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| Article | **Terrorists and Revolutionaries:** The Achilles Heel of Communist Surveillance |

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Abstract

The scholarly understanding of communist state surveillance practices remains limited. Utilising thousands of recently declassified archival materials from communist Czechoslovakia, this article aims to revise our understanding of everyday security practices and surveillance under communist regimes, which have thus far been overwhelmingly understood in relation to the domestic population and social control. In the 1970s and 1980s, Czechoslovakia attracted the Cold War terrorist and revolutionary elite. Visits by the likes of Carlos the Jackal, Munich Olympic massacre mastermind Abu Daoud, and key PLO figures in Prague were closely surveilled by the Czechoslovak State Security (StB). This article investigates the motifs and performance of a wide range of mechanisms that the StB utilised to surveil violent non-state actors, including informer networks and SIGINT. It argues that in the last decade of the Cold War, Prague adopted a "surveillance-centred" approach to international terrorists on its territory—arguably enabled by informal "non-aggression pacts." Furthermore, it challenges the notion that the communist state security structures were omnipotent surveillance mechanisms. Despite having spent decades perfecting their grip on domestic dissent, when confronted with foreign, unfamiliar, and uncontrollable non-state actors engaged in terrorism or political violence, these ominous institutions were often shown to be anxious, inept, and at times impotent. Finally, it explores the parallel state approaches to international terrorists and revolutionaries, and their shortcomings, across the Iron Curtain jurisdictions. Overall, this article seeks to expand our understanding of the broad and varied complexities of intelligence and surveillance in communist regimes.

Introduction

In June 1977, Amara Salem arrived in Prague without raising suspicion. The unassuming middle-aged man could have been one of the many Middle Easterners travelling to the Czechoslovak capital for business or pleasure. A month later, however, the feared Czechoslovak State Security Service (*Státní bezpečnost*—StB) learned Salem was not a regular out-of-towner. Five years before his arrival to Prague, he masterminded the massacre of Israeli sportsmen at the 1972 Summer Olympic Games in Munich. When the StB learned Salem was indeed Abu Daoud, they were dumbfounded. What was his business in Prague? Was he linked to the friendly Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) or the renegade and widely feared Carlos Group? Had he visited Prague before? And, most crucially, was it a mere coincidence that he had arrived in Prague as the International Olympic Committee was holding its annual meeting there (Pokorný 1979)?

This article challenges current scholarly understanding of the role of secret police forces in non-democratic ecosystems. Secret police forces of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes were initially

described by academics as omnipotent structures, employing socially penetrating surveillance to ensure regime security and exercise control over their populations (Leighton 2014: 648; Adelman 1984: 2). Over time, however, interpretations of the force and means these structures employed have been transformed. Such shifts have taken place within the discourse on Nazi Germany, whereby, in the post-war period, guided by totalitarian theory, Hitler's terror was initially considered centralised and ubiquitous (Arendt 1951). By the 1970s, however, this view was challenged by revisionist scholars who astutely observed the weaknesses of Nazi security agencies (Broszat 1981; Gellately 1990; Mallman and Gerhard 1994). Extensions and variations of the "selected terror argument" have further surfaced since the 1990s, viewing the Gestapo as a reactive institution that only targeted serious political dissents considered a threat to the regime (Johnson 2000; Dams and Stolle 2014).

The trajectory of historiography on Stalin's Russia is not dissimilar from that of Nazi Germany, starting with a similar post-war totalitarian view exemplified by Robert Conquest (1968). Greater access to Russian archives in the 1990s, however, enabled a series of revisionist accounts that explored the impact of the Soviet secret police, depicting the use of state terror as selective (Thurston 1996; Fitzpatrick 2003). Moreover, some have argued that even powerful figures like Stalin were troubled by the "decentralised nature" of their "centralised states" (Harris 2003: 377).

This reinterpretation of the role of secret police forces in non-democratic states represents a welcome shift. Communist surveillance systems, it has been shown, were characterised by significant variation across space and time (Svenonius, Bjorklund, and Waszkiewicz 2016: 96; Boersma et al. 2016). Moreover, despite developing an increased and improved capability to penetrate and detect a wide range of social and political activities aimed at challenging or changing the status quo, the communist security apparatus was far from omnipotent. When faced with mass upheaval, in Poland and Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968, the regimes were shown to be vulnerable (Kamiński and Persak 2005: 7–8). Others have argued that as Communist Party officials were well aware of the power of perception management, they exaggerated the StB's omnipotence for strategic purposes (Tomek 2016: 89, 91).

To date, however, this discourse has largely concentrated on surveillance of local populations. There has been a lack of nuanced investigation of how these surveillance regimes varied when directed towards foreign targets. This imbalance is understandable, as local populations—dissidents, students, religious groups, minorities, intellectuals, or political activists—were a surveillance priority for these largely regime security focused states. Nevertheless, foreigners—diplomats, businessmen, students, journalists, tourists, as well as terrorists and revolutionaries—were also of interest to the Soviet Bloc secret police. This was primarily because these outsiders often had private and political agendas that were at odds with the interests of these closed communist societies. Hence, such individuals presented these largely domestically focused surveillance systems with ample challenges (Hazanov, n.d.). Accordingly, various departments were set up and surveillance units deployed to follow these foreigners. *Agenturas*, that is, networks of agents, were set up to inform on their activities. Despite this significant effort, we know little about the nature, goals, and successes of surveillance measures deployed against these foreign actors.

This overconcentration of scholarship on surveillance of local populations distorts our understanding of everyday security practices and surveillance under communist regimes. It ignores what constituted an important emerging trend, namely an inherent clash between old-fashioned security states and nebulous foreign non-state actors. By exploring the nexus between communist security services and Cold War terrorists and revolutionaries, this article shows the challenges that such unfamiliar and uncontrollable individuals posed to non-democratic surveillance systems that were more accustomed to hunting down familiar local targets.

This imbalance in our understanding of the surveillance–terror nexus in the communist Cold War world raises questions: How did non-democratic states approach new unfamiliar phenomena? What was the

ultimate aim of communist surveillance of violent non-state actors? Which surveillance methods were deployed against these groups and how successful were they? In an effort to attain a complex picture of the motivations, modus operandi, and challenges to communist surveillance by non-state actors, this study explores the case of Cold War Czechoslovakia. It assesses the surveillance strategies and practices deployed by Prague's StB against several violent non-state actors largely associated with the Palestinian cause. It focuses on the 1970s and 1980s—an era also known as "normalisation"—characterised by the seizure of power by politicians loyal to the Soviet Union, revocation of reformist laws adopted during the Prague Spring, and an increased secret police presence.

During the Cold War, Prague became allied with numerous Arab regimes and by the 1970s established close ties with the PLO and its key factions (Sieber and Zídek 2009). This piece assesses the StB's ability to surveil some of the more extreme individuals linked to this ecosystem of Middle Easterners residing in Czechoslovakia, namely Carlos the Jackal and Abu Daoud, two prominent Cold War terrorists. As their cases represent some of the best studied and researched examples to date, this enables us to explore the challenges they posed to the Czechoslovak surveillance apparatus in some detail. Throughout this article, they will be referred to as "violent non-state actors" or "terrorists."

