



*America's Patriot missile defenses, like this unit deployed in the Kuwaiti desert in March 2003, performed well against ballistic missiles, but cruise missiles and low-flying aircraft escaped detection.*

force units, possibly under a single Pentagon agency. And deployment of a new "wide-area surveillance and battle man-

agement platform," which is not scheduled to occur until 2011, may need to be speeded up.

## *The Roots of Terrorism*

"Education, Poverty, and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?" by Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Malečková, in *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (Fall 2003), Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, Minn. 55105.

The notion that poverty and ignorance breed terrorism seems to have a seductive appeal that transcends mere facts. Public figures left and right continue to repeat it, even though there's little evidence to support it, write Krueger, an economist at Princeton University, and Malečková, a professor at the Institute for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Charles University, Prague.

As a rule, they note, better-off and better-educated people are *more* likely to support and participate in terrorist or militant acts than their less fortunate peers. In a December 2001 opinion survey of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, for

example, 86 percent of adults who had attended high school supported armed attacks against Israeli targets, compared with 72 percent of their illiterate peers. And outright opposition to such attacks was much higher in the ranks of the illiterate: 26 percent voiced opposition, compared with only 12 percent of better-educated Palestinians.

Many studies of those who actually commit terrorist attacks follow the same general pattern. Of 129 Lebanese Hezbollah militants who became *Shahids* (martyrs) between 1982 and 1994, only 28 percent came from impoverished families (while 33 percent of all Lebanese were living in poverty). Thirty-three

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