

Chapter 11

The World Trade Center Bombers (1993)

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The February 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City marked the beginning of an ugly new phase of terrorism involving the indiscriminate killing of civilians.¹ Like the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway in March 1995 and the bombing of the Alfred E. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in April 1995, the World Trade Center bombing was motivated by the desire to kill as many people as possible.

The target of the bomb plot was the World Trade Center (WTC) complex, a sixteen-acre site in lower Manhattan. Although mostly known for the Twin Towers, which are 110 stories tall and 1,550 feet high, the complex consists of seven buildings, including the Vista Hotel. Although the explosion killed six people and injured more than 1,000, the consequences could have been far worse: on any given day approximately 20,000 people work in the various businesses of the WTC complex and another 80,000 people either visit the complex or travel through it.²

On May 24, 1994, during the sentencing of four of the convicted WTC bombers, Judge Kevin T. Duffy asserted that the perpetrators had incorporated sodium cyanide into the bomb with the intent to generate deadly hydrogen cyanide gas that would kill everyone in one of the towers. The Judge stated:

1. Jim Dwyer, David Kocieniewski, Deidre Murphy, and Peg Tyre, *Two Seconds Under the World: Terror Comes to America—The Conspiracy Behind the World Trade Center Bombing* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1994), p. 50. See also Laurie Myroie, "The World Trade Center Bomb: Who Is Ramzi Yousef? And Why It Matters," *The National Interest*, No. 42 (Winter 1995/96), pp. 3–15.

2. U.S. Senate, Committee on Judiciary, Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information, Statement by J. Gilmore Childers, Esq. and Henry J. DePippo, Esq., *Foreign Terrorists in America: Five Years After the World Trade Center*, February 24, 1998, <http://www.senate.gov/~judiciary/childers.htm>.

You had sodium cyanide around, and I'm sure it was in the bomb. Thank God the sodium cyanide burned instead of vaporizing. If the sodium cyanide had vaporized, it is clear what would have happened is the cyanide gas would have been sucked into the north tower and everybody in the north tower would have been killed. That to my mind is exactly what was intended.³

Judge Duffy's assertion that the WTC bombers had incorporated cyanide into their bomb went largely unnoticed until it was cited in a Senate staff report submitted for the record during a hearing of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Senate Committee on Government Affairs on March 27, 1996. In footnote 2 of the report, Senate staff noted that "the defendants in the World Trade Center case may have tried to use a chemical device but failed in their attempt to create a contemporaneous cyanide gas attack."⁴ The annex of the hearings also contained two pages from Judge Duffy's sentencing statement making reference to the possible use of cyanide.⁵ Since then, some prominent government officials have referred to the judge's statement as evidence that the WTC bombing marked a new era of terrorism with weapons of mass destruction on U.S. soil.⁶ Academic terrorism experts have echoed these concerns.⁷

Since the judge's sentencing statement served as the basis for later statements by policymakers and scholars, it is important to set the record straight about the facts of the case. This chapter largely refutes the claim

3. Judge Kevin T. Duffy, Sentencing Statement, *United States of America v Mohammad A. Salameh et al.*, S593CR.180 (KTD), May 24, 1994, p. 36.

4. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Governmental Affairs, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, *Hearings on Global Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, March 27, 1996, p. 21.

5. *Ibid.*, Appendix, pp. 276–277. Laurie Mylroie, author of the previously cited article in *The National Interest* arguing that Iraq was behind the WTC bombing, claims that she provided the relevant pages from Judge Duffy's sentencing statement to the Senate subcommittee staff. Author's interview with Mylroie, June 19, 1998.

6. For example, in an interview on the PBS Frontline documentary "Plague War," broadcast on October 13, 1998, Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen said that the World Trade Center bombers had "contemplated setting off cyanide" but "failed to ignite [the cyanide] and therefore the great catastrophe did not take place." Cohen's comments were contradictory: either the terrorists merely contemplated using cyanide but did not, or they used cyanide and it failed to ignite.

7. See Chris Seiple, "Consequence Management: Domestic Response to Weapons of Mass Destruction," *Parameters*, Autumn 1997, p. 119; and Richard K. Betts, "The New Threat of Mass Destruction," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (January/February 1998), p. 29.

that the WTC bombing involved the terrorist use of chemical weapons. Nevertheless, substantial evidence indicates that Ramzi Yousef, the mastermind behind the attack, seriously considered employing chemical agents in the WTC bombing and in subsequent attacks. Examining the motivations and behaviors of terrorists who *would have* used a chemical weapon if it was available, but did not for logistical or financial reasons, may offer important lessons about how to thwart such attacks in the future.

The Perpetrators

The perpetrators of the WTC bombing turned out to be a group of New Jersey men who had been suspected of terrorism for more than two years.⁸ Ramzi Yousef remains the central mystery of the case despite his arrest, conviction, and sentence to life imprisonment. A naturalized Pakistani citizen, he entered the United States on September 1, 1992, bearing an Iraqi passport, but he claimed to have been born in Kuwait and to have relatives in Pakistan, Kuwait, Iraq, and Palestine.⁹ He used more than twelve different aliases throughout his terrorist career and said in an interview that he considered himself a Palestinian.¹⁰

Yousef attended a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan, where he honed his skills as an explosives expert. He then traveled around the world working as a professional terrorist in the name of Islamic Jihad, although expressions of religious faith or motivation were notably absent from his statements. Yousef's ability to persuade or "charm" others to join his cause served him well in his terrorist endeavors. After arriving in the United States, Yousef went to live in New Jersey with Musab Yasin, an Iraqi whose brother, Abdul Rahman Yasin, also arrived in New Jersey from Iraq shortly after Yousef.

Whereas Yousef was the leader and mastermind behind the WTC bombing, Mohammad Salameh was a follower and a bumbler. Despite the "evil" terrorist profile that government prosecutors laid out for the jury, Salameh was a pathetic figure. The eldest of a family of eleven, he struggled to achieve mediocrity in life.¹¹ Salameh attended the Sheikh

8. Dwyer et al., *Two Seconds Under the World*, p. 88.

9. Raghidah Dirgham, "Ramzi Yusuf Discusses WTC Bombing, Other Activities," *Al-Hayah*, p. 5; translated in FBIS-NES-95-097 (12 April 1995).

