, a group of extreme Islamic fundamentalists, who emerged out of the Mujahideen. The Taliban does not have full control over the country—there is a civil war against dissidents who control some 10-20 percent of the country. Afghanistan is an incredibly poor nation—life expectancy is 46 years of age, 1 out of 7 children die in infancy, and per capita income is about \$800 per year. Huge numbers of people remain refugees. Taliban rule is dictatorial and its social policy is unusually repressive and sexist: for example, Buddhist statues have been destroyed, Hindus have been required to wear special identification, and girls over eight are barred from

school. Human rights groups, the United Nations, and most governments have condemned the policies of the Taliban. Only Pakistan, and the two leading U.S. allies in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, recognize the Taliban government.

## **Why did the terrorists do it?**

We don't entirely know who did it, at this writing, so we can't say for sure at this point why they did it. There are, however some possibilities worth thinking about.

One explanation points to a long list of grievances felt by people in the Middle East-U.S. backing for Israeli repression and dispossession of the Palestinians, U.S. imposition of sanctions on Iraq, leading to the deaths of huge numbers of innocents, and U.S. support for autocratic, undemocratic, and highly inegalitarian regimes. These are real grievances and U.S. policy really does cause tremendous suffering. But how do these terror attacks mitigate the suffering? Some may believe that by inflicting pain on civilians, a government may be overthrown or its policies will change in a favorable direction. This belief is by no means unique to Middle Easterners-and has in fact been the standard belief of U.S. and other government officials for years. It was the belief behind the terror bombings of World War II by the Nazis, the U.S. and Britain, and behind the pulverizing of North Vietnam and the strikes on civilian infrastructure during the Kosovo war. It is the same rationale as that offered for the ongoing economic sanctions against Iraq: starve the people to pressure the leader. In addition to the deep immorality of targeting civilians as a means of changing policy, its efficacy is often dubious.

In this case, one would have a totally inaccurate view of the United States if one thought that the events of September 11 would cause U.S. officials to suddenly see the injustice of their policies toward the Palestinians, etc. On the contrary, the likely result of the attacks will be to allow U.S. leaders to mobilize the population behind a more uncompromising pursuit of their previous policies. The actions will set back the causes of the weak and the poor, while empowering the most aggressive and reactionary elements around the globe.

There is a second possible explanation for the September 11 attacks. Why commit a grotesquely provocative act against a power so large and so armed as the United States? Perhaps provoking the United States was precisely the intent. By provoking a massive military assault on one or more Islamic nations, the perpetrators may hope to set off a cycle of terror and counter-terror, precipitating a holy war between the Islamic world and the West, a war that they may hope will result in the overthrow of all insufficiently Islamic regimes and the unraveling of the United States, just as the Afghan war contributed to the demise of the Soviet Union. Needless to say, this scenario is insane on every count one can assess.

But even if provocation rather than grievances is what motivated the planners of the terror strikes against the U.S., this still wouldn't mean grievances are irrelevant. Whatever the planners' motives, they still needed to attract capable, organized, and skilled people, not only to participate, but to give their lives to a suicidal agenda. Deeply felt grievances provide a social environment from which fanatics can recruit and gain support.

## **How should guilt be determined and how should the punishment be carried out?**

The answers to these questions are all important. In our world, the only alternative to vigilantism is that guilt should be determined by an amassing of evidence that is then assessed in accordance with international law by the United Nations Security Council or other appropriate international agencies.

Punishment should be determined by the UN as well, and likewise the means of implementation. The UN may arrive at determinations that one or another party likes or not, as with any court, and may also be subject to political pressures that call into question its results or not, as with any court. But that the UN is the place for determinations about international conflict is obvious, at least according to solemn treaties

signed by the nations of the world. Most governments, however, don't take seriously their obligations under international law.

Certainly, history has shown that to U.S. policy makers international law is for everyone else to follow, and for Washington to manipulate when possible or to otherwise ignore. Thus, when the World Court told the U.S. to cease its contra war against Nicaragua and pay reparations, U.S. officials simply declared they did not consider themselves bound by the ruling.

