

Diplomatic Immunity? Terror Attacks Against Israeli Embassies and Diplomatic Representatives Abroad

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Introduction

Most people are unaware of the degree to which Israeli diplomats are compelled to organize their lives around the virtually omnipresent security threats that face them. These include threats from a wide variety of terrorist groups and states, including countries situated in remote corners of the world.

Anyone who has visited an Israeli embassy notices the fortress-like security conditions under which the diplomats work. Checks for possible security breaches may be so frequent and prolonged that brief meetings are impractical. In visiting such embassies and consulates, this author is reminded of the vicissitudes of Ulysses in Greek mythology, who struggled for ten years to wander home from the Trojan War; rather than negotiating entry into an Israeli embassy or consulate it is often easier to meet at someone's house or in a quiet public place despite misgivings regarding security.

Israeli embassies, with their multiple layers of fortifications, stand as testaments to the difficult reality of the day-to-day conduct of diplomatic relations between Israel and its neighbors. As the ninety-two examples below demonstrate, the diplomats and their environs repeatedly stand as convenient targets for anti-Israel terrorism.

The land on which embassies are situated is extra-territorial. Thus, for example, the recent attack on Israel's embassy in Cairo was dealt with by two layers of security. The internal security was handled by personnel from Israel's General Security Service [*Shin Bet*], whereas external security was the responsibility of Egyptian government security officers.¹ It is fair to note that after a several-hour

delay, the Egyptians whisked the remaining six Israeli embassy officials to safety, away from the frenzied mob.²

Diplomacy is supposed to protect its participants. Significantly, terrorists are not in danger of being killed if they are captured alive. Yet, the risks facing Israeli diplomats, who by international law are supposed to enjoy diplomatic immunity, remains high. On a world map, in every region except Antarctica and the Arctic, ongoing terrorist threats to Israel's diplomatic presence exist. The terrorists' arsenals include a wide array of weaponry, from anti-aircraft rockets to bombs with altimeters, pipe bombs, hand grenades, homemade bombs, letter bombs, and assault rifles.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, attacks against embassies and diplomatic personnel increased in frequency and severity over the decades that followed Israel's birth in 1948. During the first twenty years of its existence, Israel was a small and financially limited player in the international scene. However, as Israel established diplomatic relations with additional entities in the aftermath of its victory in the 1967 Six-Day War, attacks against Israeli diplomats and their embassies became widespread. Simply put, there were many more potential targets.³

It is beyond the scope of this article to examine three categories of violent attacks abroad: those on Israeli commercial enterprises; Jewish community leaders, buildings, and schools; and synagogues.

History of Diplomatic Immunity

For centuries, even millennia, nations have engaged with one another via the diplomat—a person who served as a protected representative during negotiations relevant to the interests of the host state. The concepts of diplomatic immunity and diplomatic protection developed so that, for example, the diplomat and his/her office/residence were impervious, at least in principle. Thus, the emissary was permitted safe passage in order to negotiate the terms of truces or other agreements. Indeed, the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations⁴ could be the most successful instrument drafted under the UN framework. Considering its long history, which dates back more than 2,000 years, it is necessary to understand the background of the concept of diplomatic immunity.

The principle of diplomatic immunity extends at least as far back as the Greek city states. It was respected, to varying degrees, by the entities of ancient India, Pharaonic Egypt, Carthage, the Roman Empire, Byzantium, and other European states during the Renaissance. Expanded and updated by the Congress of

Westphalia in 1643, over the following century detailed rules developed in relation to the civil and criminal immunity of ambassadors, their staff, and family members. Measures have also developed to ensure the security of embassy premises and to exempt diplomats from duties and taxes.⁵

International scholars such as Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) and Emerich de Vattel (1714–1767) defined these principles that became building blocks of customary international law. The earliest codification was adopted by the Congress of Vienna in 1815.⁶ Further details were codified with the Havana Convention of 1928. The Draft Convention of The Harvard Research in International Law⁷ preceded the standard United Nations (UN) procedure for the codification of UN customary practice in 1952 and was further developed by the International Law Commission in 1957 and, most recently, by the conference held in Vienna in 1961.

