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Terrorism Suspect Set Up by Friend

Drug Deal Said to Lure Alleged Hijacker

By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

Fawaz Younis, the accused Shiite Moslem hijacker arrested at sea by FBI agents, was apparently set up by a longtime friend and lured aboard a rented yacht with the promise of a drug deal and a shipboard party, according to informed sources.

The undercover operation last Sunday was the first arrest abroad by U.S. law enforcement officials of a suspected terrorist being sought under U.S. laws. It was denounced yesterday by Lebanon justice minister Nabih Berri, leader of the Shiite Moslem Amal movement, as "an attack against the honor of Lebanon."

During a news conference at his West Beirut home with other senior Amal officials, Berri called the incident "close to piracy in nature," Washington Post special correspondent Nora Boustany reported.

Berri said he had asked for a thorough investigation and indicated that he would take the steps necessary to "defend a Lebanese citizen in the first instance."

Younis, 28, is the alleged mastermind of the 1985 hijacking of a Jordanian airliner at the Beirut airport with two U.S. citizens and two U.S. "nationals" aboard. He was flown to the United States Thursday to stand trial for hostage-taking under 1984 legislation asserting "long arm" jurisdiction for terrorist activities involving American hostages.

U.S. officials remained guarded about the circumstances of Younis' arrest, but sources said yesterday that it began when Younis and a longtime friend left Beirut for a "holiday" in Cyprus.

"Once on Cyprus, the friend said, 'Let's go for a ride,'" one source recounted. "They get in a small launch, take it out to this yacht, and as soon as he walks on, bump, he's arrested."

FBI agents, male and female, were piloting the yacht, according to senior Justice Department officials. The identity of the craft remained secret, but one source speculated that it may have been "rented" from the Drug Enforcement Administration, which has offices on Cyprus.

Shiite sources in Beirut say that Younis, who is Lebanese, has been involved in drug trafficking and

smuggling and that he was expelled from the security arm of Amal earlier this year, Boustany reported. Senior Amal officials at the Berri news conference would not concede, however, that he was no longer part of the Amal movement. Justice Department officials described him as a full-time member of the Amal militia.

According to U.S. officials, he was lured by the prospect of buying drugs for resale later. Some sources said there was also talk of a party. In any case, the friend who accompanied Younis apparently dropped out of sight after Younis stepped onto the yacht, carefully positioned in international waters.

The FBI team took Younis further out in the Mediterranean where he was put aboard a U.S. Navy vessel that headed west for a rendezvous off Corsica with the U.S. aircraft carrier Saratoga. "It was several days' sail from where the pinch was made to where the Saratoga was," one official said.

The suspect was then flown to Andrews Air Force base here in a small transport jet capable of aerial refueling. The nonstop flight took about 13 hours.

"That's how we could say no other governments were involved," one official said of the midair refueling. "This was purely an American operation."

Now being held at Quantico Marine base, Younis has pleaded not guilty and is scheduled to return to the U.S. Courthouse here Tuesday for a bail hearing. His court-appointed attorney, Frank Carter, said he expects the government will seek "preventive detention."

Security at Younis' arraignment Thursday was the tightest in at least 20 years, according to courthouse veterans.

Some officials said it is ironic that Younis should be the first snared under the long-arm law. The 1985 hijacking involved an Arab versus Arab dispute and was not aimed at the few Americans who happened to be aboard. Other officials pointed out, however, that Younis was caught on videotape at a news conference making threats about the passengers and that the hijackers not only beat up Jordanian sky marshals on the plane, but blew up the craft after releasing those aboard.

Staff writer Nancy Lewis
contributed to this report.

PHOTO

Law's long arm makes hijack arrest

9-18-87
p. A3
Came from terrorism

By Sam Meddis
and Debbie Howlett
USA TODAY

A Lebanese hijack suspect was arrested by FBI agents — flexing “long-arm” anti-terrorism laws — on a boat in the Mediterranean, the Justice Department said Thursday.

Fawaz Younis, 28, of Beirut, was arrested Sunday after voluntarily boarding the FBI boat and was flown to the USA Thursday, authorities said.

NBC reported the CIA got Younis to board the boat on the pretext of a drug deal.

“This was the first such operation, but it will most certainly not be the last,” said Attorney General Edwin Meese.

Younis is accused of leading four heavily armed men — linked to Nabih Berri’s Amal Shiite group — who hijacked a Jordanian airliner in 1985.

Four USA nationals were on board. Their presence allowed the use of U.S. anti-terrorism laws that permit reaching around the world for an arrest.

Younis was arraigned on charges of hostage-taking, conspiracy and aircraft destruction for blowing up the plane. Maximum sentence: life.

Younis pleaded not guilty through an interpreter but was



AP
YOUNIS: Makes statement during 1985 hijacking

denied bail and is being held in an undisclosed location.

The action may have a price: The Rand Corp.’s Brian Jenkins said it “raises the question of will there be retaliation against the U.S. and, in particular, in the U.S.?”

Younis was the first arrest after two frustrations:

■ Failure to extradite Mohammed Ali Hamadi for the 1985 TWA hijacking that left a Navy diver dead. Hamadi faces trial in West Germany.

■ Inability to find Abu Abbas after the 1985 hijacking of the Achille Lauro ship. He vanished when freed by Italy.

Attack Analysis

U.S. Raid on Libya, Called Military Success, Heartens the Pentagon

Officials Say 'Smart Weapons'
And Interservice Planning
Were Vital to Outcome

Rebuke for Armchair Critics

By TIM CARRINGTON

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WASHINGTON — Pentagon officials have learned to dread post-mortem reviews of military forays. Even generally successful missions such as the invasion of Grenada generated accounts of confused planning and bungled execution, bringing criticism from Capitol Hill and demands for military reform.

So far, however, reports from last week's bombing raid on Libya haven't caused the usual chagrin. The U.S. forces hit all the designated targets, and only one U.S. aircraft was lost, for causes still being analyzed. The Air Force and Navy collaborated throughout the operation, without the communications failures that afflicted some past operations. Moreover, the technologies of "smart weapons," built into the U.S. arsenal beginning in the last years of the Vietnam war, paid off, or at least worked.

Regardless of whether the raid achieves its main objective of dampening terrorism, it will leave its mark on the U.S. defense establishment in two ways:

—It strengthens the U.S. commitment to high-technology weapons that many critics say are too costly and complex. High-tech weaponry was central to the operation and, in the view of the Pentagon, helped limit U.S. casualties.

—The apparently smooth planning of the mission validates calls for greater collaboration between the military services and more authority for theater commanders. Legislation to codify these organizational changes now seems to be a certainty.

Not Without Glitches

The raid wasn't without glitches. Five of the 18 F-111s flown down from Lakenheath in England turned back when they reached Tripoli because of mechanical problems. Two of the 14 A-6 fighter planes launched from the USS America aborted their missions as well. The Pentagon lived up to its reputation for military complexity by using more than 100 aircraft for a bombing raid that lasted 13 minutes. Moreover, damage reports from Libya call into question an early characterization of the strike as "surgical": Some of the targeted sites apparently suffered only limited damage, while hundreds of untargeted civilians and even a handful of foreign embassies suffered significantly.

U.S. officials contend that some of the damage may have been caused by Libyan missiles that missed their mark. Other problems reflect the difficulty of mounting a raid against targets in unknown territory at night. Pilots were ordered to turn back at the earliest sign of malfunctions that might have led them to the wrong targets or increased the risk of getting shot down.

But overall, the attack "demonstrates that the United States has the will and the power to attack successfully," says James McGovern, staff director of the Senate Armed Services Committee. He says the strike could answer the "armchair strategists" who have belittled the U.S. military performance in Grenada, Lebanon and Iran. Navy Deputy Undersecretary Seth Cropsey calls the mission "a logistical success. All targets aimed for were hit."

Today's Norm

The image of a more effective military machine comes none too soon for the Pentagon. After marshaling the largest peacetime arms buildup in history, the Reagan administration is facing charges of waste and mismanagement. It is fighting just to keep military spending even with inflation and to continue an arms-modernization program that is drawing increasing criticism for its cost and complexity.

Some of that criticism of complex new weaponry may soften. Defense analysts generally agree the bombing shows that high-technology warfare has become the norm today. "Libya is considered a third-rate power, but they still have a fairly sophisticated surface-to-air missile threat," says Mr. McGovern. "It's a further demonstration that high technology is what we need."

The head of the Washington office of one of the Pentagon's biggest contractors says: "The thing this operation clearly indicates is the importance of smart bombs," which locate their targets and home in on them with computerized guidance systems.

Pentagon Was Pleased

Smart munitions played a major role in the Libyan raid. Carrier-based A-7 and F/A-18 aircraft fired off Harm and Shrike missiles, which zero in on radar beams, to destroy radar facilities attached to Soviet-built SAM missiles poised to strike the U.S. planes. Jamming devices on the U.S. aircraft apparently tricked Libyan electronic equipment designed to track the enemy planes. Unable to target U.S. aircraft, the Libyans reportedly fired off the missiles in a wild barrage. "It was like they were setting off a Fourth of July fireworks display," one Navy aviator says.

In addition, the F-111s carried bombs with laser guidance systems, capable of "reading" the terrain. Although there may be later information showing some technical problems, Pentagon officials applauded the performance. "We've heard all this criticism of high-technology weapons," says an aide to Navy Secretary John Lehman. "But they worked beautifully."

A military consultant who advises the Pentagon on weapons technology says, "What you're seeing is the full maturation of technologies that were started in the late 1960s." Central to that maturation are recent policies to train soldiers and aviators in high-technology combat and to plan military tactics that make maximum use of technologically advanced weaponry.

In May 1984, six months after an unsuccessful bombing raid in Lebanon's Bekka Valley, Mr. Lehman warned Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger in a memorandum that hard lessons learned in Vietnam about the misapplication of technology seemed to have "slipped into memory." A Navy study of the raid concluded that the U.S. had employed "archaic tactics" that didn't match the technological advances in the weapon systems used. For example, the U.S. used A-6s, which are specially equipped to conduct nighttime raids, but flew them in broad daylight. During that raid, two U.S. planes were shot down, and a third was damaged significantly.

To remedy the problem, Secretary Lehman set up what he calls "Strike University," a school in high-technology bombing tactics, at the Naval Air Station in Fallon, Nev. Many of the aviators involved in the Libyan raid attended Strike University, the Navy says. When Gen. Bernard Rogers, the commander of U.S. and allied forces in Europe, began planning the Libyan strike two weeks ago, he took into account the Libyans' reputation for poor nighttime aviation and called for A-6s and F-111s, warplanes specifically designed for nighttime assaults.

Ironically, some analysts say one problem with the mission was that there weren't enough sophisticated munitions. Sen. Sam Nunn of Georgia, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, contends that the mission would have been less risky if the bombers had been equipped with so-called stand-off

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munitions, or missiles fired from a distance, rather than bombs that had to be dropped on targets from directly overhead.

"For too long, the Pentagon has relegated munitions to the bottom of the budget list," he says. "Stand-off munitions would have helped a great deal. We could have had more target options. As it was, we exposed our pilots and our planes to more danger." Pentagon officials say it is likely that the one F-111 that was lost during the raid was hit while flying over its target.

But Sen. Nunn, who in 1983 lambasted the Pentagon for sending Army and Navy forces into Grenada with incompatible radios, praises the collaboration that marked the Libyan raid. "I would say that the Navy and the Air Force were obviously able to communicate well," he says.

During the Libyan raid, Navy Hawk-eyes, command and control planes with powerful radar, patrolled the Libyan coast, directing information to the Air Force F-111 pilots as they closed in on their bombing targets. A nearby Aegis cruiser, an air-defense ship crammed with electronics, collected and compiled combat information from Air Force and Navy warplanes.

In addition, the services won praise for their well-coordinated timing during the raid, in which the F-111s flew about six hours from England to join the Navy forces in the Mediterranean and commence the bombing runs. Both Air Force and Navy officials said that there was a minimum of meddling from higher-ups in Washington. After President Reagan signed off on plans to move ahead with the strike, Gen. Rogers and Vice Admiral Frank Kelso, commander of the Sixth Fleet, set out the targeting plans and tactics.

The Air Force's participation itself may reflect a dose of interservice politics, however. Pentagon officials say that Gen. Rogers has long wanted to show that land-based forces, as well as naval hardware, could be used to project U.S. military power. When Gen. Rogers chose five major Libyan targets, it became necessary to include the Air Force, because the Navy carriers couldn't bomb all five sites simultaneously. Congressional staffers say that the Air Force lobbied for a role in the raid, but Pentagon spokesman Robert Sims denies this.

Last week's bombs weren't dropped from planes procured in the Reagan administration's buildup. The Air Force F-111 fighter-bombers and Navy A-6 fighters were mostly bought during the 1970s, a period Defense Secretary Weinberger often calls "the decade of neglect."

What the Reagan administration can claim credit for is the fact that the airplanes were ready to go into combat. The week before the raid, Gen. Rogers asked if the aircraft carriers America and Coral Sea needed spare parts or munitions. Neither did, a Navy officer said, adding that five years ago these ships were "cross-decking" vital equipment, or trading it back and forth, because there weren't sufficient supplies for both.

In addition, the F-111s, which have a history of being hard to maintain and operate, were in better shape as a result of a new maintenance depot the Air Force set up in England three years ago. The Air Force had also entered a contract with British Aerospace Co. to carry out the maintenance work, which before had been deferred or scheduled for remote maintenance shops in the U.S.

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Meanwhile, Congress is awaiting more detailed information on which sites were hit and how badly they were damaged. "Did we really hit high-value targets?" Sen. Nunn asks. "Most of the damage I've seen seemed to be to buildings. I would have tried to cut off their money—that means oil."

The Pentagon could also find itself in the middle of a nasty fracas if it is revealed that the strike was intended to kill Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi, as well as destroy terrorist and military bases. U.S. policy forbids assassinations of national leaders but administration officials said they attacked the area around Col. Qadhafi's family residence because it was a command center for the terrorists. Sen. Nunn, who was briefed the day of the strike, says that if Col. Qadhafi himself was the target, "then we were misinformed."

Cranston, GOP Senate Candidates Support President on Libya Attack

177A

By KEITH LOVE, Times Political Writer

Democratic Sen. Alan Cranston, who often opposes President Reagan's foreign policy decisions, said Tuesday he supports the President's decision to bomb Libya because it was based on proof that Libya is behind some terrorist attacks on Americans.

"Terrorism is as despicable as war and it must be stopped," Cranston said in a statement released by his Washington office. "Failure to act after we had proof of Libyan terrorism would have given credence to the view that America lacks the will to stand up and fight against terrorism."

"We sought economic and diplomatic action against Libya but our European allies refused to cooperate. The United States then had to act alone. . . ."

The senator also found himself in agreement with the seven Republican contenders who want to get their party's nomination to oppose him in November. All strongly supported Reagan's action, as did Republican Sen. Pete Wilson, who spoke out on the matter Monday night.

A longtime supporter of a nuclear arms freeze and a leading opponent of Reagan's desire to arm the *contras* fighting the Nicaraguan government, Cranston believes that the Libyan situation is special, according to his press secretary, Murray S. Flander.

Alan has made it clear he is not

a pacifist and that he is not against force when force is the only alternative," Flander said. "His horror of terrorism is reflected by his willingness to support the use of force."

However, Cranston was pessimistic about whether Monday's attack on Libya would curtail terrorism.

"I hope and pray that the President has embarked America on a course of action that will succeed in quelling terrorism," he said. "Unfortunately, we cannot expect that result soon. We must anticipate more violence. I deeply regret that Americans—including Capt. Paul Lorence of San Francisco—are missing in action and that Libyan civilians reportedly have been wounded and killed."

Senate Candidates' Views

Here is what the Republican U.S. Senate candidates had to say:

Los Angeles County Supervisor Mike Antonovich: "I strongly support President Reagan's action. . . . For too long our policy has been a defensive one."

State Sen. Ed Davis (R-Valencia): "I think it will go down in history as how a democratic leader should protect his people."

Rep. Bobbi Fiedler (R-Northridge): "I am strongly behind the President's effort to try to stem the tide of terrorism. . . . I always hope it will not be necessary to

repeat these actions but I feel confident that the President believes if [Libyan leader Moammar] Kadafi continues to represent a significant threat to the people of our country that he will act in a decisive way to prevent that threat from becoming a reality."

Former commentator Bruce Herschensohn, long a proponent of retaliation against terrorists: "You either wage war against terrorism or you surrender to it. . . . I would hope that in the future every act of terrorism against a U.S. citizen is met quickly with a response."

Economist [redacted] a supporter of economic incentives to create jobs, thinks that economic incentives might be useful in fighting terrorism: "I would have preferred that he [Reagan] have used bounties on bringing the people to justice and trial. . . . If you bring the guy into justice you get \$2 million or \$3 million. . . . But I love what the President did."

Assemblyman Robert Naylor (R-Menlo Park): "The President responded with appropriate force. [If Libya responds] the President ought to consider a naval blockade."

Rep. Ed Zschau (R-Los Altos): "This was a preemptive strike targeted on facilities that the Libyans have used to prepare for terrorist attacks. It was the right thing to do and I totally support it."

TERRORISM

Issue:

How can the United States improve its ability to deter, protect against, and respond to terrorist attacks?

Objectives:

- o Improve international cooperation to detect, deter, and combat terrorism bilaterally with allies, and multilaterally in groupings of like-minded states and other international fora.
- o Enhance operational capabilities and inter-governmental coordinating mechanisms to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks.
- o Continue refinement of legal instruments and agreements to counter terrorism, including steps for the extradition and prosecution of persons involved in terrorism.

