

Priority Handling

Congressional Action

SUBJECT:

ODD FILE

REPT #

SJD

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE QUERY:

~~DO Study on Seizure of the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Khartoum~~ (b)(3)

FROM:

EXTENSION

DATE SENT

REQUEST NUMBER

[Redacted] *AK*

24 Feb 86

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom. Draw a line across column after comment.) (b)(3)

RECEIVED FORWARDED

1. [Redacted]
2. [Redacted]
3. [Redacted]
4. [Redacted]
5. [Redacted]
6. [Redacted]

25 Feb BQ

26 Feb ke

— 26 J.

27/2 H

27/2 J

AK

Please advise if a copy (b)(3) the 1973 DO study, Seizure of the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Khartoum, can be released to the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism. If so, it is requested that NE Division furnish a copy of the study which can be forwarded to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

1 TO 4: Herewith is a copy of the requested study.

We defer to ODDO for decision on whether the document should be made (b)(3) available to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

This request is independent of another request for the same document received from the SSCI Staff (Batoclia), which is being processed.

Counsel/DO

7 to All: Please see attached memo.

SA/ODDO

N

ADDO

DDO

SUSPENSE DATE:

28 Feb 1986

C/OCA/Senate

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RETURN TO:

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8:12 CONCUR WITH Ds/COUNSEL (b)(3)

FORM 10-84 4283 15- REGISTRY

Priority Handling

Congressional Action

S-E-C-R-E-T

5 March 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR:

[Redacted]

(b)(3)

FROM

:

[Redacted]

(b)(3)

Associate General Counsel/DO

SUBJECT

:

Study on Seizure of Saudi Arabian
Embassy in Khartoum

I see no reason not to provide a copy of the DO study to the SSCI as requested by Senator Specter. However, the similar request from Joel Lisker, the Staff Director of the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, raises again concerns on how to respond to the nonintelligence committees when they seek Agency materials. One option would be to refer Mr. Lisker to the SSCI so that he can review the study--assuming the SSCI agrees--in a secure environment. It may be useful to solicit the SSCI's views on how they would like to proceed, but I do not think the Agency needs to respond routinely to requests from nonintelligence committee staffers, absent a showing of particular need.

[Redacted]

(b)(3)

Attachments: Queries (2)

S-E-C-R-E-T

[Redacted]

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SUBJECT: Senate Judiciary Committee Requests Copy of DO Study on Seizure of the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Khartoum

BACKGROUND: Joel Lisker, Chief Counsel and Staff Director of the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism discovered a footnote reference to the DO study, Seizure of the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Khartoum in a footnote reference in a 1974 DARPA document entitled Decision-Making, Bargaining, and Resources which had been declassified in 1975. Lisker said he is engaged in an analysis of PLO involvement in the incident in preparation for a 23 April 1986 Security and Terrorism Subcommittee public hearing on Arafat and the PLO at which the Attorney General has been invited to testify.

QUESTION: The Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism has requested a copy of the July 1973 DO study, The Seizure of the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Khartoum.

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THE SEIZURE OF THE SAUDI ARABIAN
EMBASSY IN KHARTOUM

June 1973

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THE SEIZURE OF THE SAUDI ARABIAN
EMBASSY IN KHARTOUMSummary

In the early evening hours of 1 March 1973, eight Black September Organization (BSO) terrorists seized the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Khartoum as a diplomatic reception honoring the departing United States Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) was ending. After slightly wounding the United States Ambassador and the Belgian Charge d'Affaires, the terrorists took these officials plus the United States DCM, the Saudi Arabian Ambassador and the Jordanian Charge d'Affaires hostage. In return for the freedom of the hostages, the captors demanded the release of various individuals, mostly Palestinian guerrillas, imprisoned in Jordan, Israel and the United States.

The Khartoum operation was planned and carried out with the full knowledge and personal approval of Yasir Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and the head of Fatah. Fatah representatives based in Khartoum participated in the attack, using a Fatah vehicle to transport the terrorists to the Saudi Arabian Embassy.

Initially, the main objective of the attack appeared to be to secure the release of Fatah/BSO leader Muhammed Awadh (Abu Da'ud) from Jordanian captivity. Information acquired subsequently reveals that the Fatah/BSO leaders did not expect Awadh to be freed, and indicates that one of the primary goals of the operation was to strike at the United States because of its efforts to achieve a Middle East peace settlement which many Arabs believe would be inimical to Palestinian interests.

Negotiations with the BSO terrorist team were conducted primarily by the Sudanese Ministers of Interior and of Health. No effort was spared, within the capabilities of the Sudanese Government, to secure the freedom of the hostages. The terrorists extended their deadlines three times, but when they became convinced that their demands would not be met and after they reportedly had received orders from Fatah headquarters in Beirut, they killed the two United States officials and the Belgian Charge. Thirty-four hours later, upon receipt of orders from Yasir Arafat in Beirut to surrender, the

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terrorists released their other hostages unharmed and surrendered to Sudanese authorities.

