The Munich Massacre: A New History

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Abstract

This thesis examines the Nixon administration’s response to the Munich Massacre; a terrorist attack which took place at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich. By examining the contextual considerations influencing the administration’s response in both the domestic and international spheres, this thesis will determine the manner in which diplomatic intricacies impacted on the introduction of precedent setting counterterrorism institutions. Furthermore, it will expound the correlation between the Nixon administration’s response and a developing conceptualisation of acts of modern international terrorism.
Maximilien Robespierre articulated his conception of terrorism as a ‘virtuous’ political weapon in 1793, during the ‘reign of terror’ after the French Revolution. The sentiment has surprisingly endured to become a defining tenet of conflict in the modern world. In the wake of the Munich Massacre in 1972, renowned French philosopher, John Paul Sartre offered this same justification for the slaughter of 11 innocent Israeli athletes by the Fedayeen (‘men of sacrifice’), of the Black September Organisation, a militant arm of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. Sartre declared that ‘terrorism is a terrible weapon but the oppressed poor have no others.’ When the Black September Organisation executed an incursion of the Olympic Village in Munich, seizing nine members of the Israeli Olympic team and killing two others, they were armed with their own validation as ‘subdu[ing] by terror the enemies of liberty’ in deliberate echo of Robespierre. The operation ended in

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3 The code name for the Munich Massacre was ‘Operation Iqrit and Biri’m’. The reference was to two ancient Arab Christian Villages that the Israeli Army had evacuated in 1948 because of ‘security reasons’. See S. Reeve, One Day in September, (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2000), p.43-44.
5 After the Munich Massacre, radio announcers on the ‘Voice of Palestine’ read a letter supposedly the last words of the terrorists (many claim that it was written afterwards in order to gain sympathy) We are neither killers nor bandits, we are persecuted people who have no land and no homeland… We will the youth of the Arab nation to search for death so that life is given to them, their countries and their people. Each drop of blood spilled from you and from us will be oil to kindle this nation with flames of victory and liberation cited in Reeve, One Day in September, p.147.
tragedy when a flawed rescue attempt by West German authorities culminated in a gunfight that took the lives of all of the nine hostages and all but three of the terrorists.6

The Munich Massacre profoundly affected the international community. A new form of terrorism had been born; it had no regard for borders or for the innocence of its targets. Despite the aforementioned rationalisations of terror, the Black September Organisation’s operation did not trigger sympathetic appreciation of the plight of the Palestinian freedom fighters among the main powers, but instead generated a course of international condemnation led by the administration of United States President, Richard Nixon. The attack prompted an international legal debate on the issue of terrorism and the development of permanent institutional counterterrorism measures.7 The Nixon administration’s response to the Munich Massacre was the beginning of a conceptual turn in the history of political violence that we now know as ‘international terrorism’.8

This thesis revisits the history of the Munich Massacre in order to bringing into closer focus that conceptual turn. It explores the variety of contextual elements that shaped the Nixon administration’s response and galvanised an impetus for the United States to fight terrorism on the global battlefield. It then goes on to read the Munich Massacre back into the history of American foreign policy and explore the significance of the Nixon administration’s response in the history of international terrorism and counterterrorism.

The Munich Massacre’s importance in the longer history of terrorism has received significant attention from scholars. As Walter Laqueur, a heavyweight in the study of the theoretical history of terrorism, declares, the Munich Massacre was the ‘most spectacular’ of

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the ‘massive scale’ terrorism that began to occur after the Six Day War in 1967.\(^9\) None of these studies, however, take into account the Nixon administration’s reaction to the attack and the implications of that response. As well as establishing the significance of the American response to the Munich Massacre to the broader history of terrorism; this thesis also revitalises the role of individuals, by investigating the complex and varied contexts in which individual political decisions are made. The analysis focuses primarily on the personal perceptions, decisions and actions of President Nixon and his National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger. This approach is required because both Nixon and Kissinger deliberately centralised foreign policy in the White House, rather than leaving it to an autonomous State Department. As a result of Nixon’s and Kissinger’s ‘advanced megalomania,’\(^10\) most diplomatic operations were managed by them directly.

Circumvention of the Department of State and bureaucratic machinery became standard form.\(^11\) The core source for this analysis is the diplomatic cables between the primary decision makers and official White House memoranda. This empirically driven analysis provides a rich tableau from which to consider how diplomatic intricacies contributed to the Nixon administration’s response and investigate the intersecting contexts that shaped, and influenced policy making.

The historiography of the Munich Massacre divides into two main strands of analysis that remain largely divorced from each other. The most comprehensive of these strands is the theoretical history of modern terrorism which is primarily concerned with the conceptual or ideological underpinnings of incidents like the Munich Massacre. Analysts such as Stefan Aubrey in, *The New Dimension of International Terrorism*, David Rapoport in *The Four Waves of*

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Modern Terrorism, Denis Piszkiewicz in Terrorism’s war with America and Walter Laqueur in his various texts such as A History of Terrorism, New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction and No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-first Century12 have provided thematic histories of modern terrorism by isolating political, ideological or religious motivations driving particular terrorist trends. The Munich Massacre has featured in these histories primarily as representative of what Denis Piszkiewicz has described as ‘terrorism’s war on America.’13

Piszkiewicz has made reference to a phenomenon throughout the 1960s and 1970s identified by David Rapoport in The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism as the ‘revolutionary wave’ or ‘third wave’ of terrorism. Rapoport claims that the Vietnam War had caused societal rupture and the effectiveness of the Viet Cong’s ‘primitive weapons’ against the ‘American Goliath’ stimulated hope in radical organisations across the world that the existing system was vulnerable.14 Groups such as the Weather Underground, the West German Red Army Faction (RAF), the Italian Red Brigade, the Japanese Red Army and the French Action Directe were activated. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) became the heroic model for revolutionary activism, replacing the position once held by the Viet Cong. The strength of the PLO motivated the formation of numerous offshoot organisations. Terrorist attacks become more frequent, more violent and began to transcend national boundaries.15 The Munich Massacre was the peak of this terrorist trend. Rapoport has observed that after the Munich Massacre ‘for good

reason’ the term ‘international terrorism’ was revived and Stefan M. Aubrey, in *The New Dimension of International Terrorism*, has declared the Munich Massacre a ‘quintessential act of international terrorism.’

The terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman in *Inside Terrorism* has made a similar claim but his thesis accentuates the Munich Massacre as ‘the first clear evidence that even terrorist attacks which fail to achieve their ostensible objectives can nonetheless still be counted successful provided that the operation is sufficiently dramatic to capture the media’s attention.’

Expanding on Hoffman’s point, Brian Jenkins in *The Study of Terrorism*, has argued that terrorism should be defined ‘by the nature of the act, not by the identity of the perpetrator or the nature of their cause’ and in his article *The New Age of Terrorism* has isolated the distinguishing characteristics of incidents of international terrorism and identified them in the Munich Massacre. Understanding the theoretical aspects of modern terrorist attacks provides an important backdrop for determining how the Munich Massacre relates to other acts of terrorism but it leaves us without a sense of how those attitudes to terrorism were actually shaped on a practical as well as conceptual level.

The second, more neglected, strand of the history concerns international reactions to this brutal attack. When the response to the Munich Massacre has been discussed at length, it has been viewed primarily through the lens of the retaliatory actions of the Israeli intelligence organisation, Mossad. George Jonas’ pioneering work on the topic, *Vengeance*, focuses on Mossad’s controversial covert retaliatory attacks known as ‘Operation Wrath of God.’

Jonas’ depiction of the Munich Massacre became cemented in the public memory when

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17 B. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, Revised and Expanded Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), p.73. For Hoffman the Munich Massacre was ‘the premier example of terrorism’s power to rocket a cause from obscurity to renown.’
Steven Spielberg adapted *Vengeance* for his 2005 film *Munich*. His book triggered a number of subsequent detailed histories of the covert Israeli response including Aaron Klein’s *Striking Back: The 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre and Israel’s Deadly Response* and Simon Reeve’s award winning documentary and book *One Day in September the full story of the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre and the Israeli revenge operation ‘Wrath of God’.* By contrast, the response of Israel’s powerful Cold War ally the United States, has attracted minimal attention.

Many historians including Mark Bowden in *Guests of the Ayatollah: the First Battle in America’s War with Militant Islam* and David Farber in *Taken Hostage* have overlooked the significance of the Nixon administration’s response to the Munich Massacre because of a belief that the story of American counterterrorism began in the 1980s when Reagan declared that he would rid the world of ‘the evil scourge of terrorism.’ This view is also adopted by Noam Chomsky in *International Terrorism: Image and Reality*. While Chomsky has cautioned that there were acts of international terrorism before the 1980s, he states that it was not until the 1980s that ‘terrorism became a major public issue’ when ‘concern over international terrorism reached the level of virtual frenzy.’

The Nixon administration’s response to the Munich Massacre has also been of passing interest in studies which survey the strategic and tactical counterterrorism measures adopted by the United States government since the 1960s. David Tucker in *Skirmishes on the Edge of Empire*, and G. Davidson Smith in *Combating Terrorism* describe the Nixon

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20 *Munich*, Directed by Steven Spielberg, 2005; Universal Studios and Dreamworks Pictures
administration’s counterterrorism measures as historical points of reference for the history of American counterterrorism, but both scholars have not comprehensively explored the context or ramifications of the initiatives. Kumamoto in *International Terrorism and American Foreign Relations 1945-1976* has complemented Tucker and Smith’s studies by highlighting some of the contentious political and diplomatic issues faced by the Nixon administration in the establishment of international counterterrorism measures but without any explanation of the rationale behind the establishment of these measures or the process that brought them into being.

Timothy Naftali, director of the Nixon Presidential Library provides one of the most comprehensive accounts of the Nixon administration’s response to the Munich Massacre in *Blind spot: The Secret History of American Counterterrorism*. Naftali, with his relatively unfettered access to the primary documentation of the administration, has been able to construct a valuable preliminary history of the Nixon administration’s response to the Munich Massacre based around the contextualisation of these sources. Naftali’s study provides the starting-point for this thesis. His analysis is by no means complete however. In the opening of Naftali’s chapter on the Munich Massacre he declares that the attack ‘finally defined the new menace of international terrorism’ but does not consider the conceptual implications of the Nixon administration’s response.

This thesis attempts to fill the space between histories of the Munich Massacre as a turning point in the history of international terrorism and the conceptual implications of the Nixon administration’s enactment of permanent counterterrorism measures. It links the theoretical analysis of the attack with the story of its aftermath, the administration’s counterterrorism

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response to the salient features of the terrorist act itself. It draws together these disparate histories of the Munich Massacre, relating them back to the history of American foreign policy.

Part One of this thesis investigates the contextual factors that shaped the Nixon administration’s response to the Munich Massacre. Chapter one focuses on the international considerations and how they shaped the Nixon administration’s initial reading of the incident and the subsequent response. It looks primarily at how Nixon and Kissinger’s existing policies toward the Middle-East interfaced with the pressures the Munich Massacre placed on American geopolitical and diplomatic interests within the region, which were, at the time, significant.

Chapter Two follows the impact of the Munich Massacre into the domestic sphere. It analyses the interplay between the administration’s Middle-East policy and pressure, perceived or real, from various interest groups. The Nixon administration was under pressure to balance pro-Israeli pressures with that of the international Arabian-American oil companies and a hostile Congress. The importance of dealing with domestic pressures was intensified by the pending presidential election.

Part Two of this thesis takes up the question of how the Munich Massacre became, as Stefan M. Aubrey has declared it, a ‘quintessential act of international terrorism.’ It explores the relationship between the Nixon administration’s response to the Munich Massacre and the evolving conceptualisation of the terrorist threat. Chapter Three looks at how the prevalence of international acts of violence against states necessitated engagement with multilateral solutions and how that process provoked contentious international political debate. It

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27 S. Aubrey, The New Dimension of International Terrorism, p.34.
expounds the rationale behind Nixon’s appeal to the United Nations and his decision to take
the fight against terrorism to a global battlefield.

Chapter Four analyses the Nixon administration’s introduction of the ‘Cabinet Committee to
Combat Terrorism’; a permanent executive branch which would systematically deal with
incidents of terrorism. It examines the establishment of this unprecedented mechanism and
its connection to a shift in the conceptualisation of the threat posed by terrorism to America
and international society. In effect, this thesis aims to identify the features which
differentiated the Munich Massacre from previous actions and to consider how the Massacre
contributed to changing the Nixon administration’s perception of terrorism so substantially.

This thesis outlines the history of the Nixon administration’s response to the Munich
Massacre, the most significant act of non-state violence on behalf of state aims during this
period. This analysis reveals the manner in which diplomatic intricacies and contextual
considerations contributed to the conceptualisation of an international terrorist threat and to
the Nixon administration’s paradigmatic approach to terrorism.

28 Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon, Washington, September 18, 1972,
National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-8. Confidential. Drafted by Atherton on
September 14 and cleared by Donelan, Sisco, Armitage, Boyd, Wright, Fessenden, and Ross, p.2.
PART I
QUIET THE ZIONIST RAGE

Chapter ONE
The Burdened Alliance

Now, and this thing could turn easily now. My fear is, World War 1 started because the Austrians had been frustrated for 15 years, had the Archduke assassinated, the Germans and the whole world was outraged. And they thought that for once they would have a free shot, and they were going to settle the Serbian problem once and for all'.

(Henry Kissinger, Sept 1972)

These are the words expressed by Henry Kissinger in response to reports of the tragedy unfolding at the Munich Olympic Games in 1972. Although imbued with the hyperbole for which Kissinger was renowned, they beg the question as to the contextual issues that stimulated such grave concern over this incident. The Munich Massacre was a product of the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, a set of hostilities that had raged between Israel and the Arab world for decades. United States' involvement in the Middle-East and any subsequent concern over hostilities in the region were primarily associated with Cold War geopolitics. The geopolitical interests of the United States had been established after the Second World War, when containment of

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the international Communist threat began to define American foreign policy. The United States established relationships with countries in the Middle-East in order to ensure access to petroleum resources, lines of communication, and military bases and thus deny the Soviet Union similar access. Sue American governments continued to commit to the objective of securing US interests in the region by keeping the Soviet Union out. As the Cold War conflict of powers entered the Middle-East, a calculated alliance with Israel emerged. When Nixon came to power he continued this approach to Middle-East policy and maintained the strategic alliance with Israel. In the wake of the Munich Massacre however, the US-Israeli alliance was tested. In 1972, the geopolitical foundations upon which the alliance was built continued to shape American policy toward the Middle-East but responding to the Munich Massacre was made complicated by the uncertain detente that Nixon and Kissinger had established with the Soviet Union and Nixon’s overarching foreign policy objectives.

