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**STUDENT REPORT**

LIBYAN STATE SPONSORED TERRORISM --  
WHAT DID OPERATION  
EL DORADO CANYON ACCOMPLISH?

MAJOR GREGORY L. TREBON 88-2600

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WHAT DID OPERATION EL DORADO CANYON ACCOMPLISH?

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## PREFACE

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International terrorist attacks targeted against Americans escalated rapidly between 1970 and 1985. Nation-states like Syria, Iran, and Libya were increasingly using terrorism to combat the United States. During this period, the U.S. Government's reaction to state sponsored terrorism primarily consisted of political and economic measures. Military responses were mostly limited to efforts after a terrorist incident to position U.S. Counterterrorist Forces for a possible rescue. We were not winning the war against terrorism.

In April 1986, following a series of major terrorist incidents involving Americans, President Reagan approved a military strike against Colonel Muammar Qadhafi's terrorist support infrastructure inside Libya. The raid was intended to deter Qadhafi's continued sponsorship of terrorism and was a direct response to Libya's involvement in the bombing of a West Berlin discotheque two weeks earlier. The military strike was designated "Operation El Dorado Canyon".

I was involved in the business of providing airlift to our nation's counterterrorist forces during this time period. I recall how busy we were in 1984 and 1985 responding to seemingly back to back terrorist incidents around the world. After El Dorado Canyon, my co-workers and I noticed a significant and sustained decrease in our "business". We were no longer "chasing terrorists" at the same rate as before. We wondered if El Dorado Canyon was responsible for the apparent decline and if the United States should continue to use direct military action to deter state sponsored terrorism against us? This research effort will provide answers to these important questions.

Open sources were used to compile information about El Dorado Canyon in order to keep this report at the unclassified level. As a result, operational details contained herein may deviate slightly from the actual classified accounts of the mission.

I would like to dedicate this paper to our nation's counterterrorist forces who stand ready to respond when terrorism deterrence fails. I wish to acknowledge the assistance provided by my wife Candy, who did most of the tedious work on this project, and who, in small ways she does not realize, has helped improve Air Force counterterrorist capabilities.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Gregory L. Trebon was commissioned through the Air Force ROTC program at Loyola University of Los Angeles where he graduated in June 1975 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science. For the next 18 months he was employed as a civilian pilot while awaiting Air Force pilot training. Major Trebon completed Undergraduate Pilot Training in 1978 at Williams Air Force Base, Arizona, and was then assigned as a C-141 pilot with the 15th Military Airlift Squadron at Norton Air Force Base, California. During the next five years, Major Trebon was qualified in each of the C-141's tactical and special operations missions including formation airdrop, Special Operations Low Level I and II, and air refueling. Major Trebon served as Assistant Chief of Squadron Standardization and Evaluation between 1982 and 1983. In October 1983, Major Trebon was assigned to Headquarters, Military Airlift Command at Scott AFB, Illinois, where he served as a Special Operations staff officer until July 1987. During this period he managed special access programs designed to improve Air Force counterterrorist reaction capabilities. He also served as a member of the Military Airlift Command's Compartmented Crisis Response Cell during several counterterrorist contingencies including the TWA 847, Achille Laro, and Egypt Air 648 hijackings. Major Trebon received a Master of Arts Degree in Management from Webster University of St. Louis, Missouri. He completed Squadron Officer School and Air Command and Staff College by correspondence. Major Trebon's decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, with one oak leaf cluster, the Air Force Achievement Medal, the Air Force Combat Readiness Medal, and the Antarctica Service Medal. He has authored two articles related to aviation, "Wichita 1946 Versus Wichita 1972" which appeared in Sport Flying, and "Surviving in the Aviation Jungle" which was published in Flying Safety magazine. Major Trebon is a senior pilot with 6000 military and civilian flying hours in 41 aircraft types.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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AUTHOR(S)

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TITLE

LIBYAN STATE SPONSORED TERRORISM -  
WHAT DID OPERATION EL DORADO CANYON ACCOMPLISH?

I. Problem: International terrorism, especially when it is sponsored by nation-states, has been described as the most serious threat to the United States besides nuclear war. Throughout the 1970's and early 1980's, the United States attempted several non-military means to deter state sponsored terrorism. In spite of those efforts terrorist attacks involving Americans continued to expand exponentially. The United States needed a more effective method to halt and reverse this ominous trend.

II. Objectives: Our primary objective is to determine if direct military action is an effective method to deter state sponsored terrorism against the United States. We will first analyze the factors which caused the United States to conduct Operation El Dorado Canyon. Next, we will review the mission execution and analyze the consequences of the raid. Finally, we will recommend if the United States should continue to use direct military action to deter state sponsored terrorism.

III. Findings: Prior to El Dorado Canyon, Muammar Qadhafi used terrorism as a primary foreign policy tool. His support for terrorism was total: providing training, equipment, funds, and diplomatic support to a variety of international terrorist

organizations. Qadhafi was involved in the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre, the 1976 Air France hijacking to Entebbe, Uganda, the 1985 Egypt Air 648 hijacking, the 1985 Rome and Vienna Airport massacres, and countless other terrorist incidents.

By the mid-1980's, Americans were frustrated with the apparent inability of the United States Government to prevent or respond effectively to international terrorist attacks against them. American frustrations were peaked by a series of spectacular terrorist attacks in 1985, some of which were linked to Qadhafi. The Reagan Administration prepared for more aggressive action against terrorists and their sponsors by adopting a new Counterterrorism (CT) Policy. The new CT Policy called for retaliatory and preemptive military actions when appropriate.

In March 1986, U.S. Naval Freedom of Navigation Operations in the Gulf of Sidra caused an angry Qadhafi to seek immediate terrorist retribution against America. In the process, Qadhafi left a trail leading directly from the Berlin disco bombing to the Libyan Government. With unilateral economic and diplomatic sanctions already in place, the President elected to conduct a surgical air strike against elements of Qadhafi's terrorist support infrastructure inside Libya.

The objectives of El Dorado Canyon were more psychological than tactical, or to put it another way, more political than military. First, the United States wanted to deter Qadhafi from continued sponsorship of terrorism against us. Second, the Reagan Administration wanted the Libyan people, specifically those in power, to realize Qadhafi's terrorism policies were costing them dearly and a change in leadership was needed (a coup). Third, the Administration wanted to deter other state sponsors of terrorism by demonstrating American willingness and capability to combat terrorism with our military power. Finally, the United States hoped to foster tougher collective action by our allies against state sponsors of terrorism.

The military objectives of El Dorado Canyon were achieved. Qadhafi's terrorist infrastructure was hit hard, collateral damage and casualties were kept to a minimum, and U.S. losses were limited to a single aircraft and crew.

IV. Conclusions: Clearly, Qadhafi is still in power and remains committed to radical change in the world order and violent solutions to his political problems. Qadhafi still supports a host of terrorist organizations and subversive groups to promote the radical change he desires. However, both Qadhafi and President Assad of Syria appear to no longer be sponsoring major terrorist actions against the United States. Statistics clearly show a notable decline since El Dorado Canyon. The number of Americans killed by international terrorism declined from 54 in 1985, to 0 in 1987. The number of Americans wounded decreased similarly, from 160 in 1985, to 57

in 1987. El Dorado Canyon alone was not responsible for this change. However, El Dorado Canyon and the tougher collective action Europeans took against terrorism because of it probably was.

The range of likely future responses to terrorism was expanded by EL Dorado Canyon in two ways. First, state sponsors must now consider the risk of military retaliation by the United States. Second, other nations maybe more likely to respond to terrorism with military force in the future.

El Dorado Canyon may also have been the turning point with regards to the utility of terrorism as a tactic to influence the American people. The overwhelming public support for the operation showed the world how fed up the American people are with terrorism. To those wishing to generate American sympathy for their cause the message may now be: Try something else - terrorism will no longer work.

Perhaps the most beneficial consequence of El Dorado Canyon was it clearly demonstrated American willingness and capability to strike quickly, powerfully, and precisely at terrorist targets almost anywhere in the world. Previously, the absence of a threat of military reprisal allowed terrorism to remain an attractive means to combat the United States for nations at the fringes of our political and economic sphere of influence. Today, state sponsors of terrorism should understand capable American military power stands behind our political and economic sanctions. As a result, those sanctions should be more effective.

V. Recommendations: Terrorism is a form of warfare. Soldiers know wars are won with offensive not defensive operations. If the United States wants to win the war against terrorism we will have to carry the fight to the states who sponsor terrorism against us.

American policy should continue to first emphasize the use of the non-violent elements of our national power to combat terrorism. However, when those elements are ineffective or inappropriate we should not hesitate using our military power to combat state sponsored terrorism.

The use of our military power should not be preconditioned on the availability of "court room quality" evidence against the state sponsor or the assurance of popular support for the operation. To do so could inhibit a meaningful and timely response. Our overriding concern must be to maintain a consistent, credible deterrent. We should provide state sponsors of terrorism no reason to doubt American willingness and capability to use military force against them.

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## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

In February 1986, Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy commented with concern: "I think state sponsored terrorism poses the most serious threat to the United States, other than the constant threat of nuclear war, of anything possible" (65:7). Many would agree with Senator Leahy's assessment. Terrorism and nuclear war both represent a serious threat to Americans. But there was one difference in 1986, terrorism was more than a threat for Americans, it was a reality. Terrorists were killing Americans, nuclear weapons were not.

The simple facts in February 1986 were: For over a decade American citizens and property were the targets of international terrorist attacks (3,232 since 1970) (67:79). Also, the number of Americans killed and wounded each year by terrorists was escalating at a rate of 20 percent a year (62:225). More ominous was the fact some nations now knew terrorism was an effective way to attack the United States because it was difficult for us to generate an appropriate response (1:1).

In early 1986, international terrorists and their sponsors were at war with the United States in every sense of the word. The preceding year, Abu Nidal (a notorious international terrorist) promised he would bring a wave of terrorist attacks against the U.S. and added: "...the billions of dollars their [U.S.] forces have will be insufficient to protect them" (1:2). Abu Nidal was able to keep his promise with the help of nations like Syria, Iran, and Libya.

In 1985, there were 91 terrorist attacks involving Americans including the hijackings of TWA Flight 847, the Achille Laro, Egypt Air Flight 648, and the Rome and Vienna Airport massacres. Fifty-four Americans were killed and 160 were wounded that year (9:47). We were at war. It wasn't a fancy war, it wasn't declared, it wasn't conventional, but it was a war. And in 1985, we were losing! The Reagan Administration knew we had a problem. They had been carefully preparing the public for more aggressive action for almost two years. In June 1984, Secretary of State Schultz told us:

From a practical standpoint, a purely passive defense does not provide enough of a deterrent to terrorism and the states that sponsor it. It is time to think

long, hard, and seriously about a more active means of defense - about defense through appropriate preventive or preemptive actions against terrorist groups before they strike (11:25-6).

Twenty-two months later, on 14-15 April 1986, the United States military put teeth into Schultz's words, conducting our first direct military strike designed to deter state sponsored terrorism. The operation's unclassified nickname was "El Dorado Canyon". It consisted of surgical air strikes by Air Force and Naval aircraft against elements of Colonel Muammar Qadhafi's terrorist support infrastructure inside Libya (39:51-2).

Looking at the world of terrorism after 15 April 1986, one thing stands out. Since the strike, there have been few of the "spectacular" terrorist incidents targeted against Americans, which were previously commonplace. Could it be the new American policy of direct military action against the sponsors of terrorism, dramatically telegraphed to the world by El Dorado Canyon, was somehow responsible? Did we finally find the right combination of political, economic, and military power to start winning the war against terrorism?

This research effort was "sparked" by a desire to learn the answers to those questions. Our primary objective will be to determine if direct military action is an effective way to deter state sponsored terrorism. Our experience with El Dorado Canyon is the vehicle we will use to accomplish this objective. We will first look at the factors which caused the United States to take military action against Qadhafi's terrorist support infrastructure: Libya's historic role in terrorism, American frustrations with our increasing role as the "victims" of terrorism, and Libyan involvement in the terrorist events of March and early April 1986. Next, we will examine how we employed our military power in El Dorado Canyon by reviewing the targets selected, our rationale for selecting them, the overall plan, execution of the mission, and finally, the military results. We will discuss these areas to provide the context to evaluate the effects of the operation.

