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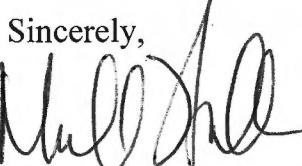
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Corporate Author : AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLL MAXWELL AFB AL

Personal Author(s) : Casford,James W.

Report Date : APR 1987

Pagination or Media Count : 38

Abstract : After repeated warnings from the United States government, elements of the U.S. Sixth Fleet and the USAF bombed targets in and around the Libyan cities of Benghazi and Tripoli on 14 April 1986. The attack came in retaliation to several Libyan sponsored terrorist attacks on U.S. concerns in the weeks preceding. This paper examines the effects of the bombing as a deterrent of future terrorist attacks and further examines current and projected U.S. counterterrorist policies.

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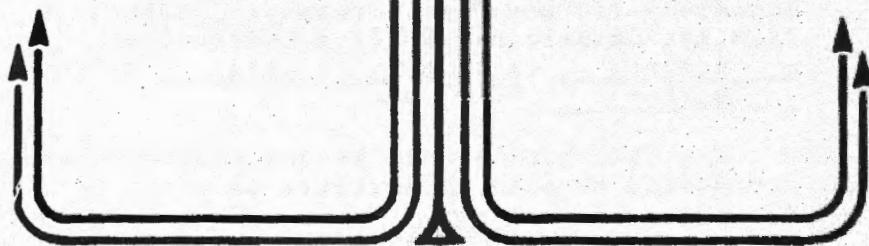
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AMERICA STRIKES BACK

MAJOR J. W. CASFORD

87-0445

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**TITLE** AMERICA STRIKES BACK

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**FACULTY ADVISOR** MAJOR THOMAS O. JAHNKE, USAF,  
ACSC/EDH

**SPONSOR** COLONEL W. HAYS PARKS, USMCR  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES ARMY (DAJA-IA)  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of  
requirements for graduation.

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## PREFACE

The U.S. retaliatory bombing of Tripoli and Benghazi, Libya, on 14 April 1986 came as a shock for many people and for many nations too. After all, America's leaders had largely ignored Libya until the Reagan Administration advocated a new, get-tough policy in dealing with terrorists and their state-sponsors. Many Reagan critics argue that the United States has no policy to deal with terrorism, and that the bombing was merely a "reaction" to and not an "action" against terrorism. This paper, therefore, examines the results of the attack as a deterrent, although that was not the actual intent of the United States. The joint-service attack was a single option available to U.S. policy-makers and when examined out of context, may give the impression of ineffectiveness. When used in concert with other policy options, military force can be an effective deterrent and a useful tool in winning the war against terrorism.

The author would like to take this opportunity to thank Major Tom Jahnke, USAF, and Colonel W. Hays Parks, USMCR, for their patience. Their advice, guidance, and encouragement made this project both possible and enjoyable.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Major Casford left college and enlisted in the Marine Corps in November 1966. He later received training as an A-4F avionics technician. In December 1970, he was honorably discharged, at the rank of sergeant, after completing a ground tour with III Marine Amphibious Force in the Republic of Vietnam. He attended Central Oklahoma State University from January 1971 until May 1974, graduating with honors and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Advertising Illustration. Major Casford was commissioned a second lieutenant two months later, following completion of the 88th Officer Candidate's Course in Quantico, Virginia. He was immediately reassigned as a student pilot at Naval Air Training Command in Pensacola, Florida, where he was designated a Naval Aviator in November 1975. He was then assigned duty with Marine Aircraft Group 26 in Jacksonville, North Carolina, where he functioned as the Assistant Group Embark Officer and HMT-204 Legal Officer while training in the CH-46F transport helicopter. Once designated a CH-46 helicopter copilot, he was reassigned to HMM-261 for duty. During the next three years, Major Casford served as the squadron Embark Officer, Logistics Officer, Flightline Officer, and Avionics Officer while completing two Mediterranean deployments. In April 1979, he was transferred to the Naval Air Training Command, NAS Whiting Field, Milton, Florida, for duty as a Flight Instructor. During 1981 he was assigned as the Category III Standardization Officer in addition to his regular duties. Following his selection as Training Wing Five Instructor of the Quarter in April 1982, Major Casford was transferred to Officer Candidate School, Quantico, Virginia, as a Platoon Commander and later as a student at Amphibious Warfare School-83. In July 1983, Major Casford was reassigned to HMM-263 in Jacksonville, North Carolina. During this assignment he served as the Assistant Aircraft Maintenance Officer, later as the Aircraft Maintenance Officer, and finally as the Director of Standardization, Safety, and NATOPS while completing another two Mediterranean deployments. In June 1986, he was transferred to Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, where he is presently assigned as a student at Air Command and Staff College. In July 1987, Major Casford anticipates being reassigned to Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, in Washington, D.C.

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REPORT NUMBER 87-0445

AUTHOR(S) MAJOR JAMES W. CASFORD, USMC

TITLE AMERICA STRIKES BACK

I. Purpose: To determine if the use of military force is an effective deterrent to terrorism by using the U.S. reprisal bombing of Libya on 14 April 1986 as an example. After examining the effects of the U.S. attack, the author examines current policy, with suggested modifications, that could possibly counter the threat in the future.

II. Problem: Critics of the U.S. government argue that America has no policy to counter terrorism and that the air strike conducted against Tripoli and Benghazi was simply a futile lashing-back at a known state-sponsor of terrorism. This paper attempts to demonstrate that although the United States largely ignored the terrorist threat for many years, the current administration is on the right track towards countering this international dilemma.