The Vienna Convention formulates a complete framework for the establishment, maintenance, and termination of diplomatic relations on the basis of consent between independent sovereign states. Article 29 provides inviolability for the person of diplomats and Article 31 establishes their immunity from civil and criminal jurisdiction. Almost all states are now parties.⁸

It is important to remember that the primary purpose of diplomatic immunity is to protect diplomats from harassment by their host government (although they can be expelled, as was recently demonstrated by the UK's expulsion of Iranian diplomats).⁹ Many principles of diplomatic immunity are now considered reflective of customary law and therefore obligatory on all civilized nations.¹⁰

The Modern Threat of Global Terrorism

In the years since 1961, diplomats have encountered a new challenge to their personal security: vulnerability to terrorist attacks. This includes the attempted kidnapping of diplomats, as well as demands for ransoms and the premature release of previously convicted terrorists. Acts of terror have also included besieging or bombing embassies. Terrorist attacks on diplomats and embassies spiked during and after the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the 1982 Lebanon War.

In general, the methods employed by terrorist groups are markedly inconsistent and therefore such acts are difficult to foil. In addition, sometimes there are competing assertions of responsibility between various terrorist groups, each of them claiming “credit” for a particular act of terrorism.

There are periods in which, seemingly overnight, new terrorist groups, such as the “Revolutionary Cells” that claimed responsibility for the 1982 bombings of

the Israeli and US consulates in Zurich, emerge out of thin air and disappear soon after. It is often difficult to discern any consistency for the behavior of these one-off groups other than their opportunism and greed. Unfortunately, even when caught and convicted, these terrorists serve very little time in confinement and are often released in various prisoner exchanges for subsequent arrestees.

The ninety-two examples of violations of diplomatic immunity detailed below demonstrate that terrorism directed against foreign representatives is more frequent than is commonly perceived. While Israel is perhaps the most frequent victim, other countries perceived to be allies of Israel, including, first and foremost, the United States, may be likely targets as well.

The 1979 hostage crisis at the US embassy in Tehran underscores the shared vulnerability of Western diplomats. More recently, the outrageous attack on the British embassy in Tehran, where Iranian students destroyed the compound to protest British petroleum and gasoline sanctions, serves as a reminder that terrorists do not target only Israeli diplomats. Indeed, any diplomat who represents a rival state may be seen as a potential target of violence. Perhaps the most alarming aspect of attacks against Israeli and Jewish diplomats is that they have occurred all over the world, even in countries normally considered peaceful and neutral.

Solutions and Responses

For a long time Israel was the constant victim of attacks on its diplomats and embassies. This is no longer the case. A significant reason for this involves Israel's innovative security measures, often referred to as world-class and deserving of emulation.¹¹ However, the September 2011 forced entry into the Israeli embassy in Cairo by an agitated mob serves as a reminder that attacks on Israelis and Israeli assets are still a threat.

In an attempt to cope with the security challenges posed by terrorists, new additional conventions, such as the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons including Diplomatic Agents, have been widely ratified.¹² This offers additional protection that expressly covers heads of state, heads of government, and ministers of foreign affairs against acts of terrorism. As of May 2008, the Internationally Protected Persons Convention had 168 state signatories, making it one of the most widely internationally adopted conventions.¹³

These widely adopted Geneva Conventions have become so successful because the central rules regulating diplomatic relations had been essentially stable for

over 200 years. The principle of diplomatic immunity, for ambassadors and their embassies, plays an absolutely essential role in promoting inter-state relations.

Terrorism against Israeli Diplomats and Embassies

The following enumerated examples of attacks on Israeli diplomatic personnel and structures abroad illustrate the frequency and range of these assaults. The techniques used, the reactions of the host countries, the casualties inflicted, the apprehension and/or punishment of the perpetrators, and the ideology behind the attacks vary greatly. Unfortunately, in some of the cases the information available from public sources is limited. This lack of information can be attributed to a concern for the security of diplomats and embassies; public access to details may aid potential attackers seeking to imitate prior methods.