We will also evaluate the immediate consequences of the raid and those that are apparent today, nearly two years later. For short term consequences, we will examine the immediate reaction to the raid, the terrorist reprisals, and the international and domestic rhetoric. For the long term consequences, we should determine if the raid caused Qadhafi to alter his sponsorship of terrorism (the primary question) and what the residual effects of the operation were. We will conclude by using what we learn in our study of El Dorado Canyon to make a judgement on what U.S. policy should be regarding the use of direct military force to deter terrorism. Prior to beginning our study we will first define the key terms.

Defining terrorism and some of its related terms is complex. "Neither the United Nations nor any other international organization has been able to agree upon a meaningful definition. Indeed, there is no single, agreed - upon U.S. Government definition of terrorism" (23:66). The reason is the entire subject is highly political and often emotional.

Acceptable definitions are dependent on one's political orientation and point of view; the idea one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. It is difficult to define the terms without somehow appearing to take sides. For example, the Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (JCS Pub 1) defines terrorism as: "The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence against individuals or property to coerce or intimidate governments or societies often to achieve political, religious, or ideological objectives" (64:370). Consider if some of these operations could be defined as "terrorism" using the JCS definition - American fire bombing of Tokyo during World War II, British night area bombing of Germany, Grenada invasion (rescue mission), and El Dorado Canyon. Could any of these operations be considered an "...unlawful use of force or violence against individuals... to coerce or intimidate governments... to achieve political objectives?" Qadhafi considers himself and those he supports to be "revolutionaries". He considers the terrorist acts they commit the military operations of revolutionary war. The Libyan official news agency has flatly stated Libyan laws "...forbid these actions [terrorism] and punish their perpetrators" (6:453-4). The message is this: One's point of view greatly influences your definition of terrorism. For our purposes, we will use State Department and JCS definitions.

Terrorism: Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine state agents, usually intended to influence an audience (30:39-40).

For "state sponsored" terrorism we will use a simple definition articulated by Secretary of Defense Weinberger on 21 January 1987:

State Sponsored Terrorism: Terrorism sponsored or abetted by a sovereign state (60:21).

Secretary Weinberger went on to explain there are three levels of "sponsorship" in his view. The first being the "policy level". State sponsors, at this level, do not "directly engage" in terrorism but "actively encourage and help" through client states like Libya (60:21). This method of support for terrorism allows nations, like the Soviet Union, to maintain an appearance of "respectability and legitimacy" through "plausible denial" of involvement (60:21).

States who provide "weapons, training, and material support" to terrorists are sponsoring terrorism at the second, or "logistic level" according to Weinberger. Several Soviet clients and surrogates are active at this level including Bulgaria, Cuba, and East Germany (60:21).

The third level of sponsorship is the "operational level". States like Libya, Syria, and Iran who "...directly engage in terrorism to pursue their own national goals" are sponsoring terrorism at this level (60:21). When we refer to "state sponsored terrorism" in this paper we are referring to activity by a sovereign state to support terrorism at any of Weinberger's three "levels". Libya, we will show, is active at all levels.

For our definition of counterterrorism we will use the words from JCS Pub 1:

Counterterrorism (CT): Offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism (64:94).

Some elaboration is appropriate. The United States might offensively "prevent" terrorism by launching a "preemptive" strike against a terrorist target; striking in advance when we know a terrorist attack is imminent (1:124, 64:283). We might "deter" terrorism offensively, by attacking terrorist related facilities inside a nation who sponsors terrorism as we did in El Dorado Canyon. We could offensively "respond" to terrorism by conducting a "punitive" or "reprisal" raid to retaliate against a state who sponsored terrorism against us. Again, an example could be El Dorado Canyon (1:120).

Each of these types of offensive counterterrorism measures, preemption, military strikes to deter, and punitive or reprisal raids will be referred to in this paper as "direct military action" or "direct action".

Now that we are familiar with the terminology, let's begin our study of El Dorado Canyon by looking at the factors which prompted the United States to conduct this operation. We will begin with Libya's historical role in terrorism prior to the mission.



## Chapter Two

### LIBYA'S ROLE IN TERRORISM PRIOR TO EL DORADO CANYON

"We have the right to fight America, and we have the right to export terrorism to them"- Muammar Qadhafi, September 1985 (69:2). In this chapter we will look at the action behind Qadhafi's rhetoric to demonstrate his active sponsorship of terrorism before El Dorado Canyon. We will examine what Qadhafi hoped to achieve through terrorism, review his methods, and end with a sampling of Qadhafi sponsored terrorist operations. Let's begin by reviewing Qadhafi's reasons for sponsoring terrorism.

Terrorism is a means to an end for Qadhafi. "He sees himself as inheriting Nasser's mission to unify the Arab world and, indeed; carries the task one step further - he dreams of uniting the Islamic world and ridding it of the state of Israel" (67:83). To achieve this objective Qadhafi has pursued a foreign policy with four purposes: "To weaken the role of Western (Christian) Democracies in the Middle East; to destroy Israel; to attack Israel's supporters; and to expand Libya's role, particularly in Africa and the Middle East" (39:41).

Qadhafi believes the only way to achieve his goal is through revolutionary armed struggle (67:83). Qadhafi's problem is Libya's limited capability to achieve his objectives through traditional applications of political, military, and economic power. Terrorism has been described as the weapon of the "have not" nations (16:92) and Qadhafi has selected it as a suitable substitute for traditional warfare. Some say terrorism is the only way an insignificant nation like Libya can attempt "to influence the world without being a world leader" (16:92). As we look at the many ways Qadhafi supports terrorism, we will see he was committed to this course of action as the primary means to achieve his national objectives.

Qadhafi sponsors both Libyan and non-Libyan terrorist organizations. Libyan terrorist groups have been created and maintained by Qadhafi. The purposes of these state sponsored "hit squads" are to silence anti-Qadhafi Libyans abroad (described by Qadhafi as "stray dogs") and to help him maintain power at home (67:84). Qadhafi also provides "across the board" support to many established international terrorist groups. He provides them recruiting assistance, diplomatic

support, propaganda assistance, funding, training, equipment, and the safe haven international terrorists sometimes need (67:84).

In the area of recruiting, Libya recruits their own prisoners for terrorist operations outside the country (possibly in exchange for a pardon), and places "advertisements" in Middle Eastern and European papers seeking "mercenaries for hire to join Tripoli's struggle for the liberation of peoples" (67:85).

Qadhafi also uses Libyan diplomatic privileges to assist international terrorist groups. The range of activities in this area is also impressive: smuggling arms and money by diplomatic courier or pouch, the use of Libyan Embassies as arms warehouses for terrorists, and providing terrorists with the travel documents they need to easily move around the world (67:85). Also, "...diplomatic messages of support are broadcast from Libya to encourage terrorist organizations in their activities" (67:86). Diplomatic assistance is important, but so is financial support. Qadhafi's oil revenues have allowed him to be most generous in this area.

It is estimated Qadhafi allocates a minimum of \$100 million per year to a wide variety of terrorist organizations (67:86). Other sources put the amount at much more. Ahmed Jibril, the leader of a major Palestinian terrorist group, commented in 1981: "Libyan aid is such that there is no need for further Arab aid... Libyan aid to the Palestinians amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars" (67:87). Qadhafi's willingness to underwrite a diverse collection of groups was illustrated in 1982 when he provided \$100 million to the Sandinistas and \$5 million to the New Caledonian Revolutionary Group (67:87). Besides funding, Qadhafi provides much of the arms terrorists need.

Qadhafi is one of the Soviet's largest arms clients purchasing an estimated \$1 billion a year (8:77). Some Soviet arms barely stop in Libya before they are sent to an estimated 50 terrorist groups and 40 radical governments worldwide. The arms are transported in diplomatic pouches, aboard merchant ships, and by Libyan aircraft (53:109). In 1973, the Irish Navy intercepted a ship loaded with arms intended for the Irish Republican Army (IRA) terrorist organization. Qadhafi later admitted he was the source of the arms (39:41). In April 1983, four Libyan transport planes, loaded with suspiciously crated "medical supplies", were inspected by Brazilian authorities as they transited enroute to Nicaragua. The medical supplies turned out to be 84 tons of arms destined for terrorists in El Salvador (39:41, 53:109, 141). In January 1986, arms manufactured in Soviet Bloc countries and destined for the IRA were seized in the Republic of Ireland. Ammo boxes in the shipment were marked with the words: "Libyan Armed Forces" (53:141). Arms are of limited value

without the training needed to use them effectively. Here too, Qadhafi was very active.

Training terrorists has long been a Libyan activity. The authoritative British journal, Foreign Report, estimates a network of 15 Libyan training camps improves the skills of approximately 7,000 foreign terrorists per year (53:109). Students at Qadhafi's camps represent a "Who's Who" of terrorist organizations such as the Japanese Red Army, the IRA, Basque Separatists, West Germany's Red Army Faction, and Italy's Red Brigades. Personnel from Sudan, Tunisia, South Yemen, Egypt, Chad, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Venezuela, and Argentina have also received terrorist training at one of Qadhafi's camps (39:41).

The training is conducted primarily by foreigners: Cubans, East Germans, Syrians, Palestinians, and possibly Soviets (67:88-91). After a six month basic course, these Libyan schools produce a terrorist capable of "...forging documents, sabotage, kidnapping, hijacking, and assassination" (67:91). Also available is training in the use of anti-aircraft missiles, explosives, and suicide pilot and naval courses (67:91-2). The bottom line is Libya is responsible for training literally thousands of terrorists from all over the world.

After they are trained, Qadhafi also shelters terrorists from those seeking to bring them to judgement for the acts they commit. He provided a safe haven to the Palestinian terrorists responsible for the Munich Olympic murders, and to the notorious terrorist "Carlos" after he took 60 hostages at a Vienna OPEC meeting (67:92).

So far we have discussed Qadhafi's total support for terrorism in largely generic terms. Examples of the "fruits of his labor" will illustrate Qadhafi's support for terrorism further. These examples represent a sampling of his activities from 1972 to early 1986. Qadhafi's involvement in the major terrorist events of 1985 and 1986 will be discussed in the next chapter as we outline the preamble to Operation El Dorado Canyon.

Summer '72: Qadhafi provided funds, training, and arms to the Palestinian terrorists who committed the Olympic Games massacre (39:41, 67:97).

March '73: The U.S. Ambassador and Charge d'Affairs were murdered in a Black September terrorist attack on the Saudi Embassy in Khartoum, Sudan. Libyan diplomats were charged with smuggling the weapons used by the terrorist into the city in diplomatic pouches (39:41, 67:98).

December '73: Thirty-two passengers deplaning a Pan Am flight in Rome are killed in an attack by members of "Libya's National Arab Youth for the Liberation of Palestine" terrorist group. After surrender the terrorists told authorities Qadhafi "...personally ordered the attack" (67:98). Italian authorities traced the terrorist's weapons and money to Libya and determined all had originally departed from Tripoli (67:98, 39:41).

Summer '76: An Air France hijacking eventually ends with an Israeli rescue of the passengers at Entebbe, Uganda. The terrorist operation was reportedly financed by Libya (67:97).

Summer '76: "Qadhafi assembled a group of Iranian, Turkish, and Latin American terrorists whose targets were to be the 1976 Democratic and Republican Conventions." Their purpose, according to Qadhafi was "...to seek revenge against Pro-Zionist groups in each party" (67:99).

1981: "Law enforcement officials revealed five Libyan-trained terrorists were sent to the United States to assassinate President Reagan and other top U.S. leaders" (67:99).

October '81: Egyptian soldiers who assassinated Anwar Sadat were members of a Libyan sponsored fundamentalist Moslem group (32:97).

1982: Libyan agents attempted to assassinate Jordan's King Hussein by firing SA-7 missiles at his personal aircraft (67:95).

April '83: The Libyan Charge d'Affairs is expelled by the Swiss Government for providing arms to convicted Swiss terrorists (51:15).

March-April '84: A series of bomb attacks against anti-Qadhafi dissidents in England occurs in March. In April, 25 are killed at Heathrow Airport when a bomb explodes in unclaimed luggage from a Libyan airliner. Later, a British police woman is killed by a gunman inside the Libyan Embassy firing at anti-Qadhafi demonstrators outside. A siege of the Libyan Embassy follows. The facility is eventually closed and the gunman leaves the country with other Libyan "diplomats" (16:134, 67:93, 69:6).

July '84: Libya mined the Red Sea and the Gulf of Cuez resulting in damage to 18 merchant ships from various countries (69:6, 16:134).

January '85: Libya, Syria, and Iran agree to step up terrorism against American personnel and interests worldwide. Qadhafi decides to form and finance the first Pan-Arab

terrorist group whose purpose, according to the official Libyan News Agency, is to promote and coordinate individual suicide operations (67:100).