III. Data: The rift between Libya and the United States has been growing since 1 September 1969 when a coup d'etat in Tripoli deposed the elderly King Idris I. Since his rise to power as the head of the Revolutionary Council, Libya's Muammar Qaddafi has moved steadily from the right to the far-left by first acknowledging, and eventually actively supporting and training terrorists. The United States virtually ignored Libya's participation in the crime of terrorism until the election of President Ronald Reagan. With Reagan came a get-tough attitude towards terrorism and

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its state-sponsors which meant an almost certain conflict with Libya. Since 1981, when the U.S. and Libya clashed in the sky over the Gulf of Sidra, America has moved slowly but surely towards the eventual confrontation on 14 April 1986. The costs were high in losses for both sides. American forces lost one F-111 and crew while the Libyans suffered several civilian dead in the bombing. Were the results cost effective?

IV. Conclusions: Research indicates that the U.S. attack on Libya did nothing to deter further terrorist actions against Americans. In fact, data compiled by Risks International, Incorporated, revealed a sharp rise in terrorist activity towards U.S. targets in the three-month period immediately following the strike. However, the use of military force is not intended as a solution by itself. It is only one of several options available to U.S. policymakers in the war against terrorism.

V. Recommendations: It is the author's opinion that many critics are too quick to judge the effects of the U.S. attack on Libya. The attack does not appear to have been intended to completely stop Libya's sponsorship, but to demonstrate that the United States is prepared to react firmly and violently against them as a result of their participation. Furthermore, the U.S. does have a policy designed to deal with terrorists, and although still in its fledgling state, U.S. policymakers appear to be headed in the right direction. The use of military force is just one of many options available under the guidelines of that policy. Above all, U.S. counterterrorist policy must remain flexible. Each incident of terrorism must be examined separately and counterterrorist agencies must have the freedom to interpret policy and determine the appropriate U.S. response in each case.

There are many things the U.S. must do to counter the terrorist threat. First, it must rebuild its well-developed intelligence capability while educating the American public to the dangers of terrorism. Terrorism cannot be fought unless the perpetrators are identified, and the American public will not support the program until it perceives the

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threat. U.S. facilities abroad must be "hardened" and made more secure, and the government must continue to seek the cooperation of the host nations. Even if nations cannot agree on a definition of terrorism, they remain obligated to provide protection for Americans residing on their soil. Finally, the U.S. Congress must set a better example for other governments and rewrite some American laws, making it illegal for U.S. citizens to support terrorists from this country. By continuing with a concerted effort similar to the program outlined above, it is be possible for the United States to deal with and eventually defeat terrorism and its state-sponsors.

## Chapter One

### THE LIBYAN OBJECTIVE

The date was 1 September 1969. Gasoline was less than 35 cents per gallon, Americans mourned the death of Rocky Marciano and contemplated the moral question of U.S. presence in the Republic of Vietnam. Simultaneously, half-way around the earth, the Arab world endured its fourth coup d'état in less than a year. This time the scene was Libya, and the matter received precious little of the U.S. citizen's attention. After all, Libya, a country of 680,000 square miles (literally twice the size of Texas) and a population of 1.5 million was of absolutely no importance to the average American. In fact, the real concern in the U.S. was from the multi-national oil companies and their growing fears that this coup, however bloodless in nature, would endanger their investments and personnel living within the country. There were 38 oil companies operating in Libya at the time that were either completely or at least partially owned by Americans, and there were at least 10,000 U.S. citizens residing within the boundaries (8:1). The newly imposed military junta, headed by Colonel Saaduddin Abu Shwirrib, was quick to reassure "...that the coup was not aimed against any foreign power and was a purely domestic movement" (8:1). The new government had assured the status quo and tension among the oil concerns lessened. There was, after all, the continued U.S. military presence at Wheeless Air Force Base.

So what happened? What happened to sour U.S./Libyan relations? Why, beginning in the early 1970s, did Muammar el-Qaddafi begin to support terrorist and revolutionary violence with such a vengeance? Why did the Libyan political objective suddenly become anti-Israeli and anti-Western, designed to weaken the democracies of Western Europe and North America, to reduce both countries' international influence and destabilize the Mediterranean border countries (2:39)? This is no simple issue and cannot be completely understood without first developing an understanding of the events preceding and following the overthrow of King Idris I on 1 September 1969.

Revolutions in the Arab world are normally led by the generals or at least colonels and majors, certainly not by lieutenants and captains as was the case in Libya. This was to be the first of many important breaks with tradition for this small, oil-rich country. Libya had gone from rags to riches under the rule of Idris with the help of American oil companies. It had been a peaceful country, friendly to the United States, and eager to become a productive member of the world economic market. As summer ended in 1969, all these things were to change forever.

Sayid Mohammed Idris el-Mahdi es-Senussi, the frail, blue-eyed, aging King of Libya was in Turkey receiving treatment for a leg ailment. The news of the coup d'etat came as such a surprise to the monarch that he discounted the reports as silly rumors. He had, after all, been an effective ruler with the support of the people. Since the discovery of oil in 1957, he had redirected 70% of all revenues back to the people and had increased their per capita incomes from \$35 to over \$1000 (31:3)! Far from corrupt, the king had lived an austere life, had put the welfare of his subjects before that of his own, and had continued to serve at their pleasure (31:3). The 79-year-old monarch could not understand what he had done to deserve an end such as this.

Sudden, incredible wealth can have strange effects on once poor people. Libyan thoughts and deeds were changing not because the discovery of oil allowed it, but because popular unrest resulting from the discovery forced it (31:3)! A radical trend had permeated and rocked the Arab world since the Arab-Israeli War in 1967. Anti-Israeli and anti-Western sentiment had been growing slowly in Libya since that time. Idris had quietly put down the dissidents and maintained the status quo without much interference from other Arab countries. However, Arab interest in Libyan affairs was growing at the same rate as Libya's bank account. Libya was already contributing nearly \$100 million annually to the United Arab Republic and Jordan to compensate for their losses in their war with Israel (31:3).

