

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

Mr. Matt Schroeder
Federation of American Scientists
1717 K Street NW #209
Washington, DC 20036

JAN 31 2007

Reference: F-2007-00010

Dear Mr. Schroeder:

This is a final response to your 15 September 2006 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for records on "a foiled attempt by Arab terrorists to shoot down an Israeli El Al plane near Rome's Fiumicino airport." We processed your request in accordance with the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552, as amended, and the CIA Information Act, 50 U.S.C. § 431, as amended. Our processing included a search for records as described in our 24 October 2006 acceptance letter existing through the date of that letter.

We completed a thorough search for records responsive to your request and located material that we determined is properly classified and must be denied in its entirety on the basis of FOIA exemptions (b)(1) and (b)(3). An explanation of these exemptions is enclosed.

You have the right to appeal this decision by addressing your appeal to the Agency Release Panel within 45 days from the date of this letter, in my care. Should you choose to do this, please explain the basis of your appeal.

In addition, a search of our database of previously released records located the enclosed four documents, consisting of 21 pages, concerning the subject of your request. Because copying costs were minimal, there is no charge in this instance.

We appreciate your patience while we processed your request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Koch".

Scott Koch

Information and Privacy Coordinator

Enclosures

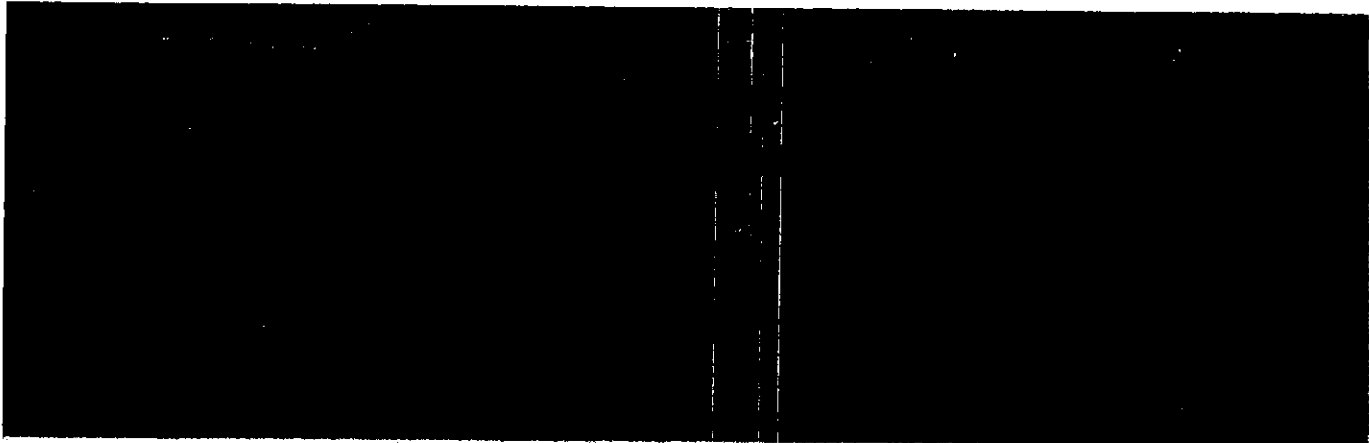


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REF/CPAS - WIDC 85-301C



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CPAS NIDC 85-301C
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28 December 1985

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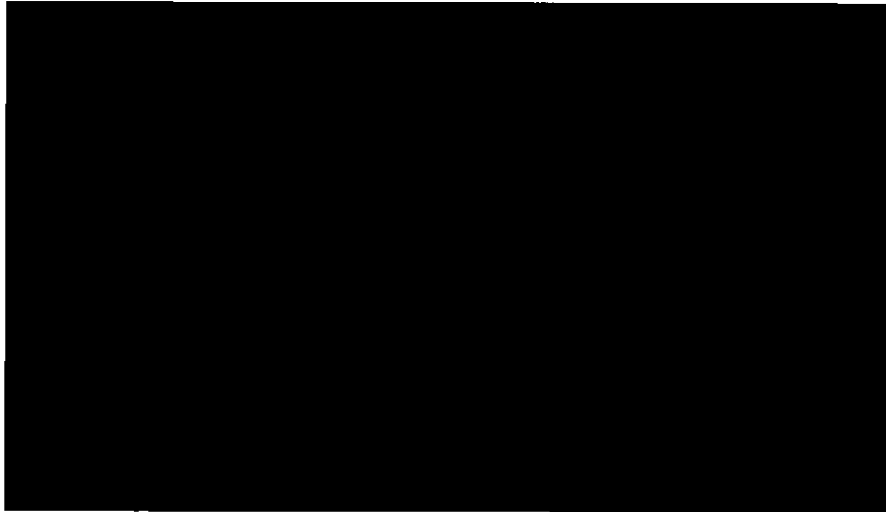
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Contents



