
Facts Behind Terrorism

Herr Genscher's message for Assad

by Thierry Lalevée

Though the final resolution on international terrorism from the Tokyo summit on May 5 singled out Libya as being one of the "states sponsoring terrorism," Syria, too, has come under the spotlight. That point was driven home by President Reagan, in an interview May 6 shortly before leaving Tokyo, when he was asked what would happen if other countries—say Syria—were also proven to be involved in international terrorism. President Reagan replied that they would "receive the same treatment" as Libya.

A similar statement from the President shortly before the April 15 raid on Tripoli, when he warned that both Syria and Iran could become America's next targets, left Secretary of State George Shultz near apoplexy. Shultz rushed to go on record that there was "no proof" directly linking Syria and Iran to terrorist acts similar to Libya. Unofficial White House sources were even quoted that Reagan had made the statement because he had been "pushed too far" by the journalists he was meeting with.

So far, Shultz personally has said nothing more about Reagan's May 6 comment on Syria. Even so, on May 5, a State Department official made public a call to Damascus to "get rid of Abu Nidal." "The Syrian government is aware of our concern about its involvement in international terrorism, including the presence within Syria and within Syrian-controlled Lebanese territories of bases and personnel belonging to the Abu Nidal organization," read the statement.

Genscher delivers U.S. warnings to Syria

Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, meeting on May 2 in Belgrade (Yugoslavia) with West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, was warned to expect both the State Department and Reagan's declarations. Much to his displeasure, Genscher was bearing an American ultimatum to Syria to immediately drop any connections to international terrorists operating in the West, and moreover, he warned Assad against any further actions against Jordan's King Hussein—a message timed to coincide with Assad's visit to Jordan on May 5.

Up to the April 14 U.S. raid on Libya, Genscher had played a key role in turning West Germany into a safehouse

for numerous Iranian and Libyan terrorists; the pro-Libyan German-Arab Friendship Association was created under his sponsorship.

Strengthening the American message, only days before his meeting with Assad, Genscher reportedly received a lengthy report from the French foreign ministry detailing how Libya, Iran, and Syria operated as a "single unit, both in the planning and financing" of terrorist operations. Genscher needn't have been reminded of these facts, but the transmission of such official documents did bring additional pressure.

Indicating how much he disliked his mission, Genscher apologized to Assad for having expelled Libyan diplomats from Bonn, insisting, reported *Der Spiegel*, that these actions were not retaliation for Libyan terrorism, but because "the freedom of movement of German diplomats in Tripoli had been curtailed." In response, Assad promised he would advise his pet-terrorists to "concentrate on the fight in the Occupied Territories," a concession for which the Israelis can certainly thank Genscher.

In any case, it is appropriate that the warning of possible American operations against Syria should come from Genscher. Recent inquiries indicate that Syria, like Libya, has used the Russian Occupied Zone of East Berlin to run terrorist operations in West Berlin and in London.

On May 5, British police officially requested the Syrian ambassador in London to permit interrogation of some of his diplomats. According to British sources, there is increasing evidence that Nezar Nawaf Mansur Hindawi, arrested on April 18 for trying to blow up an El Al plane out of London's Heathrow Airport, was working with Syrian diplomats. He was in any case carrying a Syrian passport, and according to Israeli sources, his bomb may have been fabricated in the Syrian embassy. On May 6, West German police—who had also arrested Hindawi's brother, Ahmed Nawaf Mansur Hazi, on April 18—arrested two of Hazi's associates, Fayez Saahanweh and Farouk Salameh, and charged them with a March 29 bombing in West Berlin. Their interrogations revealed that the explosives may have come from the Syrian embassy in East Berlin. Hazi was found to have been involved in planning the April 5 bombing of West Berlin's "La Belle" discothèque.

On April 20, Italy expelled three Syrian diplomats from Rome, in a clear warning that the net was closing around Damascus. In an operation with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Italian police dismantled a large heroin-smuggling network coming directly from Syria through diplomatic cars, arresting 20 Italians, Egyptians, and Lebanese. However, the Syrian embassy was the headquarters of the operation, as in the similar case of a heroin-smuggling network in Spain last November, in which several Syrian diplomats were also exposed and expelled. Syria exports hashish and heroin to finance its terrorist operations abroad in the same way Iran and Libya use their oil-export revenues to finance theirs. Hitting at the Middle Eastern drug networks is a clear requisite in the fight against terrorism.