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Subject Files - PP005-01 (First Lady)

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Folder Title:

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The George W. Bush Library

DOCUMENT NO.	FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
001	Report	[Recommendations]	5	02/11/2002	P5;

COLLECTION TITLE:

Records Management, White House Office of

SERIES:

Subject Files - PP005-01 (First Lady)

FOLDER TITLE:

523710

FRC ID:

1186

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

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Records Not Subject to FOIA

Court Sealed - The document is withheld under a court seal and is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

523710
PP005-01

THE WHITE HOUSE

April 22, 2002

The Honorable James H. Billington
The Librarian of Congress
The Library of Congress
101 Independence Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20540-1000

Dear Dr. Billington,

The trove of information and insights you sent have made me eager to go to Moscow and St. Petersburg and stay for several months! I appreciate greatly your taking the time to assemble your books about Russia, the brochure of Russian painting, and your Note on the Historical Origins of Terrorism – much interesting and timely information, which I look forward to reading.

Thank you especially for your extremely detailed and helpful guide full of wonderful ideas and practical suggestions for maximizing my time in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Your descriptions and comments will be very valuable to me and to my staff as we make our plans.

With best wishes,



APR 26 2002

Sara - I tried to write this letter, but really think it needs more substance than I have to offer... Please help!
Thanks - Sara



THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

February 11, 2002

Dear Mrs. Bush:

I am sending you at the suggestion of your office some ideas for possible visits in Moscow and St. Petersburg that might be of interest for you. I gather yours will be a very short trip in May. I will indicate a couple of key items first in Moscow then in St. Petersburg, and discuss the two great museums of Russian art in Moscow and Petersburg—one of which you might want to visit. I enclose a brochure describing highlights of these two museums that I have prepared for a forthcoming visit to Russia of our private-sector support group, the James Madison Council. I would be glad to provide more detail on any of these or on other possibilities.

I am also enclosing a short book I recently did on Russian culture, and the companion volume and videos of the series I did earlier on Russia for PBS. I could also send you a list of Russian movies from the Library's immense collection if you and the President would like to see some when you are closer to the time of your visit.

With deep appreciation again for your extraordinary role in launching the National Book Festival—and for all you have done for all of us in America since September 11.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James H. Billington".

James H. Billington
The Librarian of Congress

Enclosures

Mrs. Laura Bush
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Withdrawal Marker

The George W. Bush Library

FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Report	[Recommendations]	5	02/11/2002	P5;

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Subject Files - PP005-01 (First Lady)

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FRC ID:

1186

OA Num.:

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A Note on the Historical Origins of Terrorism

James H. Billington
The Librarian of Congress

The term *terrorism* first came into use after the reign of terror in the French Revolution. It was used to describe the systematic use of public violence on symbolic targets for political purposes—in this case the great rituals of guillotining selected victims to terrify the populace so they would not resist the dictatorial reign of the small Committee of Public Safety. It was a derogatory term used to deride a phenomenon after it had taken place.

The word terrorism was first used as a badge of pride by a political movement that sought to overthrow the existing Tsarist political system in Russia in the 1870s. The political organization formed within a broader revolutionary movement, took the name People's Will Organization, and lasted in one form or another until 1887. At its height, the People's Will commanded more than 4,000 members in a highly secret, compartmentalized and hierarchical organization that believed a free democratic system would somehow result from the delegitimization and destruction of a repressive government.

The organization developed no clear ideas about how a program of murders by a conspiratorial and highly centralized organization could end up producing the democratic utopia of which they dreamed. Nevertheless, each member pledged to the terrorist organization "every possession . . . all personal sympathies and antipathies, all strength and life itself." They took advantage of the introduction of telegraphy into Russia to give publicity to their movement. They believed that their program of targeted assassinations would dominate the Russian consciousness—as it largely did, thanks to a combination of fascinated coverage by foreign news services and sympathy shown by Russian intellectuals.

Once the assassination of officials began, the government organized itself into six military units to combat what it correctly described as a war against the existing system. In response, the terrorists switched from pistols to bombs and organized what they called "dynamite centers" in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and other cities. These centers were generally located near important targets such as railroad depots, police stations, or official residences. There was always both the external appearance of a peaceful group of family or friends and a windowless inner room or tunnel in which the real business of the "struggle group" took place: the assembly of bombs and rehearsals for assassination.