February '86: Qadhafi hosts a "conference" of radical Arab groups in Tripoli. The Libyan News Agency reports the conference resulted in the "...creation of revolutionary intervention groups and suicide squads to strike at American interests within the U.S. and throughout the world... if the United States should dare to launch aggression ...against Libya or any other Arab country" (67:100-01).

Prior to El Dorado Canyon, Qadhafi used terrorism as a primary tool in his campaign to erode Western influence in the Middle East, attack Israel and her supporters, and to elevate himself as a regional Arab power. His sponsorship of terrorism was total: providing training, equipment, funds, and diplomatic support to a host of international terrorist organizations. Qadhafi's involvement in terrorist operations between 1972 and 1986 paint a picture of a man who knew few limits in his sponsorship of terrorism and who openly acknowledged his intent to expand the use of terrorism against the United States. With Qadhafi's track record, it is somewhat surprising the United States restrained itself from using military force sooner. However, the rising tide of terrorism targeted specifically against Americans, coupled with a series of major terrorist events in 1985 and early 1986, would soon push the President's forbearance to the breaking point.

## Chapter Three

### AMERICA'S GROWING FRUSTRATION WITH TERRORISM

Libya has long pursued terrorism as a means to achieve its objectives. Qadhafi's terrorist campaigns were often specifically targeted against American people and interests. Still, the United States did not strike back. We were, as President Reagan said, "a people slow to anger" and we were willing to try every peaceful means to discourage terrorism against us (50:107). However, Americans were increasingly frustrated with the ineffectiveness of our government's political and economic efforts to curb terrorism (65:6).

Two key factors were responsible for our frustration. First, the rate of terrorist activity targeted against American people and interests had escalated (62:225). Second, our government was unable to successfully resolve a series of major terrorist incidents between June 1985 and February 1986. This chapter will explore each of these factors and show that as El Dorado Canyon neared, our citizens began to reflect what President Reagan described on 8 July 1985:

...the American people are not-I repeat, not-going to tolerate intimidation, terror, and outright acts of war against this nation and its people. And we're especially not going to tolerate these attacks from outlaw states run by the strangest collection of misfits, looney tunes, and squalid criminals since the advent of the Third Reich (50:108).

Let's begin by looking at the terrorism trends and the President's response to them.

Fatalities from terrorist attacks had been steadily increasing worldwide by 20 percent a year since 1970 (62:225). In the 13 years between 1968 and 1981, 3,000 terrorist attacks claimed the lives of 189 Americans. Most were the unintended victims of indiscriminate terrorists. During the next four years, 286 more Americans were killed in attacks specifically targeted against them (67:79, 30:39). The figures for 1984 and 1985 showed the trend was on an upward swing. In 1984, 12 Americans were killed and 33 were wounded by terrorists. In 1985, 38 Americans were killed and 157 more were wounded (40:3). One thing was clear, regardless of their government's best effort, Americans were the victims of terrorists at an ever increasing rate.

The Reagan Administration took notice of the trend. Secretary of State Schultz voiced the Administration's concern on 3 April 1984: "It is increasingly doubtful that a purely passive strategy can even begin to cope with the problem [of terrorism]" (1:114). The Secretary went on to call for a "...bold new policy to combat terrorism, including retaliatory and preemptive actions" (1:114). Schultz's statements were not trial balloons designed to test the political waters with a prototype U.S. CT Policy. His comments were telling the world the U.S. was departing from its previous course of "after the fact" military efforts to recover the victims of terrorists. We would now consider using military force prior to the fact to prevent a terrorist incident, or after the fact, to punish terrorists and those who helped them (1:113).

National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 138 articulated this new policy and was signed by the President the same day of Secretary Schultz's comments. Key unclassified points of the document illustrate the Administration's new approach. "No nation can condone terrorism... States that use or support terrorism cannot be allowed to do so without consequences... The United States will use all available channels to dissuade states from supporting terrorism..." (1:112-3). And finally words many frustrated and victimized Americans wanted to hear: "When these efforts fail, the United States has a right to defend itself" (1:113). NSDD 138 represented "...a quantum leap in our counterterrorism policy from the 'reactive mode', which characterized our policy in the 70's and 80's, to a recognition of a need for pro-active steps" (1:112).

The President took the lead preparing the American people for future direct military action against terrorists and their sponsors. In a speech to the American Bar Association, President Reagan emphatically stated, "...these terrorist states are now engaged in acts of war against the government and people of the United States. And under international law, any state which is the victim of acts of war has the right to defend itself" (50:107). In early June 1985, the United States had a firm policy designed to prevent and preempt terrorism. We also had very tough rhetoric being articulated by our most senior leadership. Would it finally make a difference?

On 14 June 1985, two teenage Shia Muslim Lebanese hijacked TWA Flight 847 on a flight from Athens to Rome (30:48). One hundred and seven Americans were once again hostages. The American military had limited opportunities to rescue them as the aircraft hopped back and forth between Beirut and Algiers. Two American military men were singled out for physical abuse by the young terrorists. One of them, an off-duty Navy diver named Robert Stethem, was eventually killed and dumped on the runway at Beirut when demands for fuel were not quickly met (3:74-85). After another round trip to Algiers, the remaining passengers (37 American men) were taken off the aircraft and dispersed throughout Southern Beirut. A rescue operation, with

a politically acceptable probability of success, then became impossible (3:74-85).

The terrorists demanded the release of 744 Shia Lebanese who were arrested by the Israeli Army during its partial withdrawal from Southern Lebanon. They hoped the U.S. would pressure Israel for their release (30:48-9, 2:193). The TWA 847 hostages were eventually freed when the Israelis confirmed the Shia prisoners would be released "...in the future" (1:250). "The irony was Israel had been planning all along to repatriate these prisoners..." (1:250). Despite loud claims to the contrary, the release of the Shia prisoners now "...appeared to represent submission to terrorist blackmail and was hailed as a victory by Israel's enemies" (1:250). The 17 day ordeal was over. The terrorists went free and in the world's eyes, their demands had been met.

As the summer of 1985 progressed, Americans remained a favorite terrorist target. On the 22 July, a Copenhagen Northwest Orient Airlines office and a Jewish synagogue were bombed by the Islamic Jihad wounding 32 people. In mid-September, 9 American and 29 other tourists were wounded when a Rome cafe was bombed by a terrorist cell linked to the Abu Nidal Group (65:244). What was Libya's role in these events? Libya is one of the nations providing direct support to the Abu Nidal terrorist organization. Remarks made by our Ambassador-At-Large for Counterterrorism to a Senate Subcommittee exploring Libya's role in terrorism illustrate the connection:

During the last half of 1985, we know of Libyan money in the millions of dollars going to Abu Nidal, of Libya providing and buying arms for Abu Nidal, of Abu Nidal and his top lieutenants living in Libya, of killers being trained there and travel documents and other facilitative assistance being provided by Libya for their travel to commit terrorist acts abroad... (65:55-6).

More frustration came with the hijacking of the Italian cruise ship, Achille Laro, by four Palestinians on 7 October 1985. Americans were once again the victims of terrorism. A 69 year old disabled American, Leon Klinghoffer, was shot by the terrorists and dumped in the sea (2:194). The Achille Laro hijacking did result in some satisfaction for Americans. Egypt arranged a deal allowing the terrorists to fly to PLO Headquarters in Tunis in exchange for the release of the hostages. The Egypt Air Boeing 737 carrying the hijackers and their PLO negotiator was intercepted by U.S. Navy aircraft and forced to divert to Sigonella, Sicily, where the hijackers were taken into custody by the Italians (30:50, 2:194).

The operation was popular with our people and satisfying to our policy makers. Terrorists, who had murdered an American,



were finally in the hands of those who could insure they paid for their crime (2:195). The political commotion caused by this discrete use of military force was a source of frustration for the Administration.

The operation was condemned by much of the world. "Arab public opinion perceived the diversion of the Egyptian aircraft as a 'hijacking' in and of itself, producing widespread antipathy toward the U.S." (30:51). Egyptian President Mubarak considered himself "publicly humiliated" by the operation (30:51). Other moderate Arab governments, whose relationships with the U.S. are always fragile, "...quickly concluded that they must keep their distance from Washington if this latest use of force was not to endanger their stability" (30:51). Moreover, the circumstances of the diversion caused such an uproar in Italy, it eventually resulted in the collapse of Prime Minister Craxi's coalition government (30:50, 2:195).

Overall, the use of American military power to deal directly with the Achille Laro hijackers resulted in mixed consequences; frustration for policy makers seeking proactive responses to terrorism and some satisfaction. Satisfaction was short-lived. Six weeks later more Americans would become the victims of another major terrorist incident.

On 24 November 1985, members of the Abu Nidal Group hijacked Egypt Air Flight 648 and diverted it to the island of Malta. During the course of the hijacking the terrorists "...began shooting passengers one by one, starting with Israeli and American citizens" (65:52). The Maltese would not permit U.S. military action and Egyptian commandos eventually attempted a rescue. Poor technique and bad luck resulted in the death of 57 of the 98 people on board when the Egyptian's assaulted the aircraft (65:52, 2:195). Only one American died. Radio Cairo linked Libya with the hijacking reporting that "Libya planned and financed the hijacking, which was carried out by a Palestinian splinter group, financially backed and encouraged by Libya" (67:106). Our Ambassador-At-Large for CT also implied Libyan involvement (65:52). Other sources reported "...Libyan agents had met with the hijackers in Athens in order to complete plans for the hijacking" (67:106). Regardless who was behind the operation, the American public saw more American blood on terrorist hands. The year ended on an even lower note.

On 27 December 1985, 18 people were killed, five of them Americans, and over 80 were injured when they were attacked by Abu Nidal terrorists as they waited at TWA and El Al ticket counters in the Rome and Vienna Airports. (65:52, 245). Five days later, Qadhafi stated the massacre's were justified because of the October Israeli bombing of PLO Headquarters in Tunisia (63:502). Qadhafi's connection with the Rome and Vienna attacks was made the following month. The State Department confirmed the passports used by some of the

terrorists were provided by Libya (69:5). How would the U.S. respond to this latest atrocity linked directly to Libya?

The American response was limited to unilateral political and economic measures. On 7 January 1986, the President issued an Executive Order which declared a "national emergency" to deal with "the immediate threat to U.S. national security and foreign policy" caused by Libya. The Executive Order directed the termination of all remaining economic relations with Libya and ordered Americans still in the country (approximately 1,500 people) to leave immediately (63:502). The next day, Libyan assets in the U.S. (\$2.5 Billion) were frozen and the State Department issued a report detailing the extent of Libyan sponsorship of terrorism (63:502).

Efforts to implement joint sanctions against Libya with our European allies were not successful. The Europeans were unresponsive and found a variety of reasons to withhold their cooperation. Some argued sanctions don't work and others voiced fears of undercutting the Middle East peace process (63:504). Most simply were not startled by the latest round of terrorism. While 1985 was a shocking year for Americans, it was just barely extraordinary for the Western Europeans. Terrorism is a grim fact of life for most of them. The British must deal daily with the IRA, the West Germans with the Red Army Faction, the Italians with the Red Brigades, and each of them with various terrorist groups rooted in the Palestinian problem (63:504).

Economic realities also made it difficult for our European allies to join with us. Estimated figures for the amount of trade between Libya and the allies illustrate this point:

- Britain - \$800 Million/yr. 5,000 British workers in Libya.
- France - \$986 Million/yr. (Libya's 4th largest). 5% of France's oil imported from Libya.
- Spain - \$1.26 Billion/yr. (Libya's 3rd largest). 80% of Spain's natural gas is provided by Libya.
- West Germany - \$2.88 Billion/yr (Libya's 2nd largest). 1,500 West German workers in Libya.
- Italy - \$4 Billion/yr. (Libya's largest). Italy owns oil wells in Libya. 4,000 Italian workers in country (63:512-19).

The Reagan Administration was not shocked by the lack of solidarity for our sanctions. They were well aware of European vested interests in Libya. However, President Reagan drew the line at any effort by the Europeans "...to take commercial

advantage of our departure" (63:503). The Italians and Canadians cooperated in this regard, while others took no formal action (63:503-4). Some small actions were taken by our allies.

On 28 January 1986, the European Economic Community (EEC) jointly banned arms sales by member nations to states "clearly implicated in supporting terrorism" (63:505). This sanction sounded good but was largely symbolic. France and Spain successfully lobbied to withdraw specific reference to Libya from the wording and Britain, West Germany, France and Italy had already ceased selling arms to Qadhafi, some as far back as 1983-84 (63:505).

