

## France leads the war on Soviet-controlled terrorism

by Thierry Lalevée

The government of France has responded to the current unprecedented explosion of terrorism, by initiating emergency measures appropriate to wartime. For indeed war, as top officials are saying, is exactly what is now being waged. Premier Jacques Chirac warned on national television on Sept. 14 that "pitiless" retaliation will be taken not only against the terrorists themselves, but against "those who manipulate them." Interior Minister Charles Pasqua left no doubt about the source of the manipulation, when he declared on Sept. 11 that the Soviet Union provides substantial aid to those countries that train and deploy the terrorists. Jean Rochet, former head of the French internal security service, told *Le Figaro* newspaper even more forthrightly: "Soviet support for terrorists today is recognized." (See *Documentation*.)

There can be no doubt that unless the Chirac government succeeds in its war against terrorism, the next staging ground will be the United States.

Among the emergency measures taken by Chirac, was a nationwide manhunt in search of two terrorists believed to have perpetrated the Sept. 12 bombing of a restaurant outside Paris. For the first time in modern history, police on Sept. 17 distributed some 200,000 posters throughout the country, announcing a reward of 1 million francs for information on the activities and whereabouts of Maurice and Robert Ibrahim Abdallah, brothers of George Ibrahim Abdallah, leader of the Marxist Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Factions (FARL). In a challenge to the French State, the brothers held a press conference the same evening in the northern Lebanese town of Tripoli, swearing that they had not been out of Lebanon for two years. But witnesses present at the Sept. 12 bombing recognized Robert Ibrahim Abdallah, from the mugshots on the posters, as the man who had hastily left the restaurant two minutes before the bomb went off. Tripoli-

based French agents confirmed that he had come back to his village only 72 hours after the bombing.

On Sept. 14, Chirac called an emergency meeting of the Internal Security Council, just hours before the explosion of another bomb at a restaurant on the Champs Elysées, which killed one policeman. Before leaving for a three-day trip to Indonesia on Sept. 15, President François Mitterrand addressed a short message to the nation, warning that the fight against terrorism has to be based on "the mobilization and the resolve of all citizens," in support of the action of the law-enforcement agencies. Hours later, terrorists hit the central headquarters of the Parisian police. Then on Sept. 17, in the worst incident of violence yet, terrorists threw a bomb into a clothing store, killing 6 people and wounding 70 more.

The popular reaction to these acts of barbarism has been twofold: rage at the terrorists and support for any measures the government might find necessary to fight what has been characterized as a "subversive war," a "new plague," or, in the words of Economic Minister Edouard Balladur, a "new Nazism." The motto, in the words of Member of Parliament Michel Debré, is: "The Fatherland is under attack, all must mobilize."

### Emergency coordination

After the Sept. 17 massacre, Chirac convened another session of the Internal Security Council. Further public and secret anti-terror measures are expected in the coming weeks, but already the daily life of France has been dramatically changed since Sept. 15, when the first measures were adopted, for at least six months' duration. European interior ministers are scheduled to discuss further actions at an emergency session on Sept. 25, along the lines discussed with West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl on Sept. 9: coordination of

information, coordination of prevention, and coordination of action.

The French government has developed an emergency crisis staff, under Chirac's control, to coordinate on a daily basis the information coming from France's foreign intelligence agency (DGSE), internal counterintelligence (DST), political police (Renseignements généraux), the military border police, and local police agencies.

Revealed publicly on Sept. 14 and implemented the following day, the government adopted the following measures:

A visa is now required to enter France, except for nationals of the European Community member countries and Switzerland. The measure, which affects most the northern African countries whose citizens travel back and forth from France frequently, was done with the cooperation and approval of these governments. Only the Swedish and Austrian governments protested.