In Tripoli, the timing for the coup was perfect. King Idris had been in Turkey for some time, leaving his nephew in the palace to try his hand at the thrown which would be his when the King eventually succumbed to age. A small group of junior military officers moved swiftly and gained control in a surprisingly bloodless coup. The Crown Prince, Hassan al-Rida, quickly announced his full support for the new revolutionary government and was immediately placed under house arrest (21:1). The Junta received little or no opposition as it imposed a curfew, cut all communications with the outside world, and suspended air operations at Wheelus Air Force Base.

In the United States, the large oil concerns worried about their investments while the government pondered the fate of Wheelus and its support personnel. Colonel Bushweirib, then thought to be the revolutionary leader, was quick to reassure the Americans that all past agreements between the U.S. and Libya would remain in effect and that there was no cause for alarm. Bushweirib also stated that he was just a spokesman and that his leader was waiting in secrecy for the proper time to reveal himself. It would be, in fact, November before Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi would identify himself as leader of the Revolutionary Council.

By 8 September, day-to-day life in Libya was returning to normal. The sea ports had resumed operations and oil was once again flowing. King Idris had been refused support by the British government and vowed never to return to his country. The only question still in doubt was the future of Wheelus AFB. Wheelus was a source of humiliation for the Libyans. While many Arab nations had Americans drilling for oil on their soil, only Libya had a U.S. base flying the U.S. flag. The U.S. did its best to play down the issue, voluntarily scaling down operations. On 6 September the United States formally recognized the new Libyan regime, timed to offset the delivery of 50 F-4 Jets to Israel in an effort to avoid the outrage of the Arabs, but many informed sources saw this coup as the beginning of the end of American military presence in Libya (35:1).

To enhance its appearance of solidarity with other Arab nations, Libya was becoming increasingly anti-Western and anti-Israeli in its actions and rhetoric. The situation continued to worsen and on 9 September, the Premier of the Revolutionary Council stated that Libya would "...support the Palestinian guerrillas in their struggle against Israel" (18:16). Although in early September the council had assured the United States that since the lease would expire in little more than one year, they were prepared to tolerate the "burden" of American presence at Wheelus. By the 28th of the same month they had begun to reverse their decision. They soon linked the base with an incident which concerned smuggling an unidentified Jew out of the country and also reported having found an automobile containing sniper equipment "near the base" (14:6).

By 2 October, the junta had outlawed the teaching of the English language in any of its schools, and the U.S. Peace Corps was therefore ordered home. It was stated in the same announcement that "no self-respecting militant Arab government" would allow the Americans to retain their \$100 million base in light of their arms aid and diplomatic support for the Israelis (34:17). The lease was due to expire officially on 24 December 1971, but officials in both the U.S. and Britain doubted the Libyans would honor the agreement.

As the situation in Libya continued to worsen, Premier Mahmoud Soliman al-Maghreby restated Libya's plans to honor agreements with American oil concerns but now caveated by adding "...as long as they honor the concerns of the Libyan people" (15:3). In addition to believing that oil prices were too low and would have to be driven up, he also hinted at nationalism by saying the American workers would be kept on the payroll long enough to train Libyan workers to do their jobs. His intent in increasing revenues was to increase his contributions to the United Arab Republic in exchange for weapons for Libya (15:3).

On 28 October, Libya formally notified the U.S. to vacate Wheelus by 24 December 1970, exactly one year early (13:13). Seventeen days later, a new Revolutionary Council leader, Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi, emerged and shouted vehement, anti-Western rhetoric at a rally held at the British base of Tobruk. He said that "Libya would go to war if the colonial states did not completely vacate the country, that Libyans would either die defending their country as martyrs or achieve victory and equally appreciate either option" (17:5). This was the first, concrete appearance of Qaddafi who had been an Army Lieutenant just 10 days before the coup (16:1).

Just over one month later, the U.S. and the council agreed that Wheelus would be vacated by 30 June 1970. The British were to leave their bases by the end of March. U.S. officials now came under fire from Congress concerning the \$100 million give-away of fixed equipment at Wheelus for which Libya made no offer to pay. It was at this point that France offered to occupy the vacated bases (33:3). Libya had already cancelled a long-standing, defensive weapons buy with Britain and optioned for a \$400 million offensive arms buy from France. French logic was that better they buy the weapons from France than the Soviet Union! This constituted Libya's formal departure on the road to terrorism and subversion. The French arms deal was large enough to supply every Libyan soldier with his own personal tank and fighter aircraft (10:1). It was a foregone conclusion that many of these weapons would find their way to fighting in Israel under the control of a non-Libyan (11:1).

Muammar el-Qaddafi officially became Premier of the Revolutionary Council on 16 January 1970, and although the name of the position would change from time-to-time, he essentially holds the same position today. Qaddafi's rhetoric was fundamentally pro-Western until the Wheelus evacuation was complete. Then he abruptly declared that no friendly relations were possible between the two nations as long as the United States persisted in supporting the Israelis (22:41).

In the early 1970s, Qaddafi began to support terrorist and revolutionary groups and to even initiate terrorism without any regard for human decency. The pattern to his actions was consistent. "They were anti-Western and anti-Israeli, and designed to weaken the democracies of Western Europe and North America, to reduce their international influence, and to destabilize the countries bordering the Mediterranean" (2:39). The United States, still stinging from public opposition to the Vietnam conflict, more-or-less adopted a policy of isolationism in respect to Libya. There will always be those who argue that it was the U.S. that put Qaddafi into power and protected his regime in the early months, but the depth and scope of this paper prevents exploring that and other related theories. It is important to note, however, that the United States did continue to support Libya with military aid (although defensive in nature) until 1975! As late as 1973, Qaddafi had arranged to purchase U.S. made C-130 transport aircraft. President Carter refused delivery which eventually led to Libya's hiring Billy Carter to persuade his brother to reconsider his decision (2:147-197).

In his early bids for power, Qaddafi was often rejected by other Arab leaders. Terrorism represented an alternative instrument of foreign policy for Libya. Qaddafi eagerly provided money, training, and logistical support for terrorist groups and has been linked to many of the major terrorist organizations worldwide (2:35-55). For example, Qaddafi provided the funds, weapons, and training for the terrorists who committed the 1972 Olympic Games massacre (22:41). Furthermore, in his efforts to project terrorism worldwide, he established terrorist training camps within Libya located at Sirte, Sebha, Az Zououlah, and Raz Hilal. He began a massive arms buildup to include the remarkable \$12 billion Soviet weapons deal in 1976 (5:258)! Alarmed by these events, the United States began surveillance flights into the Gulf of Sidra in 1972 (2:227). In response, Libyan fighters attempted to engage a U.S. Hercules C-130, firing two missiles in international airspace during 1973. By October, Qaddafi had claimed the Gulf of Sidra as Libyan territorial waters, and therein lies the conflict. Qaddafi was trying to set a dangerous precedent (22:42). If the United States were to acquiesce, other nations might follow suit and destroy the long-standing principle of freedom of the seas. The Freedom of Navigation program (FON) was developed by National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, but President Carter elected not to press the issue fearing repercussions for the hostages in Tehran (22:42). Carter's policy of moderation towards Qaddafi would prove to be a mistake.

While the Carter Administration busied itself with negotiations and rhetoric, Qaddafi chose to act. In December 1979, an angry crowd of 2,000 attacked the U.S.

Embassy in Tripoli with no intervention by the government to either control the rioters or provide protection for the Americans (2:219-229). Twice in September 1980, Libyan fighters attacked U.S. Air Force EC-135 aircraft. The second attempt, on the 21st, involved an EC-135 and what appeared to be one Navy F-14 escort. The Libyans launched eight fighters, but as they converged, they determined that there were three escorts and returned to base. The language used during this episode indicated that the pilots and controllers were Syrian (2:226). In October, Libya bought a full-page advertisement in the Washington Post issuing a warning to the United States to get out of the Middle East (22:43). Always the statesman, Qaddafi had told an Italian journalist in regard to the Iranian hostage crisis that "...everybody hates America, everybody," but he was doing everything that he could in trying to mediate a solution (2:226-230).

The U.S. Presidential election of 1980 brought Qaddafi his first serious trouble. In addition to restoring military power and prestige, Reagan also pledged to combat international terrorism which assured conflict with Libya. The new administration ordered the State and Defense Departments to treat Qaddafi as a menace, a Soviet puppet who should be stopped and even overthrown if possible. Measures were taken to increase economic, political and military pressure on Libya. The FON program received new attention and in little more than a year, the Reagan Administration began to regard Qaddafi as an enemy rather than a nuisance. Rumors of a Libyan hit-squad designed to assassinate President Reagan abounded and Americans were recalled in preparation for a ban on Libyan oil imports. The goal was to isolate, embarrass, and weaken Libya and several measures were taken to make this goal possible (2:247-248). The U.S. plan of action is outlined in Chapter Two.

## Chapter Two

### U.S. STRATEGY

Critics of the government contend there is no U.S. policy for dealing with terrorists. That is a far too simplistic view of the problem. As the number of terrorist events began to rise, the Nixon Administration attempted to define the problem and develop an organizational matrix where none had ever before existed. Government concern continued to increase and peaked in 1975 as public controversy developed around the "no concessions" policy. The government backed off during the Carter Administration, preferring to downplay the issue as a symptom of a larger human-rights problem. The Reagan Administration has at least attempted to recoup the losses of prestige and credibility suffered during President Carter's term by adopting a policy of toughness and retaliation. The critics still argue that none of these methods have been effective (19:14).

U.S. Ambassador Edward Marks maintains that the United States has not presented a tough, firm image against terrorism in any of the last four administrations. He states that although the Nixon administration announced that it would not pay ransoms, U.S. corporations were not discouraged from paying huge sums to terrorists to facilitate the release of kidnapped executives. He continued by saying the Ford Administration rejected ransom demands of terrorists in one particular case and then assisted private parties in negotiating with terrorists and paying the ransom demanded for hostage release. Marks recalled that after publicly ruling out the use of military force, the Carter Administration launched the ill-fated rescue attempt in Iran and then later secured the release of the hostages by making substantial concessions. He went on to criticize the Reagan Administration for not backing-up its tough rhetoric with consistent action (19:14). However, if one looks into the present administration's policies in regard to Libyan sponsored terrorism, there is certainly no lack of action on the part of the United States.

While the Nixon, Ford, and Carter Administrations had largely ignored Libya, regarding it as an unimportant

nuisance that could not or should not be dealt with because Europeans would not support sanctions, President Reagan had different ideas (2:247). He quickly took a hardline stand against Qaddafi and with it came the general support of the American public. A seven point program was developed with the aim of destabilizing Qaddafi's regime by isolating, embarrassing, and weakening him. The following is an outline of the program:

1. Severing U.S./Libyan political relations by closing the Libyan people's bureau [sic] in Washington (2:249).
2. Dissemination of propaganda designed to portray Qaddafi as a dangerous international outlaw, guilty of sponsoring terrorism and subversion, and deserving of serious repercussions by the U.S. (2:249).
3. Alignment of U.S. foreign policy with those nations willing to oppose Qaddafi (2:249).
4. The economic bolstering of governments in opposition to Libya (2:249).
5. Economic sanctions against Libya in the form of banning importation of its oil and restricting the export of high-tech equipment, particularly targeting oil rig components (2:249).
6. A disinformation program in which "leaked" information would give Qaddafi the impression the U.S. sought his covert removal as head of Libya (2:249).
7. Finally, the threat of military intervention and FON exercises with the intent of responding in kind to Libyan attacks. Support for Egyptian and Sudanese strikes against Libyan forces in Chad and a display of U.S. strategic power during "Operation Brightstar" (2:249).