1. May 22, 1969: Copenhagen: Three members of the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) were arrested and charged with plotting to assassinate former Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion.¹⁴
2. August 18, 1969, Copenhagen: The PFLP claimed responsibility for bombs, found and dismantled, in the Israeli government tourist office.¹⁵
3. August 23, 1969, Izmir: Two Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) bombs at a commercial pavilion at a trade fair in Izmir, Turkey, exploded prematurely.¹⁶
4. December 25, 1969, Bracknell: Trefor Owen Williams, a former British army officer and neo-Nazi activist, and Ronald Gorman Hamman stood trial in Bracknell, Berkshire, England, charged with attempting to blow up an Israeli plane on behalf of Fatah. A large amount of explosives were found in Williams' home and he was subsequently convicted and imprisoned. The charges against Hamman were dropped when he agreed to testify against Williams.¹⁷
5. March 7, 1970, Guatemala: A hand grenade tossed into the garden of the Israeli honorary consul's residence exploded, causing damage but no injuries. The police stated that an unidentified local pro-Arab group was responsible.¹⁸

6. May 4, 1970, Asuncion: Two armed Palestinians broke into the office of the Israeli Consulate and fired at the employees. An Israeli secretary, Edna Pe'er, was killed, and a local staff member was injured. The perpetrators were apprehended and sentenced to long prison terms.¹⁹
7. May 28, 1971, Istanbul: Israeli Consul Efraim Elrom was assassinated. The Turkish Liberation Army claimed responsibility.
8. September 10, 1972, Brussels: An employee of the Israeli embassy was assaulted and wounded. Fatah and its offshoot Black September claimed responsibility.
9. September 18, 1972, Amsterdam: Fatah and Black September claimed responsibility for letter bombs posted from Amsterdam to Israel and Israeli missions around the world. The bombs were defused before they could cause damage.
10. September 19, 1972, London: Agricultural counselor/attaché Ami Shechori was killed by a letter bomb. Black September claimed responsibility.
11. December 7, 1972, Singapore: Letter bombs were sent to public institutions in Israel from Singapore, for which the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine: General Command (PFLP-GC) claimed responsibility.
12. December 24, 1972, London: A Black September terrorist was arrested in London carrying weapons and explosives which the police later stated were to be used against Israeli embassies in Scandinavia.
13. December 28, 1972, Bangkok: The Israeli embassy was taken over by four terrorists. Six embassy personnel were taken hostage, and were released by the terrorists nineteen hours later.
14. January 9, 1973, Schoenau: Three Black September terrorists were arrested following a foiled attack against the Schoenau castle in Austria, which functioned as a transit centre for Soviet Jewish immigrants en route to Israel from the Soviet Union.

15. January 24, 1973, Athens: Black September claimed responsibility for a wave of letter bombs sent from Greece to Israeli consulates in Chile and Australia, and a rabbi in Canada.
16. January 31, 1973, Rome: Black September claimed responsibility for letter bombs sent to the Israeli embassy in Rwanda from Rome.
17. February 5, 1973, Rome: Black September claimed responsibility for letter bombs sent to the Israeli embassy in Guatemala from Rome.
18. February 8, 1973, Rome: Black September claimed responsibility for letter bombs sent to the Israeli embassy in Bangui, Central African Republic from Rome.
19. May 7, 1973, Paris: Two armed terrorists attempted to seize a room overlooking the Israeli embassy from which they could attack embassy staff. It is not known to which terrorist organization(s) they belonged.
20. July 1, 1973, Washington, DC: Yosef (Joe) Alon, Air Force attaché in the Israeli embassy in Washington, was shot to death outside his home. Alon and his wife, Dvora, had just returned from a farewell party for an Israeli diplomat. No one claimed responsibility.
21. November 19, 1973, Paris: Thirteen members of the PFLP, Algerian and Turkish terrorist groups were arrested near Paris shortly before their planned kidnap of an Israeli diplomat's family and attack on the Israeli embassy. They were tried and convicted but subsequently released.
22. August 26, 1974, Frankfurt: The PFLP claimed responsibility for explosions outside the Israel Government Tourist Office, which caused damage but no casualties.
23. February 8, 1976, Berlin: The PFLP claimed responsibility for a bomb that exploded at the Israel Bonds office, causing damage but no casualties.
24. June 12, 1977, Tehran: Two terrorists were killed in an exchange of fire after they attempted to break into the office of the Jewish Federation in Tehran. It is not known to which group they belonged.

