

# Terrorist on Trial: The Context of Political Crime

Jerrold M. Post, MD

When political terrorists stand trial for their violent acts, the political context inevitably plays a major role. This article describes the trial of an Abu Nidal terrorist tried in federal court for skyjacking an Egyptian airliner. The defense portrayed the traumas of the Palestinian people and of the defendant at the hands of the Israelis, offering a not guilty by reason of insanity defense on the basis of posttraumatic stress disorder. Making sense to the jury of how a sane individual could carry out a violent act in which more than 50 innocent men, women, and children died was the task of the author, who served as expert for the U.S. Department of Justice. The paper describes how the subject was socialized to violence in the refugee camps, where he was inspired to be a soldier in the revolution in order to reclaim his family lands. Nationalist-separatist terrorism is particularly intractable because of the generational transmission of hatred and revenge.

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In the turbulent Middle East, the psychopolitics of hatred flourishes, as violence begets counterviolence. The landscape is pockmarked with the craters of terrorist bombs. There is a widespread assumption in the lay community that groups and individuals who kill innocent victims to accomplish their political goals must be crazed fanatics. Surely no psychologically "normal" individual could perpetrate wanton violence against women and children.

In fact, those of us who have studied terrorist psychology have concluded that most terrorists are normal in the sense of not suffering from Axis I disorders. Indeed, terrorist groups exclude mentally unstable individuals, for they pose a severe security risk. However, conclusions concerning terrorist psychology generally are drawn from secondary and tertiary sources. Belonging to closed clandestine groups, fleeing from the law, terrorists are not readily available for interview.

When the rare occasion to interview a terrorist in depth presents itself, it offers a unique opportunity to gain insights on the mind of a terrorist. I had such an opportunity in the spring of 1996 in connection with

the trial in federal district court of Omar Rezaq for the federal crime of skyjacking. It was Rezaq, a member of the Abu Nidal group, who played a central role in seizing the EgyptAir plane that was forced down in Malta in 1985. Rezaq shot five hostages, two Israeli women and three Americans, before the botched special weapons attack team (SWAT) offensive by Egyptian forces, which led to 50 plus casualties. Convicted of murder in a Maltese court, after seven years Rezaq was given amnesty and released. Subsequently, however, he was arrested by FBI agents for the crime of skyjacking.

The defense, with the assistance of a forensic psychologist who had testified in the Menendez brothers' case, developed a creative theory. They acknowledged Rezaq's direct and indirect role in the carnage that resulted but claimed that, as a consequence of the multiple traumas the Palestinian people had incurred at the hands of the Israelis, the defendant was suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder and accordingly did not appreciate the wrongfulness of his act. I was asked by the Department of Justice to participate in the case as a psychiatrist expert in the psychology of terrorism. The other prosecution experts would demonstrate that Rezaq was legally sane, but it was my task to provide a sense-making explanation for the jury of how an individual who was sane could commit such a bloody atrocity.

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Dr. Post is Professor of Psychiatry, Political Psychology, and International Affairs and Director of the Political Psychology Program, The George Washington University, Washington, DC. Address correspondence to: Jerrold Post, MD, The George Washington University, 2013 G St., NW, Washington, DC 20052.

## Terrorist Psychologies

### *Individual Psychology*

Initial efforts to comprehend terrorist psychology were concentrated on elucidating the psychology of individual terrorists. These research efforts were seriously compromised by the lack of a research population available for systematic study, including clinical interviewing and psychological testing. As a result, the study of individual terrorist psychology has tended to be inductive rather than deductive, generalizing from individual anecdotes, memoirs, or biographical accounts. An interesting effort to get at terrorist psychology through their own words was that of Cordes,<sup>1</sup> who systematically content-analyzed terrorist statements and writings. Her work does not illuminate individual psychology, however, but rather the degree to which individuals became captive to group rhetoric and group psychology.