## **Why us? Why the U.S.?**

### ***The terrorists wreaked their havoc on New York and Washington, not on Mexico City or Stockholm. Why?***

George W. Bush has claimed that the United States was targeted because of its commitment to freedom and democracy. Bush says people are jealous of our wealth. The truth is that anti-Americanism rests on feelings that the U.S. obstructs freedom and democracy as well as material well being for others. In the Middle East, for example, the United States supports Israeli oppression of Palestinians, providing the military, economic, and diplomatic backing that makes that oppression possible. It condemns conquest when it is done by Iraq, but not when done by Israel. It has bolstered authoritarian regimes (such as Saudi Arabia) that have provided U.S. companies with mammoth oil profits and has helped overthrow regimes (such as Iran in the early 1950s) that challenged those profits. When terrorist acts were committed by U.S. friends such as the Israeli-supervised massacres in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps in Lebanon, no U.S. sanctions were imposed. But about the U.S. imposed sanctions on Iraq, leading to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent children, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright could only say that she thought it was worth it. When the U.S. went to war against Iraq, it targeted civilian infrastructure. When Iran and Iraq fought a bloody war, the United States surreptitiously aided both sides.

On top of specific Middle Eastern concerns, anti-Americanism is also spawned by more general grievances. The United States is the leading status-quo power in the world. It promotes a global economic system of vast inequality and incredible poverty. It displays its arrogance of power when it rejects and blocks international consensus on issues ranging from the environment, to the rights of children, to landmines, to an international criminal court, to national missile defense.

Again, these grievances may have nothing to do with the motives of those who masterminded the terror strikes of September 11. But they certainly help create an environment conducive to recruitment.

## **Isn't it callous to talk about U.S. crimes at a time when the U.S. is mourning its dead?**

It would be callous if the people talking about U.S. crimes weren't also horrified at the terror in New York and if the U.S. wasn't talking about mounting a war against whole countries, removing governments from power, engaging in massive assaults, and evidencing no concern to discriminate terrorists from civilian bystanders.

But since critics are feeling the pain and the U.S. is already formulating its notions of justice in precisely those unconstructive terms, for critics to carefully point out the hypocrisy, and the likely consequences even as we also mourn the dead, feel outrage at the carnage, and help relief efforts, is essential. It is how we help avoid piling catastrophe on top of catastrophe.

Suppose bin Laden is the mastermind of the recent horror. Imagine he had gone before the Afghan population a week or two earlier and told them of the U.S. government's responsibility for so much tragedy and mayhem around the world, particularly to Arab populations as in Iraq and Palestine. Imagine that he further told them that Americans have different values and that they cheered when bombs were rained on people in Libya and Iraq. Suppose bin Laden had proposed the bombing of U.S. civilians to

force their government to change its ways. In that hypothetical event, what would we want the Afghan people to have replied?

We would want them to have told bin Laden that he was demented and possessed. We would want them to have pointed out that the fact that the U.S. government has levied massive violence against Iraq's civilians and others does not warrant attacks on U.S. civilians, and the fact of different values doesn't warrant attacks of any sort at all.

So isn't this what we ought to also want the U.S. public to say to George Bush? The fact of bin Laden's violence, assuming it proves to be the case, or that of the Taliban, or whatever other government may be implicated, does not warrant reciprocal terror attacks on innocent civilians.

## **By talking about U.S. crimes abroad, aren't we excusing terrorist acts?**

To express remorse and pain, and to also seek to avoid comparable and worse pain being inflicted on further innocents (including Americans) is not to evidence a lack of feeling for the impact of crimes against humanity, but instead indicates feelings that extend further than what the media or the government tells us are the limits of permissible sympathy. We not only feel for those innocents who have already died, and their families, but also for those who might be killed shortly, for those we may be able to help save.

U.S. crimes in no way justify or excuse the attacks of September 11. Terror is an absolutely unacceptable response to U.S. crimes. But at the same time, we need to stress as well that terror-targeting civilians is an absolutely unacceptable response by the United States to the genuine crimes of others.

The reason it is relevant to bring up U.S. crimes is not to justify terrorism, but to understand the terrain that breeds terrorism and terrorists. Terrorism is a morally despicable and strategically suicidal reaction to injustice. But, reducing injustice can certainly help eliminate the seeds of pain and suffering that nurture terrorist impulses and support for them.