Special Analysis

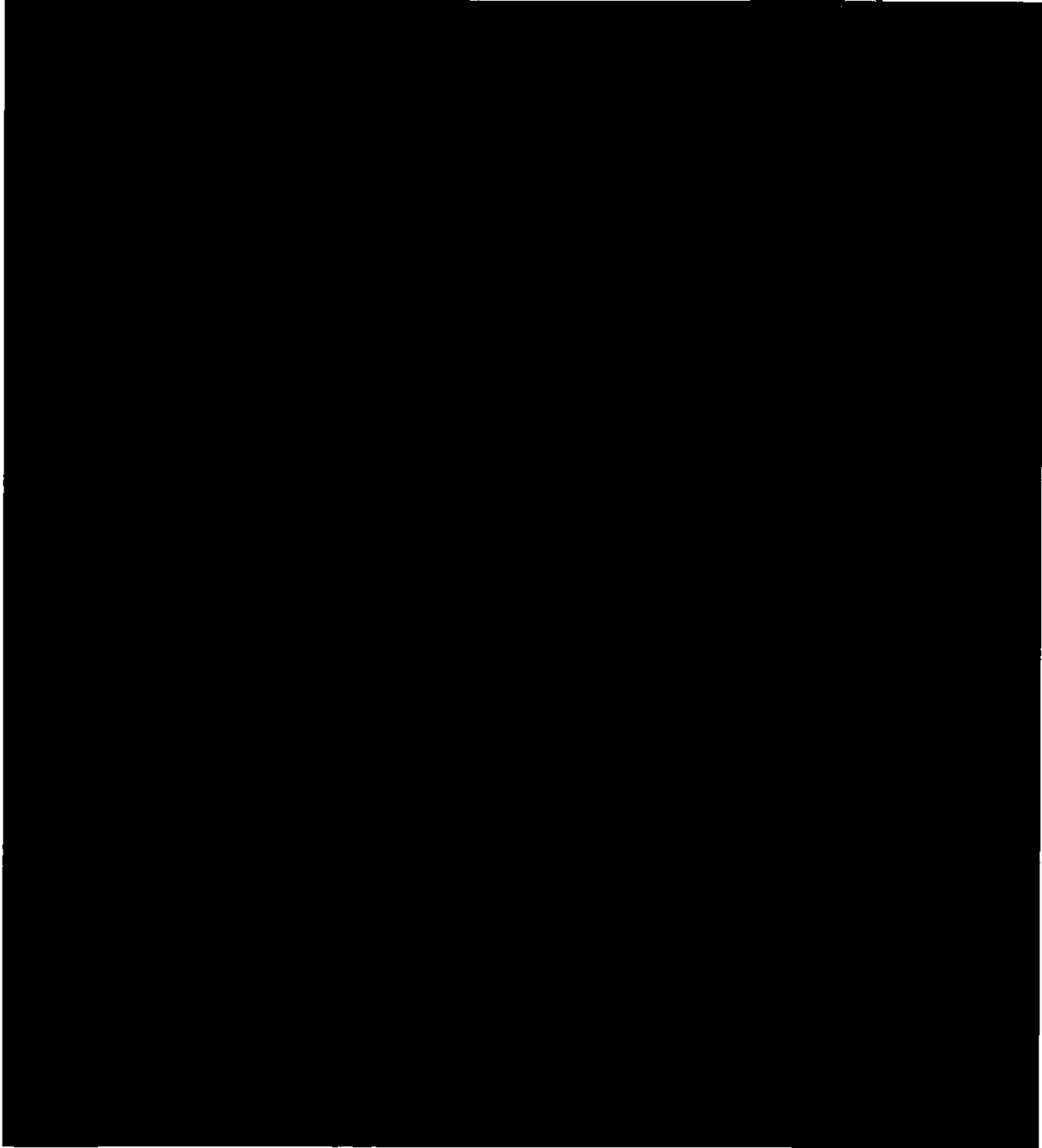
Western Europe: The El Al Attacks 6

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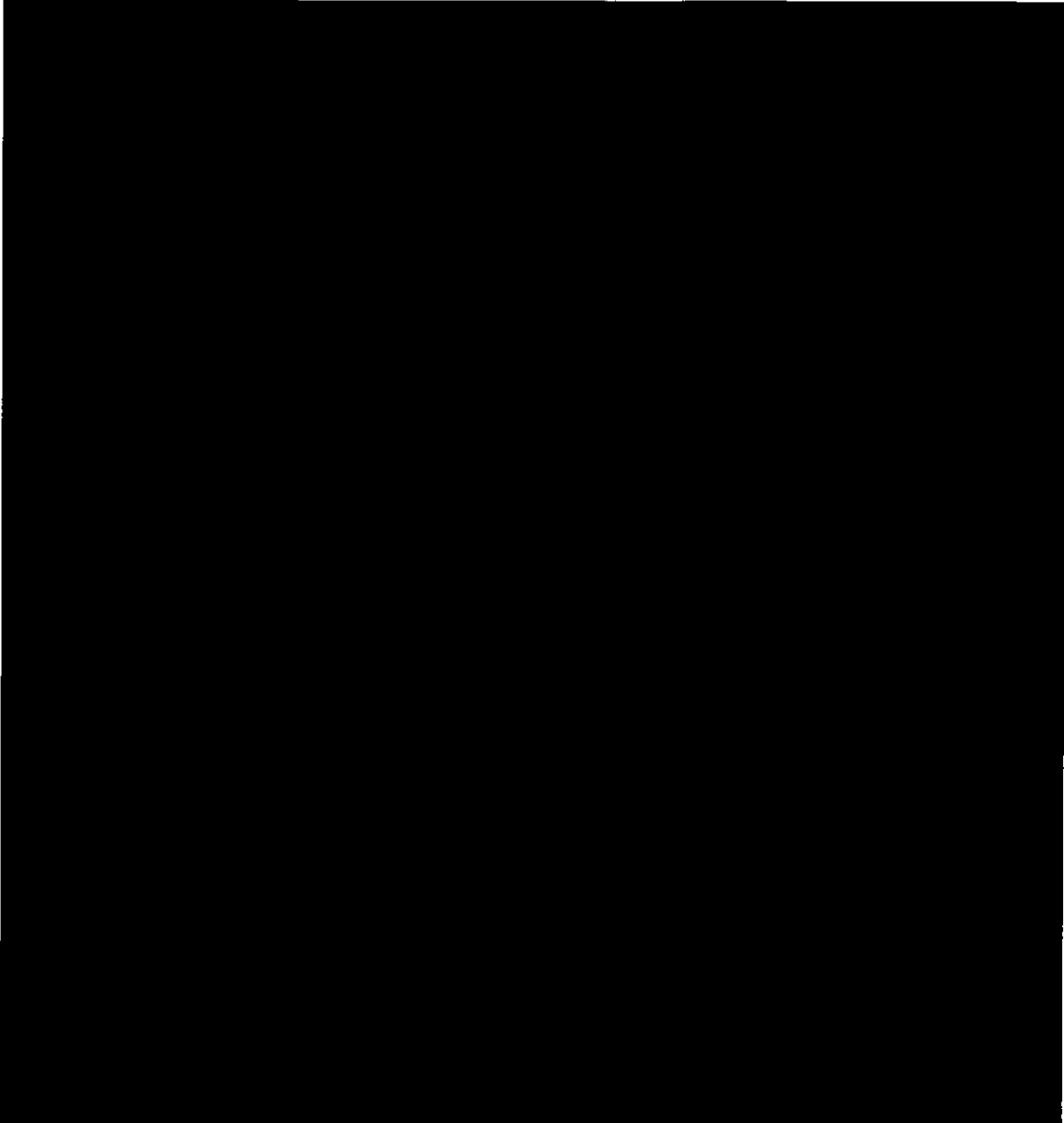