10. Dwyer et al., *Two Seconds Under the World*, p. 162.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

Omar Abdul Rahman Mosque in New Jersey and was a devoted follower of El-Sayid Nosair, the assassin of right-wing rabbi Meir Kahane. When Nosair went to jail, Salameh took up with Mahmud Abouhalima in an effort to free him. Later, he fell in with the cunningly persuasive Ramzi Yousef, whom he met in a New Jersey rooming house. As someone who struggled for acceptance, Salameh made the perfect follower for a manipulator like Yousef.

Abouhalima, an Egyptian native, was a devoted follower of Sheikh Abdul Rahman. A former fighter in the Afghan resistance against the Soviet Union, Abouhalima worked for a car services company in New York, and many of his fares originated across the street from the WTC.¹²

An equally unlikely terrorist was Nidal Ayyad, the most educated member of the group. Born in Kuwait to Palestinian parents, he became a naturalized U.S. citizen, graduated from Rutgers University, and worked as a chemical engineer at Allied Signal.¹³ At the time of the bombing, his wife from an arranged marriage was pregnant with their first child.¹⁴ Given his relative career success and new bride, he risked a good life in America by participating in the plot.

The last key player was Ahmad Mohammad Ajaj. Arriving in New York City on the same flight from Pakistan as Ramzi Yousef, the swarthy and bearded Ajaj presented a Swedish passport. The customs agent determined that the passport was suspicious and directed him to the secondary inspection area.¹⁵ During a search of Ajaj's belongings, authorities discovered several other passports, bomb manuals, and bomb-making instructional videos. Ajaj was also suspected of having connections to terrorist factions of Hamas and Al-Fatah.¹⁶ Detained as a danger to the United States, he was charged with passport fraud and sentenced to six months in prison.¹⁷

12. Summation Statement of Henry J. DePippo, Prosecutor, *United States of America v Mohammad A. Salameh et al.*, S593CR.180 (KTD), February 16, 1994, p. 8430.

13. Dwyer et al., *Two Seconds Under the World*, p. 166.

14. Summation Statement of Henry J. DePippo, Prosecutor, *United States of America v Mohammad A. Salameh et al.*, S593CR.180 (KTD), February 16, 1994, p. 8479.

15. U.S. Senate, Committee on Judiciary, Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information, Statement by Childers and DePippo, *Foreign Terrorists in America*.

16. Dwyer et al., *Two Seconds Under the World*, p. 163.

17. U.S. Senate, Committee on Judiciary, Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information, Statement by Childers and DePippo, *Foreign Terrorists in America*.

Target Selection

The terrorists apparently selected the World Trade Center as a target not because it was a symbol of Western values or the financial power of the United States, but simply because toppling the twin towers would enable them to inflict a large number of casualties. The only evidence suggesting that the twin towers were selected for their symbolic value comes from a notebook of Rabbi Kahane's assassin, El-Sayid Nosair. In his papers he argued for the need to "demoralize the enemies of Allah . . . by destroying and blowing up the pillars of their civilization and blowing up the tourist attractions they are so proud of and the high buildings they are so proud of."¹⁸ Obviously the WTC comes to mind as one of the "tourist attractions" and "high buildings" in New York City, but the same would apply to the Empire State Building or the Chrysler Building.

Thus, while the symbolism of the World Trade Center cannot be ignored, it does not fully explain its selection over other buildings or places occupied by large numbers of people. Physical attributes and location appear to have been more important. The imposing profile of the twin towers on the New York skyline lay in clear view from New Jersey, where the bombers assembled their weapon. Mahmud Abouhalima also picked up many of the fares for his car service right across the street from the WTC. Finally, the complex had a large underground garage, which is not as common in New York City as one might think. In order to knock down a tall building, the bombers believed they had to get beneath it, and an underground garage made delivery of the bomb much easier.

Building the Bomb

In November 1992, the conspirators started to prepare for an attack on the WTC. It took them more than two months to acquire the chemicals, assemble the sophisticated urea-nitrate bomb, and transport it to the designated target. Ramzi Yousef complemented his talents as an explosives expert with the local talent he found in the orbit of Sheik Omar Ayyad, a trained chemist, helped to procure and mix the chemicals for the bomb and then acted as the group's spokesman after the attack. Abouhalima, a veteran of the Afghan holy war, had ties with militant

18. Quotation in Steven Emerson, "The Other Fundamentalists," *New Republic*, June 12, 1995, reprinted in Frank McGuckin, ed., *Terrorism in the United States* (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1997), p. 44.

Egyptian groups that may have provided funding for the attack.¹⁹ He purchased ingredients for the bomb and often visited the apartment where his co-conspirators prepared their deadly brew.²⁰ Salameh was ready to do anything the others instructed him to do: get a driver's license, receive shipments of dangerous chemicals, and open bank accounts.

Yousef's explosives training at Camp Caldoun in Afghanistan, and Ayyad's training as a chemical engineer, gave the bombers sufficient expertise to procure and mix at least thirteen different chemicals into a 1,500 pound bomb. Although Yousef claimed that he contributed 90 percent of the know-how and Ayyad only 10 percent, the latter's job as a chemical engineer at Allied Signal gave him a legitimate front for ordering chemical ingredients on company stationery. Some suppliers balked when the order came from outside official channels, when the delivery address was a storage park, or when Yousef tried to pay for the chemicals in cash—but others unfortunately did not.²¹

Despite his prison sentence in upstate New York, Ajaj continued to participate in the plot. He remained in regular contact with the other conspirators throughout the building of the bomb and even requested that the authorities release his belongings (including his terrorist kit) to them. According to Gil Childers, a prosecutor on the case, "Ajaj would call Dallas from prison, and his friend would then either relay messages to Yousef or patch a three-way call through to him, thereby rendering law enforcement efforts to detect contact between Ajaj and Yousef far more difficult."²²

On February 26, 1993, the terrorists drove a yellow Ford Econoline rental van into the basement of the WTC and set a timer to detonate the 1,500-pound urea-nitrate bomb.²³ The massive blast created a cavernous

19. Dwyer et al., *Two Seconds Under the World*, p. 240.

20. U.S. Senate, Committee on Judiciary, Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information, Statement by Childers and DePippo, *Foreign Terrorists in America*.

