

MR. BARCLAY

THE LIBYAN EMBASSY INCIDENT

In the absence of Mr. Redwood I would like to raise directly with you some issues on the domestic front arising from the shooting at the Libyan 'People's Bureau'.

The four leaders of the take-over of the Bureau two months ago were apparently admitted to this country as students. Does the failure to detect that they may have had at the time of their admission an ulterior purpose in coming here reflect adversely on our immigration control procedures for people coming from Libya (and other countries such as Iran or Syria)?

There are several thousand students from Libya and other Middle East countries in the UK. Do we have adequate control and information on which to base a fundamental re-assessment of their status should that be desirable? Should we not review our whole attitude towards the entry of such students?

There are other national groups who could bring their own political conflicts into the UK, particularly the Iranians. Both those who represent the Khomeini regime and some of its opponents in left-wing Mujahadeen groups are potentially violent. Some of the latter are also developing links with extremist British organisations. It is also clear from the Lebanon conflict that the Arab terrorists of the 1980s are if anything more fanatically violent than groups like Black September a decade ago. The potentially greater threat to a greater number of lives in Britain from these sources should be taken fully into account in any subsequent policy review.

Does the Home Office devote enough resources to these questions? There is one Assistant Secretary with responsibility for policy on terrorism and public order, which has latterly included the miners' strike and the peace movement. His staff is relatively small. There is surely a case for augmenting these slender resources, or for splitting F4 division of the Home Office Police Department into two parts, with one AS responsible for public order matters and another for terrorism.

/ The media



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The media and politicians may ask whether there was any failure of intelligence or communications prior to the shooting given that indications were coming out of Libya that something extraordinary was afoot. There is I think a distinction to be made between lack of communications between departments in the twelve hours before the shooting and a longer term failure of intelligence. On the latter the police warnings following incidents presumably had some basis in intelligence reports. But the point is that in view of the relatively low public esteem in which some of our intelligence and security services are currently held, there could be a political outcry if it is felt that they failed to read the signs correctly.

These points are ones which may only be answered when the incident is resolved, but I felt they were of sufficient importance to feed into your thoughts at this stage.



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19 April 1984

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