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# The Victims of Terrorism

An Assessment of Their  
Influence and Growing Role  
in Policy, Legislation, and  
the Private Sector

Bruce Hoffman, Anna-Britt Kasupski



CENTER FOR TERRORISM RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

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## Preface

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In recent years, associations formed by the victims of terrorist acts, their families, friends, and colleagues have emerged as an influential voice in government counterterrorism policy, in the passage of terrorism-related legislation, in civil court cases, and in other private-sector activities, ranging from input in the design of the World Trade Center (WTC) memorial to the conduct, remit, and operations of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (“9/11 Commission”). Their effect on a variety of important issues, spanning actual policies to compensation questions, however, remains a largely poorly understood development. Despite the fact that family groups or victims’ associations have been prominently involved in efforts in the aftermath of major terrorist incidents since the 1988 Pan Am 103 tragedy, little research has been devoted to analyzing the political, economic, and social activities of terrorism victims’ associations or groups and their impact.

This report examines the impact that terrorism has both on its actual victims and on their families in the aftermath of violent incidents. It seeks to better understand how society and government cope and adjust following a spectacular terrorist attack by focusing on the organizational dimensions and efforts of victims’ and family groups, their government and congressional lobbying efforts, their pursuit of civil justice remedies, and their internecine dynamics and relations.

This paper should be of interest to policymakers, the private sector, and the public at large for the light that it sheds on how government and society cope in the aftermath of a major terrorist attack and the new role that victims’ groups play in such a process. The work reported here was conducted within the RAND Center for Terrorism Risk Management Policy (CTRMP). The CTRMP consists of stakeholders from various industries, including primary insurance companies, reinsurance companies, property owners, and other corporations. Funding for this research is provided by these member organizations.

### **The RAND Center for Terrorism Risk Management Policy (CTRMP)**

CTRMP provides research that is needed to inform public and private decisionmakers on economic security in the face of the threat of terrorism. Terrorism risk insurance studies provide the backbone of data and analysis to inform appropriate choices with respect to government involvement in the market for terrorism insurance. Research on the economics of various

liability decisions informs the policy decisions of the U.S. Congress and the opinions of state and federal judges. Studies of compensation help Congress to ensure that appropriate compensation is made to the victims of terrorist attacks. Research on security helps to protect critical infrastructure and to improve collective security in rational and cost-effective ways.

CTRMP is housed at the RAND Corporation, an international nonprofit research organization with a reputation for rigorous and objective analysis and the world's leading provider of research on terrorism. The center combines three organizations:

- RAND Institute for Civil Justice, which brings a 25-year history of empirical research on liability and compensation
- RAND Infrastructure, Safety, and Environment, which conducts research on homeland security and public safety
- Risk Management Solutions, the world's leading provider of models and services for catastrophe risk management.

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## Foreword

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This foreword accompanies the second release of *The Victims of Terrorism: An Assessment of Their Influence and Growing Role in Policy, Legislation, and the Private Sector*, a RAND occasional paper (OP) by Bruce Hoffman and Anna-Britt Kasupski.

After completion of RAND's quality-assurance process and first release of the paper, RAND learned of concerns from some readers about the authors' way of describing distinctions among various groups. Some viewed the authors' placement of such groups into a tier system as a ranking of the groups' general influence and importance. This had not been the authors' intent.

To address this ambiguity in classification, RAND undertook a second editing of the document. The tier description has been replaced by a categorization of groups—an approximation based on the groups' own stated agendas and activities—into national policy reform, state and local policy reform, and victim and family support groups. We have concluded that this approach is more consistent with the authors' analysis than was the tier description. The paper no longer contains any suggestion of a ranking or scoring of groups' influence.

In addition, we have amended the dates on which various groups were formed and the types of membership categories of certain groups and their membership numbers. Other descriptions and terminology have also been modified for clarity.

The authors, along with the leadership of the Center for Terrorism Risk Management Policy and of the sponsoring research units at RAND, appreciate the input received from various sources, which has given us an opportunity to improve both the quality and the factual and analytical content of this paper.

*Robert Reville  
Michael Wermuth  
Co-Directors*

*RAND Center for Terrorism Risk Management Policy*



## Summary

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To date, insufficient attention and analysis have been focused on the victims of terrorist attacks—whether the survivors themselves or family members, friends, or colleagues directly affected by this violence. This paper focuses on one important aspect of this area of terrorism studies: the organized groups of families and friends that have emerged since September 11, 2001, to become a powerful voice in U.S. counterterrorist policy and legislation.

These groups were remarkably successful in pressuring the U.S. Congress to establish a commission to investigate the 9/11 attacks, getting the White House to approve it, and then ensuring that the commission's most important recommendations were enacted into law. Although their success is well known by now, the number and diversity of these groups, their wide disparity in mission and services, and their strategies for achieving their missions are not well understood. This paper addresses that need. We describe the victims' groups that emerged from 9/11 and clarify their missions and strategies. We also compare the 9/11 victims' groups to victims' groups that were formed in response to previous terrorist attacks both in the United States and abroad, highlighting the lessons the 9/11 groups learned from these precedents and the differences between the 9/11 groups and those that preceded them.<sup>1</sup>

The victims' groups that emerged after the 9/11 attacks were unprecedented in their number and the diversity of their goals. Some focused on improving public policies to prevent further terrorist attacks; others focused on ensuring the creation of a proper memorial at Ground Zero; still others worked to establish September 11 as national day devoted to voluntary service. Given this diversity, membership in more than one group became common in the aftermath of the attacks, when these organizations appeared in rapid succession. Although logic might dictate that greater progress and benefit could be harnessed from a few broadly oriented, larger, and therefore potentially more powerful, organizations, this has not been true of the 9/11 groups that both proliferated and pursued deliberately narrower, respective agendas. We describe 16 of these groups in this paper.

We classify these groups into three categories based on their agendas: national policy reform, state and local policy reform, and victim and family support. The breadth of many groups' activities makes it an approximate categorization. Examples of groups in the first cat-

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<sup>1</sup> The first victims' groups in the United States appeared in 1972 in response to a dramatic increase in crime in the 1960s. They assisted victims of crime and civil negligence, demanded monetary compensation, and pushed for reform in the civil justice system. Although these groups are important in understanding the growing influence of victims' groups on public policy, they are beyond the scope of this analysis, which focuses on the history of terrorist victims' groups.

egory include the Family Steering Committee for the 9/11 Independent Commission (FSC), which became a powerful force in Washington and whose efforts culminated in the creation of the 9/11 Commission. Four FSC members, dubbed the “Jersey Girls” by the media, became some of the best-known 9/11 family members. They formed their own group, called the September 11th Advocates, which became one of the driving forces behind the push to systematically reform the U.S. intelligence community. One of the original and largest of the 9/11 victims’ groups, Families of September 11th (FOS11), had a broad range of activities and services, making it difficult to categorize.

Groups in the second category include, for example, the Coalition of 9/11 Families and September’s Mission, both of which have been exclusively involved with the planning and construction of a memorial at Ground Zero. Although they share this focus, their different visions for the end result and their means for achieving them have put them at odds with one another. The main objective of the Coalition of 9/11 Families is the preservation of the bedrock footprints of both the North and South Towers to a depth of 70 feet. September’s Mission has pursued a different course for the development of the memorial.

The coalition, the largest advocacy group, with more than 4,000 family members, survivors, rescue workers, and 9/11 memorial supporters registered on its Web site, actually comprises many other organizations, some of which focus on policy issues and others on providing support services. An example of the latter was founded by Saint Clare’s Church of Staten Island, which created the World Trade Center Outreach Committee after it lost 28 parishioners on 9/11. This committee seeks to help victims regardless of their religious affiliation and has expanded its efforts to serve the needs of almost 200 families living on Staten Island and in New Jersey.

We found that the success of the most prominent 9/11 organizations was due in part to the lessons they learned from the activities of groups formed after the 1988 in-flight bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. Indeed, the only set of victims’ organizations comparable to those for 9/11 are the five groups formed by those who lost friends and family on board this flight, four in the United States and one in the UK. Although they differ from 9/11 victims’ groups, they share an important characteristic with them: They strategically packaged their goals to gain access to the media and government. Their efforts’ success can be seen in the passage of legislation increasing airline safety as well as the more recent formation of the 9/11 Commission. In contrast to the individually contoured missions of the 9/11 groups, their Pan Am 103 counterparts all had essentially the same goal: to learn what happened and how such tragedies could be prevented in the future. Their differences were in the strategies and approaches they used to achieve this goal.

The 9/11 victims’ groups differed from the Pan Am 103 victims’ groups in three significant ways. First, more people were killed on 9/11 than in any other single terrorist attack, which, in turn, generated intense and sustained media and government attention. The sheer number of people who perished that day unleashed an exponentially larger outpouring of grief from the tens of thousands of relatives, friends, and coworkers who each mourned his or her loss in equally profound ways. Drawing on this deep well of pain and sorrow, survivors, families, and others were able, both individually and collectively, to pry open doors along congressional corridors that might otherwise have been more difficult to enter.

Second, the evolution of the Internet and information technology between the time of the Pan Am 103 bombing in 1988 and the 9/11 attacks 13 years later enabled the 9/11 organizations to communicate, often in real time, with increasingly large groups of people spread over a wider geographic base than ever before. The 9/11 groups' adroit and effective exploitation of information technology enabled many of them to attain the reach, influence, and stature that remained outside the reach of the Pan Am 103 organizations, many of which were formed too early to take advantage of the information revolution or were slow to exploit it for their own purposes. On a similar note, it should be mentioned that the rise of 24-hour news networks also greatly helped the families of 9/11 get their word out and garner support. Networks such as CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC often jumped at the opportunity to ask victims' relatives to participate in programs, to the extent that many of them were making regular television appearances soon after the attacks.

Finally, the 9/11 victims' groups learned important lessons from past victims' groups, particularly those affiliated with Pan Am 103. Leaders of the 9/11 groups had conversations with a few prominent leaders among the Pan Am 103 families and had access to books and news articles detailing their activism, all of which helped them form early strategies and warned them of the inevitability of divisions among family members, a lesson that proved to be invaluable in the immediate aftermath of the attacks.

The victims' groups that formed after the Oklahoma City bombing were not focused on shaping public policy but on supporting the recovery process of survivors and families. The arrest and conviction of Oklahoma City bombers Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols and the full explication of their crime during their respective lengthy trials helped to redress the outrage that drove the Pan Am 103 and 9/11 families' search for justice, answers, and accountability that ultimately resulted in the rise of their influence in Washington. Additionally, the Pan Am 103 and 9/11 attacks were committed by foreign perpetrators and therefore had profound implications for U.S. foreign and national security policy in a way that the Oklahoma City attack did not. These different circumstances created groups that were able to concentrate on providing emotional support for victims and their families. Many of these groups were formed not by victims but by third parties not directly affected by the attack. Taken together, these groups offered fewer lessons for the 9/11 groups that pursued different goals.

Internationally, similar groups have formed, most noticeably in Israel and Northern Ireland, two countries plagued by violence and conflict. Unlike those spawned by 9/11, which are unprecedented in number and influence, few of these groups, with the exception of a couple of Israeli organizations to be discussed, originated in response to a specific terrorist attack. In general, the characteristics of overseas victims' groups are quite different from those of groups in the United States. The most predominant variation is that none of the groups identified in Israel or Northern Ireland provides assistance to the victims of a particular attack. Instead, their missions, to seek justice and support those affected by Palestinian, Republican, and Unionist violence, respectively, are broadly oriented to assist a dynamic and growing constituency rather than one bound together by a single, common, shared tragedy. Furthermore, these overseas victims' groups, which, in fact, predate their U.S. counterparts, have been growing more steadily in number—irrespective of terrorist “spectaculars”—compared to the periodic emergence of those in the United States, as seen with Pan Am 103, Oklahoma City, and 9/11.

A possible explanation for the discrepancies in growth patterns and other points of difference is the rarity with which direct terrorist attacks have taken place in the United States, in contrast to Israel and Northern Ireland, where they have occurred more regularly.

In still other areas of the world, victims' groups have arisen in the wake of major attacks, such as the March 11, 2004, Madrid train bombings. Surprisingly, the large death tolls associated with these attacks have not resulted in groups forming that are any more capable of affecting public policy than was the sampling of those located in Israel and Northern Ireland. Furthermore, each of these international terrorist spectacles has produced a relatively small number of groups, nothing like the dozens created in response to 9/11, again due in part to the latter's unprecedented size. These foreign groups were, however, founded by and serve the needs of the victims and families of specific attacks—in which characteristic they are similar to those in the United States.

The comparative analysis offered in this paper emphasizes the evolution of victims' groups within the United States toward greater political influence. Building on Pan Am 103 victims' groups, the 9/11 groups assumed a level of moral authority and political persuasion in their fight for justice and improved national and aviation security that was unheard of among victims' groups overseas. These groups offer models of political activism on which future victims' groups will be able to draw. As a result, public policy on terrorism is likelier to be responsive to the demands of victims than it has been in the past.



## Acknowledgments

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The results of our research were briefed to the advisory boards of both CTRMP and ICJ, respectively, in late 2004 and early 2005 and thereafter submitted for technical review. The authors wish to thank the CTRMP and ICJ advisory boards for their support and encouragement throughout this project. We are also grateful to Laura Zakaras and Lisa Bernard, whose editing greatly smoothed and polished the final product, and to Kim Wohlenhaus, who capably oversaw the report's production.

Our greatest debt and most heartfelt thanks, however, are to the persons whose tragic losses on September 11, 2001, motivated and initiated this research in the first place. Carie Lemack, cofounder of FOS11, a truly inspirational figure in her own right, kindly read and helpfully commented on a draft of the study. She, in turn, put us in touch with fellow activists Kristen Breitweiser, Beverly Eckert, Peter Gadiel, Robin Wiener, and Charles Wolf. In addition to Ms. Lemack, each generously and, at times, painfully, answered our questions and provided critical insight without which this report would be both less compelling and less complete. In addition, Representative Christopher Shays (R-CT) of the U.S. House of Representatives, a man of uncommon intellectual rigor, integrity, and compassion, gave equally generously of his time: assessing for us the impact that these groups have had on the legislative process in Congress and describing how critical it is to listen to the voices of those who have suffered from terrorism—and any other form of violence, political or otherwise.

