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WASHINGTON POST 25 APRIL 1986 Pg. 19

Charles Krauthammer
Some Allies

*Whose side
are they on?*

What will we remember a year from now about the raid on Libya? Weinberger's line: that sickle-shaped line he drew on the night of the raid tracing the flight path of the U.S. planes that struck Libya. The head of the sickle is at Lakenheath air base in England. The base of its handle is in Tripoli. And the arc extends out into the Atlantic—repelled by France and Spain and Portugal—and down through Gibraltar to the Mediterranean.

Weinberger's line divides the Atlantic alliance in two. Margaret Thatcher chose our side of the line and asked the right question: Why was Sgt. Kenneth Ford, the American soldier killed by the Berlin bombing, in Berlin in the first place?

Sgt. Ford and his 358,000 fellow American soldiers formed a tripwire. Both sides know that NATO cannot withstand a conventional attack from the Warsaw Pact. The main purpose of American troops in Berlin is not to stop a Soviet invasion, but to die in one. In order to get to Europe, the Soviets have to kill Americans. Which forces America to go to war for Europe. And not just any war, but likely nuclear war.

So: If Ford dies at the hands of those who want to do Europe harm, the United States goes to war, perhaps even to suicide. Instead, on April 5, Sgt. Ford dies at the hands of those who merely want to do America harm. Europe's response? Weinberger's line.

That was last week. This week, another response: a joint decision on sanctions. Not military or economic, mind you. The allies refused even to

close Libya's foreign military bases, which are lightly disguised as embassies. Instead, they will restrict the number and travel of Libyan "diplomats" stationed at those embassies. They remain open for business, their principal business these days being the murder of Americans.

Oh, yes. And Europe has decided that a Libyan expelled by one country for terrorist activities would not be permitted to take up a post in another. Pseudo-actions of this kind can break alliances. Alliances always involve unequal burdens. But few can long survive the vast disproportion in NATO.

Nor the mendacious rationalizations that accompany European complacency. Former French foreign minister Michel Jobert, explaining France's refusal to give the U.S. planes overflight rights, gave a characteristically French response: We did not agree with you, so we did not follow you. *C'est tout.*

Denis Healey, foreign spokesman of Britain's pacifist Labor Party, felt obliged by Anglo-Saxon tradition actually to present a case. He claimed that the U.S. attack would not deter terrorism. In fact, states, for which terror is necessarily only one of many interests, are quite likely to be deterred by punishment. (Israel, for example, has completely eliminated state-sponsored terrorism from Egypt, Jordan and any terrorism coming across the Syrian border. The main source of anti-Israeli terror is Lebanon, where there is no state to be attacked and deterred.)

But even if Healey is right, it is simply wrong to judge the Libya raid solely on the grounds of deterrence, on whether "it works." There is the question of justice. The United States defended the raid by appeal to Article 51 of the U.N. Charter, which permits acts of self-defense.

Now, this is a valid, but very narrow rationale for an act so obviously just. Yet the administration felt obliged to invoke it because in our day the morally numbing language of international law has displaced traditional notions of natural law.

Why is it right, in domestic law, to

punish a murderer? Not simply because of the Constitution or a law passed by Congress, but because it is a universal, human—natural—sentiment that such evil be punished. The same moral sentiment applies to collective acts of murder, which is a good definition of state-sponsored terrorism.

That is why justice "feels good." Sophisticates like Healey and Jobert are offended by the notion that ordinary people derived satisfaction from the U.S. retaliation. In part, justice does satisfy a certain atavistic urge. But it also satisfies a deeper feeling: that there is a moral equilibrium in the world that must be maintained, that unpunished evil disturbs that equilibrium, and that too great a disequilibrium makes life morally intolerable.

—Euromendacity of the Healey-Jobert type will have two effects. First, the good news. After Libya, it is going to be very hard for American isolationists to try to prevent American action everywhere in the world by demanding that we first "consult with the allies." It is now clear to all that this is merely a way of advocating total inaction without appearing to do so.

We know that our allies are going to counsel restraint, i.e., passivity. Demanding that American allies lead (as in Central America) or act in concert with us (as in Europe) is to guarantee American paralysis. Imagine Grenada today had we entrusted its fate to, say, Contadora.

The bad news is that the continental drift in the Atlantic alliance will be vastly accelerated. Americans will not long assent to tripwires and suicide pacts if this is their reward. What starts with the withdrawal of American tourists ends in withdrawal of American soldiers.