This article advances three contentions. First, it argues that terrorists and revolutionaries were attracted to Prague due to its favourable location and friendly networks, but also due to its unobtrusive yet alert surveillance regime applied towards unfamiliar and potentially dangerous actors. It also outlines the reasons why Prague chose to tolerate such actors' presence on its territory. Although the StB considered both men a threat and gradually adopted subtle measures aimed at deterring their return to Czechoslovakia, Prague's "surveillance-centred" approach to international terrorists never saw either of them arrested. Arguably, this was due to an informal "non-aggression" pact agreed on by both sides, which enabled international terrorists to remain within the country's territory under surveillance in exchange for sparing the Central European nation from violence.

Second, this study argues that this "surveillance-style" approach to visiting international terrorists was largely tactical and deviated from the strategic approach adopted for the surveillance of local populations—as the latter aimed at societal control and ideological conformity. In contrast, this tactical surveillance approach applied to foreign targets was driven by a "risk management" framework aimed at understanding these nebulous actors, monitoring their activities, and eventually expelling them from Czechoslovak territory. By exploring this delicate approach to international terrorists, this article reveals that the StB's internal state security officers were often anxious and inept when confronted with these violent non-state actors. Moreover, it highlights that the system of communist secret police was made more vulnerable when confronted with these unfamiliar targets. Remarkably, even in this centralised context, Czechoslovakia struggled with the collection, assessment, and operationalisation of information gathered on terrorist groups. This left the country more exposed to volatile terrorists and revolutionaries.

Third, we can observe parallel approaches, with attendant weaknesses, to international terrorists and revolutionaries across jurisdictions. During the Cold War, when faced with violent non-state actors, Western security services faced a similar set of challenges to their counterparts in the East—including nebulous targets, lack of expertise and competence, and technological issues. Furthermore, similarities between the Eastern "surveillance-centred" approach to violent non-state actors and that of select Western states were surprisingly ubiquitous. When faced with the new and unfamiliar phenomenon of international terrorism during the Cold War, countries such as West Germany, France, or the United Kingdom chose an evasive approach to what they perceived to be a short-lived threat. This shows that there were in fact greater divisions between state and non-state actors than between the East and West——with anarchists and extremists reviled almost everywhere.

An Arduous Research Terrain

This article primarily draws on newly declassified Communist-era files and a set of five interviews. One decade ago, Czechoslovak state security records were made available to researchers. In 2007, Prague established the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes (ÚSTR) and a year later opened the Security Service Archive (ABS), enabling access to security service and intelligence files of communist and fascist-era Czechoslovakia. Although the Czech Republic was at the tip of the tail of Eastern Bloc secret police file declassifications, which began with the release of former East German Stasi archives in the early 1990s (Gauk and Fry 1994), today Prague's approach represents the most liberal in Europe. Crucially, it provides access to ninety-five per cent of communist-era StB materials, which are unredacted and available to researchers as well as the general public (Žáček 2013). Regrettably, much like in other former communist nations, ÚSTR's autonomy as well as research output remains a controversial issue (Přinosilová 2017).

Until recently, records on Middle Eastern state and non-state actors and "international" and "domestic" terrorism remained classified. In 2014, however, extensive collections of core records on the subject began to emerge. These tens of thousands of pages detail the regime's relationship with the PLO and its various factions, as well as persons such as Carlos the Jackal and Abu Daoud. Overall, these unredacted files constitute a unique crossroad of information generated by multiple security services east of the Iron Curtain, enabling the researcher to observe wider trends towards international terrorism and violent non-state actors across the Eastern Bloc.

Researching Czechoslovakia's communist-era archives is an arduous task. Despite the considerable volume of new documents, a number of key files on Czechoslovak relations with the Middle East are still classified, most notably those of the StB's foreign intelligence branch, the First Directorate. Moreover, improper cataloguing caused by sharing of core files on terrorism by multiple departments in the 1980s impedes assessments of the extent to which these collections are complete. The extent of document destruction also remains unclear. During the Velvet Revolution in November 1989, StB officers were given orders to destroy key StB documents. Although files on international terrorism were not the primary focus of this haphazard destruction, as they were thought to be useful in years to come, some relevant files were indeed destroyed or removed. Destruction, however, did significantly impact general StB surveillance records. Regrettably, many documents of the StB's Central Section of Surveillance were lost either as a matter of routine or as part of the end-of-regime destruction (Blažek and Žáček 2005: 122; Povolný 2003: 74).

Overall, reading communist-era archives requires great caution. Various debates have taken place regarding the veracity and the very purpose of secret police records from the Eastern Bloc. Some have underlined how much of this record was in fact fabricated to fit a certain "fictional enemy" the regimes had set out to fight (Verdery 2014: 60–73). According to Mark Harrison, one must learn to spot so-called claimed truths that appear to fit the official narrative but are contradictory to evidence or logic (Harrison 2015), for instance, that all dissidents and Westerners were in one way or another agents of capitalist intelligence services. Critical thinking and alertness to this kind of "truthiness" are key to avoiding such traps in communist-era documents. In the case of records on international terrorism, we should expect fewer instances of such traps. These are not records on opponents of the regime, which the secret police was designed to target, surveil, and discredit. Instead these documents report on often violent individuals known to engage in atrocious acts of political violence, which the StB was genuinely concerned about. Moreover, many of the facts in these files can now be correlated with other primary sources and secondary literature on these notorious figures.

The newly declassified state security and intelligence records that form the backbone of this inquiry provide much operational detail pertinent to the StB's surveillance of violent non-state actors. This article

draws on numerous core files on international terrorism, which contain subfiles on the Carlos Group. Furthermore, personal and surveillance files on Abu Daoud, codenamed "RAK" and "PALESTINEC," and those of Carlos the Jackal, registered under file name "BAK" and "TURISTA," provide hundreds of pages of valuable operational reports detailing their visits to Prague, conversations with informers, and interactions with the StB. The categories of their files—"signals file" (S) in the case of Abu Daoud and a "screened persons file" (PO) for Carlos—do not suggest that the two were active StB collaborators.

This inquiry rests on a combination of archival and interview sources. With respect to historical enquiry, intelligence scholars have argued that the role of interviews is twofold: corroborative and additive. Interviewees can provide context by helping scholars to interpret historical documents and reports; introduce the back story of decisions, events, or phenomena under investigation; and provide additional information to that found in the archives (Davies 2001: 75; Richards 1996: 200).[1]

Every effort has been made to contextualise the information gathered via interviews with secondary literature or primary sources. A clear exception, however, is the debate regarding "gentlemen's" or "non-aggression" agreements between Prague and myriad Middle Eastern violent non-state actors attracted to the former's territory. On this topic, there is a lack of unequivocal archival evidence. Some interviewees have suggested that sensitive decisions taken by high-level Communist Party or ministry officials—such as allowing terrorists into, or expelling them from, Czechoslovakia—need not have been put on paper. At times, the written record also alludes to the preference for verbal orders, such as when the StB discussed setting up a direct liaison contact with the PLO in Beirut. As this particular document clearly states: "The rest of the orders will be given to you personally by the First Deputy Minister of Interior" (Hronec 1979). We do not have such written suggestions when it came to Carlos the Jackal and Abu Daoud's relationship with Prague. Yet three separate sources from the StB, as well as a former diplomat, agreed that such unwritten understandings had been reached.