Accomplishments:

- o The Tokyo Economic Summit in May promulgated an important statement condemning international terrorism and pledging maximum Allied cooperation to combat it.
- o The United States responded militarily to Libyan-sponsored terrorism by striking terrorist-related targets in Libya after the West Berlin disco bombing, and reports of other ongoing Libyan-directed terrorist acts.
- o The EC and the Summit Nations agreed to ban arms shipments to Libya, and to discourage their nationals from filling in behind the American firms and workers who left Libya.
- o The Tokyo Summit also accepted the American-originated proposals for restricting Libyan diplomat missions and tightening up visa requirements.
- o Western European countries expelled more than 100 Libyan "diplomats" and "businessmen" since the bombing of the Berlin disco in April, and the subsequent U.S. military operations against Libya, throwing off balance the Libyan terrorist network.
- o Many potential terrorist attacks on U.S. citizens or facilities abroad were identified and thwarted by the end of 1985 by improved intelligence and stronger security and cooperation with other governments.

- o Quick and decisive action to intercept the Egyptian airliner carrying the Achille Lauro hijackers resulted in their capture and trial. The hijackers have been convicted and sentenced to prison by Italian courts.
- o Some 2700 officials from 33 countries have been brought to the United States for specialized counter-terrorism training under the Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program.
- o U.S. initiatives and/or support at the U.N. obtained passage of a Security Council resolution condemning the taking of hostages; Security Council Presidential statements condemning specific attacks, and a broad U.S. General Assembly resolution condemning terrorism as a criminal act.
- o At U.S. initiative, two U.N. specialized agencies, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), are drafting improved security guidelines.
- o The Public Diplomacy Working Group established under the joint sponsorship of the IG/T and the International Information Committee, has helped coordinate public affairs activities related to Libya, including "white papers" and media appearances.
- o A major program to enhance the physical and operational security at diplomatic posts abroad has been initiated; a follow-up to implement the program is being acted on by Congress this year.
- o A protocol to the U.K. extradition treaty which narrows the political offense exceptions has been ratified by the Senate. Similar treaty modifications are being negotiated with other countries.
- o As authorized under 1984 legislation, rewards of up to \$250,000 have been offered for Abu Abbas for the Achille Lauro hijacking, the TWA 847 and Kuwait 221 hijackings, and the murders of six Americans in El Salvador.
- o We have established a system of coordinated threat alerts from all members of the U.S. intelligence community to provide more timely and accurate information on terrorist threats to our overseas missions, reducing the problem of duplicate warnings and reporting.

- o Implementation has begun of a number of important anti-terrorism provisions in the Foreign Aid Authorization bill for 1986 and 1987, which Congress passed and the President signed into law in August of 1984. These provide for additional sanctions against countries supporting terrorism or maintaining unsafe airports and authorize additional funds for the ATA program and research and development on equipment to detect explosives.

Talking Points:

- o Terrorism is a worldwide phenomenon which is becoming increasingly frequent, indiscriminate, and state-supported. Terrorism is likely to be a prominent factor on the international political landscape for the rest of the century. It directly attacks our democratic values and interests and our diplomatic efforts for peaceful solutions to conflict.
- o The nature of the international terrorist threat is evolving. Recent developments include the rise of state-supported terrorism through the use of surrogates.
- o The number of terrorist attacks has been increasing. There were more than 800 terrorist incidents last year, compared with an annual average of about 500 in previous years. During recent months, we have seen the bombing of TWA 840, and a discotheque in West Berlin. However, the raid on Libya has sent an unmistakable signal to terrorists and sponsors of terrorism that the U.S. will not stand idly by in the face of attacks or threats against Americans.
- o Terrorist attacks are likely to become increasingly violent -- the number of casualties and fatalities generally has grown with the number of incidents.
- o A broader spectrum of citizens is likely to fall victim to terrorism, as exemplified in the Rome and Vienna airport attacks in December 1985.
- o This is not solely an American problem; terrorism has been directed against a broad range of countries. Nonetheless, the U.S. is a prime target of terrorist acts overseas due to our extensive official and commercial global presence. Our citizens and facilities are readily accessible, our democracy and freedoms are directly opposed to the interests of many terrorist groups.
- o U.S. policy on terrorism is unequivocal: we will make no concessions to terrorists. We will pay no ransoms, nor will we permit releases of prisoners or agree to other acts which might encourage additional terrorism. We will make no changes in U.S. policy because of terrorists' threats or acts. In countering terrorism, we are prepared to act unilaterally or in conjunction with other nations in a wide range of options appropriate to the situation at hand.

- o The preemption of terrorist attacks on American targets in France and Turkey, and the decisive action against Libya after their sponsorship of the terrorist bombing of the West Berlin discotheque, demonstrated the increasing effectiveness of the current U.S. policy on terrorism.
- o The Department of State is assigned the lead interagency role in combatting terrorism outside the United States. The State Department's Office for Counter-Terrorism deals with the problems of international terrorism on two levels: in its coordinating role within the Department of State, and in its similar role as head of the Interdepartmental Group on Terrorism.
- o In February, the Vice President's Task Force on Combatting Terrorism published its public report endorsing U.S. policy against terrorism and recommending additional measures to improve the national program. A Presidential directive was signed to implement all of the recommendations.
- o Efforts to counter international terrorism include a major effort within the U.S. Government and with friendly governments to improve our intelligence on the identity, objectives, plans, capabilities, and locations of terrorist organizations. We have increased efforts to inform the public, both here and abroad, about the international terrorist threat, and the need to be alert in helping to combat it.
- o Additional unilateral efforts to counter terrorism include continuing to improvements to the security of U.S. installations overseas, stepped-up training for U.S. employees, and improvements in the collection, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence information. Laws passed in recent years, such as the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, (which provides for the Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program, the Air Marshall program, and Foreign Airport Security procedures), have also strengthened the anti-terrorism effort.
- o Multilateral steps include the Tokyo Summit declaration against terrorism; U.N. conventions against attacks on diplomats and the taking of hostages, and the Summit Seven's Bonn Declaration, which provides for concentrated action against states that fail to take appropriate legal action against hijackers.
- o International cooperation in countering terrorism is imperative. We cannot succeed alone when the threat originates, and is carried out abroad where other governments have the principal responsibility for security and law enforcement.

- o We continue to encourage other countries to take an active stand -- through diplomatic, legal, and economic means -- against terrorism. They are, after all, frequently as much the victims of such attacks as we: citizens or installations of 90 countries were hit by terrorist attacks in 1985.

TIME/APRIL 21, 1986

COVER STORY

Targeting Gaddafi



Reagan readies revenge on a "mad dog"

By Sunday morning they were back on station in the central Mediterranean north of Libya: the carriers *America* and *Coral Sea*, 14 escort warships and two other support vessels. Once again, as in the clashes around the Gulf of Sidra three weeks ago, the flattops were prepared to launch their 160 fighters and bombers against targets in the desert country of

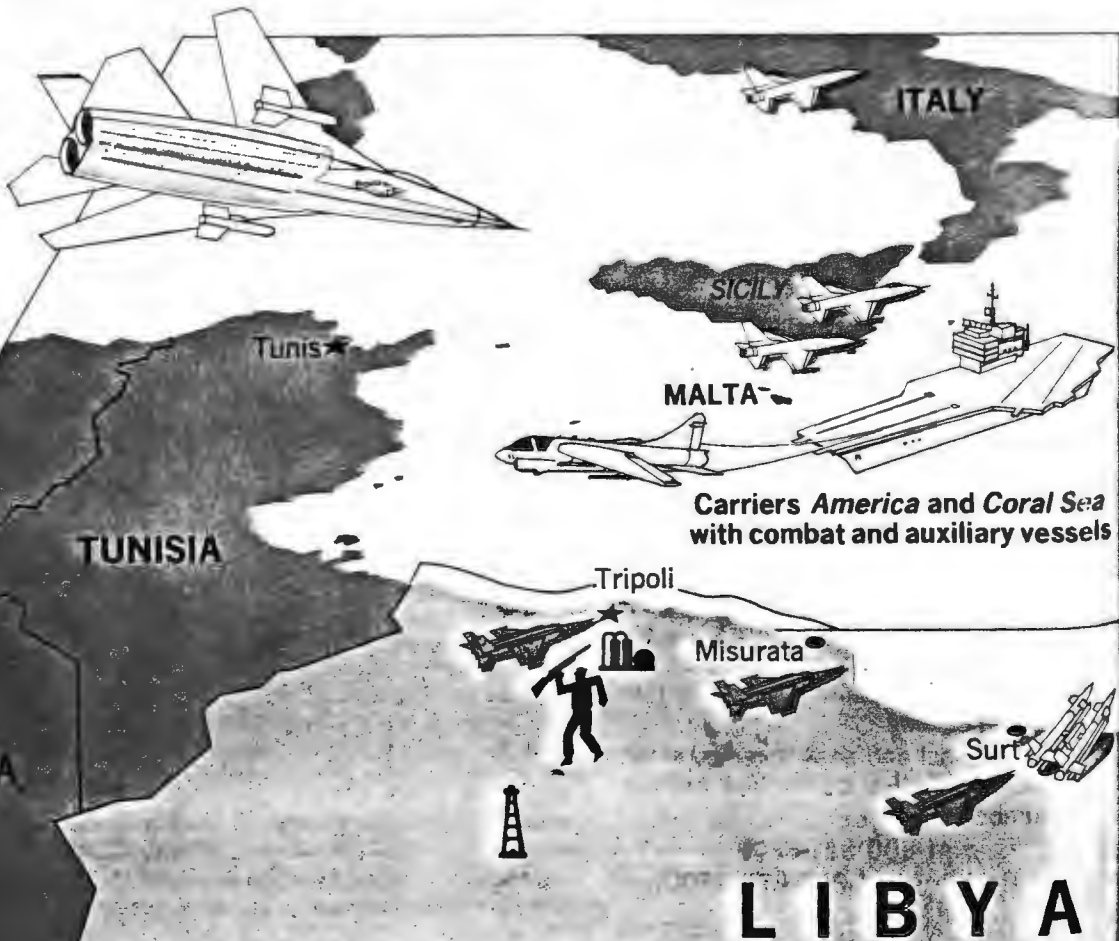
Dictator Muammar Gaddafi. But this time there was no pretext that the exercise was to assert the right of free passage in international waters.

Nor was there the expectation that any American attack would depend on whether Libya fired first. Libya had already fired—choosing once again the weapon of a terrorist bomb. After countless unheeded warnings and after futile attempts to

counter terrorism with economic and political sanctions, the U.S. Sixth Fleet was poised to strike the type of blow the Reagan Administration had threatened—and anguished about—for so long.

The world watched something it had never seen before: the U.S. Navy moving into position so that the Commander in Chief could have the option of militarily punishing another nation for its spon-

America's forces arrayed last week in the region included two aircraft carriers, with a combined total of some 160 planes, and at least 18 combat and auxiliary vessels, including the U.S.S. *Ticonderoga* with its sophisticated Aegis air-defense system. Additional ships are in the area, though the carrier *Saratoga* steamed home last week. At week's end the carriers *America* and *Coral Sea* sailed farther from Libyan waters to rendezvous off the coast of Sicily, still within range of likely targets.



Carriers *America* and *Coral Sea* with combat and auxiliary vessels



PHOTOGRAPH BY AP/WIDEWORLD

the first time, a U.S. President was prepared to punish militarily another country for its sponsorship of international terrorism

doubt. The question, rather, was whether the Administration was ready to take the risks of ordering a hard, unilateral strike. Those risks are both obvious and grave. Some U.S. pilots and other service members might be killed carrying out bombing runs of the scale being contemplated. Even severe military damage might not cow Gaddafi into calling off or slowing down terrorist attacks. On the contrary, he might intensify them, as he seems to have done after the Gulf of Sidra battle. Might Gaddafi carry out terrorist attacks inside the U.S., as he has often threatened to do? "We certainly do not overlook that possibility," said a grim-faced Ronald Reagan during his news conference.

Even a clash with Gaddafi's Soviet allies, though it seems highly unlikely, cannot be ruled out. Soviet technicians prudently managed to be elsewhere when American missiles hit anti-aircraft radars three weeks ago, but there is a possibility that some might be killed in a new strike. The Soviets, however, appeared to be as perplexed as everyone else about what might happen and what, if anything, they ought to do. "There have been no guarantees concerning action or nonaction on the part of the Soviet Union," said Valery Sukhin, a Foreign Ministry spokesman, at week's end. Georgi Arbatov, a top Kremlin adviser on American affairs, growled on U.S. television that Moscow had no deal to defend Gaddafi against the U.S.

and added that the Libyan leader does not always tell the truth.

Asked point-blank at his Wednesday press conference to confirm or deny reports that he had already decided on a military response, Reagan grew visibly uncomfortable and replied, "This is a question that, as I say, is like talking about battle plans or something. It's not a question that I feel I could answer." In fact, the President that morning had approved a tentative decision to launch an attack. The decision was made by the National Security Council, meeting in the Oval Office (minus Vice President George Bush and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, who were both traveling).

The NSC studied the evidence concerning the disco bombing and the intercepted messages indicating that Gaddafi was ordering a new wave of terrorist attacks. Admiral Crowe voiced his concerns about firepower, and CIA Director William Casey about getting agents out of Libya. But they and everyone else present agreed with Shultz, who said, "We have taken enough punishment and beating. We have to act." For the sake of tactical surprise, it was agreed that the assault should be launched by carrier planes as soon as the flattops could get into position. Reagan directed that all precautions be taken to minimize casualties to Libyan ci-

vilians. Nonetheless, he told the council that it had his authority to proceed—"but let me know the plan you decide upon before you launch the attack."

After the President's news conference, a news blackout came down. White House Spokesman Larry Speakes opened a press briefing the next morning by announcing that he would answer no questions about Gaddafi or Libya. With or without any real information, however, enough people were speculating about the details of the operation to cause the Administration to feel that it was becoming impossible to maintain tactical surprise. It also became extremely difficult to keep open the option of making no major response to the most recent terror attack. "There's no question we created a bit of a Frankenstein's monster," said an NSC official on Friday. "In a way, I guess, we meant to do that. But the monster was supposed to spook Gaddafi."

Doubts and worries grew, and by Friday, says a top intelligence official, "we knew that we were doomed. Too many people were talking freely about the operation and too many operational details were already out. We had to postpone." About noon on Friday NSC hastily convened again in the Oval Office and got the President's agreement for a postponement of indefinite duration. Reagan, says one participant, "was furious. He realized that the operation had to be put off but

wanted to make sure that in the future no more leaks will get around."

A full-fledged reconsideration of options—whether to reschedule an attack, and if so what kind and when—looked unlikely until Sunday at the earliest. By then, Bush and Weinberger would be available. Bush was on a ten-day trip to Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf nations, and arrived back Saturday night. Weinberger had been touring the Philippines and Pacific region; he arrived in Hawaii on Friday night and left for Washington Saturday.

As Bush and Weinberger were flying home, General Vernon Walters, the veteran troubleshooter and current U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., was beginning a

swing through at least four West European capitals. "Basically, we want to tell allies where we are and what could happen," said one American official. Walters' first stop was on Saturday in London, where he met with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi announced that he would receive a presidential envoy on Monday.

Western Europe's predominant response to the threat of an American strike against Libya has been skittishness, again with the exception of Britain. While hardly eager to see a military clash, London made clear that it would approve an American blow that could be represented as a form of self-defense, and officials said retaliation for the disco bombing would

qualify. Italy would be closest to any new U.S.-Libyan fighting; during the Gulf of Sidra battle it sent interceptor planes aloft, just to be ready in case some of Gaddafi's aging Soviet-built Tupolev bombers should try to attack NATO bases in Sicily. The Italians seemed to be bracing for a re-run of that experience; Prime Minister Craxi declared publicly last week that the problems of the Mediterranean "certainly cannot be settled by a military blitz," but Americans say the Italians have made no attempt in private to talk the U.S. out of a retaliatory strike.

Kohl, on the other hand, declared that "my advice would always be to avoid such acts of military reprisal until you know what you are starting and how you



La Belle disco in West Berlin after the terrorist blast

Seeking the Smoking Fuse

Uncle Sam is always listening. With high-tech spy satellites, ships jammed with electronic gadgetry, super-sophisticated listening posts around the globe and eavesdropping devices—and sometimes with the help of plain old-fashioned human spies—the U.S. constantly monitors many of the key telephone conversations and cable traffic of its friends and foes alike. The U.S. intelligence community does not want to reveal which of these methods it used to listen in as Colonel Gaddafi sent orders from Tripoli to his far-flung terror network. But U.S. officials insist there is little doubt that a fortnight ago the U.S. intercepted communications that specifically link Gaddafi with the bombing of a West German disco that claimed the life of a U.S. serviceman and injured 230 people, including dozens of off-duty American soldiers.

Indeed, it appears that the U.S. almost learned about the bombing plot in time to warn American soldiers to stay out of Berlin's nightspots before the terrorists struck. Military police were already moving to alert G.I.s in the streets of Berlin when the bomb decimated La Belle disco. "We were about 15 minutes too late," NATO Commander General Bernard Rogers told a school audience in Atlanta last week. According to high-ranking intelligence officials, the U.S. intercepted a message from Gaddafi's headquarters to his henchmen in the Libyan "people's bureau" in East Berlin informing them that terrorists, probably Palestinian, would

strike at locations in West Berlin where Americans are known to congregate. U.S. intelligence also reportedly picked up a communication from Tripoli offering "congratulations" after the blast. Asserted a top National Security Council official last week: "We have Gaddafi up to his ears in this bombing operation."

The U.S., of course, needs to be able to prove Gaddafi's complicity in order to justify reprisals, particularly military measures. The lack of "hard evidence" is constantly cited as a pretext by uneasy allies seeking to sidestep firm measures against the supporters of terrorism. Not everyone was satisfied with what Washington felt it could safely reveal. West German intelligence officials, who were provided with abbreviated and heavily edited summaries of the intercepted transmissions, accepted that there was some Libyan complicity in the Berlin bombing but were unwilling to hang all the blame on Gaddafi.

American intelligence officials faced a familiar dilemma: by disclosing too much they risked compromising their secret sources and methods of gathering intelligence. In fact, by revealing that they had broken the Libyan diplomatic code, they inevitably caused the Libyans to change it and become more careful about using the telephone. "The leaks have caused us a setback," conceded one National Security Agency official last week. "It will now take us more time to break the new codes, and in the meantime, we will be kept in the dark."