Indeed, the most striking aspect of these collective efforts to decode "the mind of the terrorist" was that they did not in fact identify a unique terrorist psychology. A wide range of psychologies—from entirely normal to severe personality disorders—has been found in individual terrorists. For the most part, extremely psychiatrically disturbed individuals were not involved in carrying out terrorist acts. Just as mentally unstable individuals pose a security threat to military units, so too do such individuals pose a security threat to terrorist groups and organizations and therefore tend to be excluded from their ranks. In the words of the noted terrorist scholar Martha Crenshaw, commenting on terrorist psychology, it is critical to combat the "stereotypes of 'terrorists' as irrational fanatics. . . . The outstanding characteristic of terrorists is their normality."<sup>2</sup>

While no one personality type, psychological pattern, or trait emerged from these studies, an impression emerged that two personality types were disproportionately represented among terrorists, especially among terrorist group leaders: Individuals with narcissistic/sociopathic features and angry paranoids.<sup>3</sup> Narcissistic/sociopathic individuals tend to be restless and action oriented, with low frustration tolerance. These self-oriented individuals suffer from both impaired consciences and an impaired capacity to empathize with the pain and suffering of others. Angry paranoids tend to externalize their problems, idealizing the "in group" and demonizing the "out group." Such individuals, who often suffer from a

lack of personal, educational, and professional success, seek an outside enemy to blame for their problems. The externalizing rhetoric of the terrorist group—"It's not us, it's them; they are responsible for our problems"—provides a psychologically satisfying explanation for what has gone wrong in their lives. It is therefore not only not immoral, it becomes a moral imperative to strike out at "them," to remove the source of the problems.

These psychological defense mechanisms contribute to the striking uniformity of terrorists' rhetorical style and psychologic. Polarizing and absolutist, it is a rhetoric of freedom fighters against an evil establishment, of the "brothers of light" against the "brothers of darkness." Psychologically vulnerable personalities find such rhetoric extremely attractive. This analysis suggests that individuals become terrorists not to achieve instrumental (e.g., political, economic) goals but rather to rationalize violent acts that they are compelled to commit. The groups to which these emotionally susceptible individuals belong accordingly are characterized by especially powerful group dynamics. For these individuals, the act of joining a terrorist group represents an attempt to consolidate a fragmented psychological identity, and most importantly, to belong.

### *Group Dynamics*

The author has observed elsewhere that group and organizational psychology rather than individual psychopathology powerfully explains terrorist behavior and the extremities to which otherwise normal individuals can go in pursuit of their group causes.<sup>4, 5</sup> As demonstrated in Fig. 1, there is a broad spectrum of terrorisms, and each of these types has its own characteristic psychology. As demonstrated in Fig. 2, generational issues are particularly prominent for two types of terrorism, social-revolutionary terrorism and nationalist-separatist terrorism.<sup>6</sup>

In many ways, these psychologies are polar opposites. The social-revolutionary terrorist is striking out against the generation of his parents who are loyal to the regime. His acts of terrorism are acts of revenge for hurts, real and imagined. A member of the German terrorist group, Red Army Faction, declared, "These are the corrupt old men who gave us Auschwitz and Hiroshima."<sup>7</sup> In contrast, the nationalist-separatist terrorist is loyal to parents who are disloyal to the regime. He is carrying on the mission of his

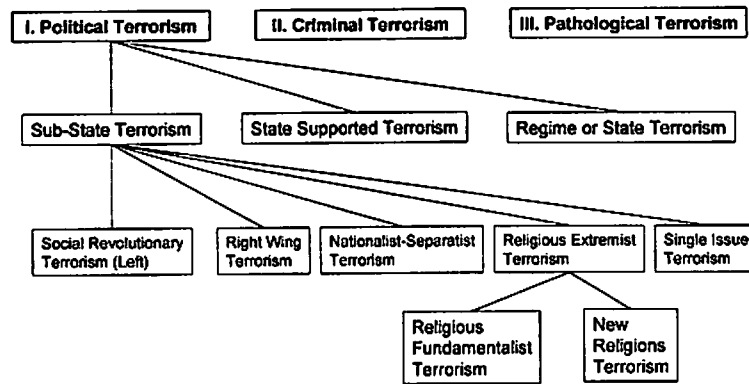


Figure 1. New typology of terrorism.

parents and grandparents who were damaged by the regime and are dissident to the regime.

