

**Middle Eastern Terrorist Activity
in Western Europe:
A Diagnosis and Prognosis**

by
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INTRODUCTION

From January 1980 to July 1, 1986, Middle Eastern terrorist groups have carried out over 259 attacks in sixteen West European countries which have resulted in 165 deaths and over 1,569 injuries.¹ Thirty-nine percent of these attacks, 45% of these fatalities, and 62% of these injuries have occurred during 1985-86. Middle Eastern terrorist activity has been and continues to be a major security and political problem for most countries in Western Europe. Many of these countries (West Germany, Spain, Great Britain, France, Italy, Greece, and Portugal) are also confronted with an indigenous terrorist threat from various separatist and Marxist revolutionary groups. The more active and dangerous of these groups are: the Red Army Faction (RAF) and the Revolutionary Cells (RC) in West Germany; the Red Brigades (RB) in Italy; Direct Action (DA) and the Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC) in France; the Popular Forces of April 25th (FP-25) in Portugal; the Popular Revolutionary Struggle (ELA) and the November 17th Group in Greece; the Basque Fatherland and Liberty movement (ETA-M) in Spain; and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Great Britain.

The level of threat posed by any of these groups in their respective countries at a particular time varies, depending primarily upon the number and impact of police arrests and the ideological and operational unity within the groups. While the short-term threat posed by these groups varies, the long-term threat remains high. All of these groups have, at one time or another, been dealt crippling operational blows by police and security forces. The fatal blow, however, has been missing. Many of these groups are already into their third or fourth "generation" — both in terms of membership and leadership. The security threat posed by these indigenous groups will not dissipate any time in the immediate future.

Compounding the indigenous terrorist problem for the European police and security forces is the activity of foreign, primarily Middle Eastern, terrorist groups. It is a unique security problem for Western Europe. No other region in the world is faced with a significant terrorist threat from foreign groups. For Western Europe, it is a problem of "spillover" terrorism. Unfortunately, Western Europe has proven to be a preferred operational area for those Middle Eastern groups. More attacks by Middle Eastern terrorist groups take place in Western Europe than in any other region, excluding, of course, the Middle East. Moreover, there are certain Middle Eastern terrorist elements that prefer operating in Western Europe rather than in the Middle East. The Abu

Nidal group and those entities responsible for assassinating Libyan and Iranian dissident elements are more active in Western Europe. For example, 68% of the attacks attributed to the Abu Nidal group since 1973 have taken place in Western Europe,² while over 95% of the terrorist attacks directed at dissident Libyan exiles since 1980 have taken place in Western Europe.³

Why this preference for Western Europe? What does this region offer that these groups cannot find in other regions such as Latin America, Africa, the Far East, North America, and, in some cases, even in the Middle East? There are five factors which make Western Europe an attractive operational area for Middle Eastern terrorist groups.

1. Western Europe provides these groups with a potential manpower pool which facilitates the building and maintenance of a logistical infrastructure. There are large communities of Palestinians and Arabs in most West European countries. This also includes the large student populations. Moreover, Middle Eastern businessmen and tourists frequently travel to Western Europe. This makes it easy for Middle Eastern terrorist groups to send in operational elements which can not only blend into the environment but can also receive logistical aid from sympathizers and in-country support elements.

2. Western Europe offers these groups geographic proximity and compactness, excellent transportation facilities, and relatively easy cross-border movement. In other words, it is easy to get to Western Europe and, once there, to move around between countries.

3. Western Europe offers these groups abundant, easy, and attractive targets. Middle East terrorists carry out attacks against three targeting sections: Israeli or Jewish, Western, and Arab or Palestinian. There is a large number of these targets in Western Europe.

4. Western Europe offers these groups immediate worldwide publicity when they carry out an attack in the region. The publicity spotlight is broader and brighter in Western Europe than in most other regions. With regard to the Middle East, attacks carried out by Middle Eastern groups in Iran, Syria, Iraq, and Libya receive little publicity because of the state-controlled press in these countries. In Lebanon, the level of political violence literally buries, from a publicity standpoint, all but the most spectacular and lethal incidents.

5. Western Europe provides these groups with a "substitute battleground" in which to carry out their intra-Palestinian and inter-Arab feuds. The majority of the attacks carried out by Middle Eastern terrorist groups are aimed at other Arab and Palestinian targets. The authoritarian nature of such states as Libya, Iran, Iraq, and Syria makes it difficult for these groups to operate effectively within these states. Israeli security

measures also make it difficult for these groups to operate within Israel. It is less risky and operationally easier to attack Libyan, Syrian, Iranian, Iraqi, and Israeli targets in Western Europe.

DIAGNOSIS

Middle Eastern terrorist activity in Western Europe is a product of the numerous antagonistic relationships which exist in the Middle East between states, ethnic and religious groups, and Palestinian and Arab personalities. More and more of these conflicts, feuds, and disagreements are evolving into "mini-terrorist wars" which are being fought not in the Middle East but in Western Europe — a substitute battlefield. Who are the adversaries in these mini-terrorist wars? What are their motives? What effect do these terrorist attacks have on the security environment in Western Europe? These questions are addressed below.

Last year, Middle Eastern terrorist groups carried out 75 attacks in Western Europe which caused 65 deaths and over 529 injuries.⁴ In 1984, the figures were 47 attacks, 18 deaths, and 63 injuries. The 75 Middle Eastern attacks in 1985 were carried out in 14 West European countries, with only Portugal, Luxembourg, Finland, Ireland, Belgium, and Norway being spared. The countries selected most frequently for these attacks were Greece (14), Italy (13), and Cyprus (9). (See chart #1.)

Of these attacks in 1985, 42 were directed at Arab and Palestinian targets, 13 against Israeli and Jewish targets, and 20 against "Western" targets, including 5 aimed at the United States. These are the three major targeting sectors for Middle Eastern terrorist groups. The most significant development was the increase in attacks directed at Western targets. This particular development will be discussed later.