Whatever unintentional mistakes or omissions remain are solely the authors' responsibility.



## Abbreviations

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9/11 FSA	9/11 Families for a Secure America
11-M	March 11 Association of Those Affected by Terror
ACAP	Aviation Consumer Action Project
AVT	Association for Victims of Terrorism
CORC	Colorado Oklahoma Resource Council
CRG	Counterterrorism Research Group
CTRMP	Center for Terrorism Risk Management Policy
ETA	Basque Homeland and Liberty
FACT	Families Achieving Change Together
FAIR	Families Acting for Innocent Relatives
FOS11	Families of September 11th
FSB	Federalnaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti
FSC	Family Steering Committee for the 9/11 Independent Commission
GJG	Global Justice Group
IRA	Irish Republican Army
LMDC	Lower Manhattan Development Corporation
MIPT	Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism
NAREIT	National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts
NIST	National Institute of Standards and Technology
PA	Port Authority
RFJ	Relatives for Justice
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary

SSC	Skyscraper Safety Campaign
TRIA	Terrorism Risk Insurance Act
UDR	Ulster Defense Regiment
VCF	Victims Compensation Fund
VPAF 103	Victims of Pan Am Flight 103
WTC	World Trade Center
WTCUFG	World Trade Center United Family Group
WVFA	Widows' and Victims' Family Association

## Introduction

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Terrorism has long been described as “theater”: violence choreographed by groups or persons seeking to effect fundamental political change. The violence that terrorists perpetrate is therefore designed not only to attract attention to themselves and their cause, but also to coerce and intimidate, to create an atmosphere of fear and alarm that the terrorists can exploit. The deliberate targeting of innocent persons generally plays a central role in the terrorists’ ability to “terrorize.” Therefore, as the fictional vampire requires blood to survive, the real-life terrorist needs victims. Yet, obvious as this might be, to date, little attention has been focused on the victims of terrorist attack—whether the survivors themselves or the family members, friends, or colleagues directly affected by this violence. The purpose of this paper, however, is not to examine the entire dimension of the suffering that terrorism causes. Rather, it focuses on one important aspect in this neglected area of terrorism studies: the organized groups of families and friends that have emerged since 9/11 to become a powerful voice in U.S. counterterrorist policy and legislation. While it focuses on groups’ counterterrorism policy–reform efforts, this paper also discusses other groups’ efforts in other policy areas and in providing support services.

The history of the victims’ movement in the United States goes back several decades and encompasses many more groups than just those related to terrorist attacks. The first organizations identified as victims’ groups appeared in 1972, 16 years prior to the bombing of Pan Am flight 103. These organizations arose following a dramatic increase in crime during the 1960s. They were facilitated by government initiatives to reduce the incidence of child abuse, the invention of state-funded victim-compensation programs (first adopted by California in 1965), and the genesis of the modern women’s movement. These groups, assisting victims of crime and civil negligence, organized around such objectives as providing victims with support services, demanding monetary compensation, and pushing for reform in the civil justice system (Ochberg, 1988, pp. 319–329). Discussion of the history of victims’ groups in this broader sense, however, has been deliberately omitted for the purpose of concentrating solely on the victims of terrorism.

The uniqueness of the subject of this paper explains the heavy reliance on Internet-based resources and interviews with individuals closely involved with the creation and operation of 9/11 victims’ groups. There is simply very little published material available on victims’ groups formed specifically in response to terrorist attacks. However, the usefulness of the Internet far outweighs its potential bias as a resource. Many of the articles in this paper that are used as supporting evidence came from newspapers and journals accessible online. Also critical to this

paper was information collected from Web sites sponsored by a number of the groups, particularly those run by the victims of the 9/11 attacks.

Most of this paper was written between July and September 2004. Interviews with the leaders of 9/11 groups and Representative Christopher Shays (R-CT) were conducted and incorporated into the text between June and July 2006. Excluding those stemming from the bombing of Pan Am 103, the groups examined with respect to a particular incident or country are not comprehensively listed, but rather a sample used to demonstrate the variety of characteristics present among victims' organizations.

This paper is divided into five chapters, including this one. Chapter Two maps a sampling of the victims' groups associated exclusively with the 9/11 attacks. Although not an exhaustive list, the 16 groups described are representative of the large spectrum of those created. We describe the number and diversity of these groups and the wide disparity in their missions and services. Their success, we argue, was due in part to the lessons they drew from the victims' groups formed after the 1988 in-flight bombing of Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. In Chapter Three, we compare the Pan Am 103 victims' family organizations with their 9/11 counterparts. We include a brief description of the organizations affiliated with the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Although these groups formed midway between those for Pan Am 103 and 9/11, they had little to no impact on the 9/11 groups. Chapter Four examines the dynamics of some relevant overseas victims' groups and associations based primarily in Israel and Northern Ireland that, in some instances, predate the Pan Am 103 organizations. These groups provide a useful contrast in mission and orientation despite their wielding often less influence than those organizations created for either Pan Am 103 or 9/11 victims. We include a discussion of certain international groups that resemble those in the United States because they were created in response to terrorist "spectaculars." Finally, Chapter Five considers the overall influence of victims' groups on government policy.

## 9/11: Power in Numbers

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Within weeks of 9/11, one of the first 9/11 victims' groups was organized. In the search for answers and support, surviving family, friends, and coworkers had already begun gravitating toward one another, offering assistance, advice, information, and guidance. Carie and Danielle Lemack were some of the first to mount an organized effort to gather a group of bereaved together. Their mother, Judy Larocque, age 50, had been a passenger on American Airlines flight 11—the first of the two hijacked aircraft that were deliberately flown into New York City's World Trade Center (WTC). In October 2001, Carie made a call to George Williams, past president of a large Pan Am 103 family group. He instructed Carie to bring a sign-up sheet to the upcoming FBI briefing held in Boston on October 13. At the meeting, Carie and Danielle collected names and addresses and soon thereafter invited surviving family members to meet at a Newton, Massachusetts, hotel (Lemack, 2005, p. 2). At this gathering, Families of September 11th (FOS11) was established and a board of directors elected (English, 2003). The group was formally incorporated in Washington, D.C., and soon opened a main office in New York City. The ambitious mission it adopted was to “promote the interests of families of victims of the September 11 attacks and support public policies that improve the prevention of and response to terrorism” (FOS11, undated). As events would subsequently show, this proved both realistic and attainable.

Other groups quickly followed FOS11—often with completely different aims and objectives. Some focused on ensuring the creation of a proper memorial at Ground Zero, while others worked to establish September 11 as national day devoted to voluntary service. Given this diversity of mission, membership in more than one group became common in the aftermath of the attacks, when these organizations appeared in rapid succession. Whether by way of curiosity or in search of guidance and information, victims and family members joined the new groups, either as participating members or by signing up on organizations' Web sites for the sole purpose of receiving regular updates detailing group and community events or information pertaining to public policy.<sup>1</sup> Although logic might dictate that greater progress and benefit could be harnessed from a few broadly oriented, larger, and therefore potentially more

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<sup>1</sup> Wolf (2006), Wiener (2006). Wolf's wife died in the attacks on the WTC. He is the founder of Fix the Fund, a group dedicated to modifying the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund in the best interest of victims. Wiener's brother died in the attacks on the WTC. Wiener was a member of the Family Steering Committee for the 9/11 Independent Commission (FSC), actively involved throughout the 9/11 Commission hearings.

powerful, organizations, this has not been true of the 9/11 groups that both proliferated and pursued deliberately narrower, respective agendas.

The most consequential group in counterterrorism-policy reform was doubtless the FSC. Established in early spring 2002, its 12 members, all leaders of other groups with knowledge of the issues and a common goal, began to pressure Congress and the White House to appoint an independent investigative commission to examine the attacks.<sup>2</sup> Untrained for the roles they took on, these 12 individuals extensively lobbied Capitol Hill, orchestrated media appearances, and held rallies. All of this planning and strategizing took place via weekly conference calls, meeting in person only at scheduled events. According to one member, the persistence of their efforts was the result of a pressing sense of “urgency and conviction—urgency because of the imminent threat of another terrorist attack, and conviction that drastic changes were necessary to correct long-standing and deeply entrenched deficiencies in Washington” (Eckert, 2006). Walking through the halls of the Senate and House office buildings, the FSC became a powerful force in Washington, successfully demanding audiences with members of Congress, a result of both their cause and status as victims. On November 27, 2002, their efforts were rewarded when President George W. Bush signed into law a bill mandating the creation of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (the “9/11 Commission”).

Throughout the 9/11 Commission’s 20-month tenure, the FSC actively monitored its progress: themselves acquiring the necessary and often specific knowledge and expertise in areas within the commission’s remit to better scrutinize the direction of its inquiries, monitor progress, and thus ensure their influence over the entire process. One of the group’s strategies, for example, was to assign each member to a commissioner with whom they had frequent contact to address the FSC’s questions and concerns throughout the development of the nearly two-year-long inquiry (Eckert, 2006).

The 10 commissioners leading the inquiry recognized that it was largely the families’ activism that led to the creation of the 9/11 Commission. While FSC members worked tirelessly toward establishing a commission and, later, toward advocating an increase in its budget, the relationship between the two was not always cooperative. According to the commission’s co-chairs, Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton, throughout the duration of the investigation, “we had our ups and downs with the families, whose list of questions would grow. Often they were our closest allies, supporting our requests for more funding or more time on Capitol Hill. Sometimes, they were aggressive critics, issuing press releases blasting our approach” (Kean, Hamilton, and Rhodes, 2006, p. 27). Indeed, some families became the commission’s sharpest critics, frustrated over its approach to accountability. Furthermore, witnesses were not placed under oath, and those persons being interviewed were primarily academics, not government officials (Kean, Hamilton, and Rhodes, 2006, pp. 54, 128).

Four FSC members, dubbed the “Jersey Girls” by the media covering their activities, became some of the best-known 9/11 family members. Inspired by the political efforts of the Pan Am 103 family groups, this group of 9/11 widows—Kristen Breitweiser, Patty Casazza, Mindy Kleinberg, and Lorie Van Auken—became one of the driving forces behind the push to systematically reform the U.S. intelligence community. According to the groups’ leaders,

<sup>2</sup> The FSC was not initially founded with the involvement of all 12 members. Some joined later (Lemack, 2006a).



the turning point in their efforts was the 300-person rally they organized with fellow FSC members Beverly Eckert, Mary Fetchet, Carie Lemack, Stephen Push, and Robin Wiener in Washington, D.C., in June 2002 to demand the creation of an independent 9/11 commission (Jacobs, 2002; Gest, 2002b; Lemack, 2004). Armed with a portfolio of photos, keepsakes, and personal memories, they had already developed an effective routine of regularly traveling to Washington to lobby congressional representatives and senators. Breitweiser was, in fact, one of the two victims' family representatives asked to testify before a particularly important hearing, held on September 18, 2002, of the U.S. Senate and House Select Committees on Intelligence investigating the intelligence failures on 9/11. The selection of Breitweiser and Push, former treasurer and director of FOS11 who lost his wife, Lisa Raines, onboard American Airlines flight 77 when it crashed into the Pentagon, was proof that their respective groups (FSC and FOS11) had gained early recognition as those most influential and well informed (Lee, 2002). The four widows also formed their own organization, September 11th Advocates. Composed only of the Jersey Girls themselves, September 11th Advocates is not a group in the traditional sense of the term, in that it does not have an open membership; nonetheless, it is included in this paper and analyzed as one of the 16 9/11 family groups.

Although the Jersey Girls' role in the creation and progress of the 9/11 Commission is perhaps best known, members of the FSC and other family groups have also wielded significant influence. FOS11, for instance, grew to comprise 1,500 members drawn from victims' families, an additional 500 persons who registered on the group's Web site as friends or concerned citizens, a seven-person board of directors, an advisory committee, and administrative staff. While nearly half of FOS11's members live in the New York metropolitan area (including New Jersey and Connecticut), residents of 47 other states and 10 other countries have joined. Operational responsibilities are divided between its board members, who are charged with actively promoting FOS11's goals, and a staff whose tasks include coordinating the group Web site, providing emotional support to members, and additional activities such as oversight of group finances, public relations, and external (e.g., media and governmental) communication (FOS11, undated).

With its large membership base, FOS11 has emerged as one of the more vocal and influential groups to rise out of the tragedy. Its board members, for instance, were especially active in promoting a variety of important policy initiatives to advance the group's mission of raising awareness about the importance of preparedness for, and the prevention of, future attacks. At the forefront of this campaign have been both Carie Lemack (vice president, FSC) and Stephen Push (see Butler, 2003). During the 9/11 Commission's first hearing, held in New York City on March 31, 2003, for example, Push was one of four family members who testified (Push, 2003). Interestingly, FOS11 members Carol Ashley, Beverly Eckert, Carie Lemack, and Robin Wiener also serve on the FSC, demonstrating the cross-pollination of membership among 9/11 family groups (FSC, undated).

Push was one of a handful of family members who worked hard to forge a collaborative effort among various 9/11 family groups to achieve the passage of the bill forming the 9/11 Commission. As mentioned previously, Push testified with Breitweiser before an important session of the U.S. Senate and House Select Committees on Intelligence on September 18, 2002. In his statement, Push marshaled specific facts and arguments to illustrate failures in

the intelligence community that led to 9/11 and the need for its reform and restructuring to prevent similar, future lapses. Push also used this opportunity to urge Congress to create an independent investigative commission (U.S. Senate and House Select Committees on Intelligence, 2002). His and Breitweiser's combined efforts led one observer to later opine that the 9/11 Commission "exists only because of people like Push and Breitweiser" (Ragavan et al., 2003).

In fact, the formation of the 9/11 Commission resulted only because of the persistent lobbying activities of family members. In this case, however, the victims' groups had also to contend with a presidential administration opposed to the idea of a commission from its inception. They did so by thoroughly educating themselves on all aspects of the 9/11 tragedies and being expert in those areas in which they sought answers, accountability, and reforms. Early in fall 2003, for instance, FBI director Robert Mueller III agreed to brief a group of some 20 9/11 activists. The four members of September 11th Advocates, in particular, arrived prepared to question the FBI director in detail on possible intelligence failures that might otherwise have thwarted the terrorist attacks (Sheehy, 2003). Further, undeterred by the Bush administration's refusal to cooperate fully with the investigation, FSC members continued to push for complete compliance, including publishing op-eds supporting their position in major newspapers (Breitweiser, 2003; Kleinberg and Van Auken, 2003). In early spring 2004, the families' two-month struggle to ensure that National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice testified publicly before the commission succeeded when the White House acceded to this demand. The victory achieved by the FSC and the 9/11 victims' groups in general is best captured by commission chair and former New Jersey Republican governor Thomas Kean, who noted how "they call me all the time. . . . [T]hey monitor us [the commission], they follow our progress, they've supplied us with some of the best questions we've asked. I doubt very much if we would be in existence without them" (Stolberg, 2004).