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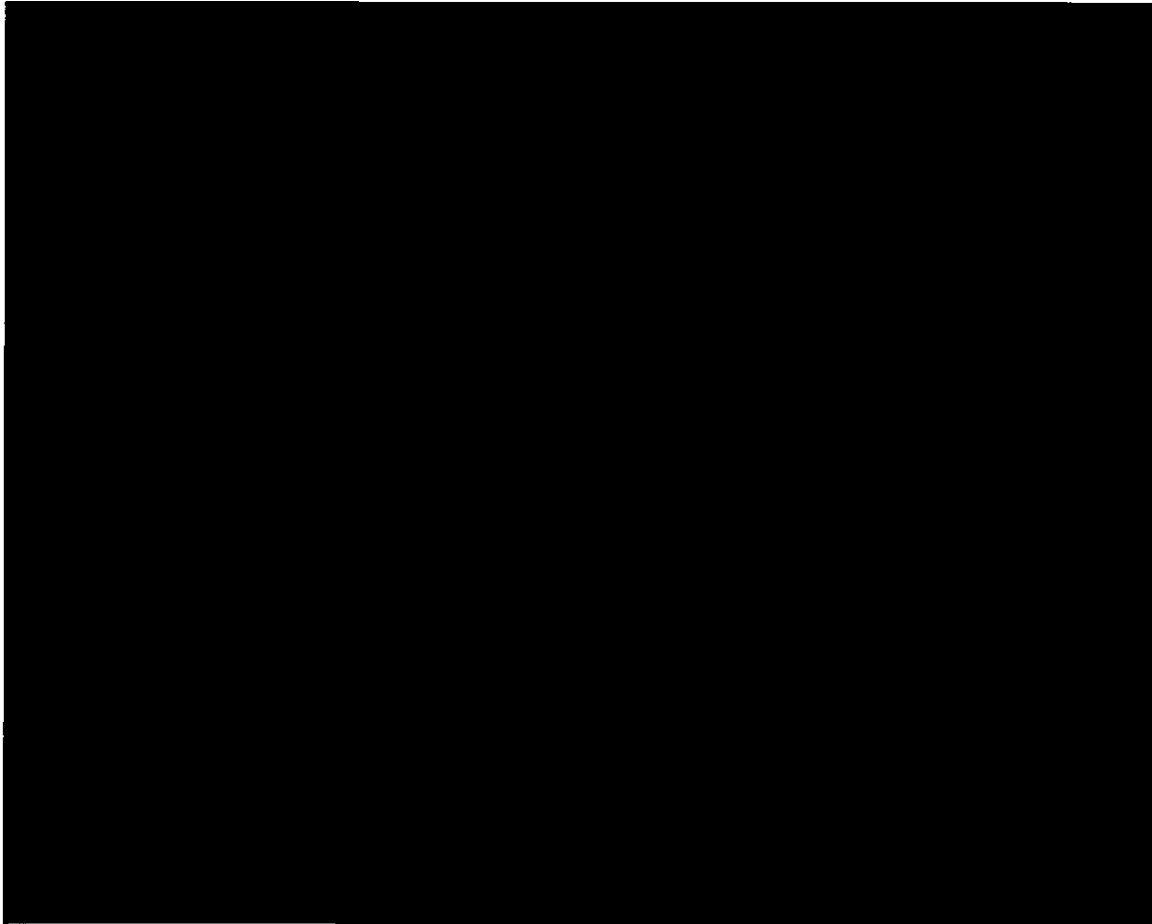
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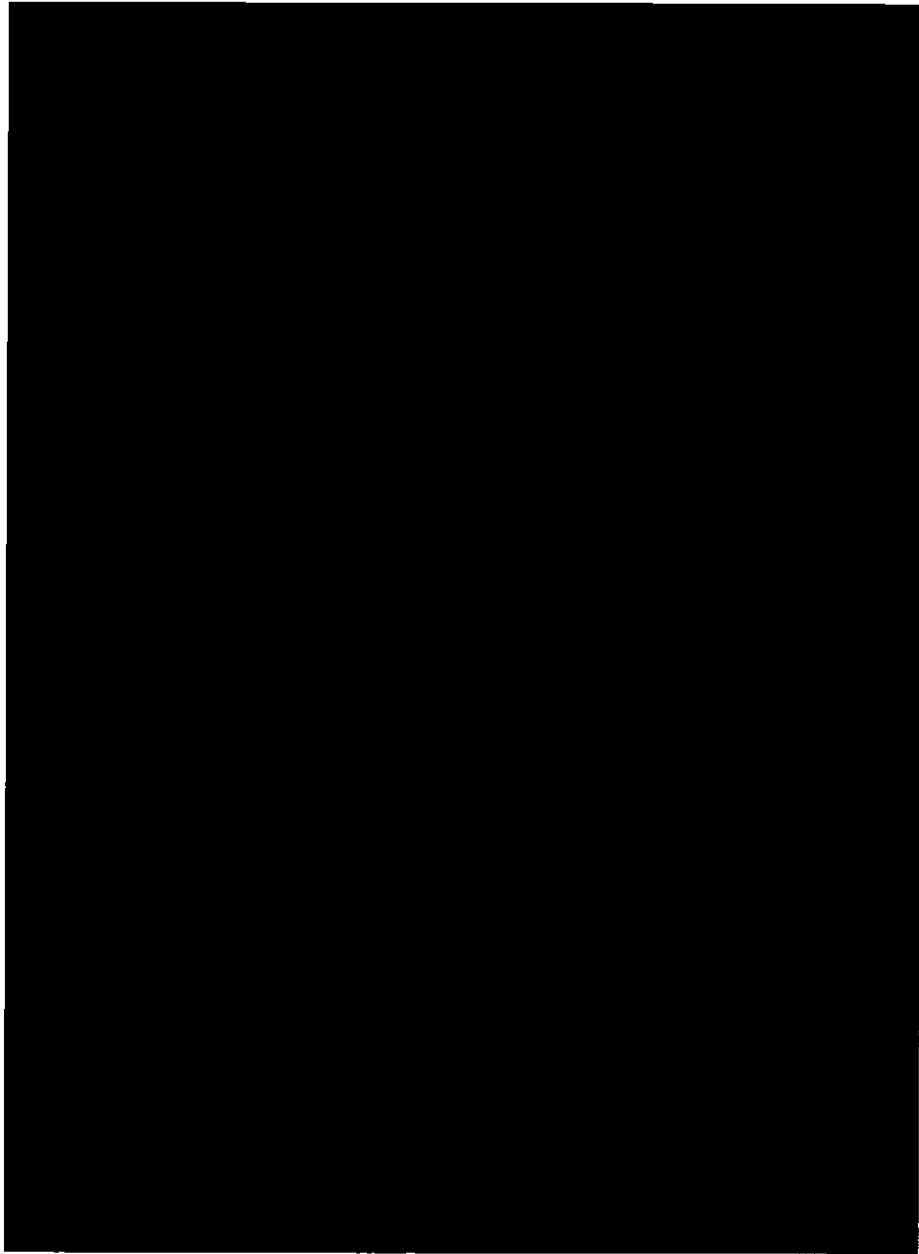