Many Americans felt the government's economic sanctions were not enough considering the evidence of Qadhafi's role in the latest terrorist incidents. What about the tough talk; what about punitive strikes many wondered? Our Ambassador-At-Large for CT responded on 19 Feb 86: "Those who say that this type of non-military action will not work against Libya should suspend their judgement until our efforts have had time to be tested..." (65:56). It may have been Ambassador Oakley was using the "give economic sanctions time to work" line as a cover story while the last obstacles to the use of military power were being removed (Americans in Libya and our final business connections). Notwithstanding, Americans were tired of being victimized and were growing increasingly impatient. Their collective frustration was articulated well by Senator Jeremiah Denton, Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism:

The American people are justifiably alarmed and frustrated by what they perceive accurately to be an apparent inability of the United States to prevent or respond effectively to international terrorist attacks. Maybe we cannot stop them all, but we can do a whole lot better than we are doing right now (65:6).

By April 1986, the pressure was on the Reagan Administration to respond more aggressively to the next terrorist event. Others might say a calculated effort by the Administration to develop a popular consensus for military action against Libya had left President Reagan politically well postured to strike Qadhafi. The events of March and April 1986 provided the President with this opportunity.

## Chapter Four

### PREAMBLE TO A STRIKE

#### THE EVENTS OF MARCH AND EARLY APRIL 1986

By March 1986, conditions were right for the use of military force against Qadhafi. Diplomatic relations between the United States and Libya had long been terminated. Two months prior, all American citizens had been told to leave Libya immediately. Also, the economic relationship between the two countries had been minimized. The events of March and early April 1986 were critical to the eventual execution of Operation El Dorado Canyon. Specifically, Qadhafi's response (more terrorism) to the U.S. Navy Freedom of Navigation (FON) Exercise in the Gulf of Sidra on 22-27 March 1986, provided cause for the United States to take direct military action 2½ weeks later.

On 14 March 1986, President Reagan gave final approval to the most extensive Naval Freedom of Navigation Exercise yet conducted in the Gulf of Sidra. It was to be our 19th in the area and the 8th time we would operate south of 32 degrees 30 minutes north latitude - Qadhafi's so called "Line of Death" (63:505, 39:40). The stated purpose of the exercise was to make "...the legal point that beyond the internationally recognized 12-mile limit, the Gulf of Sidra belongs to none, and that all nations are free to move through international waters and airspace" (63:505). There were certainly other reasons, foremost among them Libya's continued support of terrorism (63:506).

The FON Exercise is important to a study of El Dorado Canyon primarily because of its consequences. During the exercise U.S. forces carried out five attacks on Libyan missile patrol boats considered to be menacing our ships, sinking two of them. We also attacked and destroyed Libyan SAM sites (39:40-1, 63:506). Qadhafi reacted, stating on 25 March 1986: "...it is time for confrontation - for war [with the U.S.]" (10:100). The same day a message was sent from Tripoli to the Libyan Embassy in East Berlin directing them "...to conduct a terrorist attack against Americans to cause maximum and indiscriminate casualties" (10:100, 49:23). The message was intercepted by U.S. intelligence. Similar messages reportedly went to other Libyan Embassies. American intelligence already had information that Qadhafi was planning terrorist strikes against "...30-35 American installations worldwide" (49:22).

The 25 March intercept set in motion accelerated American planning for a punitive strike against Qadhafi's terrorist support infrastructure. Conceptual planning and the cataloging of potential targets began in December 1985 after the Rome and Vienna airport bombings (39:45-6). Now there would be a need for the information as the President considered his options.

On 2 April 1986, a bomb exploded on TWA Flight 840 as it descended into Athens on a flight from Rome. Four Americans, including two women and a 9-month-old baby, were killed. Their seats fell through a hole in the aircraft caused by the bomb. Luckily, the bomb went off at a relatively low altitude. Had it gone off ten minutes earlier, the explosive decompression would have been much more powerful, possibly bringing down the entire aircraft (15:1). The seat was occupied on the previous flight by a Lebanese woman thought by U.S. authorities to be a member of a terrorist group associated with Abu Nidal (15:1). This incident appeared to be a Syrian backed operation. However, Qadhafi was quick to congratulate the terrorists and warned "...we [Libya] shall escalate the violence against American targets, civilian and non-civilian, throughout the world" (39:45). Three days later he would make good on his threat.

On 5 April 1986, a bomb exploded in a West Berlin disco frequented by American soldiers. One American G.I. and a Turkish woman were killed. Over 200 others were injured, including 78 Americans (58:1, 39:40). Communications, between Tripoli and its Embassy in East Berlin, were intercepted which showed "Libya clearly knew about the operation in advance and congratulated the Embassy after it was over" (15:1). This fact was kept secret as the President ordered final planning for a military strike against Libya to proceed (39:46). On the 10th of April, Reagan told the American Society of Newspaper Editors: "... there will be retaliation" and "...terrorism cannot succeed" (10:101).

Meanwhile, the American Ambassador to the United Nations, Vernon Walters, was secretly dispatched to Europe to try to secure backing for increased sanctions and possibly a military operation against Libya. Between the 11th and the 14th of April, he met with the heads of state of France, Britain, Spain, West Germany, and Italy but with little success (19:28).

Reports of imminent U.S. retaliation against Libya were plentiful. The American press eliminated any hope of strategic surprise when it reported:

U.S. intelligence had established undeniable proof of Libyan involvement in the Berlin discotheque bombing; The USS Coral Sea was being kept in the Mediterranean beyond its normal tour of duty; Vernon Walters, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations was touring Western European capitals in search of support for a strike;

and the United States was requesting from the British Government, permission to use Air Force FB-111's (F-111's) based in England (22:142).

The Soviet Press was also speculating about a possible American raid. Pravada reports on 12 April 1986 included remarks that two U.S. Naval Task Forces, consisting of the carriers America and Coral Sea, were headed for Libya and American planners were considering the use of British based FB-111's (or B-52's from Minot AFB, North Dakota) to deliver a "surgical" strike against Libya. The sources quoted by Pravada for its information were The Washington Post and CBS News (58:1).

Press reports of possible American military preparations were not without an audience in Libya. The Libyan Peoples Bureau for Foreign Liason broadcast a disclaimer on the 13th of April stating Libya was not involved in recent terrorist events "...because Libya is against all terrorist operations, hijacking of planes and killing of the innocent, and its laws forbid these actions and punish their perpetrators" (6:453-4). The broadcast claimed Libya wanted the "Mediterranean [to] become a Sea of Peace...", stated if Libya is attacked, the United States will pay a dear price "...like the price we paid in Vietnam", claimed the American actions "...were comparable to those of Hitler", and finally, called on all Arab nations to take part in the war if Libya is attacked (6:453-4). Two days later, Qadhafi would feel the sting of American military power and no Arab nation would rescue him.

The American Naval Operations in the Gulf of Sidra caused an angry Qadhafi to seek immediate terrorist retribution against the United States. In the process, he left a trail leading directly from the Berlin disco bombing to Tripoli. This was the "last straw" for the United States. With proof of Libyan involvement in the disco bombing and with economic and diplomatic sanctions already in place, only one effective option remained for the President. This option was direct action by the military. The stage was set for Operation El Dorado Canyon.

## Chapter Five

### THE RAID

#### OPERATION EL DORADO CANYON

President Reagan stated on 8 July 1985: "There can be no place on earth left where it is safe for these monsters to rest, or train, or practice their cruel and deadly skills. We must act together, or unilaterally if necessary to ensure that terrorists have no sanctuary anywhere" (50:110).

Senator Patrick Leahy commented before a Senate Committee investigating Libya's role in terrorism on 19 February 1986: "I think the worst thing possible we can do is respond to terrorism with strong rhetoric and no action" (65:8).

At 1813 local on 14 April 1986, 28 American KC-10 and KC-135 tankers departed RAF bases at Fairford and Mildenhall, England. Twenty-three minutes later, 29 F-111F's and EF-111A's departed RAF bases at Lakenheath and Heyford. Their mission was to execute a surgical strike on terrorist support facilities inside Libya (14:1). Operation El Dorado Canyon was in motion. Time for talk and sanctions had past, the United States was about to take direct military action against the state responsible for 79 American casualties nine days prior.

In this chapter we will provide an overview of the military aspects of Operation El Dorado Canyon. Our purpose is to lay the groundwork needed to facilitate later discussions regarding the consequences of the operation. To do this we will review El Dorado Canyon's political and military objectives, the plan, mission execution, and strike results (battle damage). Let's begin by returning to the morning of 14 April 1986.

Just a few hours before American tanker and strike aircraft departed England, the Foreign Ministers of the European Economic Community (EEC) announced collective measures they just adopted "...to restrict Libya's ability to sponsor terrorist attacks" (63:499). The measures would reduce the staffs at Libyan Diplomatic Missions, restrict travel of Libyan diplomatic personnel, impose stringent visa requirements for all Libyans, and included a provision that any Libyan "diplomat" who was expelled from one EEC member nation would not be accepted by another (66:38). These measures were important. Qadhafi had long abused his diplomatic privileges to aid terrorist activities. However, the United States was proceeding with a far different method to restrict Libya's

ability to sponsor terrorist attacks on this day. We were about to bomb Qadhafi's terrorist support infrastructure inside Libya. Let's look at what the United States hoped to accomplish.

The objectives of El Dorado Canyon were more psychological than tactical, or to put it another way, more political than military. Three terrorist support facilities would be hit, but this would only put a small dent in the total Libyan terrorist infrastructure. El Dorado Canyon was primarily a psychological operation whose purpose, as stated by President Reagan, was to "...not only diminish Colonel Qadhafi's ability to export terror; it will provide him with incentives and reasons to alter his criminal behavior" (6:448). The United States wanted to deter future terrorist acts by showing Qadhafi he too, would have to pay a price. It was hoped Qadhafi would get the message if the price were made high enough (6:509). Some observers believed we were also trying to show Libyans the Soviets would not do much to help them in a confrontation with the U.S. (6:509). Many believed El Dorado Canyon was designed to do more than alter Qadhafi's policies, the United States wanted to eliminate his leadership, practically or physically (6:509). The United States also hoped to feed discontent within certain Libyan military circles by showing Qadhafi's support for terrorism was putting the nation at risk both militarily and economically (6:509). In simpler words, we quietly hoped the raid would generate a coup. President Reagan's speech to the nation the night of the raid added credence to this argument. The speech was carefully worded to show our fight was not with the Libyan people, but with their leader. Reagan commented:

Before Qadhafi seized power the Libyan people had been friends of the United States. And I am sure that, today, most Libyans are ashamed and disgusted that this man has made their country a synonym for barbarism around the world. The Libyan people are a decent people caught in the grip of a tyrant (6:447).

Reagan also stated the raid was "...carefully targeted to minimize casualties to the Libyan people - with whom we have no quarrel" (6:447).

Some argue the United States wasn't interested in generating a coup but a funeral. They believe the primary target of the mission was Qadhafi himself. Our plan to hit the Aziziyah Barracks, which doubled as Qadhafi's primary residence, added to this argument. After the raid, Secretary of State Schultz flatly stated we were not trying to kill Qadhafi. Assassinations are prohibited by Executive Order 12333 (63:509, 28:4, 70:230). Besides being illegal, the "target Qadhafi" argument is mitigated by the fact Qadhafi has several different locations where he sleeps and he decides which one he use will each night spontaneously (71:--, 19:29). However, President Reagan commented several weeks after the



raid that Qadhafi's death would have been a nice side benefit (63:509). Our specific objectives with regards to Qadhafi can be debated, the fact El Dorado Canyon was executed to achieve political and psychological results cannot. Those two factors dominated the formulation of military objectives, target and force selection, and the definition of the rules of engagement for the operation.

The military objective of El Dorado Canyon according to DOD was: "to inflict damage to headquarters associated with terrorist activities, terrorist facilities, and military installations that support Libyan subversive activities" (6:451). Others add we also wanted to clearly demonstrate our combat power, our will to use it, and the vulnerability of the Libyan military (63:510). Target and force selection to achieve those objectives were dominated by political considerations and the desire for the right psychological effect.

It was critical to our psychological goals that we accomplished the military mission without losing the battle for domestic and world public opinion. As a result, the following criterion were used to guide selection of targets:

1. Targets must be clearly related to terrorism and demonstratable as such. This would show we were only responding "in kind" and demonstrate our "...recognition of the distinction between terrorists and the Libyan military" (39:47).

2. Targets must be vulnerable and well within our capability to strike effectively. This would enable a high probability of success, minimize the likelihood of American losses, and help our goal of demonstrating a capable U.S. military (71:--).

3. Targets must be capable of attack with a low probability of collateral damage or casualties. Heavy civilian casualties would portray an image of an indiscriminate U.S. military no better than the terrorists we were trying to deter (39:47, 71:--).

4. Successful attack must be possible with a force size proportional to target value. This would limit the size of the strike force and preclude the image of heavy handedness by the Americans (71:--).

Based on those criterion, USCINCEUR nominated targets for attack during El Dorado Canyon to the SECDEF. The JCS endorsed his nominations and these targets were approved by the President on 9 April 1986 (19:29, 63:511):

Tripoli - Tarabulus (Aziziyah) Barracks: Primary command and control center frequently used to support terrorist

operations. It also doubled as Qadhafi's principle residence and the garrison for his elite guards (6:452, 14:1, 39:47).

Tripoli - Sidi Bilal Military Complex: Naval training center used to provide underwater sabotage training to terrorists (6:452, 57:838).

Tripoli - International Airport: IL-76 Candid aircraft sometimes used in terrorist operations for supply and transport (6:451, 19:29).

Benghazi - Military Barracks: Alternate command and control headquarters sometimes used during terrorist activities. It also housed more of Qadhafi's elite guard and was a storage facility for MIG components (6:452, 39:47).

Benghazi - Benina Military Airfield: Libyan MIG-23 fighter base. Would be attacked to preempt a counterattack on the American strike force (39:48).

The concept of operations developed by the U.S. European Command planners called for a simultaneous night attack against all targets in order to maximize the element of surprise, saturate Libyan defenses, and minimize American losses (6:451). A night strike was necessitated by three factors. First, the strategic element of surprise was lost. Media reports of an imminent strike, had already transmitted our intentions. Second, most civilians would be off the streets, minimizing collateral casualties. Finally, Libyan air defenses would be hampered by the darkness (22:142, 67:11, 39:48).

Force selection to support the concept of operations was relatively easy. The United States has only two types of aircraft capable of night, surgical bombing: The Navy A-6E and the Air Force F-111. Naval Carriers in the strike force had a total of 18 A-6E's on board. This was an insufficient number to execute a simultaneous attack on five widely separated targets with the high probability of success required. Uploading additional A-6's on the Coral Sea and America would require downloading other aircraft needed to support the mission (ie. Air Defense Suppression, CAP, Jamming, and C3). Uploading would have also been another OPSEC indicator a raid was imminent (6:451, 59:18, 71:--). As a result, USCINCEUR requested British based F-111F's be included to provide the requisite striking power.

The reason for emphasizing these points is, after the raid, it was widely speculated the F-111's were included only to give the Air Force a "piece of the pie". Others speculated it was done to drag the British in to create the appearance of collective action against Qadhafi (57:838, 27:11, 41:8). Neither were correct. The Chairman of the JCS provided the best response to this speculation during his testimony before a Congressional Committee six days after the raid:

The carriers could have taken out those five targets, but not in one raid, so tactical surprise would have been lost. Secondly, the F-111's were ideally suited for such a mission. They train over land at night all the time. The carrier training is diffuse because they do a number of things: attack ships, submarines and land targets, etc. Finally, we all agreed it was very important to present the Libyans with a new axis of attack they didn't necessarily suspect. While they were concentrating on the carriers, we wanted to throw an element we didn't believe they were ready for or anticipated (61:496).

Politically, the U.S. had long sought and would have preferred a more collective effort. However, the bottom line is the operational commander requested the force mix he needed to accomplish his mission and he got what he asked for. Strict rules of engagement (ROE) are typical of most contingency missions and those developed to achieve the largely political and psychological objectives of El Dorado Canyon were no different.

Destroying the targets, reducing the probability of collateral damage and casualties, and minimizing the likelihood of a shoot down were the baselines for the ROE developed for El Dorado Canyon. The mission ROE authorized aircrews only one pass over the target (no reattacks), weapons systems were required to be fully operational and targets must be positively identified to release bombs. For the F-111's, positive identification translated into target ID on radar and Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) (59:21, 39:49, 51). With the targets identified, the concept of operations developed, forces selected, and the mission ROE established, there remained only one element to complete the plan for El Dorado Canyon: diplomatic approval for staging and overflight. This often is a major stumbling point for missions with highly political objectives (39:49-50). El Dorado Canyon was no exception.

First, the U.S. needed British approval for the tanker and F/EF-111 aircraft. British approval was not automatic but was eventually obtained. Earlier in the year, Prime Minister Thatcher had condemned the idea of using force against Libya. President Reagan reportedly made a personal phone call to Mrs. Thatcher seeking her approval and assuring her the F-111's were essential to the operation. Mrs. Thatcher is said to have requested and received the President's assurance the raid would be "...directed against specific Libyan targets demonstrably involved in the conduct and support of terrorist activities" (63:510, 59:19). This decision was not easy for the Prime Minister. She had to consider the lives of 5,000 Britons in the country and her nation's significant economic relationship with Libya (21:17).

The most probable reason for her eventual approval was described as the "Falklands Factor". Essentially, Mrs. Thatcher was repaying the United States for providing the

critical intelligence and logistical support Britain needed to prevail in the Falklands (63:513). This seems credible because several weeks after the raid Mrs. Thatcher commented: "We must never forget that the United States forwent regional interests in Latin America to give us fantastic help on the Falklands" (63:513). With British support secure, French overflight approval was the last major diplomatic hurdle.

President Reagan also made a personal call to French President Mitterrand to discuss the operation. The content of their conversation is not known and the French denied overflight to the strike force (63:510). This added 2,400 nautical miles to the F-111 mission. Several reasons were given by the French for their action after the fact: "Contrary to national sovereignty", the raid would "increase terrorist activity", the raid was "too weak" (63:514-15). The most likely reason may be we asked France for permission after our decision to conduct the raid. The French were upset because we did not consult them regarding an operation they would be seen as supporting if they granted overflight (63:514-15). Lacking French support, we turned to Spain. If Spain approved overflight, the F-111's would only have to make a small detour in their routes to Libya.

Prime Minister Gonzalez also refused overflight. He disagreed with the method used to achieve the planned objective and he was also unwilling "...to accept the threats" to his country from Qadhafi (63:517). With diplomatic constraints now known, the plan for Operation El Dorado Canyon was finalized.

The plan divided target responsibilities geographically. Naval strike aircraft would attack the Benghazi area targets in Northeastern Libya while the Air Force would hit the Tripoli targets in Northwestern Libya. The Navy/Marines would provide MIG CAP, Airborne C3, and SAM Suppression for the entire operation. Airborne jamming support would be a joint responsibility at the Tripoli targets and the Navy would handle it at the Benghazi targets. Targets would be simultaneously attacked at 0200 Libyan time. Support aircraft (CAP, SAM Suppression and Airborne C3) would remain out of Libyan radar range until the last moment to maintain the tactical element of surprise. Aircraft attacking Tripoli targets would fly a low altitude, circuitous route and attack their targets from the south. Tripoli target assignments were:

Aziziyah Barracks (Command and control facility and Qadhafi residence) - 9 F-111's

International Airport (military ramp) - 6 F-111's

Sidi Bilal Naval Training Complex - 3 F-111's

Area SAM Sights - Navy A-7's

Benghazi target assignments were as follows:

Military Barracks (alternate command post) - 7 A-6's

Benina Military Airfield - 8 A-6's

Area SAM Sights - Navy F/A-18's

Sources: (37:63, 61:495-6, 59:18-21, 14:1-2, 39:51-2, 19:451).

Naval strike aircraft would launch between 1 hour 15 minutes and 1 hour 45 minutes prior to the scheduled time over target (TOT) from their carrier stations northwest and northeast of the Tripoli Flight Information Region (FIR). Air Force strike aircraft would launch from England 6 hours 30 minutes prior to the TOT and fly a low altitude route around the Iberian Peninsula. The route was designed to bypass normal air traffic control communications requirements and to work around the lack of diplomatic overflight approval. The flight down from Britain would require four radio silent air refuelings. Naval aircraft would recover directly to the carriers. Air Force aircraft would return to England via the same route, but now at high altitude, requiring only two air refuelings. Six F-111's and one EF-111 aircraft would serve as airborne spares until after the first inflight refueling. If all was well at that point they would return to England, if not, they would substitute for the aborting aircraft and proceed (37:63, 61:495-6, 59:18-21, 14:1-2, 39:51-2, 19:451).

Key Congressional leaders would be briefed three hours prior to the TOT while the Air Force strike aircraft were enroute to Tripoli. The Soviets would be advised at approximately the same time (39:51, 49:23).

Execution of the mission went according to the plan. The remainder of this chapter to review the minor deviations, point out some of the missions interesting sidelights and discuss the strike results in a military context (bomb damage assessment). Later chapters will discuss the political reaction and the consequences of the raid.

The Air Force package of 57 aircraft (28 tankers and 29 F/EF-111's) departed on-time. The first refueling was normal and the spare aircraft returned to base as planned (14:1). Three and one half hours into the operation key Congressional leaders were briefed on the mission at the White House. The briefing was also attended by the Vice President, the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Director of the CIA, the National Security Advisor, and the Chairman of the JCS. It was made clear during the briefing, the raid could still be called off if the Congressional leaders were strongly opposed to the operation (Admiral Crowe previously briefed the President that the mission could be aborted up to ten minutes prior to TOT). There were no objections (57:839, 39:51).

Three days prior to the raid, eight members of Congress sent a telegram to the President demanding he consult with

Congress about any planned military action against Libya as required by the War Powers Act. After the raid, many in Congress would dismiss the White House meeting, timed when it was, as mere notification rather than consultation (57:839).

One F-111 was late coming off a tanker on the flight down. This put the aircraft too far behind to make the planned TOT and the crew elected to abort (61:495). Morocco detected the F-111's near Gibraltar but did not relay any information to Libya (they're not on friendly terms). Malta also detected the American aircraft and tried to give advance warning to Libya, but were unsuccessful (71:--, 22:144). An American correspondent in Tripoli also tried to notify Libyan Government officials about the raid. Her activities in the two hours preceding the TOT are worth noting for planners of future operations. She wrote after the raid:

I phoned ABC News in New York and was told that U.S. Government sources predicted Reagan would attack Libya sometime in the next 48 hours. Then I heard from another Washington source that a U.S. military operation against Libya might be in process now... My gut instinct was that there was something to the tip... I again contacted ABC in New York to pass the latest bit of information. [Here comes the part planners should note] ...I then tried reaching some high-level Libyans to get some reaction, but the telephones rang unanswered in several offices and houses (17:103).

In spite of the best efforts of the Maltese and this reporter to warn the Libyans, our aircraft achieved tactical surprise. Tripoli airfield lights were on as our aircraft attacked and the air defense radars did not activate until four minutes prior to our TOT. When the Libyan radars came up, they were immediately suppressed (39:51, 37:63). Results of the Tripoli strikes were:

Aziziyah Barracks (C2 facility and Qadhafi's primary residence): Nine F-111's were planned to hit the target. One air aborted after coming off tanker late, one reportedly dropped bombs long, one aircraft appeared to have been shot down, and three others were not able to comply with the strict ROE and did not release their bombs. Three aircraft dropped bombs on the target inflicting substantial damage to Qadhafi's headquarters and adjacent work areas. After the raid a British correspondent counted seven "large bomb craters" within the 600 meter square compound. Collateral casualties included two of Qadhafi's sons injured and his adopted daughter killed. (6:452, 14:1, 61:495, 39:51, 27:14).

International Airport (military side): Successfully attacked by five F-111's. The sixth aircraft aborted due to a loss of his terrain following/terrain avoidance radar. Two IL-

76 Candid heavy transports were destroyed and the remaining three received substantial damage (6:451, 39:51).

Sidibilal Naval Training Complex: Attacked successfully by all three F-111's. The swimmer/diver training complex was damaged and several small training craft were destroyed (6:452, 39:51).

Additional colateral damage was caused in Tripoli when three F-111 bombs impacted off target, damaging several buildings in the downtown area of the city. Ironically, the French Embassy was among the buildings damaged. The bombs were thought to have been jettisoned by the damaged F-111 just before it exploded over Tripoli harbor (6:452, 19:30).

