

Entrap Thatcher aide after Syria break

by Mark Burdman

Within approximately 48 hours of the Thatcher government's Oct. 24 announcement in London that Britain was breaking diplomatic relations with Syria, the deputy chairman of the British Conservative Party, Jeffrey Archer, was forced to announce his resignation. Archer was the victim of entrapment and blackmail.

Although the consensus of *EIR* sources in London is that there is a "pure coincidence" between the Archer resignation and the British-Syrian break in relations, the whole affair reeks of an act of revenge against Mrs. Thatcher by the Damascus mafia and its friends.

On Sunday, Oct. 26, the tabloid *News of the World* published a sensational lead story presenting ostensible evidence of how Archer had arranged to provide money, via intermediaries, to a London prostitute, Monica Coghlan, to help Coghlan get out of Great Britain. Archer's motivation, according to the account, was that stories were spreading throughout London political and media circles, that he had had a meeting—and, by implication, a sexual affair—with Coghlan. *News of the World* published alleged transcripts of telephone discussions between Archer and Coghlan, in which, in response to her entreaties for help, Archer was quoted offering to provide money to get her out of the country. The last part of the paper's account, was an alleged reporter's eyewitness account of money being offered to Coghlan by an aide of Archer, at an agreed-upon meeting place.

Archer, a well-known spy-thriller writer who has written plots not unlike this one, in his Oct. 26 resignation statement, did admit to offering to get Coghlan out of Britain, out of fear that a scandal could erupt around him and the Tory Party.

What emerges, on investigation, is that he was set up. So sordid was the whole operation, that many political veterans in London think that we have not yet heard the last word on the affair, and that it will backfire against those who conspired to "get" Archer.

How the entrapment was rigged

The key individual in targeting Archer, was a certain Pakistani-born lawyer, with offices in London and Dubai, named Aziz Kurtha. On Sept. 8, according to British press

accounts, Kurtha met Monica Coghlan in the red-light district of London's Shepherd Market, in the company of two Arab associates. At this moment, he presumed to see Jeffrey Archer approaching Coghlan, and talking to her.

Kurtha, himself, is no stranger to such quarters. Not only has he reportedly "liaisoned" with Coghlan, but, as the *Daily Express* put it Oct. 27, Kurtha "is familiar with the red-light district of Shepherd Market near London's Park Lane." A London investigative source was more blunt, in a discussion with this reporter: "Aziz Kurtha, from what I understand, is a pimp, and runs a whole group of prostitutes."

One day later, on Sept. 9, Kurtha ran to the scurrilous London slander-sheet *Private Eye*, which, in turn, directed him to *News of the World*, which is now being roundly denounced in London's Fleet Street, headquarters of most of the British press, for its illicit role in what followed.

According to the Oct. 27 *Daily Express*, the following chronology ensued, leading up the Oct. 26 publication of the *News of the World* story, and Archer's resignation:

Thursday, Sept. 25: *News of the World* lays a trap for Archer. It passes his number to Monica, and reporters wire up her telephone. She tells him of Kurtha's allegations. Archer denies he has met her.

Thursday, Oct. 23: In two more taped calls, Monica piles on the pressure. Archer suggests she go abroad and offers to finance her. He arranges a meeting between her and one of his associates at Victoria Station.

Friday, Oct. 24: *News of the World* journalists spring their trap. Two microphones are taped to Monica's cleavage, with wires running to a miniature tape recorder on her hip.

Friday, Oct. 24: Archer's friend, Michael Stacpoole, hands Monica an envelope containing a wad of £50 notes. Monica refuses the money."

Who is Aziz Kurtha?

Following Archer's resignation, various British papers revealed that Aziz Kurtha, in the recent past, had been a candidate for the British Labour Party; the papers imparted partisan political motives to him.

More interesting, is the question of the source of Kurtha's wealth, his ability to "jet-set" around casinos in the Middle East, to make large-scale property deals in Britain, etc.

The *Daily Mail* and other London sources have pointed to his financial dealings with a certain Mahmoud Sipra, also Pakistani-born. Sipra, now reportedly in Pakistan, was the chief culprit behind the collapse of Britain's gold-bullion-trading Johnson-Mathey Bank in the 1984-85 period. Sometime in the early 1980s, so informed sources claim, Sipra arranged for Kurtha to receive a £400,000 loan for real estate deals.

Sipra collapsed Johnson-Mathey by arranging to get massive loans for companies and enterprises that were largely shells. He would bring certain bank officials into sex orgies, arranged through a call-girl network at the command of himself and his buddies.