In the case we are about to describe, the defendant epitomized the life and psychology of the nationalist-separatist terrorist. On the basis of some eight hours of interviews and the review of thousands of pages of documents, a coherent story emerged. The defendant assuredly did not believe that what he was doing was wrong, because from boyhood Rezaq had been socialized to be a heroic revolutionary fighting for the Palestinian nation. Demonstrating the generational transmission of hatred, his case can be considered emblematic of many from the ranks of ethnic/nationalist terrorist groups, from Northern Ireland to Palestine, from Armenia to the Basque region of Spain.

### The Omar Rezaq Case

#### Social History

The third child of a family of six, Omar Rezaq was born in 1958 in Jordan but as a young boy moved to a village on the West Bank. His father worked as a nurse for the Jordanian military. His mother was from Jaffa originally, but after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war she left for the West Bank where she and her family lived in refugee camps. The mother's displace-

ment from her ancestral home by Israel was an event of crucial importance, which became a key element in the family legend.

Rezaq spent his childhood in the West Bank village where his grandfather was a farmer. As a career military nurse, his father was often away from home. Rezaq described his boyhood in the village as pleasant; they lived in their own home, with no economic problems, no worries about food or money.

This relatively pleasant existence changed abruptly in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war (the subject was 8 years old). His father, serving with the Jordanian military, had already left in anticipation of the arrival of the Israeli army. After two months, his mother decided to follow his father. According to Rezaq, "From this time, everything changed."

Jordan was crowded with refugees. They moved into crowded circumstances, initially with their cousin, then into a small home of their own. The father was a strict, harsh man, who when he was at home, on leave from the military, would punish his son with a belt or stick for minor infractions. The subject felt closer to his mother, a quiet and gentle woman, who took responsibility for the family. She would often discuss her life and how it had changed in 1948 when her family had to leave Jaffa, so this was the second time the Israelis had forced her from her home.

After staying in Amman, Jordan for one year, the family moved to the refugee camp Talibiya, some 25 to 35 kilometers outside of Amman. The living circumstances there were very difficult, with the whole family crowded into two rooms, with no bathroom or kitchen and little privacy. Food was supplied by the United Nations (UN). There was little money.

	Parents' Relationship to the Regime	
Youths' Relationship to Parents	<b>L</b> oyal	<b>D</b> isloyal damaged dissident
<b>L</b> oyal	X	Nationalist-Separatist Terrorism
<b>D</b> isloyal	Social Revolutionary Terrorism	

Figure 2. Generational pathways to terrorism.

### ***Indoctrination in Palestinian Nationalism and Recruitment into the Movement***

In 1968, the battle of Karameh occurred, in which Yasir Arafat led a group of Palestinian guerrillas who fought a 12-hour battle against a superior Israeli force, galvanizing the previously dispirited Palestinian population. The spirit of the revolution was everywhere, especially in the camps, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) became a rallying point. In Rezaq's words, "The revolution was the only hope."

With his sister and brother now gone, Rezaq was the man of the family. In the UN school, where Rezaq was an average student, he was rewarded for learning Palestinian songs. He had Palestinian teachers who would propagandize the students, focusing their resentment for the difficult living circumstances on Israel and instilling Palestinian nationalism. Feelings of hatred were aimed at Israel. As young teenagers, Rezaq (now 12) and his friends went to the youth camp two to three hours a day, where they received some political indoctrination and began military training (learning how to clean and handle guns, jump barriers, etc.). Rezaq's father did not join the revolution and was opposed to Rezaq's becoming involved. If he saw his son go to the camp, the father beat him.

The subject was the only one in his family to join the revolution. His Palestinian teacher, who was in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and was a member of Al Fatah, the mainline Palestinian revolutionary group founded by Yasir Arafat, was a model for him. This juxtaposition of the harsh father who was opposed to the revolution with the positive model of the Palestinian teacher who was a member of Fatah intensified young Rezaq's attraction to joining the revolution, and he began to develop an identity as a soldier for the Palestinian cause.