The Nixon administration has been endorsed by historians including Spiegel, Quandt and Hahn as a markedly pro-Israeli government. Indeed, William Quandt in his comprehensive work on American Diplomacy and the Arab–Israeli conflict from 1967-1974, *Peace Process*, claims that in 1972, the Nixon administration’s Middle-East policy ‘consisted of little more than open support for Israel.’ Other commentators such as Edward Said emphasise the United States resolve to preserve ‘internal balance’ as a mode of maintaining interests. For this perception too, cultivating a friendship with Israel had significant strategic value.

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was the underlying conditions behind the Nixon administration’s support for Israel that is of significance in this context, however. An explication of Israel’s role in Nixon’s world-view, a construction that defined the overall configuration of his foreign policy structure, will elucidate the reasons why the administration attributed such import to the Munich Massacre.

The consensus among historians is that for Nixon, Israel was primarily seen as a buffer against Soviet expansion in the region. Nixon and Kissinger were not in pursuit of a friendship with the Israeli nation but rather to thwart Soviet designs in the Middle-East. As Gilbert Achcar highlights in his conversation with Noam Chomsky in *Perilous Power*, during this period Israel had acquired the status of ‘aircraft carrier of the United States.’ Nixon and Kissinger conceived of the world and the practice of foreign policy through the lens of Realpolitik; ‘that blend of cold realism and power-oriented statecraft that tended to be, to use Kissinger’s description of Bismarck, "unencumbered by moral scruples."’ Foreign policy processes were understood in terms of strength assessment rather than sentiment or ideology and objectives were achieved through the manipulation of contending forces. Nixon and Kissinger’s diplomatic creed resulted in the subordination of Middle-East policy to other issues that were considered imperative to the maintenance of their grand international strategy. Policy pertaining to Israel would have to be compatible with the more central elements of their platform and thus, the Nixon administration’s approach to

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38 Isaacson, Kissinger, p.139.


40 J. Hoff, ‘A Revisionist View of Nixon’s Foreign Policy,’ *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, (Winter, 1996), Vol. 26, No. 1, p.120.
the Munich Massacre would suffer the same fate.

The crux of the Nixon/Kissinger world system was managing the United States’ relationship with the Soviet Union\(^{41}\) and it therefore determined the core of the administration’s policy on the Middle East. In his memoirs, Nixon has explained it thus:

> Since US-Soviet interests as the whole world’s two competing superpowers were so widespread and overlapping, it was unrealistic to separate or compartmentalise areas of concern. Therefore, we decided to link progress in such areas of Soviet concern as strategic arms limitation and increased trade with progress in areas that were important to us-Vietnam, the Mid-East, and Berlin. This concept became known as ‘linkage.’\(^{42}\)

The prioritisation of issues necessitated by the policy of ‘linkage’ ensured that for the greater part of Nixon’s first term, the Middle-East was not a contender for top tier policy attention.\(^{43}\) Indeed, presidential historian, Robert Dallek asserts that when Nixon entered the presidency he was adamantly opposed to becoming embroiled directly with the burden of infertile Middle-East negotiations.\(^{44}\) The Middle-East was dismissed as a quagmire and as Nixon conceded in the statement above, was seen as only one element woven into the network of issues constituting his foreign policy platform. Nixon’s grand plan for his first term in office was to enter into an ‘era of negotiation’\(^{45}\) a strategy which would enable him to create international system where contending powers ensured stability and peace. Such conditions would facilitate détente with the Soviet Union, rapprochement with China and allow for


America’s honourable extrication from Vietnam. Joan Hoff, in her analysis of Nixon’s foreign policy platform has appealed his position.

Nixon could not have equally addressed all diplomatic fronts at once and he clearly chose to concentrate on Vietnam, China and the USSR during his first term. It made sense for him to have to put the Middle-East on the back burner until some of his other foreign policy objectives were achieved. Nixon’s method of putting the Middle-East on the ‘back burner’ was to delegate relevant policy decisions to the Department of State. This gave Nixon scope to concentrate on Vietnam, China and the Soviet Union. It also meant that the White House was not associated directly with the impasse characterising Arab-Israeli settlement negotiations and was, to some degree, insulated from denigration of unsuccessful initiatives.

Nixon was also aware of the potential problems that could arise from having Kissinger weigh in heavily on Middle-East policy at this point. This was in part due to his heritage. Kissinger grew up a persecuted Jew in Nazi Germany and although Kissinger’s biographer Walter Isaacson has claimed that Kissinger minimised his heritage as an adult Isaacson also asserts that the holocaust left a ‘lasting imprint on him.’ This claim was also made by Kissinger’s mentor in the US army, Fritz Kraemer. Kraemer said of Kissinger, that despite his strength, ‘the Nazis were able to damage his soul.’ Leaving Middle-East policy to the Department of State prevented Kissinger’s personal sentiment from influencing decision making. As Nixon told Haldeman,

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47 Hoff, ‘A Revisionist View of Nixon’s Foreign Policy,’ p.120.
50 Isaacson, *Kissinger*, p.29.
Anybody who is Jewish cannot handle Middle-East policy. Henry might be as fair as he can possibly be [but] he can’t help but be affected by it. Put yourself in his position. Good God… his people were crucified over there. Jesus Christ!
Five-six million of them popped into big ovens! How the hell is he to feel about all this?52

Nixon was sympathetic to Kissinger’s overall reading of the Arab-Israeli conflict but he did not want the public relations problems inherent with having someone of Jewish descent involved in the determination of policy towards Israel. He was content for Secretary of State, William Rogers, to handle Middle-East policy and pursue his initiatives for the moment.53

In the wake of the Munich Massacre, the ambivalence that Nixon adopted towards Middle-East policy was altered abruptly by the provocative nature of the attack both militarily and diplomatically. The Munich Massacre was a trigger for the White House to focus direct attention on the Middle-East, taking over the primary responsibility for policy from the Department of State. The Munich Massacre marked the advent of a renewed and comprehensive engagement with the Middle-East policy initiatives.54 Kissinger’s comparisons with the assassination of Franz Ferdinand prior to the First World War, and the hell that followed this event as a result, illumines not just the significance of the attack for the administration but also the core driver of early policy response. The Nixon administration feared that the Munich Massacre could prompt a substantial conflict in one of the most volatile regions in the world. The slaughter of Israeli citizens in such a blatant manner was strong justification for Israeli aggression against the Arab states.

In a phone call between Nixon and Kissinger on 6 September, 1972, both men acknowledged the probability that rage fuelled vengeance would shape any Israeli response and that it

53 Spiegel, The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict, p.189.
54 Quandt, Peace process, p.104.
could manifest in hasty, provocative and disproportional retaliatory action.\textsuperscript{55} ‘I don’t want them to go conquer Beirut,’ Nixon said to Kissinger. ‘I don’t mind them going in and knocking off a few camps, but even that’s bad right now.’\textsuperscript{56} Vengeance had become characteristic of the Israeli response. Israeli reprisals for attacks committed by activist Arab liberation organisations throughout the course of the Six Day War, the War of Attrition and other smaller skirmishes stemming from the Arab-Israeli conflict had been extensive.\textsuperscript{57} An editorial comment in Israel’s most popular newspaper Ma’ariv illustrated the Israeli resolve on the issue of national retribution.

The time has come for a major stocktaking, settling the one and only account we have with the guerrillas and the dispatchers… we shall hit them at home. We shall settle our account with them and their dispatchers, with those who sheltered them in Munich, assisted them in infiltrating their Olympic Village and bringing their weapons there.\textsuperscript{58}

Golda Meir had also fearlessly declared in an address to Knesset (Israel’s Legislature) that ‘we will smite them wherever they may be’\textsuperscript{59} and Chief of Staff, General Eleazar spoke of Israel waging a ‘continuous war’ not one ‘started today and finished tomorrow’ using ‘many

\textsuperscript{55} NARA- NMP, Presidential Tape Recordings, Nixon and Kissinger, Oval Office, September 6, 1972, Conversation 771-2
\textsuperscript{56} NARA- NMP, Presidential Tape Recordings, Nixon and Kissinger, Oval Office, September 6, 1972, Conversation 771-2.
\textsuperscript{57} Spiegel, The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict, p.189.
\textsuperscript{58} Editorial comment in Ma’ariv the nation’s top selling newspaper, quoted in S. Reeve, One Day in September, p.152.
and various means.’\textsuperscript{60} The CIA took these threats seriously and noted in the Weekly Review that Tel Aviv had declared ‘open season on the fedayeen.’\textsuperscript{61}

Of immediate concern was an attack on Lebanon.\textsuperscript{62} Kissinger predicted that Israel was planning an incursion into Lebanon to detain the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation.\textsuperscript{63} Nixon and Kissinger decided that Israel would have to be restrained. The risk of serious conflict was too great and both Nixon and Kissinger were worried that the long term historical alliance between America and Israel could lead to a presupposition of US military support.\textsuperscript{64} Kissinger, particularly, was concerned that the environment was ripe for Israel to initiate a war with Arab world, telling Nixon that ‘They are in the best position they’ve ever been in. No Russians there.’\textsuperscript{65} Egyptian President, Anwar al-Sadat had ordered a surprise exodus of Soviet advisers from Egypt in mid July, 1972 and re-established Egyptian control over military installations.\textsuperscript{66} As Kissinger observed, the exit of the Russians from Egypt provided Israelis with an improved position from which to execute their reprisals and for Israel, the brutality of the Munich Massacre was justification for a severe revenge attack.\textsuperscript{67}

Nixon and Kissinger felt it was imperative that Israel be encouraged to proceed with caution; the United States could not become embroiled, in any capacity, in another messy


\textsuperscript{61} CIA, 15 September, 1972, Weekly Review, ‘After Munich’.


\textsuperscript{64} NARA- NMP, Presidential Tape Recordings, Nixon and Kissinger, Oval Office, September 6, 1972, Conversation 771-2.

\textsuperscript{65} NARA- NMP, Presidential Tape Recordings, Nixon and Kissinger, Oval Office, September 6, 1972, Conversation 771-2.


\textsuperscript{67} NARA- NMP, Presidential Tape Recordings, Nixon and Kissinger, Oval Office, September 6, 1972, Conversation 771-2.
war. They were still struggling with the process of extricating the United States from involvement in Vietnam. The Vietnam War had dominated policy discussion in America throughout Nixon’s first term and strongly influenced Nixon and Kissinger’s foreign policy designs. Nixon unequivocally relates the primacy of the issue in American political affairs in his memoirs stating that ‘a settlement in Vietnam was the key to everything.’

Domestic and international unrest over American involvement in the war was proving detrimental to the resolution of peripheral issues and in response to building pressure on 25 July, 1969 Nixon announced the introduction of the ‘Nixon Doctrine.’ The core tenet of the doctrine was that the United States would ‘furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense.’

With the Nixon Doctrine, the administration espoused a non-interventionist set of principles but regardless of the doctrinal rhetoric, both Nixon and Kissinger recognised that the Munich Massacre had the potential to draw America into an undesirable conflict in the Middle-East. The perils of the region were an existing concern for the Nixon administration. Nixon had commented in an interview in 1970 that the Middle-East was ‘terribly dangerous’. Suggesting, like Kissinger, that it was akin to ‘the Balkans before World War One- where the two superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union, could be drawn into a confrontation that neither of them wants because of the differences there.’

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Any suggestion of an increase in American support of Israel as a result of the Munich Massacre would likely reactivate the Soviet Union’s relationship with the Arab states.\textsuperscript{73} Despite the exodus of Soviet advisers from Egypt, the Soviet Union continued to have significant interests in the Arab world. Brezhnev saw the Middle-East as part of a global strategy. Moscow had fostered strategic alliances with Arab states throughout the 1960s as part of ‘calculations relating to East-West relations.’\textsuperscript{74} According to Galia Golan in \textit{Soviet Policies in the Middle-East}, Brezhnev, considered the Middle-East a ‘convenient vehicle for Soviet competition with the West and an easy one for providing aid, especially in arms in a way the US was unwilling to provide to either side of the conflict at that time.’\textsuperscript{73} When Israel achieved a swift victory against the Soviet proxies- Egypt, Jordan and Syria in the Six Day War in 1967, David Kimche in \textit{The Last Option: the Quest for Peace in the Middle-East}, has claimed that that for Brezhnev, Israel’s success was ‘a personal humiliation which had to be avenged.’ Brezhnev was resolute that the outcome of the Six Day War would not diminish hostilities between the Arabs and the Israelis and instituted a policy of total confrontation, waging an aggressive six year war against Israel.\textsuperscript{76} Moscow continued to provide massive

\textsuperscript{75} G. Golan, \textit{Soviet policies in the Middle East: from World War Two to Gorbachev}, (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.58. See also Golan, ‘The Cold War and the Soviet Attitude towards the Arab Israeli Conflict,’ p.60.
\textsuperscript{76} CIA Directorate of Intelligence, 20 June, 1967, Intelligence Memorandum, Special Assessments on the Middle-East situation, Soviet Premier Kosygin’s UN Speech, 19 June, 1967. http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC_0000233691/DOC_0000233691.pdf This was articulated by Prime Minister Kosygin at the special emergency session of the UN general assembly on 19 June 1967. Kosygin called for urgent steps to be taken to ‘eliminate the consequence of Israel’s aggression’. 

