

Nixon Facing Great Dangers



Jack Anderson

PRESIDENT NIXON'S stubborn determination to visit the Middle East, in the opinion of experts, has placed him in the greatest physical danger of his White House experience.

He ignored secret, intelligence warnings that the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, an Arab terrorist ring, might attempt to assassinate him. They are believed to be equipped with shoulder-fired, heat-seeking Soviet missiles, which could knock down the presidential plane or blow up his ground transportation.

The greatest security precautions in history have been taken, therefore, to protect the President as he tours the world's most volatile hotspot.

★ ★ ★

MOST OF THE Secret Service protective force has been airlifted to the Middle East to provide bodyguards for Mr. Nixon and to coordinate the security preparations of the host nations.

Intelligence teams departed a week ahead of the President and fanned out to every city on his itinerary. Secret Service chief Stuart Knight himself flew to Middle East to direct operations.

In case of an attack upon the President, a special medical team has been rushed to the Mediterranean and is now standing by on an aircraft carrier.

The five-man team is led by Capt. William J. Fouty, Chief of Surgery at the Bethesda Naval Hospital, and Dr. Myer Ro-

senthal, head of the hospital's intensive care unit. Ready to assist them are three crack Navy corpsmen.

The Secret Service considered the President's train trip from Cairo to Alexandria as the most dangerous time. The vulnerability of the train threw the security experts into a near panic. The Egyptians, therefore, stationed security police at every bend in the track along the entire route.

However, intelligence reports suggest that the terrorists, because of their good relations with Egypt and Syria, wouldn't want to embarrass them with an incident. They are more likely to attempt an assassination in Israel or Jordan.

The intelligence reports warn, indeed, that the terrorists will hardly be able to resist attempting a spectacular stunt while the President is in Israel.

White House sources say the President insisted on making the trip, despite the risk, because he is determined to carry out his diplomatic objectives in the Middle East. He told visitors that the danger wouldn't deter him, recalling his experience with a mob that besieged his vice presidential limousine in Venezuela in 1958.

Perhaps he also remembered that he received a hero's welcome after his return from Venezuela. Some insiders wonder whether he deliberately might now be courting danger in the Middle East to win public sympathy on the eve of the impeachment hearings.