Europeans believe that, now that America is a superpower, a return to isolationism is impossible. They are wrong. And if a look at American geography and history does not convince them, they might try meditating a while on Weinberger's line. Americans will be meditating on it for a long time.

WASHINGTON POST 25 APRIL 1986 Pg. 1

British Believe U.S. Was Target of Bomb

By Karen DeYoung
Washington Post Foreign Service

LONDON, April 24—Police suspect a bomb that exploded outside a British Airways office in central London early this morning was intended for the American Express facility located inside, sources close to the investigation said.

They said the bombing was believed "Mideast related," though there was no initial evidence tying it to Libya or any other country or group.

It was placed on the pavement just outside a side entrance to the building leading to an American Express currency exchange office. The main part of the building is a reservation and ticketing center for British Airways and American Airlines.

The explosion at 4:45 a.m. caused extensive damage to the building and nearby stores on Oxford Street, one of London's busiest shopping boulevards. The street was largely empty at the time and the only injury reported was to a woman standing about 100 yards away who was knocked down, but not seriously hurt, by the blast.

There was widespread acknowledgement by British officials and U.S. diplomats that the bombing had heightened fears among the U.S. business community here and potential American tourists that London is not safe.

In parliamentary statements today, both Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and opposition political leaders went out of their way to reassure Americans. "Britain is a safe and good country to come to," Thatcher said.

This morning's explosion followed allegations by the government in Tripoli yesterday that American and Israeli intelligence agents had planned a series of terrorist acts in Europe that would be blamed on Libya. The Libyans said the two governments would use the acts to justify further bombing raids on Libya such as the one on April 15, in which U.S. planes flew from British bases.

Sources here said that initial in-

vestigation had eliminated the possibility of involvement by the Irish Republican Army, which has been responsible for previous central London explosions.

"We suspect that it is Arab or Mideast related," said one source, who suggested it was a grim warning that they could still strike despite extra security precautions taken here in anticipation of Libyan retaliation for Britain's support of last week's U.S. air attack. They were "putting two fingers up to us to say 'we can still do it,'" he said.

All government buildings in Britain have been placed on "amber alert," the second highest of a four-level code. British Airways has also increased security at London offices and at airports.

Although only scattered threats have been reported, American businesses in Britain have felt particularly vulnerable. Some have removed identifying signs and company names from buildings housing their offices, and installed electronic surveillance equipment.

Last week, a group of executives representing U.S. companies here met to discuss security threats and precautions. Ironically, the meeting was called by American Express and took place at the U.S. Embassy, three blocks from this morning's explosion.

But despite their concern, some American companies are loath to demonstrate panic and anxious to demonstrate U.S. support for Thatcher, whose backing of the raid against Libya has been unpopular here. Reports early this week that ATT had decided to pull out of an upcoming trade fair, were quickly denied today both here and in the United States.

American diplomats have made public appearances here over the past several days saying they are advising U.S. citizens to come to Britain, and invest money here.

Although there have been widely reported cancellations by tourists and entertainers who had scheduled British appearances, only one U.S. company is so far believed to have

scaled back its plans. Petrolight, a St. Louis-based petrochemical firm, reportedly has decided not to send a team of executives to the opening of a plant here next week.

Meanwhile, criticism of Thatcher's role in the U.S. raid in Libya continued today with bitter parliamentary exchange between Thatcher and Labor Party leader Neil Kinnock.

Referring to a speech yesterday by President Reagan in which he said he was prepared to act again against Libya, Kinnock demanded that Thatcher "tell us frankly whether you would be prepared to endorse or assist in such a further similar raid."

Thatcher repeated assurances that permission granted U.S. planes to take off from British bases was one-time only. Further requests, she said, "would of course have to be considered . . . in the light of circumstances . . . at that time."

But Kinnock persisted, saying Thatcher had "now moved into the worst of all worlds, demonstrating both complicity and impotence" in relation to U.S. policy.

To mounting shouts and jeers from both sides of the parliamentary aisle, Thatcher retorted that Kinnock was seeking to "help the terrorist" by pushing for such answers to be given in advance.

Kinnock appealed to the Commons speaker to ask Thatcher to withdraw "a vile insult not acceptable in the bitterest exchanges."

Thatcher, in one of the House of Commons' rare apologies—rarer still for the combative prime minister—told Kinnock: "I did not seek to impute anything personal to you. If I did, I gladly withdraw it."

Labor moved quickly to capitalize on the exchange. In a televised interview this evening, deputy party leader Roy Hattersley said that Thatcher's remarks showed she was "out of control," and that her "character is becoming a problem for [her] Conservative Party."