

EIR Feature

The Anglo-French patrons of Syria's Hafez al-Assad

by Joseph Brewda and Linda de Hoyos

Cerberus, cruel and uncouth monster, there
Stretches his three throats out and hound-like bays
Over the people embogged about his lair.

Such is Dante Alighieri's description of the three-headed monster-dog, Cerberus, who guards the gates of the third circle of Hell—that place “eternal, cold, accurst, and charged with woe,” whose “law and quality ever the same remain.”

Today, 675 years after Dante wrote his *Commedia* prelude to the Golden Renaissance, a modern-day Cerberus can be found in the person of Syrian President Hafez al-Assad.

For more than a quarter of a century, Assad has devoted himself to one task: to guard the Middle East against any possibility of peace. At each twist and turn in the labyrinth of Mideast diplomacy, Assad has unleashed his terrorist provocateurs to undo the work of well-meaning political leaders on all sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict, to provoke new wars, and to slaughter innocent civilians, turning an environment of negotiations into one of revenge. The result today, three years after the groundbreaking Oslo Accords between the state of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, is that the Mideast appears to be locked back into its relentless cycle of terror, counterterror, homelessness, poverty, and war—“its law and quality ever the same remain.”

For this, as we shall show, the citizens of the Mideast nations can give a fair share of the thanks to Syria's Assad.

Assad has faithfully carried out his task, not in the national interests of Syria, but in obeisance to the former French colonial masters of Syria, whom his family, elders of Syria's Alawite sect, begged to be owned by. And during his 26 years in power as Syrian President, Assad has also been at the service of France's British partners in the Mideast, particularly as mediated through Henry Kissinger—who pledged his own loyalties to the British Foreign Office in his May 1982 speech



The U.S. Army's Khoban Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, bombed by terrorists in June 1996. Keeping the Mideast in constant turmoil, through terrorism and war, has been Britain's and France's method of rule throughout the century. Syrian President Hafez al-Assad is one of their primary instruments.

before the Royal Institute of International Affairs—and former British Prime Minister Baroness Margaret Thatcher's tag-along, George Bush.

Anomalies in the 'Rejection Front'

Hafez al-Assad has earned a reputation in the Arab world for his leadership in the Rejection Front, which takes the stance that there should be no negotiations with Israel. Surveying Assad's record, however, shows sharp deviations from this official posture.

- Why did Hafez al-Assad bring Syria into the coalition, led by Baroness Margaret Thatcher and George Bush, to demolish the nation of Iraq in 1990? Enmity toward Iraq itself does not supply the answer, as Iran, which had just fought a bloody, decade-long war with Iraq, did not join the coalition. In November 1990, George Bush met with Assad in Geneva, and emerged to state:

"Mr. Assad is lined up with us with a commitment of force. They are on the front line, or will be, standing against [Iraqi] aggression. Syria has been part of the Anglo-American military task force in the Persian Gulf since early September." (Bush had already been accused of ties with Assad in regards to the case of the 1988 Pan Am 103 bombing.)

Syria bolstered Bush's coalition by moving 50,000 troops to its border with Iraq.

- If Hafez al-Assad has risked his nation for the rights of Palestinians, then why did he act to aid the Black September massacre of Palestinians in Jordan in 1970, as *EIR* docu-

ments below?

- If he is a crusader for the Palestinian cause, why did he conspire with then-U.S. National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, to instigate the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, whose ultimate and desired result was the ouster of the Palestine Liberation Organization from Lebanon, and the further shattering of the Palestinian population?

- If he is a supporter of the Palestinian cause, then why does he actively harbor and aid such groups as the death-squad Abu Nidal Organization, whose major targets were not Israelis, but leaders of the PLO?