The families also understood the importance of enlisting the media as their most critical ally. This is most clearly demonstrated by the public pressure they applied to both Henry Kissinger and George Mitchell, the originally designated chair and vice chair of the 9/11 Commission. Both men were legally obligated to reveal the names of their consulting businesses' clientele, which the families demanded to allay concerns over potential conflicts of interest with the commission's investigations. When both men refused to do so, similar pressure compelled them to resign from the commission prior to its commencing work (Ragavan et al., 2003). The FSC in particular also used the media as a tool, "calling on the public to hold the Bush administration and Congress accountable in supporting what the group deemed the nation's best interest by approving the commission's creation in November 2002 and the passage of the Intel Reform Bill in December 2004" (Eckert, 2006).

Among the groups examined in this paper, the extent of FOS11's activities and advocacy is without parallel, making it difficult to categorize. Nonetheless, FOS11 shares a number of key similarities with other 9/11 victims' groups, particularly with respect to its coordination of programs and outreach services. The Web-accessible FOS11 calendar, for instance, includes a list of family-oriented events and peer-support programs. In 2003, FOS11 joined with Tuesday's Children, another 9/11 group, to arrange a family gathering at a New York Mets baseball game. The group also initiated a photography program in hopes that this artistic medium of

expression would become an effective coping tool for children still traumatized by the loss of a parent in the 9/11 attacks. Weekly salsa-dance lessons were also organized free of charge at September Space, a New York City community center open to all surviving victims and families. September Space also provides adult victims and their families with a communal gathering place at which they can share experiences and gain understanding and insight from one another (FOS11, undated).

Because FOS11's membership is geographically vast, it has sought to bridge this distance through its Web site. Regular polls and email surveys enable staff to compile and respond to feedback with regard to the organization's efforts and priorities. Support groups facilitate communication among specific demographic populations, including those who have lost a spouse, parent, or sibling. A monthly e-newsletter informs registered members of the board's activities and posts first-person accounts of the 9/11 tragedy and the suffering that it continues to engender, along with other reflections and thoughts from its members. To further promote communication, the group introduced a chat-room option on its Web site in August 2004 (FOS11, undated).

Among 9/11 victims' groups, it is rare that any two share the exact same focus. The other groups analyzed in this chapter are not diametrically opposed to one another, as there is very little, if any, overlap among their goals. Thus, another reason for the proliferation of groups was that there were so many disparate opinions and a varying prioritization of issues among family members that, when initially attempted, made it impossible to form a single, all-inclusive group. The result was that people seeking a leadership role took the initiative and formed their own groups based on their own ideas for missions and strategies (Lemack, 2006a).

9/11 Families for a Secure America (9/11 FSA), for instance, specifically seeks to make U.S. immigration policies more restrictive. Its members believe that the terrorist attacks could have been prevented had necessary border controls been in place. Accordingly, the group has identified officials it holds responsible for policies that allowed the 9/11 attacks to occur and has lobbied for their removal from office while promoting the election of public office holders who support strict immigration policies. 9/11 FSA has also worked toward pushing for legislative reforms in those few states that do not prohibit the issuance of drivers' licenses to illegal aliens (9/11 FSA, undated). Soon after the group's inception, members began traveling to these states to lobby, the results of which have included the passage of a bill in Virginia prohibiting the distribution of licenses to noncitizens.<sup>3</sup>

9/11 FSA employs a variety of methods to attract attention and support for its proposed legislative agenda, which, unlike those of most other groups, has included seeking assistance from public relations firms and professional lobbyists. The Federation for American Immigration Reform, for example, gave the group a grant that enabled members to travel and lobby (Gadiel, 2006). In fall 2002, organization president Peter Gadiel (the father of a WTC victim) appeared in a televised political advertisement supporting Marilyn O'Grady, a Nassau County, New York, congressional candidate whose campaign platform called for more stringent immigration policies (Sachs, 2002). On September 10, 2003, Representative Tom Tancredo (R-CO),

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<sup>3</sup> Gadiel (2006). Gadiel's son died in the attacks on the WTC. Gadiel is the founder and president of 9/11 FSA.

a supporter of 9/11 FSA's efforts, organized a Washington press conference for the group to discuss illegal-immigration legislation (Spencer, 2003). Still later, Gadiel himself testified before the 9/11 Commission on January 26, 2004, on "The Role of Non-Enforcement of Immigration Law in Permitting the Terrorist Acts of September 11, 2001." In this testimony, he accused the federal government of failing to protect U.S. citizens by having long deprived the INS of sufficient funding, thus allowing the illegal immigration of more than 10 million people into the United States (9/11 FSA, undated).

Founded in 2002, September Eleventh Families for Peaceful Tomorrows represents more than 100 victims' family members. This organization promotes nonviolent responses to terrorism through activities such as peaceful demonstrations and speaking events. To this end, it encourages open dialogue and other forms of public education on alternatives to war. Hoping to create a safer world, Peaceful Tomorrows seeks to nurture a common bond among people affected by violence across the globe. In pursuit of this goal, members have visited Afghanistan to meet with those directly affected by U.S. military operations and have lobbied the U.S. government to create an Afghan Victims Fund (Peaceful Tomorrows, undated). In November 2002, some group members met with Aicha al-Wafi, mother of the 20th alleged hijacker, Zacarias Moussaoui. They comforted Wafi and stated their opposition to the imposition of the death penalty for her son, who faced six charges of conspiracy (Cantacuzino, 2004). Although many of Peaceful Tomorrows' activities are controversial, they nonetheless earned the organization a Nobel Peace Prize nomination in 2003 (Peaceful Tomorrows, undated).

Less than two weeks after September 11, 2001, the U.S. Congress passed legislation establishing a federally mandated Victims Compensation Fund (VCF) as part of the greater Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act (P.L. 107-42). Congress' intent in creating the fund was to provide immediate financial relief for victims and their families while protecting the U.S. airline industry from potential litigation. Applicants to the fund surrendered their right to sue the airlines and PA and, in return, received an average award of \$1.7 million before deductions—as determined by both federal guidelines and the discretion of the fund's special master, Kenneth R. Feinberg. During the couple of years following its creation, the fund would become a source of debate and frustration among families and groups, only one of which, Fix the Fund, was formed specifically to address related issues of compensation.

In retrospect, the haste with which the VCF legislation was enacted—because of the urgency generated by the potential collapse of the U.S. airline industry under the weight of impending litigation—created a number of unanticipated problems. Congress, for example, stipulated that insurance proceeds that families received would be deducted from their final reward, essentially penalizing those who had made adequate estate arrangements before their deaths and arguably rewarding those who did not. Disputes also arose when some family members tried to undermine one another's entitlement to compensation. Most problematic, however, is that the fund does not cover the victims of prior disasters or terrorist attacks (Jacoby, 2004). In the event of some new terrorist attack either in the United States or that directly involves U.S. citizens overseas, Congress will need to decide whether to establish a similarly organized and oriented compensation fund.

Charles Wolf founded Fix the Fund in reaction to many of these issues by supporting a modification of the VCF in what he saw as the victims' best interests. Having lost his wife,

Katherine, in the WTC, he became deeply committed to obtaining reasonable compensation levels for victims' families. Early on, he noticed that many families misunderstood the fund's intricacies and that victims' groups would call on Feinberg to make changes that only Congress could authorize. Driven by his desire to inform others while helping surviving spouses and their families achieve financial stability, Wolf created Fix the Fund and its Web site during summer 2002 to answer supporters' questions and relay VCF updates (Wolf, 2006; Fix the Fund, undated).

At a New York Bar Association meeting in May 2003, Feinberg revealed that he would make alterations to the fund, much to Wolf's satisfaction, who then announced his decision to apply to the VCF (Wolf, 2006; Fix the Fund, undated). By fall 2003, Wolf's efforts had achieved tangible success. Congress, for example, required that payouts from the fund reflect each victim's financial earnings. As special master, Feinberg exercised his authority to limit the differences among the rewards issued. In so doing, he tried to minimize "the number of very large and very small payments while narrowing the overall gap between the wealthy and those of modest means" (Feinberg, 2005, p. 156). Using the media as his forum, Wolf reoriented the focus of his mission to encourage others to opt into the fund (Wolf, 2006). Many families, some too grief stricken, others critical of having the special master assign a monetary value of worth to their loved one's life or forgoing their chance to sue as part of their search for answers and accountability, delayed applying. Feinberg and his staff, however, worked to raise enrollment levels, calling and traveling to meet with families in the months leading to the December 23, 2003, deadline (Robertson, 2003a). The dramatic results of these efforts are evident in the last-minute decisions that so many families made to partake in the fund, with 2,833 of the 2,976 eligible families having submitted applications (Robertson, 2003b).

Feinberg's willingness to adjust these levels, consistent with the powers that Congress accorded to him, is, in part, also a reflection of the influence of victims and their families. Although Fix the Fund is the only known organization to pursue such initiatives exclusively, a few other groups with more broadly oriented missions, such as FOS11, also advocated on behalf of victims for the adjustment of VCF payouts. It was also impossible for families to challenge the fund's initial set of regulations, given that they were passed into law in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, when feelings of grief and shock were still strong. Furthermore, the fund's complicated stipulations prevented many, unaware or unsure of how to approach and define the issues, from taking action (Lemack, 2006a).

The groups described above are categorized by their focus on national policy reform. It is an approximate categorization, as FOS11's activities include victim and family support and Fix the Fund worked to reform a federal program that provided support to victims and their families.

The next groups to be discussed are those that primarily focus their efforts on state and local policy reform, followed by those that provide support to victims and their families or encourage service on their behalf.

Two groups, the Coalition of 9/11 Families and September's Mission, are exclusively involved with the planning and construction of a memorial at Ground Zero. Although they share an identical focus, their respective visions for the end result and their means for achieving it have grown into a significant point of contention (Lerner, 2004). The discrepancy between

these groups ultimately offers an important explanation for why rival groups emerge—a situation that similarly produced multiple organizations among Pan Am 103 families.

The Coalition of 9/11 Families, which was founded during spring 2002, is the largest advocacy group, with more than 4,000 family members, survivors, rescue workers, and 9/11 memorial supporters registered on its Web site. The coalition, with a mission “to preserve the historical significance of September 11, 2001 through peer support events, information resources and advocacy work concerning the future memorial at the World Trade Center site,” actually comprises slightly fewer than 10 organizations. Of those, this paper addresses the 9/11 Widows and Victims’ Families Association, Saint Clare’s World Trade Center Outreach Committee, Skyscraper Safety Campaign (SSC), Tuesday’s Children, Voices of September 11th (Voices), and the World Trade Center United Family Group (WTCUFG) (see WTCUFG, undated[a]).

The coalition’s main objective is the preservation of the bedrock footprints of both the North and South Towers to a depth of 70 feet below ground. It believes that this area is sacred and should thus be excluded from all transportation and commercial development (WTCUFG, undated[a]). Alongside September’s Mission, the coalition has lobbied key elected officials, such as New York Governor George Pataki, in hopes of influencing the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) (Budd, 2002), the agency overseeing the reconstruction effort. As part of this process, the LMDC created two panels to assist with the memorial planning. Although victims’ family members hold a third of the 21 seats on the panel, coalition members claim that they are underrepresented and deliberately excluded for their outspoken opinions that often clash with those of rebuilding officials. The coalition’s fundamental demand that the future memorial should “be the centerpiece, not an afterthought,” has created new sources of tension among both developers and other family members who do not share its adamant position (Wyatt, 2002a; Gittrich and Goldiner, 2003).

In addition to lobbying against a proposal to build a bus depot under Ground Zero to accommodate increased tourist traffic, the Coalition of 9/11 Families has used a variety of tactics—including public protests—to make its views known (Haberman and Gittrich, 2003). Having obtained recognition for the site under the National Historic Preservation Act (P.L. 89-665), the coalition contemplated filing a federal lawsuit against the LMDC in February 2004. The coalition claimed that, in an effort to begin construction by the third anniversary of the attacks, the LMDC had failed to complete the federally required historical site review, which would determine the portion of area that should be left unaltered and protected (Cockfield, 2004). Two months later, however, the coalition, in coordination with historic-preservation agencies, persuaded the LMDC to acknowledge the value of existing on-site artifacts that members argued greatly contribute to Ground Zero’s importance (WTCUFG, undated[a]).

In direct contrast to the coalition’s approach, September’s Mission has pursued a more conciliatory course with the LMDC, amenable to compromise and accepting architect Michael Arad’s blueprints for the memorial (September’s Mission Foundation, undated). In the weeks that followed September 11, Monica Iken, who lost her husband, knew she had to act quickly to prevent developers from rebuilding and inadvertently detracting from the importance of any lasting memorial. She immediately began meeting with the planners of previous memori-

als to identify the key elements for incorporation in a future memorial at the WTC site (Gest, 2002c). Iken's efforts led her to found September's Mission as a means to ensure the creation of a memorial park in coordination with the commercial redevelopment at Ground Zero (September's Mission Foundation, undated).

Iken's efforts were rewarded when LMDC chairman John Whitehead appointed her to the LMDC family advisory board in January 2002 (Alexandra Marks, 2002). She also sits on the LMDC's 12-member (four of whom lost a relative in the attacks on the WTC) memorial drafting committee, responsible for having crafted the guidelines for design entries (Wyatt, 2002b). Lastly, as acting president of the September's Mission 9/11 campaign, Iken has also adopted the ambitious goal of raising more than \$100 million to support an array of programs memorializing the tragedy (September's Mission Foundation, undated).