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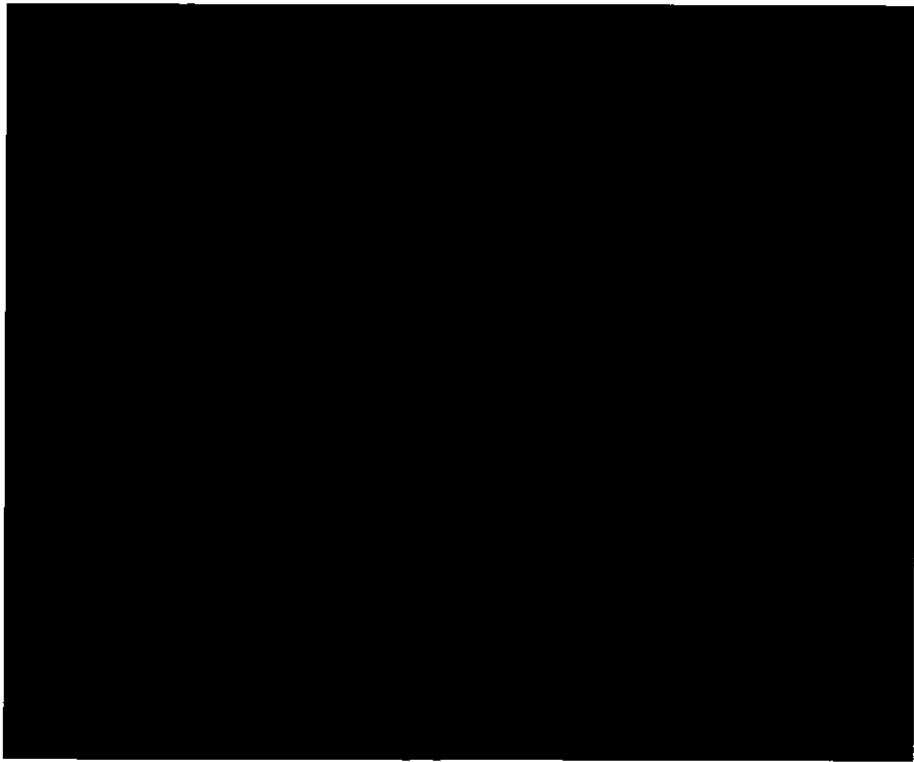
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