Attacks against other Arab and Palestinian targets

A breakdown of the 42 attacks aimed at Arab and Palestinian targets indicates that:

- 8 were directed at Libyan exiles
- 7 against Jordan
- 6 against PLO moderates and Arafat supporters
- 6 against Libya
- 5 against Iran
- 4 against Syria
- 2 against Iraq
- 1 against Tunisia
- 1 against an Iranian exile
- 1 against an Iraqi exile
- 1 against a Palestinian student

The suspected or stated motives for the above attacks are as varied as the targets. The 10 attacks directed at Libyan, Iranian, and Iraqi political exiles were carried out in order to silence or intimidate exiled opponents of these regimes. Libya and Iran are particularly active in these

types of state-directed intimidation campaigns. These opposition elements, however, occasionally retaliate against Libya, Iran, or Iraq — sometimes with the support or encouragement of other Arab states which also oppose these regimes. For example, Iranian dissidents and former supporters of the Shah of Iran are believed to have been responsible for five attacks against Iranian targets in Western Europe in 1985. Iraqi dissidents, operating under the name of the “Organization of the Iraqi Islamic Vengeance,” and with the suspected support of either Syria or Iran, carried out two attacks against Iraqi interests in Nicosia. Moreover, Libyan opposition elements — occasionally with the suspected support of Iraq, which obviously opposes Libya’s support for Iran — carried out six attacks last year against Libyan targets in Western Europe.

The catalyst for the seven attacks against Jordanian targets and the four against Syrian targets appears to have been the Jordanian — PLO agreement signed on February 11, 1985 in Amman. This agreement, which sought a negotiated Middle East peace settlement, was opposed by Syria. Syria was also displeased with Jordan for re-establishing diplomatic ties with Egypt in September 1984 and for agreeing to host the Palestine National Council (PNC) meeting in Amman on November 22, 1984. President Assad had warned Arafat not to convene a meeting of the PNC. The February 1985 agreement and the November 1984 PNC meeting most likely provoked Syria into contracting with the Abu Nidal group to attack Jordanian targets, as a show of “displeasure.” The Abu Nidal group has apparently been based in Damascus since November 1983 when the Iraqi government banished it from Baghdad. This symbiotic relationship between the Abu Nidal organization and Syria consisted of Syria providing the group with resources and safehaven and the Abu Nidal group in turn providing Syria with a “terrorist option” when developing and implementing its foreign policy. Ironically, this is the same type of relationship the Abu Nidal group had with Iraq when Baghdad used the group to attack Syrian targets in the mid-1970s.⁵

The Abu Nidal organization has a history of creating commando names for specific terrorist campaigns. The name “Black June” was used in the late 1970s when the group attacked Syrian targets; the “Arab Revolutionary Brigades” was used when the group hit moderate Arab states like Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan; the “Revolutionary Organization of Socialist Moslems” has been used primarily against British targets; and the more formal name for the Abu Nidal organization, “Fatah-Revolutionary Council,” is used primarily in attacks against Israeli targets. For the Syrian-backed terrorist campaign against Jordan, and to a lesser extent against moderates within the PLO, the Abu Nidal group used the name “Black September Organization” or BSO — a parody on the name used by the PLO when it sanctioned terrorist attacks in the early 1970s.⁶ Abu Nidal’s use of this commando name first appeared on December 4, 1984 — two weeks after the start of the Palestine National Council meeting in Amman — when the BSO killed a Jordanian political counselor in Bucharest. The BSO attack communiqué denounced Jordan for plotting with PLO leader Yassir Arafat.

After the signing of the February 1985 PLO/Jordanian agreement in Amman, BSO attacks against Jordanian targets increased. In March, the BSO attacked Jordanian airline offices in Rome, Athens, and Nicosia. In April, anti-tank rockets were fired at the Jordanian embassy in Rome and at a Jordanian airliner in Athens. In July, the BSO carried out a machine gun and grenade attack on the Jordanian airlines office in Madrid, and assassinated a Jordanian diplomat in Ankara. In September, the BSO killed a supporter of Yassir Arafat in Athens. This has been the last attack carried out by the BSO. The PLO-Jordanian agreement was eroding. King Hussein went to Damascus on December 30-31 for discussions with President Assad. On February 19, 1986, Jordan ended political coordination with the PLO in working towards a Middle East peace settlement. The PLO/Jordanian accord no longer threatened Syria's premier position in Lebanon, and the BSO attacks against Jordan stopped — for now.

It was previously stated that there were four terrorist attacks registered against Syrian targets in 1985. In April, the Syrian airline office in Rome was bombed and in Geneva, a bomb exploded in a vehicle driven by the Syrian Chargé and another bomb was found in front of a Syrian diplomat's residence. In June, a bomb was found outside the Syrian embassy in London. These attacks appear to be directed against Syria by PLO elements in retaliation for the Syrian-backed Abu Nidal attacks against Jordan and PLO moderates. As a result, the Syrian/Jordanian/PLO conflict in late 1984 and 1985 was the catalyst for 12 terrorist attacks involving Jordanian, Syrian, and PLO targets in Western Europe. This is a classic example of a Middle Eastern political feud, escalating to the terrorist mode, and spilling over into Western Europe.

It should also be pointed out that there were six terrorist attacks in Western Europe in 1985 against moderate PLO members and supporters of Arafat. One of these attacks was claimed by Abu Nidal's "Black September Organization." Another was claimed by the "Eagles of the Palestinian Revolution" — a Syrian-backed Palestinian group. Consequently, these two attacks were most likely linked to the above-mentioned Syrian/Jordanian/PLO conflict. The remaining four attacks were probably carried out by dissidents from Arafat's "Fatah" organization and other anti-Arafat elements from the "Palestine National Salvation Front," a Syrian supported counterweight to the PLO.

Attacks on Israeli and Jewish Targets

Attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets are a standard part of Middle Eastern terrorist activities in Western Europe. Stringent security measures in Israel make it difficult for these groups to carry out attacks in Israel so Western Europe is an attractive alternative. The number of attacks per year varies, depending primarily on the number of "trigger events" which take place in the Middle East. Any increase in the number of attacks can usually be attributed to specific events such as the Israeli military incursion into Lebanon, the massacres at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in 1982 or Israeli retaliatory bombing attacks against PLO

targets. The unusually high number of attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets in 1985 can be traced to several events which took place in the Middle East. Of the 13 attacks which took place in 1985, the author believes that six of these attacks were terrorist retaliations for three specific events: (1) the Israeli bombing on July 21, 1985 of a small Lebanese village called Kabrihka; (2) the Israeli interception in late August 1985 of two yachts off the northern coast of Israel which contained 13 Fatah and "Force 17" terrorists; and (3) the Israeli bombing of the PLO's headquarters in Tunis on October 1, 1985. The six attacks and these three events combined to produce a dialectical spiral of violence between Israel and Middle Eastern terrorist groups. The October 7, 1985 hijacking of the Italian cruise ship "Achille Lauro" by the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) and the subsequent death of Leon Klinghoffer, an American citizen, were other, unfortunate by-products of this spiral of violence.