The Khartoum operation again demonstrated the ability of the BSO to strike where least expected. The open participation of Fatah representatives in Khartoum in the attack provides further evidence of the Fatah/BSO relationship. The emergence of the United States as a primary fedayeen target indicates a serious threat of further incidents similar to that which occurred in Khartoum.

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THE SEIZURE OF THE SAUDI ARABIAN
EMBASSY IN KHARTOUM

Introduction

This study of the attack on the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Khartoum, Sudan, and the murder of the United States Ambassador to Sudan, his Deputy and the Belgian Charge d'Affaires by Fatah's Black September Organization (BSO) is based on information available through 31 May 1973. Immediately after the surrender of the terrorists, Sudanese President Numayri appointed a special committee to investigate the incident and prohibited release of information on the incident by police or security officials. The special committee submitted its report to the President on 24 March 1973. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] this study includes all the information available at this time concerning both the attack and the clear and direct involvement of Fatah's leader, Yasir Arafat, in its planning and in the murders of the hostages.

Planning the Operation

Planning for the attack in Khartoum apparently began in mid-February 1973 when BSO leader Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad) requested [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] an operation to secure the release of imprisoned BSO/Fatah leader Muhammad Awadh (Abu Da'ud). Awadh had been captured along with 16 of his followers by Jordanian authorities on 9 February 1973 as he was planning an attack against the United States Embassy in Amman.

(b)(1)
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It appears likely that Fatah had been considering an operation against United States officials in Khartoum prior to the decision to attack the Saudi Arabian Embassy. For some time before the attack several Palestinians resident in Khartoum, and subsequently identified as contacts of Fatah representatives in Khartoum, had been spectators at sports events of the staff of the United States Embassy in Khartoum. Recalling these occasions, members of the Embassy staff have stated that these individuals appeared to be more interested

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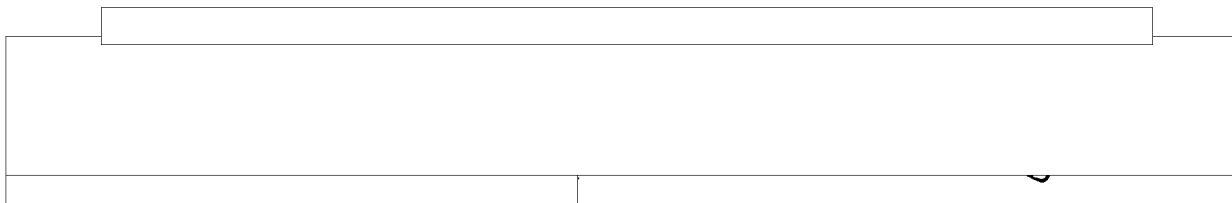
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in observing the United States officials present at these events than in the events themselves. These surveillants may have identified the various officers of the Embassy to the Fatah representatives in Khartoum who planned or participated in the murder of the United States Ambassador and his deputy.

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(b)(3)

The attack in Khartoum was planned to occur on a national holiday celebrating the first anniversary of the end of the Sudanese Civil War, and on the occasion of a state visit by Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie.

There is no specific information to explain the BSO decision to strike on the occasion of the Saudi Ambassador's reception, nor to explain why the terrorists selected Ambassador Noel or Mr. Moore as their victims. Some reasons may be deduced, however.

The Saudi Ambassador is the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Khartoum and his farewell reception for Mr. Moore (a customary event for departing senior diplomats), to which all the senior diplomats in Khartoum were invited, could be expected to bring together all those in the Khartoum diplomatic community whom the terrorists wished to capture. Since the occasion was only for the diplomatic corps, there were no Sudanese guests. The terrorists quite possibly saw this as an advantage. Their initial statement from the captured Embassy noted that the operation was not directed at the Sudanese. Past Saudi receptions for departing chiefs of mission were always stag and the lack of dependents at the reception could eliminate possible complications. The Saudi Embassy itself is well suited for withstanding a siege. It does not have common walls nor is it in close proximity to other buildings. It has a high outer wall and an unobstructed view in all directions from the upstairs balconies. Since the Fatah representation in Khartoum was in diplomatic and social contact with other Arab diplomats locally, an Arab installation offered them better access for casing purposes than other non-Arab installations where the targeted diplomats may have gathered. Finally,

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the terrorists also may have anticipated that the Sudanese security services would be heavily committed in protecting the visiting Ethiopian Emperor.

Later claims by fedayeen supporters in Beirut that the DCM, Mr. Moore, had been selected because he was a U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) employee and had worked against the fedayeen in Jordan appear to be attempts to rationalize his murder. Moore had never had any affiliation with the CIA nor had he served in Jordan, although another Department of State officer with a similar name had served in Amman in an administrative capacity. The DCM, however, had been accused in the Libyan and Egyptian press of being affiliated with the CIA and of being the architect of the resumption of diplomatic relations between the Sudan and the United States.