Known Unknowns

The East, Surveillance, and Terrorism
Since the end of the Cold War, the literature on the nature of communist regimes and their state security forces has been expanding. Monographs and edited volumes, largely aimed at analysing secret police and surveillance practices across the Communist Bloc, have searched for common denominators and highlighted key differences (Adelman 1984; Corner and Lim 2016). General histories of the secret police forces or their role in significant episodes, such as the Prague Spring, have illuminated the inner workings of these mammoth bureaucracies, with a focus on their functions and structure, targets, operations, methodology, relationship to the Communist Party, and their impact on societies (Deletant 1995; Childs and Popplewell 1996; Andrew 1999; Koehler 1999; Williams 2000; Dennis 2003; Dvořáková, Jurová, and Kaňák 2016).

Remarkably, there is still no authoritative account of the StB. Analysing four decades of Czechoslovak communist secret state history is a laborious task. As such, historians of the StB have thus far primarily focused on the system's early phases, that is, up until the Prague Spring, leaving the era of normalisation

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[1] Much like other historical methods, however, the process of interviewing is plagued by a multitude of problems (Arksey and Knight 1999: 1). These include diminished memory, contamination of one's own experience with that of others and subsequently acquired knowledge or context, and in some cases reproduction of memories tainted by considerations of one's legacy (Moran 2011). This requires the researcher to be informed, alert, and to think critically about the material provided in interviews. Doing so enables the researcher to identify areas, themes, or events that need to be treated with extra caution and further corroborated. Overall, veterans of conducting historical interviews argue that such accounts should be treated in a similar way to memoirs, which are considered most reliable when the author shares first-hand experience (Richards 1996: 200-1; Davies 2001: 77).

from 1968 to 1989 largely unexplored (Williams 2000). Certain scholars have reconstructed the complicated system of StB directorates and assessed the profile of its personnel (Frolík 1991; Blažek and Žáček 2005; Tomek 2016) and relations with the KGB at key moments in history (Žáček 2016), while others have researched particular elements of the StB's work or certain episodes, including stories of defectors or select intelligence operations (Pacner 2002; Tomek 2006; Běloušek 2008). This points to the much wider problem of scholarly neglect of the normalisation era, namely Czechoslovakia's foreign policy during the last two decades of the Cold War.[2]

Literature on StB surveillance is even more fragmented. Although there are now ample histories of the emergence of signals intelligence (SIGINT) during the Cold War in the West (Aid 2009; Aldrich 2011), analysis of how the East Bloc utilised this powerful tool for surveilling its targets has been neglected (although exceptions do exist: Schovánek 1994, 1995; Povolný 2003). Arguably, this is mostly due to the vast destruction of pertinent materials. Here, biographies and monographs of prominent surveillance targets have helped to illuminate some aspects of communist oppression and surveillance behind the Iron Curtain, including the treatment of dissident and former Czechoslovak President Václav Havel, reformist communist leader Alexander Dubček, or prominent Oxford scholar Timothy Garton Ash (Žantovský 2014; Urban 2012; Ash 1998).

Normalisation coincided with the ascent of Cold War international terrorism. Although the Eastern Bloc and Czechoslovakia did not become the main theatres of terrorist activity, they were visited and populated by myriad non-state actors engaged in international terrorism. We know remarkably little about these actors' relations with communist states, the subculture they created within this relatively closed and homogeneous society, or the StB's surveillance strategies and tactics deployed against these violent non-state actors.

Arguably, the problem is rather more extensive. In fact, we lack conceptual as well as evidence-based work on the nature of states' relations with international terrorists during the Cold War. Much of what we know about state–terrorist relations during this era was heavily shaped by the ideological warfare between the "capitalists" and the "communists" that unfolded for half a century—with each camp denouncing the other for state sponsorship of Cold War terrorist groups (Wardlaw 1989: 175–76). During the Cold War, one of the most prominent proponents of putting the "state sponsorship of terror" label on communist states was US journalist Claire Sterling. Her 1981 book, *The Terror Network,* triggered one of the most intense disputes in the history of terrorism studies. By labelling Moscow and its satellites as the masterminds behind a worldwide terror network, set on bringing down the Western democratic order, Sterling sparked one of the most politicised debates seen in Washington D.C. during the late Cold War era (Sterling 1981a, 1981b). Moreover, her story quickly found support amongst top ranks of the Reagan administration and was soon elevated to an official narrative (Stampnitzky 2014; Hänni 2016). Due to this ideologisation of the communist–terror link, our understanding of liaisons between communist as well as capitalist states and terrorists is limited and arguably inaccurate, as is our view of the challenges these non-state actors posed to these regimes' surveillance practices. Overall, this ideological approach portrays East Bloc countries as a monolithic group of active supporters of terrorism oblivious to or immune from challenges posed by modern terrorism.

New research suggests surveillance of terrorists and revolutionaries presented the communist state security apparatus with fresh challenges. A recent surge in archive-based literature on the nature of such groups' relations with communist states—including the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Poland, or Czechoslovakia—indicates that surveilling these groups was indeed a complicated endeavour (Maeke 2017; Herf 2016; Gasztold-Seń 2013; Richterova 2017a). Nevertheless, there is still a dearth of

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[2] Domestic politics and life under normalisation have been addressed in some recent works (Kolář and Pullmann 2017).

comprehensive analysis of the surveillance–terror nexus, which would assess the nature, ultimate goals, and successes of the communist states' surveillance of terrorists and revolutionaries.

The West and Terrorism

It is important to emphasise that our understanding of the history of Western counterterrorist policies—their nature, goals, and challenges—also remains limited. This is arguably a consequence of the fact that, during the Cold War, there was no single model of counterterrorism. The experiences of Western states—be it Spain, the United Kingdom, France, or West Germany—with terrorism were varied, which in turn influenced their counterterrorism policies (Rees and Aldrich 2005: 6–7). Moreover, this lack of understanding of Cold War terrorism and the complexity of states' reactions to it are also a consequence of journalists' and academics' inclination to "personalise political violence, while neglecting vital structural aspects" (Riegler 2013: 116). Finally, thanks to regime change and the end of the Cold War, researchers' access to government and intelligence materials pertinent to terrorism and counterterrorism in the 1970s and 1980s appears to be better in the East.

Increasingly, it seems that terrorism and the challenges associated with keeping it in check were not problems characterised by an East–West division, but were instead shared by communist and capitalist states alike. Many of these states from both ideological camps were old-fashioned and ill-equipped to face challenges posed by non-state actors supported by unpredictable yet powerful states such as Libya or Iraq. We know that Western states first began adopting elaborate counterterrorism measures in the early 1970s (Marx 2004: 84). Middle Eastern-inspired terrorism and political violence was a new phenomenon for the West, as it was for the East, presenting some of the most powerful capitalist countries, and their security services, with considerable challenges. This first wave of modern international terrorism triggered debates and processes in much of Western Europe and the United States, which led to the first counterterrorist legislation and policies (Hanhimäki and Blumenau 2013; Blumenau 2014; Naftali 2005).[3]

Prague and International Terrorists

In the mid-1970s, much like other Soviet satellites, Prague established a multifaceted relationship with the PLO, as well as with some of its more radical fringe elements. The PLO was "the representative of the Palestinian people," argued Prague, "leading a national liberation struggle with the goal of attaining full self-determination and the creation of an independent state on a territory" (Chňoupek 1975). So-called "extremist" or "adventurist" international terrorist groups, however, were a separate category. Prague feared these could target foreign visitors, delegations, embassies, or aircraft on Czechoslovak territory. In the late 1970s, the "Carlos terrorist group" was the StB's main concern (5/Dept. II.S-SNB 1980). Its "political nature" and "ideological profile," the StB argued, was extremist. Carlos was, in their view, a politically volatile terrorist with powerful ties to the Iraqi special services, other Arab states, and various nationalist terrorist groups. Most importantly, the StB feared all of this "could be used to compromise one of the states of the socialist community" (Vrba 1981). On a similar note, Abu Daoud was described by the StB as "a Palestinian terrorist" (Head of X.S-SNB 1979). Furthermore, it is clear from multiple reports that Prague also considered Black September—the group that perpetrated the 1972 Munich Olympics

