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ACTION

September 28, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL HAIG

FROM: TOM LATIMER

SUBJECT: Terrorist Attacks on U. S. Companies

Attached is a memo from HAK to the President responding to the President's request for a CIA analysis of terrorist bombings in Mexico against U. S. firms.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the attached memo for HAK.

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ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS  
APPLY

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*Pres has seen*

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INFORMATION

SEP 29 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER  
SUBJECT: Terrorist Attacks on U. S. Companies

In response to your request of September 18, 1972 regarding the morning brief item (Tab B) on terrorist attacks against four private U. S. companies in Mexico, CIA has submitted a memorandum (Tab A) assessing those incidents and others throughout the world.

CIA notes that in most instances the bombings of U. S. firms, like those in Mexico, are the work of local dissident groups that are essentially motivated by the internal politics of their own country. The violence directed at American businesses in various parts of the world is not part of a campaign against U. S. firms as such, but rather a result of political conflict in which these companies are identified with the establishment or with policies opposed by the dissident groups. In many cases, the violence is part of the generational phenomenon with disaffected, ultranationalist youth striking out at the local "establishment" and its ties to "U. S. economic imperialism" and in other cases, the violence stems from anti-Vietnam war groups.

Those responsible for the violence have, at most, only loose, occasional links with terrorist groups elsewhere and do not appear to be involved in an international conspiracy against American firms.

-- An important exception to the above is the alliance of Arab terrorist organizations that have conducted operations across national borders in the Mideast and in Western Europe.

Looking at terrorist incidents area by area, the CIA memorandum notes that:

-- In Mexico, the bombings of U. S. -owned businesses on 14-15 September were the first such incidents in recent memory. There is no evidence that the explosions were part of any broad plan. On the same night that the U. S. companies were hit, bombs exploded at the offices of a government financial institution and at a nearby Mexican-owned clothing store. Because these incidents came 48 hours before Mexico's Independence Day celebration, they probably were set off by dissident elements to embarrass President Echeverria.

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-- In Argentina, U.S. businesses have been frequent targets of terrorist attacks in recent years. The most serious came in June 1969 during Governor Rockefeller's fact-finding trip to Buenos Aires. The bombings on that occasion were professional and well coordinated and all involved supermarkets at least partially owned by Rockefeller financial interests. Since 1969 there have been several incidents involving U.S. businesses but never on the scale of the supermarket bombings. In fact, other foreign businesses -- FIAT and certain British firms -- have suffered as much as U.S. companies.

-- In Venezuela, urban terrorism and rural guerrilla activity resumed in May and June 1972 after a long hiatus. U.S. Government installations and private U.S. business interests were hit, although much of the violence was aimed at the Caldera government. U.S. intelligence  expect terrorist activities to increase between now and the Venezuelan Presidential election in December 1973.

-- Elsewhere in Latin America, attacks against U.S. businesses have been sporadic and those that have occurred were often related to political or labor strife in the host country.

-- When bombings or robberies against U.S. firms are carried out by terrorists, the perpetrators are usually left-wing extremists who have broken away from more orthodox communist movements.

-- In the Middle East, there is no doubt that fedayeen groups have carried out coordinated attacks against U.S. business firms and the likelihood is for increased terrorist actions against both official and private U.S. interests over the next several months in light of the Arab guerrilla's belief that the Black September Organization's Munich operation was a success.

-- In Western Europe, incidents aimed at U.S. business firms and at government property apparently are the work of anti-Vietnam war groups. The unexploded bombs which were found in the Paris offices of Pan American Airways and Trans World Airlines in May of this year were linked to anti-war groups as were a series of attacks against U.S. commercial enterprises in Milan on June 3, 1972. Other incidents against American firms in Spain, West Germany and the Netherlands this year were also the work of anti-war demonstrators.

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-- In Asia and Africa what little anti-U.S. violence has occurred has usually been directed at U.S. official installations rather than at U.S. businesses. The occasional small-scale violence that has been focused on U.S. companies in some African countries has been spontaneous and looks more like vandalism than the result of planning by extremist groups.

In sum, except for the Arab terrorists and anti-war groups, attacks against U.S. business firms in the rest of the world appear to be random events, resulting from local dissident activities. There is no available evidence that extremist groups in Latin America, for example, have planned to conduct coordinated operations against U.S. businesses. We can expect to see the fedayeen organizations, however, attempt to expand their connections with other terrorist groups, especially in the Mideast and Western Europe. Even so, it is unlikely, in CIA's view, that such contacts will result in a formal international network of terrorist organizations.

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