The decision to strike at the Saudi Arabian Embassy was made with the full knowledge and personal approval of Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman and Fatah leader Yasir Arafat.

[REDACTED]

(b)(1)
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[REDACTED] Initial information indicated that the main objective of the Khartoum operation was to secure the release of Abu Da'ud, who is being held by Jordan. Information acquired subsequently [REDACTED]

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

[REDACTED] reveals that the Fatah/BSO leaders did not expect their demands to be met by Jordan, Israel or the United States. [REDACTED] not only did the Fatah/BSO leadership and the terrorist team expect to kill their hostages, but that the primary objectives of the operation were to shock the world and to strike at the United States, because of its efforts to achieve a Middle East peace settlement which many Arabs believe would be inimical to Palestinian interests. Although it appeared that the final decision to kill the hostages was not made until after the U.S., Jordan and Israel had rejected the demands and after the terrorists had received a properly authenticated message from Arafat, the decision to murder the diplomats was in effect made with the inception of the operation.

(b)(1)
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(b)(1)
(b)(3)

Despite the above, it is believed that the BSO team had sufficient latitude to negotiate the release of the hostages if by some remote chance their demands were met.

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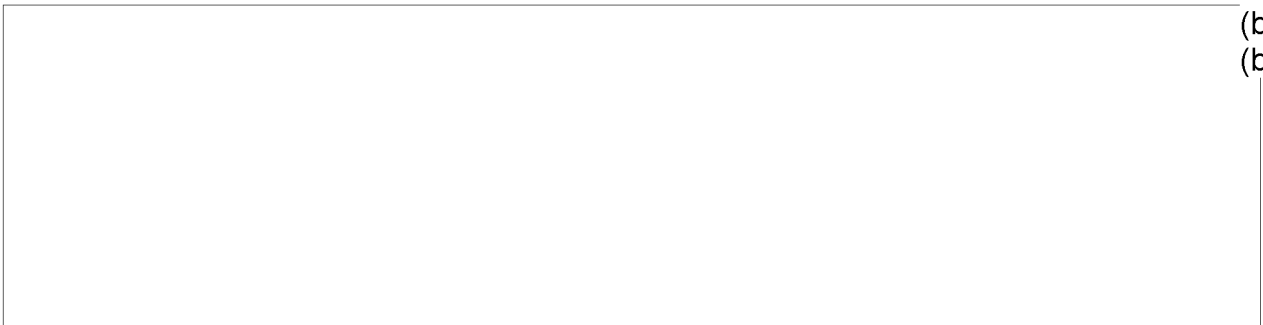
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Preparations for the Attack



The terrorists were met on their arrival by the local Fatah representation in Khartoum--Fawaz Yasin Abd al-Rahman, the senior Fatah representative; Riziq Al Qas, the second in command; and Karam Mahmoud Azzam. Al Qas, who subsequently became the eighth member of the attack group, had lived in the Sudan for over two years and was responsible for a daily program, "Palestine Corner," over local radio. His inclusion in the operation facilitated its success, since he spoke English and was familiar with the layout of the Saudi Embassy.



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~~Just four hours prior to the assault Fawaz and his family departed the Sudan for Libya.~~ [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Apparently as a result of his haste to depart Khartoum before the attack commenced, Fawaz left in his office a detailed eight-page plan of the operation, which was seized by Sudanese authorities when they raided the Fatah office. The plans were complete with a map and a detailed breakdown of each man's primary tasks upon initially entering the Saudi Embassy. Two principal members of the assault group were code-named Abu Ghassan and Abu Tariq. Abu Ghassan was instructed to distribute a written statement to the guests and select from a prepared list those diplomats to be held hostage. Abu Tariq was to secure the building from outside attack, take control of the assault group and release those diplomats not on the list. The specific instructions to the other five terrorists (presumably Al Qas was given his instructions orally by the departed Fatah leader), code-named Salih, Tariq, Gamal, Mahir and Khalid, related to securing the Embassy and being on guard against an attack from the outside. The discovery of the plan in the Khartoum Fatah office and the involvement of local Fatah representatives in the attack added to the already considerable evidence of the BSO relationship to Fatah.

Objectives of the Operation

The ostensible objectives of the Fatah/BSO operation in Khartoum, as reflected by the demands of the terrorists, were to obtain the release of Muhammad Awadh (Abu Da'ud) and his 16 followers imprisoned in Jordan; of other terrorists of various nationalities imprisoned in Jordan, Israel and West Germany; and of Sirhan Sirhan, the assassin of Senator Robert Kennedy, jailed in the United States. As stated in the Planning Section above. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the planners of the operation did not expect Jordan, Israel or the United States to accede to their demands, and that the three Western diplomats were doomed from the moment they were captured.