After finishing intermediate school, he went on to technical school under UN auspices. There were branches of the revolution in this school; each group tried to recruit the new students. Rezaq became more deeply involved in politics. He was taught that the only way to get back his country was if the PLO would fight against Israel, and he was increasingly determined to join that fight.

Two years of obligatory service in the Jordanian army were required. In 1977, at age 19, he was sent to a camp near Iraq for military training. There, the Palestinians were treated as second-class citizens.

### ***Joins the Revolution and Becomes Indoctrinated in Anti-Zionist, Anti-U.S. Views***

After only three months in the Jordanian army, Rezaq deserted and joined Fatah. He went to a military camp where he was given a military uniform and was trained in the use of machine guns, pistols, and hand grenades. He also received intense political indoctrination. This was the first time he heard of Zionism.

Now he was energized, fully committed, at last in a fighting revolutionary organization. He wanted "to work, wanted to fight. There was only one way to regain Palestine and that was to fight Israel to regain all of Palestine, from the sea to the river."

In 1978, fighting in Lebanon broke out between the PLO and Israel. The camp in which Rezaq was training sent 100 people to join the fight in south Lebanon against Israel. Rezaq was there for two months, close to the action. There was fighting every day, and he felt part of the revolution. After returning to base camp and being away from the scene of action, Rezaq became restless and resigned from the Fatah branch. Interrogated as to why he was leaving, he replied that he was bored and had nothing to do, that he had joined Fatah to fight and was not fighting.

He moved from terrorist group to terrorist group, initially enthused, then disillusioned, with each group he joined more militant than the preceding. When he was next involved in guerrilla action, he had pride in what he was doing as a soldier for the revolution. "I started dreaming that one day we will have a country, have an identity, [be] our own citizens." After attacking an Israeli patrol, his morale took a major boost. "This was for my country." He felt this was the right way, the path for him to follow. He felt a sense of excitement in the danger.

Rezaq was still with the PLO in Lebanon in 1980, the year the "explosive war" occurred, with the Phalangists and Israel against the Palestinians and other Lebanese. There were bombs and explosions everywhere, every day, bombs in cars and in supermarkets. In a close call, Rezaq almost lost his life in a car bomb explosion that destroyed a cafeteria he had just left. Had he remained, he realized, he would have died. He had never thought of his own death before. He began to have dreams about his death, started getting suspicious, feeling on guard, while before he had not cared.

### ***The 1982 Israel Invasion of Lebanon and Disillusionment with the PLO***

When Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 and penetrated deeply into Lebanon, there was very little resistance by the PLO. Rezaq found himself wondering about the revolution, which had lost to the Israelis so easily. He had been ready to fight for two years, and when the opportunity came, the movement to which he had committed himself had not fought in any meaningful way. It was a disillusioning experience.

As a result of U.S.-brokered negotiations, Arafat and the PLO were to leave Lebanon. Disillusioned with Arafat and the mainstream PLO, Rezaq decided to stay on in Lebanon to fight. He first joined the militant Fatah Intifada group, but finding it insufficiently militant, he ultimately made his way to the most violent of the Palestinian terrorist groups, the Abu Nidal group.

After intense training, he was given an important mission. He was told the mission was to hijack an airliner to obtain the release of anti-government Egyptians in prison in Egypt. He felt good about the mission. He now had a purpose. This is what he had been preparing for since boyhood. On the night before the mission, he did not sleep well. He described himself as being on edge, keyed up. It was the feeling of the soldier on the eve of battle.

#### ***The Operation***

In describing the operation, Rezaq related the entire episode in a cool, matter of fact manner—logical, detailed, calm, not emotionally overwrought—the professional military man reporting on a military action.