25. January 8, 1978, Brussels: Police discovered two loaded rocket launchers aimed at the Israeli embassy. The missiles were dismantled. It is believed the Wadi Haddad faction of the PFLP was responsible.
26. April 5, 1979, Nicosia: A bomb exploded outside the Israeli embassy, causing damage but no casualties. As-Saiqa claimed responsibility.²⁰ As-Saiqa is an armed group created by the Syrian Ba'ath party in 1966. It is a commando group formed by (and mostly consisting of) Syrian Ba'athists. It is strictly pan-Arabist, denying a Palestinian identity except as a tactical maneuver.²¹
27. April 8, 1979, Ankara: A bomb exploded outside the Israeli embassy causing damage but no casualties. As-Saiqa claimed responsibility.
28. November 13, 1979, Lisbon: An attempt was made on the life of Israeli Ambassador Ephraim Eldar, who was wounded in the attack. A guard at the embassy was killed, and the ambassador's chauffeur and a local policeman were injured.
29. December 12, 1979, San Salvador: A bomb exploded at the Israeli embassy in El Salvador causing structural damage but no injuries. The police stated that a left-wing terrorist group was responsible.
30. July 25, 1980, Brussels: The Israeli commercial attaché to Brussels, Yosef Halachi, was assassinated by members of the Abu Nidal Organization.
31. May 1, 1981, Vienna: Heinz Nittel, president of the Austrian-Israeli Friendship League, was shot and killed by members of the Abu Nidal Organization, who had also threatened to kill Austria's Jewish-born chancellor, Bruno Kreisky. Bahij Mohammed Younis was subsequently convicted of the assassination and sentenced to life imprisonment.
32. July 22, 1981, Athens: The PFLP claimed responsibility for the killing of Dhimitris Malandasi, who they claimed was an Israeli intelligence agent. They also claimed responsibility for the bomb attack in the travel agency where Malandasi worked that killed the owner, Evyenia Anjelikousi.

33. August 10, 1981, Vienna: Two bombs were hurled at the Israeli embassy in Vienna in the early morning hours, injuring a 75-year-old woman and damaging an adjoining house. Later the same day, two explosive devices went off outside the Israeli diplomatic mission in Athens, causing slight damage to the facility.
34. February 16, 1981, Cairo: Three Fatah terrorists and two Egyptian nationals were arrested on suspicion of planning to attack the Israeli embassy and a Cairo synagogue.
35. December 2, 1981, Caracas: An emissary of the Jewish Agency was shot and wounded near his home following the publication in the Venezuelan press of articles he had written about attacks on Israel. No claim for responsibility was made.
36. January 12, 1982, Guatemala City: Bombs were thrown from a car at the embassies of Israel and Argentina and the consulate of Haiti, causing minor damage. A subsequent telephone call to the press claimed that the attack was to protest Israel's supply of arms to the Guatemalan army.
37. March 31, 1982, Paris: The Israeli consulate was attacked by three gunmen, but no injuries were caused. The Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction (LARF) claimed responsibility. The police investigation subsequently established that they had been aided by members of the French leftist organization, Action Directe.
38. April 3, 1982, Paris: A young woman shot and killed an attaché at the Israeli embassy, Ya'acov Bar-Simantov, outside his home. The LARF claimed responsibility for the attack. The assailant managed to escape.
39. June 3, 1982, London: Marwen al-Banna, Hussain Ahmed Ghassan Said, and Nayaf Rosan, all members of the Abu Nidal Organization, attempted to assassinate Shlomo Argov, the Israeli ambassador, as he left the Park Lane Hotel. Argov was shot in the head and mortally wounded. The three were convicted and sentenced to between thirty and thirty-five years imprisonment each. The subsequent police investigation revealed that they had also been collecting information on Israeli and Jewish institutions in London.