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[redacted] the main goals of (b)(1)
the terrorists were: (b)(3)

- a. To strike at the United States, which many Arabs believe is the force behind an effort to reach a Middle East peace settlement inimical to Palestinian interests.
- b. To reaffirm the credibility of terrorist threats in operations of this kind, a credibility which had been seriously weakened as a result of the failure of the Bangkok operation in December 1972.
- c. To prove to Libyan leader Col. Mu'ammur Qadhafi that Fatah/BSO can carry out effective terrorist operations, and thus justify renewed financial support. (Libya had severely curtailed such support in early January 1973 because of Qadhafi's view that Fatah/BSO was not carrying out terrorist operations efficiently.)
- d. To make clear to Arab governments that the Palestinian "revolution" in general, and the fedayeen terrorists in particular, would continue to maintain their independence and not allow themselves to be manipulated by individual Arab states.
- e. To protest the reconciliation of Arab states with Jordan and their possible inclination toward a peaceful Middle East settlement.

To achieve these goals, the terrorists seized the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Khartoum and took as hostages the U.S. Ambassador and his Deputy plus the Saudi Arabian Ambassador and the Jordanian and Belgian Charges d'Affaires. The terrorists intended also to capture the West German Ambassador, who was on their target list, but failed because he did not attend the reception. Upon realizing that they had not captured the West German Ambassador, the terrorists dropped their demands for release of terrorists from German jails. [redacted] (b)(1)
[redacted] the terrorists also had hoped to capture the Egyptian (b)(3)
and Ethiopian Ambassadors, as well. Neither attended the reception, however. While it is not definitely known why the (b)(1)
Ethiopian Ambassador was targeted, it is believed that the (b)(3)
Fatah/BSO support for Eritrean dissidents and the specific ties between the Eritrean Liberation Front and Fatah in Khartoum may have been a factor in the selection of the Ethiopian

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Ambassador as a hostage. The Egyptian Ambassador reportedly was on the list because of the recent visit of Egypt's national security advisor to the United States where it was believed he had held discussions with U.S. officials on a possible Middle East peace settlement.

The Attack

On the day of the attack, at least four and possibly five of the eight terrorists were driven by Karam, the third member of the local Fatah representation, in the Landrover owned by the Khartoum Fatah office to a point near the Saudi Arabian Embassy where they waited for the reception to end. Where and how the remaining terrorists gained entry to the Embassy is not known. Reports that three of the terrorists actually attended the reception do not appear to be true, since none of those who attended the reception can recall seeing the terrorists among the guests.

The terrorists were armed with four Polish-manufactured Kalashnikov-type automatic rifles, four pistols and eight hand grenades. The pistols and hand grenades were manufactured in such diverse countries as Egypt, Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, China, Belgium and the United States.

[REDACTED]

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

At about 1850 hours the Landrover pulled into the driveway of the Saudi Embassy as United States Ambassador Cleo A. Noel, Jr. was departing. The Landrover rammed and effectively blocked Noel's car. The terrorists leapt out firing their weapons, and slightly wounded the American Ambassador and the Belgian Charge, Guy Eid. In the confusion several guests, including the Dutch Charge and the Ambassador of the Soviet Union, escaped. Other guests, including the Japanese and Spanish Ambassadors, were captured but released when the terrorists determined that they were from "friendly" countries.

Having seized the Embassy and the hostages, the terrorists set about implementing their tasks. They demanded the release of Muhammad Awadh (Abu Da'ud), certain military prisoners implicated in earlier threats against the Jordanian Government and other imprisoned fedayeen. Other demands were for the

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release of Sirhan Sirhan from the United States and the release of the two women involved in the Sabena hijacking of May 1972, who are imprisoned in Israel. The terrorists threatened to kill the hostages if their demands were not met.

The Siege and the Negotiations

The terrorists initially were extremely confident. [redacted] (b)(1)

[redacted] (b)(3)

The terrorists' only means of two-way communication was by telephone, [redacted] (b)(1)

[redacted] (b)(3)

[redacted] They could receive broadcasts on radios they found in the Embassy, but had no transmitter. The terrorists used the phone only to speak with the Sudanese negotiators. The captured diplomats also used the phone but only under the supervision of the terrorists. [redacted] (b)(1)

[redacted] (b)(3)

Negotiations for the hostages' release were begun immediately after their capture. Heavily armed troops and police quickly surrounded the Embassy. The Sudanese Ministers of Interior and Health were the chief negotiators. Most of their contact with the terrorists was by telephone or through bull-horn exchanges between the terrorists in the Embassy and one of the negotiators outside. The Minister of Health had one two-hour meeting inside the Embassy with the terrorists, which appears to have been the only extended face-to-face exchange between the terrorists and the negotiators. The only other person who was able to enter the Embassy and converse with the terrorists was the Sudanese doctor who treated the wounds of Ambassador Noel and Mr. Eid and the injury to Mr. Moore.