The original terrorist movement grew up in one of the most liberal periods of Russian history, yet helped to undermine the nascent liberal institutions that had given the terrorists relative freedom to organize and publicize their activities. They used the newly introduced institution of trial by jury to paralyze the legal system. Their lengthy defense speeches with emotional content turned many trials into indictments of the victim rather than of the assassin. Juries tended to be moved by the youth and sincerity of the terrorists and often acquitted them despite (at times even because of) their admissions of guilt.

The Russian terrorists created a certain pride in conspiracy and an ethos of fraternity that made their cells virtually impenetrable. Monetary rewards and denunciation by Russian officials had little to no effect. Many of the terrorists did not try to escape the scene of their crimes but rather seemed almost suicidally to welcome capture and execution as a demonstration of sacrificial faith in their cause. After the two bombs were thrown that killed Tsar Alexander II in March 1881, the reserve terrorist made no effort to escape, but instead used his bomb to prop up the head of the dying tsar so that he could get a drink of water before he expired.

The net effect of Russian terrorism was to delegitimize and help destroy not the government, but the liberal reforms of Alexander II, who had freed the serfs and had introduced trial by jury and a measure of local self government—none of which had existed previously in Russia. In order to combat the terrorists decisively, Alexander III, the successor of Alexander II, created an expanded and elaborate secret police system with enormous files. Serious attempts at revolutionary organization were effectively blocked inside Russia for more than a decade, and revolutionaries' were largely driven abroad. But repression in Russia served in some ways mainly to create an aura of martyrological heroism about the terrorists.

Terrorism was described by some of its original practitioners as a kind of compensation for the routine, and lack of both ritual and self-sacrifice in urbanized society. The most famous terrorist tract, *Terrorism and Routine* (originally entitled *Terrorism and the Philistines*), defended the bloody actions and shared sense of purpose of the terrorists as a necessary antidote to the mediocrity and boredom of ordinary life in the depersonalized cities that modernization was producing in Russia.

Alexander Ulianov, Vladimir Lenin's older brother, was the charismatic central figure in the last terrorist group that sought to perpetuate the People's Will Organization under Alexander III. His younger brother clearly idolized him, and one of the most interesting features in the long-hidden writings of Lenin that were published only after the collapse of the Soviet regime are his instructions ordering the instrumental use of terror during the Russian Civil War. Seizing on the resistance that some provincial Christians were making to the confiscation of valuable religious objects for the Bolshevik cause, Lenin wrote a secret memorandum urging the use of this as a pretext for staging large-scale public hangings of priests in prominent places in order to neutralize any opposition to Communism that might develop around the Church. The idea not just of killing opponents but of staging ritual murders to paralyze with fear the vacillating general population was more central to Lenin's thinking than Soviet propaganda was ever willing to make public.

Another central concept of Russian terrorism that was incorporated into Bolshevik thinking was the idea that a revolutionary political strategy must be defined and executed by a small group of leaders. Only the revolutionary "consciousness" of an elite group could provide effective tactical guidance for the unfocused anger of the oppressed

masses. "The people," in whose name the revolution was conducted, had to be delivered from their own undisciplined "spontaneity" in order to provide cannon fodder for the strategy of the "conscious vanguard."

There are, of course, fundamental differences between that original terrorist campaign based on the secular idea of a revolution at least nominally designed to create a democracy, and the current al Qaeda campaign rooted in a primitive religious fanaticism and designed to create a theocracy. The original terrorists attacked only key government officials, constructing special bombs that would confine the killing to the intended target and spare innocent bystanders. Unlike al Qaeda, the original Russian terrorists assigned women a prominent role in the conduct of their terrorist campaign (as does the greatest movie ever made on the subject: *The Battle of Algiers* [1965]). But the original Russian terrorists, like Bin Laden and other current terrorist leaders, came not from the lower but from the upper, educated classes. Finding a kind of rebirth in the caves and camps of Afghanistan is not all that different from the Russian revolutionaries' finding a new life in their secret hideaways in Odessa, Kiev, and Moscow.

Terrorism was anatomized psychologically in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed*, the greatest novel ever written on the subject, in 1871-72 at the dawn of the terrorist onslaught on Russia. In it Dostoyevsky revealed the dark secret of all forms of terrorism: Using terrible means to realize an ideal end will be able to hold its adherents together in the real world only if they participate in a common capital crime that will violate not only the laws, but the moral underpinnings of the existing system.

11/30/01