Beefing up the job done by the Air and Border Police (PAF), more than 1,000 soldiers from regular army units have been deployed to cover all border regions, including those with Switzerland and Belgium, which previously went unchecked. In Paris, security checks have been established at the entrance of all major public buildings—government buildings, supermarkets, etc. Customers and visitors are requested to open their bags for inspection. Police deployments have been increased in museums and the subway. Similar measures are being implemented in the other major cities.

Additionally, the police have adopted an offensive policy of establishing unexpected roadblocks to check the IDs of thousands of drivers, day and night. In an operation of this type on Sept. 16, two bodyguards of Syrian Vice-President Rifaat al Assad were caught, carrying expired residence permits.

### **The terror support networks**

Complementing these public measures, there are other decisions which have remained secret. A member of parliament described them as "the best part" of the government program. Secrecy is required to keep the terrorists guessing, but also in response to a useless debate over the competence of France's foreign intelligence service. Begun by revelations from Alexandre de Marenches, former head of the SDECE intelligence service, the debate degenerated quickly, with numerous former chiefs of the SDECE or the DST complaining to journalists about what they had planned to do against terrorism, but could not do because it had been politically vetoed. The only result of these revelations was to give information to terrorist groups about the capacity for reprisal of France's counterterror units.

However, by Sept. 15, it was clear that among the secret decisions taken by Chirac and his cabinet was a green light to the police, not only to go after the hardcore terrorists, but to confront the so-called intellectual layers, which act as the support network for the terrorists. Through a first sweep of

arrests and interrogations into a wide range of "supporters," it came as no surprise that most belonged either to George Habash's PFLP or the Lebanese Communist Party. Most were not implicated personally in any direct terror actions. Nonetheless, it became evident that the French base of the LCP has proven to be a fertile ground for logistical support. The role of the LCP is no surprise, given the close relations it maintains with Syria and Syrian intelligence.

The government is also close to proving that a Soviet-sponsored "Comintern" apparatus still functions throughout the Middle East and into Europe. Another important finding was that the logistics of the FARL networks were established in France through the good offices of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, a Trotskyite group. In 1981 in Rome, George Abdallah was put in touch with the French LCR representative, who was the liaison with Italian terrorist groups. She had hosted Abdallah and his friends in her apartment in Grenoble for several months. Her involvement went deeper, as she established another direct contact between Abdallah and Mohand Hammami, then an underground leader of the Direct Action terrorist organization.

### **The Curiel Network**

The strange mixture of Lebanese Communists and Trotskyites, in the FARL logistical support network, has drawn the attention of investigators to the old Curiel Network, named after Egyptian Communist Henri Curiel, a long-standing KGB operative until his death in 1978. The network was then reportedly reshaped by Jacques Verges, lawyer for Abdallah, as well as for kingpins of the Nazi International.

The intensity of terror operations in France in September has suggested a very large-scale logistical support network, in terms of weapons, manpower, safehousing, and transport. None of this could be achieved by a Lebanese terrorist organization on its own, without considerable French participation.

Privately, the eyes of investigators are turning toward former Interior Minister Pierre Joxe, who has, since March, established his own private intelligence network. Joxe, like Mitterrand's former adviser Régis Debray, belonged for years to the pro-Soviet Marxist current in France, active within the Curiel Network. Doubtless the Soviets are using these channels for their Middle Eastern puppets.

Indeed, the Communists were the only political party in France to officially denounce Chirac's anti-terror policies. Even those Socialists who had criticized it at first, withdrew their objections after the intensity of the bombings became obvious. French Communist Party General Secretary Georges Marchais called for the immediate release of George Ibrahim Abdallah. He made the speech during the yearly festival of his party, which featured guests from the Saudi Arabian Communist Party and the National Liberation Front of Bahrain, a sure indication that the French Communists are more involved in the present terrorism than is yet acknowledged.