The terrorists were offered safe passage out of the country in return for the hostages' freedom. The terrorists instead proposed that the Sudanese let them fly out of the Sudan

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with the hostages. One plan, [redacted] (b)(1)
 [redacted] was for the terrorists to fly to the Uni- (b)(3)
 ted States with their hostages, publicly murdering them and
 then surrendering to United States authorities. They considered (b)(1)
 this plan because it would afford them the maximum amount of (b)(3)
 publicity. Another plan, proposed by the Egyptian Foreign
 Ministry, was for the terrorists to fly to Cairo with their hos-
 tages; the BSO team rejected this proposal.

The terrorists extended their deadline three times. After
 they heard radio news broadcasts which led them to believe the
 U.S. Government had rejected their demands, and after [redacted] (b)(1)
 [redacted] they heard a radio message containing (b)(3)
 the code words indicating that it had originated from Fatah/BS (b)(1)
 headquarters, the fate of the three Western diplomats was seal (b)(3)

There have been various reports concerning the above radio
 message. [redacted]

[redacted] (b)(1)
 [redacted] (b)(3)

[redacted] the
 regular Voice of Palestine broadcast between 1730 and 1930
 hours on 2 March 1973 from Cairo contained the cryptic message,
 "Greetings. Your message has been received. Do what is re-
 quired quickly because the blood of the martyrs is a revolution."

The Sudanese made one final unsuccessful attempt to dis-
 suade the terrorists after the final deadline, asking them to
 wait until the arrival of high-ranking United States officials.

When the terrorists were ordered to kill the three diplo-
 mats, the victims were instructed to write their wills and last
 letters to their wives. A request by Ambassador Noel to call
 his wife was rejected. At 2100 hours local time on 2 March
 1973, the three Western diplomats were taken into the basement
 of the Saudi Embassy and machine-gunned to death.

The two Americans were key targets of the terrorists, as
 previously noted, and their murder appears to have been planned

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from the beginning. The Belgian Charge was killed, [redacted]

[redacted] in retaliation for the BSO Sabena hijacking of May 1972 in which two BSO members and two terrorists were killed; [redacted]

(b)(1)

(b)(3)

The life of the Jordanian Charge may have been spared because of his Palestinian origin and a family relationship with the widow of a senior Fatah official. There appears to have been no intention to harm the Saudi Ambassador or his family. The Ambassador's children were released 19 hours after the seizure. His wife was allowed to stay and both had the run of the Embassy. [redacted]

(b)(1)

(b)(3)

(b)(1)

(b)(3)

Despite murdering the three hostages the BSO team still believed that they would be allowed to leave the Sudan freely, and they demanded that they be flown out of the Sudan with the remaining hostages. The Sudanese refused and demanded that the terrorists surrender and release the remaining hostages unharmed. With water, electricity and the telephone cut off, the terrorists became less and less confident that they would escape.

The key objectives of the operation having been achieved with the murder of the Western diplomats, the Fatah leadership apparently became concerned about the possibility of a Sudanese assault on the Saudi Embassy with the risk of death or injury to the Saudi Ambassador. Arafat did not want to further offend King Faysal and Saudi Arabia and possibly jeopardize whatever aid he believed would be forthcoming to Fatah and other Palestinian organizations. [redacted]

[redacted] Arafat then sent a telegram (b)(1)

ordering the surrender of (b)(3)

the terrorists and the release of the hostages. [redacted]

[redacted] After receiving further assurances from Sudanese authorities that they would receive a fair trial, the eight terrorists surrendered at about 0700 hours on 4 March, nearly 60 hours after the operation had begun. [redacted]

(b)(1)

(b)(3)

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Conclusions

The Khartoum operation again proved the capability of the BSO to strike at a place and time of its own choosing.

Fedayeen terrorists and guerrillas have conducted operations against Jordanian officials and installations since September 1971, but the Khartoum attack showed a willingness to strike at an embassy of a country which had provided financial support to Fatah and do it in an Arab country with a government friendly to Fatah.

As in most BSO operations outside Israel, the attack took place in a country which hosted Fatah and PLO representatives. In this instance, however, for the first time a local Fatah office was openly involved in the planning and execution of an attack.

As in Bangkok, which also was considered an unlikely place for an Arab terrorist operation, the attack in Khartoum caught its victims completely by surprise and occurred on a day of national celebration.

The Khartoum murder of the three hostages re-established the credibility of BSO threats to kill hostages. The murders, furthermore, were the first instances in which a BSO threat to kill hostages in cold blood was carried out without some outside influence such as that which occurred at Munich when West German authorities attempted to secure the release of Israeli hostages by shooting the BSO terrorist team.

Although the slaughter of the three hostages was repugnant to many Arabs, the attack succeeded in boosting the morale of some supporters of the Palestinian movement by removing the stigma of recent failures, most notably at Bangkok, and by showing the world in general and the Arab population in particular that fedayeen terrorists could strike at United States interests with impunity. There have since been reports from reliable sources that United States officials and installations are now primary targets of the fedayeen terrorists.

