

Contemporary Conflicts *in light of the Cold War*

An Internet Resource produced by the [UCSB Center for Cold War Studies](#)

eWorkshop on **International Terrorism and the Cold War**

Background Briefing by [Dr. Jeffrey Bale](#), Center for Non-Proliferation Studies at MIIS:

The readings below have been selected to illuminate three main themes:

1. that terrorist groups of diverse ideological stripes were often covertly aided, infiltrated, manipulated, and/or used instrumentally as surrogates by the secret services of the two superpowers (and those of their allies) during the Cold War era.
2. that several of those efforts to assist or manipulate terrorists secretly, which were usually undertaken to ensure "plausible deniability" and in accordance with the cynical Realpolitik principle that "the enemy of my [main] enemy is my friend," produced unintended consequences (or "blowback") that eventually harmed the interests of the countries that undertook them.
3. that certain key components of the transnational jihadist networks that currently threaten the entire Western world (as well as moderate Muslims, supposedly "apostate" Muslim regimes, Russia, China, and India) were among the recipients of such covert assistance and largesse during the Cold War.

Hence these particular reading selections have been divided into two main categories, those that discuss examples of the covert state manipulation of terrorism during the Cold War, and those that analyze or illustrate the ideological viewpoints of the violent Islamist groups which constitute the principal security threat facing both Western democracies and the former communist bloc in the present, post-Cold War era. Note that the purpose of these readings is not to engender simplistic moral handwringing or ahistorical second-guessing, much less to minimize, justify, rationalize, or shift the blame onto others for the terrible atrocities that are routinely committed by today's jihadist terrorists, but simply to shed light on certain lesser-known dimensions of terrorism that serve to illustrate a more general lesson concerning the conduct of international affairs: that nations need to consider the practical implications of their prospective international actions very carefully lest those actions end up backfiring, all the more so in a world marked by long-standing and newly-emerging rivalries, conflicts that appear intractable, and a plethora of serious and seemingly omnipresent threats to national and international security.

Suggested Readings:

Philip Jenkins, *Images of Terror: What We Can and Can't Know about Terrorism*, (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2003): 87-109.

Jeffrey M. Bale, "Terrorism, Right Wing," in Bernard A. Cook, *Europe Since 1945: An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, (New York: Garland, 2001), 1238-1240.

URL: <http://www.history.ucsb.edu/projects/ccws/conflicts/bale.html>

John K. Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism*, New Ed., (London and Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2000): 1-8.

Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998): 87-95.

Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda: Casting A Shadow of Terror*, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003): 7-22.

Jeffrey M. Bale, "Islamism," in Richard F. Pilch and Raymond A. Zilinskas, eds., *Encyclopedia of Bioterrorism Defense*, (New York: Wiley & Sons, November 2004).

Barry Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, eds., *Anti-American Terrorism and the Middle East: A Documentary Reader*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002): 11-27, 29-32, 62-64, 131-133, 137-142, 149-151, and 289-290.

Dr. Jeffrey M. Bale is a Senior Research Associate in the Chemical and Biological Weapons Nonproliferation Program (CBWNP) at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS) at the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS).

His areas of expertise include: Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, Intelligence and Covert Operations, Political and Religious Extremism, the radical right and neo-fascism religious cults. Islamism, youth subcultures and countercultures, and Organized Crime.

For further information about Dr. Bale, visit [his page](#) on the CNS Web site.

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