

Egypt, PLO Crack Down On Terrorists

A double-pronged terrorist cleanup is currently underway inside Egypt and the Palestine Liberation Organization. It could presage not only a clampdown on international terrorism, but also strong efforts to stabilize the southern Lebanon situation, one of the major stumbling blocks to further Mideast peace negotiations.

Egyptian efforts to weed out terrorists have reached international proportions. Last week, the Egyptian Prosecutor General announced that "a band of alleged terrorists was uncovered which may have links to the Red Brigades (the kidnapers of former Italian Premier Aldo Moro — ed.) and an extremist Iraq-based Palestinian group suspected of killing two Palestinian moderates."

According to the April 25 *Washington Post*, the "Palestinian members of the gang belong to an extremist splinter group headed by a man known as Abu Nidal." Egyptian authorities claim that this group was responsible for the January murder of Said Hammami, the London-based representative of the PLO and the killing of Youssef Sebai, the prominent Egyptian journalist in Cyprus last February.

PLO leader Yasser Arafat is simultaneously involved in some housecleaning of his own, aimed at exerting his firm leadership in Al Fatah, the principal resistance faction within the PLO. Arafat has forced a showdown within the Fatah Executive Council in order to legitimize his moderate position, and simultaneously offer the Israeli forces in southern Lebanon no pretext to continue their internationally criticized occupation.

Recently, Arafat ordered the extradition of 130 commandos, purportedly linked to Abu Nidal's group, to their base of operations in Iraq. This move coincided with his decision to cooperate with the United Nations peacekeeping forces in southern Lebanon. Removal of these extremist commandos, who were supposedly planning to murder UN troops and engage in guerrilla warfare with the Israelis, represents an important step in the Mideast peace process. In addition to removing the Iraqi-linked commandos from Lebanese soil, Arafat has put Abu Daoud, the well-known Palestinian hardliner, under house arrest for allegedly having set up an independent training and operations center outside of Fatah control.

While Arafat's troops conducted their cleanup in the south, the PLO reached an agreement with the Lebanese authorities to cooperate with the central government in curtailing further armed Palestinian activity on Lebanese soil. Similar to his terrorist roundup, Arafat has skillfully neutralized the potentially dangerous Christian Falangist faction of Camille Chamoun, who has been working openly with the Israeli government under the pretext of protecting the Lebanese government from the "lawless" Palestinian population.

Israeli Links to Terrorism

This Egyptian-PLO terrorist cleanup is designed to

dismantle what is a partially Israeli-controlled terrorist apparatus. According to Egyptian authorities, one of the alleged terrorists, Sergio Montovani, a Swiss national, "may have been in Cairo posing as a journalist, during the January Cairo peace conference when scores of Israeli officials and journalists were here." And in France, the Communist Party daily *L'Humanité* blew the whistle on Israeli links to terrorist networks when it published the story that Israeli Parliament member Flatto-Sharon, who is currently under indictment by the French government for extortion and diamond smuggling, had direct connections to the Red Brigades. Samuel Flatto-Sharon gained notoriety recently by offering the Red Brigades \$5 million for the release of Aldo Moro and the right to "direct negotiations," which is a code word for "recognizing" the terrorist outfit, thus endangering the fragile Italian government which has up until now refused to negotiate with the terrorists.

Who Are The Terrorists In The PLO?

The centrist faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which is equivalent to the center faction of the main commando group Fatah, is now mounting a cleanup operation against agent "radical" nests within the PLO. The centrists, basically identical to the four men who founded Fatah in the 1950s — Yasser Arafat, Farouk Kaddoumi, Khalil Whazir (Abu Jihad), and Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad) — are allying with Saudi-oriented moderate and conservative groups to isolate the terrorists and thereby prepare the way for the PLO to seriously enter regional negotiations for a Middle East peace settlement.

The Arafat group in Fatah is targeting three inter-linked groups, inside and outside the PLO:

The "Abu Daoud" faction.

This faction of self-professed "militants" exists *within* Fatah, and consistently advocates adventurist tactical moves by the Palestinians rather than responsible political strategy. Abu Daoud himself has many suspicious historical connections: in 1972, he masterminded, in cooperation with British networks in Israeli and Jordanian intelligence, the bloody Munich Olympic massacre of Israeli athletes which had the effect of disrupting Arab-European relations; in 1973, while in jail in Jordan, he implicated Fatah members for the Munich operation; in January 1977, he was at the center of a major crisis that destabilized French Middle East operations when he was arrested by Israeli-connected French security circles in Paris; and in recent weeks he has commanded terrorist networks in Lebanon coming from Iraq who have tried to undermine the Arafat group's policy of collaboration with the Lebanese and French governments and the United Nations to maintain

stability in Lebanon. Abu Daoud is reputed to have family links with British networks in Egyptian intelligence.