After the terrorists took over the plane in accordance with the plan, they forced it down in Malta to refuel before the final leg of its journey. Control tower personnel said they would not provide petrol until the hostages were released. Rezaq informed the control tower that they (the terrorists) would not release the hostages until the plane was refueled. Malta control refused, insisting that the hijackers release all of the hostages or there would be no petrol.

He remembered the mission instructions concerning the Israelis and Americans. If there were Israelis in the plane, he was told he must kill them directly, for they were enemies of Palestine. Since America supported Israel, Americans should then be used as leverage and should be killed if no petrol was provided. Rezaq now went through the passports, and

found the passports of two Israelis and three Americans. Having given an ultimatum to the control tower that he would begin killing hostages unless they refueled the plane, when they did not provide petrol, Rezaq told the stewardess to bring him an Israeli. It was a woman. He had her taken to the staircase where he shot her in the head.

When I asked him about his emotional state at the time of the killings, and how he reacted to killing a person at close range, he looked at me with perplexity and responded as if it should be self-evident that it was what he had been instructed to do, it was the plan for the mission. As to the impact of killing a woman, he responded that there was no difference. He had been told that both Israeli men and women served in the army, so both were the enemy.

Having demonstrated that they should take him seriously, Rezaq gave a second ultimatum. By now he was hungry, so he had some lunch. The calm, matter of fact manner in which he described being hungry and eating his lunch was indistinguishable from the manner in which he described shooting the Israeli woman in the head. In the same matter of fact way, he then told of shooting the second Israeli woman in the head. The Maltese authorities still had not provided petrol, so Rezaq then ordered the air crew to bring him the Americans. The first American was shot. Because there was still no petrol, he had them bring the second American whom he then shot. The storming of the plane followed.

#### ***Formulation***

Like many of his generation, the developmental experiences of Omar Rezaq shaped his attraction to the path of terrorism, defined in his mind as “joining the revolution.” The psychological soil had already been prepared by his mother’s recounting of their family’s expulsion and uprooting from Jaffa in 1948; at age 9, Rezaq and his family moved into the refugee camp.

The father’s harsh discipline (not unusual in the cultural setting, according to the subject) did leave Rezaq, in early adolescence, ripe to idolize an alternative model, which he found in his Palestinian teacher. Like many young men of his generation in the camps, Rezaq was psychologically lost, with no clear path before him. His teachers both focused his hatred against Israel as the cause of his people’s problems and charted a valued identity, fighting for the revolution.

Throughout his life, Rezaq demonstrated a restless, action-oriented temperament. Zealous to fight and impatient for action, on occasion after occasion Rezaq became disillusioned with the leadership, leaving one organization to join another, seeking to find a group in which he could carry out his role as a fighter for the Palestinian cause. He moved progressively from the Jordanian army to the main-line Fatah, to the rejectionist front group Fatah Intifada, to the extremely violent Abu Nidal group.

The near miss when the cafeteria was destroyed by a car bomb during the "explosive war" in Lebanon (1980-1981) apparently was extremely traumatic for Rezaq, and in the aftermath he experienced symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder—insomnia, recurrent dreams about his death, depression, feelings of suspiciousness and being on guard, avoidance of public places, and a feeling that his life would be foreshortened by violence. These symptoms subsided over the subsequent years.

When Rezaq was selected for the special mission, it was an opportunity to carry out an action as a soldier for the revolution. The keyed up feeling on the eve of the action was that of the soldier on the eve of battle.

Rezaq was professional in the manner in which carried out the instructions, deliberate and under control. In his own words, he was "normal" and his "true self was under control." He knew exactly what he was doing when he shot the Israeli women and the Americans. He was executing the operational plan according to instructions, a soldier carrying out orders, killing the enemy.

Like his fellow terrorists, he believed that his actions were justified, were not wrongful but were righteous acts in the service of the Palestinian revolution. He had been socialized to blame all of his and his people's difficulties on the enemy and that violent actions against the enemy were justified. He rationalized that the Israeli injustices against the Palestinian people justified his violent acts.

When one has been nursed on the mother's milk of hatred and bitterness, the need for vengeance is bred in the bone. In ethnic/nationalist conflicts, hatred has been transmitted generationally, and the psychopolitics of hatred are deeply rooted.