## **Bush has said that the "war on terrorism" needs to confront all countries that aid or abet terrorism. Which countries qualify?**

The current thinking on this topic, promulgated by Bush and spreading rapidly beyond, is that anyone who plans, carries out, or abets terrorism, including knowingly harboring terrorists, is culpable for terrorist actions and their results-where terrorism is understood as the attacking of innocent civilians in order to coerce policy makers. Some people might argue with some aspect of this formulation, but from where we sit, the formulation is reasonable enough. It is the application that falls short.

The U.S. State Department has a list of states that support terrorism, but it is-as one would expect-an extremely political document. The latest listing consisted of Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Cuba, North Korea, and Sudan-significantly omitting Afghanistan. Cuba is included, one suspects, less because of any actual connection to terrorism, than because of longstanding U.S. hostility to the Cuban government and the long record of U.S. terrorism against Cuba. If we are talking about terrorism of the sort exemplified by car and other hand-delivered bombs, kidnappings, plane hijackings, or suicide assaults, we can reasonably guess that most of the countries on the State Department list, along with Afghanistan, Pakistan, and some other poor nations would qualify with varying degrees of culpability.

On the other hand, if we are talking about terrorism of the sort exemplified by military bombing and invasion, by food or medical embargoes affecting civilians rather than solely or even primarily official and military targets, by hitting "soft targets" such as health clinics or agricultural cooperatives, or by funding and training death squads, then we would have a rather different list of culpable nations, including such professed opponents of terrorism as the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and Israel.

At times, the parties engaged in either list point to the actions perpetrated by those on the other list as justification for their behavior. But, of course, terror does not justify subsequent terror, nor does reciprocal terror diminish terror from the other side.

## **Do Palestinians support the attacks, and, if so, what is the implication?**

There have been reports of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza cheering the attacks, and similar reports regarding Palestinians in the United States. Fox News has played over and over the same clip of some Palestinians in the occupied territories celebrating. But the media fails to explain that they are showing only a small minority of Palestinians and that official Palestinian sentiment has expressed its condemnation of the attacks and sympathy for the victims. The media have been especially remiss in not reporting such things as the statement issued by the Palestinian village of Beit Sahour movingly denouncing the terror, or the candlelight vigil in Arab East Jerusalem in memory of the victims.

There is no reason to doubt, however, that some Palestinians-both in the U.S. and in the Middle East-cheered the attacks. This is wrong, but it is also understandable. The United States has been the most important international backer of Israeli oppression of Palestinians.

Politically immature Palestinians, like the Americans who cheered the atomic bombing of Hiroshima or many lesser bombings such as that of Libya in 1986, ignore the human meaning of destroying an "enemy" target.

But that some Palestinians have reacted in this way, while disappointing, should have no bearing on our understanding of their oppression and the need to remedy it. In fact, given that Israel seems to be using the September 11 attacks as an excuse and a cover for increasing assaults on Palestinians, we need to press all the more vigorously for a just solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

## **What is the likely impact of the attacks within the U.S. policy-making establishment?**

The catastrophic character of these events provides a perfect excuse for reactionary elements to pursue every agenda item that they can connect to "the war against terrorism" and that they can fuel by fanning fears in the population. This obviously includes expanding military expenditures that have nothing whatever to do with legitimate security concerns and everything to do with profit-seeking and militarism. For example, even though the events of September 11 should have shown that "national missile defense" is no defense at all against the most likely threats we face, already the Democrats are beginning to drop their opposition to that destabilizing boondoggle. Amazingly, certain elements will even extrapolate to social issues. For example, our own home grown fundamentalists-like Jerry Falwell-have actually declared (though retracted after wide criticism) that abortion, homosexuality, feminism, and the ACLU are at fault. Others hope to use the attacks as a rationale for eliminating the capital gains tax, a long-time right-wing objective. But the main focus will be military policy. In coming weeks, we will see a celebration in America of military power, of a massive arms build-up, and perhaps assassinations, all touted as if the terror victims will be honored rather than defiled by our preparing to entomb still more innocent people around the world.

## **So what is the likely U.S. response?**

U.S. policymaking regarding international relations (and domestic relations as well) is a juggling act. On one side, the goal is enhancing the privilege, power, and wealth of U.S. elites. On the other side, the constraint is keeping at bay less powerful and wealthy constituencies who might have different agendas, both at home and abroad.

Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. has had a problem-how to get the public to ratify policies that don't benefit the public, but that serve corporate and elite political interests. The fear of a Soviet menace, duly exaggerated, served that purpose admirably for decades. The ideal response to the current situation, from the elite standpoint, will be to replace the Cold War with the Anti-Terror War. With this accomplished,

they will again have a vehicle to instill fear, arguably more credible than the former Soviet menace. Again they will have an enemy, terrorists, whom they can blame for anything and everything, trying as well to smear all dissidents as traveling a path leading inexorably toward the horrors of terrorism.

So their response to these recent events is to intone that we must have a long war, a difficult struggle, against an implacable, immense, and even ubiquitous enemy. They will declare that we must channel our energies to this cause, we must sacrifice butter for guns, we must renounce liberty for security, we must succumb, in short, to the rule of the right, and forget about pursuing the defense and enlargement of rights. Their preferred response will be to use the military, particularly against countries that are defenseless, perhaps even to occupy one and to broadly act in ways that will not so much reduce the threat of terror and diminish its causes, as to induce conflict that is serviceable to power regardless of the enlargement of terror that results.

Already Congress has been asked to give the president a blank check for military action, which means further removing U.S. military action from democratic control. Only Rep. Barbara Lee had the courage to vote "no" on Congress's joint resolution, authorizing the president "to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons."

## **What response should the U.S. take instead?**

The best way to deal with terrorism is to address its root causes. Perhaps some terrorism would exist even if the grievances of the people of the Third World were dealt with—grievances that lead to anger, despair, frustration, feelings of powerlessness, and hatred—but certainly the ability of those who would commit terror, without grievances to recruit others, would be tremendously reduced. As a second step, we might help establish a real international consensus against terrorism by putting on trial U.S. officials responsible for some of the atrocities noted earlier.

Of course, these are long-term solutions and we face the horror of terrorism today. So we must consider what we want the United States government to do internationally right now.

The U.S. government's guiding principle ought to be to assure the security, safety, and well-being of U.S. citizens without detracting from the security, safety, and well-being of others. A number of points follow from this principle.

We must insist that any response refrain from targeting civilians. It must refrain as well from attacking so-called dual-use targets, those that have some military purpose but substantially impact civilians. The United States did not adhere to this principle in World War II (where the direct intention was often to kill civilians) and it still does not adhere to it, as when it hit the civilian infrastructure in Iraq or Serbia, knowing that the result would be civilian deaths (from lack of electricity in hospitals, lack of drinking water, sewage treatment plants, and so on), while the military benefits would be slight. We would obviously reject as grotesque the claim that the World Trade Center was a legitimate target because its destruction makes it harder for the U.S. government to function (and hence to carry out its military policies). We need to be as sensitive to the human costs of striking dual-use facilities in other countries as we are of those in our own country.

We must insist as well that any response to the terror be carried out according to the UN Charter. The Charter provides a clear remedy for events like those of September 11: present the case to the Security Council and let the Council determine the appropriate response. The Charter permits the Council to choose responses up to and including the use of military force. No military action should be carried out without Security Council authorization. To bypass the Security Council is to weaken international law that provides security to all nations, especially the weaker ones.

Security Council approval is not always determinative. During the Gulf War, the U.S. obtained such approval by exercising its wealth and power to gain votes. So we should insist on a freely offered Security Council authorization. Moreover, we should insist that the UN retain control of any response; that is, we should oppose the usual practice whereby the United States demands that the Council give it a blank

check to conduct a war any way it wants. In the case of the Gulf War, although the Council authorized the war, the war was run out of Washington, not the UN. To give the United States a free hand to run a military operation as it chooses removes a crucial check.

We should insist that no action and no Security Council vote be taken without a full presentation of the evidence assigning culpability. We don't want Washington announcing that we should just take its word for it-as occurred in 1998, when the U.S. bombed a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan, asserting that it was a chemical warfare facility, only to acknowledge some time later that it had been mistaken.

If-and it's a big if-all these conditions are met, then we should no more object to seizing the perpetrators than we object to having the domestic police seize a rapist or a murderer to bring the culprit to justice. And what if a state is also found to be culpable or if a state determines to use military means to protect the terrorists? The dangers of harm to civilians are much greater in the case of a war against a state. Military action would be justified only insofar as it did not cause substantial harm to civilians.