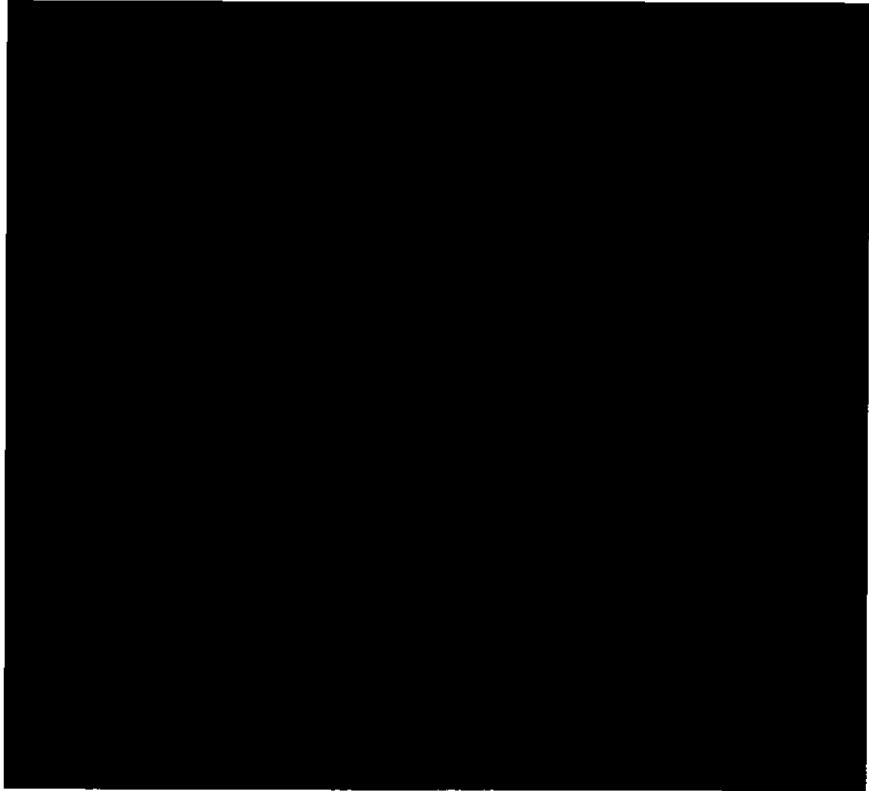
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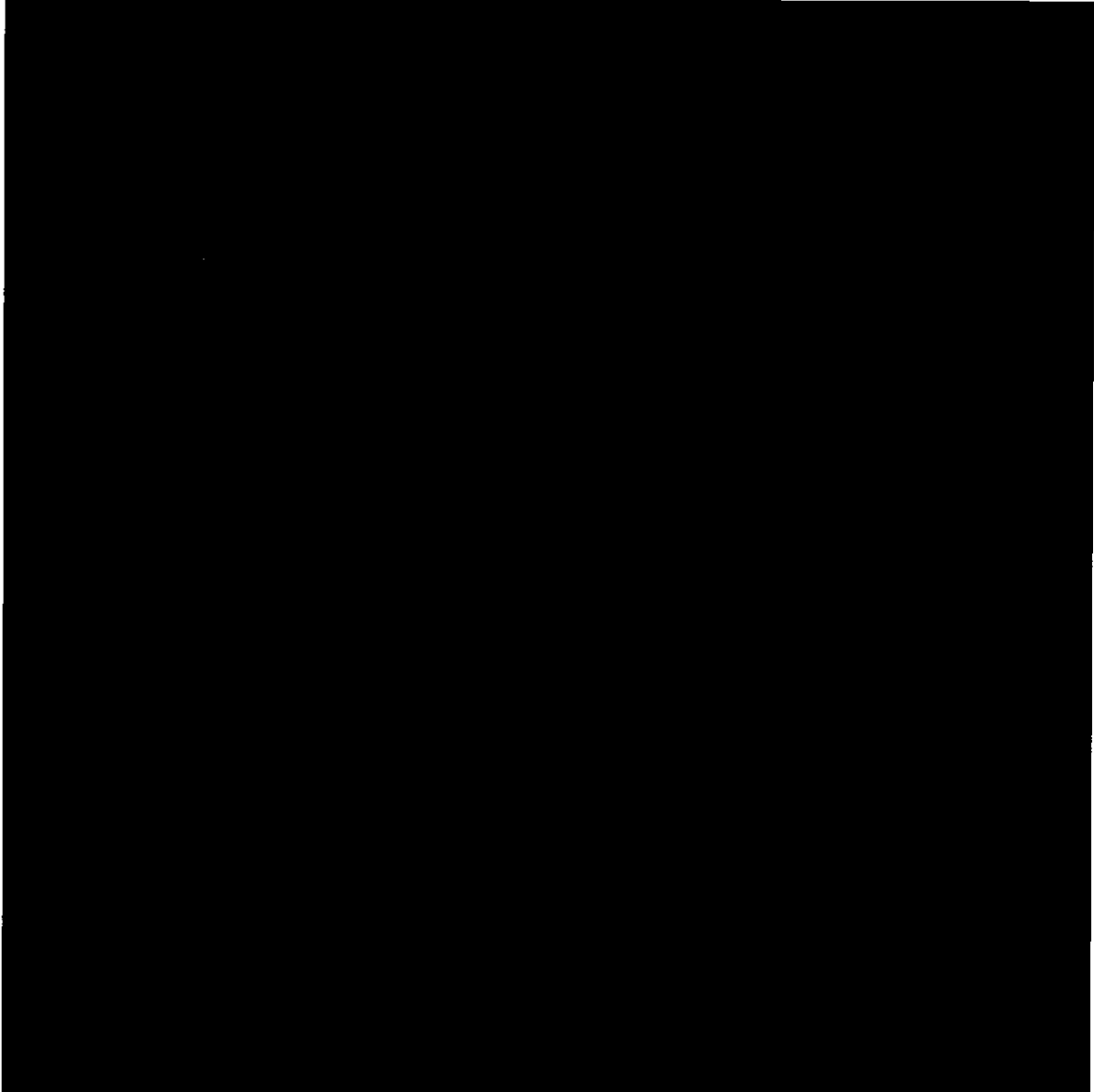