The United States would dispense with the rhetoric and take "action" on 18 August 1981. Shortly after Qaddafi claimed the Gulf of Sidra as territorial waters, a FON exercise was scheduled as a peaceful assertion of U.S. rights. A sizable force, led by USS Forrestal and USS Nimitz, sailed to within 40-nautical miles of Libyan waters and airspace (22:43). Libya made a obvious display of hostile intent, flying over 130 sorties against the U.S. fleet on the first day. Each aircraft was intercepted and escorted out of the training area without incident. However, on the second day as two Navy F-14s intercepted two Libyan SU-22 Fitters, an

Atoll, air-to-air missile was fired at the U.S. aircraft. The F-14s shot down the Fitters after maneuvering to avoid the Libyan missile (22:43).

Over the next few years, Libya continued in its sponsorship of terrorism, and relations between the two countries worsened. In January 1986, President Reagan completely broke all remaining economic ties with Libya and ordered all Americans out of that country (22:44). Another FON was scheduled and conducted in the Gulf of Sidra during March. On the morning of 24 March, Libya launched at least five SA-5 and SA-2 missiles at U.S. aircraft (22:45). The U.S. Navy planes were flying assigned defensive sectors with the mission to protect the fleet from any attacking Libyan aircraft. That afternoon, Admiral Kelso, Commander Sixth Fleet, declared that all Libyan military forces approaching the fleet would be regarded as hostile. By 1430, two Navy A-6Es fired on a Libyan missile boat, and "the fight was on." When the exercise concluded on the morning of 27 March, at least three missile patrol boats had been sunk or badly damaged, and two SA-5 Square Pair radar sites had been damaged and were at least temporarily out of service (22:44-45).

By sailing into the Gulf of Sidra, crossing Qaddafi's "line of death," and thwarting his Soviet-made defenses, President Reagan bloodied Qaddafi's nose, but the Libyan leader was in no way convinced to change his policy of sponsoring terrorism. In Tripoli a frenzied Qaddafi boasted of Libya having shot down three U.S. aircraft and repelling and humiliating the American military forces.

Undaunted by this clash with American military might, Qaddafi sponsored the bombing of the La Belle discotheque in Berlin on 5 April. Senior U.S. officials talked of Libyan involvement in a Beirut rocket attack against the American Embassy; of a plan to assassinate the U.S. Ambassador to France, Joe Rodgers; and of Qaddafi's instructions to Lebanese Army Officers to "...activate a plan to kill American diplomats in Beirut" (36:25). Many of Qaddafi's plans were easily detected, thus having value in his psychological warfare campaign. However, his recruiting efforts were more covert in nature. Qaddafi tried to recruit European and Palestinian hit men in an effort to shift blame away from Libya. So covert was the planning that Yasir Arafat, leader of the PLO, tipped off the U.S. through a third party to avoid his own Al Fatah being blamed (38:22).

In the United States, planning for Operation El Dorado Canyon was already being conducted. Critics argued that hitting Qaddafi would not be striking at the actual terrorists and also carried with it the risk of provoking the Soviets (37:25). However, the purpose of striking Libya, a state-sponsor of terrorism, was to increase the risks and costs to the promoter where before there had been none. It

would also send a message to other sponsors of terrorism. Without the backing of countries like Libya, the terrorist would eventually be emasculated. Without the funding and safe-havens provided by state-sponsors like Libya, the terrorist would have no place to turn and would possibly be forced out of existence.

When the target list was created, a new category was developed for objects directly related to Qaddafi's terrorism program (22:47). Targets could not be chosen simply for their military value as in war. Therefore, care was taken to distinguish between terrorist related targets and normal military objectives. The Libyan military, after all, was not the object of the attack since it has never been truly loyal to Qaddafi. The objective was not to destroy Libya but to send a message to terrorists and their sponsors. It is important to remember that the amount and type of damage inflicted by the U.S. attack force is not the important issue.

For various reasons, it was concluded that the attack must take place at night under the cover of darkness. Fewer civilians would be on the streets and vulnerable to inadvertent injury, and a night attack would also lessen the risk to U.S. pilots from antiaircraft weapons positioned to defend the targets (9:28). This need for a night attack, combined with a plan of flying the approach routes at high-speed and low-altitude to avoid enemy radar, necessitated the use of precision bombing aircraft. The infrared capable Navy A-6 and Air Force F-111 are extremely well-suited for this type of mission.

When the U.S. Sixth Fleet penetrated Qaddafi's "Line of Death" three weeks earlier, the aircraft carriers USS Saratoga, Coral Sea, and America were among the strike force. Now the Saratoga was no longer present, having returned to its home port in Mayport, Florida (9:28). The absence of the Saratoga, not interservice politics, made necessary the use of Air Force aircraft.

U.N. Ambassador Vernon Walters convinced Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher that the use of British based F-111s was justified (32:24). He failed, however, to secure overflight rights from France or Spain, requiring Air Force pilots to fly 2,800 versus 1,600 miles to their targets (9:29). Despite the odds, the Air Force and Navy based aircraft rendezvoused on time. The attack took place at just after 0200 on 15 April, but it was only minutes after 1900 the day prior by Washington time, and it was reported live on evening news programs as Americans sat at their dinner tables (39:28)!