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quantities of supplies to Egypt and Syria throughout 1972 even after Egyptian President Sadat had expelled Russian advisers from Egypt in July that year. Kimche claims that by the early 1970s both Egypt and Syria, bolstered by the massive military aid which Brezhnev had so generously bestowed upon them, were ready to start the countdown for their next war with Israel. This time it, however, it would be a very different affair from the previous debacle in 1967, because the Soviet Union was to be involved in all planning and preparatory stages.

Rami Ginat and Uri Bar-Noi also claim that the Soviet Union engaged in the funding of Palestinian terrorist groups throughout much of this period. In this climate, Nixon and Kissinger did not want to antagonise the Soviet leadership.

At the time of the Munich Massacre, the United States and the Soviet Union had accepted a ‘détente’ or ‘easing of tensions’ but the volatility of the Middle-East meant that there was a constant risk of conflict in the region. Altercations on the periphery also impacted negatively on negotiation processes. The ‘linkage’ that was the core of the Nixon/Kissinger Cold War foreign policy canon meant that if any element in their interconnected web of issues started to corrode, the process was undermined. They could not damage their hitherto diplomatic progress with the Soviet Union. Nixon and Kissinger had been encouraged by advancements during the Moscow and Beijing Summits but were patently aware that the relationship possessed an underlying instability as a consequence of its essentially hostile

79 Ginat, Rami and Bar-Noi, Uri. ‘Tacit support for terrorism,’ p.266.
80 Memorandum From Presidential Assistant Kissinger to President Nixon, February 18, 1969, National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 489, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1969, Pt. 2
A significant resurgence of conflicts in the Middle-East could ignite the deep set antagonisms at present dormant in the Cold War rivalries. The Munich Massacre was a potential trigger for a war in the Middle-East. Controlling a belligerent Israel was the key to retaining international stability and ensuring continued progress on negotiations. The Nixon administration would have to develop a series of measures which would contain Israeli anger and diminish the risk of igniting further conflict.

In the first instance, the suffering of the Israeli people had to be recognised. Nixon conveyed his sympathies to Prime Minister Golda Meir directly.

Dear Madame Prime Minister:

The heart of America goes out to you, to the bereaved families and to the Israeli people in the tragedy that has struck your Olympic athletes. This tragic and senseless act is a perversion of all the hopes and aspirations of mankind which the Olympic Games symbolize. In a larger sense, it is a tragedy for all the peoples and nations of the world. We mourn with you the deaths of your innocent and brave athletes, and we share with you the determination that the spirit of brotherhood and peace they represented shall in the end persevere.

Sincerely,

RICHARD NIXON

In his correspondence with Israeli Prime Minister, Golda Meir, Nixon made the assurance that the United States ‘was working diligently on the terrorist problem.’

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81 Kissinger to Nixon, February 18, 1969, NARA-NMP, NSC Files, Box 489, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1969, [Pt. 2]
administration also engaged in careful discussion over how to demonstrate American sympathy for Israeli losses. Kissinger stated in a Memorandum to Nixon that the gesture had to convey ‘meaning’ and ‘human compassion’ but in political terms, it had to unambiguously relate the American position without involving ‘the presidency of the United States in an official act.’

Secretary of State, William Rogers suggested that period of silence during the funeral of the Israeli athletes would be appropriate. In his communications with the Israeli government, Rogers had been informed by Ambassador Rabin that the Israeli government did not want high level delegations present at the funeral as it would make the event overtly political.

Beyond symbolic displays of grief and compassion, discussion in the White House centred on designing a practicable response that would serve American interests. Nixon and Kissinger knew it was essential to communicate that the administration was dismayed and concerned by the tragedy yet there must be a concerted effort to contain rather than fuel the outrage felt by Israelis. They felt The American-Israeli alliance must be maintained but also exist concurrently in a system of international and domestic dynamics conducive to American interests. Nixon and Kissinger recognised the strategic value of utilising the United Nations; it could appease the Israelis and simultaneously buy the administration time to design a longer term response to the issue. The President instructed Secretary of State, William Rogers, to ‘see what sort of game plan we can come up with for the UN.’

The Department of State expressed initial reservations on the utilisation of the UN for this...
issue but Nixon and Kissinger were adamant that it could prove valuable in their diplomatic strategy.  

Nixon, Kissinger and Rogers communicated closely with Israeli Ambassador Yitzhak Rabin in devising an official course of action. Records of conversations between Ambassador Rabin and Secretary of State, William Rogers show that the Israeli government voiced firm opposition to any overtures toward the United Nation’s Security Council. Ambassador Rabin instead encouraged the United States government to put pressure on those states with known associations and support mechanisms for Arab terrorist groups. Rabin suggested that America address Cairo, Beirut and Damascus and make it patently clear that if these governments were prepared to condone the use of their territory by anti-Israeli terrorist groups or as proxy battlegrounds for actions in other states, they would have to bear responsibility. Rabin also suggested that the United States government engage with western European countries to promote effective actions against Arab organisations with known connections to terrorist groups and establish security systems with the express purpose of exchanging views on terrorist acts. Aside from the difference of opinion on the value of utilising the UN, many of Rabin’s aforementioned suggestions were viewed as reasonable by the administration.

Yet, the outrage felt by the Israeli government also manifested in impracticable propositions

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88 Haig for the President’s File, NARA- NMP, NSC Files, Box 998, Haig Memcons, Jan-Dec, 1972
89 Telegram 164170 From the Department of State to Embassy in Israel, September 8, 1972, National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 609, Country Files, Middle East, Israel, Sept 1971-Sept. 1972. Secret; Exdis. Drafted by Stackhouse (NEA/IAI) on September 7 and approved by Atherton, Bremer, and Eliot. Repeated to Amman, Cairo, Beirut, Kuwait, Jidda, Bonn, London, Moscow, Paris, Tripoli, and USUN, p2.
90 Telegram 164170 Department of State to Embassy in Israel, September 8, 1972, NARA- NMP, NSC Files, Box 609, Country Files, Middle East, Israel, Sept 1971-Sept. 1972, p.2.
91 Telegram 164170 Department of State to Embassy in Israel, September 8, 1972, NARA- NMP, NSC Files, Box 609, Country Files, Middle East, Israel, Sept 1971-Sept. 1972, p.2.
92 Telegram 164170 Department of State to Embassy in Israel, September 8, 1972, NARA- NMP, NSC Files, Box 609, Country Files, Middle East, Israel, Sept 1971-Sept. 1972, p.3.
which would not be acceptable under global conditions at this time. The primary point of divergence between the two nations was on the continuation of the Olympic Games. The Israeli government was applying pressure to the United States government to announce their withdrawal from participation in the remainder of the Games as a show of support.93 Memoranda from the Department of State show that the notion of withdrawal was unanimously rejected by the primary decision makers: Nixon, Kissinger, Rogers and General Haig.94 Nixon was irritated by the Israeli pressure to withdraw from the Olympic Games and grumbled to Kissinger,

It’s like these assholes that tried to stop us running the government. … If we’d stopped like some of the softheads around here or gone over and prayed at the Lincoln Memorial, that’s what they want. So the thing to do is to do it the other way.95

To consent to Israel’s proposed course of action would present multiple problems for American relations with friendly states. The administration worried that withdrawal from the event would be damaging to relations with West Germany. The Germans were already under intense scrutiny due to the flawed rescue attempt at the NATO airbase and, at that time, were seen as a positive force in the region.96 Rogers also argued that cancellation of the Olympic Games would send the wrong message to terrorist groups and would be exploited. The Black September Organisation had already declared the attack a victory and as evidence that the world was not in support of Israel.97 Rogers raised concerns that it would give

93Haig for the President's File, NARA- NMP, NSC Files, Box 998, Haig Memcons, Jan-Dec, 1972.
94 Haig for the President's File, NARA- NMP, NSC Files, Box 998, Haig Memcons, Jan-Dec, 1972.
96Haig for the President's File, NARA- NMP, NSC Files, Box 998, Haig Memcons, Jan-Dec, 1972.
97 Telegram 164170 Department of State to Embassy in Israel, September 8, 1972, NARA- NMP, NSC Files, Box 609, Country Files, Middle East, Israel, Sept 1971-Sept. 1972, p.3.
credibility to other planned actions by the terrorist organisations. Maintaining control over the public relations problem was central to keeping the situation from becoming further inflamed.

There was also disagreement within the administration. A matter of contention between the Department of State and the White House was the impact the Munich Massacre would have on peace settlement negotiations in the Middle-East. The Department of State viewed the crisis as an opportunity to resume negotiations with the Israeli government on the terms of a settlement. Representative from the Department of State, Sam Hoskinson stated that the administration should ‘identify with Israeli sorrow and bitterness, but it would not be in our interest to do this in a way that closes off our options to work with both Arabs and Israelis to produce a peace settlement.’ Nixon was wary of the pushing settlement talks on the Israelis in the wake of this tragedy, however. He was convinced that the situation in Munich would not diminish resolve on the part of Israel but would rather fortify their position. Rabin had conceded that ‘after Egyptian expulsion of Russians there seemed to be a sense of relaxation and broadening of chances for peace’ but that after the Munich Massacre ‘things were taken back to where they were.’ Rabin highlighted the fact that with the existence of Arab terrorist groups like the Black September Organisation ‘who could guarantee to Israel that once there was a political settlement that Israel would not be in a

98 Telegram 164170 Department of State to Embassy in Israel, September 8, 1972, NARA- NMP, NSC Files, Box 609, Country Files, Middle East, Israel, Sept 1971-Sept. 1972, p.6.
99 Haig for the President’s File, NARA- NMP, NSC Files, Box 998, Haig Memcons, Jan-Dec, 1972.
100 Memorandum From Samuel M. Hoskinson and Fernando Rondon of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), Washington, September 6, 1972, National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Subject Files, Box 368, 1976 Olympics. Secret.
102 Haig for the President’s File, NARA- NMP, NSC Files, Box 998, Haig Memcons, Jan-Dec, 1972.
worse position?" Key decision makers in the administration concluded that it would be prudent ‘to keep a lid on things for the present.’

An analysis of documents pertaining to the initial response of the Nixon administration to the Munich Massacre shows that the principal concern was the containment of Israel. This undermines the general endorsement amongst many historians of wholesale American support for the Israel throughout much of this period. The volatility of the region meant that the US-Israeli alliance was subject to the flexibility that strategy formulation in an antagonistic Cold War world required; the notion of US support for Israel had to have some fluidity and restrictions. The Munich Massacre produced an international relations conundrum for the United States; the historical alliance with Israel was fundamental to American interests in the Middle-East, yet an open endorsement of support for Israel would rouse a possible resurgence of hostilities and would place the United States in a precarious position. The administration realised poor diplomacy could bring to the fore those sensitive issues lying suppressed within the system. Retaliation from Israel would send shivers through the lines of US interests existing within the web of diplomacy, which had so far kept the Cold War from becoming ‘hot.’

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103 Telegram 164170 Department of State to Embassy in Israel, September 8, 1972, NARA - NMP, NSC Files, Box 609, Country Files, Middle East, Israel, Sept 1971-Sept. 1972, p.5.
Chapter TWO

Domestic Unrest

You really don’t know, Henry, what the Jewish community will do on this. It’s going to be the goddamnedest thing you ever saw…  

(Richard Nixon to Henry Kissinger, 6 Sept, 1972)

The Nixon administration’s policies toward the Middle-East in the wake of the Munich Massacre would not just have international ramifications. The entanglement of the international sphere with the domestic sphere was a matter of serious consideration in the formation of the United States’ foreign policy, particularly on the question of Israel. Balancing the interests of the two spheres was difficult to achieve. Domestic and foreign policy were awkward bedfellows during Nixon’s administration, primarily due to his and Kissinger’s prioritisation of issues. Both have proclaimed in various articles and books penned since their time in the White House, that they were first and foremost world statesmen and were concerned principally with the conduct of foreign affairs. Nixon remained relatively uninspired by the domestic enterprise. He saw domestic issues as obstructive to his designs on the world stage and attempted to conduct foreign and domestic policy completely independent of each other. In his memoirs, Kissinger justified

this conduct as an effort to protect policy making from the passions of everyday partisanship.\textsuperscript{108} For the American people, it simply appeared that Nixon and Kissinger had unashamedly and consistently prioritised issues of foreign policy above domestic issues. In the words of a Time Magazine article written in 1972 ‘it does not seem to be Nixon’s nature to offer bold leadership at home.’\textsuperscript{109}

The Munich Massacre was a provocative foreign policy issue however, and Nixon’s distaste for domestic policy was tempered by his almost purely pragmatic approach to politics, a predilection he shared with Kissinger. Robert Dallek, in \textit{Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in power}, claims that both Nixon and Kissinger knew that in order to succeed in responding to international affairs, they had to appease Congress and the media, and still appeal to public opinion. They did not, as Dallek has noted ‘intend simply to reflect domestic sentiment’ but ‘were mindful of the need to enlist back by all possible means, including stealth or misleading information, for any major foreign policy initiative.’\textsuperscript{110} This was particularly true during a presidential election campaign. In September 1972, the Nixon administration’s campaign was in full-swing and serious engagement with domestic issues was inevitable because it was, and continues to be, an area where elections are won and lost.\textsuperscript{111}

As has been considered in the first chapter of this thesis, Nixon and Kissinger’s Middle-East policy calculations were ostensibly informed by the conception of the region in terms of global strategy. Engagement with domestic pressures was clearly unavoidable however. The administration’s Middle-East policy was particularly vulnerable to pressure from the pro-

\textsuperscript{108} Kissinger, \textit{The White House Years}, p914.
\textsuperscript{110} Dallek, \textit{Nixon and Kissinger}, p135.
Israel lobby, a sector of American society that Robert H. Trice has defined as ‘seventy-five\textsuperscript{112} separate organisations-mostly Jewish-that actively support most of the actions and policy positions of the Israeli government.’\textsuperscript{113} The actual influence possessed by the Jewish community and the pro-Israel lobby in the formation of foreign policy is a matter of some contention. According to John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt they have allegedly formed a powerful, vocal and committed sector of American society. In the controversial book \textit{The Israel Lobby and Foreign Policy}, Walt and Mearsheimer claim that the Jewish community have manipulated the lobbying process that occurs within the United States system of democracy with great success.\textsuperscript{114} Steven Rosenthal, too, has claimed in \textit{Long distance nationalism, American Jews, Zionism and Israel}, that ‘since 1967, there has been no other country whose citizens have been as committed to the success of another country as American Jews have been to Israel’.\textsuperscript{115} George Schultz\textsuperscript{116} in \textit{The ‘Israel Lobby’ Myth} and Abraham Foxman in \textit{The deadliest lies: the Israel lobby and the myth of Jewish control}, refute many of the claims of Walt and Mearsheimer, but have conceded that various Jewish groups in America do have political influence and largely advocate US support for Israel. Schultz and Foxman insist, however that that the Jewish groups do not constitute a homogenous lobbying group within American society. They contend that governmental support for Israel has come from agreement among the American people and the Democratic and Republican parties that to pursue pro-Israeli policy is ‘politically sound and morally just.’ They claim that American

\textsuperscript{112} Trice’s calculation of seventy five organisations was made in 1967
\textsuperscript{116} George Schultz was United States Secretary of the Treasury during Nixon’s first term
support for Israel is the result of geopolitical factors and the moral imperative of Israel as a homeland for the Jews.\textsuperscript{117}

Despite contention over the degree of clout held by Jewish groups in relation to the formation of foreign policy, the pertinent factor is Nixon’s perception of their power and their objectives. On this matter there is little disputation. Nixon was convinced of their prominent position within American society. He believed that the Jewish community had formed a powerful cohesive group in American society, which displayed disloyalty toward the American nation (sometimes referring them as ‘Jewish traitors’) and had a high level of involvement in the American media, which made them ‘dangerous adversaries.’\textsuperscript{118} Recently surfacing from the Nixon Tapes is a conversation that took place between the president and Reverend Billy Graham in February 1972. During this conversation Nixon candidly expressed his concerns regarding Jewish media penetration, declaring that ‘Newsweek; it’s all run by Jews and dominated by them in their editorial pages… The New York Times, The Washington Post; totally Jewish too.’\textsuperscript{119} David Greenberg, in \textit{Nixon’s Shadow}, has contended that Nixon made no effort to conceal his detestation of what he labelled the ‘liberal media’ even embarking on a ‘crusade’ against the American press.\textsuperscript{120} According to Nixon’s speech writer, William Safire, Nixon had once had told him that ‘the press is the enemy… to be hated and beaten’\textsuperscript{121} and that it was ‘a biased, out of touch liberal elite.’\textsuperscript{122} After the Munich


\textsuperscript{119} Nixon Presidential Material, Presidential Tape Recordings, Conversation between Richard Nixon and Reverend Billy Graham, Oval Office, February 1, 1972.


\textsuperscript{121} W. Safire, \textit{Before the Fall: An Inside View of the Pre-Watergate White House}, (Garden City: New York, 1975), pp.342-343.

Massacre, Nixon’s perception of the media was conspicuous during a meeting with Kissinger, Rogers and Haig. Nixon used it as additional evidence that the administration should not capitulate to Israeli pressure and the desires of the broader Jewish community, commenting that to withdraw from the Olympic Games ‘would be the New York Times approach.’

Nixon believed that Jewish groups considered the interests of Israel to be of far greater importance than any other issue and regarded this intense preoccupation with some distaste. In 1969, Nixon declared to fellow White House administrators that ‘under no circumstances will domestic political considerations have any bearing on the decisions I make with regard to the Mideast.’ Historian, Dominic Sandbrook has claimed that the ‘domestic political considerations’ Nixon referred to most particularly, was Jewish support for Israel. Nixon’s relationship with this sector of American society was not as clear-cut as it seems, however. Remarks captured on the ‘Nixon Tapes’ and documented in the records show an unequivocal antipathy towards the Jewish community which have motivated many overzealous historians to label Nixon an anti-Semite. Nixon’s advisor, H. R. (Bob) Haldeman has recounted an incident in his diaries where Nixon identified the enemies of the government as ‘youth, black, Jew’ and recalls him stating in an Oval Office meeting that ‘most Jews are disloyal… generally speaking, you can’t trust the bastards. They turn on you…’ Yet it should also be noted that Nixon appointed Kissinger to the second most

123 National Memorandum From the President’s Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) for the President’s File, Washington, September 6, 1972, 8:30 a.m. National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 998, Haig Memcons, Jan-Dec, 1972. Secret. Drafted by Haig on September 11.
126 Illustrations of Nixon’s anti-Semitic outbursts during that period abound. See ‘New Nixon Tapes Are Released: Depth of President’s Anti-Semitism Detailed,’ Washington Post, (6 October, 1999).
powerful post in the administration and also selected many other figures of Jewish heritage to serve in important positions. Nixon’s counsel, Leonard Garment countered claims of Nixon’s anti-Semitism saying that on a scale of one to one hundred he would rate him ‘somewhere between fifteen and twenty–better than most, worse than some, much like the rest of the world.’

Although many of Nixon’s remarks have revealed an underlying hostility toward the Jewish community, it is important to acknowledge that the first term of his presidency also coincided with a particularly intense period of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Walt and Mearsheimer claim that as a corollary to heightened tensions in the Middle-East caused by the War of Attrition during 1969-1970 and attacks like the Munich Massacre, concern over the security of Israel reinforced and intensified the Israel-centric view of many Jewish community-relations groups. Nixon’s remarks, although improper, are also a reflection of resentment towards increasing demands to display strong support for Israel. Nixon’s sentiments toward the Jewish community were also a product of his belief that they were principally sympathetic to the Democratic Party and he was thus reluctant to court the Jewish vote. In The White House Years, Kissinger reported that Nixon ‘considered himself less obligated to the Jewish constituency than any of his predecessors had been and was eager to demonstrate that he was impervious to its pressures’. The small percentage of Jews who voted for him, he would joke, had to be so crazy that they would probably vote for him even if he turned on Israel.’ Kissinger also claims that Nixon rarely practiced that which he preached. ‘For on almost all practical issues his unsentimental geopolitical analysis

129 Mearsheimer and Walt, The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy, pp.118-119.
130 Dallek, Nixon and Kissinger, p.169.
131 Kissinger, The White House Years, p.559.
132 Kissinger, The White House Years, p.564.
finally led him to positions not so distant from ones others might take on the basis of ethnic politics'.\textsuperscript{133} Any personal resentment would become secondary to political pragmatism.

Nixon’s pragmatic approach to politics was particularly evident during the 1972 election campaign as emerging political conditions began to turn in his favour. The presumptive nominee for the Democratic Party, George McGovern caused some apprehension amongst the Jewish community.\textsuperscript{134} There was some uncertainty about McGovern’s commitment to the security of Israel.\textsuperscript{135} Nixon although generally disliked by the Jewish community, was considered to have shown his wherewithal in relation to the support of Israel. Thus Nixon, like a modern-day Dostoevsky,\textsuperscript{136} assumed the paradoxical position of being labelled an anti-Semite, yet the preferred candidate because he was considered an ardent supporter of Israel. This was an electoral advantage that Nixon would not neglect to capitalise upon and he revised his earlier reluctance to cater to the Jewish vote. Nixon recognised that the American Jews were a key political constituency. He felt that their antagonistic views towards his administration could be ameliorated through strategic political manoeuvring. Salim Yaqub has highlighted a host of domestic and international concerns that emerged throughout the 1970s such as crime, busing and the mistreatment of Soviet Jews which prompted many people in the Jewish community to question their traditional liberalist ideology.\textsuperscript{137} This provided the Republican Party with an opening, a chance to increase its

\textsuperscript{133} Kissinger, \textit{The white House Years}, p.564.
\textsuperscript{135} ‘The Voters: The Jewish Swing to Nixon’, \textit{Time Magazine}, (21 August, 1972)
\textsuperscript{136} In his book \textit{A Writers Diary}, Fyodor Dostoevsky is noted to have expressed anti-Semitic sentiment frequently but he is also noted to have stood up for equal rights of the Russian Jewish population. See S. Cassedy, \textit{Dostoevsky’s Religion}, (Stanford University Press, 2005); D. I Goldstein, \textit{Dostoevsky and the Jew}, (University of Texas Press, 1981).
support within the Jewish community and its share of the Jewish vote.\textsuperscript{138} The development of this important facet of Nixon’s electoral game plan would best be served by showing measured partiality to Israel after the tragedy in Munich. Yaqub has emphasised how a display of support for Israel would lead the Israeli government to effectively endorse Nixon for re-election, and the support would filter through to the American Jewish community.\textsuperscript{139}

Merely showing partiality for Israel was problematic, however. The Munich Massacre had inspired intense anger in champions of the Israeli cause and many pro Israeli groups were making unreasonable demands and using violent and vengeful language. The \textit{New York Times}, reported that members of The Jewish Defense League had engaged in a hunger strike at the West German Embassy in Washington and the National Chairman Bert Zweibon issued a statement that the United States and the broader community were guilty of being ‘the silent witness of Arab barbarity’. The League made claims that Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Lebanon ‘harbor, train and finance’ Arab ‘butchers’ and that retaliation should take the form of ‘the assassination of Arab diplomats all over the world’.\textsuperscript{140} In response to the protests of the Jewish community, Nixon complained to Kissinger ‘the trouble with the Jews is that they’ve always played these things in terms of outrage.\textsuperscript{141} The Nixon administration had to subdue the Jewish community’s indignation but not give any sense that the administration


\textsuperscript{139} Yaqub ‘The Weight of Conquest,’ p.234.


was unconditionally pro-Israel. There was firm opposition within the administration to letting American policy be dictated by an outraged and radical Jewish community.

The Nixon administration decided that the Jewish Community’s outrage would best be calmed by a public acknowledgement of their anguish; with a delicate and measured display of compassion. Secretary of State, William Rogers, proposed that Nixon issue an executive order for a national day of mourning, perhaps even flying flags at half mast.\textsuperscript{142}

Rogers’ proposal was rejected out of hand however as it was considered by Nixon and Kissinger to be letting policy be dictated by the ‘radical Jewish community.’\textsuperscript{143} The Munich Massacre was one of many tragic incidents taking place on the world stage at the same time and Nixon and Kissinger felt that it must be placed within international perspective. They stressed that Ireland was facing a near civil war which should not be reduced in import by efforts to appease an outraged Israel. ‘Why don’t you order the flag when some Irish nationalists get killed?’ Nixon queried in response to Rogers’ proposal. ‘What will Irishmen say if you didn’t lower it when the school children got killed in Belfast…?’\textsuperscript{144} Both Nixon and Kissinger felt that by lowering the flag, the administration would be demonstrating a double standard. But it was merely a matter of getting the level of conciliation right. ‘We’ve got to show we care on this one’ Nixon acknowledged in a private phone call to Kissinger. ‘You really don’t know, Henry, what the Jewish community will do on this. It’s going to be the

\textsuperscript{142} Memorandum From the President’s Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) for the President’s File, Washington, September 6, 1972, 8:30 a.m. National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 998, Haig Memcons, Jan-Dec, 1972. Secret. Drafted by Haig on September 11.

\textsuperscript{143} National Archives, Nixon Presidential Material, Presidential Tape Recordings, Conversation between Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, Oval Office, September 6, 1972, Conversation 771-2.

\textsuperscript{144} NARA- NMP, Presidential Tape Recordings, Nixon and Kissinger, Oval Office, September 6, 1972, Conversation 771-2.
goddamnedest thing you ever saw’. Kissinger felt that the administration should be particularly cautious when appeasing the Jewish community however warning Nixon that

It’s not our day of mourning, Mr President. It’s easy enough now to do a number of grandstanding… And also, God I am Jewish. I’ve had 13 members of my family killed. So I can’t be insensitive to this. But I think you have to think also of the anti-Semitic woes in this country"

Running parallel to the competition in the Middle-East between the Arab world and Israel was a similar clash within the United States lobbying system. Both constituencies possessed significant internal domestic leverage. Since the Six Day War, major Arab-American international oil companies had been increasingly pushing for Arab support from the American government. Representatives of the international oil companies in America were being pressured by their Arab partners to become more aggressive in their articulation of Arab interests. The consortium of companies forming the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) were particularly forthright in expressing their discontent stating that ‘the image of the US has more or less collapsed in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war’ and that ‘as a direct consequence of our [American] identification with Israel, Soviet influence in the Middle-East—which was practically non-existent in the mid fifties—has burgeoned.’ Although American oil interests in the Middle-East did not become pressing until 1973 when the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC)

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149 Now called Saudi Aramco
150 Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations and United States Foreign Policy (94th Congress, 1st Session, 1975), pt 7 pp517-528.
proclaimed an oil embargo,\textsuperscript{151} the United States had implemented measures to ensure accessibility to Middle-East oil in the tightly integrated energy market since World War Two. The United States built friendly relations with many Arab states and prevented any one state from establishing hegemony in the region, establishing a local balance of power. This strategy would ensure that Middle-East oil would not become the possession of unfriendly states and would dissuade hostile states from obstructing oil flow.\textsuperscript{152}

Nixon continued these efforts to form good relationships with the major international oil companies. Such amicable relations were reflected in the significant campaign contributions Nixon received in the run-up to his 1968 election win and the generous contributions he received throughout 1971 and 1972.\textsuperscript{153} Even so, Nixon and Kissinger were not substantially influenced by Arab-American oil interests in the formation of Middle-East policy.\textsuperscript{154} An executive of the Mobil Oil Company remarked that ‘we could always get a hearing, but we felt we might as well be talking to the wall’. Despite their largesse, the major international oil companies had limited influence in Washington during this period.\textsuperscript{155} For the most part, the major international oil companies did not apply significant pressure throughout Nixon’s first term, however. They recognised the benefits of tending to their interests independently of the government as a means to prevent poor publicity or get involved in messy diplomacy.\textsuperscript{156}

\textsuperscript{151} This was ostensibly in response to the U.S. decision to re-supply the Israeli military during the Yom Kippur war
\textsuperscript{152} Mearsheimer and Walt, The Israel Lobby, pp.142-143. According to Mearsheimer and Walt, the importance of middle-east oil led the US to become a close ally of Saudi Arabia after WW2 and is one reason why Washington backed the Shah of Iran.
\textsuperscript{153} Spiegel, The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict, p.171.
\textsuperscript{154} Spiegel, The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict, p.171. Spiegel asserts that American oil interests in the region started to take precedence in 1973 with the oil shocks
\textsuperscript{156} R. Engler, The Brotherhood of Oil: Energy Policy and the Public Interest, p.63.
Admittedly though, the impact of terrorist attacks like the Munich Massacre was the cause of some apprehension. The implications of the Munich Massacre and more specifically, any indication of US support for Israel had the capacity to cause severe disruption to business interests. Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, American businesses in the Middle-East had been subject to multiple terrorist attacks from Fedayeen groups aiming to obstruct Western access to Arab oil.\(^{157}\) Kissinger, in a memo to Nixon, outlined his concerns that in the wake of the Munich Massacre radical Arab terrorist groups would be inspired to engage in a campaign of destruction aimed at businesses perceived as representing US imperialism.\(^{158}\)

there is no doubt that the Fedayeen groups have carried out coordinated attacks against US business firms and the likelihood is for increased terrorist actions against both official and private US interests over the next several months in the light of the Arab guerrilla’s belief that the Black September Organisation’s Munich operation was a success

Terrorist attacks of this nature would interrupt transit and communications in through the region.\(^{159}\) Nixon’s claim that he was not impeded by domestic constraints was not necessarily reflected by reality.