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~~Top Secret~~**Special Analysis****WESTERN EUROPE: The El Al Attacks**

The armed attacks at the El Al counters in the Vienna and Rome airports closely resemble previous Abu Nidal attacks, but the possibility that a PLO group may have been responsible cannot be discounted. Interrogations of surviving gunmen should yield additional information that will help establish the gunmen's group affiliation. [REDACTED]

Was It Abu Nidal ...

The style of the coordinated attacks matches previous Abu Nidal incidents. So far this year, the Syrian-sponsored Abu Nidal group has conducted six grenade attacks in Western Europe:

- 16 September: Cafe de Paris, Rome.
- 3 September: Glyfada Hotel, Athens.
- 1 July: Offices of British Air and Alia, Madrid.
- 21 March: Almost simultaneous attacks against Alia offices in Athens, Nicosia, and Rome. [REDACTED]

Abu Nidal is known to retaliate against those governments that imprison its members. Both Italy and Austria are now holding three group members each. [REDACTED]

Among its approximately 15 attacks in Western Europe this year, however, the Abu Nidal group has not attacked any Israeli targets. Although a Madrid radio station today received a claim of responsibility for the attacks on behalf of Abu Nidal, the caller did not use one of the group's several cover names or include justification for the attack—both standard Abu Nidal procedures. [REDACTED]

... Or the PLO

A member group of the Palestine Liberation Organization might have conducted the attacks to embarrass PLO Chairman Arafat and to demonstrate its operational capabilities in the aftermath of Arafat's recent Cairo Declaration. Fatah Force 17 and Arafat deputy Salah Khalaf's PLO United Security Organization have the infrastructure in Western Europe to carry out attacks such as those conducted today. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

It is highly unlikely that Arafat would condone an attack in Italy that would jeopardize relations already strained by the Achille Lauro hijacking. An anti-Arafat PLO group backed by Syria is a third possibility. Several PLO leaders have long felt that Arafat's diplomatic efforts in seeking a Middle East peace are potentially detrimental to the Palestinian cause. The attacks, therefore, would demonstrate the group's continued dedication to the armed struggle against Israel as opposed to Arafat's emphasis on diplomacy. [REDACTED]

Possible Government Reactions

Tel Aviv views the attacks as part of its ongoing conflict with Damascus. Israel probably will use the attacks as a pretext for striking at PLO bases in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, which are within the envelope of Syrian air defense missiles that Israel would have to destroy first. An attack on Syrian missiles in Lebanon probably would spill over into Syria and involve Syrian SA-2s along the Lebanese border. [REDACTED]

Italian Prime Minister Craxi, a Socialist, and Foreign Minister Andreotti, the ranking Christian Democrat in the governing coalition, will condemn the attack, but they will insist that Rome must wait for the results of the investigation before assigning blame. Both Craxi and Andreotti are sympathetic toward the PLO, and evidence of a PLO role would be damaging to them at home. [REDACTED]

Craxi and Andreotti probably already have sought private assurances from Arafat that the PLO was not involved. Craxi in particular is likely to try to avoid reigniting the criticism of the government's handling of the incident of the Achille Lauro hijacking by insisting that judicial process must be allowed to take its course. He is also likely to insist that Rome will not release the hijackers of Achille Lauro or any other imprisoned terrorist to avoid attacks in the future. [REDACTED]

Austrian Chancellor Sinowatz will condemn the attacks strongly, and all Austrian political parties are likely to stress their determination that the airport attack should not become a partisan issue during the campaign to elect a new president in May. Austrian public statements are likely to include reminders of Vienna's longstanding interest in a Middle East settlement that takes account of Palestinian interests. [REDACTED]