These results were not gained without some costs. The direct and open involvement of the Fatah representatives in Khartoum in the operation has resulted in the loss of the aura

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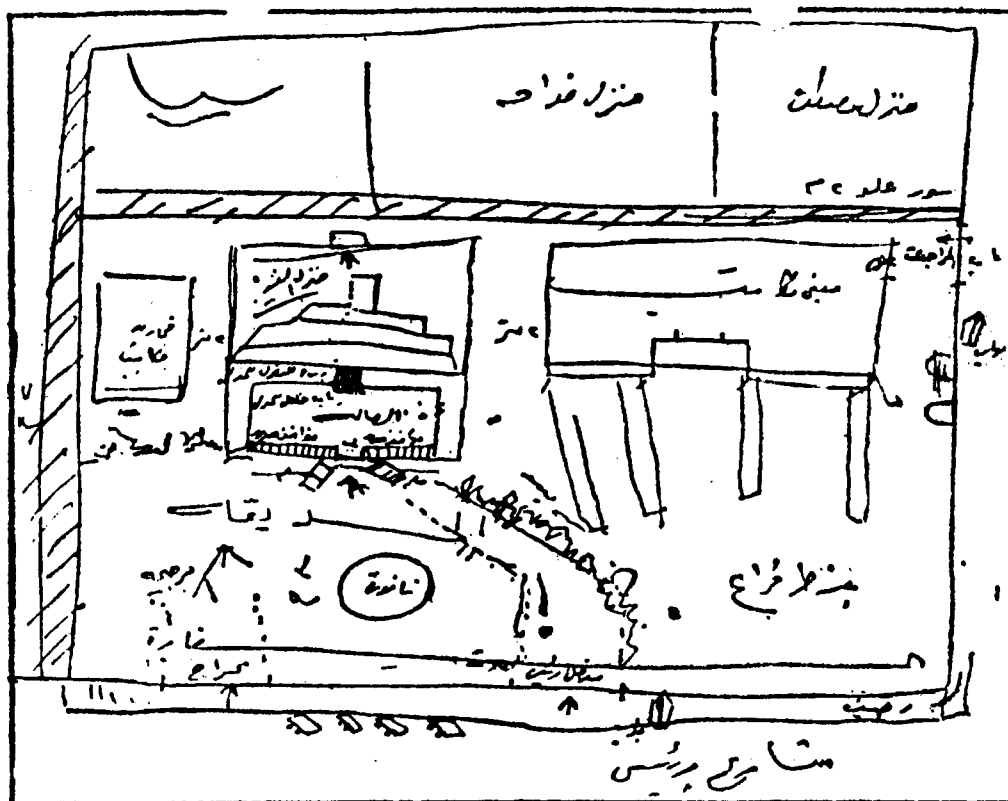
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of "moderation" which Fatah leaders had sought to project to the world. The incident further demonstrated that Fatah and the BSO are one and the same.

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Crude sketch plan of Saudi Arabian embassy, drawn for guidance of terrorist squad by Al Fatah representative in Khartoum, Fawaz Yassin Abdel Rahman. Sudanese police found it when they raided his office. Below, transliteration of the plan. 1, Stores block is actually about same size as main building; 2, pyramid effect crudely represents four-storey embassy; 3, rough indication of office block on pillars.

