

## Investigative Leads

# New tracks on Irangate's Ledeen

by Mark Burdman

Irangate investigators might find it well worth their while to devote some attention to the latest exploits of chief Irangate/Project Democracy protagonist Michael Ledeen, in Europe and the Middle East.

According to information received by *EIR*, Ledeen spent the first days of May at the prestigious Cini Foundation in Venice, as one of the participants in an extraordinarily lavish conference sponsored by the New York City-based Young Presidents Organization and financed by American Express bank, with some "cultural" assistance from the Guggenheim Foundation. One Venetian insider said privately, that the conference was the most lavish he had seen in years in the city. Four hundred business executives, many accompanied by their wives, spent four or five days in Venice, and then were given a tour of Rome.

One highlight event, during the strictly confidential conference proceedings, was a speech by Ledeen on "The Anatomy of Terrorism," a subject he certainly knows quite well from the inside. They were treated to Ledeen's first-hand account of his exploits with Lt.-Col. Oliver North and friends.

Ledeen being at Cini is interesting in and of itself. The Foundation, on the Benedictine-dominated island of San Giorgio Maggiore, frequently sponsors highly important cultural events, especially those that equate modernist degeneracy and mystical cultism with culture. Following a recent conference at the Cini Foundation, a journalist for the Soviet government newspaper *Izvestia* praised Venice as the mother-center of world culture. The Foundation's original patron, the Venetian Count Vittorio Cini, a minister in the Mussolini government and financial wizard for leading Venetian families, has been cited by Ledeen as one of the most important influences on Ledeen's book, *Universal Fascism*, a book which is favorable to fascist ideology.

Even if Irangate investigators would want to avoid the deeper cultural aspects, the goings-on at Cini in early May would be interesting from a more limited standpoint. During his stay in Venice, Ledeen met with Irangate cohort Adnan Khashoggi, as well as with Watergate culprit R. "Bob" Halde-  
mann, the Nixon aide who has already served time in jail.

According to one source in a position to know, Halde-  
mann gave them both a detailed account of what it's like to be in jail.

One aspect of the Ledeen-Khashoggi meeting involves their common "Israeli connection," a journalist named Dafra Barak, who writes for the leftist magazine *Hoalem Hazeh*. This Israeli lady is, according to good information, Khashoggi's Israeli romance. At the same time, Israelis in a position to know refer to her as "Ledeen's girlfriend here," and speak of the "good relations" between the two.

We don't know what Ledeen's influential wife Barbara would have to say about such talk, but we do know that Dafra Barak is the first person Ledeen contacts when he comes to Israel. She is assisting him in a legal case now in preparation, against another Irangate insider, the 33-year-old Amiram Nir.

One reported motivation behind such a lawsuit, is that Ledeen is angry about what Nir told the Tower Commission about Ledeen's role in the Israeli-U.S.-Iran arms-trafficking deals.

A second, possibly more intriguing, suggestion, is that Ledeen and other Irangate insiders, including former Foreign Ministry Director-General David Kimche, have decided to make Nir the "fall guy" for the Irangate deals, to treat him as "the Israeli version of Oliver North." This would be a damage-limitation exercise, in the same sense as many corrupted individuals in the United States have tried to make North's operation (or, for that matter, the operations of Mossad spy Jonathan Pollard) appear to be a rogue operation divorced from Project Democracy.

Toward such efforts, Ledeen was in Israel some time around late-March/early-April, and granted his "girlfriend" Dafra Barak an interview in *Hoalem Hazeh*.

## Ledeen, Israel, and the Russians

Despite all the efforts by U.S. congressional committees, the Mossad, Project Democracy, *ad nauseum*, to cover up the real dimensions of Irangate, the *New York Times*'s May 27 revelations about Soviet-Israeli collusion to sell arms to Iran, should make cover-ups all the more difficult. From this standpoint, Ledeen's relationship to *Hoalem Hazeh* is quite fascinating.

The magazine's founder and editor, Uri Avnery, is a prominent figure in the international left-radical jet set, whose sympathy for pro-Soviet causes is not limited to his close relations inside Israel to assets of the pro-Moscow Israeli Communist Party. One of his more recent claims to infamy, was his public support for the cause of the Soviet-sponsored West German Green Party, an entity that wiser Israelis have correctly denounced as Nazi-like and anti-Semitic. One Israeli source stresses that Dafra Barak is "very close to Uri Avnery."

Avnery, both personally and through the New York office of his magazine, has been very active in defamation and counterorganizing against *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche.