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## The Police: 'Day of the Jackal'

For the second time the United States is asked to cope with government-sponsored terrorism—in this case a kind of large-scale "Day of the Jackal."

Without any inside information on the intelligence or sources involved in this latest Libyan affair, a number of issues come to mind that cause real concern.

If one assumes that the intelligence in our hands is reasonably credible with regard to source and content, aside from political considerations what is the best U.S. response to a threat of this sort? Bear in mind that the source of the threat is a government known for its support of and connections with disparate terrorist groups around the world, from the IRA to the Japanese Red Army.

It is easy to denigrate the "overreaction" of the security forces, but in fact, given the source of the threat, a worst-case scenario must be the basis of any planning. In this case, where there is the indication of assassination teams with a paramilitary capability, possibly including heavy weapons, the more orthodox protective measures would hardly be sufficient. Without recourse to paranoia, you can still take seriously—or at least refuse to dismiss—the possibility of a large-scale coordinated attack by well-trained commandos in one or more teams

that could overwhelm protective forces—especially since the protective forces must guard a number of possible targets. The assassination of Anwar Sadat is no comfort. The net effect is the further isolation of the president and his senior people.

But taking the threat seriously and trying to protect against it do not really justify the intense—even excessive—publicity that has accompanied this affair. While it may have been the decision that going public would have the effect of dissuading Muammar Qaddafi from believing he could disassociate himself from the operation, there is a real question of the negative impact of all this publicity on U.S. and world opinion and on current and future sources of critical information.

In the light of what has happened, have we adequately protected the source(s) and have we reassured others who may someday provide similar intelligence? A more controlled handling would have allowed better source protection and widened the political options available to the administration. It would certainly have reduced the credibility gap here and abroad.

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