As attacking aircraft approached the shores of Tripoli and Benghazi, almost total surprise was evident. The street

ights were still on in both cities enhancing the U.S. weapons officer's infrared targeting systems (39:26). Air Force aircraft attacked targets in the Tripoli area while the Navy bombed targets in and around Benghazi. Meanwhile, Navy A-7s and Navy/Marine F/A-18s allowed themselves to be targeted by Libyan radar. This deliberate targeting allowed the U.S. pilots to detect the radar sources and neutralize them with Shrike and HARM missiles (39:28). Despite suppression of the enemy's radar, the F-111 pilots encountered extremely heavy antiaircraft fire over Tripoli. According to a senior Pentagon official, the Libyans fired Soviet-made SAM-2, -3, -6, and -8 missiles and ZSU-23-4 antiaircraft guns into the now orange skies over Tripoli (9:30).

In less than 12 minutes the attack was over, and all aircraft except one, were again "feet-wet" (39:26). Sadly, two Air Force captains perished as their F-111 burst into flames and crashed into the ocean some 10 miles off shore (9:30). The Navy, suffering no losses, recovered all aircraft safely despite Qaddafi's claims to have shot down as many as a dozen U.S. planes (9:31). For the Air Force crews, it meant spending 15 hours strapped into their F-111s, and many had to be lifted from their seats upon arrival in England (9:31). For Qaddafi, it had been a hard slap in the face from an angry President Reagan.

The effectiveness of the April bombing can only be assessed by observing Qaddafi's reactions in the weeks and months that followed. Those reactions are discussed in Chapter Three.

## Chapter Three

### THE EFFECTS OF MILITARY RETALIATION

#### BACKGROUND

Although terrorism has existed for a great many years in one form or another, noticeable increases did not begin to occur until the 1970s. As John L. Scherer stated, "There is reason to expect terrorism to increase. The actions are inexpensive, and while they are unlikely to topple governments, they have created confusion and gained considerable publicity (4:v)." Terrorist occurrences involving deaths have been increasing at a rate of about 20 percent per year since the early 1970s (6:xi). To date, 1983 has been the bloodiest with the death toll standing at over 2000 (6:xi). Figure 1 illustrates this dramatic increase in terrorism worldwide.

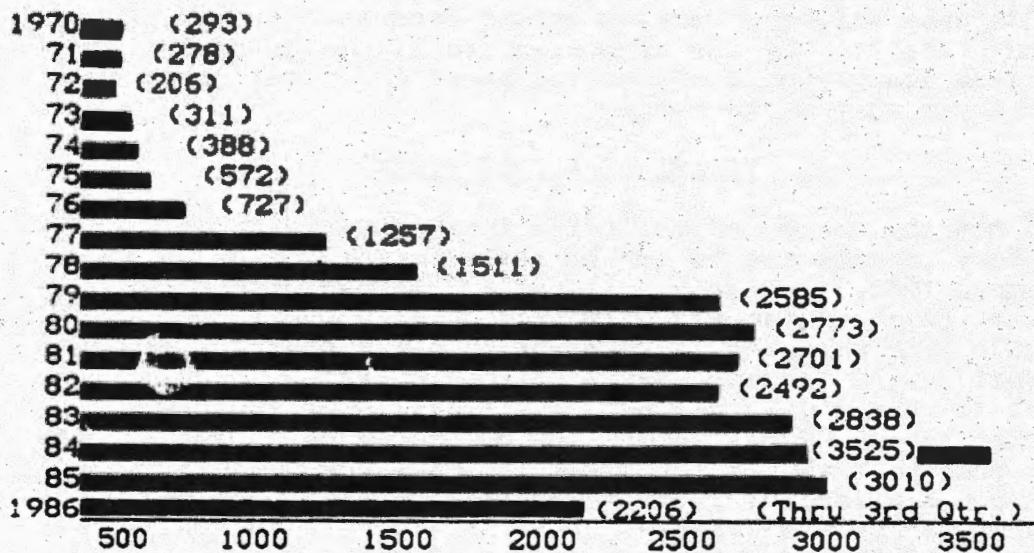


Figure 1. Major Terrorist Incidents Worldwide (28:46)

As figure 1 illustrates, in 1973 incidents of terrorism began to increase sharply and would never again dip below the 300 mark. These statistics include only major occur-

rences as determined by Risks International, Inc. and consist of kidnappings, bombings, hijackings, assassinations, sabotage, threats, thefts, conspiracies, and other related actions. Since the early 1970s, governments have become more rigorous and more effective in combatting terrorist elements; however, despite their undeniable successes, the total volume of international terrorism has increased (12:31).

One of the more obvious possible means of reducing or eliminating terrorism is through international cooperation. However, the controversy has been in convincing the world to agree on a unified definition of what constitutes a terrorist act. What is one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter. In 1972 the United States submitted the draft Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Certain Acts of International Terrorism to the United Nations General Assembly. While most Western nations were in agreement, the draft was opposed by the Communist bloc countries in support of the Third World nations (20:16). Not until December 1985, after 13 years of disagreement, did the UN adopt a consensus agreement regarding all acts of terrorism as criminal (20:16)!

M. S. Nestlehutt maintains that the single greatest impediment to the United States efforts to combat terrorism is its weak intelligence network abroad (20:17). He states that Congress, perhaps in reaction to Watergate, deliberately weakened the U.S. intelligence system. Regardless of the motives involved, "...between 1976 and 1980 the number of CIA case officers working abroad decreased from 4,800 to 1,200" (20:17). On the otherhand, the Israelis present an excellent example of the need for superior intelligence work in the war against terrorism.