- If Assad is opposed to all negotiations with Israel, then how is it possible for Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy to relate, as he did in an interview on Israeli TV with Shlomo Ganor, on Oct. 18, 1990, that Israel has tacit agreements with Assad's Syria? Asked to comment on the Syrian occupation of Beirut in 1990, Levi, a Likud leader who opposes the Oslo Accords, answered: "Israel has certain parameters which it regards as a red line, insofar as its security is concerned. The Syrians know this too. . . . I believe the Syrians have so far acted responsibly and have honored the confines of these parameters. . . ."

"**Ganor:** Could these agreements with Syria—which were at least tacit—lead, instead of confrontation and the issue of strategic parity, to something more positive in the direction of the peace process?

"**Levi:** This has been the policy of all of Israel's governments."

Who benefits from terror?

Granted, Assad has never claimed to be a man of peace. So it is not surprising to see that the provocateur organizations under his protection in Syria and Lebanon have carried out the most spectacular terrorist attacks, perfectly timed to derail any diplomatic initiative for a comprehensive peace in the region. Syria is home to:

Abu Nidal, the would-be assassin of Israeli diplomat Shlomo Argov, which incident precipitated the 1982 invasion of Lebanon by then-Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon;

George Habash, whose hijacking spree in 1970 gave King Hussein of Jordan and Henry Kissinger the pretext to carry out their bloody crackdown against the PLO; and

Ahmad Jibril, which introduced the blind-terror suicide bombing technique into Lebanon, working with the Hezbollah.

But despite the succor Assad grants to terrorist organizations, whose primary targets have been citizens of the United States, Europe, and Israel, Assad is openly endorsed by London, Paris, and Washington.

In May 1986, after Assad and General al-Kouli, chief of Syrian Air Force intelligence, had been linked by Italian authorities to the Rome Airport massacre of December 1995, Kissinger exonerated Assad in a statement to the *Los Angeles Times* of May 24: "I believe that the Syrian leader limits himself to closing his eyes to the groups that plot in his country. I don't believe he supports terrorism. I have a great appreciation for his ability for calculation."

As usual, Kissinger was echoing the word from the British Foreign Office. As the London *Times* very candidly put it in an editorial on Feb. 15, 1982, entitled "The Best Assad We Have": "There is a temptation to argue that since President Assad has adopted a radical stand in the Arab world and is in formal alliance with the Soviet Union, his departure from the scene might ease matters. In fact, the reverse is almost certainly the case. . . . His record shows him to be a man of straightforward dealing and statesmanlike behavior; very far from the doctrinaire radical some imagine him to be."

It is the sponsorship from London, Paris, and their allied networks in Washington, that has made Hafez al-Assad a "survivor" for the last 26 years. His actions and those of his "dogs of war" fit precisely the geopolitical aims of his masters—not of his nation or his allies in the Mideast. For London, and for Paris, in its current Entente Bestiale arrangement with Britain, a comprehensive peace settlement in the Mideast is a strategic disaster. If the Oslo Accords were to be carried out—*complete with their economic protocols calling for nuclear power, desalination, and transport development in the region*—then the Mideast would cease to be the foremost proxy arena for major power geopolitical manipulation. Instead, the Mideast assumes its rightful place as the crossroads between East and West, a linchpin in the community of nations for the economic reconstruction of Asia, Africa, and

eastern Europe. It is precisely that eventuality, that Hafez al-Assad guards against.

Assad waits it out

This is why Hafez al-Assad has been one of the most crucial behind-the-scenes players in wrecking the Oslo Accords. Intensive diplomacy was initiated to bring Assad into the peace process, beginning mid-November 1995, only days after the Nov. 4 assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. According to recent reports, Rabin had said that he was willing to give up the Golan Heights to Syria. Shimon Peres, sources reported, was also ready to return the Heights, along with concessions encompassing economic ties, energy cooperation, and water management. During a Dec. 11, 1995 White House meeting with Prime Minister Peres, President Clinton had a 12-minute phone conversation with Assad. All to no avail.

Assad's recalcitrance resulted in the highly publicized "stall" in the peace process. This was then the signal for what would soon occur: three successive blind suicide bombing attacks on Israeli citizens in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, on Feb. 25, March 3, and March 4. At the same time, the Hezbollah and Israeli military low-intensity warfare escalated, with missiles being lobbed on both sides of the Israeli red line in Lebanon.