U.S. officials are somewhat doubtful of finding a Gaddafi link to the bombing of a TWA jet two weeks ago that cost four lives. The evidence so far remains sketchy, though intelligence experts were at least familiar with the type of bomb used to blow a hole in the airliner's fuselage. The timing device of the highly sophisticated bomb is activated by pressure—in this case, when a passenger sat on the seat under which it was placed. A similar bomb had exploded aboard a Pan Am flight from Tokyo to Honolulu in 1982. According to intelligence reports, only one terrorist is known to have the expertise to make this kind of bomb: a man who goes by the code name Rashid. Already a legend in the international terror network for his talents, Rashid was believed to be working for a terrorist group called the May 15 or Abu Ibrahim organization. The May 15 group works for the Syrian intelligence service, not Gaddafi, say U.S. officials. Indeed, a prime suspect in the case, May Elias Mansur, who is believed to have planted the bomb's detonator under the seat before getting off the flight during a stopover in Athens, has been linked to Syrian terrorist groups. But why would the Syrians get involved in this particular terrorist operation? One NSC official admitted that the U.S. is "still fishing" for clues—and still hoping that they will ultimately lead to Gaddafi's doorstep.

Nation

are going to get out of it at the end." Other Germans elaborated by voicing a worry that is widespread in Europe: U.S. retaliation will prompt more terrorist attacks that will occur primarily in Europe; even if the principal targets are American, Europeans will get killed too. Says one West German government official: "The more the Americans hit Libya, the more the Libyans will hit back at U.S. targets in West Germany. We are more than a little bit afraid that we are going to be directly involved in the middle of their war."

France and West Germany each booted out two Libyan diplomats, though not, they insisted, in response to U.S. pressure. Spain, angered by a Gaddafi threat to mount terrorist attacks in all countries that harbor U.S. bases, recalled its Ambassador from Tripoli "for consultations."

There were signs that the prospect of a U.S. military attack, combined with Gaddafi's vengeful bluster, was galvanizing European allies into talking about taking further steps. At a press conference in Tripoli, Gaddafi vowed to answer any U.S. strike by fomenting terrorist attacks in all the cities of southern Europe. An alarmed Italian Prime Minister Craxi phoned his Spanish counterpart, Felipe González, to suggest that a meeting of foreign ministers of the twelve European Community nations be held right away. The meeting was scheduled first for Wednesday, then for Monday. Its apparent purpose: to draft some European-wide program of economic and political sanctions that might hold enough promise of hurting Gaddafi to persuade the U.S. to call off a military blow.

Contingency planning by the Pentagon and CIA has by now given Reagan and his commanders a wide range of options to choose from, and targets to select, if they again decide to strike. Israeli officials late last week claimed that State Department Under Secretary Michael Armacost had told them the U.S. has identified more than 30 potential Libyan targets, ranging from airfields to oil depots; Washington reports add such intriguing items as Gaddafi's personal living quarters. Under one scenario, attack planes launched from the Sixth Fleet carriers could be joined by F-111s from Britain (the British reportedly have given their consent) and even by B-52 bombers flying from bases in the U.S.

Some plans have been drawn in impressive detail. One involves three waves of carrier-based planes that would strike in quick succession under cover of pre-dawn darkness. First, fighter planes

would launch missiles that home in on radar to knock out once again the radars at the SA-5 missile sites at Surt and Benghazi. Then, attack planes would wing in low and fast to knock out the missiles and their launchers. Once they had been destroyed, the third wave would hit adjacent airfields, destroying the runways so that Gaddafi's 550 combat aircraft could not scramble to counterattack the fleet. Supposedly, all that would take little more than an hour, at the end of which Libya would be crippled militarily at the price of a handful of U.S. casualties.

TERRY ASHE



General Bernard Rogers said last week that the U.S. had "indisputable evidence" that Libya was behind the Berlin disco bombing. As Commander in Chief of U.S. European forces, Rogers has the responsibility of the Sixth Fleet.

BELLAGE—UPI/REUTERS



Vice Admiral Frank Kelso, commander of the Sixth Fleet, led his carrier groups back into the central Mediterranean. After directing the fighting in the Gulf of Sidra last month, Kelso praised the performance of his men as "first rate."

Another likely group of targets consists of communications facilities: radio-TV stations, ground-to-satellite stations and dishes, main telephone terminals. Knocking them out would, in theory, virtually cut Libya off from the outside world, at least for a time. Other potential targets offer both rewards and drawbacks. Hitting two training camps for terrorists that are known to operate near Tripoli and Benghazi would most closely fit the punishment for terrorism to the crime of inciting and supporting it. But the camps are thought to be empty right now, and when occupied they are also heavily used to train young recruits for the Libyan army, who bear no responsibility for Gaddafi's terrorism. Bombing oil jetties and other installations could cripple Libya's economy, but at the possible price of killing German, Italian and other foreign technicians still working in the Libyan petroleum industry—and possibly even some Americans. There were 1,500 in

Libya in January, and some may have disobeyed Reagan's order to get out of the country. The Libyan intelligence-service headquarters, from which Gaddafi and aides launch terrorist operations, is in downtown Tripoli and hard to hit without causing heavy casualties among Libyan civilians.

But what would an attack on any or all of these targets actually do to combat terrorism? That is the essential question. If the Reagan Administration does hit Libya, the most it can count on is silent and grudging acquiescence from most of its allies and more vocal but still guarded approval from Congress—and that assumes the fighting is over quickly with no heavy loss of American lives. Heartier approval would follow only if the attack seemed likely to bring about a sizable decline in terrorist outrages.

If the Sixth Fleet eventually steams away without attacking, the Administration might win both applause for restraint and derision for making empty threats. But it would only be putting off until the next time the question of whether and how to retaliate. Given the virus of terrorism, there assuredly would be a next time. Indeed, having talked so much about retaliation and now gone so far toward it, Washington has practically guaranteed a sharpening debate about reprisal every time there is a new murderous attack for which intelligence officials believe they can pinpoint the perpetrator.

In part, the urge to hit back is driven by the new assertiveness of Reagan's foreign policy. The Administration takes pride in having put muscle into American policy; a series of successes from

Grenada to the Philippines has shown that the U.S. can pull off military and diplomatic coups without risking nuclear holocaust. The spread of terrorism is the great, galling exception to this assertiveness; the U.S. too often has seemed impotent in preventing or avenging the deaths of its citizens. The Administration is eager to prove that the military power it has built at enormous expense has uses in the real world beyond standing off the Soviets.

But the case for retaliation goes far beyond a desire to flex muscle in a good cause. Terrorism has become a virtual war that pits mindless barbarism against all civilized society. Even more frightening than the number of terror attacks is a shift in their pattern away from military and political targets toward random violence against ordinary people—tourists, shoppers, service members dancing in a disco. This phenomenon has many complex causes. But Shultz and his supporters are convinced that a powerful factor is a

belief among terrorists that they can act with impunity: the U.S. will huff and puff but never really do anything. That idea will not change, in this view, until the U.S. demonstrates that terrorists and the governments that sponsor them are not safe, that attacks on Americans are certain to carry a heavy price.

No one pretends, however, that military reprisal alone will stop terrorism. There is no Terrorist Central that can be bombed out of operation. Attacking Libya would do little to curb the depredations of terrorists sponsored by Syria or Iran or South Yemen, not to mention the innumerable and shifting groups that operate beyond the control of any government.

Would it quiet Gaddafi? Europeans fear it would do just the opposite. They are concerned that an American attack would force even conservative Arab leaders who hate and fear the Libyan dictator to take his side publicly. They are more worried about inflaming the anti-American passions of Middle Eastern youths already inclined toward extremism. Says one top Italian official: "The terrorists themselves are usually not Libyans. They

are Beirutis, Lebanese of all kinds, Syrians, Iranians, Palestinians. Striking at Gaddafi militarily may just serve to recruit more such people."

What many Europeans fear most is a deadly, escalating cycle of vengeance: terrorism begetting U.S. strikes, which prompt more terrorism in reply, which touches off more reprisals. In their view, and in the view of many American experts, an antiterrorism policy must be accompanied by concerted diplomatic efforts to bring about some resolution of Arab-Israeli conflicts, the Palestinian question and other root causes of tension in the Middle East. So far the Reagan Administration has done little, if anything, to reinvigorate the stalled peace process.

Nor can the cycle of terrorism be broken without more effective police work: better intelligence on extremist groups, intense surveillance of their movements, infiltration of terrorist cells. Such methods take a frustratingly long time to take effect, and meanwhile, murderous attacks continue. But the methods eventu-

ally do work; witness Italy's successes against the Red Brigades and West Germany's against the once dreaded Baader-Meinhof gang. Indeed, the President declared at his news conference last week that "in the last year . . . through our intelligence gathering in cooperation with our allies, we have aborted 126 planned terrorist attacks that never took place."

Nevertheless, last week's activities made it clear that the Reagan Administration, led by Shultz and others, firmly believes military reprisals must play a greater role in the undeclared war against terrorism. That is why Muammar Gaddafi once again finds himself in the cross hairs of America's Sixth Fleet. Uncle Sam spoke loudly, vowing vengeance, then raised his big stick. Given the dangers posed by terrorism, such a response was understandable, even justified. Then, at least for a moment, came an eerie pantomime of waiting and hesitation. Given the risks involved, the fact that the sword of vengeance cannot always be swift was also understandable, also justified. —By George J. Church. Reported by Michael Duffy, David Halevy and Strobe Talbott/Washington

Could It Happen Here?

In Berlin, a shattered discothèque; in Rome and Vienna, airline terminals strewn with bodies. So far, the U.S. has been spared the horror of a major terrorist attack. But as hostility intensifies between the U.S. and Libya, the shadow war could come closer to home. Security experts warn that extremists could find easy pickings in American cities. "We are absolutely unprepared here in the U.S.," says Dr. Robert Kupperman, a terrorism expert at Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies and a former National Security Council staffer. "Everywhere in the country, government facilities, commercial installations and civilian networks make ideal targets for terror attacks." A U.S. intelligence analyst concurs: "We have become the ultimate challenge for every terrorist, and we are just not ready."

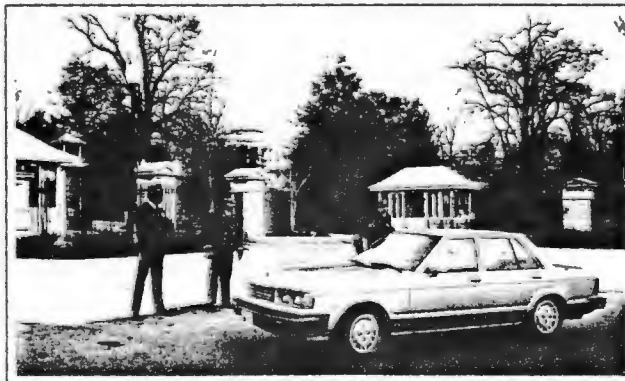
In Washington, security has been beefed up at the White House, where antiterrorist barricades have been installed to block cars and trucks. At the Pentagon, an underground concourse of shops and banks will soon be closed to anyone without special clearance. The State Department had also set up concrete barricades and sometimes screened visitors with metal detectors, but guards could not prevent a horrifying incident last summer when a 20-year-old man shot his mother to death, then took his own life just 100 yards from Secretary of State George Shultz's office. Since then Foggy Bottom has required more thorough personal searches, even for people carrying State Department passes.

In another likely target city, New York, the FBI and local

police have established joint contingency plans to deal with terrorist attacks. Nevertheless, says an FBI official, "a determined nut can do great damage before you can neutralize him." For example, four men and two women said to be members of a terrorist group known as the United Freedom Front were able to set off ten bombs in military-reserve centers and corporate facilities in the New York City area before they were apprehended. The group was finally convicted of multiple conspiracy and bombing charges in federal court last month.

Authorities agree that the only way to prevent terrorist attacks is through timely intelligence. President Reagan has maintained that 126 terrorist missions were foiled in 1985. Federal officials said 23 of those were in the U.S., including plots to kill Libyan dissidents and efforts by Sikh extremists to assassinate Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi during a visit last year.

The U.S. carefully keeps track of visitors and residents from hostile nations such as Libya, Iran and Syria. There are approximately 3,200 Libyans in the U.S. who have been granted temporary visas, including an estimated 1,200 students. The Government also maintains huge computer databases with information on individuals suspected of having radical, anti-U.S. associations. Meanwhile, the supersecret National Security Agency uses the world's most technologically advanced surveillance techniques to eavesdrop on questionable telephone calls and radio communications abroad and intercept and decode suspicious telex messages. To conform to U.S. privacy laws, the intercepts take place outside U.S. borders. But as the rest of the world painfully knows, determined terrorists are very hard to stop.



Barricades, dressed up with plants, outside the White House

BRAD VARNER

Surprise, tactics, night skills led to raids' success, Pentagon says

By Walter Andrews
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

177A

The U.S. raid on Libyan terrorist targets Monday night succeeded because of the element of surprise, the use of low-level flight tactics and the ability to bomb at night, the Defense Department said yesterday.

Spokesman Robert Sims also said the search continued in the waters off the coast of Libya for an Air Force F-111 believed lost with its two-man crew.

There was no evidence of survivors or any sound from beepers attached to the plane's ejection capsule as of late yesterday, Mr. Sims said. "We don't have anything to indicate they ejected," he said.

Eighteen F-111 fighter bombers, from two bases in England, participated in the raid, along with 15 Navy aircraft from two carriers stationed in the Mediterranean.

All the Navy planes returned

safely, Mr. Sims said. In addition to the one believed downed near Libya, a second F-111 had to land in Rota, Spain, because of an overheated engine. Mr. Sims could not say whether this plane was on its way to or from Libya.

There was no report of damage to any of the U.S. planes, Mr. Sims said. It is not known why the one F-111 went down in Libyan waters, he said. There was no indication it was hit by anti-aircraft fire.

"The success of the mission was due to surprise, electronic jamming, missile suppression, low-level attack tactics, and the cover of the night," Mr. Sims said.

"We think the defenders were confused as well as surprised," the spokesman said. "Anti-aircraft fire continued for several minutes after our planes left."

The closely coordinated attack on three targets in western Libya by the F-111 fighter-bombers and on two

other targets at the eastern end of the nation by the Navy A-6 bombers began at 7 p.m. EST and lasted about 12 minutes, he said.

Mr. Sims reserved judgment on the overall damage to the five targets because "we do not have sufficient data to give our own estimate either on the overall success of the mission against the targets" or the damage to the civilian areas that may have resulted.

"We're examining data as it comes in — tapes, pilot estimates and so forth," he said. Photo reconnaissance had been hampered by cloud cover yesterday over the target areas, he said.

The Pentagon said the three targets hit in western Libya were the Azziziyah Barracks in the capital city of Tripoli, Libyan military headquarters where terrorism is planned; the Sidi Bilal port facility, used as a training base for Libyan commandos; and the military section of the

Tripoli airport.

The two eastern targets were the Jumahiriya Barracks in Benghazi, which the Pentagon said was an alternate terrorist command post, and the Benina military airbase east of Benghazi, home base for Libyan fighter and bomber aircraft used to transport equipment in its war with Chad.

Mr. Sims said it was believed that three to five Soviet supplied Il-76 transport aircraft and between five and 12 Libyan Air Force Soviet Mig-23 fighter aircraft were destroyed at the Tripoli airfield.

"I think this is a very conservative estimate, but we will have to wait until we have more information to provide that for you," the official said.

Mr. Sims said the fire from anti-aircraft missile and guns was heavy in all the locations with the exception of the Benina air base, where he said it was light.

"Resistance at Benina airfield was light, and that is perhaps because the attackers were in and out so quickly," he said.

The spokesman ridiculed as fake a picture made public by the Libyans, which they said was an F-111 shot down by anti-aircraft fire. In fact, he said: "This is the booster stage of an SA-3 [Soviet anti-aircraft] missile."

Mr. Sims said the two American aircraft carriers — the Coral Sea and the America — had launched their aircraft several hundred miles north of Libya and would remain in the general area "as long as necessary."

The two ships began speeding south early Monday morning from their station in the central Mediterranean near Sicily after a final go-ahead for the attack was given by the White House, officials said.

Mr. Sims said "dozens" of HARM and Shrike missiles, designed to

knock out enemy radar sites, had been launched by the Navy A-6s and the Air Force F-111s. He said a large, undetermined number of precision-guided 500-pound, 750-pound and 2,000-pound bombs also had been used.

Asked about charges that bombs had damaged the French embassy in Tripoli, the spokesman noted that these had been dismissed as untrue by Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger at a White House press briefing Monday night.

"I don't have any reason to change that until we have a full assessment" of the bomb damage, he said.

The spokesman also said he had seen no official reports that would indicate Libyan gunboats were responsible for the explosions in the waters near the Italian island of Lampedusa, where the U.S. Coast Guard operates a telecommunications facility.

Coordination, Surprise Cited in Raid's Success

Pentagon Says Libyans Were Caught Off Guard; U.S. Planes Press Search for 2 Missing Airmen

By JAMES GERSTENZANG, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—Less than a day after the raid on targets linked to terrorist activities in Libya, U.S. officials Tuesday portrayed "Operation El Dorado Canyon" as a successful mission in which long-range bombers and short-range, carrier-based aircraft performed a closely coordinated, nighttime bombing raid that apparently achieved total surprise.

As U.S. military forces searched hostile waters off Tripoli for two airmen lost when their F-111 went down, Reagan Administration officials began reviewing the results of the lightning-fast mission that involved more than 130 airplanes and hit five targets in Tripoli and Benghazi in the space of just 12 minutes.

Despite what he described as heavy Libyan missile fire, Pentagon spokesman Robert B. Sims said—without disclosing his source—that three to five Soviet-built Ilyushin 76, four-engine jet transports were damaged on the military side of the Tripoli airfield, and that five to 12 Soviet-built MIG-23 fighters, the most sophisticated in the Libyan arsenal, were damaged at the Benina air base, where a spare parts hanger was destroyed.