21. Summation Statement of Henry J. DePippo, Prosecutor, *United States of America v Mohammad A. Salameh et al.*, S593CR.180 (KTD), February 16, 1994, pp. 8435–8439.

22. U.S. Senate, Committee on Judiciary, Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information, Statement by Childers and DePippo, *Foreign Terrorists in America*.

23. Dwyer et al., *Two Seconds Under the World*, p. 50.

crater 200 feet by 100 feet wide and seven stories deep in the garage of the World Trade Center, and caused acrid smoke to rise to the 46th floor.²⁴ The twin towers, built to withstand the impact of a Boeing 707 jet crash, remained in place, but the garage where the bomb detonated crumbled into 6,000 tons of rubble.²⁵ In all, the explosion killed six people, injured more than 1,000, and caused nearly \$300 million in property damage.²⁶

The Days After the Bombing

Instead of fleeing after the bombing, Nidal Ayyad served as the undercover spokesman for the group. He called the *New York Daily News* tip line and left a message claiming responsibility for the bombing in the name of the "Liberation Army."²⁷ He also sent a letter to the *New York Times* from the Liberation Army making various demands, a copy of which the FBI recovered from his computer at Allied Signal.²⁸ In the letter, the conspirators identified the American people, not a symbolic building, as their target: "The American people are responsible for the actions of their government and they must question all of the crimes that their government is committing against other people. Or they—Americans—will be the targets of our operations. . . ."²⁹

Ayyad's letter claiming responsibility for the WTC bombing promised that the "next time it will be very precise and WTC will continue to be one of our targets in the US unless our demands are met."³⁰ Indeed,

24. Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senate, Committee on Judiciary, Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information, *Foreign Terrorists in America: Five Years After the World Trade Center*, February 24, 1998.

25. Dwyer et al., *Two Seconds Under the World*, pp. 50, 74.

26. U.S. Senate, Committee on Judiciary, Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information, Statement by Childers and DePippo, *Foreign Terrorists in America*.

27. Ayyad's co-workers at Allied Signal identified his voice during the trial. Summation Statement of Henry J. DePippo, Prosecutor, *United States of America v Mohammad A. Salameh et al.*, S593CR.180 (KTD), February 16, 1994, p. 8480.

28. DNA analysis of the stamp on the envelope sent to the *New York Times* indicated that Ayyad had licked it. *United States of America v Mohammad A. Salameh et al.*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), Government Exhibit 196.

29. *Ibid.*

30. *United States of America v Mohammad A. Salameh et al.*, S593CR.180 (KTD), Government Exhibit 78-E. See also Summation Statement of Henry J. DePippo, Prosecutor, *United States of America v Mohammad A. Salameh et al.*, S593CR.180 (KTD), February 16, 1994, pp. 8479–8484.

immediately after the blast, Ayyad began calling chemical supply houses seeking to obtain more chemicals, presumably for another bomb.³¹ Robert Blitzer, a senior FBI official who worked on the case, suggested that Ayyad may have had more deadly plans in mind.³² Yousef later indicated that the group had planned another, smaller attack after the WTC bombing with a "more efficient bomb," possibly containing a toxic chemical ingredient.³³

The first of the conspirators to be arrested was Salameh, who sought to recover the deposit money on the rental van used in the bombing, apparently because he needed the money to get out of the country. The FBI had traced the van's vehicle identification number, which evidence specialists had found on a twisted piece of metal in the debris of the WTC garage. Salameh returned to the rental agency twice, and the second time the FBI was waiting to arrest him.

Three days after the bombing, Abouhalima boarded a plane to Sudan without any possessions, leaving behind his wife and young children. He continued on to Egypt, where the Egyptian authorities arrested him within a few weeks and extradited him to the United States. Imprisoned and awaiting trial, Abouhalima tried without success to negotiate a deal with prosecutors, claiming that Ramzi Yousef had manipulated him and the others to conduct a crime far larger than they had ever imagined.³⁴

Yousef escaped to Pakistan on the night of the bombing and traveled around the Middle East and Asia. He and several associates subsequently moved to the Philippines, where in August 1994 he began a conspiracy to blow up twelve United and Delta airliners en route between the United States and Asia within a short time. On December 4, 1994, Yousef and his accomplices bombed the Greenbelt Theater in Manila, and on December 11, he placed a small explosive device on Philippine Airlines Flight 434 en route to Tokyo via Cebu, killing a Japanese businessman. On January 6, 1995, Yousef and two accomplices were mixing chemicals in his Manila apartment when a fire broke out, forcing the conspirators to flee into the street. Concerned that he had left his laptop computer in the apartment,

31. Evidence for Ayyad's procurement efforts came from telephone records and witness testimony. Summation Statement of Henry J. DePippo, Prosecutor, *United States of America v Mohammad A. Salameh et al.*, S593CR.180 (KTD), February 16, 1994, p. 8479.

32. Author's telephone interview with Robert Blitzer, Washington, D.C., June 18, 1998.

33. Direct Testimony of Brian Parr, *United States of America v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef and Eyad Ismoil*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), October 22, 1997, p. 4721.

34. Myroie, "The World Trade Center Bomb," p. 10.

Yousef sent one of his associates back to retrieve it. Responding Philippine police arrested the associate and recovered the computer, which contained encrypted files with details of the plot to blow up numerous U.S. airliners in flight.³⁵ Forced to abort the bombing plot, Yousef traveled to Pakistan where, more than two years after the WTC bombing, neighbors alerted the Pakistani authorities to his location. He was apprehended on February 8, 1995. After being tried and convicted in the Manila bombing case in September 1996, Yousef was extradited to the United States to stand trial in the WTC bombing.³⁶

The trials of the four WTC conspirators except Yousef lasted from September 1993 to March 1994 (while Yousef was still a fugitive), followed by Yousef's own trial from August to November 1997. All of the defendants were sentenced to 240-year terms in maximum-security prisons. To prevent them from selling their stories to publishers or movie studios for profit, Judge Duffy imposed fines and restitution fees in the millions of dollars and recommended extremely restrictive visiting privileges.