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[3] Pan-European intelligence liaison networks were set up to counter this new threat. Although these first began as a set of informal bilateral agreements, by the late 1970s Britain, France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, and Israel began informally engaging with the first European clandestine forum—KILOWATT—focused on issues of terrorism. Other frameworks followed, including the French-sponsored MEGATONNE, allegedly set up to share intelligence on radical Islamic terrorists in Europe (Shapiro 2001: 17–8). In 1976, the Trevi Group—a parallel police cooperation framework—was set up to coordinate members' counterterrorism activities (Bunyan 1993: 1). Furthermore, we are just beginning to get a glimpse of national strategies and reforms adopted in countries such as the UK or France based on new primary documents (Aldrich and Cormac 2017; Bruguiére 2016).

Massacre—to be a terrorist group. Crucially, it understood the intimate personal link between the al Fatah's intelligence service and members of Black September—and that Abu Daoud was a member of both (Chmelíček 1980).

Why Czechoslovakia?

During the Cold War, Czechoslovakia attracted international revolutionaries and terrorists for myriad reasons. First, although under communist rule, Prague was in many ways more "cosmopolitan" than other East Bloc capitals. Thanks to hosting a number of international organisations—including the Soviet-dominated International Union of Students, the Federation of Journalists, and the theoretical and ideological magazine *Issues of Peace and Socialism*, Prague attracted elite Third World communists from around the globe, many of whom had escaped their homelands due to political persecution.

Second, Prague became somewhat of a milieu for Arabs from allied Middle Eastern governments. Czechoslovakia was a popular educational mecca for Iraqi, Syrian, Jordanian, Palestinian, and Lebanese nationals—not least thanks to the communist regime's generous system of stipends for Third World students. The StB suspected that many of these foreign nationals worked with intelligence services, political parties, or governments of their own or rival states that tasked these individuals with surveilling fellow nationals or recruiting them for their cause. Furthermore, this ecosystem of foreigners from the Third World included Middle Eastern diplomats who arguably maintained close relations with controversial non-state actors. This made it easier for terrorists and revolutionaries to blend in.

Third, some of this milieu were also representatives of the PLO and its various factions, which, by the 1970s, had developed a strategic relationship with Moscow, the Eastern Bloc, and Prague. Due to this link, even the more obscure and radical elements associated with the Palestinian cause—Carlos the Jackal and Abu Daoud—decided to test Prague's tolerance and hospitability. It has since become clear that Czechoslovakia's relationship to this plethora of non-state actors was heterogeneous. Its attitude towards these terrorists and revolutionaries ranged from a long-standing partnership with the PLO, to fear, suspicion, and efforts at expulsion of some of the more radical groups and individuals, such as the Carlos Group and Abu Daoud.

Prague's location was ideal for terrorist business. With most targets of their operations located in Western Europe, Czechoslovakia was close to this theatre, yet protected by the Iron Curtain. Furthermore, this geographic centrality enabled them to meet with their partners based in Budapest, Berlin, or the Middle East—which included arms dealers, Middle Eastern diplomats, spies, or political affiliates. Moreover, during this period, Czechoslovakia was much more open to tourists from socialist as well as capitalist countries than, for instance, the GDR or the Soviet Union (USSR). Even the StB was aware that this relative openness made Prague vulnerable to attacks by international terrorists (Subrt 1979).

Carlos the Jackal

Carlos, born Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, began his terrorist career with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—External Operations (PFLP-EO) in the early 1970s. Although a Venezuelan, Carlos developed an interest in the Palestinian cause through his friendship with Palestinian students at the Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow. Such was his commitment to this cause that after being expelled from the prominent Moscow-based university in 1970, he travelled to Beirut to volunteer for the Palestinians. Instantly recruited and given the nom de guerre "Carlos," the aspiring revolutionary spent the first stage of his career at the PFLP's training camps in Jordan where he briefly joined the Palestinian guerrillas in their war against the Jordanian King. By 1971, Carlos had relocated to Europe and soon began working full-time for the group's European branch, immersing himself in the world of false documents and safe houses. By 1973, he became the group's hitman, staging terrorist attacks in London and Paris. In 1975, the Jackal and several of his PFLP-EO associates staged their largest attack yet. In December 1975, they raided the OPEC ministers' meeting in Vienna, killing three and kidnapping some prominent targets. Although

Carlos and his colleagues managed to leave Vienna with some of their most prominent targets—the Saudi Arabian and Iranian Oil ministers—Carlos failed to kill the men in the name of the Palestinian cause as instructed by his PFLP-EO masters. Instead, he chose to cash in a multi-million-dollar cheque for their release. This disobedience of PFLP-EO orders led to Carlos's ousting from the radical organisation (Smith 1995; Sharīf and Mahnaimi 1995: 69–89; Follain 1998).

Soon after, the infamous terrorist decided to go solo, setting up his own group in March 1978. To establish new partnerships, the so-called Carlos Group began travelling across the Middle East and the Eastern Bloc. Although he never settled in Prague, it is now known that Carlos visited the Czechoslovak capital up to ten times, meeting with his associates, potential partners, and mingling with Middle Eastern diplomats as well as with Abu Daoud. Finally, we also know that he met there with officers of the Romanian Securitate, who later recruited him to carry out some of their state terror attacks in the West. From his first visit to Prague in 1978, the StB considered Carlos a threat and a reputational hazard. Gradually, the StB adopted subtle measures aimed at deterring the return of Carlos and his Group. Finally, in the mid-1980s, they artfully ejected the Jackal and his accomplices from their territory, but without risking formal expulsion (Richterova 2017a).

Abu Daoud

Born in 1937 in Jerusalem as Mohammad Daoud Oudeh, Abu Daoud achieved iconic status amongst the Cold War terrorist elite thanks to his role in the Munich Olympic massacre. The high-school-teacher-turned-lawyer-turned-terrorist was first introduced to the world of armed struggle in 1968, when he was recruited for a security and intelligence course in Cairo by Ali Hassan Salameh, the infamous Red Prince. Coming top of his class, Abu Daoud quickly rose through the ranks of the PLO's security establishment, designing its intelligence branch, commanding thousands of al Fatah troops mounting attacks on Israel from Jordan, and, after the 1970 expulsion of the PLO from Jordan, relocating to Lebanon. Daoud also became a central figure in the terrorist group Black September, responsible for dozens of attacks throughout the 1970s. Handpicking the attackers, arranging logistics, transporting arms and grenades, surveilling the Olympic village, and helping the last attacker jump over the security fence minutes before the attack, Abu Daoud was the heart and soul of the Munich Olympic massacre, Black September's most spectacular operation, which unfolded in front of the eyes of 900 million viewers in one hundred countries (Reeve 2000; Scheuer 1999, 2006).