Sims said that another target, the Aziziya Barracks, which Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger has said was a terrorism command and control headquarters, suffered structural damage in the raid.

Meanwhile, Navy pilots who took part in the operation speculated that Libyan surface-to-air missiles that soared straight up and fell back to the ground without striking aerial targets may have been responsible for some of the damage in Tripoli.

Sims said that partly cloudy skies over Libya prevented a thorough assessment of the damage to targets and surrounding areas. Such reports are generally assembled from photographs made by high-altitude aircraft and satellites. What was described as intelligence from "friendly" agents on the ground can also contribute to the assessment.

He said that the French Embassy, apparently damaged during the operation—although U.S. officials refused to acknowledge that the damage was caused by U.S. weapons—was situated between two targets.

When asked about damage to the embassy, one of the pilots interviewed aboard the aircraft carrier America said: "It appeared to me that if there was collateral damage in Tripoli, it was done by Libyans themselves firing missiles straight up into the air which came down to the city."

Attack Described

Another pilot described a missile attack he encountered: "It kind of looks surreal because how could it be a star going that fast, and then you realize that it might be going for you, and that snaps you right back to reality."

While the U.S. 6th Fleet operated in the central Mediterranean throughout the day after the raid, American airplanes and ships conducted searches for the missing F-111 crew in the sea north of Tripoli, encountering no opposition from Libyan forces.

Officials said they had no indications that the two fliers ejected from the F-111—the only one of the 18 fighter-bombers that did not land safely. One aircraft landed in Spain, after an engine overheated, and the other 16 returned to their bases in Britain.

The two crew members of the missing fighter-bomber were identified by the Pentagon as Capt. Fernando Ribas Dominicci, 33, of Puerto Rico, the pilot, and Capt. Paul F. Lorence, 31, of San Francisco, the weapons officer.

Missed Rendezvous

Sims said that they did not report at a rendezvous point after the raid.

A Pentagon official, speaking on the condition that he not be identified by name, said a U.S. pilot reported seeing a "fireball" before the airplanes reached their targets in Tripoli, although other sources said the apparent explosion was seen after the raid. These sources also cautioned that what the pilot claimed to have seen may have been unrelated to the missing airplane.

However, said another source, "I don't think anybody has much hope" of finding the fliers.

Ejection capsules on F-111s carry strobe lights and beeping devices set to generate signals as soon as they separate from the airplane fuselage. Officials said there were no indications of such signals.

According to Pentagon officials, the raid involved 18 U.S. Air Force F-111s based at two British air bases—Upper Heyford and Lakenheath—and 15 A-6 Corsairs, which are light bombers that were launched by the America and another carrier, the Coral Sea. The carriers were operating just north of the Libyan "Flight Information Region," a strip of the Mediterranean Sea that extends north of Libyan leader Moammar Kadafi's "line of death" delineating the mouth of the Gulf of Sidra.

Sims said that the carriers were operating in the same region later Tuesday, and "they'll stay there as long as necessary."

The F-111s struck in three waves, with two approaching tar-

gets in Tripoli from the north, over the Mediterranean and a third crossing Libyan territory east of the capital city, flying south over the desert, making a U-turn to the west, and striking the city from the south, one Administration source said.

At the same moments, the A-6s struck targets in Benghazi, several hundred miles to the east on the coast of the Gulf of Sidra, according to Sims.

12 Minutes of Fighting

The Pentagon spokesman said that the entire raid, which began at 2 a.m. Tuesday Libyan time (4 p.m. PST Monday), lasted 11 or 12 minutes.

The F-111s dropped 750 and 2,000-pound bombs—so-called "smart" munitions that use lasers and other sophisticated systems for guidance. One source said the bombs carried "drag chutes" to slow their descent while the low-level bomber hurries out of their explosive range. The A-6s, the source said, carried gravity bombs.

Joining the aerial armada were about 100 other airplanes, including tankers dispatched from Mildenhall air base in England to refuel the F-111s, A-7 attack aircraft and F/A-18 fighters launched by the carriers, and a variety of other carrier-based airplanes, including E-2C battle command ships, EA-6B Prowlers, which were said to have effectively sent out electronic signals to interfere with Libyan surface-to-air missile guidance and other electronic systems, and F-14s, given an interceptor role.

In the Dead of the Night

Hard choices and high drama for the raid's planners and pilots



It was a sudden strike that leaped live right out of the nightly news. At the precise moment that the three networks began airing their evening newscasts last Monday, U.S. attack planes were roaring toward their five Libyan targets. Out of the black Mediterranean night they came, racing through orange cones of frantic antiaircraft fire to punish the man Ronald Reagan calls the "mad dog of the Middle East." As Americans, transfixed at their television sets, listened to the muffled rattle and thump of the as-

Actually, the schedule of Operation El Dorado Canyon, as the strikes were code-named by Pentagon planners, was dictated by the military necessity of hitting Libya in the middle of the night. It was just one factor in an enormously complex operation that involved 150 aircraft and resulted in the launching of more than 60 tons of bombs. The outcome was far from perfect: the U.S. lost one F-111 fighter-bomber along with its two-man crew and unintentionally caused some civilian casualties and damage. But El Dorado also produced more than a few nuggets of military gold, including severe

military planners that such an action was inevitable. The Pentagon brass was concerned, however, that it lacked the firepower to hit Gaddafi with sufficient force. Since the Sixth Fleet's skirmish only three weeks earlier with Libyan forces in the Gulf of Sidra, the fleet's strength had considerably diminished with the departure of the aircraft carrier *Saratoga* for its home base in Mayport, Fla. There was not sufficient time to order the flattop back to the central Mediterranean to join the carriers *Coral Sea* and *America*.

Political and moral considerations further complicated the military planning.

REAGAN DECIDES



"Try to make the world smaller for the terrorists," commanded President Reagan on April 7, as the U.S. looked for ways to forestall a new wave of Libyan terrorism. The planning for an air strike

that would ultimately engage 150 warplanes and drop some 60 tons of bombs on Libya was intricate and constrained by a host of political and diplomatic as well as military considerations. It required U.S. airmen to fly through heavy flak in the dead of night and strike with flawless precision. The primary target: Colonel Gaddafi's headquarters. The unstated hope: that the Libyan leader would be asleep there when the bombs fell.

WEEK OF APRIL 7-13

sault filtering over the phone lines of network correspondents holed up in a Tripoli hotel, the U.S. attackers delivered their lethal cargo of laser-directed bombs. As quickly as they had come, the warplanes wheeled out to sea, vanishing back into the gloom, all safe but one.

Even for an Administration accustomed to making its moves with television coverage firmly in mind, the timing of the 7 o'clock strike was extraordinary. Ronald Reagan could hardly have written a more gripping script to dramatize his determination to strike out militarily at terrorist regimes. By the time Reagan took to the airwaves to explain and justify the raids, they had already been discussed—and generally applauded—at dinner tables across the land.

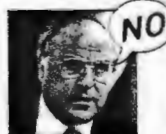
WALTERS VISITS EUROPE



In a late-hour mission, the U.N. Ambassador was dispatched to win the backing of U.S. allies for a raid.



Craxi



Kohl



Thatcher



González



Mitterrand

APRIL 11-14

damage to at least eight Soviet-built Libyan planes and Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi's personal headquarters. "We didn't do everything right," says Admiral William Crowe, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. But on balance, he maintains, the operation "was very successful."

Plans for a strike of some sort against Libya began late in March when U.S. intelligence learned of Libyan intentions to conduct future terrorist acts like the West Berlin disco bombing on April 4. At a National Security Council meeting on April 7, the President clearly decided that the time for action had arrived. His command: "Try to make the world smaller for the terrorists."

Though Reagan did not order up an air strike then and there, it was clear to

F-111s LEAVE UK



F-111 at Lakenheath airbase

APRIL 14, 12:13p.m. TAKE OFF...

The President's guidelines for retaliation against terrorists have always been to hit precisely defined targets and to minimize the chance of injuring civilians. Both concerns dictated a low-level attack with precision bombing. Furthermore, it would have to be carried out at night, when few people were on the streets. A night raid was also likely to risk fewer fliers than a daylight attack. Taking all these factors into account Crowe and the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended that additional aircraft would be necessary. The ones most ideally suited to the mission were the Air Force's F-111s at Britain's Royal Air Force Base at Lakenheath. Reason: like the Navy A-6 craft, the F-111s are equipped with infrared bombing sights capable of highly accurate nighttime targeting.

After the Security Council met in the Oval Office on Wednesday, April 9, a joint security-intelligence team prepared a list of five targets. First on the list was the Bab al Azizia army compound, which serves as Gaddafi's command center and residence. "We hit Gaddafi's barracks because it's the nerve center for his command structure and headquarters of his loyalist guard," says a top national security aide. There is little doubt that Azizia was also targeted in the hope that the Colonel would be very much at home and killed or injured in the attack. Using the military euphemism for civilian casualties, one Administration official deadpanned, "If Gaddafi had been killed, I don't think it would have been considered 'collateral damage.'" Indeed, an additional reason for staging a night raid was to catch Gaddafi asleep, though U.S. intelligence officials warned the Administration that the Colonel is believed to rotate his sleeping quarters for security reasons. No fewer than five F-111s were assigned to hit Gaddafi's compound. The

territory. A mission by U.N. Ambassador Vernon Walters to line up support from the allies failed to change their minds. So instead of flying 1,600 nautical miles due southeast from Britain to their targets, the squadron would be forced to keep to international skies and detour 2,800 nautical miles around the Iberian peninsula.

Reagan gave final approval to the plan on Sunday, April 13, following his return to the White House from Camp David. In doing so, the President asked Admiral Crowe how late he could still order a cancellation of the mission if conditions should warrant a change of plans. The Joint Chiefs Chairman assured his boss that he could command a turnaround as late as ten minutes before strike time.

The first aircraft off the ground Monday, at 12:13 p.m. EST, were 28 tankers from Royal Air Force bases in Fairford and Mildenhall. Minutes later a squadron of 24 two-seater khaki-and-brown F-111 attack bombers began streaking off runways at Lakenheath and were joined by five EF-111 electronic jamming planes

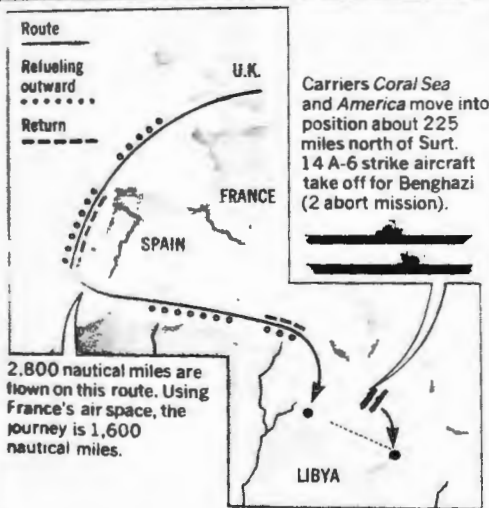
Tunisia. It was skillfully integrated into the Navy's airborne armada by a single Air Force officer providing coordination from an airborne tanker.

With one squadron heading for Tripoli and the other for Benghazi, pilots dropped to altitudes under 500 ft. to avoid radar detection. This strict insistence on low-level approaches is a fairly recent development for the U.S. military. "Every pilot loves to do yanks and banks and dive and drive, but this is dangerous until you have attrited the threat," Navy Secretary John Lehman said last week in an interview with TIME. "You have to hit with antiradar devices. This results in an emphasis on night, low-level attack, which can beat any defense if you do it right."

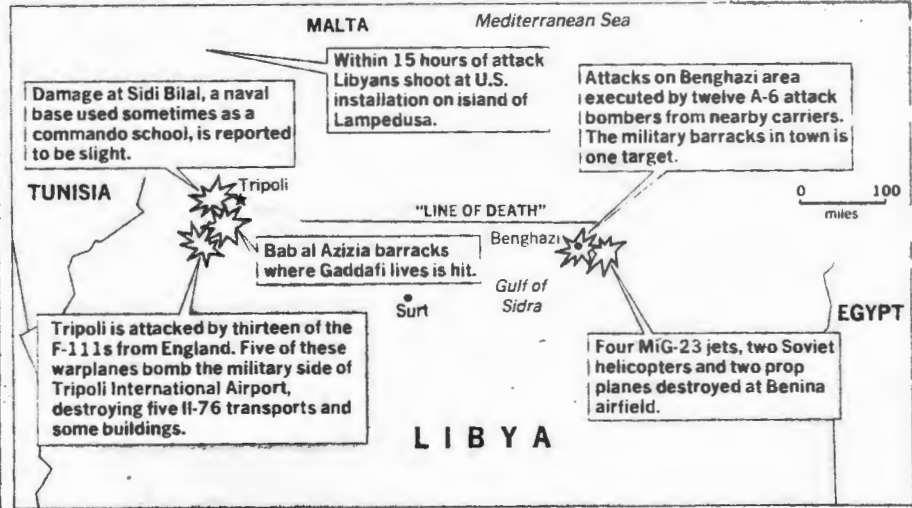
Aircraft carrying such radar-jamming devices, as well as HARM missiles to take out radar sites, were the first to reach the target cities, approaching at 6:54 p.m. Precisely at 7 p.m., the squadron of A-6 fighters roared over Benghazi from the Gulf of Sidra and began bombing the airfield. In Tripoli, part of the F-111 squad-

ROUTE TO THE BATTLE

MAJOR TARGETS IN LIBYA



...7:00p.m. ATTACK



APRIL 14, 7:00-7:11:30p.m.

hope, says a senior Administration official, was to "turn the barracks into dust."

Next on the hit list was the military section of the Tripoli International Airport, base of Libya's fleet of nine Il-76s, which have been used in terrorist operations for supply and transport. A third target was the Benghazi army barracks, which Gaddafi uses as an alternative command post. Then came barracks at the naval port of Sidi Bilal, near Tripoli, a commando training facility. Finally, security officials recommended a strike at the Benina airfield, where Libya's MiG-23 interceptors are based, as a precaution against counterattack.

A large wrench was thrown into the operation when the French and Spanish refused to permit F-111s to fly over their

whose mission was to disable Libyan radar capabilities. Flying at 30,000 ft., the force rendezvoused over southern England and refueled four times during its seven-hour flight through darkened skies. After the first refueling, seven planes, brought along as a reserve in case of airborne malfunctions in the others, broke out of formation and returned to base.

Meanwhile, the carriers *Coral Sea* and *America*, stationed in the mid-Mediterranean, were steaming toward the coast of Libya. Between 5:20 and 6:20 p.m., close to 100 aircraft catapulted off their decks—18 A-6 and A-7 strike and strike-support craft, six F/A-18 fighters, 14 EA-6B electronic jamming planes and a variety of support craft. As the Air Force's F-111 squadron rounded the tip of

ron had circled around inland and approached from the south. The city was ablaze with light, and not a single air-raid alarm sounded. "We were able to see the hits," recalled one Navy airman, who had spent many hours studying photos of his target. "They looked just where they should have been."

The U.S. was able to achieve total surprise in part by giving the Soviets the slip. The carrier task force managed to lose the Soviet warships that usually shadow the fleet. If the Soviets did spot the planes, at any rate, they evidently did not tip off their friends in Libya.

In Tripoli, the thunderous whine of the jet engines was followed by sudden concussive crescendos, as 500-lb. gravity bombs and 2,000-lb. Paveway II laser-

guided bombs started to explode. The massive blasts shook windows throughout the city, jolting sleeping residents awake—and sometimes more than that. “When the firing woke me up, I immediately thought of throwing myself on the floor,” recalled an Italian resident. “Then a big explosion did it for me.”

Several minutes into the attack, two things went tragically wrong, possibly in connection with each other. One of the F-111s dropped its bombs in a residential area a mile south of the harbor, killing several civilians, destroying homes and damaging other buildings, including the French embassy and the Swiss Ambassador’s residence. It seems highly coincidental, to say the least, that the bomb exploded only a few blocks from Libya’s internal-security headquarters, reputedly a onetime haunt of the notorious terrorist Abu Nidal. U.S. officials insist, however, that the security facility was not a U.S. target.

Some Pentagon officials theorize that the bomb may have been dropped by an

attacker that was out of control. Three Navy pilots reported seeing one aircraft turn into a “fireball” and disappear into the ocean about ten miles offshore. The missing crewmen, who were presumed dead after a search yielded no signs of life, were Captain Fernando L. Ribas-Dominici, 33, of Puerto Rico and Captain Paul F. Lorence, 31, of San Francisco.

Over their targets, U.S. pilots were confronted with an astonishing barrage of Libyan defensive fire. The night sky over Tripoli was stitched with orange streaks as tracers and missiles arced up toward the attackers. “They fired everything they had,” said a senior Pentagon official, including Soviet-built SAM-2, -3, -6 and -8 missiles and ZSU-23-4 anti-aircraft guns. Said Vice Admiral Frank Kelso, commander of the Sixth Fleet, who was in overall command of El Dorado Canyon: “I don’t think anybody has ever flown a mission in any more dense SAM environment than they were in today.”