Who Sponsored the Bombing?

With any major calamity, conspiracy theories tend to emerge when key details of the case appear incomplete. A few analysts suggest that Yousef and Ajaj were either Iraqi agents or freelance terrorists employed by Iraqi intelligence to exploit Islamic militants residing in the United States, as a means of continuing the Persian Gulf War on American soil.³⁷ A list of unusual coincidences dating back to 1992 forms the basis for suspecting an Iraqi connection to the WTC bombing.³⁸ Nevertheless, the theory that

35. Statement for the Record of Louis J. Freeh, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, before the United States Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies, February 4, 1999.

36. The Yousef chronology was derived from "Work Product (Majority)," Judiciary Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information (undated).

37. Myroie, "The World Trade Center Bomb," pp. 3-15.

38. The coincidences are as follows: (1) The WTC bombing occurred on February 26, 1993, the second anniversary of the liberation of Kuwait by the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq; (2) in June 1992, shortly after El Sayid Nosair went to jail for charges stemming from the assassination of Rabbi Meir Kahane, Mohamad Salameh made the first of more than forty calls to an uncle in Iraq whom Israeli authorities had imprisoned for terrorist activity before deporting him; (3) Yousef entered the United States on September 1, 1992, carrying an Iraqi passport without a visa and requested asylum; (4) Ahmad Mohammad Ajaj, who flew to New York on the same flight with Yousef, was arrested at the airport with a terrorist kit filled with fake passports and bomb

the Iraqi government sent Yousef on a mission to avenge the Gulf War relies too much on circumstantial evidence to create a compelling case.

Several aspects of the conspiracy also make Iraqi sponsorship unlikely. First, if Yousef really was a state-sponsored terrorist, the co-conspirators he chose for the project were unusual. Abouhalima, Salameh, and Ayyad all had connections to Nosair, Rabbi Kahane's imprisoned assassin, making them likely targets for FBI surveillance. Indeed, the FBI questioned and followed Abouhalima several times prior to the WTC bombing. Furthermore, although Abouhalima may have developed valuable fighting skills as a guerrilla in Afghanistan, Salameh and Ayyad were inexperienced and naive terrorists.

The amateurish mistakes made by the WTC bombers before and immediately after the bombing also suggest that the conspiracy was the work of neophytes, not state-sponsored killers. Six months before the bombing, Salameh tried to get a driver's license in New Jersey but failed the driving test four times and the vision test twice; he finally succeeded in New York.³⁹ Then, a month before the bombing, Salameh skidded off a wet road, totaling the car. Yousef was injured in the crash and was hospitalized for a week recovering from the accident. Finally, FBI agents apprehended Salameh when he tried to recover his deposit on the rental van that had carried the bomb. Given that Salameh was such a bungler, why would any state sponsor risk including him in such a high-stakes venture? Surely a professional such as Yousef could have selected others who would have made better co-conspirators.

Salameh's difficulties in obtaining enough money to flee the country were not the only financial problem the group faced. The bomb cost the conspirators about \$10,000 to make, and they resorted to using discount coupons to rent the van they employed for delivery.⁴⁰ As Yousef was being flown from Pakistan to the United States to stand trial, he told Secret Service agent Brian Parr that he would have put sodium cyanide into the WTC bomb if he had had enough money.⁴¹ Yousef also told Parr

manuals in his luggage; (5) Yousef lived in New Jersey with Musab Yasin, an Iraqi whose brother, Abdul Rahman Yasin, also arrived from Iraq shortly after Yousef; (6) Salameh lived in the same building and presumably involved his friend and follower of Nosair, Nidal Ayyad, in the conspiracy; and (7) Abdul Rahman Yasin, who showed an FBI agent the apartment where the bomb was made and was considered a "cooperative witness," escaped to Baghdad a day after the FBI released him.

39. Dwyer et al., *Two Seconds Under the World*, p. 171.

40. Summation Statement of Henry J. DePippo, Prosecutor, *United States of America v Mohammad A. Salameh et al.*, S593CR.180 (KTD), February 16, 1994, p. 8443.

41. Direct Examination of Brian Parr, *United States of America v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef and Eyad Ismoil*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), October 22, 1997, pp. 4734-4735.

that the date of the bombing (which coincided with the second anniversary of the liberation of Kuwait by U.S.-led coalition forces during the 1991 Gulf War) had no symbolic significance; instead, the group ran out of money so they used what they had at the time. Presumably if Iraq had sponsored the bombing, money would not have been a problem.

Finally, Yousef's statements about Iraq did not sound like those of an Iraqi agent. A few months after his extradition to the United States, Yousef granted an interview to the Arabic newspaper *Al-Hayah* in which he said that the Iraqi people must not pay for the mistakes made by Saddam Hussein.⁴² Similarly, in his statement before Judge Duffy at the time of his sentencing, Yousef chastised the United States for tacitly supporting Iraq during the late 1980s, when Saddam Hussein killed thousands of his own (Kurdish) citizens with chemical weapons.⁴³ Yousef went on to say that Saddam "is killing them [innocent Iraqi civilians] because he is a dictator."⁴⁴ Perhaps Yousef sought to mask the identity of his sponsor by condemning Iraq, but his pattern of rhetoric seems unlikely to come from someone acting on behalf of Saddam or the Iraqi intelligence services.

Instead of state sponsorship, a large body of evidence indicates that the WTC conspirators were "transnational terrorists"—inspired and assisted by several Islamic militant groups operating in the United States and abroad, but not a formal part of any of them. Government prosecutors made a compelling case that Yousef and Ajaj traveled together from Pakistan to the United States to conduct terrorist activities, and that Yousef then recruited local people to help.⁴⁵ Salameh and Ayyad, both Palestinians whose families came from Jordan, attended Sheik Omar's mosque but were not part of his inner circle. Abouhalima, Salameh, and Ayyad knew each other from the mosque, but no known evidence suggests a prior link between them and Yousef or Ajaj.⁴⁶

After his arrest in Egypt, Abouhalima's alleged confession made no mention of an Iraqi government connection to the bombing. He reportedly acknowledged his membership in the Egypt-based Gama al-Islamiya fundamentalist organization and explained how he had arranged to collect the funds for the WTC bombing from "Iranian industrialists and

42. Dirgham, "Ramzi Yusuf Discusses WTC Bombing," p. 5.

43. Statement of Ramzi Yousef at Sentencing, *United States of America v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), January 8, 1998, p. 10.