The Libyans learned during the March Gulf of Sidra FON Exercise that if their air defense radars were on for very long, they would "...get a HARM missile down their throat" quickly (19:30). As a result, the Libyans fired their SAMS and AAA at the F-111's without radar assistance. This made both ineffective. However, Air Force crews were still impressed by what they encountered over the city (61:496). The sheer volume of defensive fire, accurate or not, presented a formidable obstacle and may have resulted in the loss of one F-111. Navy SAM Suppression aircraft fired 48 anti-radar missiles against sites near both target areas (27:12).

The Navy aircraft attacking the Benghazi targets had a much easier time of it (27:14). Strike aircraft were launched on time. One A-6 aborted on the deck of the America leaving a strike force of 14 A-6's to hit the Benghazi targets (39:51). The A-6's attacked their targets on time and all 14 aircraft were clear of the target area and returning to their carriers 13 minutes later (27:14). Results were excellent:

Military barracks (alternate command post and storage area for MIG components): Attacked by 6 out of 7 A-6's planned (one deck abort). Strikers damaged a MIG assembly warehouse, destroyed four MIG shipping crates, and damaged a fifth. Two bombs impacted 700 yards from the barracks, damaging two homes and causing some civilian casualties (6:452, 39:51-2).

Bienna Airfield: Attacked by 6 of 8 planned A-6's. Two aircraft air-aborted for unspecified reasons. Libyan aircraft destroyed included 3 to 4 MIG-23 fighters (including those standing strip alert), one F-27 medium transport, and 2 MI-8 helicopters. Aircraft damaged included 2 Boeing 727's and one smaller transport. The parking apron was cratered and several adjacent buildings were damaged (6:452, 37:63).

Libyan Air Force aircraft did not respond to either attack. All Navy strike aircraft were recovered 53 minutes after the attack began. All Air Force aircraft returned to Britain except one F-111 which diverted to Rota, Spain, with a malfunctioning engine. A search and rescue operation was

launched for the missing F-111 crew, and was later terminated with negative results. The remaining F-111's successfully recovered to England, with the last landing 15 hours after take off (34:87, 14:1).

Operationally, the mission went well but was not without the fog and friction of war. Our military objectives were achieved. Qadhafi's terrorist infrastructure had been hit, collateral damage had been kept to a minimum, and U.S. losses were limited to a single aircraft and crew. Only time would reveal if the operation's political and psychological objectives were accomplished. In the short term, the reaction to the strike was immediate.



## Chapter Six

### SHORT TERM RESULTS OF EL DORADO CANYON

Today, nearly two years after El Dorado Canyon, we are in an excellent position to determine if the operation accomplished its primary objectives. Our objectives were, first, to deter Qadhafi from continued sponsorship of terrorism against the United States. Second, we wanted the Libyan people and, more specifically, those in positions of power to see Qadhafi's support of terrorism would cost them dearly. As a result, we hoped Libyans would realize a change in leadership at the top was needed. Third, we wanted to demonstrate our resolve to fight state sponsored terrorism. Fourth, we wanted to fire a warning shot we hoped other state sponsors would hear and heed. Finally, we hoped to foster tougher collective action by our allies against state sponsors of terrorism.

To judge our success or failure in accomplishing those goals we need to examine the consequences of El Dorado Canyon in two stages. First, we should look at the short term results of the raid. Specifically, we will review the domestic and international reaction to El Dorado Canyon, focusing on the political rhetoric after the mission. On the international level, we will review the reaction to the raid by Qadhafi, our Western Europe allies, selected Arab states, and the Soviet Union. Domestically, we will look at the reaction of the American public, Congress, and the media. Second, the long term consequences of the raid will be discussed in the next chapter.

Domestically, the public reaction to El Dorado Canyon was very positive. President Reagan addressed the nation shortly after the raid to inform the American people about the operation. The President commented:

Several weeks ago, in New Orleans, I warned Colonel Qadhafi we would hold his regime accountable for any new terrorist attacks launched against American citizens... The evidence is now conclusive that the terrorist bombing of the La Belle Discotheque was planned and executed under the direct orders of the Libyan regime... Today, we have done what we had to do. If necessary we shall do it again. I warned that there should be no place on earth where terrorists can rest and train and practice their deadly skills. I meant it. I said that we would act with others if possible, and alone if necessary, to ensure that

terrorists have no sanctuary anywhere. Tonight, we have (6:447-8).

The American people responded with overwhelming support for the raid and the President. A New York Times telephone poll, taken the next day, revealed 77 percent of those questioned approved of the raid with 76 percent also approving of Reagan's handling of foreign affairs (10:102). A Gallup Poll, taken three days later, confirmed those initial results, finding 71 percent approved of the raid. Sixty-eight percent supported the action even if it turned out the raid did not deter future terrorism. Americans also supported future raids by an 8-to-1 margin (7:2).

The American media reaction was also favorable. Editorials supporting the raid appeared in most major papers (10:102). The Washington Post stated: "The United States has reason and right to do what it did" (10:102). Congressional reaction also reflected the popularity of the action. The Congressional Quarterly Weekly reported the next week:

Across the political spectrum, there was general agreement after the attack Libya was responsible for the Berlin Bombing, the U.S. air strike was justified, and the European allies had virtually forced Reagan to take military steps by their refusal to collaborate in economic warfare against Qadhafi (57:839).

However, there was some dissent in the United States. The most notable critic was Republican Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon, who was sharply critical of the Libyan civilian casualties stating: "The vast moral gulf which once separated us from the terrorists was narrowed [by El Dorado Canyon]. Before, only they had the blood of innocents on their hands. Now we both do" (57:839). Some Libyan experts were also critical and argued the raid would strengthen Qadhafi's position at home and cause dissenters to rally around him in the crisis. Some also believed the raid would not deter Qadhafi's support of terrorism but only increase his motivation to continue. While others felt an American attack on a Soviet surrogate would further complicate our relations with the Soviets (10:102).

President Reagan anticipated this criticism. On the evening of the raid he stated:

It has been said that by imposing sanctions against Colonel Qadhafi, or by striking at his terrorist installations, we only magnify the man's importance. That the proper way to deal with him is to ignore him. I do not agree. Long before I came to office, Colonel Qadhafi had engaged in acts of international terror... For years, however, he suffered no economic or political or military

sanction. And the atrocities mounted in number -- as did the innocent dead and wounded... We will [continue to] respond, so long as I am in this Oval Office (6:447-8).

The overwhelming domestic support for the raid was a credit to the job the Reagan Administration did preparing the American people for military action against Qadhafi. Qadhafi responded to the raid by dropping out of sight (14:1).

The Libyan leader was not seen or heard from, by the West, until two days after the raid. As we previously discussed, six 2,000 pound laser-guided bombs impacted within the compound where Qadhafi was sleeping that night. Two of his sons were wounded and his adopted daughter was killed. Initially, there was speculation Qadhafi had been killed. There were also several reported incidents of gunfire in and around the compound. However, there were no confirmed reports of a coup attempt in the open press (14:1, 17:107). Qadhafi reappeared on 16 April 1986 at his desert retreat 400 miles inland (14:1).

Qadhafi's initial statements were designed to rally the Libyan people in case of another attack. Qadhafi was also trying to preempt a second strike by turning world opinion against the United States with claims of his nation's innocence in the Berlin bombing (71:3). Excerpts from Qadhafi's speech that day illustrate his effort:

If there is any living force in America, it should bring down the Reagan government. He must be put on trial as a war criminal and murderer of children... We have not issued orders to murder anybody. Those who carried out operations in Europe are unknown. Perhaps U.S. Intelligence, or a Palestinian, or someone else carried out those operations... Any operation that took place in the past, or will take place, is an individual operation, and that one who carries it out is the only one responsible (6:455).

Qadhafi also stated he was ready to declare war and escalate military operations to Southern Europe, but had restrained himself in response to a "flood of appeals" from various heads of state (6:456). He said he did not want to punish the Americans or Europeans for the "...acts of a crazy American President" (6:456). Finally, he called on Arabs to break diplomatic and economic relations with the U.S. and join him in a total boycott of America (6:456). Qadhafi's rhetoric went unheeded. When he called for an Arab summit, he insisted the focus should be on the U.S. raid. However, most Arab foreign ministers would not agree to attend a meeting whose sole purpose was to denounce the U.S. (38:26).

Military retaliation to El Dorado Canyon was limited. The day after the raid, two Libyan missiles were fired at a Coast

Guard Navigation Station on the island of Lampedusa, 200 miles north of Tripoli. Both missiles fell into the sea short of their target (14:2).

Three terrorist attacks against Americans occurred shortly after the raid. It is unclear whether these incidents were the result of activities already in progress, the work of Libyan sympathizers, or reprisals specifically directed by Qadhafi. In Beirut, two British hostages and one American hostage were shot and dumped on a city street. In Kartoum, Sudan, a U.S. diplomat was shot. In North Yeman, an American Embassy Communications Officer was also shot (14:2). Qadhafi's response to the raid was not surprising; neither was the Soviet reaction.

The Soviets responded with stinging condemnations of El Dorado Canyon and veiled threats our actions would damage bilateral relations. The Soviets also made an effort to exploit the incident for its propaganda value. They reported El Dorado Canyon was another example of the American military bringing the world to the brink of global conflict (58:4,8). Excerpts from a 15 April Soviet press report were typical of their rhetoric:

American imperialism has perpetrated a new criminal action fraught with a serious threat to universal peace and security... Since the time of the bandit attack on Grenada by the U.S., one will not find such a flagrant mockery of international law and human morality... The Soviet Union resolutely condemns the aggressive bandit action taken by the United States (6:456-7).

The tangible Soviet reaction consisted of a withdrawal from Tripoli Harbor of the flagship of their Mediterranean Fleet after they received warning of U.S. intentions (38:26). The Soviets also cancelled a scheduled summit preparation meeting between Secretary of State Schultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze (14:1).

The State Department strongly criticized both the Soviets and East Germans two days after the raid. We asked both countries to intervene when we learned a terrorist attack against Americans was being planned at the Libyan Embassy in East Berlin. A State Department representative commented: "This entire cycle of events would have been avoided if the Soviets and East Germans had restrained the Libyans" (49:22).

The Arab media responded to the raid with "...overwhelmingly hostile rhetoric" and "...used the occasion to vent its frustration at every aspect of U.S. policy in the Middle East" (38:26). Comments in the 19 April 1986 issue of Middle East Digest illustrate the attitude of many Arabs:

American bombers struck Libya with the avowedly noble intention of combating terrorism. Their most significant achievement seems to have been the killing of Muammar Qadhafi's baby daughter, and the serious wounding of two of his sons. The U.S. action showed a profound ignorance of the roots of Middle Eastern terrorism, and remarkable incompetence in meeting its challenge. President Reagan has alienated the Arab world, embarrassed his European allies, and given the Soviet Union a great propaganda opportunity... Reagan had described Qadhafi as the Mad Dog of the Middle East. Many international observers share the view of one American woman opposed to the raid: 'I think the Mad Dog is sitting at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.'" (52:7).

Official reaction by the moderate Arab states was much milder. Saudi Arabia and Jordan avoided public statements. Egypt expressed regret over the affair but refused to condemn either side. Syria and Iran both condemned the operation, initially offered Qadhafi support, and then quickly fell silent (36:7-8). Iraq, still angry over Libya's recently formalized ties with Iran, offered no help (36:8). The lukewarm Arab reaction was attributed to the dilemma the American raid had placed them in. Arabs were "...in the awkward position of having to denounce an action which violated the integrity of the Islamic world by an ostensible ally" (38:26).

Qadhafi's efforts to generate a stronger reaction against the U.S. were ineffective. Two weeks after the raid, Arab foreign ministers gathered in Tunis. The meeting was called by Algeria and Libya under the auspices of the Arab League. The ministers agreed to condemn the American raid but did not support Libya's demand for collective economic sanctions against the United States (36:7). The absence of concrete action by the Arabs illustrated Qadhafi's isolation in the world (36:7). If the mild Arab reaction was pleasing to the U.S., the reaction of our Western European allies was probably disappointing.

The timing of the raid was particularly embarrassing to most European governments. The raid came just a few hours after EEC Foreign Ministers concluded a special meeting where they agreed to denounce Libya's role in terrorism for the first time. The minister also approved limited sanctions against Libya (63:512). Official reactions of the EEC nations were generally critical of the raid. Only Britain and Canada publicly endorsed the American action (63:512). The basis for European criticism was their belief a violent response to terrorism was counterproductive. Most of our NATO allies were also bitter because they were not consulted prior to the mission (10:103).