Iken has also been a vocal opponent of Arad's design, "Reflecting Absence." The memorial's focal point is two pools of water marking where the towers once stood, between which will be a large clearing surrounded by oak trees (Davidson, 2004). Unlike September's Mission, many members of the Coalition of 9/11 Families do not approve of Arad's plan to list the victims' names in a random manner, which will make it difficult to locate specific names. Furthermore, the latter group also wants full access to the bedrock footprints of both towers in addition to the incorporation of historic artifacts above ground to help retell the tragedy's story. Iken, who agrees that victims' names should be listed on the correct tower in which each lost his or her life, is adamantly against the other two points, the latter of which, she argues, has the potential to unnecessarily stir painful memories in visitors (Lerner, 2004).

In December 2001, Sally Regenhard and Monica Gabrielle founded the SSC. Regenhard had lost her 28-year-old son, Christian, a probationary firefighter who died at the WTC, and Gabrielle, her husband. Representing several hundred families of firefighters and other victims who perished on 9/11, the SSC is dedicated to determining why the WTC towers collapsed, reforming New York City building codes, and ensuring that any reconstruction at Ground Zero meets these revised safety regulations (SSC, undated). The SSC professional advisory panel is composed of 13 members (including Regenhard and Gabrielle) with expertise in engineering, fire science, fire protection, and architecture (SSC, undated). As early as December 2001, Regenhard had gathered 160 family members' signatures calling for an independent federal investigation to examine the structural failures and collapse of the WTC (Calderone, 2001). In response, federal authorities approved a \$16 million, two-year investigation to be conducted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) (Garcia, 2002). Regenhard and Gabrielle testified before the 9/11 and NIST commissions on November 19, 2003, and February 12, 2004, respectively, arguing that the Port Authority's (PA's) ambiguous building regulations resulted in unnecessarily high death tolls at the WTC (SSC, undated).

In December 2003, 12 firefighter families (including Regenhard) filed a lawsuit against the city of New York. It was their contention that faulty radio equipment prevented many rescue workers from hearing the urgent messages sent to order the evacuation of the WTC (Tavernise, 2003). This suit followed one by the SSC on July 1, 2003, against the PA, which owned the towers. A bistate organization, the PA claims immunity from local regulation, thus angering families who believe that the towers did not fulfill fire code regulations required by New York law (Gittrich, 2003).

Diane and Kurt Horning founded WTC Families for Proper Burial to obtain a dignified burial for the 1,200 victims' remains never recovered from Ground Zero that now lie in the Staten Island Fresh Kills landfill (Vargas, 2004; WTC Families for Proper Burial, undated; DePalma, 2004). This family group would like to see these bodily fragments recovered and placed in appropriate containers for internment at the World Trade Center Memorial. In pursuit of this goal, the group conducts weekly two-hour meetings at the public library in Union, New Jersey. Members have also circulated a petition requiring a minimum of 50,000 signatures calling on the New York state legislature to enact legislation authorizing their plan (WTC Families for Proper Burial, undated). As of June 2004, the group, which had already succeeded in getting former New Jersey Governor James McGreevey to sign a bill requiring the PA to recover the ashen remains, had collected 35,000 signatures. A bistate organization, the PA, however, is not required to take action until New York passes a similar law (DePalma, 2004; Haberman, 2003b).

In turning to groups that provide support services to 9/11 victims and their families, it is worth noting the array of activities pursued by many groups' leaders. For instance, the leader and cofounder of Voices of September 11th (Voices), Mary Fetchet (who lost her oldest son, Bradley, at the WTC), also testified before the 9/11 Commission. Fetchet and cofounder Beverly Eckert advocated for the formation of an independent 9/11 investigative commission and have outspokenly promoted the implementation of various safeguards to prevent future attacks (Stoeltje, 2002). Fetchet served on the FSC and is a member of the SSC and the board for the Coalition of 9/11 Families, the first two of which Eckert was also a member. Having begun as an informal organization holding weekly support-group meetings, Voices, also cofounded by Beverly Eckert, quickly grew following the opening of an office in New Canaan, Connecticut. A former clinical social worker, Fetchet, in partnership with Eckert, created a group capable of addressing related issues of long-term mental health among the family members of 9/11 victims (Voices, undated). Given its community-based focus, Voices also organizes and provides informational support and bereavement groups as well as referrals for mental-health assessments and counselors. Its Web site includes a comprehensive monthly calendar of events sponsored by other 9/11 groups for both victims and their families (Voices, undated).

The Widows' and Victims' Family Association (WVFA), formed in early November 2001 (Steinhauer, 2001), represents those who lost a friend or relative serving as a firefighter on September 11. Having originally been created to insist that firefighters stay at Ground Zero to recover the remains of all victims, its focus has since expanded. Today, the group also seeks to build a September 11 archive, unite families through peer and informational networks, and support the fire department in appreciation for the assistance it has given to the families of firefighters who perished. To achieve these aims, the WVFA wants to construct a Tribute Education Center near the WTC site to memorialize the tragedy. This center would explain 9/11's historical significance and present personal profiles and accounts of individual victims, survivors, and families. Finally, in recognition of those firefighters from around the world who came to New York City in a show of support and solidarity, the WVFA has initiated the Firefighters Spirit Program. This program welcomes firefighters and their families from abroad to the city, where they receive tours of firehouses, training facilities, and Ground Zero.



Not only has WVFA successfully gained the media's attention; it has also encouraged unity among various family organizations, specifically to combine resources and form the Coalition of 9/11 Families. Since its creation, the WVFA has acted as the coalition's primary leader, publishing newsletters and compiling feedback from family surveys (WTCUFG, undated[a]).

WVFA officer Lee Ielpi has been especially active in pursuing the group's mission. A former firefighter himself, Ielpi lost his son Jonathan, a firefighter, on 9/11. Ielpi returned to the site every day until the recovery effort officially ended, 262 days following the attacks (Wetheridge, 2002). Two months after the tragedy, when the city of New York reduced the number of firefighters assisting with the 24-hour recovery effort, Ielpi expressed grave concern, attracting the attention of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen. After participating in a site evaluation with Von Essen, Ielpi managed to secure approval and have the number of firefighters on duty at Ground Zero raised to the original 75 persons per shift (Steinhauer, 2001). This accomplishment reflected precisely why the WVFA had been formed: to ensure the expeditious recovery of victims' remains.

Two groups with very different membership pools offer similar services of outreach and support. Having lost his older brother in the attacks, Anthony Gardner established the World Trade Center United Family Group (WTCUFG) in September 2001 to create a community of family members in living tribute to those who had died. The WTCUFG's primary objective is to provide peer support through special events, programs, and an online chat room. Available only to registered members, the chat room acts as an informal forum monitored by the organization's mental-health advisor, Lisa Kaplan. Membership is open to all victims' family members, survivors, and rescue workers; they receive information updates, event invitations, and a bimonthly newsletter via the Internet (WTCUFG, undated[a]).

Having lost 28 parishioners on 9/11, Saint Clare's Church of Staten Island began the World Trade Center Outreach Committee. Led by Denis McKeon, this committee, which seeks to help victims regardless of their religious affiliation, has expanded its efforts to serve the needs of almost 200 families living on Staten Island and in New Jersey (Gest, 2002a). Initially, the group coordinated assistance for meal deliveries, child care, and transportation. Later, volunteers started to contact the 221 organizations listed on the World Trade Center Relief Web site and relay pertinent information back to family members, whom they then helped complete necessary paperwork. From November 2001 through June 2002, the church also scheduled regular meetings that continue today on a biweekly basis (WTCUFG, undated[b]).

Although both the WTCUFG and Saint Clare's World Trade Center Outreach Committee belong to the Coalition of 9/11 Families and both provide support to victims, there are a few differences between the two organizations. First, the WTCUFG relies heavily on its Web site to maintain group cohesion and communication among its geographically widespread membership. By comparison, Saint Clare's exclusively local remit means that it can do without a Web site, relying on personal contact to operate on a more personal level. Second, Saint Clare's World Trade Center Outreach Committee is run and operated primarily by people who, in fact, were not directly affected by the attacks, in contrast to the WTCUFG, which was founded by a victim's family member. This distinction makes Saint Clare's World Trade

Center Outreach Committee unique among 9/11 groups in this paper: Neither its leadership nor its volunteers are victims or family members.

One Day's Pay was launched in 2002 to honor the victims of 9/11 by establishing the infamous date as a national day of voluntary service. Founder David Paine, president of PainePR in Irvine, California, created the organization to commemorate the life of fellow industry colleague Mark Bingham, a passenger onboard United Airlines flight 93, which crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania (One Day's Pay, undated; Weidlich, 2002). At a Washington press conference in August 2003, One Day's Pay announced its goal of involving 30 million to 50 million people in the national day of service by 2010 (One Day's Pay, undated). It also stated that more than 100 organizations had reportedly pledged to participate in charitable efforts that would take place during the 2003 observance (Haberman, 2003a). Due to increased media coverage, the number of hits on the group's Web site rose within a year from 1,500 to 60,000, with a total of 70,000 people having registered their pledges of service (Calabro, 2003).

Based in New York City, Tuesday's Children has made an 18-year commitment to assist every young child who lost a parent on 9/11. Founded by Chris Burke, whose brother died in the attacks, the program has registered more than 2,000 children. Tuesday's Children actively works to foster good relationships between families and staff to promote healthy, supportive dialogue and the formation of support networks. These networks then participate in group activities attended by crisis counselors and health-care professionals who offer participants comfort and assistance. Tuesday's Children also provides families in the New York area with tickets to sporting and cultural events in addition to sponsoring mentoring programs that include internships and apprenticeships for older children seeking guidance with careers and continuing education (Tuesday's Children, undated).

The victims' groups formed in response to the terrorist attacks on 9/11 are unique in both number and influence. Their relative sophistication is evident when comparing them to other victims' groups, including the trailblazing organizations that emerged from the tragic in-flight bombing of Pan Am flight 103 in December 1988. Nevertheless, the Pan Am 103 victims' groups were important predecessors to the 9/11 groups, as we describe in the next chapter.

## Pan Am 103: The Predecessor to 9/11

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The achievements of 9/11 victims' groups are due in part to the lessons their leaders learned from the victims' groups that emerged 15 years earlier in response to the Pan Am 103 bombing (Sheehy, 2003). The Pan Am groups were the first effectively organized terrorism victims' groups in the United States, and they essentially set the stage for those that would later form as a result of the 9/11 attacks. We begin this chapter by describing these groups, focusing on the four formed in the United States. (A fifth was formed in the UK.) At the end of the chapter, we compare the Pan Am groups to those that were formed after later attacks.

### Pan Am 103: A New Voice in the United States

On December 21, 1988, at 7:02 p.m. local time, a bomb containing less than a pound of Semtex-H<sup>1</sup> plastic explosive detonated in the baggage hold of Pan Am flight 103, en route from London to New York, while the aircraft was flying over Lockerbie, Scotland. With the deaths of all 259 passengers and crew on board (plus 11 people on the ground hit by the flaming debris) (Cohen and Cohen, 2001, pp. 1, 3), the bombing acquired the infamous distinction as the largest terrorist attack against the United States to date in terms of loss of life. Questions from the families of those killed surfaced quickly about how such a tragedy could have occurred and specifically how a bomb could even have gotten onto the plane. When answers to these and other security- and intelligence-related issues were not immediately forthcoming, shock and horror turned to anger and determination, as the Pan Am 103 victims' families and friends resolved to learn for themselves what had happened and, more to the point, how such future tragedies could be prevented. Thus the group Victims of Pan Am Flight 103 (VPAF 103) was born. It would, however, soon splinter into rival factions, as disagreements over objectives, goals, and the means through which to achieve them surfaced (Cohen and Cohen, 2001, pp. 78–79, 97, 99).

The sources of division among Pan Am 103 families eventually led to the establishment of four groups (a fifth represents victims living in the UK). The two main ones are VPAF 103 and Families of Pan Am 103/Lockerbie. VPAF 103, as the parent organization, not surprisingly has the largest membership of the Pan Am 103 groups, claiming to represent 160 fami-

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<sup>1</sup> Semtex® is a registered trademark of Explosia, a.s.

lies as of 1997. At the same time, Families of Pan Am 103 had 70 members. The remaining two groups, Justice for Pan Am 103 and Terrorism Watch: Pan Am 103, are minor offshoots of these two larger bodies, both having been founded in 1995 (“Lockerbie Crash,” 1997). The main explanation for this fractionalization is the often starkly different approaches of the missions advocated by the groups of Pan Am 103 victims. Despite the paucity of Pan Am 103 groups compared with 9/11 ones, the chasm separating the Pan Am organizations was often wider and less amenable to cooperation, much less resolution.

Among the most active in the search for answers was Albany, New York, lawyer Paul Hudson, who lost his 16-year-old daughter on the flight. While many victims’ families remained incapacitated by their grief, Hudson ignored warnings from Pan Am officials not to travel to the crash site and flew to Lockerbie just three days after the bombing. On January 18, 1989, in a speech before a group of parents whose children, all students at the University of Syracuse, had died while returning home from their respective study-abroad programs, he issued his first call for a concerted effort to learn how the tragedy had actually occurred (Cohen and Cohen, 2001, pp. 34–35). A month later, 80 family members met at a Teaneck, New Jersey, restaurant, and thus VPAF 103 was born. Hudson accepted the position as chair, and Bert Ammerman, a New Jersey high school principal who had lost his brother, that of political action committee chair (Cohen and Cohen, 2001, p. 69). The group began by demanding the immediate resignation of the U.S. Department of State’s counterterrorism coordinator, Ambassador L. Paul (Jerry) Bremer, who was accused of failing to notify U.S. airlines of a known terrorist threat immediately before the Pan Am 103 bombing (“Air Crash Victims’ Kin Organize,” 1989).

Initially, the members of VPAF 103 stood united, offering one another support while pressing the U.S. government for answers. By spring 1989, members championing the cause of airline security reform had already met with senators Daniel Moynihan (D-NY), Alfonse d’Amato (R-NY), and Bill Bradley (D-NJ) (McFadden, 1989; “Air Crash Victims’ Kin Organize,” 1989). Accordingly, by the time many of the relatives convened in Washington for a vigil on April 3, 1989 (103 days following the airline disaster), their cause and activities had already gained the attention necessary to ensure both media exposure and high-level political access. Over the next couple of days, they visited the offices of all 100 senators, lobbying not only for improved airline security, but also for the creation of an independent commission to investigate the bombing (Sharn, 1989). Five family members also met briefly with President George H. W. Bush, but their requests fell on seemingly deaf ears whether on Capitol Hill or at the White House (Cohen and Cohen, 2001, p. 74). Galvanized by government inaction, VPAF 103 became even more strident in expressing its demands—thus prompting the first disagreements and fissures (Gerson and Adler, 2001, p. 28).