44. *Ibid.*

45. Summation Statement of Henry J. DePippo, Prosecutor, *United States of America v Mohammad A. Salameh et al.*, S593CR.180 (KTD), February 16, 1994, pp. 8509–8523.

46. Dwyer et al., *Two Seconds Under the World*, p. 164.

fundamentalist expatriates living in Europe” with the assistance of the Muslim Brotherhood.⁴⁷ While detained in the Metropolitan Correctional Center, Abouhalima reportedly responded to a fellow prisoner’s question about how five guys could blow up the WTC by claiming that they did not act alone. He went on to say that “three hundred men across the country . . . would do anything to hurt the United States.”⁴⁸

Abouhalima’s comments echo a line in the letter sent by Ayyad after the bombing claiming that “more than 150 suicidal soldiers” were ready to stage further attacks if their demands were not met.⁴⁹ Yousef also described the “Liberation Army” that took credit for the WTC bombing as “an international movement concerned with affairs of the world’s Islamic armed movement.”⁵⁰ In 1995, investigative journalist Steven Emerson noted that federal investigators had identified links between the WTC bombers and at least five Islamic organizations: the Gama al-Islamiya, Islamic Jihad, Hamas, the Sudanese National Islamic Front, and al-Fuqrah.⁵¹ He observed that these groups work together more closely in diaspora communities outside the Middle East “because they feel they are surrounded by a common enemy: Westerners and their values.”⁵² Emerson concluded that the WTC bombing was financed by Islamic terrorist groups but not by a state sponsor.⁵³

Several historical forces created a fertile climate for a loose collection of individuals to act out their anti-American feelings, even though they were not a part of a formal terrorist organization. The decade-long struggle in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union created a generation of rebel warriors who were fervently anti-Israel and anti-American. Both Ramzi Yousef and Eyad Ismoil, who drove Yousef in the rental van to the WTC garage, claimed to have had relatives killed during the Persian Gulf War or at the hands of the Israelis.⁵⁴ Moreover, the political mood throughout

47. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 251.

49. *United States of America v Mohammad A. Salameh et al.*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), Government Exhibit 196.

50. Dirgham, “Ramzi Yusuf Discusses WTC Bombing,” p. 5.

51. Emerson, “The Other Fundamentalists,” p. 40.

52. *Ibid.*

53. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Judiciary, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology, and Government Information, Testimony by Steven Emerson, *Foreign Terrorists in America: Five Years After the World Trade Center Bombing*, February 24, 1998, p. 41.

54. Dirgham, “Ramzi Yusuf Discusses WTC Bombing,” p. 5; Statement of Eyal Ismoil at sentencing, *United States of America v Eyad Ismoil*, S1293CR. 180 (KTD), April 3, 1998, p. 16.

the Middle East immediately after the Gulf War, particularly in the Palestinian community, was strongly anti-American. Iraq's devastating defeat by a coalition of forces under U.S. leadership created a political backlash that led many Arabs to rally to Saddam Hussein's cause.

Yousef and the other WTC conspirators clearly had financial supporters in the Middle East who have never been identified or brought to justice. Abouhalima seemed to have obtained funds from Egyptians in Egypt and Germany, but their identity remains a mystery. Other financial supporters may have been in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the Philippines. Osama bin Laden, widely believed to have been the mastermind of the August 1998 attacks on the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, would seem a natural candidate to support the WTC bombing, but to date none of the government indictments against him indicate a connection to the incident.⁵⁵ In sum, although the available evidence does not dispel all doubts, it does suggest that the WTC bombers operated independently of formal state sponsorship.

Evidence Does Not Support CW Use

What evidence, if any, supports Judge Duffy's statement that the WTC terrorists incorporated cyanide into their bomb? During the trial, prosecutors questioned FBI chemist Steven Burmeister about the consequences of mixing sodium cyanide with either nitric or sulfuric acid, both of which were known to be present in the device.

Prosecutor: What happens when you mix sodium cyanide with either nitric or sulfuric acid?

Burmeister: You form hydrogen cyanide, which is a gas, which is extremely toxic.

Prosecutor: . . . When you say hydrogen cyanide is very toxic, could you give us an idea of how toxic that is?

Burmeister: Very toxic, if you breathe it, you're dead. . . .⁵⁶

Despite this chilling testimony, Burmeister never suggested during the trial that his investigation had led him to believe that the bomb actually contained sodium cyanide.

When FBI agents raided a storage shed where the bombers kept

55. Indictment, *United States of America v Usama Bin Laden, Muhammad Atef, Wadih El Hage, Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, Mohamed Sadeek Odeh, Mohamed Rashed Daoud Al-Owhali*, S(2) 98 Cr. 1023 (LBS).

56. Direct Examination of Steven G. Burmeister, *United States of America v Mohammad A. Salameh et al.*, S593CR.180 (KTD), January 24, 1994, p. 6911.

chemicals, they discovered one sealed bottle of aqueous sodium cyanide.⁵⁷ This finding does not prove, however, that the conspirators actually incorporated cyanide into the bomb. Aqueous sodium cyanide is used for industrial purposes such as mining and metal finishing, and on a smaller scale for photographic purposes and for flushing fish out of coral reefs. In either aqueous or solid form, sodium cyanide can cost less than three dollars per pound.⁵⁸ For industrial use, sodium cyanide is sold in solid form in ton lots or in aqueous form by the tanker truckload. The terrorists' 1,500-pound urea-nitrate bomb would have required such a large quantity of sodium cyanide that a chemical supplier probably would have requested a site visit to ensure that the buyer could handle the shipment safely. Furthermore, a technical analysis of how much sodium cyanide would have been required, and the conditions needed to create hydrogen cyanide, do not support Judge Duffy's assertion.⁵⁹

In an interview, former FBI official Blitzer stated that there was "no forensic evidence indicating the presence of sodium cyanide at the bomb site."⁶⁰ In fact, little information about the composition of the bomb could be ascertained from the crime scene because of the enormous amount of physical and liquid debris. The blast tore open the structural bowels of the twin towers, releasing water, sewage, and building materials. Additionally, the cars parked in the WTC garage and their contents were scattered widely. Even chemicals used to melt snow on the sidewalk flowed into the bomb crater. The only catalogue of chemicals that could be made with a high degree of confidence came from purchase orders placed by the terrorists, the contents of the shed where the chemical ingredients were stored, and the apartment where the bomb material was mixed. Investigators worked backwards from these sources to identify the chemicals present at the bomb site.