Attacks Against Western Targets

The third and last targeting sector for Middle Eastern terrorist groups is "Western targets," that is, attacks against U.S. and West European facilities and personnel. Of the 75 terrorist incidents carried out by Middle Eastern groups in Europe in 1985, 20 were directed at Western targets. It was these attacks that attracted the most publicity for the groups, caused the most casualties, and had the greatest impact on the political and security environment in Western Europe. The primary reason that these attacks had more of an impact on the security environment in Western Europe than those directed at Arab, Palestinian, Israeli, and Jewish targets, is that the attacks aimed at Western targets were more indiscriminate in nature and clearly designed to cause mass casualties. These attacks caused 45 deaths, or 66% of all fatalities caused by Middle Eastern attacks in 1985, and 439 injuries or 83% of the injury total. The objective of these attacks was to cause shock and then to induce fear. This in turn was to translate into pressure on the European countries to release imprisoned Middle Eastern terrorists. This was the primary motive for 13 of the 20 attacks directed at Western targets.

These 13 attacks involved the following terrorist campaigns designed to release imprisoned comrades:

1. Three incidents directed at Swiss targets by suspected PLO terrorist elements to pressure the Swiss to release two Palestinian terrorists arrested on April 26, shortly after bombing two Syrian diplomatic targets in Geneva.
2. Two attacks against French targets in Paris by suspected Iranian-backed Shi'ite groups to force the French to release the terrorists involved in the attempted assassination of former Iranian Prime Minister Bakhtiar in Paris in 1980.
3. The hijacking of TWA Flight 847 out of Athens by Lebanese Shi'ite terrorists to force the U.S. to put pressure on Israelis to release some 700 Lebanese Shi'ite Moslem prisoners.
4. The December 27 attack on the airport in Vienna by Abu

Nidal to pressure the Austrian government into releasing three Abu Nidal members arrested in Vienna for a 1981 attack on a Vienna synagogue.

5. Four attacks by the Abu Nidal group, operating under the name of the "Revolutionary Organization of Socialist Moslems," against British targets in Greece, Spain, and Italy in order to force the British to release the three Abu Nidal terrorists being held for the attempted assassination of the Israeli ambassador in London in 1982.

6. Two attacks by the Abu Nidal group against Italian targets in Italy in order to pressure the Italian government into releasing an Abu Nidal member arrested in Rome in April 1985 for firing an anti-tank rocket at the Jordanian embassy and because of Italy's request to the Greek government to extradite an Abu Nidal member for the October 1982 attack on a Rome synagogue. Both attacks, the Café de Paris bombing in September and the attack on Fiumicino airport in December, had secondary objectives. The Café de Paris attack was also aimed at the British and the U.S., and the Fiumicino attack was also directed at Israel and the U.S.

The remaining seven attacks directed at Western targets in Western Europe in 1985 were either carried out for other motives, such as support for Iran in the Iran-Iraq war or in retaliation for the Israeli bombing of a small village in southern Lebanon, or were simply not claimed. In fact, there were four attacks in 1985 which have not been attributed to any specific Middle Eastern group or state. However, it is generally agreed that Middle Eastern groups were involved. The first took place on April 12 when a bomb exploded in the El Descanso restaurant near the Torrejon air base outside the Madrid. This particular restaurant is frequented by U.S. military personnel and their dependents. Eighteen Spaniards were killed and 82 persons were injured, including 15 Americans. Several groups, including the "Islamic Jihad" organization, claimed credit for the bombing. However, no viable claim has been received. The second unclaimed incident took place on June 19 when a bomb detonated in the check-in area of the Frankfurt international airport. Three people, including two children, were killed and 42 others injured. Although some 20 groups have claimed credit for the attack, no viable claim has been received.

Another attack occurred on July 1 when a bomb exploded in the transit luggage section of Fiumicino airport in Rome. Twelve people were injured in this bombing. No terrorist group claimed credit for this attack. The possibility exists that in both the Frankfurt and Rome incidents, the bombs detonated prematurely. The targets may not have been the airports but aircraft departing these airports. A fourth unclaimed attack took place on November 24 when a car bomb exploded in a U.S. military commissary area in Frankfurt. Some 36 people, including 32 Americans were injured during this attack. Once again, no group claimed credit, but Middle Eastern terrorists are the primary suspects.

Of all the terrorist developments which took place in 1985, the intensified activities of Middle Eastern terrorists against "Western" targets in Western Europe was the most significant. This assessment is based on several factors:

1. 1985 marked a dramatic increase in the number of attacks against "Western" targets and in the casualties caused by these attacks.⁷ In 1984, only 6 attacks took place against "Western" targets which resulted in 2 deaths and 26 injuries. In 1985, there were 20 attacks, 45 deaths and 439 injuries. The attacks last year clearly indicated a trend towards more indiscriminate attacks designed to cause mass casualties.

2. There was a significant increase in the number of attacks directed at U.S. targets. In 1984, there was only one attack carried out against a U.S. target. This was the attempted assassination of the U.S. Consul General in Strasbourg on March 26 by the Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction. In 1985, 5 attacks were recorded, causing eight U.S. deaths and 74 injuries. The five attacks were: the June 14 hijacking of TWA Flight 847 out of Athens; the bombing of a TWA office in Madrid on July 1; the July 22 bombing of the Northwest Orient airline office in Copenhagen; the car bombing at a U.S. military shopping area in Frankfurt on November 24; and the attack at the El Al and TWA ticket counters at Rome airport on December 27. These attacks signal a trend of increasing Middle East terrorist attacks against U.S. targets in Western Europe.

3. The attacks by Middle Eastern groups against "Western" targets in 1985 signaled the beginning of a terrorist campaign by certain groups to focus on a perceived "Achilles heel" of West European governments — tourism.⁸ One of the groups, the Abu Nidal organization, implied as much in its communiqués. After the September 16 grenade attack on the Café de Paris on the Via Veneto in Rome, an Abu Nidal group warned tourists, especially Arabs, to stay away from Britain, Spain and Italy to avoid "operations by our heroic strugglers." All three countries are holding Abu Nidal terrorists. This warning was repeated after the group bombed the British Airways office in Rome on September 25, as a communiqué advised "tourists to avoid British, Spanish, and Italian institutions because they will be targets of our operations." These warnings were possible indicators that attacks, similar to the airport incidents in Rome and Vienna, were being planned.

