

British courts, PLO denounce Syrian role in running terrorism

by Thierry Lalevée

Just as the men who rule in the Syrian capital of Damascus thought they had neutralized the wave of French media revelations on Syria's role in international terrorism, they were hit from unexpected quarters.

First came the mention on Sept. 29 in the nationally circulated Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* that the Italo-American investigative commission formed earlier this year had concluded its inquiries by proving that Syria was financing international terrorism with drug-trafficking.

The report, which is jointly authored by Edwin Meese's U.S. Justice Department and the Italian Interior Minister Oscar Scalfaro, has not yet been made public, either in the United States or in Italy, and has received little publicity. Indeed, some embarrassed quarters in Washington, for whom it is expedient to concentrate only on Libya, are eager not to give it any publicity out of fear it would compromise the new spirit of cooperation with Moscow.

PLO revelations

However, good feelings in Washington for Syria won't spare Damascus. That was proven on Oct. 7 in Paris during a press conference of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) intelligence chief Salah Khalaf, a.k.a. Abu Iyad. After 48 hours of meetings with French officials such as Bernard Gerard, the new director of the DST (Internal Counter-Intelligence), Abu Iyad blasted the Syrian leadership as responsible for the terror wave in France. Reacting to the new wave of communiqués since Oct. 1 from the ASALA (Armenian Secret Army) and the Solidarity Committee with Arab Political prisoners, Abu Iyad of the PLO told the press, "These were written by Syrian intelligence."

The "aim of the terrorists is to force France to change its Middle East policy, and to withdraw its forces from Lebanon," continued Abu Iyad, as he praised the French role in the United Nations international force in Lebanon (Unifil). He then announced that the PLO was committed to do "its utmost, to track down terrorists which are exploiting the Palestinian cause." Abu Iyad's declarations, which were de-

scribed by the Oct. 8 issue of *Le Figaro* as likely inspired by the French government, to "say what Paris cannot yet say officially," helped relaunch the "Syrian connection" at a time when Damascus is pleading innocence.

While investigations are continuing, Paris has requested, or rather ordered, Syria to cooperate in the inquiries. Bernard Gerard himself went to Damascus on Oct. 1. Earlier, French Cooperation Minister Michel Aurillac had gone to Damascus to tell officials, "We know that the Abdallah brothers were helped to leave France by professional intelligence agents," meaning Syrian.

Emile Ibrahim Abdallah was identified as one of the bombers in the Rue de Rennes massacre in Paris on Sept. 17. His brothers and Maurice Abdallah have been identified by witnesses as responsible for a restaurant bombing in Paris on Sept. 12. The brothers succeeded in escaping to their native village of Khobeyat, Lebanon on Sept. 18, where they held a press conference claiming they had not left the country for four years. But subsequent investigations have conclusively proven that the Abdallah brothers were indeed in Paris and had kidnaped a French diplomat in March 1985, among other crimes.

The PLO charge that the escape of this terrorist family was aided by Syria, has backed Damascus into a corner. Syria already had to pay a price, when its acting ambassador in Teheran was kidnaped on Oct. 3 by the hardliner Hezbollahis, who feared that the Syrians might be ready to tell French authorities about Hezbollahi operations in Europe, as a proof of Syrian "good will."

On Oct. 8, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres arrived in Paris for meetings with his French counterpart Jacques Chirac. Peres, in an interview with a French weekly, described the fight against terrorism: "In addition to all the measures and aspects you know already, there are others less well known but just as important: [to watch] the bank accounts of the terrorists, individuals or groups (someone has to feed them financially), the arms-trafficking networks (they certainly have to provide themselves with weapons), their

moves, or simply the future of these men. An entirely new policy has to be established."

The terrorist organizations ASALA and SCAPP launched new threats against the French government, prompted by the PLO intelligence chief's visit to Paris and the arrival there of Shimon Peres. Abu Iyad was described as a "French informer" by both terrorist groups, and the ASALA put out a communiqué calling on the Islamic Jihad to "deliver a present to the French Zionists" on the occasion of Peres's visit, by "executing the Zionist spy, Kaufmann," one of the French hostages held since 1985 in Lebanon.