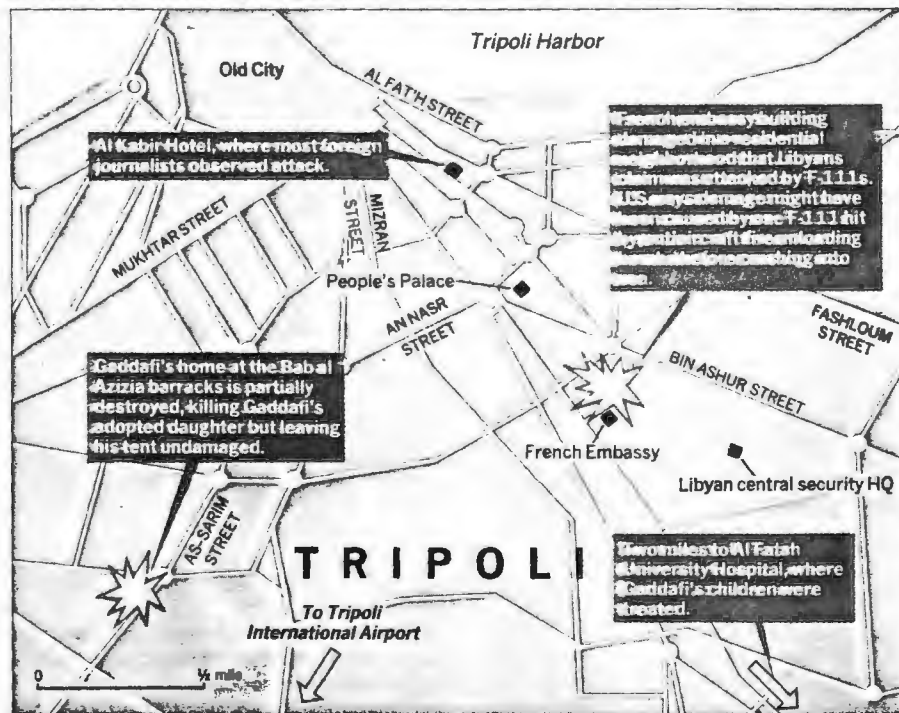
What prevented the Libyan missiles from inflicting real damage was the fact

that most of them were fired without radar guidance. “We forced the Libyans to turn off their radar,” says Lehman. “If they turned them on to guide their missiles, they would get a HARM down the throat.” Nor was any defense mounted by the Libyan air force, whose pilots are notoriously poor night flyers. Military intelligence intercepted a radio transmission of air force headquarters in Tripoli pleading with a base commander in Benghazi shortly before the attack to get his craft in the air. The commander’s reply: immediate takeoff was impossible.

But the performance of U.S. equipment was flawed. In an effort to prevent any bombing that might be deemed indiscriminate, U.S. airmen were under orders to abort their missions if on-board equipment showed the slightest glitch. Five of the 18 F-111 craft developed such malfunctions, probably in their radar targeting equipment, as did two of the carrier-based A-6 craft. Pentagon officials rightly maintain that the rules of engagement in wartime would not be as stringent as

CLOSE UP ON TRIPOLI

AFTERMATH



Lost raiders: F-111 Weapons System Officer Captain Paul F. Lorence and his pilot, Captain Fernando L. Ribas-Dominici. Their aircraft reportedly turned into a “fireball.”



Reprisals: the corpses of three Western hostages seized in Lebanon, including American Peter Kilburn, dumped on a road outside Beirut two days after the raid.



The raid was a total surprise. The city was ablaze with light, and not a single air-raid alarm sounded. The Libyans hastily put up a hail of anti-aircraft fire, but their Soviet-made SAMs, fired without radar guidance, were wildly inaccurate. “We forced the Libyans to turn off their radar,” says Navy Secretary John Lehman. “They knew if they turned them on to guide their missiles, they would get a HARM down the throat.” Nor was any defense mounted by the Libyan air force, whose pilots are notoriously poor night

flyers. Five F-111s were assigned to hit Colonel Gaddafi’s compound, and four of them dropped 16 laser-guided 2,000-lb. bombs. The hope, said a senior Administration official, was to “turn the barracks into dust.” The bombs cratered the compound, blew out windows and caved in a wall, but did not flatten any buildings. Gaddafi was probably safe in his underground bunker when the planes broke off the attack and headed back out to sea. One F-111, apparently hit by anti-aircraft fire, never made it.

TIME Maps by Paul Pugliese and Nigel Holmes

Photographs by Alpert-Keystone, Peter Jordan, Ponzio-Contrasto, Robert Royal, Sven Simon, Newspix, Ismail-AFP

Nation

those for the Libyan mission, but the high rate of even minor malfunctions is hardly encouraging.

The bomb run completed, U.S. craft lifted quickly out of the Libyan light show and headed north. For the airmen flying the F-111s, that prospect included an additional eight hours' flying time and two more midair refueling operations. One last snafu occurred when one of the F-111s overheated and was diverted to a U.S. naval station near the Spanish town of Rota. When the rest of the crews returned to Britain after spending 15 hours strapped into the F-111s' tight quarters, some men had to be lifted out of their seats.

By then Libyan radio was claiming many casualties, including the death of one of Gaddafi's eight children and the injury of two others. Dr. Mohamed Muafa, who identified himself as the Gaddafi family's physician, said he had found all three children in the wreckage of the colonel's home an hour after the attack. Washington officials were frankly surprised there were not more casualties in Gaddafi's compound. Of the five bombers assigned to hit it, four dropped 16

laser-guided 2,000-lb. Paveways. The bombs cratered the compound, blew out windows and caved in a wall or two, but they did not flatten any buildings. Gaddafi's tent was still standing, only slightly grazed by a fallen utility pole.

The Libyans also showed foreigners the residential damage wrought by U.S. bombs. But they showed no inclination to allow inspections of military targets. The U.S. displayed aerial photographs of the damage at the Benina air base near Benghazi showing the wreckage of at least four MiG-23 Flogger jets, two Mi-8 Hip lightweight helicopters and two F27 propeller-driven aircraft. The Pentagon estimates that at the Tripoli military airport the U.S. took out five Il-76 transports and caused major damage to several buildings. Defense officials admit that damage to the Sidi Bilal facility was less than they had expected, and withheld the results of bombing at the Benghazi barracks.

Libya's only military riposte to the raid was feeble. On Tuesday afternoon it launched two Soviet-made SS-1 ballistic

missiles, each with about a ton of dynamite in its warhead, in the general direction of the tiny Italian island of Lampedusa. Fired from a military base near the Tunisian coast, they were evidently aimed at a Coast Guard navigational aid facility located on Lampedusa. Both missiles exploded three miles short of land.

Tripoli also claimed that it had knocked as many as a dozen U.S. aircraft out of the skies, and that surviving pilots were being hunted down by local citizens "like mad dogs." Authorities made no attempt to prove either claim, but few Libyans expected Gaddafi to let matters rest where they stood. Nor did those on the front line of the U.S. side seem to think that last week's raid put an end to the contest of wills between Gaddafi and Washington. On the day after the raid, TIME Correspondent Sam Allis noticed that someone had scrawled a message on the circular rear end of a Sidewinder missile stored on the deck of the carrier *America*. The grim inscription: THIS IS FOR MOMAR'S MOM. —By William R. Doerner. Reported by David Halevy and Bruce van Voorst/Washington

A Lethal Video Game

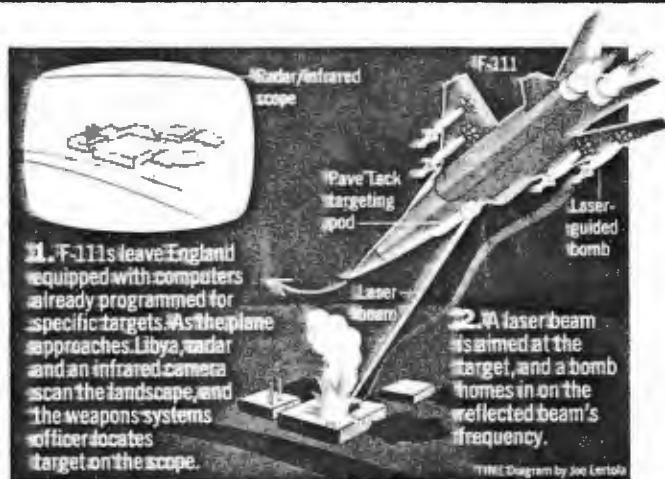
Hurling along near the speed of sound in dead of night, at times under intense antiaircraft fire, how could pilots of the F-111 fighter bombers plant so many of their bombs on or near targets as small and discrete as a single building or a row of planes? By high-tech wizardry that makes a real-life bombing run seem almost as simple as a video game.

The prime weapon of last week's raid was an advanced version of the F-111 fitted with a special electronics navigation and targeting pod known as Pave Tack. Developed by Ford Aerospace & Communications and first delivered to the Air Force less than six years ago, the pod fits in the weapons bay of the F-111 and allows the pilot to find his target in total darkness while moving at very high speed.

As they flew to within 30 miles of the Libyan coast, weapons-systems officers (called whizzos), who sit beside the pilot on each F-111, went into action. They lowered the Pave Tack pods, which began sweeping the horizon first with radar and then with infrared cameras, transmitting fairly detailed pictures of the ground below to a radar-infrared scope that is like a small television screen on the aircraft's instrument panel. The whizzos knew what to look for: before taking off from England, they had thoroughly studied aerial-reconnaissance photographs of their targets. In addition, information to find and identify targets had been fed into the F-111s' computers.

At 90 sec. from target, with the plane at an attack altitude of less than 500 ft. and streaking along at 600 m.p.h., the whizzo sees an infrared image of his quarry on his screen and directs a pencil-thin laser beam toward it. This step, called target designation, or painting, supplies the plane's computer with the exact range to the target.

One minute away, the whizzo tells his pilot that the computer is locked on to the target. The pilot presses a button on his throttle, turning command of the plane's bomb-release mechanism over to the computer. As the plane roars toward its target, the bombs are released to drop in a controlled fall. Then, in what is called a toss, an evasive maneuver to avoid damage by the explosion of his own bombs, the pilot suddenly takes the



plane up to about 1,200 ft. Though the plane is wrenching upward, the Pave Tack system, mounted on a device that can swivel 360°, keeps its laser eye on the target all the while.

In last week's mission, the F-111s used 2,000-lb. bombs of the Paveway II class. The bomb's nose contains a laser-sensing device, a computer and small movable fins for stabilization and control. The sensor homes in on the reflection of the laser off the target; the computer moves the fins to make minute midcourse corrections. Each F-111 emits a laser at a different frequency, which only its bombs are programmed to detect.

Known as precision-guided gravity bombs, these ungainly guppy-shape munitions were around in a less sophisticated form in the Viet Nam War. The Paveway IIs are actually a technological notch below the Harpoon and HARM missiles used last month in the Gulf of Sidra. Those devices are called smart bombs because they have their own propulsion and guidance systems to direct themselves to a target, enabling a pilot to "fire and forget." Nonetheless, F-111 flyers are still confident about what they can do with the plain old Paveway II. Even though the F-111s did not put a bomb squarely on Gaddafi's tent last week, they did not miss by much.

**LYNDON
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April 7, 1986 \$2.00

'America Is Our Target'

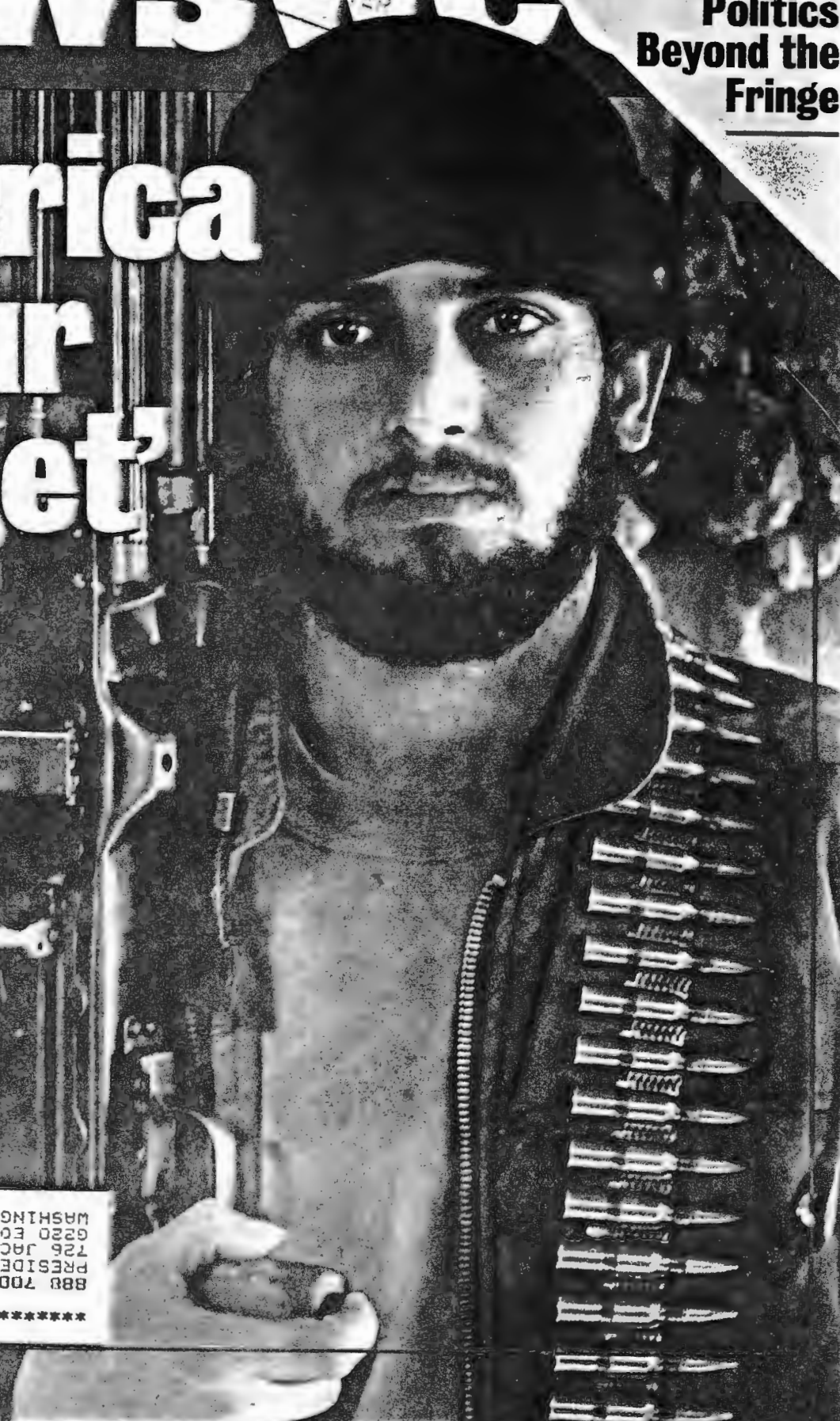
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ARTHUR GRACE—NEWSWEEK



PETER TURNLEY FOR NEWSWEEK

The best of enemies: Neither side was intimidated

Kaddafi's Crusade

The Libyan leader threatens new terrorist attacks after Reagan steams through his 'line of death'

His audience was small and relatively subdued, but Muammar Kaddafi managed to work himself into a fine frenzy. "We humiliated America and its forces," he told the crowd gathered at the Bab al Aziziya barracks in Tripoli. Kaddafi boasted that his "line of death" had repelled the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Gulf of Sidra. He claimed that his missiles had shot down three American warplanes, "whose six pilots are now feeding the fish." He maintained that his forces had recovered a dud missile fired by the Americans. "We are going to hand it over to the Russians," he gloated. He dismissed Ronald Reagan as "a trivial and futile actor" and bragged that "America fears Libya." When Kaddafi finally finished, Libyan soldiers dragged out a terrified cow with "Reagn" painted on its side. One of the men slit its throat with a knife. Then, as the animal thrashed out its life, the soldiers dipped their hands into the wound and danced around in the blood.

By American reckoning, it was Kaddafi whose ox was gored last week. U.S. warships steamed across the "line of death" into what Libya regards as territorial waters and stayed there, unharmed, for 75 hours. When Libya fired surface-to-air missiles at American planes, the Sixth Fleet replied with missiles of its own, silencing the air-defense battery. When Libyan patrol boats approached the fleet, bombs and missiles drove them off, sinking at least two. The American armada—three giant aircraft carriers and 24 other ships—had come to keep the sea lanes open and to punish Kaddafi for his sponsorship of international terrorism. The dual mission accomplished, it sailed away five days before the announced end of the exercise, with Reagan offering "a hearty 'well done'."