During his summary statement, Prosecutor Henry DePippo carefully listed all the chemicals the U.S. government believed had been present

57. *Ibid.*, p. 6910.

58. A web site sponsored by Brooks Air Force Base described a silver plating process using aqueous sodium cyanide and listed a price of \$2.23 per pound of solution (<http://xre22.brooks.af.mil/hscxre/97tns/97needs/526.htm>). A commercial web site offering prices for solid sodium cyanide indicated a price of approximately 65 cents per pound (<http://allchem.com/price.html#S>).

59. Richard A. Falkenrath, Robert D. Newman, and Bradley A. Thayer, *America's Achilles' Heel: Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Terrorism and Covert Attack*, BCSIA Studies in International Security (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1998), pp. 32–33.

60. Author's telephone interview with Blitzer, June 18, 1998; author's telephone interview with Steven G. Burmeister, an FBI chemist involved in the WTC investigation, August 6, 1998.

in the bomb. Conspicuous by its absence was any mention of sodium cyanide.⁶¹ The prosecution, in its effort to paint a dark picture of the defendants for the jury, presumably would not have hesitated to add attempted mass killing with a chemical weapon to make the case even more compelling. But if the FBI had not found definitive evidence at the bomb site to prove the presence of sodium cyanide, there was no reason for the prosecution to mention it.

The only other public suggestion from an official source that the WTC bombers attempted to disseminate a chemical agent came from Major General George Friel, the former head of the U.S. Army's Chemical and Biological Defense Command (CBDCOM). A Gannett News Service story carried by the *Detroit News* quoted Friel as stating that the "1993 World Trade Center bombers may have tried to mix a toxic agent—probably arsenic—with the homemade bomb they planted in the skyscraper's garage."⁶² A press spokesperson at CBDCOM, which Friel commanded until July 1998, indicated that the general had repeated what he had heard in briefings by the FBI.⁶³ When asked specifically about Friel's statement, however, an FBI chemist involved in the case stated that he was not aware of any evidence indicating that arsenic was present in the conspirators' collection of chemicals.⁶⁴ Most likely, Friel misspoke when he believed he was recounting Judge Duffy's statement.

Explanations for Judge Duffy's Statement

None of the physical evidence presented at the trial appears to support Judge Duffy's assertion in his 1994 sentencing statement that the WTC conspirators had incorporated cyanide into the bomb. Of course, there is a remote possibility that the bomb contained sodium cyanide that was destroyed in the blast without leaving a trace, or that the FBI investigators never found the bombers' secret stash of cyanide. Based on the evidence presented at the trial, there is no way of knowing. In any event, it would have been impossible for the prosecution to charge the defendants with using a chemical weapon if the FBI could find no forensic evidence to support the charge. Some contend that the sealed filings in the court case

61. Summation Statement of Henry J. DePippo, Prosecutor, *United States of America v Mohammad A. Salameh et al.*, S593CR.180 (KTD), February 16, 1994, pp. 8338–8370.

62. John Omicinski, "Terrorists Pursue Bio-Chemical Bombs," *Detroit News*, April 5, 1998.

63. Author's telephone interview with spokesperson for the U.S. Army Chemical and Biological Defense Command, August 6, 1998.

64. Author's telephone interview with Burmeister, August 6, 1998.

may contain a clue to the Judge's assertion.⁶⁵ But a key government participant in the trial who is familiar with all the sealed exhibits in the case said in an interview that they do not contain any evidence that the bombers incorporated sodium cyanide in their bomb.⁶⁶

Finally, some indications suggest that Judge Duffy may have changed his mind about the cyanide allegation. At the first trial in May 1994, he made his strong statement about cyanide use when sentencing Salameh, Ayyad, Abouhalima, and Ajaj. At that time, he seems to have drawn his conclusion from the evil intentions of the terrorists and the discovery of a single sealed bottle of sodium cyanide in their storage locker. The trial was highly stressful because the defendants and their attorneys bedeviled the legal process and because death threats were made against Judge Duffy. It is therefore possible that the pressures of the trial may have caused him to overstate an important facet of the case.

At the time of the trial of Ramzi Yousef in January 1998, however, Judge Duffy made no mention of the conspirators' failed attempt to use cyanide or even their intent to employ a chemical weapon, although it would have been logical to do so when sentencing the mastermind of the crime, whom he called "an apostle of evil."⁶⁷ It is possible that over time, Judge Duffy came to realize that he had overstated the case for chemical weapon use. Despite several requests by the author, the judge declined to comment on the case.

Yousef's Threats to Use CW

Although proof is lacking for the actual use of cyanide in the WTC bomb, much evidence suggests that the conspirators considered lacing the bomb with poison. During Ramzi Yousef's extradition flight back to the United States, he revealed to Secret Service Agent Parr that he had considered putting sodium cyanide in the WTC bomb but had decided not to because "it was going to be too expensive to implement."⁶⁸ Although there might be reasons for Yousef to lie about this matter, his comments fit the

65. Author's telephone interview with former Senate staffer John Sopko, January 28, 1998.

66. Author's interview with former U.S. Department of Justice official J. Gilmore Childers, New York, May 20, 1998.

67. Sentencing Statement of Judge Kevin T. Duffy, *United States of America v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef*, S1293CR.180 (TD), January 8, 1998, pp. 21–25.