Middle Eastern terrorist activity has been a security and political problem for Western Europe governments since the early 1970s when Palestinian airplane hijackings dominated the terrorist scene and the massacre at the 1972 Olympics in Munich testified to the bloody and desperate nature of Middle Eastern terrorism. Over the years, the threat of Middle Eastern terrorism in Western Europe has generally oscillated between the low and moderate levels with an occasional peak into the

high level. Such peaks are most often triggered by a particularly lethal or well-publicized Middle Eastern terrorist attack, such as the Carlos-led raid on the OPEC Ministerial meeting in Vienna in 1975, the seizure of the Iranian embassy in London in October 1980, the attack on the Rue Copernic synagogue in Paris in October 1980, the Carlos threat to the French government in February 1982, and the massacre at the "Jo Goldenberg" restaurant in Paris in August 1982.

In general, Middle Eastern attacks in Western Europe have been directed at other Arab or Palestinian targets or against Israeli or Jewish targets. (See chart #2.) Historically, there have been few attacks against Western targets in Western Europe. In fact, only 28 attacks were recorded during 1980-84. However, the 20 attacks which took place in 1985 indicate that these groups are beginning to concentrate their efforts more on Western targets. Moreover, it appears that these groups may be intentionally designing their attacks to scare tourists away from certain countries in Western Europe. This is most likely not a targeting aberration, but a signal of a dangerous and growing trend.

ACTIVITY IN 1986

The trend toward more indiscriminate attacks by Middle Eastern terrorist groups in Western Europe which began in 1985 has continued into the first six months of 1986. In February and March, a group calling itself the "Committee of Solidarity with Arab and Middle Eastern Political Prisoners in Western Europe" carried out seven indiscriminate bombing attacks in the Paris area which caused two deaths and over 67 injuries.⁹ These attacks were directed at stores on the Champs-Élysées and a Paris to Lyon train. Bombs were also found and defused on the Eiffel Tower and in a crowded Paris metro station. The purpose of these attacks was to pressure the French government into releasing three terrorists, one of whom is the suspected leader of the group responsible for the February and March incidents. It would appear that certain Middle Eastern groups have come to realize that they can put more pressure on a West European country by carrying out indiscriminate bombings in the capital of that country than by kidnapping its citizens in Lebanon.

On April 2, a bomb exploded aboard a TWA flight over Athens. Four Americans were killed, including an infant, and six were injured. A group calling itself the "Arab Revolutionary Cells — Al Kassam's Revolutionary Cells" claimed responsibility for the attack. This group claimed that the attack was in retaliation for the March 24 Gulf of Sidra incident in which U.S. Navy planes, on maneuvers in international waters, responded to Libyan missile attacks by attacking Libyan radar installations and sinking several Libyan vessels. Middle Eastern terrorists retaliated against on April 5 when a large bomb exploded in the "La Belle" disco in West Berlin, a place frequented by U.S. servicemen. Three people were killed, including two American servicemen, and 230 were injured. Seventy-two Americans were among the injured. This attack was linked directly to Libya.¹⁰ On the same day, two Libyan diplomats were ordered to leave France because, according to a Ministry

of Interior spokesman, "they were in contact with individuals likely to commit attacks on American interests in France." Press reports indicated that one of the targets of these planned attacks was the visa section at the U.S. Embassy in Paris.¹¹ The U.S. responded in self-defense to these continued actions by Libya to plan and carry out terrorist operations against U.S. and West European targets, and on April 14-15 carried out punitive air strikes against terrorist-related targets in Libya.

Although Libya was clearly implicated in an attempted terrorist attack against a U.S. Air Force officers' club in Ankara on April 18, three days after the U.S. air strikes, this attack was probably planned before the air strikes, during the period when the attacks on the La Belle disco and the U.S. visa section in Paris were being planned.¹² Since April 15, there has been very little Libyan-directed or supported terrorist activity recorded in Western Europe. Other Middle Eastern terrorist activity, however, has continued in the region. There have been 11 Middle Eastern terrorist attacks in Western Europe from April 15 to July 1. The most significant incidents involved attempts to smuggle explosives aboard Israeli El Al planes in London on April 17 and in Madrid on June 26. Both operations were designed to blow up the El Al planes in mid-air. Both operations were thwarted by El Al security officials during luggage check-in inspections. If these bombs had not been detected, over 350 people would have died. Syria has been linked to both of these incidents.¹³ In the attempt at Heathrow airport, an Arab was subsequently arrested who claimed that he had the support of the Syrian embassy in London. In the Madrid attempt, the Arab who was later arrested claimed to be a member of the Abu Musa group — an anti-Arafat dissident group supported by Syria. Moreover, on July 5, the Abu Musa group claimed responsibility for the Madrid attempt and also demanded that the Spanish government release the captured terrorist, calling him one of their "freedom fighters."¹⁴

The other nine Middle Eastern attacks after April 15 consisted of: (1) the previously mentioned Libyan-supported attempt on the U.S. Air Force officers' club on April 18; (2) the April 24 bombing of a British airways office in London (a suspected retaliatory attack for British support during the April 15 air strikes); (3) the April 25 grenade attack on a Saudi Arabian airline office in Vienna; (4) the April 25 attempted grenade attack on a Kuwaiti airline office in Vienna; (5) the May 2 attempt by a suspected Libyan-funded group to bomb a Bank of America office in Madrid; (6) the June 9 assassination of a top-ranking member of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) in Athens; (7) the June 19 bombing of the Italian Chamber of Commerce Office in Athens; (8) the June 19 attempted bombing of the Italian consulate in Athens (these June 19 attacks were most likely triggered by the start of the "Achille Lauro" hijacking trial in Genoa on June 18); and (9) the June 21 attempt to launch two anti-armor rockets at the Iraqi embassy in Vienna.

From January 1 to July 1, 1986, there have been 25 Middle Eastern terrorist incidents in Western Europe.¹⁵ Fourteen took place before the April 15 air strikes on Libya and 11 occurred afterwards. A brief survey

of the most significant of these attacks indicates that the trend toward more indiscriminate attacks by Middle Eastern terrorist groups has continued into 1986. The breakdown of the targets of these attacks also indicates that the trend toward more Middle Eastern attacks on Western targets has continued into the first half of 1986. Sixteen of these attacks were directed at U.S. and West European targets. Two were aimed at Israeli targets, and seven directed at other Arab or Palestinian targets. This would appear to confirm a trend which was started in 1985. For example, of the 158 Middle East terrorist incidents recorded in Western Europe from 1980-1984 (a five-year period), 102 or 65% were directed at other Arab or Palestinian targets, 28 or 17% were directed at Israeli or Jewish targets, 22 or 13% were directed at West European targets, and 6 or 5% were directed at U.S. targets. In comparison, of the 101 attacks recorded from January 1985 to July 1, 1986 (an 18-month period), 50 or 49% of the total were directed at Arab or Palestinian targets, 15 or 15% at Israeli or Jewish targets, 26 or 26% at West European targets, and 10 or 10% at U.S. targets.¹⁶ While the attacks by Middle Eastern groups continue to be aimed primarily at other Arab targets, there is a discernible shift toward more attacks on West European and U.S. targets.¹⁷