# French leaders speak out against terror

**Premier Jacques Chirac—statement issued Sept. 8, after the bombing of the Paris Town Hall:** “[Terrorism] is really the plague of modern times, and we have to mercilessly wage a true war against it. This means, first of all, that the government organizes all means at its disposal to fight against this scourge, and this would not be without consequences for all who are directly or indirectly linked to terrorism. This is really a war—a subversive war, but a war, which must be waged with all necessary means. Second—and we are working on this—it means a better, more efficient, more permanent coordination among the intelligence services and the covert operations services of the various concerned Western countries, and especially the democracies that are targeted for destabilization.”

**Premier Chirac—interview on French television, Sept. 15:** Terrorism is a dangerous game for everybody: for the victims who are supposed to be frightened, of course, those who were injured, but also for the perpetrators. . . . I want everyone to know that the day will inevitably come when we will catch a terrorist red-handed who will talk, and those who are manipulating him should know that they will be subject to draconian measures of retaliation, which will be pitiless, whatever the consequences. They have to know this.”

Chirac announced a series of anti-terrorist measures and then added: “These measures are the public ones. I can tell you there will be others . . . which will remain secret, to destroy the leprosy which is called terrorism.”

**Premier Chirac—speech at a City Hall news conference on Sept. 18:** The terrorists are “barbarians of the modern age. Let them know that if we get proof of the origin of these attacks, the response will be instantaneous and without weakness. . . . Terrorism is today the absolute evil, a deadly menace . . . for our republican liberties.”

**Economics Minister Edouard Balladur—television interview on Sept. 11:** “Terrorism is the absolute evil. It is as grave as Nazism. Therefore, we have to combat it by all means, all means, not excluding anything. . . . I recall that in Israel, the entire population associated itself with the fight against terrorism. . . .

“I think we have to upgrade the cooperation among all

the Western countries and join them in the fight against terrorism, and never give up.”

**Justice Minister Albin Chalandon—interview published in *Paris Match* Sept. 18:** Asked whether he agrees with Alexandre de Marenches’s proposal for a Nuremberg Tribunal to try the international terrorists (see below), Chalandon replied: “Why not? In any case, it is in our interest to act globally, and for threatened nations to cooperate, rather than each looking for its safety separately.”

**Roger Chaix, director of French public security—interview published in *Le Figaro* on Sept. 17:** “There is no question that governments of Mideast countries are complicit in the ongoing terrorist campaign. . . . We have to give ourselves the means, and hit hard and fast. . . . In this, we cannot respect all of the rules of democracy. . . . Terrorists are killing, in Paris and Lebanon and elsewhere. Abdallah is only a cover for the controllers of terrorism.”

**Alexandre de Marenches, former head of the French secret services (SDECE)—television interview on Sept. 7:** “We have to draw the lessons from World War II, when the BBC was publicly denouncing the Nazi collaborators. We have to use public denunciation of the terrorists. Also, we have to institute an international tribunal, to try the terrorists, who would be branded for their entire lives as international assassins. I propose that this Tribunal be created in the Federal Republic of Germany, in Nuremberg.”

**De Marenches—radio interview, Sept. 8:** “We are now in the middle of World War III, though I regret that some people don’t have the courage to say it. . . . Terrorism is only beginning, because there are wolves in our societies, where sheep predominate, and the more the sheep bleat, the more they attract the wolves.”

Asked whether his 1970 proposal that the United States assassinate Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi were not too radical, and would not have made things worse, de Marenches replied: “If we asked ourselves the same question about Hitler, if you see what I mean, we were not wondering whom we could replace him with. . . .”

**Jean Rochet, former head of the French internal security service (DST)—interview to *Le Figaro* published Sept. 12:** “Soviet support for terrorists today is recognized. The political commission of the Council of Europe has concluded that the U.S.S.R. is responsible for helping the bomb-throwers among the Palestinians, by furnishing logistical aid, weapons, explosives, and instructors, which one finds in Syria and in Libya. There is no need for any illusions: The overall supply for terrorists comes from the East. . . . In order to combat crimes and blackmail, we have to counter-attack by using means of pressure and effective actions, by acting against the responsible leaders.”