

France rallies support against Soviet-sponsored terrorism

by Thierry Lalevée

French Premier Jacques Chirac flew into New York City for just a few hours on Sept. 24, from the battlefield of France's war against terrorism, to deliver an appeal at the U.N. General Assembly, for the nations of the world to rally with France and deploy "all appropriate means to eradicate terrorism," which he described as a "war waged without boundaries." Fresh from a cabinet meeting in Paris which dealt with the challenge to the French State, Chirac did not accuse any specific individuals or nations of promoting terrorism. Indeed, one-third of the delegates to the UNGA might have been forced to get up and leave the Assembly if he had done so. Instead, he denounced those states that are "allowing the terrorists to use their territories, those which are supporting the terrorists, and those which are encouraging them to their own benefit." The French press promptly interpreted his comments as directed against Syria, Iran, and Libya.

Chirac was speaking as a representative of a nation at war, with its citizens fully mobilized in a kind of "new Resistance," as the editorialists are calling it. Recent public opinion polls show that more than 75% of French citizens agree with Chirac: France is at war, and must respond to the terrorist assault with the methods of warfare. These citizens endorse whatever measures the government may have to decide upon, to fight against the terrorists. That includes security measures which have restricted the normal freedoms of citizens in France's major cities—e.g., constant checks of ID papers and bags. The polls show that most Frenchmen are convinced that the terror war has little relation to the presence of Arab prisoners in France's jails—the ostensible reason for the terrorists' provocations—but rather stems from a policy of confrontation headquartered in Damascus and ultimately in Moscow. Indeed, on Sept. 19, French government spokesman Denis Baudoin declared that the terror wave has "much wider international ramifications" than the mere presence of Arab political prisoners in France.

Interior Minister Charles Pasqua emphasized on Sept. 25 that "there is no discussion, no negotiations" with the terrorists. Asked about the possibility of using intermediators to negotiate between France and the Middle East, Pasqua commented, "We cannot reject those negotiators, but we are sending one clear message: No negotiation. We won't give in to blackmail."

Since Sept. 4, at least 11 people have died in the terror

bombings which have primarily hit the French capital. The 11th victim was a policeman who, on Sept. 14, was injured while carrying a bomb out of a restaurant to keep it from exploding and killing some 1,000 persons. A second policeman died on the spot, and a waiter is still in a coma from injuries received during the blast. The recent bombings have wounded a total of more than 250 persons.

Although, as we go to press, some have been lulled by a false sense of security since the last massacre on Sept. 17, intelligence reports underline that in the following days, more than four bombs were defused by the police before they could go off. This has not been made public, and there is no reason why it should be immediately. In the days following the major bombings, there have been hundreds of false alarms, some from panicked citizens, others of more dubious character. The ability of the police to move in quickly underlines the spirit of mobilization of the citizens at large, the degree of national unity and cooperation with the police, which is rare in France. This cooperation has allowed the police to rapidly identify some of the terrorists.

On Sept. 18, witnesses came to the police to identify Emile Ibrahim Abdallah and Selim al Khoury as the bombers of the Sept. 17 Rue de Rennes massacre, which killed five on the spot. The same day, as wanted posters were put up all over the country by the police, other witnesses identified Robert and Maurice Abdallah as those responsible for the Sept. 12 restaurant bombing.

On that very day, as a challenge to the French government, the Abdallah brothers held a press conference in their native village of Khobeyat, Lebanon, to claim that they had not left the country for the last four years. But subsequent investigations proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that the brothers were the kidnapers of French diplomat Sydney Peyrolles in March 1985. It was also proven that Emile Abdallah had taken the 20:50 Paris-Vienna plane on the evening of Sept. 17, giving him enough time to return to Khobeyat by the following afternoon. Other culprits have been positively identified, including the cousins Caroline and Jacqueline Esber, and the sisters Ferial and Fayouz Daher. Jacqueline Esber, wife of George Ibrahim Abdallah, the leader of the Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction (FARL), was identified as the woman who entered Paris police headquarters pushing Abdallah's son in a baby-carriage. She was

checked by the police, but the carriage was not.

Abdallah's group is responsible for the 1982 assassinations of Lieutenant-Colonel Ray, military attaché at the U.S. embassy in Paris, and Leamon Hunt, CIA counterterror specialist in Rome. The group is also blamed for the Sept. 22, 1986 murder in Lebanon of French military attaché Colonel Goutière, a director of French intelligence operations in the region.

The Syrian connection

No one in France really believes that the terror war is just one family's vendetta against the French State. On Sept. 25, Interior Minister Pasqua said for the first time, "Such bombings could not have been done without logistical help within France. I want to warn those Frenchmen that, whatever public position they have, they will be hunted and prosecuted without pity." The same day, French police succeeded in arresting Frederic Oriach in Paris. A founding member of the Direct Action terrorist gang and the FARL, Oriach made his way to Damascus immediately upon his release from jail last spring. Police sources who considered Oriach the coordinator between Syrian intelligence and French-based agents, knew that he had re-entered France on or about Sept. 5. The day prior to his arrest, some five active sympathizers of Direct Action, who were known to have been in Damascus in August, were also arrested.

The precise leads which were leaked to the French press in the days prior to Oriach's arrest, indicate that this was not an accident, but the first result of a full-fledged mobilization conducted in tandem by all of France's intelligence services. Such revelations led Oriach to attempt a replay within France of the Abdallah brothers' challenge. Hours before his arrest, he called radio and television stations announcing a press conference. But the unfortunate fellow was arrested as it started, always claiming his innocence and his opposition to terrorism. With Nazi-communist Jacques Verges as his lawyer, Oriach obviously was trying to test the political will of the government.

French intelligence sources revealed to the media before Oriach's arrest, that the origins of the terror wave in France were to be found in a series of gatherings held in Beirut and Damascus under the leadership of both Gen. Ghazi Kheana, Syrian intelligence chief for Lebanon and controller of Frederic Oriach, and Gen. Mohammed al Khouli, chief of Syrian air-force intelligence and personal friend of Syrian President Hafez al Assad. According to *France Soir* of Sept. 20, these meetings in mid-August were also attended by Iran's Mohsen Rafigh Dust, minister of the Pasdarans (revolutionary guards) and Libya's Ahmed Qaddafi, Colonel Qaddafi's personal representative.

Following the decision to launch the current terrorist assault against France, Syria's President Assad flew to Moscow, then to Tripoli on Aug. 24, revealed *France Soir*. These reports were later confirmed in other media, as well as by

EIR's intelligence sources.

Though no French government official has yet publicly accused Syria, Libya, or Iran, the message has been all too clear, and the nations most directly deploying the terrorists have begun to try to cover their tracks. The day after the *France Soir* leaks, Qaddafi told a mass rally in Tripoli that he was opposed to "the terror wave in France." Damascus, which had previously expressed regret for the murder of the French military attaché in Beirut, Colonel Goutière, but had said nothing on the French situation, abruptly changed its line on the very same day. A new communiqué expressed Damascus's "regrets" for the attacks against France. On Sept. 23, Syrian Foreign Minister al Sharah told the Paris daily *Le Monde* that Syria even supported the French presence within Unifil, the United Nations peace-keeping forces in Lebanon. The words reveal the embarrassment of the Syrians to have been caught at their game, but the words may not save them from punishment.

Indications are that the French government is preparing to launch an air strike against Lebanon, as the aircraft carrier *Clemenceau* left its port in Touloun, and began moving into the eastern Mediterranean. The carrier, according to U.S. intelligence sources, will be used to target the Lebanese village of Koubeiyat, home of FARL leader George Ibrahim Abdallah.

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