Unlike Carlos, Abu Daoud's notoriety haunted him throughout his post-Munich life: in 1973 he was arrested and sentenced to death in Jordan for planning a large-scale attack on the country's political elite; in 1977, during an incognito visit to Paris, he was nearly extradited to West Germany; and he also survived the Mossad's "Wrath of God" Operation—a decades-long Israeli assassination campaign triggered by the Munich massacre that targeted PLO and Black September representatives (ibid.). At this point, Abu Daoud, fearing further arrests in the West, began visiting the East Bloc, known for its close relations with his official employer, the al Fatah. Between 1977 and 1982, Czechoslovakia became one of Abu Daoud's favourite destinations east of the Iron Curtain. While in Prague, Abu Daoud met with several of his Munich massacre accomplices and clearly enjoyed the company of Palestinian, Iraqi, Syrian, and Libyan diplomats, military attachés, intelligence officers, and arms dealers. The Black September commander, however, also enjoyed leisure while in Prague—meeting his East German girlfriend and enjoying short-term romances with local women. Finally, we also know that in August 1979, Abu Daoud had breakfast and coffee with Carlos the Jackal. Although travelling undercover, under myriad assumed identities and diplomatic passports, his presence was soon detected by the StB. Contrary to what was previously thought, Prague did not welcome Abu Daoud with open arms. Much like the case of Carlos, after having tolerated his multiple visits to the Czechoslovak capital, he was expelled in late 1982, never to return (Richterova 2017b).

A "Surveillance-Centred" Approach to Terrorists

We now know that the StB considered both men a threat. In both cases, Czechoslovak counter-intelligence gradually adopted subtle measures aimed at deterring the return of these international terrorists to Czechoslovakia. Eventually they managed to eject them from Czechoslovak territory: Abu Daoud in 1982 and Carlos the Jackal in 1986. Czechoslovakia's "counterterrorism" approach, however, lacked the ultimate finale—that of arresting groups and individuals considered or known to be a threat. This leads to an important and lingering question: why did Prague not resort to incarcerating these internationally feared men and their accomplices?

According to the "Terror Network" school of thought, Prague's reluctance to arrest violent non-state actors meant the communist regime supported and endorsed their violence in the West. To date, archives have not revealed any unequivocal evidence of such encouragement or assistance. In multiple interviews, however, former diplomats and StB officers have suggested that the communist regime and its security arm had reached unwritten "gentlemen's" or "non-aggression" agreements with various violent non-state actors visiting or residing on Czechoslovak territory. According to such informal pacts, terrorists and revolutionaries were to refrain from engaging in any violent activities while in Czechoslovakia. In turn, they would be allowed to travel there for short-term visits, vacation in the communist country's capital and spa towns, meet their networks and even transport weapons through its territory. Furthermore, some interviewees have even suggested that, as a part of this "gentlemen's agreement," Prague would turn a blind eye to these groups' activities outside its own territory and the Eastern Bloc, most chiefly when it came to attacks against Israel in the Middle East. As these testimonies suggest, myriad groups accepted this arrangement as they saw the Central European country as a safe zone (Csipák 2017; Voleš 2015; Nergl 2018).

To date, we have no unequivocal evidence of Prague striking a non-aggression pact with Carlos or the Munich Massacre commander. We do know, however, that for some time their visits to Czechoslovakia were silently tolerated. Arguably, this "surveillance-style" approach was caused by a mixture of factors. Remarkably, communist states feared retribution by these volatile and violent non-state actors as well as any form of open conflict between these groups. Reputational hazard stemming from allowing such controversial and high-profile figures of the Cold War terrorist underworld onto their territory also played a role. Furthermore, Prague's state security operated in an ideologically polarised world, which saw the Eastern Bloc closely allied with many Arab regimes and the PLO. Arresting and presumably handing terrorists, who proclaimed ideological affinity to Marxism-Leninism and maintained intimate links to Prague's key Middle Eastern partners, to the West was inconceivable. Moreover, not being members of INTERPOL, Prague felt no pressure to arrest individuals who perpetrated attacks in the West. Consequently, it also had limited legal means to do so, unless they broke local law.

The absence of written evidence on "non-aggression pacts" is problematic and, as such, this claim requires more research to be fully substantiated and understood. Nevertheless, a parallel narrative—one of surveillance rather than that of state-sponsored terrorism—seems more fitting for how Prague handled international terrorists. During their stays in Czechoslovakia, these terrorists, as well as other non-state actors who visited the country during socialism, were closely watched by counter-intelligence officers and their network of informers. As the next section shows, however, employing this surveillance approach proved quite a treacherous path for the StB.

Challenging the Surveillance System

As a country firmly embedded in the socialist camp, Czechoslovakia's surveillance system focused predominantly on its "internal enemies" and the so-called "main enemy."[4] The former was a term chiefly

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[4] Protection of the Czechoslovak economy was also among the top three counter-intelligence priorities.

used to denote the regime's opposition: anti-socialist elements comprising dissidents, intellectuals, students, minorities, intellectuals, or religious communities. The latter term was reserved for the intelligence services of the United States, the United Kingdom, West Germany, and their imperialist allies. Prague was diligently focusing on preventing their activities on Czechoslovak territory. Hence, embassies of capitalist as well as African, Latin American, and Asian countries suspected of any subversive activity against the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic were under close watch (RMV ČSSR 1977). Surveillance of domestic populations was largely exercised to ensure the population's loyalty to the regime, prevent treason, and transform the individual and the "societal" or "moral" fabric as a whole (Almgren 2009: 455 in Svenonius, Bjorklund, and Waszkiewicz 2016: 96, 99; Holquist 1997: 417). In other words, surveillance was the ultimate tool for maintaining regime security across the Eastern Bloc, as it was employed not only to collect information on imminent anti-regime activities but also to regulate and influence broader trends within society.

The StB used various surveillance methods to monitor its fiercest critics: informers and/or technical equipment installed in people's homes, neighbourhoods, or work places. According to Professor Miroslav Kusý, one of Slovakia's most prominent dissidents, who was subjected to surveillance for almost two decades and eventually incarcerated by the regime, the main aim of communist-era surveillance was to threaten those who vocally resisted the regime and to prevent them from staging anti-regime activities: "We were threatened by the regime. For instance, the officers would say: 'Think of your children. Something might easily happen to them'" (Kusý 2017). But they also tried so-called softer strategies of subjugating dissidents to the regime's will. As Kusý recalls, "several people promised me a great warm job in return for endorsing the regime" (ibid.). Kusý resisted, however, and worked as a manual labourer for most of the 1970s and 1980s.[5]

The paranoid regime could not ignore foreigners either visiting or residing on their territory. Surveillance was also deployed against foreign institutions operating in Czechoslovakia. With varied success, StB managed to penetrate some of the defences set up at diplomatic missions of NATO member states and of the countries of the Middle and Far East. To this end, the secret police used long- and short-term bugging of offices and phones, secret technical inspections, concealed filming and photography, and monitoring mail correspondence (Blažek and Žáček 2005: 123–24). Nevertheless, in the latter half of the 1970s, when Middle Eastern violent non-state actors began visiting Czechoslovakia, the StB was faced with a new challenge.

Czechoslovakia's motivation to adopt this "surveillance-centred" approach to visiting international terrorists deviated from the approach adopted for the surveillance of local populations. It is argued here that the surveillance of terrorists and revolutionaries had little to do with such strategic aims as solidifying the communist party's ideological dominance. The state security's approach was a tactical one aimed at risk management and involved mapping these groups' movements, liaisons, leadership and membership, plans, capability, and eventually pushing them out of its territory. As this section shows, this tactical surveillance approach bore mixed results.