The United States Congress was also a terminal difficulty for Nixon, particularly in his

\(^{157}\) Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon, Washington, September 29, 1972, National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Subject Files, Box 310, Cabinet Committee on Terrorism.

\(^{158}\) Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon, Washington, September 29, 1972, NARA-NMP, NSC Files, Subject Files, Box 310, See also Memorandum From Richard Kennedy of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), Washington, December 1, 1972, National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Subject Files, Box 310, Cabinet Committee on Terrorism. Secret.

\(^{159}\) (Kissinger) to President Nixon, Washington, September 29, 1972, NARA-NMP, NSC Files, Subject Files, Box 310.
pursuit of foreign policy objectives. Sandbrook has described Nixon’s relationship with
Congress as ‘simply dreadful’.\textsuperscript{160} When Nixon had taken office in 1969, he was the first
President since 1853 to have done so without a majority in either the House of
Representatives or the Senate. The democratic majorities obstructed Nixon’s policy
initiatives frequently, a situation worsened by the fact that he was loath to cultivate
relationships with congressional Democrats and Republicans alike.\textsuperscript{161} Nixon took pains to
conceal his foreign policy intentions from Congress believing that he was in a better position
to deal with international issues. In \textit{President Nixon: Alone in the White House}, Richard Reeves
has claimed to have viewed a handwritten note by the president which reveals the extent to
which he considered himself responsible for the conduct of foreign policy processes. The
note read

\begin{quote}
Foreign policy = strength…
Must emphasise - Courage.
Stands alone…
Knows more than anyone else.
Towers above advisers. World Leader\textsuperscript{162}
\end{quote}

Nixon felt that Congress was ‘cumbersome, undisciplined, isolationist, fiscally irresponsible,
overly vulnerable to pressures from organised minorities and too dominated by the
media’.\textsuperscript{163} In the wake of the Munich Massacre, Congress was a beast that he would have to
deal with, despite his reservations. The righteous anger of Jewish Americans over the attack
on innocent Israelis was increasingly filtering into congressional policy debates. Nixon had
concerns over Israeli links in the United States Congress exploiting the tragedy in Munich as

\textsuperscript{160} Sandbrook, ‘Salesmanship and Substance,’ p.86.
\textsuperscript{161} Sandbrook, ‘Salesmanship and Substance,’ p.86.
\textsuperscript{162} Quoted in Reeves, \textit{President Nixon: Alone in the White House}, p.22.
a rallying point for voicing objections to US-Soviet détente.\textsuperscript{164} There was already significant criticism coming from both the left and the right of Congress over Nixon and Kissinger’s policy of détente with the Soviet Union. In August, 1972 Leonid Brezhnev had imposed the ‘diploma tax’ on would-be emigrants to combat the growing emigration of Soviet Jews to the West. The policy caused great offence within the American Jewish community and throughout the world.\textsuperscript{165} Noam Kochavi, in \textit{Insights Abandoned, Flexibility Lost: Kissinger, Soviet Emigration and the Demise of Détente} observed that after the tragic events of the Munich Massacre it would appear justified for Israel to pressure the administration on emigration rights for Soviet Jews. There would be a Congressional push from members with links to Israel for emigration rights to be made a feature of détente with the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{166} The Munich Massacre had considerable political reach, it had the potential to threaten Nixon and Kissinger’s highly prioritised initiative of US-Soviet détente.

As was consistent with Nixon and Kissinger’s overarching foreign policy approach, political pragmatism determined how the domestic affects of the Munich Massacre were managed. The administration’s decisions in the international field were tempered by domestic obligations and vice versa. As in almost all of Nixon’s policy calculations, the position the administration would adopt when dealing with the American Jewish community would be determined by a manipulation of contending forces based on power assessment rather than sentiment or ideology. The overriding concern in relation to the Munich Massacre was containing Israeli ire and, as in the international sphere, the Nixon administration sought to show measured support for the Jewish Community without endorsing unreasonable action. The administration could not show open partiality for the domestic Jewish population as it would be read as support for Israel internationally. Support for American Jews would anger


\textsuperscript{165} Kochavi, ‘Insights Abandoned, Flexibility Lost’, p.514.

\textsuperscript{166} Naftali, \textit{Blind Spot}, p.57.
the same constituencies as an open display of support for the nation of Israel and have similar international ramifications. Maintaining the precarious balance was made more complicated by other domestic constraints such as Arab-American business interests, Congressional concerns over Soviet Jewish emigration and the pending presidential election. For Nixon, it was simply a matter of manipulating these issues so that the administration could continue to pursue their foreign policy objectives and preserve national interests.
PART II

ROUSE THE GLOBAL WRATH

Chapter THREE

International Condemnation

O men of arms, why do you love injustice?
You must live in law and order
Get up, wake up, or be forever regretful,
Don't be infamous among the nations\textsuperscript{167}
(Yemeni poet, Amin al Mashreqi)

As Part One of this thesis has illustrated, containing Israel was integral to US interests both in the international and domestic spheres. There was also another dimension to the Munich Massacre that had to be addressed; the international nature of the attack. The Arab-Israeli conflict had gone beyond state boundaries in deliberate and frightening way. It had been thrust into the homes of millions of people around the world and had incited fear and anger in the international community. The Munich Massacre was the most visible and brutal exemplar of a new but increasingly prevalent phenomenon of international political attacks. Most commonly manifesting in hijackings, the Nixon administration and broader international community had to determine how to effectively deal with transnational

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\textsuperscript{167} Amin al Mashreqi, quoted by James Brandon in ‘In poetry-loving Yemen, tribal bard takes on Al Qaeda - with his verse’, \textit{The Christian Science Monitor}, p2, available online, http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0512/p01s02-wome.html/(page)/2 Amin al Mashreqi declared that ‘Other countries fight terrorism with guns and bombs, but in Yemen we use poetry, through my poetry I can convince people of the need for peace who would never be convinced by laws or by force.’
offences. The Nixon administration recognised that the Munich Massacre, as such a visible act of international terrorism, would require an equally visible international response. An appeal to the United Nations to engage on the issue of international terrorism and denounce the actions in Munich would also speak to their Israel problem. It would allow the United States to show a degree of support for Israel without involving America directly. The use of multilateral institutions also had the potential to fuel controversial international politics however.

Although little study has been undertaken on Nixon’s perception of, and interaction with, the United Nations, Edward Keefer has observed Nixon’s general aversion to seeking multilateral solutions in achieving his foreign policy objectives. Keefer asserts that in Nixon’s realist view of international relations ‘national self-interest and major power relations were the only real considerations for foreign policy.’ In 1971, Nixon offered his blunt opinion in a private conversation with the American Ambassador to the People’s Republic of China, Walter McConaughy saying

I’d just say to hell with the UN. What is it anyway? It’s a damned debating society. What good does it do? Very little…. They talk about hijacking, drugs, the challenges of modern society, and the rest of it is to give hell to the United States.

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Nixon’s thinly veiled anti-UN sentiment stemmed from his assessment of the United Nations as an ‘old institution’ he considered ‘obsolete and inadequate’ and ‘set up to deal with a world of twenty years ago.’

According to Jeremi Suri in *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*, Kissinger had a better sense than Nixon of how engagement with the international community could benefit the United States. Kissinger was aware of the limits of unilateral power and promoted the idea of a world system where power was dispersed hierarchically allowing for ‘more centres of decision.’ This system would produce terms favourable to the United States; it would encourage innovative diplomatic conduct between states and promote consensus building while legitimising America’s role as a world superpower.

Suri has explained that within Kissinger’s ‘federalist’ approach to foreign relations, the United States was the central diplomatic actor in a community of states; the international mediator. Kissinger rejected both the imperialist impulse for a single state’s dominance over a distant landscape and at the other extreme, the assumed equality of all nations in an institution like the United Nations General Assembly.

Keefer and Suri have observed that Nixon and Kissinger recognised the value of the United Nations in monitoring ceasefires, separating parties in conflict and passing resolutions reflecting decisions already made in other less public channels but this did not dissuade the two men from their general aversion to the institution. Nixon and Kissinger’s lack of enthusiasm for the United Nations should be contextualised however.

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175 Suri *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*, p184.
Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the United Nations underwent a series of major changes both in orientation and in membership. The UN engaged in active promotion of decolonisation and as a result, an influx of newly independent states gained a political voice within the forum.\textsuperscript{177} Paul Kennedy, in \textit{The Parliament of Man} has observed that the ‘world community’ became predominantly African, Asian and Latin American. The former colonies dominated both in population and in General Assembly votes.\textsuperscript{178} The newly independent states also brought their own set of agendas to UN debates. Kennedy has claimed that the existing systems became subject to broad criticism and as a corollary, there was a significant increase in anti-Western sentiment.\textsuperscript{179} The United Nations was also weakened by financial pressures, mounting claims of institutional impotency and an ongoing but ultimately unsuccessful campaign to keep the People’s Republic of China out of the assembly. China gained membership in 1971.\textsuperscript{180} According to Peter Romaniuk in \textit{Multilateral Counterterrorism}, preoccupation with these issues meant that although there was a surge of international terrorist activity and hijackings throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, terrorism was not addressed in any considerable way by the United Nations.\textsuperscript{181} This is not to say that the terrorist acts throughout this period were not deemed significant by the international community or by the Nixon administration however. In 1969, in his address before the 24\textsuperscript{th} Session of the General Assembly, Nixon stated that ‘there are at least five areas in particular of great concern to everyone here with regard to which there should be no national differences, in which our interests are common and on which there should be unanimity.’ \textsuperscript{182}

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\textsuperscript{179} Kennedy, \textit{The Parliament of Man}, p186.
\textsuperscript{182} R. Nixon, Address Before the 24th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, September 18, 1969, Public Papers of the Presidents, \textit{The American Presidency Project}, Richard Nixon,
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One of these five areas was ‘securing the safety of international air travel.’ Nixon went on to say

By any standards, aircraft hijackings are morally, politically, and legally indefensible. The Tokyo Convention has now been brought into force, providing for prompt release of passengers, crew, and aircraft. Along with other nations, we also are working on a new convention for the punishment of hijackers. But neither of these conventions can be fully effective without cooperation; sky piracy cannot be ended as long as the pirates receive asylum. Consequently, I urge the United Nations to give high priority to this matter. This is an issue which transcends politics; there is no need for it to become the subject of polemics or a focus of political differences. It involves the interests of every nation, the safety of every air passenger, and the integrity of that structure of order on which a world community depends.183

In 1970, in Organisation of American States (OAS) policy discussions, the need for an international approach to the terrorist problem was acknowledged in a number of recommendations. These recommendations included: specific condemnation of the acts (which would include hijacking), member states facilitation of the extradition of terrorists, the establishment of an international instrument declaring terrorist acts international crimes plus an appeal to the international community to condemn such acts and those countries and organisations maintaining connections with terrorist elements.184 Even though Nixon had urged for the terrorist issue of hijacking to be prioritised in 1969 and again in 1970, it

184 Memorandum from the Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Eliot) to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), Washington, June 24, 1970, U.S. Department of State.
was not until a more potent example of terrorism confronted the international community that dealing with the threat became urgent. The Munich Massacre filled that void.

For Nixon, the Palestinian violence exemplified in the attack in Munich was ‘precedent setting.’ It was an indication of a shift in the psyche of the terrorist. Terrorist elements had demonstrated that they would go to considerable lengths, including killing civilians in blatant sight of the world to pursue their agenda.\(^{185}\) Nixon heatedly denounced the terrorists as ‘international outlaws’ stating that ‘they are unpredictable and all the rest.’\(^{186}\) The overriding concern of the Nixon administration continued to be the prevention of Israeli retaliation but Nixon also recognised that the world faced a formidable security challenge. The anarchic nature of the threat necessitated the enactment of preventive measures in order to thwart any future attacks on vulnerable targets. This was a job for the United Nations. Nixon and Kissinger recognised that by appealing to the international community to condemn the attack and debate the establishment of international security measures, the United States could also show Israel that they were sympathetic to their position without jeopardising national interests.\(^{187}\)

Early discussion of the utilisation of the United Nations met with firm opposition from the Department of State. Secretary of State, William Rogers held the view that obtaining effective measures against incidents of international terrorism through an UN Security Council Resolution would likely be greeted with negligible success. Rogers noted that the strength of the loss would send a clear message as a win for the terrorist cause, which would


\(^{186}\) Naftali, *Blind Spot*, pp.56-57.