British offensive

The opening of the trial of Nazir Narwaf Mansour Hindawi in London at the Old Bailey court on Oct. 6, is pinning down the Syrian connection to terrorism in very precise and embarrassing details for Damascus. Hindawi was arrested last April 18, some 24 hours after he had tried to send his pregnant girlfriend, Anne-Marie Murphy, to Israel on an El-Al plane with 5 kilograms of explosives. As was proven, the explosives were set to go off while the plane was flying across Austria, killing more than 300 passengers. Undetected at the x-ray check, the bomb was found by more thorough El-Al security officers, minutes before departure.

As the trial opened, the public prosecutor began revealing the network involved in the Hindawi operation, as obtained from Hindawi's interrogations. Such revelations have implicated the highest levels of the Syrian government in terrorism, and are expected to lead to the ban of the "Syrian Arab Airline" at Heathrow Airport in London. On Oct. 3, the British government already decided to ban "Libyan Airlines" from flying into London, from Oct. 31 on. The decision was taken following the trial of a Libyan arrested in the winter of 1985, who confessed to having received explosives and military grenades from a Libyan airline official in London.

As it came out, Hindawi's story is very similar. Hindawi, of Palestinian origin and of Jordanian nationality, admitted to have been recruited to Syrian intelligence by Haitham Said. Said is the number two man in Syrian Air Force intelligence, directed by Gen. Mohammed el Khouli, who has been identified as responsible for the French terror wave. In Air Force intelligence, Said controls the deployment of the civilian Syrian Arab airlines, and has been using them to transport weapons, explosives, and drugs, the prosecutor revealed.

Through Said, Hindawi, who worked in London since 1980 as a journalist, traveling throughout Western and Eastern Europe, was introduced to the London Syrian ambassador, Dr. Loutof Haydar, at whose residence he found refuge after having left his girlfriend at the airport. It was Haydar who provided Hindawi with a Syrian "service" passport of the kind used by government officials, in the name of "Issar Share." Following Hindawi's arrest, three of Haydar's collaborators, who handled the daily contact with Hindawi, were expelled.

EIR bared Syrian link

No other publication, anywhere in the world, has revealed in depth the Syrian role in terrorism which is now surfacing in European courts and media. *EIR's* Sept. 26, 1986 cover story "Who really runs Middle East terrorism," documented this assertion: "Syrian intelligence remains the most trusted vehicle through which the Soviet military command and KGB direct the international low-intensity warfare offensive." The 12-page feature detailed the institutions through which terrorism is carried out; their history going back to the Nazi period; their bank accounts and safehouses; and a chronology of the meetings and "diplomacy" through which so-called Islamic terrorism has been reorganized and deployed since the Soviet Communist Party Congress in February.

This devastating exposure of how Moscow holds the reins of world terrorism was compiled by *EIR* Counterintelligence Editor Jeffrey Steinberg, who as we go to print is sitting in a jail, denied all his constitutional rights (see the *Feature*, p. 30 for details). A Soviet-inspired vendetta?

Similarly, Hindawi had also admitted that he received the explosive from a yet unnamed official of the "Syrian Arab Airline" at the "Royal Garden Hotel" in Kensington. Though this was not said at the trial, it is common knowledge that the hotel is the personal property of Syrian Vice President Rifaat al Assad—which is the reason Syrian officials visiting Britain and personnel from the airlines always stay there.

Libya-Syria link

Never had a terror network been exposed so precisely for its connection with Syria. However, more is expected to be revealed, as there is evidence that, though Syria organized the operation, it did so in cooperation with Libya.

Indeed, Hindawi himself had for a year edited a weekly magazine, *Coll Jadid*, which was financed by the Arab People's Congress of Tripoli. Investigating the Western European and Eastern European correspondents (notably in Warsaw and East Berlin) of the weekly has proven useful.

Similarly, the question of the European-wide "Hindawi network" is expected to come up. After all, his brother was arrested in West Berlin at almost the same time, and charged with involvement in the bombing of the "La Belle" discothèque in early April. Two of his cousins were also arrested in Spain and Italy in following months, and charged with terror activities.