In addition, if the goal of a proposed military action is to enhance U.S. security rather than to wreak vengeance, such envisioned benefits would have to be weighed against the prospects of driving thousands of others in the Islamic world into the hands of terrorism. In other words, military action needs to be the smallest part of the international response. More important are diplomatic pressures, cutting off funding for terrorist organizations, reducing the grievances that feed frustration, and so on.

It is critically important to also note, however, that even non-military actions can cause immense civilian suffering and that such options too must be rejected. Calling for Pakistan to cut off food aid to Afghanistan, for example, as the United States has already done, would likely lead to starvation on a huge scale. Its implications could be far worse than those of bombing or other seemingly more aggressive choices.

## **What should we do to protect ourselves from these sorts of attacks?**

Beyond pursuing the implementation of international law through appropriate international channels and beyond trying to rectify unjust conditions that breed hopelessness and despair that can become the nurturing ground of terror, it is also necessary to reduce vulnerability and risk.

Some things are far easier than the media would have us believe. If we don't want to ever see a commercial airliner turned into a missile and used to destroy people and property, we can disconnect the pilots' cabin and the body of the plane, making entry to the former from the latter impossible. Likewise, it is significant that the U.S. airline industry has, up until now, handled airport security through private enterprise, which means low-paid, unskilled security personnel with high turnover. In Europe, on the other hand, airport security is a government function and the workers are relatively well paid, and hence much more highly motivated and competent.

Other tasks will be harder. What we should not do, however, is curtail basic freedoms and militarize daily life. That response doesn't ward off terror, but makes terror the victor.

## **How do we respond to what seems like militaristic flag-waving?**

To harshly judge the way some show their feelings for the U.S. in times of crisis can be callous and unconstructive. The image of firefighters running up stairs to help those above is heroic and deserves profound respect. The vision of hundreds and thousands of people helping at the scene, working to save lives, donating, supporting, is similarly worthy and positive. Even the flag waving, which can at times be jingoistic, should not be assumed to be such. The important thing is to increase awareness of the relevant facts and values at stake, the policies that may follow and their implications, and what people of good will can do to influence all these.

## **What should progressives do?**

Change depends on organized resistance that raises awareness and commitment. It depends on pressuring decision makers to respect the will of a public with dissident and critical views. Our immediate

task is to communicate accurate information, to counter misconceptions and illogic, to empathize and be on the wavelength of the public, to talk and listen, to offer information, analysis, and humane aims.

## **The United States and Middle East: Why Do They Hate Us?**

The list below presents specific incidents of U.S. policy. It minimizes the grievances against the U.S. because it excludes long-standing policies, such as U.S. backing for authoritarian regimes (arming Saudi Arabia, training the secret police in Iran under the Shah, providing arms and aid to Turkey as it attacked Kurdish villages, etc.). The list also excludes actions of Israel in which the U.S. is indirectly implicated because Israel has been the leading or second-ranking recipient of U.S. aid for many years and has received U.S. weapons and benefited from U.S. votes in the Security Council.