40. June 8, 1982, Zurich: The Revolutionary Cells claimed responsibility for bombs at the Israeli and US consulates that caused damage but no injuries.
41. June 18, 1982, Rome: A bomb in the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) office in Rome caused little damage and no casualties. No claim of responsibility was made.
42. June 19, 1982, Rome: Bombs caused minor damage but no injuries at the offices of the Italian–Israel Chamber of Commerce, the HIAS and the local American Express office. No claim of responsibility was made.
43. August 10, 1982, Paris: Members of the Action Directe machine gunned an empty Israeli embassy car and bombed a Jewish-owned shop and bank. One person was injured.
44. August 11, 1982, Guatemala City: A bomb attack on the Israeli embassy, which caused no damage or injury, was followed shortly thereafter by a similar attack on a nearby synagogue. No claim for responsibility was made.
45. September 17, 1982, Paris: A bomb hidden in a motorbike exploded next to the car of Amos Manel, an Israeli embassy official, injuring eight people, including Manel and members of his family. The subsequent police investigation established that it had been carried out by members of Action Directe with the assistance of the LARF.
46. September 23, 1982, Bogota: The wife of the Israeli ambassador and two others were seriously wounded when attackers were machine-gunned at the ambassador's residence. The April 19 Movement, a leftist Colombian terror organization, subsequently claimed responsibility.²² An anonymous spokesman for M-19 stated that the bombing was an act of solidarity with the Palestinians killed in Beirut.²³
47. September 23, 1982, Malta: The Israeli chargé d'affaires, Esther Milo, was almost kidnapped by a four-man group as she was about to enter her car. She was lightly injured in the failed attempt. The attack was attributed to the Abu Nidal organization.

48. December 3, 1982, Quito: A bomb concealed in a suitcase exploded in the building housing the Israeli embassy. Two local policemen were killed and a local woman was injured. The building sustained considerable damage. A local organization claimed responsibility.
49. December 23, 1982, Sydney: A bomb exploded in the Israeli consulate in Sydney. Two people, including a local employee, were wounded. The Abu Ibrahim faction claimed responsibility.
50. March 28, 1983, Vienna: An assassination plot by the Abu Nidal Organization against the Austrian (Jewish) Chancellor Bruno Kreisky was foiled by the local security services.
51. May 2, 1983, Mexico City: Shots were fired at the home of an Israeli diplomat, causing damage but no casualties. No claim of responsibility was made.
52. December 23, 1983, Malta: The Israeli chargé d'affaires, Esther Milo, narrowly escaped assassination when a lone gunman shot at her car. No claim of responsibility was made.
53. June 5, 1984, Cairo: A security officer of the Israeli embassy, Zvi Kedar, was wounded in the hand by a shot fired from a moving vehicle.
54. June 28, 1984, Colombo: A bomb was detonated near the hotel room occupied by the head of the Israeli Interest Section in Sri Lanka. The explosion caused damage to the room and its contents.
55. October 4, 1984, Nicosia: A car bomb exploded in the parking lot of the Israeli embassy in Cyprus. The building sustained severe damage. The Abu Musa organization was responsible for the attack.
56. August 20, 1985, Cairo: An employee of the Israeli embassy, Albert Atrakchi, was shot and killed while driving in his car. His wife and an embassy secretary were wounded. Responsibility was claimed by the Islamic Jihad of Egypt.
57. March 19, 1986, Cairo: Eti Telor, wife of an employee in the Israeli embassy in Cairo, was killed and three embassy employees were injured in an attack on their car, near the Israel pavilion at the Cairo Trade Fair.