Tensions exploded at a VPAF 103 meeting held in late April 1989. Angered by group criticism of his efforts to obtain political support, Ammerman and his followers stayed in the hotel bar, refusing to join Hudson and other members meeting in a nearby function room. Hudson was particularly incensed by this divisiveness, and, at another meeting held two months later, he and a handful of supporters—including outspoken Florida widow Victoria Cummock—founded Families of Pan Am 103/Lockerbie. Hudson was elected president of the new organization—a mere shadow of VPAF 103, with which most of the Pan Am families (Cohen and Cohen, 2001, pp. 72, 78–79, 97, 99).

Splits such as these appear inseparable from the formation of victims' groups. Following the attacks on 9/11, for example, an attempt was made by families tried to create a single group, which inevitably failed, as people with different visions could not agree. People's diverse personalities simply prevented them from working in full cooperation. The result was an organic process of people with various opinions and priorities establishing or gravitating to their own groups. The family members of Pan Am 103 victims came together as a single entity thrown together by tragedy, which resulted in the rise of high levels of tension. These families had no template from which to work or learn and thus accepted forced cooperation as the most logical next step to promote and achieve the aviation security changes to which they were committed.

The reasons behind the Pan Am 103 division fundamentally stemmed from the different tactics that Hudson and Ammerman pursued. Ammerman's critics accused him of getting "too cozy" with the state department and later taking advantage of his three-year term as president of VPAF 103, trying to silence those families that did not agree with his conciliatory tactics. Some family members, for instance, disagreed vehemently with this approach, arguing that the George H. W. Bush administration was intent on whitewashing Syria's and Iran's alleged roles in the bombing to ensure their quiescence, if not alliance, as the prospects of war with Iraq increased throughout the latter half of 1990. Among the most vocal proponents of this view were Dan and Susan Cohen, who had lost their daughter, Theodora. Ammerman and the majority of the group, however, chose to accept that responsibility for the in-flight bombing rested fully with the two Libyan intelligence agents indicted for the crime in 1991.<sup>2</sup> Families of Pan Am 103/Lockerbie, the rival group to VPAF 103 established by the Cohens, among others, has long supported the punitive, multibillion-dollar lawsuit brought against the government of Libya and considers itself less lenient than VPAF 103 in its search for answers to the Pan Am attack ("Lockerbie Crash," 1997).

Cummock and Hudson have each pursued independent avenues outside of the Families of Pan Am 103/Lockerbie organization to attract attention and support for their relentless campaign to improve airline security. In several ways, their efforts parallel those taken by 9/11 victims. Key figures, such as the four Jersey Girls, rose to become prominent media personalities and movement leaders much like Cummock and Hudson, who similarly tried to work through governmental channels to achieve their aims. Originally an active member of VPAF 103, Cummock decided to funnel her efforts into securing government accountability. As early as March 9, 1989, she traveled to Washington and testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Operations, then considering a revision of the state department's budget to deal with the bombing's repercussions. A staunch supporter of the Republican Party, Cummock also used her own political connections and those of friends to arrange a meeting between President George H. W. Bush, herself, and four other family members on April 3, 1989 (Gerson and Adler, 2001, pp. 37–39,

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<sup>2</sup> Susan and Dan Cohen lost their 20-year-old daughter Theodora, a University of Syracuse student, on board Pan Am 103. Originally members of VPAF 103 who left to join Families of Pan Am 103/Lockerbie upon its formation, the Cohens relinquished all membership ties to work independently. Using the media, they have widely disseminated their negative views and distrust of the U.S. government (Cohen and Cohen, 2001).

42). That same weekend, she succeeded in meeting with the senate minority and majority leaders, Bob Dole (R-KS) and George Mitchell (D-ME). Her efforts are credited with having played a role in convincing senators Dole and Ted Kennedy (D-MA) to support legislative action to ensure the implementation of Executive Order 12686. Signed by President Bush on August 4, 1989, the order created a seven-member investigative Aviation Security and Terrorism Commission. Family members of four Pan Am 103 victims—Ammerman, Cummock, Joan Dater, and Hudson—were the first witnesses to testify in a series of five public hearings before the commission, popularly referred to as the McLaughlin Commission, named after its chair and former Secretary of Labor, Ann McLaughlin (Gerson and Adler, 2001, pp. 58–61, 63, 67–68).

Both Pan Am groups' lobbying of Congress paid off with the passage of the bill introduced by Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) in response to the commission's recommendations. Although the bill's provisions focused on preventing explosives from being smuggled onto aircraft, it also mandated the creation of a directorate of intelligence and security within the U.S. Department of Transportation. Nonetheless, the legislation provoked renewed wrangling between the two victims' groups. While VPAF 103 endorsed the bill when it was introduced, Families of Pan Am Flight 103/Lockerbie considered it too weak and successfully pushed for the addition of more stringent security requirements (Gerson and Adler, 2001, pp. 93–94). In a number of respects, the Pan Am groups' involvement and interactions with the McLaughlin Commission can be seen as a precursor of sorts to the later 9/11 Commission.

In July 1996, Vice President Al Gore appointed Cummock to serve on his White House Aviation Safety and Security Commission. Gore selected Cummock to help the government develop counterterrorism measures in the wake of the then-unexplained explosion aboard TWA flight 800 earlier that same month (Roberts, 1997). Cummock herself also testified before the Gore Commission along with fellow commissioners Kathleen Flynn and George Williams (who, at the time, was serving as president of VPAF 103), both parents of Pan Am 103 victims (Office of the Vice President, 1996). A year later, however, Cummock filed suit in federal court against Gore and the Department of Transportation—despite the commission's recommendations to reduce the vulnerability of commercial airports and carriers. Even though an exhaustive investigation concluded that the TWA 800 crash was not the result of a terrorist attack, Cummock maintains that a bomb caused the explosion and that circumstances had therefore pressed the commission to impose tighter security procedures and standards than it was prepared to recommend. In her lawsuit, she claimed that the commission pressured her to abandon her efforts to strengthen aviation security on the grounds that it would impose unnecessary delays and costs on the airlines. She also alleges that the other commissioners reneged on their promise to publish her 42-page dissent in the official report. Cummock's frustration stemmed in part from knowing that airline companies contributed nearly \$500,000 to the Democratic Party after President Bill Clinton created the commission, a fact that she insists tainted the findings of the final report (Roberts, 1997).

As executive director of the Aviation Consumer Action Project (ACAP), Hudson has appeared before government commissions and subcommittees. A nonprofit organization founded by Ralph Nader in 1971, ACAP is a member of the FAA's Aviation Security Advisory Committee and advocates for travelers on issues involving international aviation. Accordingly,

Hudson has focused his efforts on promoting safety precautions designed to prevent terrorism on commercial aircraft (Hudson, 2001a). In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, he intensified these activities, pressing the U.S. government to adopt new emergency safety measures and harden aircraft against terrorist attacks (Hudson, 2001a).

The Pan Am families' class-action suit filed against Libya for its role in the bombing bears some similarity to the 9/11 victims' struggle to sue known supporters of terrorism. The case against Libya, specifically, sparked renewed internecine squabbling and disagreements among Pan Am families. These divisions intensified in summer 2003 as negotiations led the Libyan government to agree to make \$10 million payments to each of the victims' families. Payment, however, was made contingent on the U.S. government's lifting of all punitive sanctions on Libya. Although the vast majority of families accepted an initial \$4 million payment when the UN ended its 15-year enforcement of sanctions in September 2003, others remained distrustful of Libya's motivations, refusing to accept what they dismissed as "blood money" and castigating those families that had agreed to the settlement. Susan and Dan Cohen, for example, have outright refused the offer to accept any money and believe that the situation has turned many families "into Libyan agents," lobbying on behalf of murderers (Wald, 2004). September 11 families, unlike those for Pan Am 103, who were given no alternative to litigation, were offered reparations in the form of the VCF. It is important to realize, however, that, although the VCF stipulates that recipients cannot sue the airlines or the U.S. government, it does not prevent them from filing charges against foreign parties, which many have done.<sup>3</sup>

On April 23, 2004, President George W. Bush reduced economic sanctions against Libya in recognition of that country's positive step earlier that winter to forgo its weapons of mass destruction. This action also greatly benefited the U.S. oil industry, which gained access to Libya's rich reserves. Although it appeared to many that the agreement was rewarding Libya for past criminal behavior merely on the promise to act better in the future, those Pan Am families that supported the settlement argued that sanctions should be lifted as an incentive to produce behavioral changes in the Libyan government (Kessler, 2004).

Pan Am 103 family representatives came to Washington to meet with administration officials and congressional aides a week before the July 22, 2004, deadline stipulated by Libya for removing the final U.S.-imposed sanctions. Some 230 signed a letter to President Bush requesting that the sanctions be lifted (Wald, 2004). However, the agreement among most families concerning issues of compensation only superficially transcended group boundaries and disputes. Over the previous decade, for example, members from Families of Pan 103/Lockerbie assumed the more active role in demanding that the Clinton administration impose harsher fiscal penalties on Libya. Their proposals, which included an oil embargo to encourage Colonel Moammar Gadhafi's government to admit responsibility for the bombing, led to the reinforcement of sanctions on Libya in 1996 (Lardner, 1992; Kessler, 2004). Although the vast majority of Pan Am families now favor lifting these sanctions, members of VPAF 103 have been vocal in this pursuit, thereby gaining media attention. Glenn Johnson, Jr., for example, the group's current president, has maintained his position that, if the government intends to remove the sanctions, it should do so before the deadline set by Libya, so that the families

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<sup>3</sup> Lemack (2006a). Ultimately, 97 percent of those victims eligible to apply opted into the fund.

can receive at least the promised reparations (Wald, 2004). This observation reinforces VPAF 103's image as a conciliatory group, actively seeking to persuade the government to drop the sanctions.

### **Lessons Learned: 9/11 and the Advent of a New Era for Victims' Groups**

On the eve of the first anniversary of the Pan Am 103 bombing, an article in *USA Today* featuring VPAF 103 stated, "[T]he families' close ties and perseverance are unusual, if not unprecedented, among victims groups" (Hall and Sharn, 1989). A tragedy had brought a group of strangers together under unusual circumstances and forced them to unite in their search for answers and accountability. Despite the divisiveness and often bitter recrimination that came to mar the cooperative spirit on which the families once embarked, the impact of this first major terrorism victims' group was palpable more than a decade later. Another *USA Today* article published in 2003 observed,

[Pan Am] 103 transformed ordinary Americans into tenacious advocates and charted new territory in international law and diplomacy. It brought about improvements in airline security, helped sensitize a callous U.S. government and created the first institutions to deal with terrorism victims. (Slavin, 2003)

Pan Am 103 also provided a template, which inspired some 9/11 families to take action and form groups as had been done in the past, but with greater effectiveness. The four Jersey Girls cited Bob Monetti as one of their initial sources of inspiration. Monetti, whose son died on board Pan Am 103, met the women at a local bereavement group shortly after the 9/11 attacks. He stressed to the widows the importance of taking immediate action and not losing another minute. "You're not getting any answers," he reportedly told them. "It's time for a [major] rally" (Jacobs, 2002). Heeding Monetti's advice, the women began to mobilize a broad band of supporters and feel their way around official Washington, successfully learning its ins and outs and how to achieve the greatest impact and influence possible. Beverly Eckert also views Monetti, "who early on raised the issue as to why there was no commission investigating 9/11, as being an instigator for 9/11 families to push for a commission" (Eckert, 2006).

Taking inspiration from the Pan Am groups and their leaders, the 9/11 victims' groups reached a level of influence, stature, and authority that was unprecedented. There are several reasons for their greater success. The most obvious one is that 10 times more people lost their lives on 9/11 than on board Pan Am 103, leaving behind far more victims to form groups. The horrific death toll thus worked in the victims' favor and, although the government postponed both the formation of an independent commission and, later, the adoption of its recommendations, the large number of victims eventually made it impossible to avoid taking action or ignore the surviving spouses, significant others, children, and parents of the deceased.

Another factor in the greater success of the 9/11 victims' groups is that information technology in 2001 was so much more advanced than it was in the late 1980s. Some of the Pan Am groups were formed before the widespread public use of the Internet. Others might have taken



advantage of the new technology but were either reluctant or unable to exploit its potential. Failing to create Web sites as the technology became more readily available, these groups lost the opportunity to build more effective means of communication both internally and in terms of effective outreach. Only VPAF 103 has any kind of Internet presence—a link on the University of Syracuse’s homepage, a simple contrast to the advanced Web sites later maintained by 9/11 groups such as 9/11 FSA.

Newsletters accessed through 9/11 FSA’s Web site enable members and concerned citizens to help achieve the group’s goals, including signing and mailing letters addressed to government officials. Some of the organization’s efforts have been met with unusual success. In Utah, for example, former state Representative Matt Throckmorton challenged incumbent U.S. congressional representative and “open-border supporter” (a label imposed by 9/11 FSA, referring to his not supporting policy changes strengthening U.S. borders) Chris Cannon for the Republican nomination. In response, 9/11 FSA members sent letters to all 1,093 convention delegates describing Cannon’s support for open border policies, and, on May 8, 2004, Throckmorton received enough votes to run against Cannon in a primary (9/11 FSA, undated). In sum, the Internet allowed group leaders to quickly mobilize members, disseminate relevant information, and organize a collective grassroots movement, regardless of their physical distance.

Indeed, many of the 9/11 group Web sites regularly post updated newsletters, sponsor chat rooms, and include schedules of regional and local events. The result has been an astonishingly diverse and vast membership. Unlike Pan Am 103 groups, the 9/11 organizations have been able to attract a wide base of members, including concerned citizens from around the world who have no personal connection to the attacks. The Internet has also facilitated membership across groups and has allowed those with even the seemingly obscurest missions to gain the support they need to continue.

The evolution of 24-hour news networks also played to the advantage of 9/11 groups. These networks, eager to fill airtime, actively sought the families of victims to capture their stories, which provided the latter with the opportunity to address a national audience with regard to their groups’ agendas, struggles, and progress.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, the lessons learned from past victims’ groups and, in particular, those affiliated with Pan Am 103, let 9/11 organization founders and leaders study these other groups’ past experiences and avoid the same mistakes and emulate what hitherto had proven successful.