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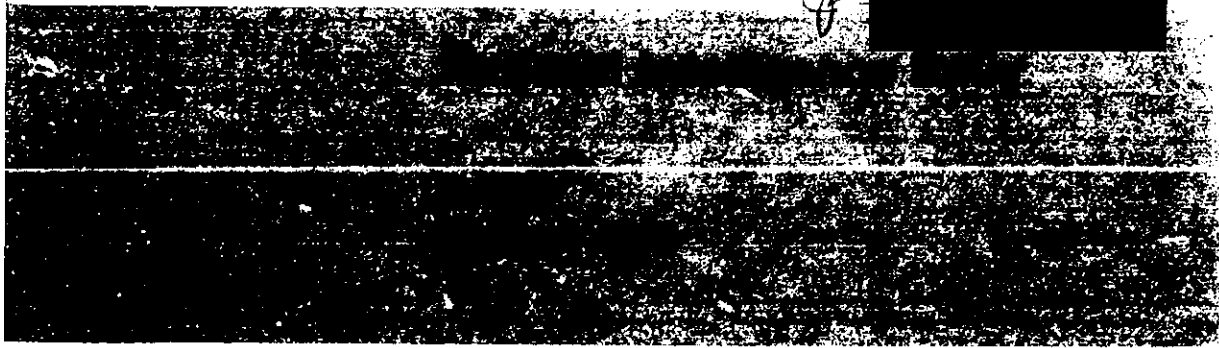
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13 June 1986

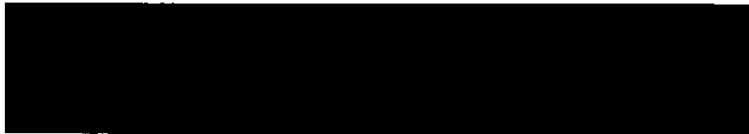
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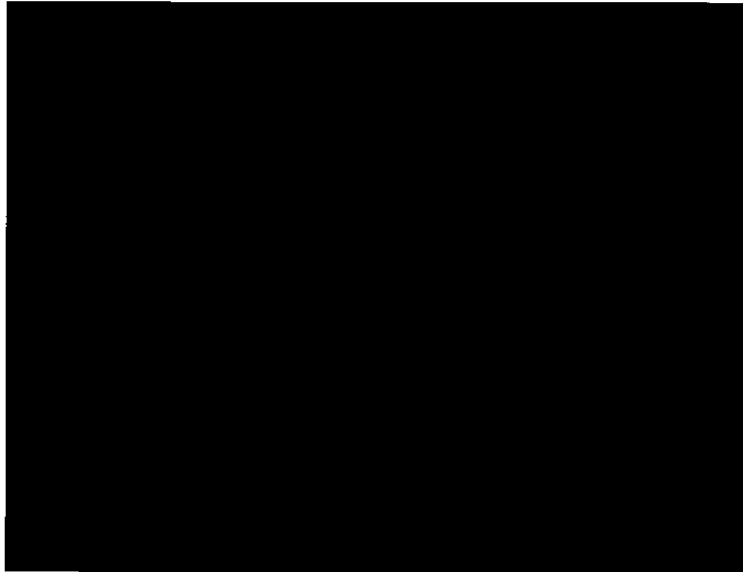
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Contents



Libya: Arms Support for Abu Nidal 4



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TCS 2837/86
13 June 1986

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[REDACTED]

LIBYA:

Arms Support for Abu Nidal

Markings on six Bulgarian handgrenades captured from Libyan terrorists in Turkey in April closely match those on grenades used in four recent attacks attributed to the Abu Nidal terrorist group. [REDACTED]

Four Libyans were arrested by Turkish authorities on 18 April as they approached a US officers club in Ankara carrying handgrenades acquired from the local Libyan People's Bureau. Analysis of markings on the grenades indicates that they were made in Bulgaria in 1980. They bear the same factory and lot numbers as [REDACTED] markings [REDACTED] as other 1980-vintage Bulgarian grenades used by suspected Abu Nidal terrorists in attacks last year on the Cafe de Paris in Rome, at the Rome and Vienna airports, and in Malta during the EgyptAir hijacking. [REDACTED]

Comment: The similarities between the grenades seized in 1985 and those captured in Turkey corroborate previous reporting that Tripoli provides operational support for the Abu Nidal group and uses its diplomatic installations to pass weapons to terrorists. Austrian authorities had determined that the Vienna airport terrorists used passports confiscated by Libya from Tunisian workers, and some of the terrorists arrested after the Rome and Vienna airport attacks said they belonged to the Abu Nidal group. [REDACTED]

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CIA/CPAS INID 85-301JX

National Intelligence Daily

Saturday
28 December 1985

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CPAS NID 85-301JX
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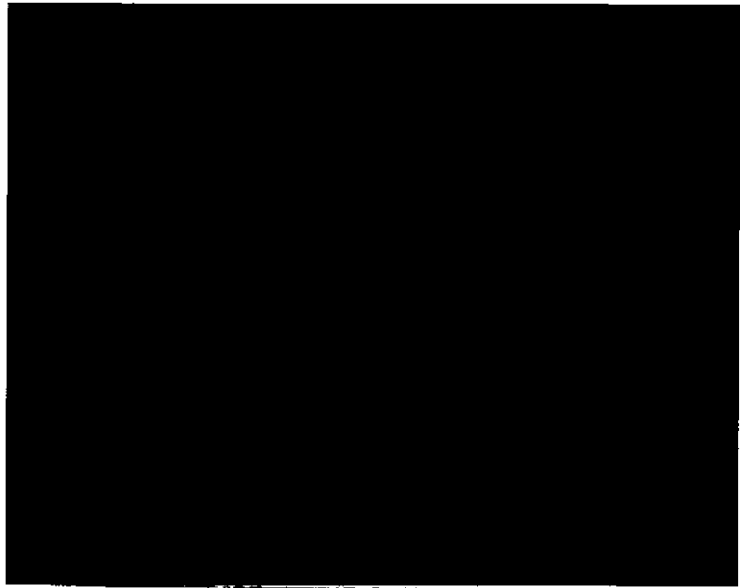
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Contents



Western Europe: The El Al Attacks 9



~~Top Secret~~
TCS 3001/85
28 December 1985

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Special Analysis

WESTERN EUROPE: The EI AI Attacks

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Abu Nidal is known to retaliate against those governments that imprison its members. Both Italy and Austria are now holding three group members each. Senior officials of the Abu Nidal group last week held discussions with Austrian officials about the early release of its prisoners.