Coming in the middle of an impassioned national election campaign, the terror atrocities and Lebanon crisis shifted the climate enough away from Shimon Peres, that Benjamin Netanyahu's anti-peace coalition could credibly win by a very slim margin in the elections on May 31. Netanyahu's negotiating posture suits both Assad *and* his masters: Israel will not give up the Golan Heights.

Was Assad informed by traitors to President Clinton's peace efforts, that all he had to do was to "wait it out" for an Israeli government to come in to power that would be more amendable to "tacit agreements," rather than peace? Is there any connection between the fact that George Bush showed up in Damascus on a "private visit" in March 1996 to meet with Assad, and that his British-led neo-conservative confrères in the Republican Party were the strongest opponents of the Oslo Accords in the United States?

And, over the last months, as President Clinton's hopes for peace in the Mideast have become ever more tenuous, who should arrive on the scene to pick up the pieces, but Assad's old partner, France. In a lovefest before reporters in Damascus on Oct. 20, Assad told reporters that French President Jacques Chirac's "mission in Syria has been successful. . . . It is common knowledge that the ties and cooperation between Syria and France go back a long way. This cooperation is now growing."

Thus, Assad has survived the latest peace-danger. How long will he be able to portray himself as the friend and ally of the Arab world, on the one hand, while serving as the dutiful Cerberus for London and Paris, on the other?

I. The Lebanon War

Services delivered, and received

In 1992, British intelligence official Bernard Lewis wrote an article in the fall issue of *Foreign Affairs*, entitled “Rethinking the Mideast,” which foretold a dire future for the region. Lewis was the architect of the “Arc of Crisis” policy which guided the Carter administration’s overthrow of the Shah of Iran, and the installation of Ayatollah Khomeini in his place. In his new forecast, Lewis said that all of the Mideast would soon be subject to a process he dubbed “Lebanonization.”

“Most of the states of the Middle East,” he analyzed, “are of recent and artificial construction and are vulnerable to such a process. If the central power is sufficiently weakened, there is no real civil society to hold the polity together, no real sense of common national identity or overriding allegiance to the nation-state. The state then disintegrates—as happened in Lebanon—into a chaos of squabbling, feuding, fighting sects, tribes, regions and parties.”

Lebanon was, in fact, destroyed through the process Lewis described. Beginning with a civil war in 1975-76, which claimed 100,000 lives, Lebanon fell victim to a Syrian and an Israeli invasion, and a continuing, orchestrated proxy war of parties and sects, which thoroughly destroyed every major city, and all industry. By 1990, Lebanon was divided between Syria and Israel, and, as a country, had ceased to exist.

But the death of Lebanon was not some sociological phenomenon, expressing the irrational nature of the Arab people, as Lewis, among others, would have it. Nor was it a result of the artificial origins of the Lebanese state in the aftermath of World War I, or the inequities that characterized Lebanese society. Rather, it was a result of an Anglo-French-directed conspiracy, employing agents such as Henry Kissinger, George Bush, Israeli Gen. Ariel Sharon, and Syrian President Hafez al-Assad.

The conspiracy had several objectives besides destroying Lebanon. Chief among them was the destruction of the Palestine Liberation Organization, because the elimination of the PLO would destroy the possibility of a comprehensive peace settlement in the Mideast. Ever since World War I, Britain and France have ruled the Mideast through keeping it in unending conflict. Ethnic and sectarian violence remain their primary instruments.

There were two phases of the Lebanonization process.

The first was “Black September,” the 1970 Kissinger-organized slaughter of the Palestinians in Jordan, which forced the PLO to move its forces to Lebanon. The second was the Lebanese civil war itself, and the ensuing Syrian and Israeli invasions, which forced the PLO out of Lebanon, and reduced the country to a Syrian province.