CONCLUSIONS AND PROJECTIONS

Middle Eastern terrorist activity in Western Europe will continue to be a major security concern for Western Europe and the United States in the immediate future. The Middle Eastern groups and states involved in the terrorist activity which took place during 1985 and the first six months of 1986 have given no indications that they are prepared to stop their activities in Western Europe. The region still has operational advantages over the Middle East or other regions. As long as there are inter-Arab conflicts, intra-Palestinian rivalries, Arab disagreement over a Middle East peace settlement, radical Middle Eastern states and groups which oppose the existence of Israel, Middle Eastern terrorists imprisoned in West European jails, and U.S. political and military involvement in the Middle East — especially U.S. support for Israel — there will be Middle Eastern terrorist activity in Western Europe. The political alliances may change and terrorist groups like the Abu Nidal organization may shift clients or patron states, but the use of political terrorism to settle Middle Eastern feuds and conflicts and to influence the Middle East policies of West European states will continue. The level of this activity will alternate between temporary lulls and periods of intensified activity. The lulls should not disarm us and the intensified activity should not surprise us.

After the April 15 U.S. air strikes on Libya it was generally agreed that there would be a period of increased terrorist activity directed either at the United States or some West European countries, especially Great Britain for its direct support of the U.S. raid. These retaliatory attacks did not take place, at least not at the level which was expected. There are reasons for this muted Middle Eastern terrorist response in the West European arena. First, the U.S. raid most likely caused some political confusion within the Qaddafi regime. This confusion prevented any type of well-planned terrorist response to the U.S. air strikes. Second, the

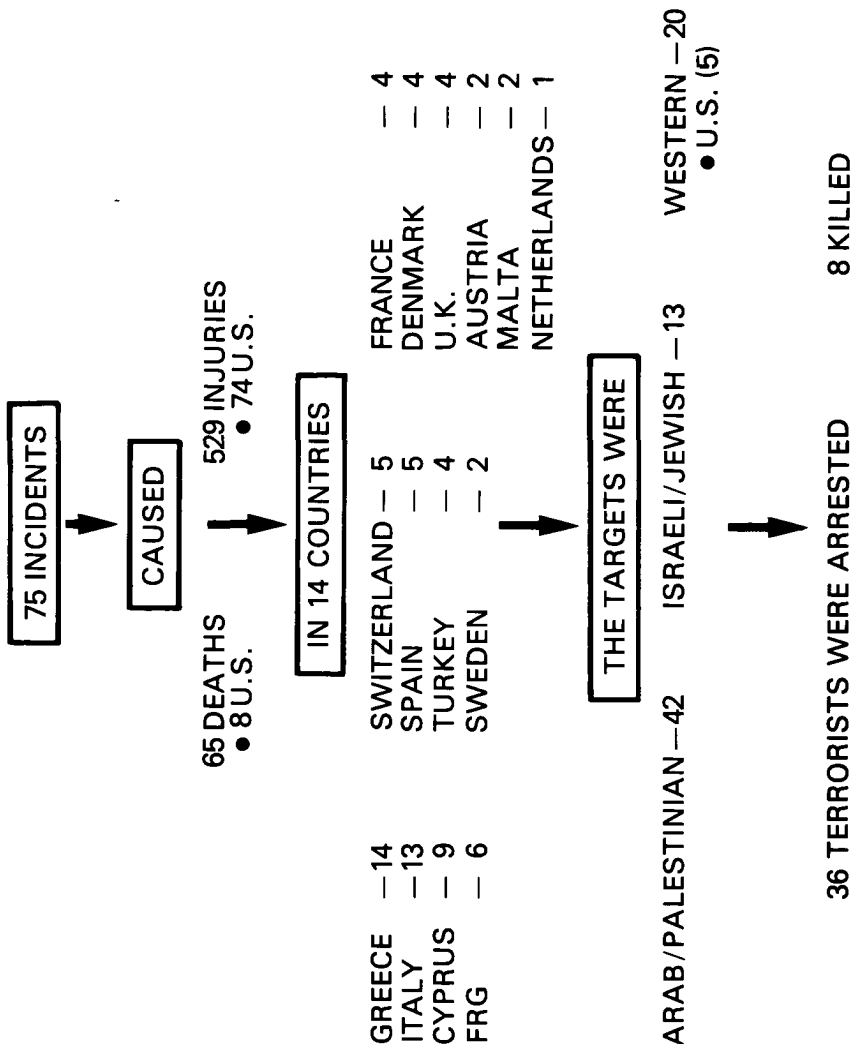
post-raid crackdown on Libyan "diplomatic" activities by West European countries no doubt disrupted the Libyan terrorist logistical infrastructure in the region.¹⁸ Third, the linking of Syria by the press to the bombing of the Arab-German club in West Berlin on March 30 and the April 17 attempt to blow up an El Al plane out of London's Heathrow airport has probably caused Syria to pull back temporarily from supporting terrorist activity in Western Europe. Fourth, the increased indigenous terrorist activity in June and July by groups like Action Directe, the Red Army Faction, and the Basque separatist group ETA-M most likely caused some Middle Eastern groups to postpone any operations in specific countries.¹⁹ There appears to be a correlation between periods of increased indigenous terrorist activity in Western Europe and the operational inactivity of Middle Eastern groups and *vice versa*. This is probably linked to the fact that security measures, police searches, and identity checks at border crossings and airports are intensified after bursts of terrorist activity, by either indigenous or Middle Eastern groups, thus making it difficult for other groups to operate.

These four negative factors which have combined to restrain Middle Eastern terrorist activity in Western Europe since the April 15 raid are temporary restraints. In time, the Libyans may develop an appropriate terrorist response to the April 15 raid. Middle Eastern groups may "plug in" to new logistical infrastructures in Western Europe. Moreover, it is possible that some of these groups may foster new ties with indigenous European groups in order to take advantage of the logistical aid these groups could provide. It is doubtful that Syria will permanently sheath its terrorist sword. It will continue to support terrorist attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets and, when the advancement of Syrian political objectives dictates it, against other Arab, European or U.S. targets.