## Oklahoma City: Victim Support Services

On the morning of April 19, 1995, at 9:02 a.m. local time, a bomb exploded in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The homemade explosive, which weighed nearly 5,000 pounds, was concocted from a mixture of ammonium nitrate fer-

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<sup>4</sup> Lemack (2006a). This is not to say, however, that all 9/11 family members were pleased with the media’s role. Initially, some people expressed frustration with the lack of media coverage. The Jersey Girls, for example, took more than a year to build a press list, collecting the names of reporters during their frequent trips to Washington (Breitweiser, 2006). Breitweiser’s husband died in the attacks on the WTC. She is an original member of September 11th Advocates and the FSC, through the latter of which she was involved during the 9/11 Commission hearings.

tilizer and diesel fuel and packed into the back of a Ryder® rental van. By August of that same year, Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, both U.S. Army veterans who housed an extreme animosity toward the government, were indicted for the bombing that ultimately took the lives of 168 people and injured 853 others (Kifner, 1995; Call and Phefferbaum, 1999). The worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil prior to September 11, 2001, both in number of victims and level of destruction, the government and many unaffected third parties responded quickly to provide victims and their families with necessary support services. In other words, victims' groups did not arrange for the provision of these services, in that the victims themselves had no actual role in their organization and coordination. Furthermore, those traditional victims' groups that did form bear little resemblance to those previously established by Pan Am 103 families, the latter of which pursued more pronounced routes of activism.

Information on Oklahoma City victims' groups is difficult to locate, suggesting that very few were formed or that the impact of those that do exist is limited at best. This can be explained by the arrest, trial, and conviction of Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols. Their sentencings eliminated the primary source of motivation similar to what drove both the formation of the Pan Am 103 and 9/11 victims' groups and their demand for answers, increased security, and government accountability. Other possible reasons include that the perpetrators of the Oklahoma City bombing were U.S., not foreign, citizens, as in the other two attacks, the latter of which may have spawned more activism. Furthermore, 9/11 demonstrated fundamental flaws in systems on which people rely daily, including but not limited to airline safety and the structural soundness of buildings (Lemack, 2006a). With far less ambitious missions, the Oklahoma City groups identified in this paper focused on providing victims and others with the emotional support they needed immediately following the bombing and later during the trials of McVeigh and Nichols.

The result of circumstance, the victims and families of Oklahoma City had a limited impact on public policy compared with the other two sets of terrorist victims' groups in the United States. The extent of their influence is limited to the initiation of two pieces of legislation passed by Congress to guarantee these and future victims the right to participate in the offenders' trials. The first of these statutes requires the court to make closed-circuit televising of trial proceedings available to victims in the event that a trial is moved out of state more than 350 miles from its original site. The second, the Victims' Rights Clarification Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-6), gave the victims of the Oklahoma City bombing the right to both watch the trial and testify at the sentencing. (Initially, the U.S. district judge forbade those persons seeking to participate from viewing the proceedings.) (DOJ, 2000, p. 14.) These two pieces of legislation are narrower in scope than those passed in response to the efforts of the Pan Am 103 and 9/11 groups that had a greater, more widely felt effect, particularly with respect to increasing national security.

The three Oklahoma City victims' groups identified were established with the intention of providing support to survivors and families experiencing difficulty in the years following the bombing, especially during the trials of McVeigh and Nichols. Having lost her daughter, Frankie Ann Merrell, in the attack, Marsha Kight founded Families and Survivors United. In so doing, Kight sought not only to coordinate information and help other victims, but also to advocate on their behalf with respect to their right to participate in the trial proceedings

(Horne, 2001). Kight, who attended every day of the trials, was reportedly prohibited from testifying by government prosecutors concerned by her beliefs in opposition to capital punishment. Disappointed with the apparent failure of the Victims' Rights Clarification Act (P.L. 105-6), she testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary to voice her concerns and those of other victims with regard to their involvement in the trials. She has since moved to Washington, D.C., where she works for the National Organization for Victim Assistance (Kight, 1999; Horne, 2001).

The final two victims' groups similarly reach out to provide their members with the support they need. Paul Heath survived the bombing and created the Oklahoma City Murrah Building Survivors Association. A former psychologist with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Heath had both the professional and personal experience that made him a good candidate to start a support group to help those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. In addition, Heath is largely responsible for the arrangement and provision of the closed-circuit television transmission of McVeigh's execution (Foxhall, 2001). Outside of his own organization, he was also involved with the design selection of the Oklahoma City National Memorial and serves on the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism's (MIPT's) outreach committee (Stowers, 2000). MIPT was established as a research institute in 2000 with the goal of "preventing terrorism or mitigating its effects" (MIPT, undated). On its creation, MIPT started an outreach committee for victims that is currently led by bombing survivor Dorothy (Dot) Hill. This group conducts monthly meetings in addition to providing assistance to other victims of terrorism, which has involved members making trips to Israel as well as New York City following the 9/11 attacks (Jenkins, 2005).

These three victims' groups share very few similarities with others we have described in this paper. The remaining Oklahoma City groups are even less similar, in that they were not created by victims or their families but rather by third parties having no direct connection to the bombing. Although this response is not rare, as seen in the efforts of organizations such as the American Red Cross and those assisting victims in Israel described in the next chapter, it is unusual in the United States for such groups to be nearly as prominent as—if not more prominent than—traditional victims' groups. The Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, for example, founded Project Heartland. In operation for five years, Project Heartland worked to address the needs of victims facing a variety of mental-health disorders. Likewise, the Colorado Oklahoma Resource Council (CORC) was established on March 14, 1996, to collect donations; coordinate medical and mental-health assistance; and provide food, lodging, and transportation to victims staying in Denver for the trial proceedings (DOJ, 2000, pp. x, 14, 15).

The functions served by all of the Oklahoma City groups were critical components in the recovery process of survivors and families. Because of the arrest and trial of McVeigh and Nichols, these groups could concentrate solely on providing emotional support to the victims. This is in contrast to the families of Pan Am 103, for example, that pressured the U.S. government to identify and punish those responsible for the bombing of the plane. As a result, the experience of the Oklahoma groups contributed less to 9/11 policy reform-oriented groups than did the Pan Am 103 groups.



## An International Comparison: Israel, Northern Ireland, and Terrorist Spectaculars

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In looking for precedents for the 9/11 victims' groups, we examined groups that have formed outside the United States. Most of these are in Israel and Northern Ireland, two countries plagued by violence and conflict. We found that few of these groups originated in response to a specific terrorist attack.<sup>1</sup> Their missions—to seek justice and support those affected by local terrorist violence—are broad in their orientation and serve a dynamic constituency.<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere in the world, victims' groups have been created in response to major terrorist attacks, such as the train bombings in Madrid in March 2004. These organizations bear more similarity to U.S. groups: The severity of physical destruction and loss of life caused by spectacular attacks has enabled some of these groups to draw great attention to their cause. Only one, however—the Beslan Mothers' Committee, formed in reaction to the catastrophic government response to the hostage crisis at the Beslan school in Russia in September 2004—has attained a level of influence comparable to some policy reform-oriented 9/11 groups.<sup>3</sup>

### Israel and Northern Ireland

The characteristics of the victims' groups in Israel and Northern Ireland are quite different from those located within the United States. Founded in 1986, the Terror Victims Association is Israel's oldest victim-support group (Abramowitz, 2002). The years following its establishment marked the proliferation of similar organizations throughout both countries. The main difference between these groups and the 9/11 and Pan Am groups in the United States is that none of the Israeli groups we have identified provides assistance to victims associated with a specific attack. Although a couple of the Israeli organizations to be discussed were founded in response to a particular terrorist incident, they offer nonexclusive services of support. Furthermore, groups in Israel and Northern Ireland, which, in fact, predate their U.S. counterparts,

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<sup>1</sup> One exception to this generality should be noted. The Koby Mandell Foundation was established in Israel during summer 2002 by Koby's parents following his murder by Palestinian terrorists (Koby Mandell Foundation, undated; Lazaro, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Information about such missions was gathered from a number of Web sites affiliated with groups identified in both Northern Ireland and Israel.

<sup>3</sup> The generalities stated in this chapter do not apply to UK Families Flight 103, the British counterpart to the U.S. Pan Am 103 groups.

have been more steadily growing in number—irrespective of terrorist spectaculars—compared to the periodic emergence of those in the United States and elsewhere in the world. A possible explanation for the discrepancies in growth patterns and other points of difference is the rarity with which direct terrorist attacks have taken place in the United States, for example, in contrast to Northern Ireland and Israel, where they occur (or, at least in the past, have occurred) more regularly. Thus, while many variables come into effect to complicate an exact comparison between U.S. and foreign groups, analyzing the two sets is still a useful method to determine their key similarities, differences, and possible roles in the future.

Due to the sheer level of death and destruction caused by single terrorist incidents such as Pan Am 103 and the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the U.S. victims' groups have been more influential on policy and legislation than have those in Israel and Northern Ireland. The relative frequency with which attacks occur in these latter two countries has resulted in the formation of a plethora of groups. The missions of the majority of foreign groups are typically community oriented and altruistic rather than focused on policy or punitive initiatives. Those few overseas groups that have sought more activist goals have had limited success. The most obvious explanation is that the combination of much smaller, individual incidents versus one or two precedent-setting attacks coupled with less well-crafted objectives has restricted the ability of Israel's and Northern Ireland's victims' groups to attract large amounts of financial assistance or effectively enlist major political figures to achieve their basic goals.

Also noteworthy is the rarity with which the survivors of attacks and victims' families form groups in Israel. Here, victims' groups are typically founded by a third party, as is also true of those associated with the bombing in Oklahoma City. These founders bear no direct connection to an attack and help victims by facilitating the growth of groups that provide emotional, physical, and financial support services.

The Koby Mandell Foundation bears a slight resemblance to the majority of U.S. victims' groups with respect to it having been founded by the family of a young terrorism victim. On May 8, 2001, two Palestinian terrorists stoned 13-year-old Koby to death in a cave where he had been playing near his home in Tekoa, a Jewish settlement in the West Bank. The day following Koby's funeral, his parents, Rabbi Seth and Sherri Mandell, originally from a Maryland suburb outside Washington, D.C., decided to channel their grief into positive action by establishing a foundation in their son's honor. The foundation's purpose would be to assist other families similarly suffering from the repercussions of terrorist attacks that claimed the life of a loved one (Koby Mandell Foundation, undated; Mason, 2001). The foundation, which began offering counseling and emotional support retreats for mothers during the summer of 2002, has since expanded to help men, children, and young adults affected by terrorism (Lazaroff, 2002).

The Mandells found that, unlike the United States, Israel surprisingly lacked a systematic response to assist the victims of tragic events. Having immigrated to Israel in 1996 from Silver Spring, Maryland, the Mandells used their influential, Washington-area connections to solicit sufficient donations from the U.S. Jewish community and others to provide a wide range of support programs to victims' friends and families free of charge (Prusher, 2002). During the foundation's Mother's Retreats, professional grief counselors provide the counseling support these bereaved women need to continue their lives and heal their families. Finally, Camp Koby

is an example of another support activity that provides specially trained counselors and professional therapists to help children who often feel profoundly alone and abandoned after the loss of a parent or sibling to a terrorist attack. The camp, which is divided into two sections for youth ages 9 to 13 and 14 to 17, also organizes follow-on reunions throughout the year (Koby Mandell Foundation, undated).

In addition to their extensive efforts to help others affected by terrorism, the Mandells have also devoted their energies to a variety of activities outside the foundation's purview. Already a published author before her son's death, Sherri Mandell has written several articles for Israeli newspapers about the consequences of Palestinian terrorism against Jews and Israelis (Mandell, 2002b). The Mandells have also rallied support for the Koby Mandell Act, proposed in Congress, after learning of the U.S. Department of State's reluctance to provide rewards for information leading to the capture of Palestinian terrorists accused of killing U.S. citizens. In every other country except, apparently, Israel, the state department provides rewards in the event that an American is murdered in an act of terrorism. Passage of this bill would thus impose the same recompense for Americans killed in Israel by Palestinian terrorists (Mandell, 2002a).

On a smaller scale, the dual role of the Koby Mandell Foundation both to provide support and to push for legislative change mirrors the agendas of several 9/11 organizations. The Terror Victims Association, Israel's oldest victims' group, founded in 1986, has similarly attempted to affect government policy by petitioning against the release of convicted terrorists from Israeli prisons (Abramowitz, 2002). Social workers train association members to visit the families of terrorist victims and provide counseling and support as well as to organize and oversee social gatherings and memorial services and maintain a telephone hotline. The association's orientation is thus two-fold, focusing on a key political issue while providing families with the necessary emotional support and counseling they may require.

Among numerous scheduled events, the organization holds yearly trips for children during Hanukkah vacation. These trips are often daylong excursions for youth ages 6 to 12 and three days for those ages 12 to 18 and typically revolve around some outdoor adventure theme. To build confidence and encourage the formation of lasting bonds, the association also organizes summer camps and meetings at which alumni of past programs gather to renew acquaintances. Seeking to add a little cheer to holidays and festivals, volunteers also distribute gifts made possible by donations from private donors both in Israel and abroad (Abramowitz, 2002).

The organization redoubled its efforts to prevent the release of convicted Palestinian terrorists following the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, which contained specific provisions governing prisoner release. Although the association met little success in this respect, it has been able to attract media attention, especially as a result of its efforts to have the late Yasser Arafat tried in Brussels for war crimes under Belgian law (Jacobson, 2001). On November 27, 2001, a team of volunteer attorneys representing 30 Israeli association members, filed a complaint accusing the Palestinian leader of partaking in crimes against humanity since 1974 ("Israelis File Complaint Against Arafat in Belgium," 2001). The case never proceeded, however, since, around that time, another Belgian court dismissed similar charges brought against Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for his alleged involvement in the 1982 massacre of Palestinians at the Sabra and Shatlia refugee camps in Lebanon. Despite this ruling, which gave

diplomatic immunity to political leaders, the association continued to push its suit against Arafat, insisting that the judge's decision did not apply to the Palestinian Authority (Penketh, 2002). The association also offers monetary rewards for information leading to the capture of escaped terrorists ("Victims Group Offers Reward for Leads in Bombing," 1998).