Through this process, the Anglo-French forces behind both Sharon and Assad ensured increasing, debilitating radicalism in the Arab world, in which terrorists on both sides could prevent peace. And through this process, Assad took over Syria, while Kissinger took over U.S. foreign policy.

Black September

On Dec. 9, 1969, U.S. Secretary of State William Rogers, in a speech in Washington, announced a dramatic, and workable, plan to settle the Mideast conflict once and for all. In outlining what became known as the “Rogers plan,” the secretary of state demanded that Israel withdraw to its pre-1967 borders with Egypt, in exchange for diplomatic recognition from Egypt, and an end to the state of war. He also called for a more broad-based settlement in the region, through negotiations between Israel and Jordan over the West Bank, the future of Jerusalem, and the Palestinian refugee problem.

The Rogers plan caused hysteria in Israel, which had not received any official or even unofficial notification of his speech. The Israeli cabinet met in emergency session the next day, and rejected it. The U.S. Zionist lobby was equally alarmed, and condemned it.

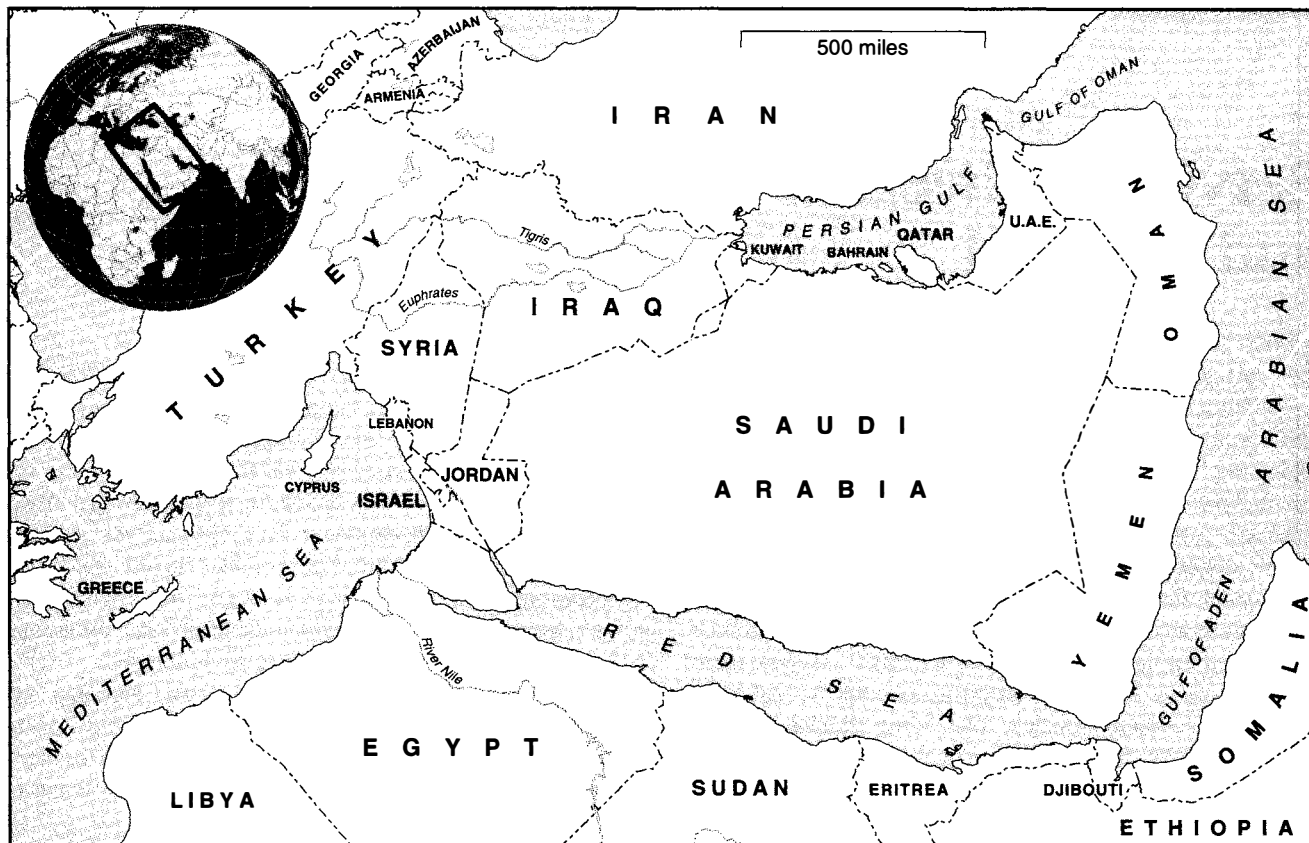
But, most importantly, the Rogers plan provoked a violent response from U.S. National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, who denounced the proposal at a National Security Council meeting. After several huddles with President Richard Nixon, Kissinger reportedly succeeded in convincing Nixon to undercut the plan. But by then, it had a life of its own. Egypt, in particular, expressed interest.¹