#### ISRAEL AS A CASE STUDY

America was by no means the first country to use the military in response to terrorists attacks. As early as 31 December 1968, the Israelis launched a cross-border raid against Egyptian targets with helicopter-borne forces (7:26). The raid was in response to three separate attacks against Jewish targets over a one-month period in which at least 14 were killed (7:26). The Israelis followed with another attack 60 kilometers inside Jordan on 1 December of that same year (7:26). The results were predictable. Although the Israeli retaliation attacks were huge successes, terrorists attacked an El Al aircraft in Athens that same month, the day after Christmas (7:26).

The Israeli's hardline response to terrorism has continued in much the same manner up to the present day. The face of the enemy has changed, but the response has been predictably consistent. Israel has exchanged blows with

terrorists much like two heavyweight boxers engaged in a championship bout. Each contestant has pummelled the other in a protracted war of wills. The terrorists striking indiscriminantly at Jewish targets of opportunity while Israel has relied on superior intelligence to pinpoint their targets of retaliation (20:16).

When studying the Israeli example, questions eventually come to mind. Where will it all end? What has Israel accomplished with its apparent eye-for-an-eye, tooth-for-a-tooth strategy? In all these years, Israel seems no closer to finding a solution to its troubles than when it started. Can America hope to be any more successful than the Israelis have been in their efforts to combat the terrorists? Is it wise then, for the United States to journey down this so well traveled path of vengeance?

#### TARGET: AMERICA

In her widely respected book, The Terror Network, Claire Sterling states that the particularly violent style of terrorism the world is now experiencing began in 1968. Consequently, this report examines terrorist attacks against American concerns since 1968 through the third quarter of 1986. The overall effectiveness of the U.S. retaliatory bombing on 14 April 1986 was determined by comparing statistics gathered in the months following the attack to the years of data preceding. The completion deadline for this research project limited the analysis to a mere eight-month period; however, the comparison was deemed a reasonable evaluation considering the fleeting nature of the political, military, and psychological benifits realized from just one major retaliatory effort.

In 1970 attacks on American targets became very popular with the terrorist. According to "Patterns of International Terrorism: 1980", international terrorist attacks on U.S. citizens or property accounted for 9.1 percent of all incidents reported during that year (4:203). This figure, up from 2.4 percent in 1968, indicates the dramatic change in terrorist priorities. Since that time, U.S. targets have continued to be the most popular in the world with attacks on diplomatic officials receiving the most emphasis (4:203-204).

Figure 2 on the following page graphically illustrates the volume of terrorist attacks on U.S. citizens and their property from 1980 through 1985. The statistics, provided by Risks International, include only major terrorist attacks. The figure, through the third quarter of 1986, already stands at 137 (28:18; 29:17; 30:16)! It is significant that the number of incidents in the second quarter, following the U.S. bombing, are more than twice that of the first and third. While some authorities have argued that the attacks in the second quarter were already planned, in

motion, and were not a result of the bombing, the fact remains that the U.S. attack did not deter these events.

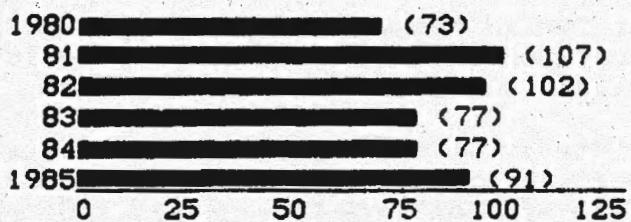


Figure 2. Terrorist Attacks on U.S. Targets 1980-1985  
(23:47: 24:45: 25:45: 26:38: 27:37: 28:46)

Past U.S. efforts have largely been directed at countering terrorism. Counterterrorism is reactionary by nature and first requires action by the terrorist to provoke a counter-reaction by the U.S. Government, and as we have seen, the results are not always completely productive. One of the objectives of reprisal operations is to reduce the state-sponsor's capabilities to continue their sponsorship, but terrorists require only small groups of personnel without much support (12:35). Destroying a state's capabilities to wage the war of terrorism requires dealing more damage than the United States is apparently willing to inflict (12:35). Military retaliatory operations produce unpredictable results, and the United States must not overestimate the anticipated gains from this one action. The U.S. reprisal of 14 April 1986 was, more than anything else, a statement in action reinforcing the get-tough rhetoric of President Reagan. It should and may very well be the point of departure for a new, definitive and long awaited U.S. policy to counter this modern-day threat.

## Chapter Four

### DEALING WITH TERRORISTS: THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN EFFORTS PRESSING THE ADVANTAGE

Terrorism is only a small part of an even greater whole which has come to be known as low-intensity conflict. Wars of this nature are likely to remain a problem for some time; therefore, the United States should allocate much more of its defense resources to developing a better capability to cope with terrorists. Simply stated, the United States does not understand terrorism and does not know how to deal with it. The likelihood of an all out, conventional war involving America in the future is remote; however, terrorists are certain to continue their attacks against U.S. concerns and its allies by virtue of their record of successes in the past. Whereas the strike by U.S. forces on 14 April 1986 represented a bold stride in the right direction, it was, after all, just one step. The attack was a strong statement against terrorism and its sinister sponsors, and it sent shock waves rippling throughout the world. The United States must now continue the initiative while it still possesses the momentum, and as complicated as the problem is, there are numerous possible solutions. The following is but one of those possible answers.

#### A SUGGESTED PLAN OF ACTION

When one considers the experts available within the United States alone, it is difficult to understand why the problem persists. Ray S. Cline and Professor Yonah Alexander, both renowned terrorism experts, offer some basic guidelines in the following statement.

The way to deter nations from sponsoring terror-acts or supporting terrorist groups is to let them know in advance that the cost of acting in such a fashion will be high and then make sure that is true. The measures that would hurt the terrorists and their state sponsors the most are the ones that should be given the most emphasis.