StB Education and Competence

Despite the StB's size, the state security system faced issues of competence. Some have even suggested that the mammoth secret police often failed to obtain information of strategic value (Williams 2000: 32). This had much to do with the StB's employment strategy, which was, especially at crucial turning points

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[5] In many ways, the regime would take these guidelines to the extreme. In the 1970s, the StB sent its counter-intelligence officers to monitor visitors to the grave of T.G. Masaryk, the first president of democratic Czechoslovakia (II.S-SNB 1975). In February 1975, the secret police was deployed to compile a list of all guests at a birthday event for Czechoslovakia's most prominent writer, actor, and screenwriter, Jan Werich (IV.S-SNB 1975).

during the StB's four decades of existence, dictated by massive purges of StB personnel who had fallen out of favour with the Party. One such turning point came after the suppression of the Prague Spring and the subsequent August 1968 occupation of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact forces. Remarkably these events divided the StB, with much of the new generation of StB officers opposed to the Warsaw Pact invasion. Unsurprisingly, extensive purges of those siding with the Czechoslovak reform movement followed the suppression of the Prague Spring. The Ministry of the Interior saw about 3,350 of its employees fired for having supported the reforms. By 1972, seventy-three per cent of the StB command had been replaced, mostly impacting foreign intelligence (Williams 2000: 32). Furthermore, the post-Prague Spring StB was further weakened by a wave of defections. According to the influential Czech historian of the StB, Prokop Tomek, this left the "old guard" from the 1950s Stalinist StB, who stood in support of the invasion, to become the backbone of the regime. New hires were to be of worker background in order to maintain "the class character of the StB." Loyalty, not education, foreign experience, or language ability, was the priority (Tomek 2016: 94).

Within the context of international terrorism, officers with such educational profiles would be ill-equipped for the job. In the words of a former high-ranking intelligence officer who took over the Arab agenda in Prague after the fall of communism: "They were no Middle East experts. What they knew they largely learned from their Arab *agentura*" (Anonymous 2017). Having spent most of their lives in the largely closed communist world, the domestic state security apparatus, primarily tasked with keeping these foreign elements in check, represented the antithesis of cosmopolitanism. Their lack of language skills as well as experience with and knowledge of foreign cultures made for an inward-looking intelligence culture. This rendered them ill-suited for surveilling elusive foreign targets, who communicated in often "exotic" languages and engaged in unpredictable alliances. Moreover, since terrorism was a new threat, the StB had little expertise in pursuing violent and potentially dangerous non-state actors. Their unpredictability also clashed with the surveillance teams' routine. When the terrorists convened in private safe houses past midnight, StB surveillance often left their positions before the meetings were over (IV.S-SNB 1979).

Furthermore, quite contrary to our current view of terrorism as a high-profile security subject, in the 1970s and 1980s, the agenda of monitoring terrorist activities and networks was not a popular career path. It was uncharted territory and "outside the box" of what most StB officers were trained to do. Moreover, regional offices tasked with monitoring terrorism were even worse off, as their closest supervisors were based in Prague and they rarely saw them face-to-face (Csipák 2017).

Human Intelligence

HUMINT was essential to the StB's work. The so-called Arab *agentura* was mostly made up of the populous Middle Eastern student community living in Czechoslovakia or diplomats and local employees working at Middle Eastern embassies in Prague, including the official PLO representation. To the StB, which lacked experts on the Middle East, the Arab *agentura* was the key to understanding who their targets were, what their business was in Czechoslovakia, and the ties between them.

The quality of HUMINT within this *agentura* was varied. On one hand, and thanks to its widely cast web of informers, the StB was capable of navigating through the very diverse, unfamiliar, and dynamic landscape of relations within the Arab community. On the other, however, reliability was often an issue. According to a Czechoslovak Arab scholar who later joined the ranks of the democratic Czechoslovak intelligence service: "In terms of sources they [the StB] were often hostages of their informers' individual interests. Their assets often provided conflicting information and rarely supplied their handlers with information acquired directly from the source. Much of what they fed the StB with was based on hearsay or second-hand information" (Anonymous 2017). According to former StB officer, Ladislav Csipák, who recruited and worked closely with the Arab *agentura* in the late 1980s, one also had to be aware that these informers were often doubles. "Of course, we knew who each Palestinian we recruited worked for—be it

the PLO, Al Saiqa, the PFLP, or the Abu Nidal Organisation. We knew that these people were intelligence officers with allegiances to these particular groups, but they also worked for us." Despite this, however, according to Csipák, "[b]eing in touch with [informants] was an advantage despite the fact that we knew he was a double" (Csipák 2017). In other words, the StB grew accustomed to the fact that their *agentura* mixed genuine information with disinformation.

Despite these deficiencies, however, the Arab *agentura* seemed to have been the steadiest and most rewarding way of obtaining information about the StB's nebulous surveillance targets. Gradually, the StB found ways to reward or coerce its agents into sharing valuable information. "Our main goal in respect to this *agentura* was to find out whether there was any threat of terrorist attacks," recalls Csipák. Soon he and his colleagues found ways to motivate or even blackmail their contacts into cooperating: "I recruited and nailed down several people when they began to have visa issues or when their permanent student residency permit was about to expire…." It was at this point, recalls Csipák, he would approach the potential informer saying: "Listen, I can fix you a permanent work permit, but I need some information from you… so I gave him the most basic permit possible and if he fulfilled my expectations, then I had no problem prolonging his stay" (Csipák 2017).

The StB had also activated its "hotel *agentura*"—the ubiquitous StB spies in hotels across Prague. In order to keep these foreign objects "under control," the state security placed hotel managers, waiters, receptionists, and cleaners on their payroll. These reported on a regular basis and were helpful when it came to supplying the StB with information on the terrorists' and revolutionaries' arrivals, departures, and the content of conversations they held with staff. When it came to the content of clandestine meetings, however, the usefulness of this *agentura* proved limited. As such rendezvous were often held in their private hotel rooms or safe houses, the StB had to rely on its bugging devices or informers firmly embedded in the Arab community.

Technical Challenges
SIGINT often compensates for HUMINT's failings. However, it appears that this was not the case when it came to bugging the rooms of these foreign subjects. High-class hotels in Prague had a limited number of rooms that were equipped with surveillance technology. All the hotel *agentura* needed to do was to make sure members of the Carlos Group or others of their like were accommodated in these particular rooms (Kába 1980). This did not always work, as the security-aware Carlos, for instance, at times refused to accept the rooms he was allocated. In these instances, the StB had to install the bugging devices in his room during his stay—a highly risky manoeuvre (Informer "Rudolf" 1979). Further problems emerged. In August 1979, during one of the most important meetings organised by the terrorists in Prague, the hotel *agentura* managed to check these guests into rooms with the appropriate technical surveillance equipment. Everything was set up for the StB to listen in on their plans. In the end, however, the technology failed and the StB was left guessing about the content of the meeting (Němec 1985(a), 1985(b); Kováč 1985).

Moreover, translation and analysis of the transcripts were also problematic. In August 1979, when the Carlos Group held a mini terrorist summit in several rooms of the Intercontinental, the StB recorded some of their negotiations. Much of what was said, however, was "lost in translation" (Jíra 1979). The StB found the conversation largely inaudible and difficult to attribute to particular persons, and they lacked the capacity to translate from Arabic. Due to this dearth of language expertise, only excerpts of the conversations held in English and French were translated. The rest was sent to Moscow for the translation of Arabic and further analysis (II.S-SNB 1980).