The April 15 U.S. air strikes on Libya did not alleviate the Middle Eastern terrorist threat in Western Europe, for there are many components to this threat. Libya, although a major factor in this threat, is only one of many. The U.S. raid, combined with the subsequent security crackdown on Libyan People's Bureaus in Western Europe, has shown the Libyan regime that further support of terrorist activity against U.S. and West European targets will no longer be cost-free. A price will have to be paid. It is still too early to say if Libya will be willing to pay that price in the future. What can be said is that the U.S. raid has temporarily restrained Libyan support for terrorist activity and most likely caused it to re-evaluate any further support. As a limited form of negative reinforcement, the U.S. raid on April 15 has so far been successful. It is important to remember, however, that there are still other components of the Middle Eastern terrorist threat which must be dealt with. Some of these components are Middle Eastern states. Some are radical Palestinian terrorist groups. Some are deep-rooted, complex, Middle East political issues, emanating from conflicts whose resolutions must be achieved in the Middle East, not in Western Europe or the United States. These other components of the Middle East terrorist threat may be more difficult to contend with than the Libyan factor.

MIDDLE EAST TERRORIST ACTIVITIES IN EUROPE (1985)

CHART 1



**MIDDLE EAST TERRORIST ATTACKS
ON TARGETS IN EUROPE (1980-85)**
Total 233

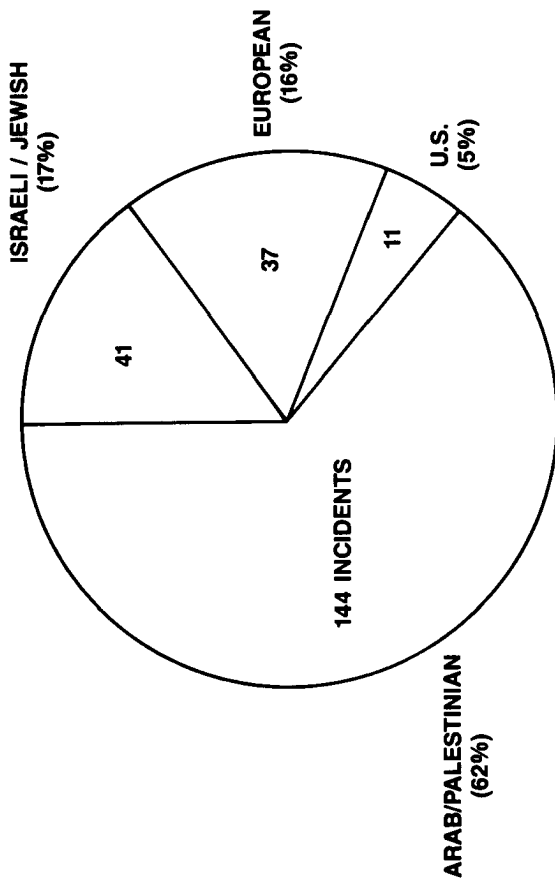


CHART 2

APPENDIX I

Selected List of Terrorist Incidents in Western Europe from 1985 to July 1, 1986 Attributed to Middle Eastern Groups

1985

- January 13 **Rome:** A Libyan diplomat was shot and killed.
- January 31 **Nicosia:** A Palestinian businessman was shot and wounded in his office.
- February 6 **Frankfurt:** A bomb exploded in an Iranian bank.
- February 12 **Limassol, Cyprus:** A bomb is defused outside an Israeli shipping company.
- February 23 **Paris:** A bomb exploded outside the Marks and Spencer department store. One person was killed and 15 were injured.
- February 27 **Madrid:** A bomb exploded in a Jewish-owned travel agency. Five people were injured.
- February 28 **Vienna:** A former Libyan ambassador was shot and wounded.
- March 1 **Rome:** A Libyan emigre businessman was shot and killed in his office.
- March 17 **Groedinge, Sweden:** An Iraqi defector, reportedly a former Iraqi intelligence officer, was murdered.
- March 21 **Rome:** A hand grenade was thrown into a Jordanian airline office.
- March 21 **Athens:** A hand grenade was thrown into a Jordanian airline office. Three people were injured.
- March 21 **Nicosia:** A hand grenade was thrown into a Jordanian airline office.
- March 29 **Paris:** A bomb exploded in a movie theatre sponsoring a Jewish film festival.
- April 1 **Rome:** A Syrian airline office was bombed. Three people were injured.
- April 2 **Nicosia:** A Libyan emigre businessman was shot and killed.
- April 3 **Rome:** An anti-tank rocket was fired at the Jordanian embassy.
- April 4 **Athens:** An anti-tank rocket was fired at a Jordanian airliner taking off from Athens rocket.
- April 6 **Bonn:** A gunman shot and killed a Libyan dissident. Two Germans were also wounded.
- April 12 **Madrid:** A bomb exploded at the El Descanso restaurant, just outside Madrid. Eighteen Spaniards were killed and 82 people were injured, including 15 Americans.

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- April 13 **Aachen, West Germany:** A Moroccan citizen was shot and killed.
- April 26 **Geneva:** A bomb exploded in a vehicle driven by a Syrian diplomat. A second bomb was found near another Syrian diplomat's residence.
- April 26 **Geneva:** A bomb exploded in front of a Libyan airlines office.
- June 2 **Geneva:** A bomb exploded at the Geneva railway station. A second bomb was defused at the Geneva airport.
- June 3 **London:** A bomb was found outside the Syrian embassy.
- June 5 **Athens:** There was an attempted assassination of a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).
- June 6 **London:** A bomb exploded at a Jewish-owned travel agency.
- June 14 **Athens:** A TWA plane was hijacked to Beirut. One American was killed.
- June 15 **London:** A bomb exploded near the "Swiss center."
- June 19 **Genoa, Italy:** A bomb exploded next to an Israeli shipping firm.
- June 19 **Frankfurt:** A bomb exploded at Frankfurt airport. Three people were killed and 42 injured.
- July 1 **Rome:** A bomb exploded in the transit luggage section at Fiumicino airport. Twelve people were injured.
- July 1 **Madrid:** A bomb exploded at British airways and TWA offices. One person was killed and 24 injured.
- July 1 **Madrid:** The Jordanian airlines office was attacked by terrorists with machine guns and hand grenades. Two people were injured.
- July 17 **Nicosia:** A bomb exploded in the home of a PLO representative.
- July 22 **Copenhagen:** Bombs exploded at the Northwest Orient airline office and a synagogue. One person was killed and 27 injured.
- July 24 **Ankara, Turkey:** A Jordanian diplomat was shot and killed.
- August 8 **Glyfada, Greece:** A bomb exploded in the bar of the London hotel. Thirteen people, mostly British tourists, were injured.
- August 9 **Bonn:** A letter bomb exploded at the Iranian embassy. One person was injured.
- August 18 **Istanbul:** A former Colonel in the Iranian police was shot and killed.
- August 27 **Istanbul:** A bomb exploded outside the El Al airlines office.