68. Direct Examination of Brian Parr, *United States of America v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef and Eyad Ismoil*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), October 22, 1997, pp. 4730–4731.

evidence presented by government prosecutors and confirmed by FBI officials.

During the same conversation, Yousef indicated that he had planned to use “hydrogen cyanide in some other form of a bomb, not as large a bomb, but a different type of bomb to disperse that [poison] in the Trade Center.”⁶⁹ One of the files recovered from Nidal Ayyad’s computer at Allied Signal stated that the bombers’ “calculations were not very accurate” but promised that the next attack would be “very precise” and that the WTC would remain a target unless their demands were met.⁷⁰ Perhaps Yousef’s smaller bomb was the one Ayyad referred to as “very precise.” Moreover, in the letter that Ayyad sent to the *New York Times* immediately after the WTC bombing, the terrorists warned that if their demands went unmet, other attacks would be conducted, including strikes on “some potential Nuclear [sic] targets.”⁷¹

Once Yousef arrived in the Philippines, he began threatening to use chemical weapons, but this was several months after Judge Duffy’s sentencing statement at the first (1994) trial of the WTC bombers.⁷² A number of situations arose in which Yousef drafted notes threatening to use chemical weapons if his demands were not met. These threats appeared several times in various letters and statements, and in computer files that he believed he had deleted from his laptop computer. When the Pakistani authorities apprehended Yousef, they recovered two handwritten letters. One letter, signed “The Liberation Army Chief of Staff,” threatened to kill the Philippine president and stated that the group could “manufacture different kinds of chemical substances that are deadly and poisonous gases and assemble them from very basic materials that are available to any chemist.”⁷³ Yousef claimed that they would use these weapons “in big cities and big and vital establishments and drinking water sources.”⁷⁴ In the other letter, Yousef made much the same point:

69. *Ibid.*, p. 4734.

70. *United States of America v Muhammad A. Salameh et al.*, S1293CR 180 (KTD), Government Exhibit 78-E.

71. *Ibid.*, Government Exhibit 196.

72. The World Trade Center bombing occurred on February 26, 1993. Judge Duffy issued his sentencing statement for the first trial of the WTC bombers in May 1994. According to the prosecutor in the second trial, Ramzi Yousef arrived in Manila, the Philippines, in January 1995. See Summation Statement of Dietrich Snell, Prosecutor, *United States of America v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, Abdul Hakim Murad, Wali Khan Amin Shah*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), August 26, 1998, p. 5114.

73. *Ibid.*, Government Exhibit 527.

74. *Ibid.*

... we also have the ability to make and use chemicals and poisonous gas. And these gases and poisons are made from the simplest ingredients which are available in the pharmacies and we could, as well, smuggle them from one country to another if needed. And this is for use against vital institutions and residential populations and drinking water sources and others.⁷⁵

In a press report, a former senior intelligence official indicated that Yousef had "been studying not only chemical but biological weapons."⁷⁶ The source of this allegation is unclear. None of the letters confiscated from Yousef at the time of arrest nor the deleted files recovered from his laptop computer and entered into the court record contain any mention of biological weapons. Moreover, a former senior FBI official familiar with all aspects of the WTC bombing case said there was no evidence to support this allegation.⁷⁷ Even so, Yousef's terrorist career reflects a clear escalatory pattern, from building conventional explosives, to considering lacing the WTC bomb with deadly chemicals, to threatening attacks on nuclear facilities, to planning for the large-scale use of chemical weapons.

The Bombers' Motivations

Interviews with any of the convicted conspirators are unlikely because of the severe restrictions on visitations imposed by Judge Duffy. Nevertheless, a picture of the terrorists' motives emerges from letters claiming responsibility for the attack, statements to authorities, statements at trials, and letters retrieved from the hard-drives of computers they used. These sources suggest that Yousef was motivated by an inchoate mixture of visceral hatred and personal affirmation, wrapped in a variety of geopolitical rationales.

The primary motivation for the WTC bombing was to kill and injure a large number of Americans. Yousef told Agent Parr that he intended for the explosion to cause one tower to fall into the other, inflicting 250,000 civilian casualties.⁷⁸ Yousef also told Parr that he "recalled being disappointed when he heard the initial report that only one person had

75. *United States of America v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, Abdul Hakim Murad, Wali Khan Amin Shah*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), August 26, 1998, Government Exhibit 528-T.

76. William J. Broad and Judith Miller, "The Threat of Germ Weapons Is Rising, Fear Too," *New York Times*, December 27, 1998, Section 4 (Week in Review), p. 1.

77. Author's interview with Blitzer, June 18, 1998.

78. Direct Examination of Brian Parr, *United States of America v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef and Eyad Ismoil*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), October 22, 1997, p. 4721.

been killed."⁷⁹ Throughout Yousef's terrorist career in the mid-1990s, he sought to carry out some truly diabolical terrorist acts, all of which he justified by visceral hatred of the United States because of its support for Israel.

Another striking feature of Yousef's motivations is the absence of a religious rationale. The letter Ayyad sent to the *New York Times*, which Yousef claimed to have written, contains no religious references. Similarly, Yousef did not offer any religious rationale for his terrorist activities during his statement at sentencing.⁸⁰ In his interview with *Al-Hayah*, Yousef argued that the movement he supported aimed "to pressure the U.S. Administration by carrying out operations against U.S. targets so this administration will stop its aid for Israel." Yousef said that he considered himself "religious," but when asked whether he was a radical fundamentalist, he launched into a diatribe on how "Israel itself was created on a radical fundamentalist principle."⁸¹ Finally, when questioned about whether he was more dedicated to "the cause" than to his children, Yousef stated "we have not chosen this path voluntarily but have been compelled to take it as a result of the killing and the occupation with which we are living."⁸² In sum, Yousef's declared motivation was not religious but rather an anti-occupation crusade aimed against Israel and its main supporter, the United States.