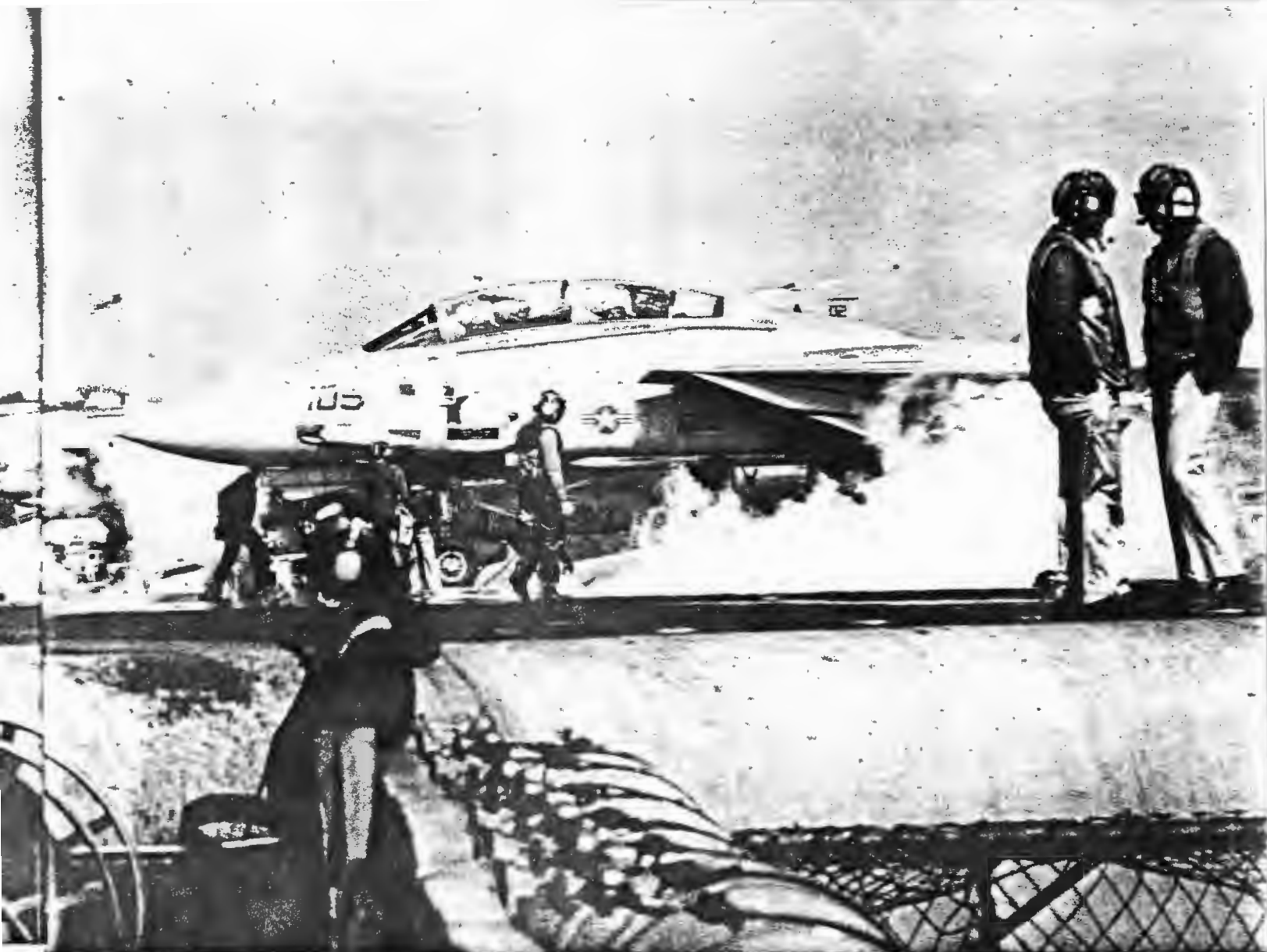
That might not be the end of it, however. By barging into the Gulf of Sidra, Reagan gave Kaddafi a bloody nose, but there was no sign that the volatile Libyan leader had been persuaded to get out of the terrorism



The Navy's 'Terrorist Busters' at work: The men on

business. On the contrary, Libya exhorted its fellow Arabs to form "suicide squads" and to hurl "human bombs" at American targets in the region. Already, Kaddafi had begun to mobilize a counterattack by his allies and protégés in the vast underworld of international terrorism (page 25). "America is our target," announced the Palestinian faction run by Abu Nidal, who was blamed for the atrocities at the Rome and Vienna airports last Christmas. Reagan himself warned about "intensive Libyan preparations" for a campaign of violence against Americans. "The United States will not be intimidated by new threats of terrorism," the president promised. So far, most Americans seemed to agree. In a NEWSWEEK Poll (page 23), 63 percent of the people questioned said last week's attack on Libya was worthwhile, even if it leads to more terrorism against Americans.

And it probably will. Senior American officials, intelligence analysts and diplo-



PETER TURNLEY FOR NEWSWEEK

on board the aircraft carrier USS Saratoga knew exactly why they were poised just north of the Gulf of Sidra



TRIPPETT-SIPA-SPECIAL FEATURES

A carefully calibrated response: Weinberger briefs the press on Operation Prairie Fire

matic sources in Washington have told NEWSWEEK of mounting evidence that Kaddafi is preparing a crusade against American citizens and facilities, mostly in Western Europe and the Middle East. His bag of dirty tricks includes the following:

- Highly classified CIA reports warn that Kaddafi's agents have had "no fewer than 35" American targets under surveillance overseas. The list ranges from the offices of American companies to the headquarters of the Sixth Fleet and the homes of its top officers in Naples. President Reagan also has been told that Libyan hit squads are tailing CIA station chiefs in the region.

- Last Wednesday a message was sent from Tripoli to Libyan agents in Paris, Belgrade and Geneva, ordering them to "prepare to carry out the plan." Similar messages were sent to Kaddafi's agents in Rome, Berlin and Madrid.

- A defector from a Libyan hit squad has told the CIA about a plot against the life of an American diplomat in Europe. The de-



Arsenal of democracy: Sidewinder air-to-air missiles (foreground) and 'cluster' bombs stockpiled for action aboard the Saratoga

factor, a North African who was recruited by Libyan agents in Western Europe, has passed a series of lie-detector tests and is still in U.S. custody.

■ Two Libyan agents in the Lebanese Army were ordered last week to attack U.S. Embassy personnel in Beirut. American officials believe that U.S. buildings in the Lebanese capital are now safe from carbomb attacks. But they worry that assassins might attack Americans with rocket-propelled grenades.

■ In recent weeks Kaddafi has intensified his efforts to recruit European and Palestinian hit men in hopes of shifting the blame away from Libya. One Palestinian was enlisted to help carry out an attack on a U.S. diplomatic mission in Western Europe. The plot was uncovered when Yasir Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization, tipped off the United States through a third party. Arafat didn't want his own Al Fatah to be blamed.

■ To keep Washington in what one source calls "a state of high anxiety," the Libyans are planning a psychological-warfare campaign in Europe and the Middle East, including telephoned bomb threats. "We think they're really going to yank our chain," says an American official. Libya also is trying to stir up demonstrations at U.S. embassies in Sudan and two other African countries. Apparently the Libyans hope that the demonstrators will run amok and sack the embassies.

The targeted embassies and other Americans in danger overseas have been warned, and across Europe and the Middle East governments are tightening up security.



Moscow was warned: Soviet destroyer (foreground) tracks a U.S. aircraft carrier

Similar steps are being taken in many American cities and airports, and the 3,500 Libyans who live in the United States are being watched. Some of the precautions were taken before last week's action in the Gulf of Sidra and have already begun to pay off. In February an Italian soldier and a free-lance cameraman were arrested in Sicily and accused of giving secrets to the Libyans, possibly in connection with a plot against Americans.

Intelligence analysts aren't sure when Kaddafi's new terror campaign will begin, if it does at all. Some experts argue that he will strike quickly in order to reaffirm his manhood after the Gulf of Sidra incursion. Others believe he will wait two or three months, giving himself time to put together an elaborate campaign—and giving Americans time to drop their guard. Robert Kupperman of Georgetown University in Washington predicts that Kaddafi will hold off for a couple of months. Then, he

says, "we're going to see attacks against Americans at airports, on the Via Veneto, at train stations. There will be attacks against individuals—American officials living abroad and tourists—and against American businesses. We're in for terrible trouble ahead."

But Kaddafi is as unpredictable as he is dangerous. According to several sources, a frequently updated CIA report on his mental state claims that he uses hallucinogens to expand his mind. Kaddafi also is said to be preoccupied with a girlfriend in Western Europe, flying off in a private plane to visit her almost every week. Whether or not those stories are true, Kaddafi sometimes doesn't seem to make sense, even to people who share his cultural background. NEWSWEEK has learned that one impeccable source who conferred with Kaddafi last Tuesday told American officials that he found the Libyan leader "disoriented and incomprehensible."

If Kaddafi is caught sponsoring attacks on Americans, the Reagan administration promises a swift and strong response. No final decisions have been made, in part because American retaliation will depend on what Kaddafi does. Officials have told NEWSWEEK, however, that most of Reagan's advisers support Secretary of State George Shultz's longstanding call for reprisals the next time around, not just against terrorist camps but against Libyan military and economic targets as well. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and Adm. William Crowe, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, are still reluctant to use military power except against specific terrorist targets. But Donald Regan, the White House chief of staff, John Poin-dexter, the president's national-security adviser, and CIA Director William Casey support Shultz's contention that further Libyan-sponsored terrorism should be answered with devastating attacks.

So far most of Libyan industry does not appear on any U.S. target list; nor have plans been drawn up to bomb Kaddafi's command bunker or the barracks where he lives. But American targeters already are prepared to attack a wide range of Libyan military facilities and the training camps allegedly used by terrorists. And if Kaddafi gives them sufficient provocation, American warplanes will go after the oil pipelines and storage facilities that are crucial to Libya's hard-pressed economy. "The next act of terrorism," promises a top U.S. official, "will bring the hammer down."

Going it alone: Washington began to tighten the screws on Kaddafi early this year. After the murder of 15 air travelers in Rome and Vienna, Reagan ordered American residents to leave Libya, and he imposed a trade embargo on the country. Many American allies were unenthusiastic about the sanctions, which seemed likely to do Kaddafi little harm. Preparing to go it alone, the administration drafted a long-term plan for additional economic and political moves against Kaddafi. It also started to look for an excuse to take military action against him (NEWSWEEK, Jan. 20).

Why Libya? The administration has long recognized that Syria and Iran are even more deeply involved with terrorism than Kaddafi is. The Abu Nidal group, for instance, could be traced more directly to Syria than to Libya. But Syria and Iran are difficult, well-armed targets, and the State Department regards Syrian President Hafez Assad as the essential mediator in Lebanon. So Libya became the prime U.S. target. Whatever his precise standing may be among the patrons of terrorism, Kaddafi deserved to be punished. "He harbors terrorists, trains them, supplies them and encourages them," Shultz said in Rome last week. "You don't have to be Sherlock Holmes to figure it out." Kaddafi also con-

Fearing Trouble: A Newsweek Poll

Most Americans think last week's action against Libya was justified, but they fear a terrorist response. And there are grave doubts about aiding the contras.

Gulf of Sidra Attacks

Do you think U.S. attacks against Libyan ships and military sites were justified or not?*

- 75% Justified
- 15% Not justified

Some people think that U.S. naval maneuvers in the Gulf of Sidra were a deliberate attempt to provoke an attack from Libya. Do you agree or disagree?*

- 43% Agree
- 46% Disagree

*ANSWERS FROM THE 90 PERCENT OF ALL RESPONDENTS WHO HAD HEARD OR READ ABOUT THE U.S. RETALIATORY ATTACKS.

Fears of Terrorism

Following the U.S. attack on Libya, are you more afraid of terrorist acts against Americans because Kaddafi will retaliate, or less afraid because the attack taught Kaddafi a lesson?

- 64% More afraid
- 26% Less afraid

Do you think the U.S. attack on Libya was worth doing even if it risks more terrorist attacks against Americans?

- 63% Worth it
- 26% Not worth it

If you had the opportunity to travel overseas this summer, would you take the trip or refuse it because of the threat of terrorism?

- 34% Take trip
- 61% Refuse it

Aid to the Contras

Do you think giving U.S. military aid to the contra forces fighting the communist government in Nicaragua will eventually lead to U.S. troops being sent there to help in the fight? Or do you think such aid will permit the contras to carry on without the help of U.S. troops?

- 44% U.S. troops will be sent
- 33% Permit contras to carry on
- 23% Don't know

Which is of greater concern to you today: the presence of a communist government as close to the United States as Nicaragua, or the possibility that U.S. troops will become involved in a war in Central America?

- 34% Communist government
- 54% U.S. troops involved

The Wise Use of Military Force

Do you think President Reagan makes wise use of military forces to solve foreign-policy problems, or do you think the president is too quick to employ U.S. forces?

	Wise	Too quick
Current	56%	32%
2/84	40%	52%
10/83 (After Grenada)	43%	47%

For this NEWSWEEK Poll, The Gallup Organization interviewed a representative national sample of 606 adults by telephone March 26 and 27. The margin of error is plus or minus 5 percentage points. Some "Don't know" responses omitted. The NEWSWEEK Poll © 1986 by NEWSWEEK, Inc.



PETER TURNLEY FOR NEWSWEEK

Anticipating reprisals: Security guards search a car at a NATO base near Naples

tinued to alarm Washington with his meddling in Chad, where his forces are supporting rebels against the government, and Sudan, where he is supporting the government against some rebels. Even Libya presented problems as a target, however. It was difficult to locate the terrorist camps and to know when they were occupied by specific groups, such as Abu Nidal's. And there was a high risk of killing Libyan bystanders.

Then, in late January, Kaddafi gave the Americans the pretext they were looking for: he proclaimed his "line of death" across the Gulf of Sidra (map). "That line is manifestly illegal under international law, so the United States had a perfect right to cross it, which means a perfect right to fire back if Kaddafi were to attack us," said a senior administration official. The freedom-of-navigation issue also solved the targeting problem; the Americans could fire at Libyan missile sites, aircraft or warships that threatened them. In early February the planning for Operation Prairie Fire began, and soon Washington's resolve was hardened by the CIA reports that Libyan agents were shadowing U.S. diplomats in Europe and the Middle East. By then the Navy had begun to put pressure on Kaddafi with unannounced incursions into the airspace over the Gulf of Sidra. Sources told NEWSWEEK that carrier-based American planes crossed the line for 32 consecutive days, forcing Kaddafi to keep his air defenses on constant alert.

Moral heights: The decision to go ahead with Prairie Fire was made at a meeting in the White House on March 14. The toughest issue was how to retaliate if Kaddafi fired on the fleet. Shultz favored swift attacks on Libyan oilfields and terrorist camps, while Weinberger argued that the U.S. response should be proportional to the Libyan aggression. Shultz wanted targets to be selected in advance, while Crowe insisted that the Sixth Fleet commander, Vice Adm. Frank Kelso, should be allowed to make the final decisions on the spot. Poindexter had the swing vote, and he engineered a compromise: Kelso could defend himself, but if Kaddafi launched an all-out assault the fleet would retaliate against a graduated, preselected list of Libyan military and economic targets, with Washington approving each escalation. Later, officials agreed that Poindexter's compromise allowed the United States to retain the moral high ground by waiting until the Libyans opened fire and then responding in kind.

Then, NEWSWEEK has learned, the na-

tional-security adviser dropped a stitch. After agreeing to brief congressional leaders on Prairie Fire, Poindexter failed to follow through, apparently because it slipped his mind. The Hill went unbriefed, even as Under Secretary of State Michael Armacost called in the Soviet chargé d'affaires to tell him what was going to happen—and to warn Moscow that U.S. forces would strike back if Libya opened fire.

Ronald Reagan himself took little part in the March 14 meeting. "You almost got the impression that he wasn't paying attention," an aide recalls. But at the end Reagan recapped the proceedings and went over the



Burnt offering: A Libyan patrol boat after a hit by a U.S. missile

rules of engagement in some detail. "It was pretty obvious that he knew what he was going to do long before he sat down," says the aide. When the action began last week, administration spokesmen insisted that freedom of navigation was the only issue. "The purpose is not to put Kaddafi into his box, [although] that's where he belongs," Shultz said during a visit to Turkey. "The purpose is to exert the U.S. right to conduct naval and air exercises in every part of the globe." But aides confirm that Reagan has a visceral dislike for Kaddafi and wants to overthrow him, just as he hopes to depose Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega. "We wanted to provoke Kaddafi into responding so we could stick it to him," says one participant in the March 14 meeting. "And we knew he would oblige us."

The men on board the aircraft carrier Saratoga knew exactly why they were on

station outside the Gulf of Sidra, and they knew what was likely to happen next. The skipper, Capt. Jerry Unruh, sported a name tag on his breast pocket that read: "Terrorist Buster." "One of the men gave it to me, and I promised I'd wear it," he told NEWSWEEK's Theodore Stanger, who visited the carrier as Prairie Fire began. By then the ship's store had sold out its supply of "Terrorist Buster" T-shirts (\$4.50 each).

'Standoff' range: After lunch on Monday the Libyans fired their first SAM-5 missiles, and in response, American warplanes hurtled off the flight decks of the Saratoga, the Coral Sea and the America.

For nearly 24 hours they continued their scheduled training flights and fought when they had to, efficiently but cautiously. American electronics jammed the Libyan defenses, and the Sixth Fleet fired its missiles and dropped its bombs from the relative safety of "standoff" range. There were a few glitches. The fleet never did determine exactly how many missiles the Libyans had fired or how many Libyan patrol boats were sunk or how many Libyans had been killed (150 was the best guess). In addition, U.S. officials worried that Kaddafi might have been telling the truth when he said he had recovered a dud "HARM" missile, which could be an intelligence bonanza for Moscow. When the first action reports got back to the White House, however, Ronald Reagan's first question was: "Any casualties?" None, he was told. "Good!" the president exclaimed, pounding the arm of his chair.

Elsewhere, the incursion drew a mixed reaction. Congress was more or less acquiescent. Some of the European allies regretted the violence, but not too heatedly, while others happily cloaked themselves in the fig leaf of free navigation. As expected, Arab governments complained, moderates and radicals alike, but some of the protests had a hollow ring. "People keep coming up to us in private and saying, 'Great,'" reported a U.S. diplomat in the Middle East, where Kaddafi is more despised than admired. The final verdict on Operation Prairie Fire will come in the weeks and months ahead, when Kaddafi launches his next terror campaign—or decides not to risk it. If there is a new round of terror, the ruthless friends of Muammar Kaddafi will find that the stakes are higher the next time around.

RUSSELL WATSON with JOHN WALCOTT and JOHN BARRY in Washington. TONY CLIFTON and RUTH MARSHALL in Tripoli and bureau reports

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HEADLINE: Reagan Adviser Poindexter Under Criticism by Colleagues

BYLINE: By Lou Cannon and David Hoffman, Washington Post Staff Writers

KEYWORD: REAG1

BODY:

Seven months after taking over as President Reagan's national security affairs adviser, Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter has become the object of intensifying criticism from White House colleagues for his management of arms control, the space program and administration foreign policy initiatives in Congress.

Senior officials who have daily contact with Poindexter said in recent interviews that he is well versed in policy matters but complained that he is slow to resolve internal disputes, often overlooks important political considerations and has not mastered the art of explaining complex issues to a president accustomed to dealing in broad concepts rather than details.

For example, the officials said Poindexter had allowed key decisions on the future of the U.S. space program to languish and had failed to anticipate the political outcry following Reagan's May 27 announcement that the United States would no longer be bound by the limits of the unratified SALT II treaty.

In addition some officials said that, before the June 11 presidential news conference, Poindexter had not adequately explained the probable consequences of the SALT II issue to Reagan, whose explanations of his decision contradicted what high-ranking senior administration officials had said about it.

These criticisms -- expressed in interviews by numerous senior administration officials, all of whom requested anonymity -- have persisted even as U.S.-Soviet relations appeared to take a better turn and Reagan expressed optimism that Moscow was beginning to negotiate seriously at the Geneva talks on nuclear and space weapons.