58. October 2, 1986, London: Six members of the Abu Nidal Organization, including a Swedish national, were arrested and charged with plotting to assassinate the Israeli ambassador. The members of the group were all deported.
59. March 18, 1987, Athens: A bomb was thrown at the Israeli embassy, causing damage but no injuries. No claim of responsibility was made.
60. February 16, 1988, Manila: An explosive device was detonated outside the building housing the Israeli embassy. There were no injuries.
61. March 21, 1988, Tokyo: The Israeli embassy was bombed. There were no casualties, and no claim of responsibility was made.²⁴
62. May 1988, Nicosia: An attempt was made to attack the Israeli embassy in Nicosia, Cyprus, using a car bomb. The bomb was detonated a few hundred meters away, killing several policemen.²⁵
63. July 16, 1988, Lima: Three members of the Abu Nidal Organization, including two locally recruited Arabs, were charged with gathering information on synagogues and cars owned by Jewish community leaders and Israeli diplomats, with a view to carrying out terrorist attacks.²⁶
64. December 14, 1988, Lisbon: A parcel bomb was delivered to the Israeli embassy but was defused by the Portuguese police. No organization claimed responsibility, although the sender's name on the parcel was "Carlos Pentantos."²⁷
65. January 16, 1989, London: A powerful letter bomb was sent to the Israeli embassy in London, but was rendered harmless after its discovery. Responsibility was claimed by the January 15 Organization, which was believed to be affiliated with Palestinian Islamic Jihad.²⁸
66. August 23, 1989, Istanbul: A bomb was detonated near the Israeli consulate in Istanbul, causing no damage or injuries. The Armed People's Units, believed to be associated with the Marxist Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), claimed responsibility.²⁹

67. October 3, 1989, Brussels: Dr. Joseph Wybran, the president of the Belgian Jewish community, was assassinated by a gunman in the car park of the hospital in Brussels where he worked as a consultant. It was later alleged that he was murdered by members of the Abu Nidal Organization at the behest of the Iranian government.³⁰
68. November 15, 1991, Kyiv: Army experts defused two explosive devices found in the toilets of the main synagogue in Kiev, Ukraine. An Israeli ex-minister was scheduled to address a communal meeting there later in the day.³¹
69. March 7, 1992, Ankara: Ehud Sadan, chief of security at the Israeli embassy, was killed by an explosive device attached to his car.³² The Islamic Jihad, Hizbullah and the Islamic Revenge Organization claimed responsibility.³³
70. March 17, 1992, Buenos Aires: A bomb demolished the Israeli embassy. Twenty eight-people were killed and approximately 300 wounded, among them four Israeli embassy personnel, four local embassy employees, and scores of Argentineans, including elderly residents of a nearby nursing home and schoolchildren on a passing bus.
71. April 1, 1993, Washington, DC: Four members of the Abu Nidal Organization, all long-term residents in the US, were convicted of planning a terrorist campaign against the Israeli embassy and leading members of the Jewish community in Washington, DC.
72. March 11, 1994, Bangkok: A hijacked truck laden with explosives was intercepted on its way to carry out an attack against the Israeli embassy. After hitting a local motorcycle, the terrorist driving the truck fled the scene. The body of the motorcycle driver was later found by police.
73. July 26, 1994, London: A bomb exploded outside the Israeli embassy. Several embassy personnel were injured.
74. July 27, 1994, London: A car bomb exploded outside the Balfour House, Finchley offices of the Joint Israel Appeal and Zionist Federation, causing blast damage to the front of the building, the buildings opposite, and injuring five people.

