

UN Should Take Lead In Erasing Terrorism

International terrorism has reached the point where it can only be combatted by guaranteeing that it will fail. It is time that the nations of the world, perhaps under the auspices of the UN, reach agreement on internationally coordinated steps to bring an end to it all.

The murder of West German industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer is only the latest in the awesome series of terrorist invasions of human rights. That murder, the terrorist hijacking of a West German airliner and other acts of terrorism indicate that terrorism is no longer a local incident.

On the contrary, there is ample evidence to show that there is coordination between international terrorist groups such as West Germany's Baader-Meinhof Red Army Faction, Palestinian extremists and the so-called Japanese Red Army.

For example, the skyjackers of the West German plane not only wanted the release of convicted terrorists in West Germany. They also demanded the release of Arabs serving terms in Turkish prisons.

There is an international brotherhood of terrorists and it is time to declare war on it.

It should be made clear what will happen to terrorists upon capture. Nations should define in advance what they will do if their airliners are hijacked, or if someone else's skyjacked plane comes within their jurisdiction.

Above all, it should be made clear what will happen if a state anywhere in the world gives sanctuary. Countries prepared to give sanctuary are merely encouraging other terrorists. Yet today, diplomatic, political, cultural or trade relations go on as normal.

Certainly, there needs to be a relentless effort to dramatically increase airport security in Europe.

But, above all, there needs to be serious discussion and then action on the growing menace of international hostage taking. Diplomatic niceties are absurdities when innocent lives are lost and children are terrorized. The UN can perform an important function by creating the world forum for antiterrorist action. It has put off action far too long.