Among its approximately 15 attacks in Western Europe this year, however, the Abu Nidal group has not attacked any Israeli targets. Although a Madrid radio station today received a claim of responsibility for the attacks on behalf of Abu Nidal, the caller did not use one of the group's several cover names or include justification for the attack—both standard Abu Nidal procedures.

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28 December 1985

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Terrorism Review

June 1986

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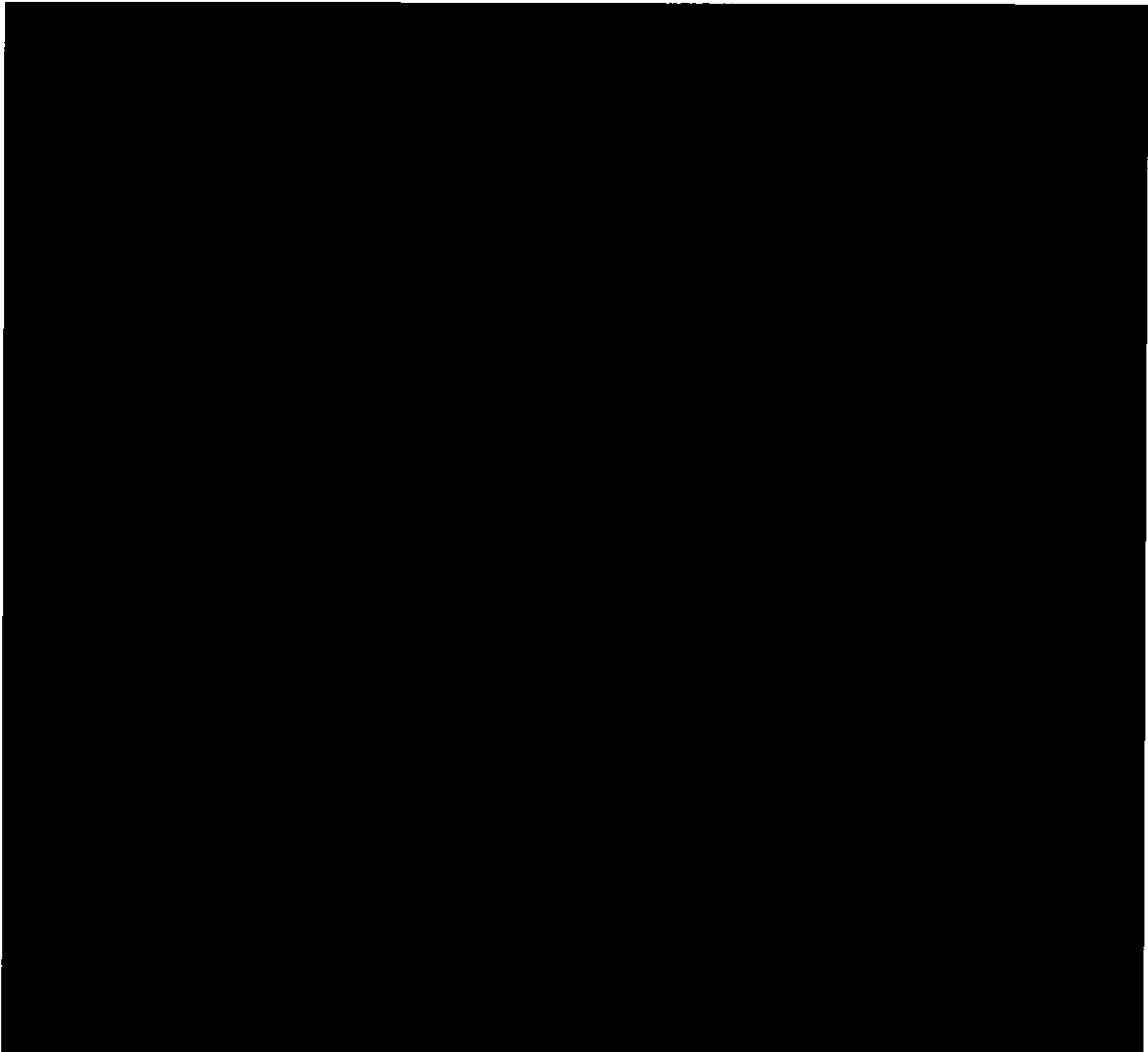




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Italy

Arrest Warrants Issued in Rome Airport Attack

A Rome magistrate issued arrest warrants in May for 15 individuals—including Palestinian radical Abu Nidal. The warrants charged the defendants with participating in an "armed band" and were issued for last December's attack on Rome's Da Vinci Airport and other incidents in Italy reaching back to 1982. Press reports indicate that only three of the 15 are at large; the rest are in custody in Italy. Because it has so many terrorist suspects in jail, Italy remains vulnerable to retaliatory attacks. [REDACTED]