Consequently, Kissinger orchestrated the Black September slaughter, to drown any possibility that the plan might succeed. The basis for his counter-initiative was the turbulent situation in Jordan in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

The 1967 war had thrown Jordan into a chaotic situation. It lost the “West Bank,” its richest province, to Israel. Large numbers of Palestinians living on the West Bank, fled to Jordan. There, they joined refugees who had been living there since the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. By 1970, the PLO had created a virtual state within a state in Jordan. PLO raids into Israel from Jordanian territory, increased tensions between the Jordanian government and the PLO, because the government feared Israeli retaliation. In June, a Palestinian radical tried to assassinate King Hussein.

1. On Kissinger’s efforts to sabotage the Rogers plan, see Seymour M. Hersh, *The Price of Power; Kissinger in the Nixon White House*, (New York: Summit books, 1983), pp. 213-34.

The Mideast region today



This created the context for Kissinger to move. He employed the services of Hafez al-Assad, then Syria's defense minister, who in turn called on George Habash, head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). As a first step in the destabilization, the PFLP hijacked one Swiss and two American passenger planes on Sept. 6, 1970. Three days later, it seized a British airliner. Nearly 500 passengers from the latter plane were flown to an airport outside of Amman. The PFLP declared that they would be held hostage until their comrades in Swiss, German, British, and Israeli prisons were freed.

The PLO Cental Committee moved quickly against the PFLP, and, on Sept. 12, suspended its membership in the PLO. It condemned the PFLP actions as ones "that could affect the safety and security of the Palestinian resistance."²

As international tensions mounted over the PFLP hijackings and hostage taking, King Hussein formed a military government, and ordered the Palestinians to disarm. On Sept. 15, Jordanian artillery and tank units suddenly attacked Palestinian camps around Amman, beginning what has been called

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 234-250.