\(^{187}\) Memorandum From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) for the President's File, Washington, September 6, 1972, 8:30 a.m. National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 998, Haig Memcons, Jan-Dec, 1972. Secret. Drafted by Haig on September 11.
work against their own interests and promote terrorist confidence. The Department of State officials were also concerned that utilisation of an institution like the UN could ‘exacerbate rather than ease’ tensions arising from the attack. The airing of Arab grievances within debate would likely intensify Israeli embitterment and could potentially be used as justification for Israel to engage in an independent action. The Israeli government had also voiced their reluctance to make any moves toward engagement with the UN. Rogers believed that direct contact with Israel was likely to bear more fruit in terms of negotiations. Officials from the Department of State were also conscious that the United Nations was increasingly being criticised as an impotent institution. They worried that a failed resolution would be yet another demonstration of its limitations.

Samuel Hoskinson of the National Security Council staff told Kissinger that

the hard reality, however, is that there is really very little we, or any major power, can do to rectify this situation or make sure that it will not happen again. We can attempt to focus world moral indignation and press for tighter international security measures but we will remain vulnerable to the dedicated extremist

Nixon’s actions mirrored Hoskinson’s advice. He made moves toward focussing world moral indignation and pushed for the implementation of international security measures.

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188 Memorandum From Samuel M. Hoskinson and Fernando Rondon of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), Washington, September 6, 1972, National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Subject Files, Box 368, 1976 Olympics. Secret.

189 Samuel M. Hoskinson and Fernando Rondon to (Kissinger), Washington, September 6, 1972, NARA-NMP, NSC Files, Subject Files, Box 368.

190 Haig for the President’s File, NARA- NMP, NSC Files, Box 998, Haig Memcons, Jan-Dec, 1972

191 Samuel M. Hoskinson and Fernando Rondon to (Kissinger), Washington, September 6, 1972, NARA-NMP, NSC Files, Subject Files, Box 368.

192 Samuel M. Hoskinson and Fernando Rondon to (Kissinger), Washington, September 6, 1972, NARA-NMP, NSC Files, Subject Files, Box 368.
Nixon issued a presidential directive to ‘mobilise the international community to take action to combat terrorism in the wake of the Munich tragedy.’193

Nixon was also prompted to push for some sort of action to be taken against those Arab states condoning the existence of terrorist forces in their territories. It was clear to the President that his administration, and the international community would have to act decisively on this issue and put measures in place to secure the safety its citizens. Since September 1970, in the wake of Arafat’s expulsion from Jordan, when Lebanon accepted the Palestinian Liberation Organisation use of Lebanese territory, Nixon had been becoming increasingly frustrated with Arab states that provided safe havens for terrorist elements.194 Nixon declared in a phone call to General Haig that ‘we have to be awfully tough… any nation that harbours or gives sanctuary to these international outlaws we will cut off economic support.’195 Kissinger also suggested to Nixon that they should push the UN to enact ‘some international rules on harbouring guerrillas and so forth. That is a concrete measure that affects the world. That’s a statesmanlike thing.’196 The administration began immediate consultations with the Ambassadors and Charges of almost fifty countries in order to solicit additional views and suggestions on the problem of international terrorism and to manoeuvre the international voice to condemn those nations complicit in the efforts of terrorist groups.197 Despite the Department of State’s reluctance, Nixon was adamant in his desire to pursue the UN line of strategy. ‘It will be good to put the goddam UN on the

spot. We want to put them on the spot on this issue, because we think we got them by the balls here.’

Nixon cast aside his aversion to the United Nations and embraced its value as a mechanism for condemnation of the Munich Massacre but for this approach to be viable, he needed to get the support of the world community. Nixon recognised that any American appeals to Arab governments to confront terrorism on their own soil were hampered by the perception that America was in Israel’s hip pocket. Nixon therefore designed a diplomatic strategy to be carried out by the Department of State in an order to circumvent the problem. Nixon directed Rogers to encourage nations with the capacity to provide more leverage over Arab states to vocalise their concerns. These nations should make clear to the leaders of Arab states that the credibility of Arab governments was diminishing as they consistently failed to denounce or deal with terrorist attacks. The international community had no reason to believe the innocence of Arab governments when those who executed the attacks carried Arab passports, were based in Arab states and expressed their views from Arab capitals. Rogers should also encourage these friendly nations to advise Arab leaders that the vague position they adopted towards terrorism was causing detriment to their national interests; it tarnished their international image and dominated their policy dialogue making it captive to terrorist issues. Finally, they should emphasise the fact that the Munich Massacre and similar attacks raised antagonisms within the Middle-east and rendered any movement on peace settlements redundant. So long as a terrorist war was maintained on Israel, there

199 Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon, Washington, September 6, 1972, National Archives, RG 59, President's Evening Reading: Lot 74 D 164.
would be brutal counter attacks and any diplomatic efforts by Arab states would be deemed insincere.\textsuperscript{203}

The Nixon administration would also capitalise on the outrage building among international community.\textsuperscript{204} Denunciations of the terrorist actions were coming from around the globe. On the morning after the attack, the \textit{New York Times} reported that ‘people spoke of it to strangers on street corners, expressing horror. A taxi driver, forgetting to complain about Paris traffic for once, turned to his fare and said, in summing up the general feelings, “But they’re crazy; the world is going crazy.”\textsuperscript{205} King Hussein of Jordan called it a ‘horrible crime’ in a message to Chancellor Willy Brandt of West Germany. Stating that ‘In the name of the Jordanian government and people, I convey to you our affliction and our anger at this act of violence perpetrated against the civilised world’, that it was the work of sick minds who are opposed to humanity, the Palestinian people and Jordan and opposed to Arabism, its traditions, its values and its cause.\textsuperscript{206} Dr Cynthia Wedel, president of the National Council of Churches said that ‘until this abuse of human freedom disappears from the world scene, it is imperative that effective security measures be maintained so that international meetings may be encouraged and continued without the threat of such atrocities.’\textsuperscript{207} Condemnation came from the Vatican too as it described the attack as ‘a betrayal of the Olympic spirit and an unjust injury to the West German Government.’\textsuperscript{208} An editorial on the front page of \textit{L’Osservatore Romano}, said that the attack had broken the political truce traditionally

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represented by the Olympic Games.’\textsuperscript{209} The Jewish Service Organisation, B’nai B’rith made a statement that ‘the murderers and barbarism are not isolated acts but are a repeated consequence of the over and tacit support and encouragement, and the comfortable sanctuary which Arab governments have given to terrorist groups.’\textsuperscript{210}

In a memorandum to Nixon, Rogers reported that the actions which had been taken with other governments had been successful in ‘imparting a sense of urgency’ on the terrorist issues within the international community and that efforts would be made by the Department of State to maintain the momentum that had been generated. Rogers informed Nixon that focus had shifted to designing a strategy for the United Nations General Assembly where the issue of terrorism was expected to be a priority item.\textsuperscript{211} On September 8, 1972 Waldheim appealed to the international community that the UN could not be a ‘mute spectator’ to the acts of terrorist violence and proposed that an item be included in the 27\textsuperscript{th} General Assembly to address the growing problem of international terrorism. The item was entitled ‘Measures to Prevent Terrorism and other forms of violence which engender or take innocent human lives or Jeopardise Fundamental Freedoms.’\textsuperscript{212} The motion was encouraged and welcomed by the Nixon administration.\textsuperscript{213} In order to emphasise the level of importance the United States government attributed to the terrorist issue, Rogers focussed on the issue of international terrorism in his opening address to the United Nations General Assembly.

\textsuperscript{209} New York Times, Sept 6, p19.
\textsuperscript{210} New York Times, Sept 6, p19.
\textsuperscript{211} Rogers to President Nixon, Washington, September 18, 1972, NARA, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-8. Confidential.
\textsuperscript{212} Telegram 167911 From the Department of State to the Mission at the United Nations, September 14, 1972, 1941Z, National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-8. Confidential; Immediate. Drafted by John Norton Moore (L) and cleared by Sisco and De Palma, p1-2.
\textsuperscript{213} Telegram 167911 From the Department of State to the Mission at the United Nations, September 14, 1972, 1941Z, National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-8. Confidential; Immediate. Drafted by John Norton Moore (L) and cleared by Sisco and De Palma, p1-2.
Assembly and encouraged the foreign ministers of other nations to do the same. On 25 September, 1972, when Rogers addressed the 27th UNGA, he said of the terrorist threat:

The issue is not war-war between states, civil war or revolutionary war. The issue is not the strivings of people to achieve self-determination and independence. Rather, it is whether millions of air travellers can continue to fly in safety each year. It is whether a person who receives a letter can open it without the fear of being blown up. It is whether diplomats can safely carry out their duties. It is whether international meetings-like the Olympic Games-like this assembly-can proceed without the ever-present threat of violence. In short, the issue is whether the vulnerable lines of international communication-the airways and the mails, diplomatic discourse and international meetings-can continue, without disruption, to bring nations and peoples together. All who have a stake in this have a stake in decisive action to suppress these demented acts of terrorism.

The US circulated a Draft Convention to the assembly which they proposed would ‘deal with the dangerous recent trend to internationalise terrorism and civil violence as evidenced in the recent Munich tragedy.’ The United States outlined the intention of the Convention as a mechanism which would identify acts of political violence ‘both outside the State of nationality of the perpetrator and outside the State against which the act is directed’. The

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215 LXVII Bulletin, Department of State, No. 1378 at 425-430 (Oct, 16, 1972); USUN Press Release 104(72), Sept 25, 1972
216 Information Memorandum From the Legal Adviser of the Department of State (Stevenson) to Secretary of State Rogers, Washington, September 22, 1972, National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-8. No classification marking. Drafted by Moore.
draft also stipulated that for an act to be covered under the Convention it would have to have been directed against civilians rather than at armed forces during military conflict.\footnote{217 (Stevenson) to Rogers, Washington, September 22, 1972, National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-8.}

Within the scope of the covered acts the Convention then declares that anyone who unlawfully kills, causes serious bodily harm orkidnaps another person commits an offense of international significance. State party to the Convention would be required to extend their jurisdiction over such offenses, make such offenses crimes punishable by severe penalties, and to extradite or prosecute alleged offenders found in their territory.\footnote{218 (Stevenson) to Rogers, Washington, September 22, 1972, National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-8.}

The Draft Convention did not endeavour to establish an internationally accepted definition of ‘terrorism’ however. In preparation of the draft, Nixon had noted in his correspondence with Rogers that to dwell on the matter of definition at that point would impede progress on dealing with the terrorist acts and focussing on ‘the common interest of all nations in preventing the spread of violence from areas involved in civil or international conflict’ would better serve the issue.\footnote{219 (Stevenson) to Secretary of State Rogers, Washington, September 22, 1972, National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-8.} Categories of offences would be identified which could be condemned by all states regardless of ideological persuasion or alliance status.\footnote{220 (Stevenson) to Rogers, Washington, September 22, 1972, National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-8.} As Rogers outlined in his address to the General Assembly, the political aspect would become secondary to the protection of innocent lives or preventing the disruption of processes necessary for the effective function of relations between states. The offences that would be condemned were ‘hijacking and sabotage of civil aircraft; kidnapping and assassination of foreign diplomats and other foreign officials; and the export of international terrorism to
countries not involved in the underlying conflicts.’

The Nixon administration had carefully worded the resolution in order to prevent it becoming, what Romaniuk has described as, ‘a lightning rod of dissension’ but were ultimately unable to avoid the political potency of the document. While there was significant support from many UN member states for the United States proposals, various legal and political impediments emerged in the ensuing debate in the assembly’s legal committee. Some representatives expressed reservations as to viability and utility of the American approach, stating that a secure and exact definition of terrorism was required. American diplomat Joseph Sisco and the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, Samuel De Palma claimed that many African states, with the encouragement of a selection of Arab states, twisted the argument to take a lofty position on issues such as ‘the inalienable right to self-determination’ and ‘the legitimacy of national liberation struggles.’ The delegates claimed that genuine liberation movements would be labelled ‘terrorism’ by the regimes they challenged. Bruce Hoffman in Inside Terrorism has observed that according to these delegates any condemnation of ‘terrorism’ in the UN was, in essence, an endorsement of the status quo whereby the powerful could continue to subjugate the weak.

The United States Ambassador to the United Nations, William Tapley Bennett Jr noted that there were also several Arab states that resented the proposals and rejected them, sensing

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221 (Stevenson) to Rogers, Washington, September 22, 1972, National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-8.