A Poindexter associate said the admiral is successfully dealing with a "full plate" of difficult problems. But other officials said Poindexter appears overloaded and unwilling to delegate, and they expressed dismay at what they described as an increasingly clogged system of paperwork at the National Security Council. "It's like Hoover Dam," one official said.

Poindexter would not comment on these concerns, following his usual practice of shunning the news media. He spurned the recommendation of other White House officials that he conduct a background briefing for reporters on Reagan's SALT II decision -- one of the most important arms control announcements of the president's second term and one that was followed by contradictory administration statements and considerable confusion in the media. Such

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briefings usually have been conducted in the past by national security affairs advisers or their principal deputies rather than by White House spokesman Larry Speakes, who was instructed to brief on May 27, the day of the SALT II announcement.

Poindexter has told associates he does not believe that briefing the media is an essential part of his job. He has said he views his role primarily as providing information to the president and being an "honest broker" among the strong-willed Cabinet secretaries.

In his unwillingness to explain administration policy to Congress and the media, Poindexter sharply contrasts with Reagan's three previous national security affairs advisers. Richard V. Allen, the first, was a 1980 campaign adviser with strong ties with the conservative movement. He lasted only a year, however, after persistent conflicts with then-Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr.

William P. Clark, his replacement, lacked any foreign policy credentials but brought to the job political experience and an understanding of Reagan, whom he had served as chief of staff in Sacramento. In dealing with Congress, Clark heavily relied on Robert C. McFarlane, a former Senate Armed Services Committee staff member; McFarlane then succeeded Clark when he became secretary of interior.

McFarlane brought both political experience and knowledge of foreign policy issues to the post but was sometimes criticized for being too activist for a president who preached the virtues of Cabinet government. When McFarlane left last December, he recommended his 49-year-old deputy Poindexter as his successor and both Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger made it known that they welcomed the idea of a less assertive national security affairs adviser.

Poindexter's strong suit at the time of his appointment appeared to be a capability for managing military crises. Reagan praised Poindexter's performance in directing U.S. forces in the interception of the Achille Lauro hijackers last October, when the admiral was still McFarlane's deputy. Poindexter also coordinated the U.S. military response to Libya in the Gulf of Sidra exercises and the subsequent bombing in April of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi's headquarters in retaliation for a West Berlin terrorist attack.

He has also taken the unusual step of remaining on active duty while holding the job.

But Poindexter's military crisis management skill has not been evident in dealing with sensitive political situations, officials say. Poindexter has acknowledged some of these difficulties to other officials, saying that he has been severely hampered recently by the absence of his respected deputy, Donald R. Fortier, a former assistant to House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Lee H. Hamilton (D-Ind.).

Fortier, who is seriously ill, had played a critical role in dealing with Congress and in anticipating political problems for the White House on national security issues, officials said.

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"Fortier provided a buoyancy factor, and without him, they are sinking," said a senior official. "Poindexter has to do a lot of things he has no experience doing."

In recent weeks, Poindexter has attempted to improve his relations with Capitol Hill by increasing frequency of his meetings with members of Congress, including one last Friday to fashion a new administration approach to aiding the Nicaraguan rebels. He also began weekly breakfasts with White House chief of staff Donald T. Regan about five weeks ago aimed at bettering their working relationship, officials said.

One of the first signs of strain to become public was over the space program. A special interagency group had been established after the space shuttle Challenger tragedy to study both the civilian and national security aspects of the space program.

The expectation was that this group would give the president options on such issues as building a replacement shuttle orbiter, coping with the backlog of commercial and government satellites, dealing with the need for additional unmanned rockets and financing the space program in the future, officials said.

But the result was "gridlock," as one official put it, because of conflict between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Defense Department, a conflict Poindexter did not resolve. "The group was supposed to report in 30 days," said one White House official familiar with the issue. "The presidential Rogers Commission was supposed to report in 120 days. But the Rogers Commission came in first."

Only when, in mid-May, Regan questioned the need for a fourth orbiter did the process move forward, officials said.

The episode that has generated the most criticism of Poindexter in the White House was Reagan's announcement that the United States would no longer be bound by the limits in the SALT II treaty because of alleged Soviet violations. Reagan said he would take into account Soviet arms-control policies over the next several months before deciding whether to exceed the SALT II restrictions when the 131st B52 bomber is armed with air-launched cruise missiles later this year.

The officials said they devoted extra attention to the issue in preparing Reagan for his June 11 news conference, realizing that his comments would be read closely by the Soviets, U.S. allies and critics in Congress.

According to a participant, Poindexter -- who has been described by some officials as relatively disinterested and uninformed about arms control -- gave Reagan a "confused" explanation of what could happen when the United States exceeded the limits on missile launchers in the unratified SALT II treaty.

The president emerged from this briefing apparently under the impression that the decision to abandon the limits had yet to be made. When Reagan was asked at the news conference why he had made the SALT II decision at this time, he responded, "didn't make it now," leaving what aides said was an unintended impression he might return to the SALT II limits.

The next day Speakes attempted to clear up the confusion by announcing that the SALT II limits "no longer exist." Two days later Reagan gave a clear

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explanation to journalists of what he had done on SALT II -- after a briefing by Regan that Poindexter did not attend.

White House officials also expressed concern that Poindexter has not paid sufficient attention to likely political consequences of the SALT II decision. Although Shultz and some other officials anticipated a strong negative reaction from Congress and the allies, Poindexter seemed surprised by the extent of the criticism, officials said. One key official said Poindexter erred by not preparing follow-up action that would have deflected some of that criticism.

Poindexter was not alone in the White House in failing to anticipate the political outcry against the president's SALT II statement. But as pressure grows on Capitol Hill and in Europe for a new U.S. accord on arms control with the Soviets, officials say that Poindexter appears to be fulfilling his reputation as a manager of military crises rather than an architect of political solutions.

GRAPHIC: Picture 1, Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter . . . contrasts with predecessors; Picture 2, Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter . . . has full plate of problems

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HEADLINE: CRITICISM ON IRAN AND OTHER ISSUES PUT REAGAN'S AIDES ON DEFENSIVE

BYLINE: By BERNARD WEINRAUB, Special to the New York Times

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, Nov. 15

BODY:

With the White House facing criticism of its Iran policy and its handling of foreign affairs, two of President Reagan's advisers have mounted a strong defense of their competence and the role they have been playing.

One adviser, Donald T. Regan, who is the White House chief of staff and a principal subject of the growing criticism from some both inside and outside the White House, said: "I don't take kindly to this criticism by people who have not examined my record. How much more experience do you have to have in foreign policy than I do to believe you are qualified?"

His comments in his White House office on Friday came at the conclusion of a day in which he and Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter, the national security adviser, began a series of interviews and television appearances to last through the weekend.

They acknowledge that this unusual defense was in response to the criticism about the secret arms deliveries to Iran and their possible linkage to the release of hostages held in Lebanon, but also about the effectiveness of Mr. Reagan and his inner circle in handling the major foreign policy issues of his second term.

There is no evidence that the President himself is dissatisfied, but recent events have brought his advisers under close scrutiny and some criticism from members of Congress, the State Department, politicians and diplomats.

The criticism comes after reports of official misinformation about Libyan intentions and after a dispute over what the President told Mikhail S. Gorbachev in Iceland. Mr. Regan and aides to Admiral Poindexter contend that all these issues were beyond their control.

"Some of us are like a shovel brigade that follow a parade down Main Street cleaning up," Mr. Regan said with a laugh. "We took Reykjavik and turned what was really a sour situation into something that turned out pretty well.

"Who was it that took this disinformation thing and managed to turn it? Who was it took on this loss in the Senate and pointed out a few facts and managed to pull that? I don't say we'll be able to do it four times in a row. But here we go again, and we're trying."

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The remarks point up one aspect of the Reagan team that has been compared unfavorably by some current and former officials to the group led by James A. Baker 3d, the chief of staff in the first term. In this view, the present team is seen as having spent a lot of time on "damage control," while Mr. Baker and his staff seemed better able to avoid damaging situations.

In the first term, the White House maintained generally successful relations with Congress and managed to avoid lasting criticism over its most acute foreign policy problem, Lebanon. The White House was then relatively unadventurous in foreign policy, focusing on domestic issues.

Some current and former officials say Mr. Regan, a blunt-spoken former Wall Street executive, and Admiral Poindexter, because of inexperience in foreign affairs and in dealings with Congress, have caused problems in foreign policy. These officials say Mr. Regan and Admiral Poindexter have been more inclined to adventurism.

On specific points, some officials say Mr. Regan, on Iranian policy, did not reach out to Congress or seek unanimity within the Administration so that Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger would not oppose the policy. There has also been criticism of the White House delay in announcing its new policy on Iran.

The Need for Allies in Capital

A member of the White House team during the first term said:

"There seems to be little understanding now of the fact that in Washington it is important to have allies, and your most critical allies need to be brought into the process as early as possible."

A White House official who has long worked for Mr. Reagan said:

"One of the advantages they saw in Don Regan's style at the beginning was a kind of strong, fighting confrontational approach that everyone expected to be healthy in terms of promoting the second-term agenda and preventing lame-duck status.

"In the first term, the agenda was domestic-oriented - tax cuts and economic change and recovery from the recession. But in this term, with the President turning more to arms control, to summits, to terrorism, this may not be the best style in terms of delicate foreign policy issues. When you couple that with a kind of penchant for secrecy, you have got problems."

Relations With Congress

Admiral Poindexter, who as national security adviser heads the National Security Council staff, has also faced criticism within the White House for not cementing relationships with Congress, especially when compared to his predecessor, Robert C. McFarlane.

Admiral Poindexter argued against disclosure of the Iran policy on the ground that it would damage prospects of obtaining the release of more hostages.

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A State Department official, discussing Admiral Poindexter, said:

'You have a leader, at the N.S.C., who is a highly competent military officer, but has two unusual things about him. One, he is still on active duty, which is odd and, I think, makes you less vigorous in pursuing your views. Secondly, he does not have a great deal of background in foreign affairs nor is he a confidant of the President.'

'The best policy in the world can fail if your Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense oppose it - as happened with Iran. If you decide to do it, it was Regan's and Poindexter's job to have brought these people in.'

On a personal level, officials say, the tensions over the Iran policy have spilled over into White House criticism of Secretary of State Shultz, who opposed the policy from the outset.

But Charles E. Redman, the State Department spokesman, said: 'The Secretary supports the President. Those are his words. You can take that as gospel.'

Mr. Regan, in defending his motives in the interview on Friday, said:

'Look, in the initial stages of this, by necessity, only a few people were involved. You couldn't make this a town-meeting sort of exercise. Those who had a need to know were consulted. There were differences of opinion, they were put forth with vigor by the senior people involved, debated and then the President made his decision.'

Fear of Early Disclosure

Had the Administration consulted Congress, Mr. Regan said, 'I suspect it would not have held as a secret as long as it did.' He spoke testily of the criticism that Mr. Baker, now Treasury Secretary, would have brought in Congressional leaders, as the White House did before the invasion of Grenada.

'Look, we did consult with the Congressional leadership on Libya - that happened under Regan,' he said, referring to the raid in April. 'When there was an event about to transpire, we made certain the Congress was informed. In this one, there was no big bang as in launching the attack on Libya or the invasion of Grenada.'

An official of the National Security Council staff termed some of the criticism of Admiral Poindexter unfair, saying that the admiral had developed ties on Capitol Hill.

Although White House officials have criticized Admiral Poindexter for surrounding himself with aides who are in the military, the official said the staff was usually about 30 percent military.

SUBJECT: UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS; ARMS SALES ABROAD; UNITED STATES ARMAMENT AND DEFENSE; SUMMIT CONFERENCES

NAME: WEINRAUB, BERNARD; REAGAN, RONALD WILSON (PRES); REGAN, DONALD T; POINDEXTER, JOHN M (VICE ADM); GORBACHEV, MIKHAIL S

across "the territory of all of Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals."

In any case, the Reagan Administration had decided to go ahead with the raid whatever the cost in relations with the allies and the Soviets—and, for that matter, at whatever price in an immediate spasm of fresh terrorism. Why? Of all people, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, who had long been publicly dubious about military reprisals against terrorism, put the rationale most succinctly. Terrorism, Weinberger declared in a Boston speech, "is now a state-practiced activity, a method of waging war" planned and organized by governments convinced of their impunity. It will get steadily worse unless the U.S. convinces them otherwise, he said. Shultz, who for years had argued what was originally a lonely case in favor of antiterrorist strikes, developed the rationale still further. Whatever the immediate effects of U.S. action, said the Secretary of State, "if you raise the costs [of inciting terrorism], you do something that should, eventually, act as a deterrent."

Besides, there was a growing feeling that the Administration had exhausted every other alternative for taming Gaddafi. Said President Reagan, addressing a meeting of lawyers on Wednesday: "We tried quiet diplomacy. We tried public condemnation. We tried economic sanctions. And, yes, we tried a show of military might [the Sixth Fleet's skirmish in the Gulf of Sidra with Libyan patrol boats and missile batteries last month]. But Gaddafi intensified his terrorist war, sending his agents around the world to murder and maim innocents."

The Administration's case drew vigorous agreement across almost the full spectrum of American political opinion. House Speaker Tip O'Neill, usually a leader of opposition to what his fellow Democrats see as an overly adventurous Reagan foreign policy, declared that "we just can't let this madman of terrorism [Gaddafi] keep threatening." Indeed, said O'Neill, if Libya continues to foment terrorism, "I think the American people would demand that we go in again." The *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, whose editorial writers are often skeptical about military action overseas, voiced approval of the raid. The most notable dissenter was former President Jimmy Carter, who predicted that the raid would make Gaddafi "a hero" in the Arab world and a worse menace than ever. But, Carter acknowl-



Return: a U.S. F-111 approaches Lakenheath

edged, "mine is one of the lonely voices."

It certainly seemed to be; polls indicated that the military strike against Libya was about as popular with the American public as any action Reagan has ever taken. An overwhelming 71% of 1,007 adults polled for *TIME* by Yankelovich/Clancy, Shulman last week approved the strike, vs. only 20% who disapproved and 9% who were not sure. Some 60% went further to agree with the statement that the raids "made me feel proud to be an American."

Something more than jingoistic pride seemed to be involved in the public's atti-



Protest: placards outside Thatcher's office
Scathing criticism for backing of the U.S.

tude. Many respondents approved the strike despite a sober appreciation of the dangers involved. Three out of five declared themselves to be "afraid of what will happen in the future," and 48% agreed that "the bombing will only make the situation with Libya worse, not better." But the majority looked for eventual gains; 56% agreed that "in the long run, the bombing will help stop terrorist attacks on Americans."

The Reagan Administration's attitude toward an air strike had been years in the making. The President has been preoccupied with the problem of terrorism since his early days in office. Two events in Reagan's first year helped to fix his thoughts on Gaddafi as a symbol of virtually everything he hates. One was a Libyan attack on U.S. jets in the Gulf of Sidra that resulted in the shooting down of two of Gaddafi's Soviet-built Su-22 fighter planes. Later in 1981 U.S. intelligence picked up information

that Libya was sending hit squads to the U.S. to assassinate Reagan and some of his close aides. No such attacks occurred, but the scare contributed to Reagan's revulsion toward the Libyan dictator, which has been fueled since by Gaddafi's long series of boasts, taunts and public threats against Americans and open encouragement of terrorism around the world.

Yet even after Shultz began his open advocacy of military reprisals in 1983, Reagan continued to express caution. Then late last year several factors combined to push him to a more militant view. Terrorism seemed to be accelerating, exemplified by the massacres at the Rome and Vienna airports. Nonmilitary means of countering the outrages seemed maddeningly ineffective. Evidence for the airport massacres appeared to point to Syria as well as Libya, and when Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead toured Europe early this year trying to organize a political and economic boycott of Libya, he came home empty-handed.

Another decisive event for the President had been the U.S. capture in October of the four Arab terrorists who had hijacked the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro* and murdered an American passenger, Leon Klinghoffer. The seizure gave the President new confidence that U.S. military forces could indeed strike effectively against terrorists. When John Poindexter, then deputy assistant for national security, met with the President the morning after the hijackers had been seized, Reagan leaped from his chair in the Oval Office and exclaimed, "I salute the Navy!"

Still, Reagan had laid down and stuck to an all-important precondition for any outright reprisal attack: it had to be directed against a target that could be proved responsible for a specific terrorist attack. And for all his open support of terrorism, Gaddafi had always been skillful at covering his tracks in actual incidents. But then the U.S. broke the Libyan diplomatic code and intercepted messages between Tripoli and Libyan "people's bureaus" (as the country calls its embassies). The messages proved, to Washington's satisfaction and eventually to the satisfaction of initial skeptics like West German Chancellor Kohl, that the bureau in East Berlin had dispatched terrorists to place a bomb in a West Berlin disco packed with American servicemen. The bomb explod-

ed early in the morning of April 5, killing U.S. Army Sergeant Kenneth Ford and a Turkish woman and injuring 230 people, 79 of them Americans.

The U.S. claimed further that intercepted messages disclosed orders by Gaddafi to Libyan agents and Libyan-sponsored terrorists to carry out attacks against more than 30 American targets around the world. White House Spokesman Speakes asserted that one plot was for Libyan agents to hurl grenades and open fire with machine guns at lines of people waiting at the U.S. visa office in Paris. This intelligence enabled the Administration to claim that it had struck Libya not only to punish Gaddafi for the Berlin disco bombing but in self-defense, to forestall a new wave of bloodshed.

That argument appeared to be crucial in winning the support of the British government. In private communications to Washington, Thatcher insisted that any U.S. action had to be justified as one taken under the inherent right of self-defense recognized in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. Whether the strike against Libya really met that condition is at best questionable; Article 51 refers to self-defense "if an armed attack occurs." Nonetheless, the U.S. got political support it urgently needed. "What they really wanted was less the planes than someone along with them," said one Thatcher confidant.