The Global Justice Group (GJG) is another organization actively prosecuting persons and organizations involved in acts of terrorism. Specifically, GJG was established in Chicago, Illinois, in April 2003 to provide the public and government with operational research in historically neglected areas. These areas include uncovering networks, with a particular emphasis on those channeling funds that support and spread terrorism, in addition to filling in the gap of researchers familiar with the Arabic language, religion, and culture (GJG, undated).

Much of GJG's research is outsourced to the Mann and Mairone Group, a subset of the Chicago law firm bearing the same name formed in 1987 that has since expanded its practice to include counterterrorism and human rights law. In accordance with this growth, Mann and Mairone created the Counterterrorism Research Group (CRG) in 2002, which conducts research on international money laundering and terrorist financing through its partnership with GJG. Although GJG is not an Israeli organization in terms of its geographic location, the victims it has represented are largely those who have suffered as a result of violence perpetrated by Palestinian terrorists. On December 21, 2004, Mann and Mairone filed a complaint in the Eastern District of New York against the Arab Bank, PLC, on behalf of more than 500 survivors and family members killed by acts of terrorism in Israel. The Arab Bank is headquartered in Amman, Jordan, and is accused of having collected, transmitted, and disbursed funds directly to terrorist organizations (Mann and Mairone, undated).

The Terror Victims Association and GJG are not the only organizations to actively pursue their missions through the court system. In accordance with German law, which permits the survivors of crimes or their immediate families to apply to participate in the trials of their alleged perpetrators, FOS11 leader Stephen Push served as a coplaintiff in the Hamburg trial of Mounir Motassadeq. Motassadeq, who acted as a financier for the al Qaeda cell in Hamburg, faced charges of membership in a terrorist organization and more than 3,000 counts of accessory to murder. As a coplaintiff, Push and his German legal counsel had the same status as the prosecution team, thereby enabling them to review all evidence and to call and question witnesses (Finn, 2002). Indeed, 20 other family members received coplaintiff status (Connolly, 2003). Motassadeq was sentenced to the maximum of 15 years imprisonment in 2003 but was released in April 2004 because of the U.S. government's refusal to introduce sensitive intelligence information to the court (Butler, 2003; Fleishman, 2004). As the retrial, which began in August 2004, nears an end, despite the efforts of the U.S. families, Motassadeq and second suspect Abdelghani Mzoudi (both of Moroccan origin) may still be acquitted (Whitlock, 2004).

The only Israeli organization in this study to forgo offering support to victims to concentrate solely on activist routes for change is Pups for Peace, which has a carefully designed and obtainable initiative explicit in its scope. Similar to the 9/11 group One Day's Pay, Pups for Peace was founded by a nonvictim in response to a specific incident. In the aftermath of the March 2002 terrorist bombing of a Passover seder at the Park Hotel in Netanya, Israel, Glenn Yago, an economist at the Milken Institute think tank in Santa Monica, California, conceived



of a preventive program training explosive-detection dogs. He contacted Mike Herstik, an experienced dog trainer and avid supporter of Israel. Together, these men solicited the funding to begin a Los Angeles school for the purpose of training both dogs and Israeli handlers to prevent suicide attacks (Tugend, 2002).

To decrease the number of future bombings, Pups for Peace launched its first two-month session in fall 2002, training 60 dogs and 20 handlers at the Los Angeles facility. These dogs are trained to detect explosives and alert their handlers, who will then take appropriate action (Radler, 2002). In May 2003, the first civilian pilot program at a Netanya bus station began with encouraging results. Pups for Peace hopes to be able to expand this program to enhance the safety of public transportation throughout Israel (Pups for Peace, undated). In 2002, organizers announced their goal to put approximately 300 dogs a year through the program for three years at an estimated cost of \$2.7 million (Pups for Peace, undated). (The cost of training an individual dog and trainer runs upward of \$10,000 [Tugend, 2002].)

The three remaining Israeli organizations focus on lending direct support to terrorist victims. Founded in 2000, OneFamily began with the single generous donation of a young girl and her family. Jerusalem resident Michal Belzberg decided to cancel plans for her bat mitzvah celebration and contribute the funds to assist those in need. Her father, Marc Belzberg, now serves as the organization's chair. Since its creation, OneFamily has grown to become Israel's largest volunteer-staffed nonprofit organization, having helped thousands of victims through the distribution of more than \$10 million in aid (OneFamily Fund, undated).

Following an attack, the organization helps families put their lives back together through tasks such as subsidizing the costs of rent, food, and health care and providing legal advice and job-placement services. As part of its mission to extend emotional support and provide counseling, volunteers who visit hospitals and homes also conduct local meetings with victims, which convene on a regular basis. The organization additionally sponsors three-day workshops that present small groups of people with the opportunity to gather in an isolated location and escape from the stress of their usual routines, while the OneFamily youth division manages interactivity therapy sessions and quarterly camps (OneFamily Fund, undated). Perhaps the most unusual feature of OneFamily, however, is its sponsorship of overseas missions that enables victims to promote terrorism awareness while raising funds and other international support for the organization's agenda. As a result of these efforts and those of the organization's directors and staff, people from around the world have contributed to a number of its aid programs (OneFamily Fund, undated).

In December 2002, OneFamily commissioned New Wave Research to conduct a study, the findings of which reflect OneFamily's success in assisting those in need. New Wave Research compared the services that OneFamily offers to those of similar organizations, by contacting all 667 Israeli families directly impacted by terrorism as of December 15, 2002, thereby eliminating research bias. Of the 293 families to return the survey, 79 percent had either received or were receiving help from OneFamily, which received the highest satisfaction ratings. These families considered OneFamily the organization most capable of fostering caring and meaningful relationships (OneFamily Fund, undated).

The Natal organization, located in Tel Aviv, was founded in 1988. It seeks to bring the subject of psychological trauma to the forefront of public awareness by addressing the needs

of people impacted by the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Currently, Israel's social security program covers only trauma therapy for terrorism victims and their immediate families, and such Defense Ministry services are exclusively for military personnel. Thus, Natal works to meet the needs of those individuals affected by terrorism who do not fit into either of these categories (Cohn, 2003; Green, 2001).

Natal's services are available to any Israeli citizen regardless of his or her religion. The organization extends its outreach assistance to victims' families, populations living in high-risk or insecure locations, and people afflicted by emotional stress resulting from the conflict. It also provides counseling and other help to mental-health, rescue, and emergency service professionals. A recipient of funding from both the Israel Emergency Campaign of the United Jewish Communities and the North American Jewish Federations, Natal is able to provide victims with therapy at a subsidized cost (United Jewish Communities, undated). To better serve its clientele, Natal also runs a hotline and outpatient treatment center staffed by professionals (Cohn, 2003).

Finally, in response to the second intifada and the resultant increase in terrorist activity since September 2000, the Jewish Agency, in global cooperation with Jewish Federations and other donors, has created the Fund for the Victims of Terror and Their Families. In so doing, the Jewish Agency recognized the limitations faced by both Israeli government financial assistance programs and voluntary organizations, such as OneFamily and Natal, that lack the government and professional contacts to provide victims with needed resources. To bridge this gap, the Jewish Agency established the fund to offer families immediate monetary aid and supplemental income, designed to help meet the costs of counseling, medical services, hospital transportation, and home care (Jewish Agency for Israel, undated).

Three groups in Northern Ireland stand noticeably apart from others there as most prominent, two of which represent Unionist (loyalist or Protestant) interests and the other those of Republicans (nationalist or Catholic). Families Acting for Innocent Relatives (FAIR) was founded in 1998 as a nonsectarian, nonpolitical organization. It is based in South Armagh County bordering the Republic of Ireland, an especially violent area during the conflict. Despite its commitment to address the needs and interests of all of Northern Ireland's terrorism victims (Macleod, 1998; FAIR, undated), FAIR represents primarily the relatives of Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) officers and Ulster Defense Regiment (UDR) soldiers killed by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) (Moriarty, 1998). By exposing the terrorists who have plagued Northern Ireland, the group hopes to uncover the truth behind the murders of innocent Protestants and Roman Catholics as a step toward achieving lasting peace in the embattled province. It also seeks to attract the attention of the media and government, both of which the group claims have historically focused on Republican needs and concerns (FAIR, undated). Feeling ignored by governments in both Dublin and London, the organization has staged a number of protests and meetings to express its unease with everything from the governments' seeming disinterest in securing border safety to the gradual release of IRA terrorists from prison ("Group Concerned About Border," 1998; Dee, 2000).

Leveraging the support of members of Parliament Jeffrey Donaldson and Nigel Dodds, FAIR has organized a number of prominent media and parliamentary opportunities. In spring 2002, members made statements before Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrats, voic-

ing their outspoken opposition to the granting of blanket amnesty to terrorists who had yet to be tried (Dempster, 2002). In March 2004, FAIR began to urge Prime Minister Tony Blair to demand that Colonel Moammar Gadhafi compensate the victims of IRA violence for the explosives and arms the Libyan government supplied to the IRA during the 1980s. Members of FAIR, as the families of terrorism victims, compare their situation to that of the Lockerbie families, which eventually received payment from the Libyan government (Henderson, 2004). Accusing Prime Minister Blair of ignoring victims' needs, the organization arranged for a meeting with an American who had worked for 20 years in Libya's oil industry. Acting as Gadhafi's intermediary, the anonymous American agreed to discuss the group members' requests for financial compensation with Libyan officials (Anderson, 2004).

On the international front, members of FAIR began lobbying efforts in the United States as early as 1999. Group leader William Fraser successfully gained the attention of U.S. politicians during several trips (Walker, 1999). In later meetings with 9/11 victims and then-head of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Tom Ridge, members sought to spread the truth about sectarian violence in Northern Ireland (Dempster, 2004).

Established in October 1998, Families Achieving Change Together (FACT) is another support group in Northern Ireland for the innocent victims of terrorism and their families (FACT, undated). Although the Web site makes no reference to supporting either side of the conflict, cofounder Janet Hunter lost her 20-year-old brother, Joseph McIlwaine, a UDR soldier, to IRA violence in June 1987 ("Support Group to Change Its Name," 2003). Janet, along with her husband, David, have run the Lisburn-based victims' group to help similarly bereft individuals. The group's activities have answered the need of many people in Northern Ireland who felt lost and alone in their struggles prior to having sought assistance through FACT's support network (Walsh, 2002). Originally Families Against Crime by Terrorists, FACT changed its name in fall 2003, a change that Janet Hunter considers a positive reflection of the group's first few years of work ("Support Group to Change Its Name," 2003). To reach out to those feeling isolated or ignored by society, the government, or other agencies, the organization offers free support through social events, regularly scheduled meetings, a drop-in support center, and therapy sessions (FACT, undated).

In 1991, the families of 40 people killed by security forces in Northern Ireland came together and formed Relatives for Justice (RFJ) (Bowcott, 1991). A Belfast-based organization, RFJ provides support services throughout the province to help those directly affected by police, army, and loyalist paramilitary violence (RFJ, undated; Bowcott, 1991). Acting in this capacity, the organization coordinates group and individual counseling sessions. Through all of these efforts, RFJ hopes to give victims and their families the tools and strength needed to contribute to building a new society, centered on fundamental human rights and equality (RFJ, undated).

Through its mission to assign accountability to the government and security forces for the violence inflicted on innocent Catholics, RFJ also promotes welfare and legal advocacy. Statistics cited by the group report that 15,000 Irish Republicans have gone to prison as a result of the conflict, compared with only four members of the British Army and no one from the RUC (RFJ, undated). In response to this discrepancy, RFJ has pushed for an investigation into allegations of collusion between British security forces and those of Northern Ireland, to

be conducted by a third country if necessary (Breen, 1993). In pursuit of this goal, more than 40 members met with the then-president of the Irish Republic, Mary Robinson, during winter 1995, to discuss the group's peace-process agenda, a meeting that took three years to secure ("President to Meet Victims of NI Conflict," 1995). RFJ also hosted a "State Violence–State Truth" conference, among other activities, including peace protests and calls to ban the police and army's use of plastic bullets and UN intervention in the Irish government's investigations of sectarian murders (Murphy, 1999; Breen, 1993; Unsworth, 2001; Moriarty, 2001).

The one outlier among this sampling of international groups is UK Families Flight 103. Formed in response to the bombing of Pan Am 103 and greatly influenced by the initial creation of similar groups in the United States, this group does not conform to the patterns of those in Israel and Northern Ireland. Having lost his 23-year-old daughter on board the aircraft, organization leader Jim Swire acts as a spokesperson for the 30-member organization of families, using unconventional tactics to attract attention to the group's mission. These families believe that Iran and Syria are responsible for the bombing, not Libya. The U.S. government, they argue, ruled out these two countries and focused on Libya to ease diplomatic relations during the 1991 Gulf War (in this respect, the group's position is similar to that of a few U.S. families, including the Cohens). In the past, Swire has worked directly with Colonel Moammar Gadhafi's government to promote the fair trial of the two Libyan intelligence agents indicted for the crime, one of whom was acquitted and the other convicted for the Pan Am 103 bombing ("Jim Swire," undated).

In one of his more controversial moves, Swire successfully checked a fake bomb on board a transatlantic British Airways flight in fall 1990. Modeled to replicate the bomb on board Pan Am 103, Swire constructed the dummy using a Toshiba® cassette recorder. The replica went undetected despite the examination of his suitcase by security at Heathrow airport. While politicians and family members such as Bert Ammerman readily expressed their disapproval, other Pan Am 103 families commended the powerful statement made by Swire's actions. Susan and Dan Cohen, who similarly doubted the sole responsibility of Libya for the attack, praised Swire for exposing the continuance of blatant failures in airline security following the Pan Am attack (UK Parliament, 1990; Cohen and Cohen, 2001, p. 210).

In 1991, Swire took his first trip to Libya to visit Colonel Gadhafi in hopes of striking a compromise under which the two men indicted for the crime could be tried in an international court ("Gaddafi 'Could Give Up Bombers,'" 1991). UK Families Flight 103 sought to push the U.S. and British governments to allow for a trial in a neutral country, a plan first devised by Edinburgh University Professor Robert Black (McKillop, 1996). In 1994, Gadhafi approved Black's plan, and Swire immediately began to petition for its acceptance (McNeil, 1998). Four years later, the Clinton administration agreed to a trial in the Netherlands at the Hague's International Court of Justice. This angered many U.S. Pan Am 103 families, who felt that, by so doing, the U.S. and British governments were compromising with Libya. The nine-month trial ended on January 31, 2001, with the conviction of Abdelbaset al Megrahi and the not-guilty verdict delivered to the accused Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah, both unanimous (Cohen and Cohen, 2001, pp. 232, 240, 242, 296, 297, 301). Convinced of Libya's innocence, group members of UK Families Flight 103 did not hesitate to publicly express their dismay with the guilty verdict delivered to Megrahi (Reid, 2001).