the Black September massacre.³

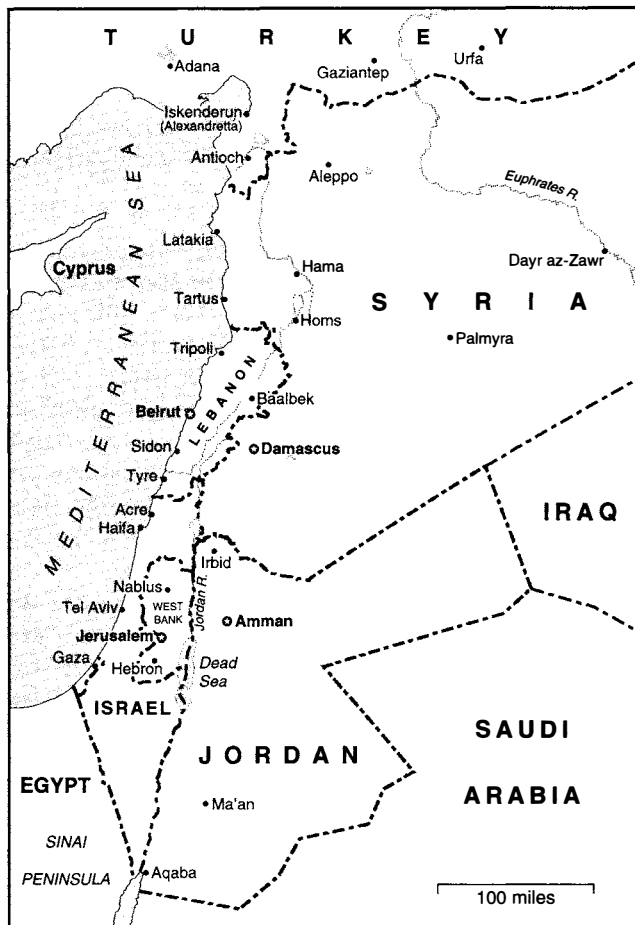
Egyptian President Gamal Nasser sent a delegation to Jordan to take stock of the situation. The delegation returned "shaken by what they had seen," Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohammad Heikal later reported, because the size and scope of the massacre indicated that it was planned far in advance. "By then," Heikal noted, "Nasser had information that the operation had been planned in cooperation with the CIA and some Jordanians, including [Jordanian Prime Minister] Wasfi Tel." Nasser soon died of a heart attack.⁴

Syrian strongman Salah Jadid was also upset. Responding to Palestinian pleas for assistance, Jadid ordered 200 Syrian tanks, commanded by his brother, to invade Jordan to support the Palestinians. But Assad, who was then Syrian defense minister, refused to provide air cover for the tanks. As a result,

3. For background on Black September: Hersh, *ibid.*; Mahmoud Riad, *The Struggle for Peace in the Middle East* (London: Quartet Books, 1981), pp. 158-170; Umar F. Abd-Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria* (Berkeley, California: Mizan Press, 1983), pp. 57-63; Patrick Seale, *Assad: The Struggle for the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 154-165.

4. Hersh, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

Syria today



the Jordanian Air Force and armored brigades inflicted devastating losses on the tanks, forcing their return to Syria on Sept. 23-24, in total disgrace.

On Nov. 23, within two months of this humiliation, Assad overthrew Jadid, and took power in a military coup.

It was only much later, that it emerged that Assad had been in secret contact with Prime Minister Wasfi Tel in Jordan all along, and that Tel had been reporting back to Kissinger. Assad had reassured King Hussein, in advance of the Syrian tank invasion, that the Syrian Air Force would not retaliate, if the Jordanian Air Force attacked the tanks.⁵

Speaking of these events in his *White House Years*, Kissinger reports his satisfaction at the rise of Assad: "Another less noticed significant result of the autumn crises [of 1970] was the accession of Hafez al-Assad to power in Syria in November 1970. Less visionary than [Egyptian President] Sadat, he nevertheless gave Syria unprecedented stability and, against the background of the turbulent history of his

people, emerged as a leader of courage and relative moderation."

Kissinger had reason to be very happy with the combined effects of the massacre and Assad's accession to power. Rogers was thoroughly discredited in Nixon's eyes. Within a year, Kissinger was named secretary of state in his place, while still maintaining control over the National Security Council.

How Kissinger gave Assad Lebanon

The wiping out of the Palestinian movement in Jordan, its expulsion to Lebanon, and Assad's takeover of Syria, prepared the ground for the destruction of Lebanon. This began in April 1975, when Kissinger, the British, and the French, triggered a civil war between the Phalange militia of the Roman Catholic Maronites, and the PLO-aligned Lebanese National Front, which represented the Muslim majority. The civil war claimed 100,000 lives that year.

A primary reason for the manipulated conflict, was to create the conditions for the Syrian takeover of Lebanon, and, in the process, the elimination of the PLO.

This was already known to many in the region.