A cost-imposing strategy in the field of low-intensity conflict is the soundest course, just as it is in warfare. When terrorist acts become a systematic element in these conflicts, it is time to counteract--not merely to react (1:58).

Perhaps the problem is not with the lack of effectiveness of the reprisal bombing but with excessive American expectations. International terrorism is a complex issue and cannot realistically be eliminated by one, single action. The use of military force is but one option, albeit a dangerous one, available to U.S. policymakers. It is not an end in itself. The key to forming an effective policy to counter terrorism would appear to be flexibility. From the outset, nations have experienced difficulty in defining the problem, and without a workable definition, a solution hardly seems possible. Instead of seeking a broad, generic policy which deals with all forms of terrorism in a like manner, the U.S. must develop a system of flexible response that will enable it to examine each and every incident separately. Counterterrorist agencies must then have the freedom to interpret policy and determine the appropriate response in that particular situation. The use of military force must be carefully scrutinized and cautiously implemented because of the obvious risk of escalating to conventional warfare. The use of such force should therefore remain a last resort to all nations. So, what is the answer?

Highest on the list of priorities is intelligence. A well-developed intelligence capability allows for either removal of the target from danger or an overt or covert pre-emptive strike against the terrorists to surgically eliminate the threat. There are many other options made available by a system of good intelligence which serve to further emphasize the need. Those options are actually limited only by the imagination and experience of the collecting agency and parent government. Counterterrorist intelligence work is a relatively new area requiring new tools and capabilities. Rather than traditional intelligence gathering, this new form requires operatives with the street-wise savvy of big city cops to produce the results necessary to make an operation of this nature successful (3:232). In the aftermath of Watergate, Vietnam, and the investigations into CIA wrongdoing during the 1970s, the American governmental process seems to have developed an aversion to the "cloak and daggerism" commonly associated with intelligence work (3:232). Consequently, the rebuilding process necessary to restore and enhance the U.S. intelligence capability to the level needed has not been without its problems. The recent Iranian arms/Contra aide scandal should provide even more opposition in the months to come. The American public tends to have a skeptical view of its government when all the facts are not clearly visible, and for this reason an educa-

tional process is sorely needed. Once again, our Jewish allies provide an excellent example.

The Israelis consider themselves to be at war with terrorists--the battle actually being fought on their own soil at times. Americans, on the other hand, are not at war and are far removed from the scene of the battle. It is difficult to convince a resident of the Southwestern United States to support an aggressive and expensive counterterrorist program when the most intense conflict they have ever witnessed is the annual Oklahoma-Nebraska football shootout! In this regard, the media often works against the government. The viewers are treated to the mistakes and the blunders of our policymakers, and the skepticism grows. The government could and should use the media to educate the public to the dangers terrorists represent. In time, Americans could become as aware as the Israelis if the program were to be managed effectively and professionally.

The present lack of first-rate intelligence and popular support must be countered by increased antiterrorist security measures. The devastating vehicle bombings of the U.S. Marine barracks and U.S. Embassy in Beirut and Kuwait left little doubt as to the vulnerability of U.S. missions and installations overseas. These facilities must be "hardened" and key U.S. officials properly protected. Additionally, cooperation of the host governments in recognizing their responsibilities to U.S. citizens should develop a secure, relatively risk free environment and eventually reduce the terrorist threat (3:233-235). These security measures are also being augmented by security awareness training programs for personnel being assigned to overseas missions. Many potentially disastrous situations can be averted by security conscious personnel.

The United States must and undoubtedly will continue to seek the agreement and cooperation of other governments. The security of U.S. citizens when stationed or traveling abroad is, after all, the responsibility of the host nation (3:237). Even if governments cannot agree on a uniform definition of terrorists or just exactly what constitutes a terrorist act, they can hardly deny their obligation to provide protection for personnel at risk within the boundaries of their own countries. An extension of this spirit of cooperation among governments would be the elimination of sanctuaries for terrorists. The U.N. Charter specifies that "every state has the duty to refrain from...assisting or participating in...terrorist acts in another state or acquiescing in organized activities within its territory...when the acts referred to in the present paragraph invite the threat or use of force" (3:241). Libya is clearly in violation of the charter, and the U.S. must continue its diplomatic pressure. Should it fall, there is always the option of overt or covert force.

There is also dire need for new, timely legal actions. For example, until November 1984, it was not illegal in the United States to conspire to assassinate a foreign head of state! Amazingly, it is legal for U.S. citizens to provide training, equipment, specialized electronics, explosives technology, logistical support, and other types of assistance to known terrorists (3:242)! Until the United States rewrites its own laws, it can hardly expect cooperation from other governments.

### CONCLUSION

Contrary to arguments offered by numerous critics of the U.S. government, the Reagan Administration has made great strides towards combatting state-sponsored terrorism. Although the reprisal bombing of 14 April 1986 cannot be considered a completely successful deterrent, it did provide positive proof to both Qaddafi and the terrorists he supports that the United States is prepared to act firmly and violently if necessary to protect its people and their interests abroad. While not an end in itself, shows of force and military reprisal actions are one of several options available to U.S. policymakers. By continuing to develop a policy of flexible response which examines each incident separately and develops plans of action from available options accordingly, the U.S. government can expect to win the war against terrorism in the future: The victory will not be quick and neat. Since terrorists fight a protracted war, patience is and always will be essential. After all, the split in U.S./Libyan relations has been growing since late 1969, and a solution to this problem will itself take time to effect.

If, as John Dryden once observed, one should "beware the fury of a patient man," so too should terrorists and their patrons fear the ultimate wrath of a patient nation. They are inviting U.S. retaliation, and it should soon grant them their wish (3:244).

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