- September 3 **Glyfada, Greece:** Hand grenades were thrown into the Glyfada hotel. Nineteen British tourists were injured.
- September 15 **Copenhagen:** Bombs exploded in front of a Jewish food store and a travel agency specializing in trips in Israel. Twelve people were injured.
- September 16 **Rome:** Hand grenades were thrown at tourists sitting at the Café de Paris, an outdoor cafe on the Via Veneto. Forty people were injured, including 8 Americans.
- September 18 **Athens:** An Arab publisher and personal friend of Yassir Arafat was shot and killed near his office.
- September 24 **Stockholm:** A bomb exploded in front of the Iranian ambassador's residence.
- September 25 **Rome:** A bomb exploded in a British airways office. One Italian was killed and 14 injured.
- September 25 **Larnaca, Cyprus:** Palestinian terrorists killed three Israelis during an attack on a small boat in the harbor.
- September 30 **Amsterdam:** A bomb exploded next to the El Al ticket office.
- October 6 **Athens:** A Libyan emigre businessman was shot and wounded.
- October 7 **Athens:** Three bombs exploded at Libyan-related targets: a Libyan airline office, the Libyan consulate, and a car owned by a Libyan diplomat.
- October 7 **Genoa:** The Achille Lauro cruise ship, out of Genoa, was hijacked in the Mediterranean sea by Palestinian terrorists. One American was killed.
- October 9 **Barcelona, Spain:** The bodies of two Israeli seamen were found. The PLO terrorist group, "Force 17," claimed credit for the murders.
- October 21 **Athens:** A Libyan emigre was shot and killed.
- November 5 **Rome:** A bomb was found hidden in a calculator sent as a gift to the Iranian ambassador to the Vatican.
- November 8 **Nicosia:** A bomb exploded outside the Iraqi airlines office. A second bomb exploded under the car of the airline office Manager. He was killed.
- November 8 **Thessaloniki, Greece:** A hand grenade exploded outside the room of two Palestinian students.
- November 18 **Athens:** An Egyptian clerk was shot and killed.
- November 23 **Athens/Valleta, Malta:** An Egypt Air plane was hijacked during its flight from Athens to Cairo. The plane was diverted to Malta. The hijackers killed two people, including an American woman, and wounded five others, including two Americans.
- November 24 **Frankfurt:** A car packed with explosives explodes in the U.S. military post exchange. Thirty-six people were injured, including 33 Americans.

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- November 25 **London:** A letter bomb exploded inside the Iranian consulate. One person was injured.
- December 7 **Paris:** Firebombs exploded in two French department stores. Thirty-five people were injured.
- December 12 **Valletta, Malta:** A bomb exploded at the Libyan cultural center.
- December 27 **Vienna:** Terrorists attacked the El Al counter at the airport. Three people were killed, and 31 injured, including 2 Americans.
- December 27 **Rome:** Terrorists attack the El Al and TWA check-in counters at the airport. Sixteen people were killed, including 5 Americans. Seventy-four were injured (10 Americans).
- December 28 **Nicosia:** There was an attempt to booby-trap the car of the PLO representative.

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- February 3 **Paris:** A firebomb exploded in a shopping mall on the Champs-Élysées. Eight people were injured.
- February 3 **Paris:** A bomb was found and defused on the third level of the Eiffel Tower.
- February 4 **Paris:** A firebomb exploded in a crowded bookstore. Four people were injured.
- February 5 **Paris:** A firebomb exploded in a shopping mall. Twenty-six people were injured.
- February 16 **Rome:** The owner of an anti-Qaddafi radio station was shot and wounded.
- March 17 **Paris:** A Paris to Lyon express train was bombed. Nine people were injured.
- March 20 **Paris:** A bomb exploded in a shopping gallery on the Champs-Élysées. Two people were killed and 32 injured.
- March 20 **Paris:** A bomb, wrapped with nails, was found and defused in a crowded metro station.
- March 30 **West Berlin:** A bomb exploded in a German-Arab club. Seven people were injured.
- April 2 **Athens:** A bomb exploded aboard a TWA flight over Athens. Four Americans were killed and six injured.
- April 3 **Paris:** A bomb exploded outside the home of an Iranian opposition leader.
- April 5 **West Berlin:** A bomb exploded in the La Belle disco. Three people were killed, including two U.S. servicemen. Over 230 people were injured, including 72 Americans.
- April 7 **Stockholm:** A bomb exploded at a Northwest Orient airline office.
- April 10 **Lisbon:** A bomb exploded in front of the Air France ticket office.

- April 17 **London:** Security agents at El Al airlines intercepted a hidden bomb in the carry on luggage of an Irish girl at Heathrow airport.
- April 18 **Ankara:** Four Libyans were arrested near a U.S. Air Force officers' club. One was carrying a travel bag filled with six hand grenades.
- April 24 **London:** A bomb exploded at an office which housed the British airways and American airlines ticket offices.
- April 25 **Vienna:** A hand grenade was thrown at the Saudi Arabian airlines office. Another grenade was found outside the Kuwaiti airlines office.
- May 2 **Madrid:** Two terrorists were arrested attempting to place a bomb in a Bank of America office. The terrorists were linked to a Middle East group.
- June 9 **Athens:** A top level member of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine was shot and killed.
- June 19 **Athens:** A bomb exploded outside the Italian chamber of commerce office. A second bomb was found outside the Italian consulate.
- June 21 **Vienna:** Two anti-tank rockets were found aimed at the Iraqi embassy.
- June 26 **Madrid:** A bomb, intended to be smuggled aboard an El Al plane, exploded at the luggage check-in area for El Al airlines. Thirteen people were injured.

Endnotes

* The opinions expressed in this paper are solely the author's and should not be interpreted in any way as representing the views or policies of the U.S. Department of State.

1. This figure includes explosive devices discovered by police before they could detonate and devices which failed to detonate due to mechanical failure. The majority of these attacks were either claimed by a Middle Eastern group or subsequent investigation linked a Middle Eastern group to an attack. Some incidents, however, were attributed to a Middle Eastern group through "analysis," that is, the suspected link was made based on the target of the attack, method of operation, area of operation, and the timing of the attack (i.e., did it occur just after a "trigger event" in the Middle East?).