In contrast, Ayyad, Abouhalima, and Ajaj all expressed religious sentiments during their statements at sentencing but never admitted any connection to the WTC bombing.⁸³ Their statements were more affirmations of faith than rationales for a terrorist attack. Given that several of the conspirators were followers of Sheikh Omar, Yousef's lack of religious justification is conspicuous by its absence. He appears to have been a secular terrorist who mobilized others by playing on their religious zeal.

At the root of the WTC bombers' intent to inflict mass casualties was a strong desire to punish, to seek revenge, and to underscore the dignity of Muslims. In the letter claiming responsibility for the bombing, they stated that their "action was done in response for the American political,

79. *Ibid.*, p. 4734.

80. Statement of Ramzi Yousef at Sentencing, *United States of America v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), January 8, 1998, pp. 6-18.

81. Dirgham, "Ramzi Yusuf Discusses WTC Bombing," p. 5.

82. *Ibid.*

83. Statements of Mohammed A. Salameh, Nidal Ayyad, Mahmud Abouhalima, and Amad Mohammad Ajaj at Sentencing, *United States of America v Muhammad A. Salameh et al.*, S1293CR 180 (KTD), May 24, 1994, pp. 26-34, 41-49, 53-65, 65-113.

economical, and military support to Israel, the state of terrorism, and to the rest of the dictator countries in the region.”⁸⁴ Later, in his statement at his sentencing, Yousef said that he supported “terrorism so long as it was against the United States government and against Israel.”⁸⁵ Yousef sought to avenge what he perceived as terrorist attacks by Israel against Palestinians by indiscriminately killing Americans because of the U.S. government’s support for Israel.

Yousef justified his terrorism as both punishment and revenge. Since the United States never learns, he argued, it must be punished. Yousef equated the U.S. punishment inflicted on Libyan and Iraqi civilians with the punishment he had dispensed: “the United States is applying the system of collective punishment against Iraq and Libya—when either government makes any mistake, the United States punishes the people in their entirety for the government’s mistake. We are reciprocating the treatment.”⁸⁶

In Yousef’s statement at his sentencing, he argued that his terrorist acts were justified because “it is necessary to use the same means against you because this is the only language which you understand.”⁸⁷ The bombers’ letter to the *New York Times* also stated that “the American people must know that their civilians who got killed are not better than those who are getting killed by the American weapons and support.”⁸⁸ In essence, the terrorists argued that to appreciate the tragedy Palestinians had experienced at the hands of the Israelis, innocent Americans had to die. The implication of Yousef’s twisted logic was that as a result of the losses inflicted by terrorism, the American people would come to value Palestinian lives as much as their own and stop supporting Israel.

Yousef also justified terrorism against U.S. civilians as revenge for what he perceived as a long history of moral transgressions by the United States. In his view, the United States had waged terrorism against civilians during the firebombing of Tokyo, the Vietnam War, and the trade embargoes against Cuba and Iraq. Yousef cited the U.S. use of the toxic herbicide Agent Orange in Vietnam and the reluctance of the United States to condemn “Saddam Hussein when he killed thousands of his

84. *Ibid.*; Government Exhibit 196.

85. Statement of Ramzi Yousef at Sentencing, *United States of America v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), January 8, 1998, p. 18.

86. Dirgham, “Ramzi Yusuf Discusses WTC Bombing,” p. 5.

87. Statement of Ramzi Yousef at Sentencing, *United States of America v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), January 8, 1998, pp. 13–14.

88. *United States of America v Muhammad A. Salameh et al.*, S1293CR 180 (KTD), Government Exhibit 196.

people in the 1980s with chemical weapons" as further evidence of the U.S. government's disregard for civilian lives.⁸⁹

Beyond the motives of punishment and historical revenge, Yousef's terrorist acts affirmed who he perceived himself to be. When he was apprehended in Pakistan, he had in his possession a number of newspaper clippings about his terrorist exploits.⁹⁰ In the *Al-Hayah* interview Yousef described himself as an "explosives expert" and a "genius." Yousef boldly told the court at his sentencing that he was a terrorist and proud of it.⁹¹

The dangerous work of a terrorist bomber appears to have fed Yousef's psyche. After suffering the accidental detonation of a bomb in July 1993 that disfigured his hand and damaged one eye, Yousef did not shrink from his trade but went on to build the bombs he used in the Philippines in 1994. Working with deadly materials with the intent to cripple a global superpower by killing its people fed Yousef's view of himself as an expert and a genius. He seemed to get a charge or affirmation as a terrorist bomber with each new attack. The WTC bombing propelled him on to his next terrorist activity. Fortunately, his plan to blow up several American airliners in the sky failed, and he was apprehended before he could make good on his threats to use chemical weapons.

Conclusion

The World Trade Center bombers proved that determined terrorists can obtain large quantities of chemicals, mix them into a potent explosive device, and deliver them to a major target, potentially killing or injuring tens of thousands of people. Although the preponderance of evidence indicates that the WTC bombers did not use a chemical poison in their bomb, they considered that option and, given their expertise in chemistry and explosives, may have been able to accomplish it. Fortunately, the chemical ingredients needed to produce toxic weapons are neither cheap nor simple to acquire. In this case, the terrorists' intent to use a chemical weapon appears to have been thwarted by technical, logistical, and financial obstacles.

Yousef's terrorist crusade appears to have been driven by a

89. Statement of Ramzi Yousef at Sentencing, *United States of America v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), January 8, 1998, p. 12.

90. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 177.

91. Dirgham, "Ramzi Yusuf Discusses WTC Bombing," p. 5.

confluence of anti-American and anti-Israeli rage and a significant dose of ego rather than religious ideology. He had more in common with the famous Latin American terrorist Carlos the Jackal than he did with the religiously inspired suicide-bombers of Hamas. Although he drew on the diaspora of militant Islamic fundamentalists, his attempt to inflict mass casualties in New York City did not stem from religious conviction. Instead, his twisted belief about how to respond to the plight of the Palestinian people seemed driven by the thrill of being an explosives expert, killing innocent people, and moving on to practice his brand of terrorism another day. His exploits as a transnational terrorist affirmed the high opinion he held of himself. A terrorist who thinks that he is a genius will set the highest goals for practicing his craft. In Yousef's case, that meant attempting to kill as many innocent people as possible.