On May 31, 1976, Raimun Iddah, an important Lebanese-Christian leader, told a Lebanese press conference, that he had heard in Washington that Kissinger believed that "peace would not come to the Middle East until Syria had taken administrative control of Lebanon." The next day, Syria invaded Lebanon with 20,000 troops. The invasion was necessary, Assad said, in order "to protect the Palestinian resistance, and to renew Lebanese unity, and keep the country from becoming divided."

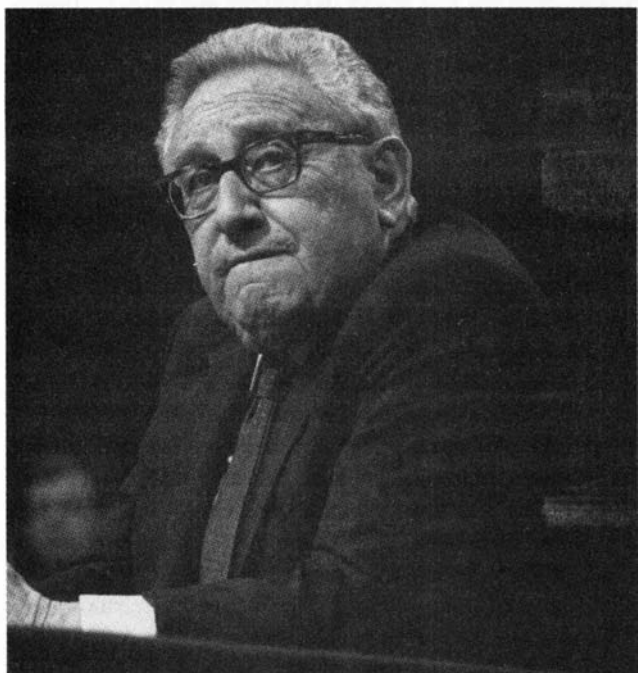
A joint French-Syrian declaration on June 19, 1976 said that the Syrian intervention had the purpose of "facilitating the return to peace, order, and security," that would make a "political solution" of the conflict possible.

Although Assad said he was acting in support of the Palestinian cause, his immediate concern was to protect the Maronite militias (which he was later to annihilate). Syrian forces brought an end to the Muslim siege of Zahlah, a Maronite stronghold on the verge of falling, and aided the Phalangist siege of the Palestinian camp of Tall az-Zatar, which fell Aug. 12. The intervention led to an uneasy cease-fire in the civil war in October 1976.

In order to defray the cost of the Syrian intervention—which was about \$1 million a day—the United States government, together with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, pledged sizable increases in their annual aid to the Syrian regime. On June 6, Kissinger announced full U.S. support of Assad's intervention, at his meeting with UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim.

But Assad did not only require U.S. and French support, in order to launch the invasion. He also needed Israeli guarantees, because the deployment of Syrian troops into Lebanon, left Damascus—only a short drive from the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights—highly vulnerable to Israeli attack.

5. Hersh, *op. cit.*, pp. 242, 247.



Henry Kissinger triggered the civil war in Lebanon in 1975, and handed that nation over to Syria and Israel.

Because of these concerns, Kissinger brokered a Syria-Israel “red-line” agreement, prior to the invasion. Syria would not enter the region between the Litani and Zahrani rivers; would not attack the Phalange in Beirut; and would not introduce anti-aircraft missiles into the theater, which might threaten Israeli aircraft flying over Lebanon. In return, Israel gave its blessing to the Syrian takeover. Soon, Syria occupied most of the country.

Israel gets a cut

The understanding also allowed Israel to invade southern Lebanon on March 15, 1978, with 10,000 men and 300 tanks, in order to “save its Christians.” There was no resistance from Syria. The Israeli government announced that Israel would “never withdraw until the existence of the Palestinian commandos had been eliminated,” which was also Assad’s objective. The region was turned over to Phalangist leader “Major” Haddad, an Israeli partner in the hashish trade. In May, two months after the Israeli invasion, U.S. State Department official Harold Saunders praised Syria for “its positive, although hidden role, in solving the problem of southern Lebanon.”⁶

The same deal allowed the Israeli Army, under the command of Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, to launch a massive invasion of Lebanon on June 4, 1982, with only token Syrian resistance. The day before, a member of Syria’s Abu Nidal gang supplied the pretext, by shooting an Israeli diplomat in London. By the end of August, the Israelis had killed 19,000

6. Abd-Allah, *op. cit.*

people, mostly civilians.