Prime Minister Thatcher was firm in her support for the operation. In her speech to the House of Commons the next day Mrs. Thatcher stated: "The United States, after trying other means, has now sought by limited military action to induce the Libyan regime to desist from terrorism. That is in the British interest. It is why the government of Britain supports the United States' action" (6:460). Mrs. Thatcher also remarked it would have been "inconceivable" for her to deny the request considering America's role and prolonged sacrifices in helping provide for the defense of Europe (36:5). Mrs. Thatcher's support for the raid was not popular in England. An April 17th poll by The Times showed two-thirds of her people opposed the raid and even more (71 percent) opposed her decision to support it (10:103, 36:4). The opposition party seized the opportunity to strongly criticize Mrs. Thatcher. They charged her with becoming a Reagan puppet and claimed she was more sensitive to American needs than British (63:513). Mrs. Thatcher's popularity soared on our side of the ocean. Some said if she ran for President in 1988, "...she'd be a shoe-in" (36:4). Across the British Channel, the French reaction seemed contradictory.

French President Mitterrand and French officials cited a variety of reasons why they did not support El Dorado Canyon. They stated the raid would increase terrorist activity. They criticized the raid as "too weak" and took exception to being excluded in the planning (63:513, 6:460). Seventy percent of the French public supported their governments denial of overflight. In contrast, the same percentage also supported the American raid (63:517, 10:103). Americans were not impressed by the lack of French support. After the raid, President Reagan and Secretary Weinberger mildly criticized the French for their decision (63:511).

The Italian Government strongly criticized both the United States and Libya. They criticized the U.S. for conducting the raid and Libya for retaliating against the Italian island of Lampedusa (63:518). The Italian response was understandable. The belligerents in El Dorado Canyon included their major ally (America) and one of their principle trading partners (Libya) (63:518).

The Spanish reaction also reflected the political realities in the country. Prime Minister Gonzalez was critical of the raid. He did not believe the methods were correct and he wasn't willing to accept the terrorism he thought would result if he supported us. Gonzalez was also critical of Libya in his statements (63:517). Gonzalez's response was also understandable. There is a strong element of anti-Americanism in Spain and Prime Minister Gonzalez was two months from a national election at the time (63:517). West Germany, like Spain, was mildly critical of both sides.

Chancellor Kohl did not endorse the raid, but let it be known Qadhafi must expect the consequences of his sponsorship of terrorism (63:520). The West German people were not so gentle. Seventy-five percent of the Germans queried opposed the raid according to a Washington Post poll (10:103).

United States officials reacted to the lack of support in Europe with mild criticism of the NATO allies. The U.S. let it drop there, not wanting to highlight the lack of solidarity on the methods to combat terrorism (63:511).

In the United Nations, a group of non-aligned nations sponsored a Security Council Resolution which "...condemned the U.S. attack as being in violation of the U.N. Charter and the norms of international conduct and called for the U.S. to refrain from further attacks" (36:10). The resolution was vetoed by the United States, Britain, and France. Some were surprised by France's decision to join in the veto (36:10).

In summary, the Soviets and many Arab nations responded to El Dorado Canyon with loud condemnation and virtually no concrete action. Our European allies reacted with mildly critical rhetoric which soon faded. At home, the overwhelmingly positive reaction to the raid reflected the American people's strong sentiments against terrorism. The domestic reaction was also a credit to the work done by the Reagan Administration preparing the public for military action against Qadhafi. Although the short term reaction appeared to be favorable, the long term success of El Dorado Canyon could only be judged against our primary objective.

## Chapter Seven

### LOOKING BACK - WHAT DID THE RAID ACCOMPLISH?

The primary objective of El Dorado Canyon was to hit Qadhafi hard enough to deter his continued sponsorship of terrorism against the United States (27:14). In order to understand our success in attaining this objective we will need to determine the operation's impact on terrorism directed against Americans and Qadhafi's current role in terrorism. Is he still active? If so, how and why? Have other circumstances influenced Qadhafi's role? Besides the raids influence on Qadhafi, three other consequences should be examined. First, we must consider El Dorado Canyon's impact on efforts by the U.S. and our allies to collectively combat terrorism. Second, we should determine if other state sponsors of terrorism were deterred by our action. Finally, we should understand the practical benefits the raid provided the U.S. Military. The statistical results begin to tell this story.

There was no dramatic decline in the total volume of international terrorism after the raid. It is probably safe to say no one expected there would be (29:5). The raid was not targeted against all international terrorism with its wide ranging participants. However, there were fewer attacks carried out in 1986 by Middle Eastern groups in Western Europe (29:5). The State Department reported the number of terrorist attacks in this category dropped by almost 50 percent in 1986 compared to 1985. The majority of the decrease occurred after April (12:15, 24:36). The number of American fatalities also declined from 38 to 12 (68:2). Britain's Aberdeen University estimated the proportion of state sponsored incidents fell approximately 25 percent between 1985 and 1986 (24:36). These figures are especially significant when one remembers terrorism had been increasing in Europe for many years.

It is impossible to determine how much of the 1986 decline can be attributed to the raid and how much to the cumulative effects of diplomatic, economic, and military sanctions. Some reports indicate Qadhafi ordered a temporary suspension of terrorist activity after the raid (29:5). If true, it would certainly be a gratifying result of the raid and corroborate a comment made later by the Secretary of Defense: "Qadhafi now understands that those who use terrorism must pay a heavy cost" (20:1). However, there is strong evidence Qadhafi is still very active.



Many believe Qadhafi simply changed his method of operation after El Dorado Canyon and is now only being more cautious. As one expert said: "Qadhafi has not abandoned the use of terrorism as an instrument of policy, but he will probably take greater care to conceal his involvement (29:6). Qadhafi also has not abandoned his dream of a United Arab State guided by his leadership, nor his desire to inspire and finance worldwide revolutions to overturn the status quo (29:2). Many believe terrorism, for Qadhafi, remains a "...useful means of distracting foes, provoking crisis, straining relations among opponents, and gaining concrete benefits - in sum, a tool too useful to be abandoned" (29:6). There is ample evidence to support this view.

In the United Kingdom, it was reported Qadhafi provided \$2 million to the IRA in June 1986. In August 1986, the British base at Akrotiri, Cyprus, was attacked with mortars by a terrorist group who later claimed allegiance to Qadhafi (26:111-2). In October 1986, French Customs officials seized a Panamanian cargo ship bound from Tripoli to Northern Ireland. The ship was carrying 150 tons of arms and munitions including 20 SA-7's. The French thwarted "...one of the biggest efforts ever by Libya's Col. Muammar Qadhafi to supply the IRA and possibly other European terrorists" (18:14). Other reports indicate Qadhafi is also trying to establish ties with a variety of subversive groups inside England. Those groups represent a wide range of causes from the Black Liberation Army to Neo-Nazi movements (26:111-2).

Reports of Qadhafi's continuing sponsorship of terrorism around the world are numerous. In France, an Israeli paper reported in May 1986, Qadhafi was extending support to "Action Directe", a major French terrorist group (5:56). In July, a plot by extremists to blow up the American Embassy in Lome, Togo (Africa), was thwarted by the local government. It was later discovered the explosives for the operation were smuggled in from Benin, a radical Marxist State with close ties to Qadhafi (54:54). On 15 September 1986, four Palestinians attempted to hijack a Pan Am 747 on the ground at Karachi, Pakistan (35:18). The hijacking ended 16 hours later leaving 19 dead and 40 injured (54:54). Pakistani police and intelligence officials claimed the hijackers were Palestinians trained in Lebanon. However, one of the terrorists carried a Libyan passport and was believed to be a Libyan national (35:18, 52).

On 16 April 1986, two Arab terrorists entered Istanbul's largest Jewish Synagogue, locked the door behind them, and proceeded to murder worshipers with automatic weapons and hand grenades. Twenty-two people were killed before the terrorists took their own lives (35:14, 54:54). Experts could not agree which nation sponsored the attack. Israeli experts blamed the Syrians, the Turks thought Iran was responsible, and some Americans thought it was a combined Syrian, Iranian,

and Libyan sponsored operation (35:16). Machine guns used in the massacre were Soviet-made and the grenades Polish-made. Both were identical to those seized, five months prior, from two Libyans attempting to blow up the American Officer's Club in Ankara, Turkey (35:19). No evidence was discovered linking any nation directly to the massacre (35:52).

Elsewhere, Venezuelan authorities reported a Libyan official was quietly working to establish a regional terrorist network, to be directed from the Libyan Embassy in Panama. Reported targets of the network were Guadalupe, Martinique, and French Guiana (26:113). Qadhafi has also been active farther from home, providing training and financial support to a variety of "...oppressed groups and revolutionary movements" in the South Pacific (4:54). Qadhafi's continued support to a wide variety of terrorist and subversive organizations is consistent with his goal to help overturn the world's status quo.

Some have concluded Qadhafi no longer targets American interests directly, or at least not in a manner which could be linked to him. Some State Department experts believe this to be the case, saying Qadhafi has adopted a lower profile vis-a-vis the United States and is trying to distance himself from terrorism (5:1). This may have been true, but last year Qadhafi made a move which will make this approach much more difficult for him in the future.

In July 1987, Qadhafi permitted the Abu Nidal terrorist organization to relocate their operational headquarters from Damascus, Syria, to Tripoli. President Assad asked the group to relocate (5:1). Why Qadhafi accepted Abu Nidal, knowing it would result in a more visible relationship with Nidal's terrorist organization, is widely speculated about. Whatever his motives, Qadhafi now risks being directly associated with any terrorist activity Abu Nidal undertakes (5:1).

Another quietly hoped for consequence of El Dorado Canyon was Qadhafi would be replaced as the leader of Libya. This has not occurred. However, there are many who feel his current position is tenuous (25:13). El Dorado Canyon is probably not the primary reason for Qadhafi's present circumstance, but it certainly may have contributed to it.

The lukewarm reaction to the raid by most Arab states and their lack of support for concrete measures against the United States or Britain showed Libyans how isolated Qadhafi had become. Feeling rejected by the Arab world, Qadhafi tried to draw closer to the Soviets in May 1986. The Soviets kept him at arms length, denying additional credits for arms, rejecting a mutual defense treaty, and reminding Qadhafi's diplomatic representatives of the differences between supporting

revolution and pure terrorism (56:59). At home, pressures on Qadhafi have also grown.

Qadhafi's intervention in Northern Chad had scarcely been challenged since the early 1970's. Now, Chadians have pushed Libyan forces back with a series of ringing defeats and have even attacked inside Libya (31:15). The connection between Chad and El Dorado Canyon was made by one Libyan expert: "The raid was a factor in Qadhafi's embarking on a more aggressive campaign in Chad... He did it to regain prestige lost when we [the United States] attacked him. Chad was suppose to be a walkover. Now it's a defeat of colossal proportions from which he may not recover" (13:1). Chad has fueled discontent with Qadhafi's policies in the Libyan Army; discontent which is partially rooted in El Dorado Canyon.

The ease with which the United States executed El Dorado Canyon discredited the Libyan military. After the raid, Qadhafi proceeded with plans to abolish the formal military hierarchy and started planning the eventual elimination of Libya's conventional armed forces (56:58). Qadhafi also initiated plans to relocate Army Headquarters to a remote desert region. These steps have not endeared Qadhafi with the rank and file military professional. Military morale and discipline have suffered (56:58). There have been reports of Libyan troops refusing to fight in Chad, defections to Egypt, and executions of military leaders (25:13). The military is the organization that has enabled Qadhafi to maintain power. It also is considered the source of the only serious coup attempts (TT:13). The present state of the military must be a serious concern for Qadhafi and may eventually lead to his undoing. The military is not his only problem at home.

Since the raid, Qadhafi has proceeded with some radical domestic policies and may be alienating the Libyan people in the process. Lower oil revenues have caused Qadhafi to cut salaries and welfare benefits. Simultaneously, he continues to export millions of dollars to a collage of terrorist and subversive groups worldwide (56:58-9). Qadhafi has also moved older "white-collar" workers into "blue-collar" jobs, banned additional hiring of engineering graduates (telling them to join the military instead), and announced he would abolish money and transition the economy back to a barter system (56:58-9). He has also announced plans to depopulate Tripoli by a mass move to the countryside. The turmoil caused by these extreme domestic measures have left many Libyans disenchanted with their leader (25:13).