The "Abu Nidal" breakaway group.

Abu Nidal has been expelled from the PLO, and has set up a countergang, breakaway PLO group in Iraq that has carried out assassinations against Palestinian moderates. Nidal's outfit, which controls the Baghdad *Voice of Palestine* and terrorist cells within Iraq, is blamed by Fatah for many of the destabilizations of the Palestinian movement in recent months.

The "Wadi Haddad" group.

Wadi Haddad, until his death in East Germany last month, was at the command-and-control center of a

major terrorist-hijacking operation located in Iraq and based in breakaway elements within the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The PFLP itself is not in the PLO, having left the PLO over disagreement with the latter's support of a negotiated settlement in the Mideast. The PFLP leadership around George Habash does not support reckless terrorist acts, and Haddad's death has led to speculation that the PFLP connection to terrorism will be broken, in part as a result of Soviet and Cuban diplomatic intervention to that end.

Press reports from Beirut indicate that a faction inside the centrist group itself, led by Abu Iyad, wants a hardline, no-compromise policy for the PLO. This, however, appears to be a "safety valve" to channel sentiment in the PLO's constituency base, rather than an alliance with the agent networks.

British Push CENTO Remilitarization

Speaking at the 25th ministerial meeting of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in London, British Foreign Secretary David Owen called for the remilitarization of alliance members Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan. Owen dismissed suggestions that the long dysfunctional CENTO pact had outlived its usefulness, stressing that it has "immense value" to Britain. Without it, Owen explained, London would have long since lost its influence in the area: Pakistan and Turkey would have "split further apart from the West," he pointed out, and Britain would never have become a major arms supplier to Iran.

By his own admission, Owen steered the conference clear of any discussion of the fate of former Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. According to several well-informed sources, British intelligence and Henry Kissinger played the prime role in the removal of Bhutto from power, and are now pressuring for his execution. These same sources also report that Bhutto was on the verge of pulling Pakistan out of CENTO at the point that he was overthrown and replaced by Gen. Zia ul-Haq.

In remilitarizing CENTO, Owen hopes to use British influence to revive Cold War tensions in this strategically vital and potentially explosive region, undercutting chances for U.S.-Soviet entente there.

Not surprisingly, his efforts have received the support of the self-styled "New Kissinger," U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski. Brzezinski favors building up CENTO as a military bastion rather than as the instrument of economic development that it had become via its spin-off, the Organization for Regional Cooperation and Development.

In contrast, Brzezinski's factional enemy in the Administration, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, is known to oppose the remilitarization of CENTO. According to the French daily *Le Figaro*, Vance tried to avoid attending the CENTO meeting, and purposely had it shifted from Washington to London so that he would not be obliged to stay long.

Target: Iran

The main target of a remilitarized CENTO is the Shah

of Iran, whose commitment to industrial progress for his oil-rich country has overridden his willingness to forge an Israel-Iran axis against the Soviet Union and Saudi Arabia, which Britain desires. As a result, the British are fomenting bloody internecine warfare between the fanatic Shiite Moslem sect and the Sunnis, hoping to trap the Shah into looking to CENTO and Britain for salvation from internal destabilization.

Over the past several weeks, riots against the Shah have broken out in Iran's major cities. In the tradition of their bestial Al-Ghazali ancestors, Shiite leaders are demanding an end to industrialization and have called for a return to no-growth "fundamentalism." The Shiites are also demanding that the Shah break off his recent deals with the Soviet Union.

The chief organizer of the anti-Shah riots is Ayatallah Khomeini, an old British intelligence operative once described by the Soviet press as the "most reactionary" element in the Middle East. Khomeini is coordinating his activities with Iran's reactionary clergy, known as Ulema.

According to an Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Iran is facing its "worst crisis." The Shah's government is reportedly "teetering" as a result of the riots and he is under pressure to abdicate and form a council with his wife, becoming a mere figurehead without any say in economic and foreign policy.

The Shah has, so far, responded according to profile, reportedly blaming the unrest on the "Communists." At the CENTO meeting, the Iranian representative, playing right into the British gameplan, called for the strengthening of CENTO militarily to stem the growing internal unrest. According to one Mideast analyst, Owen is "itching to send troops into Iran, run CENTO maneuvers there, and so forth. If the Shah clamors for it, it will make things that much easier," the source added.

Next month, British Tory leader Margaret Thatcher will visit Iran. In addition, Britain is planning sales of military transports to the Shah as part of Owen's "contingency plans."