Technical problems extended further. The StB struggled to establish the identities of individuals suspected of engaging in political violence or terrorism. This was difficult due to the ubiquity of forgery and identity fraud—a practice widely used by violent Middle Eastern non-state actors. With fake identities came multiple false as well as genuine passports—many of which were diplomatic—mostly issued by Middle

Eastern and North African states. Some Arab partners, such as South Yemen, admitted that they had indeed lost track of how many passports had been given to Palestinian groups (Jíra 1980). According to a former StB officer, Ladislav Csipák, who worked on the Arab agenda in the latter half of the 1980s: "At the time, these passports were widely available—it wasn't a problem to get a hold of them." In the 1970s and 1980s, personal details in most Arab passports were not filled in with typewriters but rather written by hand in ink. The grammar and spelling were atrocious (Csipák 2017).

The StB was acutely aware of this problem and was bluntly reminded of this fact by its most problematic customers. For instance, Carlos entered Czechoslovakia as the South Yemeni national Mohsen Kassem Al Bakri, as a Syrian passenger Michael Khouri, or Adil Fawaz Ahmed (Vlček 1979). In early November 1982, the StB subjected Abu Daoud to a four-hour questioning at the end of which he was told to leave the country. During the ordeal, Abu Daoud fought back, telling the StB that there was no point in forcing him to leave Czechoslovakia as he would easily return under another identity whenever he liked. "At this very moment," boasted Abu Daoud, "I have four different Arab passports in my luggage" (Solnický 1982). As a consequence, the authorities struggled to establish the identity of these terrorists and the StB often learned about visits by Carlos or Abu Daoud to Prague only retrospectively or once they were settled in their luxurious hotels in the capital. For instance, Abu Daoud's first visit to Prague, which coincided with the potentially explosive meeting of the International Olympic Committee, was only discovered by the StB weeks after the terrorist's departure. With respect to Carlos, during several of his visits, the StB surveillance only caught up with him days after his arrival in Prague (Pokorný 1979).

Reform

As a result of such intelligence failures, in the early 1980s the state security conducted its first internal assessment of the terrorism threat. According to Csipák, in the mid-1980s "socialist countries began viewing terrorism as a phenomenon which could also pose a threat to them. Myriad terrorist organisations and factions emerged, which could also strike against Prague. It was at this time that they became serious about addressing terrorism" (Csipák 2017). Moreover, other less well-known and equally unpredictable terrorist groups became increasingly problematic. The emerging offshoots of the Muslim Brotherhood, which attempted to hit Soviet targets in the Middle East, were a case in point (5/Dept. II.S-SNB 1980).

In January 1980, as the importance of this agenda and the StB's frustration increased, the Ministry of the Interior adopted a set of structural reforms. In an effort to improve its ability to detect the arrival of violent non-state actors in Czechoslovakia, a number of areas were identified for attention. Internal liaison between the counter-intelligence and the foreign intelligence branch needed improvement. The former was to increase its penetration of the foreign *agentura* on Czechoslovak territory and unmask plans for terrorist attacks—especially against foreign diplomatic missions. Furthermore, the reforms called for creating a systematic database of *personae non gratae* suspected of terror links. The foreign intelligence branch was to supply Prague with critical information about foreign terrorist groups, their training facilities, and their future operations. Cooperation between friendly nations was also to increase, which would include exchanging operative information on terrorist suspects and best "counterterrorism" practices. Moreover, this would enable countries to warn each other of the arrival of terrorists or allow them to prevent the terrorists from entering their territory (5/Dept. II.S-SNB 1980).

Nevertheless, despite the adoption of new guidelines, problems persisted. In August 1985, when Carlos's deputy, Abu Hakam, arrived in Prague, the East German Stasi alerted Prague one day ahead of his arrival with a fake passport and name. Hastily, the StB reached out to the First Directorate and the local *agentura* to find out what Abu Hakam's business in Prague was. He was soon taken in for questioning by the StB (6/Dept. II.S-SNB 1985). Initially, it seemed the reforms had made a positive impact. When questioned, Abu Hakam's room was subject to a search that did not unearth any suspicious items, and the terrorist was ordered to leave Czechoslovakia the next day (Nergl 1985; Němec 1985(a)).

Three days later, however, an audit of Operation CARLOS uncovered major loopholes. During the course of this operation, there was inadequate documentation of arrivals and departures of Carlos Group members. Most recently, Abu Hakam was allowed into the country unnoticed—although the Passport and Visa Directorate was meant to immediately report arrivals of these terrorists to their StB colleagues. Further problems emerged. Following the terrorist's arrival, it took the Fourth (Surveillance) Directorate forty-eight hours to catch up to him. The bugging device in his room was installed with a three-day delay and, once installed, it failed to work. The StB failed to identify any of the three to four Arab contacts Abu Hakam met in Prague. Finally, an assessment of the room search showed that the officers on duty forgot to check the safe, which, as was later revealed, contained a large amount of foreign currency and various personal items, possibly of interest to the secret police (ibid.).

The internal audit of Operation CARLOS also showed that there was tension over which department was responsible for the operation and for preventing members of the Group from entering into Czechoslovakia. Materials on the Group were scattered across several directorates. There were further problems with analysis: by 1985, the ten-volume file on the Carlos Group had not yet been properly evaluated (Němec 1985(b); Kováč 1985; Němec 1985(a)).

Within several days, new measures were adopted. In the future, the StB would liaise with the Director of the Intercontinental Hotel when they required access to guest safes. Furthermore, a chemist should be present at every search and proper photo documentation of all objects and weapons, including any suspicious items or circumstances, would be carried out (Dynžík 1985). Finally, the country's first computerised database—SAPO—was found to have been flawed, failing to register the arrival of a number of Carlos Group members (Sládečko 1985).

Overall, Carlos the Jackal and Abu Daoud were problematic targets for the StB's surveillance apparatus. This was due to their ever-changing identities and documents, the amorphous nature of their alliances and affiliations, their lack of formal hierarchy, and the counter-intelligence measures these actors employed. In addition, a combination of problems related to StB officers' education and competence, the nature of their informants, the technology at their disposal, and their organisational structure resulted in the StB's limited capacity to use surveillance tradecraft to effectively monitor terrorists and revolutionaries. Fifteen years after the advent of increased international terrorism, Czechoslovakia struggled with collection, assessment, and operationalisation of information gathered on terrorist groups. This made the country more exposed to uncontrollable terrorists and revolutionaries.

Parallel Weaknesses and Approaches

With the ascent of international terrorism in the late 1960s, there was a clear need in Western Europe to address terror threats. How successful were these states in countering terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s? Were the challenges they faced much different from those confronting their colleagues behind the Iron Curtain? The record is mixed. In the 1970s, international terrorism was a new phenomenon that many Western states perceived as a short-lived threat that needed to be waited out. Moreover, many Western European capitals were reluctant to arrest terrorists as this often provoked further terrorist attacks, kidnappings of European citizens, aircraft hijackings, or attacks on European targets abroad. Moreover, the West's Arab allies—some of which had close ties with the likes of Abu Daoud and Carlos—protested against the incarceration of prominent terrorists or revolutionaries.