222 Information Memorandum From Assistant Secretary of State, International Organization Affairs (De Palma) and Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco) to Secretary of State Rogers, Washington, September, 21, 1972, National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-8. Confidential. Drafted by Armitage and cleared by Fessenden, L, Ross, EA, Atherton, and ARA.

that their own states were the targets of the criticism.\textsuperscript{224} Within this disputatious minority, there were states openly condoning and championing the use of terrorist methods as an integral part of their revolutionary philosophy.\textsuperscript{225} In other cases, commercial and political interests prevented governments from taking a firm stance and further, many countries articulated their attachment to the historically traditional legal institution of diplomatic or territorial asylum.\textsuperscript{226} According to Ambassador Bennett the discussion was effectively derailed by a group of delegates who concluded that to address ‘terrorism’ was to neglect dealing with the root cause of the phenomenon. These delegates claimed that terrorist acts were simply a reflection of the subjugation of liberty and social injustices caused by military occupation, loss of territory, poverty and lack of human rights and that until the sources of discontent were eradicated, any international legal measures would be ineffective.\textsuperscript{227} Ambassador Bennett noted the criticism of the developed world that underscored this argument; that the suffering of the peoples of the ‘Third World’ was of limited interest until terrorist elements internationalised their violent acts and threatened the security of the developed world.\textsuperscript{228}

The American proposals to the UN were dependent upon broad international approval and uptake of the obligations outlined in these treaties but the issue of terrorism was infused with so many political agendas that the legal and humanitarian aspects were overpowered. Although there was a widespread sense of horror amongst the international community in relation to the Munich Massacre, the United States encountered significant difficulties (at the 27\textsuperscript{th} Assembly) in drawing together such disparate sovereign states to uphold a cohesive

approach. When the resolution emerged from extended debate and negotiation, the United States voted against it, declaring it impotent in preventing acts of terrorist violence and ineffective in addressing the terrorist problem.\textsuperscript{229} What is significant however is that despite the failure to establish any concrete measures within this forum, there was conviction from the international community to pursue the issue beyond the 27\textsuperscript{th} Assembly. An ad hoc committee, which the United States was prepared to serve on,\textsuperscript{230} was established to continue the process, leading up to the 28\textsuperscript{th} General Assembly.\textsuperscript{231}

Although originally motivated by the pragmatic political concern of containing Israel, Nixon’s overtures towards the United Nations in response to the Munich Massacre, constituted a noteworthy step in the history of counterterrorism. The prevalence of acts of international terrorism in conjunction with Nixon’s fondness for the manipulation of international issues had inspired him to brush aside his aversion to the use of multilateral solutions in foreign policy. The Nixon administration’s utilisation of the United Nations became the crux of a diplomatic strategy that would tend to US interests while at the same time allow strong denunciation of terrorist attacks like the Munich Massacre. They brought the fight against terrorism to the global battlefield by exploiting the network of antagonisms and interests defining state relations.\textsuperscript{232} Although there was a clear divergence of views within UNGA, the inclusion of the item and the debate that ensued marked the first time


\textsuperscript{232} For a further example of manipulation of the international community in pursuit of national interests see also M. Connelly A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria’s Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003).
that the international community had grappled with the terrorist issue seriously and as a united community.\textsuperscript{233}

Chapter FOUR

The New Terrorism

The Nixon administration had brought the fight against terrorism to the global battlefield; they had stimulated international debate and simultaneously made in-roads into addressing their primary concern of preventing Israeli retaliation. However, Nixon considered the containment of Israel of such integral importance to national interests and the stability of the world system that he felt it necessitated a complementary line of attack in the domestic sphere. At the same time as pursuing his efforts in the UN, the President formed the ‘Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism.’ The Cabinet Committee was a permanent executive branch which would coordinate information sharing between US security departments, solicit counterterrorism suggestions from other nations and systematically manage issues of terrorism. It was pivotal in the preparation of the draft resolution which was submitted to the 27th United Nations General Assembly but would also function as a domestic counterterrorism force which would ensure the security of the American nation and its people. The Cabinet Committee would indicate to the world, and most particularly to Israel, that America was committed to fighting against the proliferation of terrorist acts like the Munich Massacre.

Beyond the political rationale however, the establishment of a permanent executive branch to fight terrorism revealed a fundamental shift in the administration’s conceptualisation of terrorism. The attack in Munich was not an isolated terrorist event. The Nixon administration had been facing acts of ‘terrorism’ since its very first days in office. Within the first five weeks, Nixon had to deal with the seizure and diversion of nine American
commercial aircraft (and three from various other nations) to locations in Cuba.\textsuperscript{234} The hijackings caused minimal concern within the White House however. These acts of terrorism were not initially considered to pose a significant threat to either national or international security. A frequent occurrence since the early 1960s, hijackings were predominantly committed by American citizens who wanted, for various reasons, to make their way to Cuba.\textsuperscript{235} In response to the hijacking epidemic, the American government simply put procedures in place in order to minimise inconvenience. The American government, the American people, the airlines and the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) considered hijackings during this period to be an irritating disruption to air travel but they were not deemed a serious threat. Naftali suggests that Americans viewed the incidents as ‘something akin to bad weather in Chicago.’\textsuperscript{236}

At much the same time, Nixon’s administration was confronted by countless acts of domestic terrorism which occurred as a result of an American society in flux and plagued by significant civil unrest. The civil rights movement had swept through the United States and had incited significant dissent and anarchy amongst large sectors of the population. Some black liberation groups, most notoriously the ‘Black Panther Party,’ engaged in protests, typified by guerrilla warfare against the police, factional feuds between rival groups and many racially motivated attacks.\textsuperscript{237} Strong opposition to American involvement in the Vietnam War and ambivalence toward the values of the existing system also motivated various left-wing political extremists such as the ‘Weather Underground’ to engage in

\textsuperscript{234} ‘Memorandum from the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon,’ Washington, February 7, 1969, US Department of State.


violent actions across America, often using bombings as the preferred mode of attack.\textsuperscript{238} Nixon condemned these as acts of ‘revolutionary terrorism.’ He remarked angrily to Kissinger that ‘they are reaching out for the support- ideological and otherwise- of foreign powers and they are developing their own brand of indigenous revolutionary activism.’\textsuperscript{239} In his various speeches to his constituents across the country the President spoke of ‘a rising tide of terrorism, of crime, and on the campuses of our universities we have seen those who instead of engaging-which is their right-in peaceful dissent, engage in violence.’\textsuperscript{240} A revolutionary wave, David Rapoport claims in \textit{The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism}, had swept through the developing world and the Western heartland.\textsuperscript{241} During Nixon’s first term in office, the proliferation of the violent actions of radical political organisations and the frequency of hijackings steadily increased but Nixon continued to deal with the various manifestations of terrorism, domestic and international by way of reactive policy.\textsuperscript{242} The attacks were considered to be an irritating inconvenience but not a serious threat. In the words of historian Timothy Naftali, they were an ‘annoying little gnat that buzzed around the superpower while it was trying to handle truly dangerous matters.’\textsuperscript{243} It was these

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\item Hewitt ‘The Political Context of Terrorism in America: Ignoring Extremists or Pandering to Them’, p.331.
\item Rapoport, D. ‘The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism’, UCLA International Institute, p.56. available online, http://www.international.ucla.edu/cms/files/Rapoport-Four-Waves-of-Modern-Terrorism.pdf [accessed 31/01/2010] Rapoport claims that the development of the ‘new left’ wave of terrorism was resultant of ‘enormous ambivalence about the values of the existing system’ and that the ‘terrorists’, as well as many outside observers, saw themselves as ‘freedom fighters.’
\item Naftali, \textit{Blind Spot}, p.68.
\end{itemize}
incidents; the bombings, the hijackings and the violent crime that initially shaped Nixon’s conceptualisation of ‘terrorism.’

The revolutionary ethos common to the majority of the terrorist groups was infectious however and throughout late 1969 and 1970, there was a sharp increase in the number of serious hijackings. These attacks were predominantly executed by the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organisation) and one of its offshoot organisations, the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine). Of particular significance was the hijacking of TWA (TransWorldAirlines) flight 840. This was the first hijacking incident where Palestinian hostility was specifically directed at an American target and it was the first incident that grabbed the full attention of the Nixon administration. In conjunction with the increase in serious hijackings there was also a shift in terrorist methods. The hijackers of TWA flight 840 were specifically targeting passengers on the aircraft they claimed were ‘responsible for the death and misery of a number of Palestinians.’ Terrorist groups began to go beyond simply diverting the aircraft, they engaged in hard line political statements. As G. Davidson Smith has observed, ‘terrorism began to emerge as a tactic of politically motivated dissent and militancy.’ The nationality of the airline was no longer a primary consideration; the aircraft was simply a mechanism to be exploited in the pursuit terrorist goals. Innocent civilians would be taken hostage and threatened if demands were not met. Rapoport has claimed that terrorist organisations began to employ a new logic whereby the act became a form of punishment as well as a strategy in the pursuit of particular objectives. The frequency of hijackings throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s was cause for the Nixon

\[\text{244} \text{ Hoffman, Inside Terrorism, p.67.} \]
\[\text{245} \text{ Teahan, ‘Nuisance to Crisis: Conceptualising Terrorism during the Nixon Administration’, p.53.} \]
\[\text{246} \text{ Naftali, Blind Spot, p.35.} \]
\[\text{247} \text{ Quoted in Naftali, Blind Spot, p.35.} \]
\[\text{248} \text{ G.D. Smith, Combating terrorism, (London: Routledge, 1990), p.53.} \]
\[\text{249} \text{ Hoffman, Inside Terrorism, p.68.} \]
\[\text{250} \text{ Rapoport, ‘The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism’, pp.56-57.} \]
administration to principally equate terrorism with hijackings but with the terrorists employing a new and dangerous logic, the administration began to re-evaluate the methods for dealing with these incidents.

Nixon started to utilise the power of the international voice. As was noted in Chapter Three of this thesis, Nixon appealed to the 24th United Nations General Assembly in 1969, to give ‘high priority’ to the issue of ‘sky piracy.’\textsuperscript{251} He also rallied support for several historic international conventions addressing civil aviation.\textsuperscript{252} Under pressure from the Nixon administration, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) achieved the ratification of The Tokyo Convention\textsuperscript{253} and the Hague Convention\textsuperscript{254} and introduced the Montreal Convention.\textsuperscript{255} There was only modest commitment to these measures however as an incident had not yet occurred which posed a fundamental threat to either international or American security. The Munich Massacre changed this. Although the revolutionary ethos of the Black September Organisation was ultimately consistent with that of many earlier attacks, the Munich Massacre also possessed particular features which distinguished it as a new class of threat and prompted Nixon to mobilise the world community to fight against


the menace of terrorism.

Brian Jenkins, in *The New Age of Terrorism* has emphasised the terrorist’s determination to internationalise their struggle. The Black September Organisation executed an operation that not only transcended the national frontier, but deliberately and brutally violated the sacred international precinct of the Olympic Games.²⁵⁶ Jenkins has highlighted how attracting international attention, ensured that the terrorists were able to gain leverage over various institutions and provide them with a strong position for making their demands.²⁵⁷ Jenkins and Bruce Hoffman in *Inside Terrorism* also stress the manner in which the Black September organisation exploited the surge in technological advancements that took place in the 1960s and 1970s. Terrorist groups were furnished with a whole new suite of weapons and mechanisms to use in their operations.²⁵⁸ Recognising how dramatic events, particularly involving innocents could scare governments into communicating directly with them for fear of being held responsible for the potential loss of life, the terrorists were able to manipulate the ubiquity of television, communications satellites, advanced recording equipment and international news networks. The Black September Organisation was able to reach a worldwide audience instantaneously.²⁵⁹ Their incursion into the Olympic Village and their capture of the Israeli athletes was comprehensively broadcast throughout the world which increased the impact and terror of their attack and raised the profile of their cause.²⁶⁰ As Peter Taylor observed in *States of Terror: Democracy and Political Violence* ‘an estimated 900 million persons in at least a hundred different countries saw the [Munich]

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crisis unfold on their television screens.”

The Munich Massacre had successfully internationalised the violence stemming from the Arab-Israeli conflict. Over a quarter of the world had been watching in horror as the Black September Organisation executed an attack on a historical symbol of international unity and reconciliation. Stefan Aubrey has said of the Munich Massacre,

the particularly despicable act of terrorism against a previously immune target group violated all the norms of theretofore-terrorist behaviour... A previously sacrosanct mould was broken in Munich, allowing the bar to be raised on acceptable levels of violence employed by terrorist organisations against non combatants and the resultant casualties incurred.

The blatant violation of state boundaries along with the brutality and visibility of the Munich Massacre had caused the international community to feel as if they, not just the Israelis, were vulnerable to attack. In his account of the incident in *One Day in September*, Simon Reeve claims that with their actions in Munich, ‘the Palestinians had changed the rules of conflict’ and thus the rules of reply were also altered.

As Rapoport states, ‘for good reason, the abandoned term, ‘international terrorism’ was revived after the attack in Munich. Up until that point, the term ‘international terrorism’ and significantly, the term ‘counterterrorism’ had not formally entered the Washington

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lexicon. The new language being used by the Nixon administration indicated not only a shift in the methods of terrorist elements but also a turning point in the development of the conceptualisation of terrorism. Nixon had moved on from simply conceiving of terrorism as either hijacking or a policing issue. Terrorism was a threat that defied borders and established norms; it was unpredictable and dangerous. Nixon declared that

The use of terror is indefensible. It eliminates in one stroke those safeguards of civilisation which mankind has painstakingly erected over the centuries. But terror threatens more than the lives of the innocent. It threatens the very principles upon which nations are founded... If the world cannot unite in opposition to terror, if we cannot establish some simple ground rules to hold back the perimeters of lawlessness, if, in short, we cannot act to defend the basic principles of national sovereignty in our own individual interests, then upon what foundations can we hope to establish international comity?

Nixon recognised that the response would have to be multifaceted; the threat could not simply be tamed by reactive policing, appeasing various constituencies or making broad denunciations at the UN. Nixon was not an idealist; he believed that ‘idealism without pragmatism is impotent. Pragmatism without idealism is meaningless. The key to effective leadership is pragmatic idealism.’ Any action taken in response to the new international threat would have to be consistent with the administration’s interests. It would be a product of the intersection of world interests, national interests and the interests of Nixon and

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266 Naftali, Blind Spot, p.55.
267 Naftali, Blind Spot, pp.56-57.
Kissinger.

The exigency of dealing with the issue of terrorism intensified when Nixon accessed information from an unorthodox source. A psychic Nixon occasionally consulted, Jeanne Dixon, prophesied a major terrorist attack on American soil, targeting either an Israeli official or a prominent American political figure.\footnote{National Archives, Nixon Presidential Material, Presidential Tape Recordings, Conversation between Richard Nixon and Rose Mary Woods, Oval Office, September 19, 1972, Conversation 783-25.} This odd source caused domestic security concerns to make their way to the fore of the post-Munich discussion. The alliance between the United States and Israel became strained as a result of the alleged threats to American security. Nixon began to view Israeli actions as responsible for creating the conditions whereby the United States had become acutely vulnerable to a terrorist attack.\footnote{Naftali, \textit{Blind Spot}, p.58.} The Nixon administration’s relationship with Israel was already under pressure as Israel exploited its links within Congress to push Nixon on the issue of the free emigration of Soviet Jewry and undermine the easing of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. Nixon resented Israeli efforts to manipulate the tragedy in Congressional debates in order to pursue their anti-détente agenda.\footnote{Naftali, \textit{Blind Spot}, p.58.}

US-Israeli tensions were further exacerbated, on September 8, 1972 when the Israeli air force, despite Nixon’s efforts to mollify and prevent belligerent reprisals, executed strikes on ten bases in Syria and Lebanon. During this operation, three Syrian jets were shot down, the rail line between Syria and Beirut was bombed and destroyed and some 200 civilians lost their lives.\footnote{Reeve, \textit{One Day in September}, pp.152-153.} These attacks were followed a week later by an Israeli incursion into southern Lebanon where the homes of 130 suspected PLO operatives were destroyed.\footnote{Reeve, \textit{One Day in September}, p.153.}
became increasingly frustrated with the intransigence of the Israelis. Despite his irritation, Nixon recognised that if there was risk to United States security as a result of circumstances resulting from the Munich Massacre he was under an obligation to protect American citizens and foreign diplomats in the United States. He contacted General Haig to find out whether the FBI had contingency plans for dealing with a significant terrorist attack on American soil. Nixon’s newfound domestic concerns were still seen by Kissinger as secondary to the threat posed by an Israeli military overreaction but Nixon was convinced of the validity of his new threat assessment.