75. September 13, 1994, Bonn: German authorities arrested six Palestinians with Jordanian passports and one Egyptian in connection with a plot to assassinate Ignatz Bubis, the president of the German Jewish community, and bomb a Jewish center in Cologne, a synagogue in Berlin, and the Israeli embassy in Bonn. Although they were later released for lack of evidence, the attackers were stated to be members of the Abu Nidal Organization.
76. March 1996, Manchester: Three Islamist post-graduate students were put on trial for planning terrorist attacks in the Manchester area. Although no targets were identified, they had in their possession a photograph of the Israeli ambassador, against whom it was alleged that they were planning an assassination attempt. The students were not affiliated with any terrorist group. Two were acquitted; the third, Faisal Mostafa, was convicted of illegal possession of a firearm with intent to hurt or kill, and imprisoned.
77. September 22, 1997, Amman: Two Israeli embassy security personnel were injured in an attack, while in the course of duty.
78. April 23, 1998, Athens: Two firebombs exploded outside the offices of the Central Board of Jewish Communities. A previously unknown group, International Solidarity, claimed responsibility.
79. October 1, 1998, Brussels: A grenade was found and safely dismantled outside the Israeli embassy.
80. February 17, 1999, Berlin: Some 100 rioters broke into the Israeli consulate general, brandishing clubs, hammers, and iron bars. Israeli security guards shot and killed three of the rioters in self-defense after they took a woman hostage and tried to seize weapons.
81. November 18, 1999, Rome: A crudely constructed pipe bomb was planted outside a cinema, which was screening a Holocaust film to the Jewish community with the Israeli ambassador in attendance. The package was found and disarmed. A few days earlier a similar bomb was discovered outside the National Museum of Liberation, which had also been daubed with antisemitic slogans.
82. Early 2000, Asuncion: Tri-border area-based al-Qa'ida terrorists targeted the Israeli (and US) embassies. The plot may also have

involved planned simultaneous attacks against the Israeli embassies in Quito, Ecuador and Montevideo, Uruguay.

83. March 4, 2000, Montreal: Tarek Adealy Khafagy, an Egyptian refugee, was arrested for possessing an explosive substance. The police stated that he was also involved in bomb plots against the Israeli embassy in Ottawa and the consulate in Montreal.³⁴
84. March 10, 2000, Canada: Ayman Bondok and Kim St. Louis were arrested for possessing illegal explosives. They were charged with threatening Israel in an effort to win the release of Lebanese prisoners. It is believed that Bondok had also made threatening calls to the Israeli consulate.³⁵ Police believe the two were acting on their own rather than in concert with any terrorist groups. On March 30, Bondok was charged with extortion and possessing explosives. St. Louis was charged with the latter offense but was released on bail.³⁶
85. December 3, 2002, Canberra and Sydney: Jack Roche, a British-born convert to Islam, was charged with plotting bomb attacks on the Israeli embassy in Canberra and the consulate in Sydney, Australia. Roche claimed to have been al-Qa'ida-trained in Afghanistan. He subsequently pleaded guilty and was sentenced to nine years in prison. One Australian citizen was arrested in November 2002 for an alleged plot to bomb the Israeli consulate in Sydney. This individual was charged with terrorism offenses.
86. November 9, 2003, Munich: German police seized large quantities of TNT, firearms, and grenades, thereby foiling a plot by the neo-Nazi Kameradschaft Sud to bomb a ceremony on November 9, the anniversary of Kristallnacht. The ceremony, which was to mark the dedication of a new synagogue, was attended by President Rau of Germany, the Bavarian state premier Edmund Stoiber, leading representatives of the Jewish community, and other notables. Martin Wiese, 29, was found guilty of masterminding the planned attack. Three of Wiese's accomplices were also jailed. Five other former members of Wiese's group were given suspended prison sentences of between sixteen and twenty-two months for their part in the conspiracy. Prosecutors said Wiese planned to detonate an explosive at a foundation-laying ceremony at the Jewish center on November 9, 2003. Wiese's group was said to have plotted to use Munich's sewer system to gain access to the site.