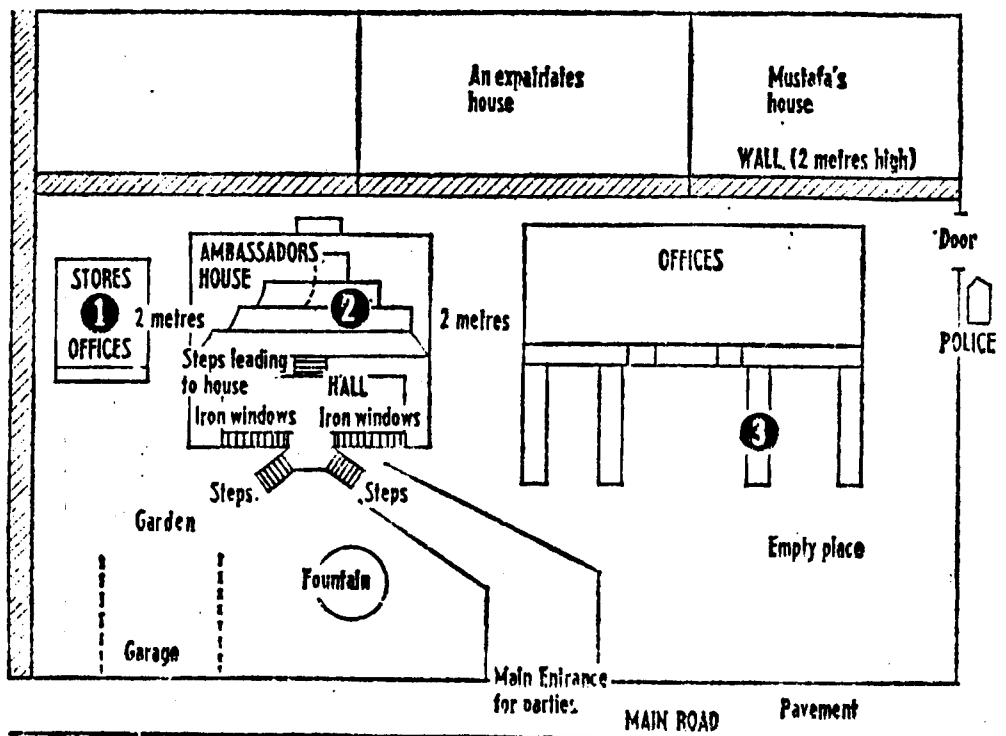


Figure 1: Plan of the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Khartoum, Prepared by the Local Fatah Representative.

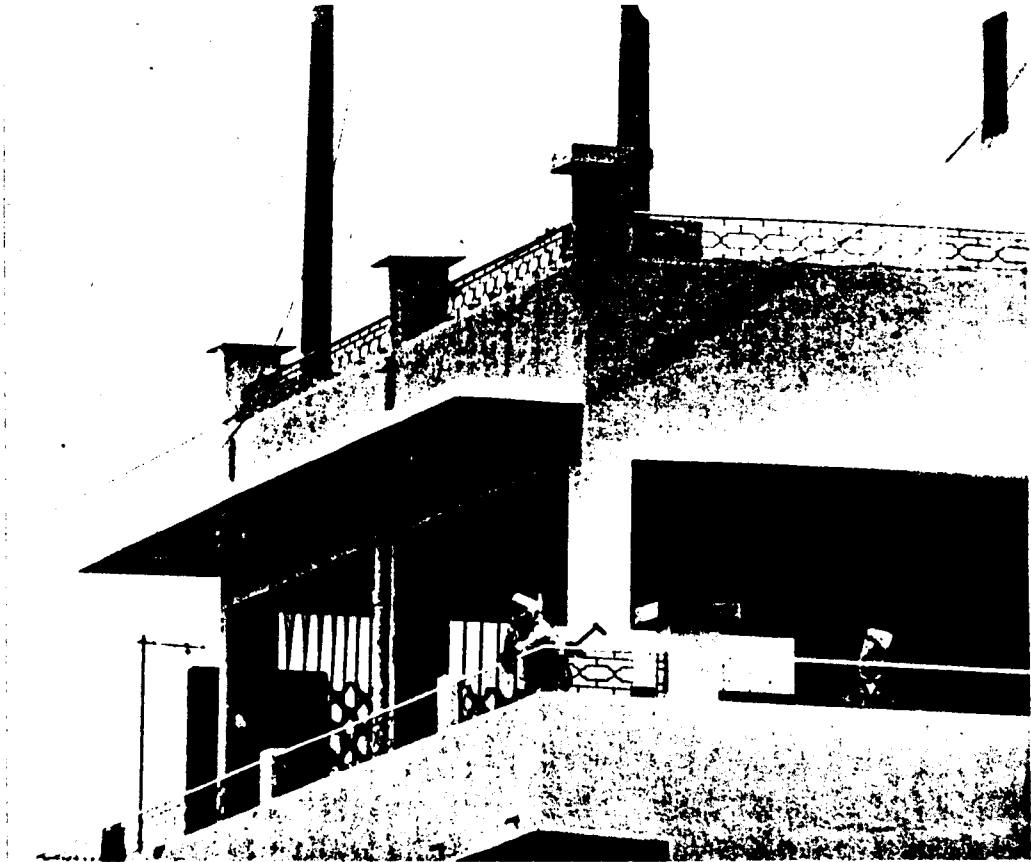


Figure 2: Fatah Terrorists in the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Khartoum.