- ❑ 1949: CIA backs military coup deposing elected government of Syria.
- ❑ 1953: CIA helps overthrow the democratically elected Mossadeq government in Iran (which had nationalized the British oil company) leading to a quarter-century of dictatorial rule by the Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlevi.
- ❑ 1956: U.S. cuts off promised funding for Aswan Dam in Egypt after Egypt receives Eastern bloc arms.
- ❑ 1956: Israel, Britain, and France invade Egypt. U.S. does not support invasion, but the involvement of NATO allies severely diminishes Washington's reputation in the region.
- ❑ 1958: U.S. troops land in Lebanon to preserve "stability."
- ❑ 1960s (early): U.S. unsuccessfully attempts assassination of Iraqi leader, Abdul Karim Qassim.
- ❑ 1963: U.S. reported to give Iraqi Ba'ath party (soon to be headed by Saddam Hussein) names of communists to murder, which they do with vigor.
- ❑ 1967-: U.S. blocks any effort in the Security Council to enforce SC Resolution 244, calling for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in the 1967 war.
- ❑ 1970: Civil war between Jordan and PLO. Israel and U.S. prepare to intervene on side of Jordan if Syria backs PLO.
- ❑ 1972: U.S. blocks Sadat's efforts to reach a peace agreement with Egypt.
- ❑ 1973: U.S. military aid enables Israel to turn the tide in war with Syria and Egypt.
- ❑ 1973-75: U.S. supports Kurdish rebels in Iraq. When Iran reaches an agreement with Iraq in 1975 and seals the border, Iraq slaughters Kurds and U.S. denies them refuge. Kissinger secretly explains that "covert action should not be confused with missionary work."
- ❑ 1978-79: Iranians begin demonstrations against the Shah. U.S. tells Shah it supports him "without reservation" and urges him to act forcefully. Until the last minute, U.S. tries to organize military coup to save the Shah, but to no avail.
- ❑ 1979-88: U.S. begins covert aid to Mujahideen in Afghanistan six months before Soviet invasion. Over the next decade U.S. provides more than \$3 billion in arms and aid.
- ❑ 1980-88: Iran-Iraq war. When Iraq invades Iran, the U.S. opposes any Security Council action to condemn the invasion. U.S. removes Iraq from its list of nations supporting terrorism and allows U.S. arms to be transferred to Iraq. U.S. lets Israel provide arms to Iran and in 1985 U.S. provides arms directly (though secretly) to Iran. U.S. provides intelligence information to Iraq. Iraq uses chemical weapons in 1984; U.S. restores diplomatic relations with Iraq. 1987 U.S. sends its navy into the Persian Gulf, taking Iraq's side; an aggressive U.S. ship shoots down an Iranian civilian airliner, killing 290.
- ❑ 1981, 1986: U.S. holds military maneuvers off the coast of Libya with the clear purpose of provoking Qaddafi. In 1981, a Libyan plane fires a missile and two Libyan planes were subsequently shot down. In 1986, Libya fires missiles that land far from any target and U.S.
- ❑ U.S. attacks Libyan patrol boats, killing 72, and shore installations.

- ❑ When a bomb goes off in a Berlin nightclub, killing two, the U.S. charges that Qaddafi was behind it (possibly true) and conducts major bombing raids in Libya, killing dozens of civilians, including Qaddafi's adopted daughter.
- ❑ 1982: U.S. gives "green light" to Israeli invasion of Lebanon, where more than 10,000 civilians were killed. U.S. chooses not to invoke its laws prohibiting Israeli use of U.S. weapons except in self-defense.
- ❑ 1983: U.S. troops sent to Lebanon as part of a multinational peacekeeping force; intervene on one side of a civil war. Withdraw after suicide bombing of marine barracks.
- ❑ 1984: U.S.-backed rebels in Afghanistan fire on civilian airliner.
- ❑ 1988: Saddam Hussein kills many thousands of his own Kurdish population and uses chemical weapons against them. The U.S. increases its economic ties to Iraq.
- ❑ 1990-91: U.S. rejects diplomatic settlement of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (for example, rebuffing any attempt to link the two regional occupations, of Kuwait and Palestine). U.S. leads international coalition in war against Iraq. Civilian infrastructure targeted. To promote "stability" U.S. refuses to aid uprisings by Shi'ites in the south and Kurds in the north, denying the rebels access to captured Iraqi weapons and refusing to prohibit Iraqi helicopter flights.
- ❑ 1991-: Devastating economic sanctions are imposed on Iraq. U.S. and Britain block all attempts to lift them. Hundreds of thousands die. Though Security Council stated sanctions were to be lifted once Hussein's programs to develop weapons of mass destruction were ended, Washington makes it known that the sanctions would remain as long as Saddam remains in power. Sanctions strengthen Saddam's position.
- ❑ 1993-: U.S. launches missile attack on Iraq, claiming self-defense against an alleged assassination attempt on former president Bush two months earlier.
- ❑ 1998: U.S. and U.K. bomb Iraq over weapons inspections, even though Security Council is just then meeting to discuss the matter.
- ❑ 1998: U.S. destroys factory producing half of Sudan's pharmaceutical supply, claiming retaliation for attacks on U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya and that factory was involved in chemical warfare. U.S. later acknowledges there is no evidence for the chemical warfare charge.