87. July 30, 2004, Tashkent: The Israeli ambassador's personal bodyguard and four local policemen were killed in a dual suicide bombing outside the Israeli and US embassies in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.³⁷ The explosions came days after fifteen alleged Islamist militants went on trial in Tashkent. They were accused of being involved in a wave of violence during the spring of 2004, in which at least forty-seven people were killed. Islamist websites carried competing claims of responsibility.³⁸
88. February 1, 2008, Nouakchott: In the early morning hours, shots were fired at the Israeli embassy, apparently by global jihadi elements calling themselves al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb. Three local residents were wounded; members of the embassy staff were unharmed.³⁹ The Mauritanian security forces announced that three suspects had been detained in the center of the country about 150 kilometers (93 miles) from the capital. The three tried to evade a checkpoint by exchanging their vehicle for another, which was waiting for them. No details have been made known about the three suspects.⁴⁰
89. March 2008, Manila: Three Middle Eastern men were arrested for plotting to blow up the Israeli, American, British, and Australian embassies.⁴¹
90. June 11, 2009, Baku: Two members of Hizbullah were arrested for plotting to bomb the Israeli embassy. Each was sentenced to fifteen years.⁴²
91. April 28, 2010: Manchester: Deputy Ambassador Talya Lador-Fresher was attacked after giving a speech at the University of Manchester. Students from a group called Action Palestine tried to attack her as she left the auditorium. Lador-Fresher was escorted to her car where again students tried to attack by jumping on the hood and trying to smash the windows.
92. September 9, 2011, Cairo: A peaceful demonstration turned violent when thousands of protestors smashed through the security barrier outside the Israeli embassy and stormed the building. Egyptian security forces tried to calm the crowd by using tear gas but were unsuccessful for many hours. In addition to trying to destroy the embassy, the rioters attacked the police. One person died and almost 500 people were injured. The Israeli ambassador, Yitzhak Levanon,

his family, his staff, and their families were evacuated from Egypt. Most were not on the premises during the attack. Six Israelis were locked in a safe room during the riot. It was not until US President Obama intervened and negotiated with the Egyptian military that the six Israelis were saved. They were evacuated just minutes before rioters broke into the safe room.

Conclusion

The threat against the lives and security of Israeli representatives abroad remains a dangerous and ongoing issue. As recently as February 14, 2012, there were twin attacks suspected of being directed against the Israeli diplomats in New Delhi, India, and Tbilisi, Georgia. In the Indian capital, a motorcyclist detonated a bomb while driving past an Israeli embassy car; in the Georgian capital, an Israeli embassy driver discovered an explosive device attached to the underside of his car. No group has claimed official responsibility, although Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman have accused Iran of coordinating the attacks. These twin attacks demonstrate the continued and relevant danger facing Israeli representatives abroad.⁴³

The recent attacks highlight the geographical diversity of assaults directed at Israeli representatives. The reality is that Israelis, and even Jewish communal leaders, must consciously protect themselves, their colleagues, and the lives of family members, regardless of the location in which they operate. It is also important to reiterate that not only Israelis are targets of violence, but every representative of a government considered to be a rival to an attacker's interest faces the threat of hostilities.

The attacks on Israeli and Western embassies underscore the daunting, overarching threat of modern transnational terrorism. Unfortunately, the tactics and targets discussed in this article are just a small part of the evolving arsenal of terrorists, expanding beyond guns, bombs, and kidnappings. Cyber-terrorism, for example, is beginning to emerge as a grave menace. Cyber attacks, unlike the terrorist attacks of the past, require minimal time to execute, as hackers can cause havoc from long distances without the need for any logistical support.⁴⁴ Possible targets of such an attack are communications systems, banks, electrical and transportation infrastructures, government services, emergency rescue services, and the systems responsible for storing and distributing water, natural gas and oil.⁴⁵ The Israeli government, responding to a hacking threat from Saudi Arabia, recently set up a commission entrusted with protecting networks operated by government ministries, the defense establishment, and the civilian economic sector.⁴⁶

The various threats of transnational terrorism are destined to grow. Israel and its Western allies have no alternative but to continue to respond to a merciless struggle aimed at embassies, diplomats and other envoys and staffers.

Notes

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- ¹ Interview with "F," former Israeli ambassador, in Jerusalem, Israel (February 5, 2012).
- ² Msnbc.msn.com, "Israeli PM Condemns Embassy Attack in Cairo," www.msnbc.msn.com/id/44464518/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/israeli-pm-condemns-embassy-attack-cairo/.
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