In sum, policy-oriented victims' groups in Israel and Northern Ireland have had fewer accomplishments than have those for 9/11 especially and for Pan Am 103. There are various explanations for this discrepancy, many of which have already been touched on and are very similar to those differentiating the sets of 9/11 and Pan Am 103 groups. First is the sheer catastrophic size of the 9/11 attacks, which attracted far more attention and thus were complicit in soliciting widespread support from both the U.S. public and government officials. The smaller scale of attacks abroad and the frequency with which they occur has meant that these groups have neither the same media presence nor political clout, because they directly affect a proportionately smaller percentage of the population. Furthermore, international groups have not been able to gain substantial membership interest among concerned citizens who do not have any connection to a particular terrorist incident or tragedy. In addition, Web sites maintained by the overseas groups are consistently inferior to those of 9/11 groups (although a few mirror their sophistication), despite their being considerably more advanced than that of VPAF 103.

### International Terrorist Spectaculars

Throughout the world, there are groups outside Israel and Northern Ireland that bear some similarity to the composition and missions of those in the United States. These groups tend to be the products of major attacks that traumatically rattled their respective countries. Such attacks, also known as *spectaculars*, are consequently associated with high levels of death and destruction. It is likeliest, for these reasons, that all of the following groups, unlike those in Israel and Northern Ireland, were formed by and are primarily composed of victims' family members.

Of all the international groups examined in this paper, the Beslan Mothers' Committee has attained a level of influence most comparable to that of the more prominent Pan Am 103 and 9/11 organizations. The grassroots organizational structure of this Russian group paired with the grief driving its members, who lost children in the attack on the school, have culminated in a powerful motivational force behind these women. The most influential overseas group analyzed, the Beslan Mothers' Committee successfully pushed for the recent resignation of the president of North Ossetia, whom they believed inappropriately handled the hostage crisis at the Beslan school (Arnold, 2005).

The Beslan Mothers' Committee was formed immediately following the Beslan school seizure of September 1, 2004, that ended two days later with the deaths of some 330 adults and children out of the 1,200 total held hostage. The group originally began as a small gathering of mothers seeking consolation following the loss of their children. From there, the committee grew to combine efforts in grassroots political organization with advocacy and victim support (Eckel, 2005). Group chair Susanna Dudieva, who lost her 13-year-old son in the attack, has orchestrated meetings, rallies, and protests in an effort to demand government accountability for the crisis' disastrous end (Tskhurbayev, 2005; Talbi, 2005). In December 2004 and January 2005, women from the group blocked a main highway, demonstrating in support of the resignation of North Ossetian president Alexander Dzasokhov. Later, on February 17, they held a press conference reiterating their demands, during which they never stopped flooding the

Kremlin with petitions and letters. The Beslan Mothers' Committee and other victims blame Dzasokhov for refusing to communicate with the terrorists during the siege (Smirnov, 2005). The leader and the government are also accused of falsely insisting that the hostages were being well treated during the 52 hours they were held in the gymnasium when, in actuality, they were given no food or water. Furthermore, those angry with Dzasokhov criticize him for operating a government "in which corruption was so rampant that the militants simply bribed their way through police checkpoints" (Tskhurbayev, 2005).

Although the Beslan Mothers' Committee was able to acquire Dzasokhov's resignation, making it the most influential international group analyzed, the extent of its success has been limited. Nur-Pashi Kulayev, the only hostage-taker captured alive, was sentenced to life in prison on May 26, 2006. The mothers also asked that a criminal case be filed against local government officials, the head of Russia's *Federalnaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti* (FSB) security service, and the interior minister, all of whom they believe to be guilty of negligence. The group claims, for example, that Russian special forces used flame throwers and tanks to fight against the terrorists, the result of which was an unnecessarily high death toll. However, to date, no one has been brought to trial, despite the mothers' three unsuccessful written attempts to request an audience with President Vladimir Putin (Talbi, 2005). Nor are they likely to be successful. Furthermore, many residents of Beslan oppose Dzasokhov's successor, Taimuraz Mamsurov. Mamsurov, appointed by Putin, is opposed for his close connection to Dzasokhov, the latter of whom now has a position on Russia's Federation Council, the upper house of parliament (Tskhurbayev, 2005).

The Beslan Mothers' Committee's demand for government accountability mirrors that of the 9/11 Jersey Girls, who played a major role in the creation of the 9/11 Commission. Although the more prominent 9/11 groups may have achieved far more than the Beslan group has, the latter's very formation and initiatives demonstrate that victims' groups with an activist focus formed by the survivors and families of an attack can and do exist internationally and exercise a degree of influence. The remaining groups detailed, perhaps with the exception of those in Spain, have been largely unsuccessful in their ability to both define and achieve their missions.

Nord-Ost is another Russian group founded by a family member who lost a relative as a result of a terrorist barricade-and-hostage incident. This particular group was created shortly after the siege of the Dubrovka Theater in Moscow, October 23 through 26, 2002, during which Chechen rebels held 800 audience and cast members hostage. One hundred twenty-nine of these hostages perished in a botched rescue attempt by Russian special forces, including 30-year-old Aleksandr Karpov, the son of group founder Tatyana Karpova. As the head of Nord-Ost (named after the theater performance the night of the attack), Karpova is responsible for having tailored the group's mission to hold the Russian government, not the Chechen terrorists, responsible for the hostages' deaths (Hodge, 2004). This mission shares some similarity with FSC's drive to assign government accountability to the 9/11 attacks.

The 129 people who perished in the crisis died from poison gas, which Russian special forces pumped into the building with the intention of disabling the terrorists prior to the rescue. In the year and a half following the siege, an additional 40 people died from side effects related to the gas that also caused illnesses in 80 percent of the survivors (Cecil, 2003). In reac-

tion, the Russian government paid \$3,150 to the family of each victim and half that to survivors. Some members of Nord-Ost have since filed a lawsuit over the inadequacy of these payments, which have failed to cover victims' physical and mental health-care costs and lost wages (Engleman, 2002). The group is also continuing to push publicly for a full investigation into the government's mishandling of the incident, including the latter's failure to quickly evacuate the theater and provide timely medical services to those injured (Hodge, 2004). Although the group lost its case in court against Russian President Vladimir Putin, its formation and the filing of a lawsuit demanding government accountability is part of the growing trend among victims and their families to form grassroots organizations dedicated to holding governments responsible for terrorist incidents.

The remaining four groups have had less measurable effect on public policy in their respective countries. With modest efforts and often little success, they are not comparable to the prominent, policy reform-oriented 9/11 groups. However, their existence confirms that these types of organizations are increasingly becoming vehicles through which survivors and the families of victims can assume an active role in their fight for justice. SOS-Attentats, for example, worked to secure additional funds from the Libyan government for the families of the 170 people killed in the September 19, 1989, bombing of a Union des Transport Aériens (UTA) flight en route to Paris from Brazzaville, Congo. As a result of the group's efforts, in 2004, Libya agreed to pay \$170 million to the families, which had demanded the added compensation following the Libyan government's earlier payments to the victims of Pan Am 103 ("Libya Signs \$170M Deal for '89 French Passenger Jet Bombing," 2004).

The UK Bali Bombing Victims Group, led by Jocelyn Waller, who lost her son in the 2002 nightclub bombings, has made considerably less progress. Although the group seeks to take legal action against the British government for failing to alert travelers to the possibility of a terrorist attack in Bali, its actions have thus far been limited to the organization of commemorative events and the creation of a permanent London memorial (Kathy Marks, 2003; "Brits Remember Bali Dead," 2003; Hopkirk, 2005).

The final spectacular addressed is the March 11, 2004, train bombings in Madrid, Spain. Prior to this attack, however, less lethal terrorist incidents in the country perpetrated by the separatist group Basque Homeland and Liberty (ETA) had also given rise to a small number of victims' groups. Luis Delgado, for example, formed the Association for Victims of Terrorism (AVT) after an ETA car bomb killed his son and disabled his wife on November 22, 1988. The group's agenda, to promote the increase of pensions and other benefits received by victims, was motivated by the government's failure to protect the rights of victims and their families (Lorant, 1991).

The Madrid bombings differ significantly from the ETA attacks. Having claimed the lives of 191 victims, they were the most fatal attacks in Europe to date. Pilar Manjón, the mother of a victim, created the March 11 Association of Those Affected by Terror (11-M). This group's politically leftist orientation has put it at odds with AVT. Many of the victims of the March 11 bombings were working-class commuters, the families and advocates of whom tend to support Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's socialist government. AVT, in direct contrast, largely represents ETA-attack victims and is outright opposed to Zapatero's attempts to initiate peace talks with the terrorist group (Sciolino, 2005).

The result is that March 11 has, in some ways, torn these groups of victims apart, as seen throughout the duration of the investigative commission examining the bombings (Sciolino, 2005). In reaction to the Socialist-dominated commission, AVT staged a large protest in the streets of Madrid in June 2005. Accounts put the number of participants at as small as 300,000 and possibly as large as 1 million (Owen, 2005; “Hundreds of Thousands Protest in Madrid Against Any Talks with ETA,” 2005). AVT and 11-M, similar to groups for 9/11 victims, were also deeply divided over the impending creation of a memorial. As of this writing, there is no memorial to commemorate the lives lost in ETA attacks. AVT thus chose to support the creation of a memorial honoring all of Spain’s terrorism victims, in contrast to the members of 11-M, who want a memorial exclusively for the Madrid bombings (Abend and Pingree, 2004). Differences such as those separating AVT and 11-M are an inherent component in the creation of victims’ organizations, as seen among the 9/11 groups, for example—each of which has its own uniquely contoured mission.



## Conclusion

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Nothing better represents the success of the national-policy reform-oriented 9/11 family groups than the release of the 9/11 Commission's 567-page report. After dedicating themselves to the commission's formation and its possession of full investigative powers, many victims took satisfaction in the thoroughness of the final product as a testimony of their achievement (Polgreen, 2004). Indeed, the 9/11 families' status as victims, according to *The New York Times*, made them "a rare force in Washington, with leverage that was not negotiable in ordinary political terms," making it difficult, if not impossible, for the government to ignore their cause (Dwyer, 2004). This is exemplified by their having lobbied for and won a two-month extension for the commission in the face of political opposition (Dwyer, 2004). The dramatic overhaul of the intelligence community based on the commission's recommendations is the first restructuring of its kind in more than 50 years. As Representative Chris Shays (R-CT) noted, "victims are a huge and important element to reform. . . . They are people who need to be listened to" (Shays, 2006).

Some of the 9/11 victims' groups have acquired knowledge and an unusual ability to work within Washington bureaucracy. Early in fall 2004, for example, six 9/11 victims—the four Jersey Girls, SSC cofounder Monica Gabrielle, and Pentagon survivor April Gallop—announced their support for then-presidential nominee Senator John Kerry after he mentioned his intention to, if elected president, create another commission in addition to the 9/11 Commission, which had concluded its work. This commission, Kerry said, would investigate those issues left untouched by the first, something the six women greatly desired, having failed to get an additional extension for the original commission working with FSC. These women took a political stand, frustrated that the commission's final report never assigned accountability for the failures that enabled the attacks on 9/11 to occur (Breitweiser, 2006). "This is not about politics," Breitweiser insisted. "[T]his is about making the country safer" (Waterman, 2004). Disappointed with both the Bush administration's stonewalling of the 9/11 Commission and the war in Iraq, they were the first victims' relatives to actively participate in presidential politics (Waterman, 2004).

Both Breitweiser and Gabrielle made a number of campaign appearances, the former having to overcome a fear that had prevented her from flying since September 11, 2001 (Waterman, 2004; Gerhart, 2004). Breitweiser kept her promise and began working her way through swing states alongside then-vice presidential nominee John Edwards in an attempt to convince "security moms" that John Kerry would make the country safer than would his incumbent

opponent. She met people across the country who encouraged her to stay on the campaign trail in the belief that her efforts were having a positive impact (Mosk, 2004). These women's attempts to affect the outcome of a presidential race demonstrates that families are becoming more adept at identifying opportunities to effect political change.

This strategy, however, created a rift in FSC, as some remaining members strongly believed that making the passage of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations a partisan issue would discredit FSC. Having remained steadfast in their belief that the creation of the commission and the adoption of its recommendations were national issues of concern that rose above political party lines, FSC remained nonpartisan throughout the hearings. While the Jersey Girls, Gabrielle, and Gallop campaigned, the others pursued their own efforts in Washington during fall 2004 for legislation that would adopt the commission's suggestions to completely reform the country's national-security structure, returning to Capitol Hill on a near-weekly basis over a four-month period.<sup>1</sup>

April Gallop, forced to retire from the Army for injuries sustained at the Pentagon on 9/11, has also established a consulting firm to lobby those issues of utmost importance to 9/11 families, veterans, and children. This effort was not mentioned within the body of this paper, because it is not technically a victims' group. Although the firm, AEZ Consulting, is still in the organizational stage, Gallop hopes that time will help make it a more professional and active force in Washington (Sarasohn, 2004). AEZ may be a harbinger of things to come, an example of the variety of sophisticated media beyond victims' groups that are likely to emerge and play an even greater role in the pursuit of explanations, accountability, and a higher level of national security.

In summary, we have described the growing influence of groups formed by victims of terrorism in the United States over the past two decades. The Pan Am 103 and 9/11 groups show a progression of influence in their demands for government accountability. Both sets of groups assumed a new level of power in their fight for justice and improved national and aviation security that is unheard of among victims' groups overseas. The success of 9/11 victims' groups, in particular, leaves a legacy for victims of future terrorist attacks, who may devise even more refined and effective methods of political pressure and lobbying and providing for support services. Ultimately, future victims' groups may continue to raise the bar in pressuring government to be held responsible for failing to avert, prevent, preempt, or prepare for a terrorist attack.

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<sup>1</sup> Anonymous interview, June 12, 2006.

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