The annual figures for the number of Middle Eastern terrorist attacks in Western Europe and the fatalities and injuries caused are:

	Incidents	Fatalities	Injuries
1980	33	28	65
1981	20	11	214
1982	34	23	248
1983	24	10	113
1984	47	18	63
1985	75	65	529

The above figures (based on the author's files) are subject to minor changes as further investigation and subsequent arrests lead to responsibility for past attacks which, at the time, were not attributed to Middle Eastern terrorist groups.

2. Xavier Raufer, "Terrorisme: Les Reseaux Transnationaux Venus Du Moyen-Orient" (Terrorism: The Transnational Networks out of the Middle East), *Le Debat*, 39 (March-May 1986), p. 180.
3. Based on a report issued by the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C. on January 9, 1986 entitled "Libya Under Qadaffi: A Pattern of Aggression," pp. 7-11, and the author's article "Political Terrorism in Western Europe: Some Themes and Variations" in Yonah Alexander and Kenneth Myers, *Terrorism in Europe* (Croom Helm: London: 1982), p. 61.
4. This figure *does not* include the 58 passengers killed during the Egyptian counter-terrorist attack on the hijacked Egyptian Air plane in Valletta, Malta on November 24, 1985. For comparative purposes, indigenous terrorist groups in Western Europe (including the IRA and the ETA) were responsible for 133 deaths in 1985. If the IRA and the ETA were excluded, the figure would be 42.
5. The Abu Nidal organization used the commando name of "Black June" (after June 1976 when Syria fought the Palestinians in Lebanon) to attack several Syrian targets during the latter half of 1976. For example, on September 26, Black June terrorists attacked a hotel in Damascus causing 4 deaths and 34 injuries. Three of the terrorists were captured and publicly hanged in Damascus the next day. On October 11 the Syrian embassies in Rome and Islamabad were attacked by Black June. On December 1, Black June terrorists attempted to assassinate the Syrian Foreign Minister in Damascus. The Abu Nidal organization was based in Baghdad at the time of these attacks. For an excellent article on the Abu Nidal group and its relationships with radical Middle East states, see Aaron D. Miller "A Portrait of Abu Nidal: The Man Who Loves to Kill Americans" in the *Washington Post*, March 30, 1986, p. D1.
6. It is possible that the Abu Nidal's use of the commando name "Black September Organization" is a commemoration of the September 17, 1982 massacre in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon.
7. The number of Middle Eastern terrorist attacks against Western targets in Western Europe from 1980 to July 1, 1986 is as follows:

1980	1
1981	4
1982	8
1983	10
1984	5
1985	20
1986 (as of 7/1)	16

8. With the concurrent fall of the dollar it is difficult to assess accurately the effect of recent Middle Eastern terrorist attacks in Western Europe on tourism. However, it would appear that these attacks have had a major, negative impact on tourist travel to Western Europe, especially the Mediterranean countries — at least during the June 1985 to June 1986 period. Since the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 in June 1985, there has been a dramatic increase in press and magazine articles and television programs dealing with the effect of terrorism on tourism. Various polls indicate that Americans are afraid of traveling to Western Europe. A recent *Newsweek* poll taken between March 26 and 27, 1986 (before the bombing of TWA Flight 840 and the bombing of the disco in West Berlin) indicated that 61% of the Americans interviewed, if they had the opportunity to travel overseas this summer, would refuse to go because of the threat of terrorism. [*Newsweek*, April 7, 1986, p. 23]. See also the article "As U.S. Travel Abroad Declines, Europe Grieves" in the *New York Times*, July 13, 1986, p. 1. However, since the last major Middle Eastern terrorist attack on April 5 — the bombing of the La Belle disco — there has been a three month period of relative calm on the Middle East terrorist front in the Western Europe. There have been recent indications (airline bookings, passport applications) that American tourism may be starting to return to Europe.
9. The "Committee for Solidarity with Arab and Middle East Political Prisoners in Western Europe" is an apparent alias for the Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction (LARF). This is a Lebanese Christian group, tinged with Marxism-Leninism, formed in northern Lebanon in 1980. The LARF has claimed credit for six attacks against U.S. and Israeli diplomats in France from 1981-84. The LARF attempted to assassinate three U.S. diplomats in Paris and Strasbourg, and assassinated a U.S. Army attaché in January 1982 in Paris. There are currently three LARF members imprisoned in France and Italy. The group is ostensibly seeking the release of three terrorists being held in France: George Abdallah, the suspected leader of the LARF; an Armenian terrorist; and a pro-Iranian terrorist who attempted to kill former Iranian Prime Minister Bakhtiar in Paris in 1980. In communiqués issued on March 20 and April 7, the group also demanded that Italy release the two LARF members it is holding or else the group would "make the streets of Rome and its people subject to what is being witnessed in Paris."
10. Speech by President Reagan to the American people on April 14, 1986 from the White House.
11. *Washington Post*, April 19, 1986.
12. Reuter, April 18, 1986; Agence France Presse, April 20, 1986; and an interview with the Turkish Minister of Interior in *Cumhuriyet* (Ankara) on April 25, 1986.
13. *Washington Post*, June 1, 1986, p. 1, and the *New York Times*, July 16, 1986, p. A3.
14. Reuter, July 5, 1986.
15. See Appendix I.
16. See the article by Ennio Caretto in *La Stampa* (Rome), July 11, 1986. Caretto's article is based on comments made by the author to a U.S. Information Agency (USIA) seminar on terrorism, held at the U.S. Department of State on July 9, 1986 for members of the foreign press.
17. This shift is fueled somewhat by the fact that 12 West European countries are currently holding Middle Eastern terrorists in jail. Consider also that terrorists from the Abu Nidal group, one of the most active and dangerous Middle Eastern terrorist groups, are being held in Great Britain, Austria, Greece, Spain, Malta, and Italy. On March 2, 1986, the Abu Nidal organization issued a press release in Damascus on the occasion of welcoming back three members of the group who recently received early releases from prisons in France and Portugal. This press release noted that "the official spokesman renewed greetings to our freed comrades and the promise to the other comrades who continue to suffer exceptional circumstances to make every effort for their imminent return to our ranks and for their freedom."
18. A background paper by the U.S. Department of State (dated July 1, 1986) entitled "European Actions Against Libya's Terrorist Network" notes that West European countries have expelled more than 100 so-called Libyan diplomats and businessmen. The European actions reduced the staff of several key Libyan People's Bureaus (LPB) and imposed travel restrictions of those who remained. The LPB's and Libyan student organizations in Europe form the core of the Libyan terrorist network in the region.