

percent of the killers had been to high school, compared with only 23 percent of the general population. A study of 285 Palestinian terrorists who carried out suicide bomb attacks for other groups between 1987 and 2002 found that they were nearly twice as likely to have finished high school and attended college as other Palestinians. Two of the bombers were the sons of millionaires.

On the other side of the conflict, a look at the membership of Israel's deadly Bloc of the Faithful, which killed 23 Palestinians during the early 1980s, turns up teachers, writers, entrepreneurs, a chemical engineer, and other high achievers.

Krueger and Malečková look more to politics than to economics to explain terrorism. People who have "enough education and income to concern themselves with more than minimum economic subsistence" are more likely to become engaged in politics, violent or not. And countries that allow fewer political outlets are more likely to produce terrorists. Comparing the home countries of international terrorists who struck between 1997 and 2002, the authors found that countries with basic civil liberties produced fewer terrorists. When political freedoms were taken into account, the poorest countries were no worse incubators of terrorism than the richest.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Devilish Incentives

"Religion and Economic Growth Across Countries" by Robert J. Barro and Rachel M. McCleary, in *American Sociological Review* (Oct. 2003), 1307 New York Ave. N.W., Ste. 700, Washington, D.C. 20005-4701.

The "Protestant ethic" may have spurred the rise of capitalism, as sociologist Max Weber argued more than 70 years ago, but what about religion's role in keeping economies growing? Apparently, it's helpful to be a God-fearing country, but not so God-fearing that people attend religious services on a regular basis. Think Scandinavia.

Countries with large numbers of religious believers—no matter what their faith—tend to prosper more than others. But if those believers are regular participants in services, economic growth is retarded, according to Barro, an economist at Harvard University, and McCleary, director of Harvard's Religion, Political Economy, and Society Project. They analyzed data on 41 countries around the world from the 1980s and 1990s.

What's wrong with a country's citizens'

regularly attending religious services? Not only does it take time and attention away from earthly concerns, the authors speculate, but when a lot of people attend, it may be a sign that organized religion in that country strongly influences "laws and regulations that affect economic incentives," such as those governing credit and insurance markets.

But just having a lot of citizens who profess a belief in God while still heading off to work on holy days doesn't light a country's economic fire. It's a belief in an afterlife that matters most. Barro and McCleary think that's what encourages the capitalist virtues, such as honesty, thrift, and a strong work ethic. But not just any afterlife, they note: "There is some indication that the fear of hell is more potent for economic growth than is the prospect of heaven."

Piracy's Second Act

"The New Piracy" by Charles Glass, in *The London Review of Books* (Dec. 18, 2003), 28 Little Russell St., London WC1A 2HN, England.

While everybody talks about digital piracy these days, piracy of the old-fashioned kind, which supposedly disappeared after the

Napoleonic Wars, has been making a big comeback—and some fear that the worst is yet to come. There were 445 attacks on ships