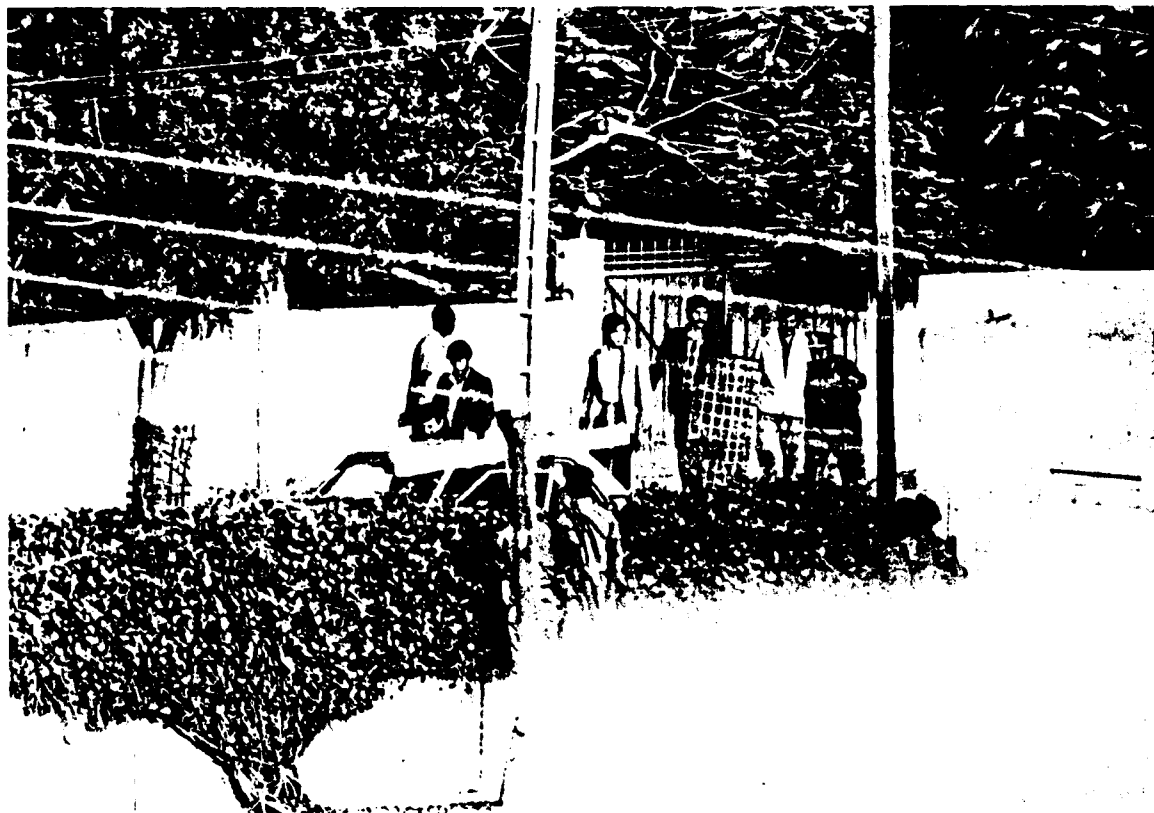


Figure 3: Surrender of the Fatah/BSO Terrorist Team to Sudanese Authorities.

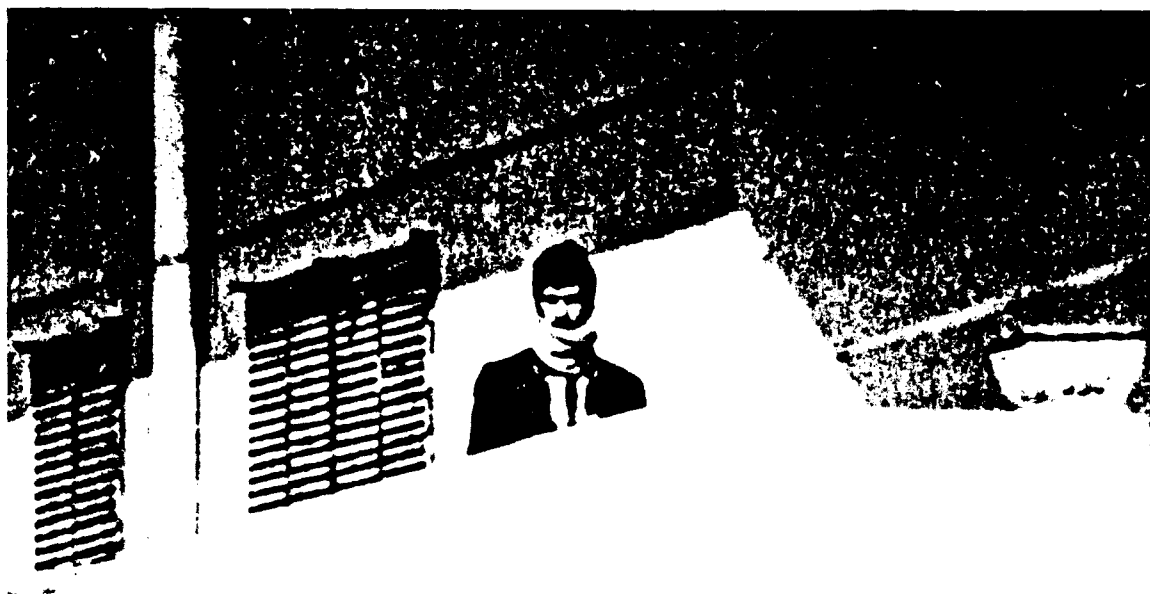


Figure 4: One of the Khartoum Terrorists

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Figure 5: Photograph of Palestinian contacts of Fawaz Yassein Al-Rahman found in The Roxy Hotel in Khartoum. Al-Rahman, Rizig El Qas and Karam Mahmoud Azzam are identified, as are two of the persons suspected of having surveilled United States Embassy personnel.

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