

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-1NEW YORK TIMES
24 October 1984

100 Threats a Week Are Reported Against U.S. Installations Abroad

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 23 — Government agencies have been receiving about 100 threats a week against American embassies and other installations abroad since the bombing of the United States Embassy in Lebanon last month, Administration officials said today.

"The volume is staggering," a State Department official said. Intelligence officials said particular attention was being paid to a possible terrorist attack against the United States not only in the Middle East but in such areas as Latin America as well.

They said information has been received in the last month that cannot be disregarded pointing to an attempted terrorist attack on an American installation just before the election on Nov. 6 in the belief that this might hurt President Reagan's re-election chances.

"The Iranians have read that they helped bring down Jimmy Carter in 1980," a State Department official said. "Why not try to do the same to Reagan?" He was speaking of the holding of American hostages by radical Iranians, which was sanctioned by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The hostages were not released until Mr. Reagan's Inauguration Day in 1981.

Robert C. McFarlane, the White House national security adviser, said on the NBC News program "Today" that he expected terrorist attacks against Americans to continue.

Anniversary Ceremony

"I think the prospects are that there will be further attacks," he said, "not only in Lebanon in the short term, but elsewhere in the Middle East." The chances of new acts of terrorism, he said, are "about 70 percent."

Today was the anniversary of the truck-bomb explosion at the Marine barracks at Beirut International Airport that led to the death of 241 American servicemen. A ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery was at-

tended by 500 people, including Barbara Bush, the wife of the Vice President.

At the State Department, John Hughes, the spokesman, said, "We continue to mourn the tragic loss of life which resulted from this vicious and unwarranted attack.

"The marines went to Lebanon as instruments of peace," he said, "and we must honor their sacrifice in that cause.

"We have pursued this objective because it is what America stands for and because it is in America's interest," he said. "This anniversary reminds us that our road will not be easy. Nevertheless, we will not be diverted from pursuing a just, honorable and lasting peace in the Middle East. We will persevere."

Steps in Lebanon and Elsewhere

Security precautions have been most evident in Lebanon in recent days, as Ambassador Reginald Bartholomew and other key personnel have left the country, at least temporarily. But officials said steps were being taken elsewhere as well to be on guard.

Mr. Hughes said, "Embassies in that area and in other areas around the world are on a high state of alert, as would be expected in view of various rumors and various threats that have been circulating.

"As I have said before, sadly, threats and intelligence relating to possible attacks on U.S. missions and U.S. embassy offices are all too frequent, as they are against the diplomats and missions of other countries as well."

Mr. Hughes said he did not relate the threats explicitly to the American election. He said that they "have been snowballing and I would say over the

past year, a little longer."

Intelligence officials said the increase in the number of reported threats was in part a result of the increased awareness by American and foreign officials of the threats by terrorists.

Areas of Biggest Concern

"Top priority now is to stop the terrorists, and everyone is eager to report threats," a senior official said. "Secondly, all Government agencies are more vigilant and no scrap is left unreported. And thirdly, the intelligence community is working hard. They are gearing up, and putting more human resources into the effort."

The areas of most concern to the Administration, the official said, are the Middle East and Latin America, particularly Central America.

"There are legitimate grounds for concern and plenty of reasons for more threats," he said. "No one is disposed to take them lightly."

He said that in the Middle East there was no question but that the Iranians were behind the anti-American terrorist attacks, although it was difficult to pinpoint who in the Iranian hierarchy was responsible.

The Syrians, who took advantage of the attacks against the Americans in 1983 — the bombing of the embassy in April and the Marine barracks in October — to end the pro-Western orientation of the Beirut Government, are believed to be interested in bringing the terrorism under their own control and away from the Iranians, whom the Syrians regard as irresponsible, a senior official said.

But the Syrians are allied with the Iranians against the Iraqis in the Persian Gulf war and are reluctant to take concrete actions to end the terrorists' sanctuary in the Bekaa, Lebanon's eastern valley, he said.