### **The Trial**

Any trial is a contest of dueling frames of reference, of alternate explanations. The defense in effect

put Israel on trial. They were aided in their endeavor by a remarkably one-sided portrayal of the Arab-Israeli struggle by a Middle East scholar, who depicted the Palestinian people as victims of Israeli aggression, neglecting to mention the bloody history of aggression visited upon Israel by Palestinian terrorists and in the three Arab-Israeli wars. From the collective trauma of the Palestinian people, it was but a small further step to the specific traumatization of the defendant. Rezaq was, they contended, suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder, and accordingly did not appreciate the wrongfulness of his act. The jury, however, had not been provided with a sense-making alternative frame of reference, an alternate explanation. How could a sane man wreak such carnage?

The following was the alternate sense-making explanation provided to the jury. Like thousands of his generation, Rezaq did indeed experience many traumas. In 1968 he experienced the hardships of life in the refugee camps, having been forced out of the family home on the West Bank. At that time he was told by his mother of her having lost her home in 1948. This was in many ways a classic case of generational nationalist-separatist terrorism, carrying on the family cause, seeking revenge for damage done to parents and grandparents. When Rezaq was a preadolescent in the refugee camp schools, the camps were aflame with revolutionary enthusiasm after Arafat's success in 1968 at Karamah. Rezaq was inspired by his Palestinian teacher, who was a member of the PLO. Like thousands of his generation, Palestinian radicals identified for him the heroic career path of joining the revolution, fighting for Palestine. As Rezaq moved along this path, his identity was consolidated—his role was that of a soldier for the cause. His besieged society had rewarded violence against the identified Israeli enemy, making it a permanent part of personality.

This description of Rezaq's pathway into terrorism was the alternate explanation that was provided. He did indeed believe what he was doing was right, but this belief was not as a consequence of severe mental disease or defect but a consequence of his education, socialization, training, inspiration by his Palestinian teachers and role models. They provided him with a sense-making explanation of what was wrong and who was responsible, and therefore to take violent action against those whom he had been

taught were responsible—Israelis and their supporters, the Americans—was justified and redemptive.

The issue of rebutting Rezaq's alleged mental illness was important. The government and its forensic psychiatrists had been quite effective in countering the defense assertions in support of not guilty by reason of insanity, demonstrating that the defendant was fully aware of the legal consequences of his act.

The findings in my own examination augmented their findings. His demeanor in the cockpit was consistent with that of a soldier on a mission: well-trained, cool, and professional. When he related the incidents to me, it was in the manner of a military after-action report or briefing. He was quite matter of fact when he described shooting the Israeli women, explaining with no fluctuation of emotion that because Israeli women served in the military, they too were the enemy and should be killed. In describing events, he told of having lunch in the same manner in which he described declaring the ultimatums and killing the hostages. Rezaq clearly knew that this action was a crime. The discussion of why the terrorists wore ski masks was quite revealing. He indicated to me that the purpose of the mask was so that if he were successful he would not be recognized and pursued for his role in hijacking. If he were recognized, people would go to the police and he would be caught and sent to jail. Similar reasons were given for all of the security precautions. The defense psychiatrist asserted that when Rezaq was in the cockpit, he was less carrying out a hijacking than reconstructing the boundaries of his mind. But he had made clear that he was acutely aware when he was in the cockpit that he was carrying out a hijacking. He knew this fact clearly. He was cool, collected, professional, a soldier carrying out a mission, which was confirmed by analysis of the cockpit tapes and by witness reports.