In Washington, once the intelligence information had been assessed, there was never any serious debate about what the

The Iron Lady Stands Alone

"A lioness in a den of Daniels," the London *Times* characterized her. When British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher stood before the House of Commons last week, opposition members and even backbenchers from her own Conservative Party hooted and jeered her for allowing U.S. planes to take off from English air bases for their bomb runs to Libya. The Prime Minister held her ground. "It is inconceivable," she stated, "that [the U.S.] should be refused the right to use American aircraft and American pilots . . . to defend their own people."

The opposition was in full cry against her. Labor Foreign Policy Spokesman Denis Healey said Thatcher's decision was "a disastrous blunder" and proved that "when Mr. Reagan tells Mrs. Thatcher to jump, her reply is 'How high?'" Other Laborites vowed that if they ever returned to power, they would close down U.S. nuclear bases. Liberal Party Leader David Steel told the Prime Minister she had turned "the British bulldog into a Reagan poodle." Social Democratic Party Leader David Owen was less harsh, but maintained that Britain should have taken the Libyan issue to the United Nations. Later in the week, after two British hostages in Lebanon were murdered, apparently in retaliation for Britain's cooperation with the U.S., Labor Party Leader Neil Kinnock blamed Thatcher, saying the hostages had been "abandoned to their fate."

Many in Thatcher's own Tory Party were equally unsympathetic, particularly former Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath, who pointed out that he had refused President Richard Nixon's request to use British bases for U.S. aircraft resupplying Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Even some members of Thatcher's Cabinet privately opposed her decision, though all supported it publicly.

In January, Thatcher had told U.S. correspondents she could not support a retaliatory strike against terrorists that violated international law. But she seemed to have come to

believe with Reagan that alternatives to force in dealing with Libya had simply failed. Last week she reminded her critics of Libya's continuing support of the terrorist gangs in the Provisional Irish Republican Army and of other Libyan incidents much closer to home. Two years ago, London broke diplomatic relations with Tripoli after Constable Yvonne Fletcher was killed by gunfire from the Libyan "people's bureau."

Nor had Thatcher been entirely complaisant in responding to the U.S. requests. Before permitting the use of the air bases, she insisted that the raid be justifiable as self-defense. She was shown what one aide said were "compelling" reports from U.S. and British intelligence that Gaddafi had ordered the bombing of a West Berlin discothèque and planned a wide range of other terrorist activities. She also demanded promises from Reagan that the U.S. warplanes would confine their attack to "clearly defined targets related to terrorism" and avoid widespread civilian casualties.

Thatcher had other reasons too for assisting the Reagan Administration. She reminded M.P.s of the vital American military assistance in recapturing the Falkland Islands from Argentina four years ago: "We received splendid support from the U.S., far beyond the call of duty." Added one Whitehall official: "We owed Washington one."

Thatcher showed little patience for her counterparts elsewhere in Europe who refused to aid the U.S. Although the U.S. had repeatedly urged its NATO allies to take

tougher, nonmilitary action against Libya, she told Parliament, results had been "totally insufficient. She held to the view that "if one never took any action because of the risks involved, the alternative would be to be totally and utterly passive and supine before Colonel Gaddafi and anyone else who practices state-sponsored terrorism."

Although the Prime Minister's actions set her apart from fellow European leaders and much of British public opinion, her stance of gritty independence was nevertheless familiar. Thatcher, as one government official put it, "is used to being the odd person out." That role last week, as lioness and Iron Lady, served the U.S. well.



Thatcher leaves Downing Street for Parliament

U.S. should do. "We'd been a pretty determined bunch ever since the *Achille Lauro*," said one senior Reagan official. "The only major point of discussion was targeting." Reagan insisted that the targets be chosen with a view toward holding down casualties among Libyan civilians. That damage nonetheless occurred. In downtown Tripoli might indicate that a so-called surgical air strike is much easier to plan than to achieve.

Although military action was decided on Monday, April 7, final approval of a plan and targets did not come until the following Sunday. That allowed time for a last-minute mission by Vernon Walters, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. and a veteran troubleshooter, to sound out European allies on their attitudes. On Saturday, Sunday and Monday, he visited in quick succession London, Madrid, Bonn, Paris and Rome.

Walters' mission, however, became a source of new controversy. Several European leaders contended that Walters, while making it clear that the U.S. was seriously considering a military strike, put all his comments on a what-if basis. As a result, they said, they got no impression that an attack had already been ordered, much less that it was within days or even hours of beginning. Added to their concern about being caught in the middle of a cycle of military reprisal and terrorist vengeance was a resentful feeling that the U.S. had failed to consult them properly, and perhaps had even misled them.

France had already refused a U.S. request to permit the F-111s to fly over her territory before Walters met with President François Mitterrand and Prime Minister Jacques Chirac. An official French government statement later explained that Paris was fearful of intensifying "the chain of violence" by abetting the U.S. military strike. France may also have been reluctant to become involved in any military action that it did not initiate and could not control. Another factor: the newly installed Chirac government had just renewed efforts to win freedom for eight French hostages in Lebanon and did not want to endanger them—a concern that was justified by the subsequent execution of British and American hostages.

Walters implied that Spain also had refused overflight permission before he got to Madrid Saturday. Said the Ambassador: "Sometimes it is better not to ask the question when you don't think you will like the answer." But Prime Minister Felipe González said later that during his meeting with Walters, the Ambassador—again on a what-if basis—specifically

asked if Spain would permit overflight, or, failing that, at least allow tanker planes taking off from Spanish bases to refuel the F-111s in flight over the Atlantic. Whenever asked, González replied with a firm no.

As late as Monday, many European leaders apparently believed they might still have time to talk the U.S. out of an attack. Meeting in emergency session in the Hague only hours before the strike, foreign ministers of the twelve European Community nations went further than they ever had before toward meeting U.S. requests for collective action. They pledged to reduce the number of Libyan diplomats allowed into their countries, to

dominantly against the raid, was hardly monolithic. Polls showed an odd pattern. In Britain, Market & Opinion Research International surveyed 1,051 people for the *London Times*. Two-thirds were against the air strike, and 71% disapproved of Thatcher's permission for British bases to be used. But in France, which refused to participate, a survey taken within 48 hours of the raid turned up only 49% against vs. 39% who were in favor of it. In France also, one notable political figure, former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, stated flatly, "I approve of the American action in Libya." French-speaking Swiss polled by the Lausanne newspaper *Le Matin* registered an astonishing 67.8% majority for the attack. Opinion seemed vehemently opposed in Spain. A crowd in Barcelona smashed windows of a McDonald's restaurant, and *El Pais*, the leading daily in Madrid, published a cartoon of the U.S. flag with skulls for stars and bones for stripes.

Very privately, the U.S. picked up some support in the Arab world. Radical Arab states condemned the military strike in shrill, vehement and threatening terms, conservative nations in ritualistic tones. But their confidential comments differed markedly from their public ones. Said one Arab government minister: "Gaddafi has done more harm to us [by fomenting terrorism] than to the Americans. The only problem with the attack on Libya is that you didn't get him."

The final act before the bombs could fall was a move by the White House to line up congressional support. The Administration acted at about the last imaginable moment to fulfill even theoretically the requirement of the 1973 War Powers Act that "the President in every possible instance shall consult with Congress before introducing United States armed forces into hostilities." At 4 p.m. on Monday, when the already airborne F-111s were only three hours from the attack, nine House and Senate leaders of both parties were summoned to the Old Executive Office Building for "consultation" with a pride of Administration lions: Vice President George Bush, Shultz, Weinberger, CIA Director William Casey, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral William Crowe. Reagan came in ten minutes later, read briefly from typewritten notes describing the operation, then turned the presentation over to National Security Adviser John Poindexter, who gave a detailed rundown of the evidence linking Libya to the Berlin disco bombing and the wave of new terrorist acts that

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION

U.S.	BRITAIN
<p>Do you approve or disapprove of U.S. military action against Libya?</p> <p>Approve 71% Disapprove 20% Not sure 9%</p> <p>In the long run, will the Libyan bombing help stop terrorist attacks on Americans?</p> <p>Agree 56% Disagree 33% Not sure 11%</p> <p>Source: Yankelovich/Clancy, Shulman</p>	<p>Do you think Reagan was right or wrong in ordering the bombing of Libya?</p> <p>Wrong 66% Right 29% No opinion 5%</p> <p>Do you think the bombing will increase or decrease the likelihood of terrorist attacks on Britain?</p> <p>Increase 84% Decrease 4% No difference 12%</p> <p>Source: Market & Opinion Research International</p>

limit their freedom of movement and to keep them under close surveillance. That move has some importance: Libyan "diplomats" are believed often to pass instructions, money and weapons to terrorists.

But besides coming too late, the move fell short of meeting Washington's urging that the Europeans shut down the Libyan people's bureaus entirely. Meeting again on Thursday, two full days after the attack, the twelve tried to come up with some further move that might satisfy the U.S. but could agree only to wait for a committee report due this week.

It is possible that this attitude will change. While opposing the attack, some European leaders also criticized their own failure to propose any alternative antiterrorist program. Said West Germany's Kohl: "Too frequently, the Europeans have been too satisfied with mere declarations which have been politically ineffectual while leaving the U.S. alone in its struggle against international terrorism. . . . If we Europeans do not want to follow the Americans for reasons of our own, we must develop political initiatives."

Public opinion in Europe, while pre-

Nation



Payoff: the shattered façade of Gaddafi's headquarters in Bab al Azizia army compound on the day after the attack

the Administration said was imminent.

All the congressional leaders found the evidence sufficiently convincing to justify the raid, but several remarked that they were being notified, not consulted. One of the Reagan officials replied that there was still time to call off the attack—if the legislators objected “unanimously” and strongly. House Republican Leader Robert Michel thought, “If I had some serious objection, how could I make it now?”

No one objected, but no one expressed any enthusiasm either. Michel, playing devil's advocate, asked if the Administration had considered waiting for the next terrorist provocation. Poindexter replied that the case against Gaddafi was so strong that there was no point in waiting. Several legislators ventured worried what-next questions: in effect, how ready was the Administration to use military force against future terrorist acts? Democratic Senate Leader Robert Byrd of West Virginia asked, “What are we playing, tit for tat? Suppose the trail leads to Syria or Iran. Are we going to send in the bombers?” Shultz replied that the Administration would consider the problem on a case-by-case basis, deciding on a military or other response as the circumstances of each terrorist outburst appeared to dictate. That did not satisfy Georgia Senator Sam Nunn, the leading Democratic expert on defense. While continuing to defend the Libya raid as justified, Nunn remarked later, “I don't sense any long-range strategy in dealing with terrorism. I think it's still ad-hocism.”

Administration officials, for their part, are anything but eager to proclaim a broad new Reagan Doctrine of repeated military retaliation against terrorism. On the contrary, they warned against assuming that new terrorist outrages will necessarily, or even probably, be punished by bombs and bullets. Having demonstrated

that the U.S. really will hit back if it has sufficient evidence and provocation, the President, they say, will now return to emphasizing political and economic action. Primarily, that means pushing the allies yet again to agree to some sort of tough, coordinated action, this time with at least the implicit argument that they can see for themselves the unpleasant consequences if they refuse. Indeed, there was some intention among Reagan's advisers to use the bombing to shock the Europeans out of their timidity and inertia. The President especially intends to press for a coordinated program next month at the economic summit meeting in Tokyo of the non-Communist world's seven leading industrial powers: the U.S., Canada, Britain, France, West Germany, Italy and Japan.

Still, the question of when, how and at whom the U.S. might strike again probably cannot be dodged for long. Even if Gaddafi is cowed, terrorist violence undoubtedly will continue and may even increase, as last week's incidents so frighteningly indicated. Libya's assistance to terrorists is of two types: Gaddafi directly plans and carries out some attacks, but he also supplies money, weapons and training to groups that act on their own and could carry on without him. Says Brian Jenkins, a Rand Corp. expert on terrorism: “Quite clearly Gaddafi has played a major role in terrorism, but he by no means exercises control over the myriad Middle East groups who target the U.S. and the West for a variety of reasons. Gaddafi may have a ‘go’ switch for some terrorist groups, but not a ‘stop’ switch.”

Richly as Gaddafi deserved being targeted, the U.S. has been observing a kind of double standard in fingering him as Terrorist Public Enemy No. 1. Less noisily, but not a bit less lethally, Syria and at

times Iran have been quite as active as Libya in sponsoring, aiding and sheltering terrorists. To take the most notorious example, Italian police believe that the gunmen who carried out the Rome and Vienna airport attacks trained in the Syrian-occupied Bekaa Valley of Lebanon. But Syria and Iran are far more populous, and more heavily armed, than Libya. They also are less politically isolated.

Syria maintains a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union—a diplomatic plum Gaddafi has pleaded for but never received—which Damascus conceivably could invoke for military assistance against attack. Under those circumstances, if evidence ties some future terrorist murder to Syria as unequivocally as the intercepted messages pointed to Libya in the Berlin disco bombing, what would the U.S. do? Go back on the pledge, renewed by Reagan at his news conference two weeks ago, to “respond” whenever he has proof of responsibility for a specific terrorist act? Or would the U.S. take the risk of launching a military action that could lead to a much wider conflict?

One criterion for the use of military force, of course, is precisely the likelihood that it will prove effective at an acceptable cost. But in the end, the reason for last week's U.S. air strike came not so much from a calculation of effectiveness as from a conviction that a military blow had become inevitable. Shultz has much merit to his argument that terrorists must be forced to consider a cost for their attacks: given the evidence on Gaddafi and the military strength the U.S. had against him, it became a question of put up or shut up, now or never. The blow established the credibility of the U.S. military threat. But it did not solve the question of how to integrate that threat into a global antiterrorist strategy. —By George J. Church. Reported by David Beckwith and Barrett Seaman/Washington and Christopher Ogden/London

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STRAIGHT ADVICE ON NATIONAL SECURITY

BYLINE: By BERNARD WEINRAUB, Special to the New York Times

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, Jan. 26

BODY:

In the hours before President Reagan's last news conference more than three weeks ago, Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter sat with a group of White House aides in the Oval Office briefing Mr. Reagan.

On foreign policy issues as varied as East-West relations, economic sanctions against Libya and aid to Nicaraguan rebels, Admiral Poindexter, the President's new national security adviser, assumed control of the dialogue. 'He told the President, straightforward, 'You shouldn't say that, it would be better if you said this,' ' said one participant at the meeting. 'He gave advice, and it wasn't sugar-coated.'

Recent sessions like the one in the Oval Office surprised some White House aides for two reasons. The first is that Admiral Poindexter, who is a nuclear physicist, spoke so confidently and bluntly to Mr. Reagan, only weeks after his appointment to the post. 'He's steely-eyed,' said one White House official. 'He's a cool and calculating customer.'

'Tension Is Gone'

The second reason is that Donald T. Regan, the White House chief of staff has left national security in the hands of the admiral, a pointed contrast to Mr. Regan's strained relations over turf with Admiral Poindexter's predecessor, Robert C. McFarlane. 'The tension is gone,' said one aide to Mr. Regan.

Another White House official remarked: 'John is very direct, very forthcoming. We gets along with Regan and Regan's people. Of course they like their own team. He has moved up under Don Regan, so he is Don Regan's man.'

As a measure of Admiral Poindexter's confidence in the job, White House officials say he is planning some key personnel moves this week and a restructuring of the National Security Council, a high-level agency created by Congress in 1947 to coordinate foreign policy and manage crises. #3 Key Deputies Officials say that Admiral Poindexter will create a staff of three key deputies: Donald R. Fortier, a specialist on Western European affairs who was Mr. McFarlane's aide on policy matters, will be appointed deputy national security adviser, the post Admiral Poindexter had held. Peter W. Rodman, director of policy and planning at the State Department and a former associate of Henry A. Kissinger, will oversee foreign policy issues. Ronald F. Lehman, a National

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Security Council official who also served as deputy to John Tower, the arms control negotiator, will oversee defense issues.

At this point, the contrasts and similarities between Admiral Poindexter and his predecessor have begun to emerge. "The admiral is a little more prone to thinking out loud, he delegates more, he's easier to read, he's not as intense as McFarlane," said one White House official who worked with both men. "I don't think there's any perceptible difference in terms of policy issues."

A Changing Role

Perhaps the most substantive difference between both men rests in their evident perception of the role of national security adviser, a role that has veered over the years from the forceful one of Mr. Kissinger to a relatively obscure one of some others.

While Admiral Poindexter refuses to meet with reporters and apparently views his role as a low-profile insider, Mr. McFarlane had served as a source of information to friends in the White House press corps and had assumed an increasingly visible role in foreign policy.

One White House official, who like others interviewed spoke on condition he not be identified, said the admiral saw the Secretary of State as the proper spokesman on foreign policy. "Poindexter sees his role as maintaining an effective hand in interagency coordination, as assuring that the foreign policy advice the President gets is broad and representative of all the main players," this official said. "He'll have his own input, but he won't be a spokesman."

Dealing With Congress

Admiral Poindexter's most immediate task, officials said, is essentially to take a crash course in Congressional relations. While Mr. McFarlane nurtured close ties to Capitol Hill, Admiral Poindexter has, according to one Republican legislative aide, "complete inexperience in how to deal with Congress - he didn't know the difference between an authorization and an appropriation." Admiral Poindexter, aware of the criticisms, has made almost daily trips to Capitol Hill to meet key legislators and their aides.

By all accounts, Admiral Poindexter is a confident and strong figure with what one official called a "nonabrasive, nonoffensive style."

As Mr. McFarlane's deputy, he oversaw the response in October to the hijacking of the cruise ship Achille Lauro and the seizing of the Egyptian airliner that carried the hijackers.

"John was in his office eating dinner, monitoring what was going on, making decisions all the time," said one White House official. "He was very cool."

Secretary of State George P. Shultz, responding to a question about Admiral Poindexter, remarked in an interview Friday night that "the transition is going very, very smoothly" from Mr. McFarlane to Admiral Poindexter. "He's familiar with the territory," said Mr. Shultz. "He's been there. He's picked up without dropping a stitch."

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GRAPHIC: photo of Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter (AP)

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