We have got to have a plan. Suppose they kidnap [Israeli Ambassador] Rabin, Henry, and demand that we release all blacks who are prisoners around the United States, and we didn’t and they shoot him?... What, the Christ, do we do? We are not going to give in to it... We have got to have contingency plans for hijacking, for kidnapping, for all sorts of things that [could] happen around here

It was as a remedy to both concerns that Kissinger suggested the establishment of a highly visible domestic institution created with the express purpose of fighting terrorism. A ‘gesture’ indicating that the United States was ready to engage in a systematic approach to counterterrorism would both appease the Israelis and concurrently stall the Jewish community’s anti-détente drive. Nixon felt that the establishment of prominent counterterrorism institution could be useful beyond placating Israel and the American

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275 Naftali, Blind spot, p.58.
276 Naftali, Blind Spot, p.58.
278 As Haig stressed in a memo to Nixon’s top aide, John Ehrlichman that ‘the reasons for this [Cabinet Committee] involve the Soviet Jewry issue and our need to keep the Israelis cooperative on this issue.’ Naftali, Blind Spot, p.58.
Jewish community. Nixon wanted the highest level membership on the committee not ‘a bunch of jerks from State’ he told Kissinger.\textsuperscript{279} On September 25, 1972, Nixon circulated a Memo to the heads of nine different governmental departments and agencies and informed them of his plan to establish an interagency counterterrorism institution that would, according to Nixon, serve as the world leader in combating the international menace. The Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism’ was formed. Its five key functions would be to

1) Co-ordinate among the government agencies, ongoing activity for the prevention of terrorism. This will include such activities as the collection of intelligence worldwide and the physical protection of US personnel and installations abroad and foreign diplomats, and diplomatic installations in the United States.

2) Evaluate all such programs and activities and where necessary recommend methods for their effective implementation.

3) Devise procedures for reacting swiftly and effectively to acts of terrorism that occur

4) make recommendations to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget concerning proposed funding of such programs,

5) Report to the President, from time to time, concerning the foregoing.\textsuperscript{280}

The Cabinet Committee would be headed by Nixon’s Secretary of State, William Rogers with the broader membership comprising the Secretaries of Treasury, Defense and Transportation, the Attorney General, the US Ambassador to the UN, the Director of the

\textsuperscript{279} National Archives, Nixon Presidential Material, Presidential Tape Recordings, Conversation between Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, Oval Office, September 25, 1972, Conversation 786-5.

CIA, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Henry Kissinger), the Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs and the Acting Director of the FBI. Nixon expressed to the heads of these departments and agencies that he considered the terrorist problem to be of the utmost importance and urged them to act efficiently in their respective efforts to deal with this international concern. The main objective of the Committee would be to consider effective solutions to the prevention of domestic and international terrorist acts while also becoming a leading force in the establishment of procedures that would enable the government to react swiftly, appropriately and efficiently to terrorist acts. The last point would be considered in concert with the governments of other states and international organisations. The Cabinet Committee’s first task would be to prepare the draft resolution on terrorism for the 27th United Nations General Assembly.

Nixon ordered each of the contributing departments and agencies to be ‘fully responsive to the requests of the Secretary of State and assist him in every way in his efforts to coordinate government wide actions against terrorism.’

Nixon also pushed for movement on House legislation for the protection of foreign officials in the US, action on the air piracy bill S2567 and implemented a series of new measures in dealing with foreign visitors to the United States. The existing program, which allowed up to 600 000 visitors annually to stay on American soil for ten days without prior authorisation or screening if they claimed they were in transit was deemed inadequate and was

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281 Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism-Sept 25, 1972, 319- Public Papers of the President, The American Presidency Project.
scrapped. On September 27, 1972, it was replaced by a program stipulating that foreign travellers (excepting Canadians) must be in possession of a visa in order to be granted entry into the United States. These measures were implemented alongside ‘Operation Boulder,’ the purpose of which was to create a system of safeguards preventing foreign terrorists or terrorist sympathisers from gaining entry into the United States. Any travellers from Arab countries who sought visas had to submit to a five day waiting period. The waiting period also applied to nationals coming from territories with known active terrorist organisations. Nixon also implemented a system for screening the names of applicants against CIA, FBI, INS and Secret Service records before issuance of the visa. The INS also provided the FBI with a list of the names and locations of Arab students of concern living within the United States at that time. The American government took pains to send the message to the American people and the international community that it was taking action against the terrorist menace.

Nixon’s tour de force, the ‘Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism’ only ever had one official meeting but as G. Davidson Smith notes in Combating Terrorism, ‘the solitary meeting was not as unremarkable as it may appear however, as several important and lasting decisions were achieved at the gathering.’ Particularly significant was the introduction of an affiliated interagency Working Group headed by Ambassador Armin Meyer. This Working Group was established to ‘coordinate intelligence data regarding terrorist organisations and their activities and to improve exchanges of such information with other

286 Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon, Washington, September 6, 1972, National Archives, RG 59, President's Evening Reading: Lot 74 D 164. No classification marking  
287 Smith, Combating terrorism, pp.113-114.
governments’. The Working Group would regularly interact with the intelligence and enforcement agencies of the Executive Branch; the FBI, CIA, INS, NSA, Customs, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Secret Service and Treasury. It would conduct reviews relating to intelligence flow from international sources to domestic agencies as well as to local police jurisdictions and the various mechanisms utilised in the exchange of pertinent information.

The Working Group also had a significant long term influence as it created a number of fundamental guidelines for dealing with terrorist acts which Davidson Smith has claimed were ‘followed by every US administration since 1972.’ The ‘no concessions’ policy that has become enshrined in the modern American counterterrorism doctrine was a policy that first emerged from the Working Group. Up until the early 1970s, American governments had dealt with hostage crises through negotiation with the terrorist elements. The American government had negotiated the release of the hostages in the case of the hijacked TWA flight in 1969 and had granted concessions to the PFLP in order to ensure the safe release of hostages at the Dawson Field crisis in September 1970. When the Black September Organisation detained ten hostages, including two US Ambassadors, at the Saudi Embassy in Khartoum in 1973, Nixon’s declaration that ‘we will do everything we can to get them released but we will not pay black mail’ exemplifies his administration’s new policy. The prevailing opinion has been that Nixon’s comment was impulsive and, as Naftali

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290 Smith, Combating Terrorism, p.114.
293 Nixon at press conference, quoted in Naftali, Blind Spot, p.70.
suggests, a result of the president ‘blowing off steam.’ Armin Meyer, however, has since claimed that the Working Group, at the urging of Kissinger had developed and advocated a ‘no negotiations, no deals and no concessions’ policy some time before the incident in Khartoum. The Working group was also responsible for the introduction of the principle that host governments had responsibility for anti-terrorist protection measures and also that terrorist actions should be dealt with as criminal matters and terrorists prosecuted as criminal. It provided a forum for the discussion of counterterrorism issues and a point of reference for a number of subsequent presidents. Nixon had created a new paradigm in the United States’ response to terrorism.

Beyond its political ramifications, the Cabinet Committee and the affiliated interagency action group also constituted a clear shift in the Nixon administration’s conceptualisation of terrorism. With the introduction of a permanent executive arm to systematically deal with terrorist activity, the Nixon administration had effectively redefined the threat posed by international terrorism. Terrorism had transformed from an inconvenience to be dealt with via reactive policing to a fundamental challenge for national and international security. When Nixon resigned the presidency in 1974, Gerald Ford continued Nixon’s efforts to form an international coalition against terrorism but did not think that the terrorist threat necessitated measures beyond those enacted by Nixon in response to the surge in hijackings between 1968 and 1972. In 1977 President Carter dismantled the Cabinet Committee to

294 Naftali, Blind Spot, p.70.
296 Smith, Combating Terrorism, p.114.
297 Smith, Combating Terrorism, p.53.
298 Tucker, Skirmishes at the edge of empire, p.7.
Combat Terrorism only to replace it with a different executive counterterrorism organisation which performed similar fundamental functions and operated under the same rationale.\textsuperscript{299}

The Nixon administration was a counterterrorism pioneer. It was the first government of the United States to conceive of terrorism as a national issue. Throughout Nixon’s presidency, the United States counterterrorism procedures evolved from the endorsement of the international community’s efforts in the deterrence of international hijacking to the establishment of a permanent executive branch with the express purpose of enabling comprehensive and effective cooperative procedures and information sharing in countering terrorist threats.\textsuperscript{300} The Munich Massacre was a key factor in this evolution. It was a tragic demonstration that terrorism posed a serious threat to national and international security. Institutional measures needed to be established to meet this new challenge. The ‘Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism’ and the affiliated Working Groups became the antecedents to the State Department’s Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism which is active today.\textsuperscript{301} An institutional legacy was created. As the international community continues to be plagued by terrorist incidents comparable to that which occurred at the 1972 Olympic Games, fundamental aspects of Nixon’s counterterrorism measures continue to be relevant today.

\textsuperscript{299} G. D. Smith, \textit{Combating Terrorism}, p.115.
\textsuperscript{300} Naftali, \textit{Blind Spot}, p.33.
\textsuperscript{301} R. Horowitz, ‘Understanding U.S. Counterterrorism Policy: Background And Resources’, Research Institute for European and American Studies, available online, \url{http://www.rhesq.com/Terrorism/Understanding%20U.S.%20Counterterrorism%20Policy.html#2}
Conclusion

This thesis opened with Maximilien Robespierre’s pronouncement in 1793 to ‘subdue by terror the enemies of liberty, and you will be right, as founders of the Republic.’ This revolutionary ethos, espoused by Robespierre and almost 200 years later by members of the Black September Organisation manifested in a form of terrorism, embodied by the Munich Massacre, that the international community would not condone. The Munich Massacre changed the way the international community conceptualised terrorism and unleashed a counterterrorism force against terrorist actions like those committed by the Black September Organisation in Munich. This was not an organic development however. It was a corollary to the Nixon administration’s response to the incident, a response determined by the negotiation of the intersection of multiple volatile state relations and domestic considerations. By reading the Munich Massacre back into the history of the Nixon administration’s foreign policy, this thesis has uncovered those steps which caused both Nixon and the world to see international terrorist acts like the Munich Massacre as a menace to international society rather than as part of a revolutionary fight.

Geopolitical considerations in the Middle-East were integral to the Nixon administration’s response to the Munich Massacre. The United States had significant interests in supporting Israel in order to maintain a balance of power with the Soviet Union in the Middle-East. The Soviet Union formed the crux of their foreign policy objectives and was also the shadow behind their response to the Munich Massacre. The Nixon administration’s immediate concerns were that Israel would enact harsh reprisals against the Arab world. Vengeance from the Israelis had the potential to upset the intricate foreign policy platform that Nixon and Kissinger had constructed around détente with the Soviet Union and furthermore, had
the potential to draw the superpowers into a proxy war in the Middle-East. Israel would have to be contained.

The Nixon administration’s resolve to contain Israel was made more complicated by various domestic considerations, however. Nixon and Kissinger, first and foremost world statesman, were ostensibly impervious to the pressures of domestic in the formation of foreign policy but the Munich Massacre was a provocative incident which triggered unrest in powerful sectors of American society. In the midst of a presidential election campaign, Nixon was especially sensitive to the pressures of interests groups. The vocal and powerful pro-Israeli groups were particularly forthright in the wake of the attack and Nixon came under increasing pressure to support Israel. Nixon and Kissinger’s answer to this problem was to design measures that would show support for Israel, while distancing the United States from any direct intervention on involvement.

The Munich Massacre was not an isolated act of terrorism however. It was the most visible instance of a new but increasingly prevalent phenomenon of international attacks. Since the late 1960s, national and transnational offences had proliferated under a revolutionary banner and caused mounting concern within the world community. Thus, in concert with their efforts to maintain geopolitical interests, the Nixon administration took the issue of international terrorism to the United Nations. Championing the lofty proposition that the world should ‘unite in opposition to terror’, Nixon had recognised that by appealing to the United Nations to, the administration could effectively show their support for Israel without risking national interests. It was the pragmatic politics for

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which Nixon and Kissinger were renowned.

Showing pro-Israeli forces that the administration was serious about fighting the menace of international terrorism was also one of the key considerations in the formation of the Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism. This was an historic institution. The establishment of a permanent executive branch to systematically deal with terrorism was unprecedented in American history. For Nixon, the Cabinet Committee and its affiliated working groups were not purely about appeasing Israel however. In the Munich Massacre, a sacred symbol of international unity and reconciliation had been violated. This action caused fear and anger to breed throughout the world. Nixon recognised that terrorist actions like the Munich Massacre posed a serious threat to national and international security and necessitated an institutional response.

The meeting of these two major concerns, containing Israel and dealing with the threat of increasing incidents of international terrorism, prompted the Nixon administration to implement a paradigmatic response to terrorism. It is a legacy that has awarded him surprisingly little acknowledgement however. The world has not moved on from dealing with acts of terrorism perpetrated by non-state actors and furthermore, the counterterrorism institutions that exist today have been modelled on the measures implemented by Nixon in the wake of the Munich Massacre. The Nixon administration’s response to the attack appears to be as relevant today as it was in 1972 and deserving of a new and comprehensive history.
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