Examples of this approach are myriad. For instance, less than two months after the 1972 Munich Olympic massacre commanded by Abu Daoud, another group of terrorists hijacked a West German plane in an effort to free three of the surviving attackers from Munich. Remarkably, Western Germany swiftly gave in to the hijackers' demands and released the three arrested terrorists. In 1970, for similar reasons, London freed one of the most famous female terrorists, Leyla Khaled, in exchange for the safe return of one of

London's hijacked airliners (Follain 1998: 26–7). In 1977, Abu Daoud was arrested in Paris while attending a funeral of an assassinated colleague. Although Israel and Germany swiftly filed extradition requests during the visit, in a matter of weeks, thanks to Iraqi intervention, Abu Daoud was again a free man (Reeve 2000: 209–10).

In fact, according to those who covered Western policies towards Cold War terrorists, there were also other reasons why Western governments' eagerness to search for and arrest international terrorists was varied. According to journalist and first Carlos biographer Colin Smith, French security often treated their dealings with terrorists as a "gentlemen's affair." They "exuded their usual neutral air of 'we wish you would please go away and fight your battles somewhere else, gentlemen'" (Smith 1995: 123–24).

Some of these episodes demonstrate that Western European countries struggled with a similar set of counterterrorism problems to those in the East. These nebulous targets often slipped through the countries' defences. For instance, Abu Daoud travelled to France under a fake Iraqi identity as part of an official Palestinian delegation. It was only thanks to an Israeli tip-off that France realised whom they were hosting. Carlos was also an elusive target for the French and the British (Reeve 2000: 209–10). After the 1972 Munich Massacre, MI5 lamented in a letter to Home Secretary Robert Carr, "[i]t is difficult to predict the likelihood of terrorist operations in the UK. We do not control directly the amount and quality of intelligence we receive about Arab terrorist plans and intentions" (Andrew 2009: 613). According to MI5, the intelligence the UK received from liaison services was "usually imprecise as regards targets, timing and the identities of those involved. It is in any case the practice of terrorists to travel on false passports" (ibid.).

Western states were also aware that Middle Eastern terrorists and revolutionaries enjoyed support networks on their territory. This made these elusive targets even more difficult to detect. Sir Martin Furnival Jones, the MI5 Director General during the 1960s, was sceptical about being able to keep terrorists out of UK territory: "It is not difficult for terrorists previously unidentified… to gain entry to Britain for short periods, possibly carrying explosives with them. There are a large number of pro-Arab supporters of different nationalities in Britain, including many Arab students, who would be prepared, or could be induced, to give help in minor ways or provide cover…" (Andrew 2009: 601–2).

Furthermore, capacity was also a problem. After Munich, Israel supposedly flooded the European intelligence services with information about myriad terror targets—often acquired by infiltrating terrorist groups. European services, however, struggled to assess and process this wealth of information (Dobson and Payne 1982: 13). A case in point was when the "misrouting of information" prevented Carlos's arrest in London and enabled him to carry out his spectacular series of terrorist crimes culminating in the kidnapping of the OPEC oil ministers in Vienna during 1975 (Dobson and Payne 1982: 70). France also failed to catch Carlos while he was conducting operations on their territory, although Paris later had successes with Carlos's accomplices. Overall, this shows that the late Cold War was an era during which, generally speaking, counterterrorism was very weak across all of Europe.

Conclusion

Was Abu Daoud's first visit to Prague during a meeting of the International Olympic Committee a coincidence or a prelude to an attack? Remarkably, despite being closely monitored during his multiple visits to Prague, the StB never found out. Such paradoxes in the story of Carlos the Jackal's and Abu Daoud's interactions with Czechoslovak secret police point to a number of insights, which refine current scholarly understanding of the Cold War communist state–terror nexus.

This investigation suggests that the rigid narrative of communist state sponsorship of terror is outdated. Prague's communist regime was not an enthusiastic supporter of these nebulous Cold War terrorists.

Instead it chose to apply a much more cautious approach to potential threats that were closely linked to some of the country's key Middle Eastern allies. This parallel "surveillance-style" approach was characterised by risk management and aimed at monitoring and eventually ejecting unfamiliar threats. Arguably, this was indeed a negotiated approach based on verbal non-aggression agreements with these nebulous targets or their powerful Middle Eastern allies. Nevertheless, we are unable to make a final judgement on the significance of such unwritten pacts until we gain more insight into this modus operandi.

Moreover, this article highlights the limits of current scholarly understanding of everyday security practices and surveillance under communist regimes. This piece argues that existing literature has been distorted by an overconcentration of scholarship on surveillance of local populations. Despite having spent decades perfecting their grip on domestic dissent, when confronted with international terrorists, these otherwise effective institutions were often left bewildered—struggling to successfully utilise some of their basic surveillance tradecraft. Furthermore, we observe that surveillance efforts directed at violent non-state actors were driven by different motivations than those deployed against local populations. Whereas domestic surveillance was led by strategic objectives, that is, controlling the population and securing the regime, the monitoring of foreign actors was largely driven by tactical concerns and focused on immediate risk management.

Security and intelligence agencies are not omnipotent bureaucracies capable of monitoring or averting threats as they please. They operate within a certain political, cultural, and structural context that determines the nature as well as the success of their work. Moreover, they rely on human agents and technology that is far from infallible. From the 1970s onwards, with the ascent of international terrorism, this context changed rapidly and found old-fashioned states both East and West of the Iron Curtain to be unprepared. Both camps were perplexed when faced with similar challenges: monitoring and "controlling" these unfamiliar actors. This shows that the study of communist regimes, and their intelligence and surveillance strategies, remains highly relevant not only to understanding undemocratic states but also their democratic contemporaries.

This further points to the role of ideology when interpreting government policies on terrorism. Infused with Cold War biases, the debate about international terrorism has portrayed Western states as the fierce anti-terrorist forces of their time, while East Bloc countries are framed as a monolithic group of active supporters of terrorism oblivious to or immune from challenges posed by modern terrorism. This conceptualisation ignores what constituted an important emerging trend, namely an inherent clash between old-fashioned security states and nebulous foreign non-state actors. Moreover, it neglects the Eastern Bloc's heterogeneous approach to international terrorism, with some countries such as Romania willingly utilising terrorists as hit-men against the regime's opponents (Tofan 2013); yet others, such as Czechoslovakia in the case of the Jackal and Abu Daoud, adopting a much more cautious approach to these globalised threats.

The new picture of Cold War counterterrorism looks different from the picture that has prevailed over the last thirty years. The divisions were in fact less between East and West and instead more between state and non-state actors—with anarchists and extremists reviled almost everywhere. Given the common means, goals, and challenges violent non-state actors posed to Western democracies and communist countries during the Cold War, the congruence in surveillance practices across diverse states is perhaps not entirely surprising. Certainly, empirical contours vary to some degree across national contexts, most prominently with regard to the fact that the communist states never attempted to arrest the terrorists and revolutionaries they feared. Nevertheless, this suggests that these concepts have broad applicability and can be helpful in identifying the surveillance variation that does exist.

Such finding will have further relevance for understanding the long-standing complications of counterterrorism and surveillance of nebulous targets. The significance of this research is further

amplified by the increasingly porous boundaries between states and the latest rise of the terror threat on the European continent. Furthermore, the knowledge that non-democratic countries are not immune to fear of such violent non-state actors can inform future policies towards such states.

Finally, as new archives open, the possibility of mapping these variations presents an exciting challenge. This is especially the case when it comes to the debates that informed and dictated the West's and the East's approach to transnational threats, as well as to the often paradoxical role Middle Eastern states have played in the context of international terrorism. Overall, new findings are likely to further illuminate our understanding of the relationships between state and non-state actors.

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