In summary, Qadhafi's current precarious position is the result of several factors. The strong U.S. military action against Libya, lukewarm Arab and Soviet support after the raid, humiliating Libyan defeats in Chad, turmoil in the military, a sagging economy, and disillusionment with Qadhafi's radical domestic policies are responsible for what

some say is the "...mood of the greatest despondency and resentment [which] now hangs over the country" (25:13). El Dorado Canyon probably is not the primary reason for Qadhafi's predicament, but it certainly contributed to the series of events leading to the current situation. The raid also effected the Europeans.

El Dorado Canyon galvanized our Western European allies causing them to intensify their own efforts to combat terrorism. Three weeks after the raid, the allies met at the Tokyo Economic Summit. There they issued a joint statement sharply critical of all states who support terrorism and singled out Libya by name for the first time (6:462-3). The allies also agreed to implement sanctions against Libya to make it more difficult for Qadhafi to promote terrorism by abusing his diplomatic privileges. The "...closest possible bilateral and multilateral cooperation between police and security organizations and other relevant authorities in the fight against terrorism" was also agreed to in Tokyo (6:462-3). Finally, Summit participants agreed to improve extradition procedures between them so terrorists could be brought to justice more easily (6:462-3). The 1986 decline in European terrorism by Middle Eastern groups can be partially attributed to the agreements reached at Tokyo. Other nations soon felt the consequences of Europeans less tolerant of state sponsored terrorism.

Britain broke diplomatic relations with Syria after it learned an attempt to blow up an El Al Airliner in London was logistically supported through the Syrian Embassy. At Britain's request, ECC nations (except Greece) agreed to ban arms sales to Syria and stop visits by high level Syrian officials to their countries (24:36). West Germany expelled Syrian diplomats and imposed economic sanctions after an investigation also implicated Syria in the La Belle Disco bombing (12:15, 24:36). Another goal of El Dorado Canyon was to cause Iran and Syria to think twice about their continued support of terrorism.

In Syria's case, El Dorado Canyon probably made no impression. Syria was implicated in the El Al bombing attempt two days after the raid and some believe Syria sponsored the Istanbul Mosque massacre five months later (24:36). Syrians probably believe they are less vulnerable to American attack than Libya. Their air defenses are much more capable and Syrians are more firmly situated under the Soviet umbrella (24:36). However, President Assad's request for the Abu Nidal group to leave his country may be an indication Syria is now trying to distance itself from terrorism. Most observers attribute Assad's move to the pressure created by European sanctions and not his fear of American military action (24:36). This is probably the case, but El Dorado Canyon can be credited with helping create the

climate in which Europeans have pursued their anti-terrorism efforts with renewed vigor.

There is no evidence the raid had any impact on Iran's support of terrorism. While the United States was bombing Qadhafi's terrorist infrastructure to deter state sponsored terrorism, our agents were secretly negotiating with Iranian officials to trade arms for the American hostages in Lebanon (24:36).

The military gained valuable combat experience with a new family of precision guided munitions, electronic countermeasures, and SAM suppression equipment during El Dorado Canyon. This experience may be helpful in future CT operations. The Syrian Air Defenses system is dependent on the SA-5. The capability demonstrated by United States to defeat Libyan SA-5's may cause President Assad to feel more vulnerable to American air power. This may be another reason for his apparent effort to back away from terrorism (36:15).

Two years after El Dorado Canyon, we find Qadhafi is still active but in a more discrete way, Syria may be reducing its support of terrorists, and the Europeans have adopted additional collective measures to combat terrorism. The question remains: Are Americans being attacked and killed by terrorists now at the same rate as before the raid? The answer to this important question is an encouraging NO! The most current terrorist statistics speak for themselves (remember El Dorado Canyon occurred in April 1986):

	Americans <u>Killed</u>	Americans <u>Wounded</u>	Attacks Involving <u>Americans</u>
<u>First 3 Qtrs '86</u>	11	95	99
<u>First 3 Qtrs '87</u>	0	43	53

Note: Figures for the last quarter of 1987 were not yet available so the comparison was limited to the first three quarters of each year.

Data Sources-(43:22, 44:20, 45:20, 46:18, 47:17, 48:18).

Obviously the decline is significant. The trend is more telling if you compare totals for the last four years. To arrive at the year end total for 1987 we used the actual numbers for the first three quarters and added a projection for the fourth quarter. Has there been a significant decrease in terrorism targeted against Americans since El Dorado Canyon? The numbers show there has been across the board.

	Americans <u>Killed</u>	Americans <u>Wounded</u>	Attacks Involving <u>Americans</u>
<u>CY '84</u>	61	144	77
<u>CY '85</u>	54	160	91
<u>CY '86</u>	12	158	111
<u>CY '87</u> (Projected)	0	57	71

Data Sources-(9:47, 43:22, 44:20, 45:20).

What can we conclude from El Dorado Canyon two years after the operation? Clearly, Qadhafi is still in power and remains a man committed to a radical change in the world order and violent solutions to political problems (55:114). Just as clearly, Qadhafi still provides support to a host of terrorist organizations and subversive groups to promote the radical change he desires. However, what seems to be different today, in 1988, is both Qadhafi and President Assad of Syria have pulled back from pursuing major terrorist actions against Americans. The statistics clearly show a notable decline. El Dorado Canyon, alone, was not responsible for this change. However, El Dorado Canyon, and the tougher collective action Western Europeans took against terrorism because of it, probably was (12:15).

Today, Qadhafi's power base at home seems to have been weakened by several factors: the successful American raid, his increased activity and subsequent defeats in Chad (which some say he pursued because of El Dorado Canyon), his continued isolation in the Arab world, and growing disillusionment with his radical economic and domestic policies. These factors have caused many to wonder, not if Qadhafi will be removed from power, but when? Those same people believe "...the majority of Libyans will greet his passing with satisfaction" (25:14).

The raid also may have permanently changed the international terrorism equation in two ways. First, state sponsors of terrorism must now consider the risk of "...military retaliation, not only from Israel (which they expected), but more dangerously from the United States" (29:6). Second, it now may be more likely other nations will opt for the use of military force against states responsible for terrorism (29:6). In this regard, the range of future responses to terrorism has been expanded by El Dorado Canyon.

El Dorado Canyon also may have been the turning point with regard to the utility of terrorism as a tactic to influence the American people. The Journal of Palestine Studies made this observation after the raid: "Terrorism has become, as far as Americans are concerned, a counter productive tactic

for pursuing an equitable resolution of the Arab-Israel dispute" (10:100). This statement implies terrorism once was an effective tool for drawing American attention to, and even sympathy for, the plight of the Palestinians. The overwhelming American support for El Dorado Canyon has shown the world how fed up our citizens are with terrorism. To those wishing to generate American support for their cause the message now may be: Try something else - terrorism will no longer work.

Finally, while the wisdom and the ultimate consequences of El Dorado Canyon can be debated, two things cannot. First, the raid clearly demonstrated the President's willingness to use military force as a tool of last resort against those who sponsor terrorism against Americans. Second, the operation demonstrated the capability of the American military to strike quickly, powerfully, and precisely at terrorist targets almost anywhere in the world. In the long run, this may be the most beneficial consequence of Operation El Dorado Canyon.

## Chapter Eight

### CONCLUSION

#### WHERE SHOULD WE GO FROM HERE?

Should the United States continue to use direct military action as a means to deter state sponsored terrorism? In this chapter we will answer this question. We will not address what the overall U.S. counterterrorism policy should be. Rather, we will focus narrowly on the issue of future uses of direct military action as an element of our counterterrorism policy.

Terrorism supported by nation-states is not going to go away. The goal of the United States should be to reduce terrorism to a level where it no longer commands our attention or influences our actions to a degree out of proportion with the importance of the factors which cause it (39:52). Over the years we saw taking no military action had not deterred terrorists in general, nor Qadhafi in particular. As the 1980's progressed, Americans became the victims of terrorism in ever increasing numbers. The absence of a strong response by the United States reinforced the concept that terrorism was an effective tool for weaker states to challenge us (39:52). Terrorism had become a relatively low risk - high yield tactic for Libya and others.

If the United States is to deter terrorism we must increase the risks to states who sponsor terrorism against us. We can do this using conventional methods. We must apply our political, economic, and military power. But the states most active in terrorism (Libya, Syria, and Iran) are positioned at the fringes of our political and economic reach. We should continue to first apply the non-violent elements of our national power. However, after our political and economic cards are on the table, we should not hesitate to use our only significant remaining leverage, the application of military force. Not doing so leaves the price for supporting terrorism at a level each of those three states have already shown they are willing to pay.

Some argue the use of military force will not deter terrorism, but will actually strengthen the terrorist group and promote increased terrorist activity (42:23). If military force is targeted against a particular terrorist group, a good



case could be made to support this belief by students of group dynamics and group psychology. They would argue "...the external danger has the consequence of reducing external divisiveness and uniting the group against the outside enemy" (42:23). Military action may cause the terrorist group to change their targets or lie low for awhile, but experts say: "...the terrorist organization will not respond to retaliation or threatened danger by a permanent cessation of terrorist activity, for to do so would be to lose its very reason for being" (42:34). This is probably true for the individual terrorist group. But the argument is not valid if the target of your military action is a nation-state who sponsors terrorism (42:34).

The nation-state's objectives are: maintaining its security (survival), furthering its national goals, and providing for the well-being of its people. Unlike the group, the state does not have to commit acts of terrorism to justify its existence (42:34). If the state's support of terrorism threatens its primary goals then that support can be reduced or eliminated. "If retaliatory policies [by other nation-states] are seen as threatening those primary goals, they can be expected to have an inhibiting effect upon the utilization of terrorism to promote national interests" (42:34). What is the bottom line? Direct military action against individual terrorist groups may not be an effective way to deter them. Direct action against a state who sponsors terrorism can be effective, making potential costs outweigh potential gains. Therefore, the United States should continue to selectively apply our military power against states who sponsor terrorism against us. This is a legal position which the American people have shown they strongly support.

Legally, combating terrorism with military force is justifiable under the "international law notion of self-defense" as long as the force used is proportional to the threat posed (23:6). More specifically, the use of force against nations who sponsor terrorism "...is an accepted application of international law... When it is used in self-defense to protect essential U.S. interests" (23:70). However, we should not precondition future military responses on the acquisition of perfect "court room quality" evidence against the state who sponsored the terrorist attack (1:129). To do so, could inhibit a meaningful and timely response (1:129).

The American people strongly support the continued use of military force against terrorism. A 1986 Gallup Poll found 68 percent of the Americans questioned supported El Dorado Canyon. Sixty-four percent would support direct military action against Syria or Iran if they sponsored future terrorist acts against the United States. Eighty percent also supported another raid against Libya if Qadhafi keeps it up (7:4,6,9-10). Public support, like "court room quality"

evidence, should not be an absolute prerequisite for future direct military action against state sponsored terrorism (1:130). Future operations may not be as neat and clean as El Dorado Canyon, nor targeted against an adversary with Libya's easily identifiable track record. The overriding concern of the United States must be to maintain a consistent, credible deterrent. State sponsors should have no reason to doubt American willingness to use force against them if the situation warrants.

No single measure will completely eliminate state sponsored terrorism. Our goal should be to reduce it to a level where it does not significantly intrude in our national affairs, or in the lives of our people by the coordinated application of each element of our national power. As Secretary of Defense Weinberger said before an International Conference on Terrorism on 21 January 1987: "When terrorism is sponsored or abetted by sovereign states, it becomes a matter of international conflict, which must be dealt with by a full range of political, economic, and if necessary, military instruments available to sovereign states (60:21).

The spiraling rate of terrorism against America in the 1970's and 1980's taught us that taking no military action did little to prevent terrorism. We have learned the absence of a threat of military reprisal allows terrorism to remain an attractive foreign policy tool whose benefits can outweigh the risks for nations on the edges of America's political and economic sphere of influence. We know direct military action against states who use terrorism is both legal and strongly supported by the American people. However, we should not precondition future applications of military force against state sponsored terrorism on "court room quality" evidence or the assurance of popular support for the operation. We agree with Secretary Weinberger who said: "...political and economic actions are all the more effective when the terrorist state understands clearly that behind these other measures stands effective military power, capable of an appropriate and timely response (60:22).

Finally, as soldiers we know wars are won with offensive not defensive operations. As students of Low Intensity Conflict we know state sponsored terrorism is a form of warfare. If the United States is to win the war against terrorism we will have to do it with offensive operations, carrying the fight to the states who sponsor terrorism against us (1:8). The evening of the raid, President Reagan informed the American people about El Dorado Canyon and remarked: "Today, we have done what we had to do. If necessary, we shall do it again" (6:447). What should the American policy be regarding direct military action against state sponsors of terrorism? If need be, we should not hesitate to do it again!

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