It was important to augment technical forensic testimony by conveying the understanding that serious psychiatric illness is incompatible with the role of the terrorist. Political terrorists are not seriously psychiatrically ill. A psychiatrically disturbed, mentally unstable terrorist is a major security risk, just as a military unit cannot tolerate an emotionally unstable soldier because he would pose a danger to the unit. Rezaq was in the Abu Nidal Organization (ANO) for two years, in training and being observed. ANO more than other groups was especially careful about their members and monitored their performance

closely in training. In analyzing a 1994 terrorist attack in the United States, which was attributed to the ANO, terrorist experts doubted that it was an ANO operation because it was executed so unprofessionally. On the basis of Rezaq's extensive period in camp and in training, he was selected for this important mission and was named number two, indicating the ANO leadership's belief in his stability and professionalism. He confirmed their judgment. His demeanor in the cockpit was that of a cool professional carrying out a mission.

Moreover, during a period of depression, prior to the mission, Rezaq saw a psychiatrist who was a member of the PLO. He was told that his reactions were normal and was encouraged to pursue his role as a fighter for the revolution. Had he been seriously disturbed, this would have been immediately evident to the psychiatrist, who would have diagnosed his psychotic condition and told the organization that he should not go on a mission.

It was important to convey to the jury that the ANO is the bloodiest and most professional of terrorist organizations, with operations in more than 20 countries and having killed or injured more than 900 people. Abu Nidal was the architect of the massacres at the Rome and Vienna airports and was responsible for shooting the Israeli ambassador to Great Britain, which was the final trigger in the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, after a long campaign of terrorism against Israel by terrorist groups operating out of Lebanon. Although Rezaq may not have known who the Abu Nidal group or the Fatah Revolutionary Council were when he first joined the organization, by the time he rejoined the ANO he surely knew their reputation. He moved progressively from violent group to ever more violent group. When Arafat left Lebanon, this was a crucial turning point for young Rezaq and the Palestinian movement. Rezaq was not abandoned. He chose to stay behind to fight, joining Abu Musa—who saw Arafat as a traitor to the cause—and his 12,000 fighters. When Rezaq subsequently became disappointed in Abu Musa, he chose to join the bloodiest terrorist of them all, Abu Nidal.

Individuals with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) tend to avoid circumstances resembling that which occasioned the original trauma. Not only did Rezaq not seek to avoid violent circumstances, such as the bombing identified by the defense as precipitating his PTSD, but he sought out ever more violent circumstances. Indeed, when a group was insuffi-

ciently violent, he left them for a more violent group, finally reaching the very acme of violence in the Abu Nidal organization. As he proudly declaimed, "I live to fight, and only feel alive when I am fighting," not the utterance of an individual suffering from PTSD. Rezaq by history may well have had some of the symptoms of PTSD, but he assuredly was not in a dissociated flashback state when he carried out the hijacking.

Did Rezaq believe that what he did was wrong? Assuredly not. He had rationalized, justified that what he was doing was in the service of Palestine. He believed it was the right thing to do; but this belief was not a consequence of mental illness. It was the consequence of his entire life experience, of being inspired and trained to be a soldier for the cause. His beliefs and activism were common to thousands of his peers; but thousands of his countrymen who had suffered similar traumas did not choose to participate in killing innocent victims for the cause, choosing the path of political activism instead. A defense psychologist asserted Rezaq would not have carried out the hijacking if had not been suffering from PTSD. Psychologically Rezaq was of the same mindset as the radical Palestinian terrorists, who were also socialized to the path of violent terrorism. His decision to carry out the hijacking was not a consequence of PTSD.

When Rezaq was selected for the hijacking mission, it was the culmination of a dream. Rezaq had been taught to hate all Israelis and their American sponsors. He was taught to blame all of the difficulties in his life on the Israelis, whom he saw as enemies

in the war in which he was a heroic soldier. When he carried out the hijacking, it was the very pinnacle of his life, a dream come true. But the dream turned into a nightmare, with tragic consequences. More than 50 people lost their lives in the hijacking and SWAT team attack. Rezaq is now serving a life sentence in federal prison.

The generational transmission of hatred exemplified by this terrorist's life argues for the continuation of Palestinian/Israeli hatred and perpetuation of the violent struggle. While there is guarded optimism concerning the Middle East peace process, the signatures of Yasir Arafat and Ehud Barak to a comprehensive peace agreement will not signal the end of the fear and hatred that has been passed from generation to generation.

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