On Aug. 21, the PLO began evacuating Beirut, after a 10-week Israeli siege, because, PLO officials said, “the destruction of Beirut over the heads of a half a million Muslims is not a mere possibility, but has become a reality.” The first of 16,000 Palestinians left Lebanon for good, under a U.S.-sponsored cease-fire accepted by the Israelis, since one of their main aims had been achieved.

But on Sept. 15, Israel broke the cease-fire, invaded West Beirut, and encircled the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. Sharon sent units of the Phalange militia into the camps on Sept. 16, with orders to “purify them.” The militia remained there until Sept. 18, with the backup of the Israeli Army, and killed 1,500 men, women, and children.

The creation of the Hezbollah, to fill the vacuum left by the PLO’s expulsion, was Israel’s other major success. Hezbollah carried out suicide-bombings against U.S. targets, and fought any Muslim group which advocated allying with Christians to expel the Israelis from Lebanon. It soon became Syria’s major narco-terrorist group there.

Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir was quite explicit that the invasion was intended to radicalize the Palestinians. He told Israeli television in June 1983: “It is good for Israel that there are domestic quarrels, breakups, and divisions within the organization of the PLO. This is one of the results of Operation Peace for Galilee [Israel’s name for the invasion]. I am not afraid of the radicalization of the entire organization. The differences within the PLO, to the extent that they are connected with political problems, are merely tactical. Tactically speaking, it may be that Arafat’s tactics are sometimes more dangerous for us.”

The Israeli invasion also went a long way toward creating the basis for Lebanon’s “final solution,” its 1990 division between Syria and Israel. In the interim, both Syria and Israel had abandoned their former Maronite allies, and moved to eliminate them.

The countdown began with the October 1989 Taif Accords, which were drafted in the Saudi Arabian town of that name, with the blessings of George Bush. The accords declared the Lebanese government of Gen. Michel Aoun, which still ruled a portion of the Maronite region of the country, illegitimate. The accords recognized a Syrian puppet government, in its place.

The main reason for the move, was Aoun’s spring 1989 declaration of a “war of liberation” against Syria, which began with closing the ports that Syria used to ship drugs to the U.S. and European market.

On Sept. 12, 1990, Bush met with Assad in Geneva, and gave the go-ahead to the Syrian takeover of all of Lebanon not already occupied by Israel. The pretext was Assad joining the “Gulf coalition” against Iraq. On Oct. 13, Syrian troops stormed Aoun’s headquarters, and massacred 700 of his followers. Aoun was expelled to France, where he remains to this day, under house-arrest.

Assad's dogs of war

Hafez al-Assad has been the primary protector of three terrorist legends: Abu Nidal, George Habash, and Ahmad Jibril. The record of carefully timed blind-terrorist acts and targeted assassinations by these three well-heeled and well-shielded terrorists, is a history of the provocations that have worked to keep the region in a maelstrom over the last two decades. In the case of Abu Nidal and Habash, protection has also been extended from London and Paris.

Abu Nidal—Treks to London

Abu Nidal, *nom de guerre* of Sabri al-Banna, is the leader of the Syrian-based Revolutionary Council, which has been responsible for some of the most spectacular terrorist incidents concerning the Middle East.

Born in 1937 to one of the richest Palestinian landlord families, Abu Nidal became a Palestinian activist as a youth. He emerged as the head of the Iraqi section of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and was elected to the 15-member inner council of the Fatah, Arafat's group and the most important group within the PLO coalition.

Abu Nidal broke with the PLO during Black September in 1970, accusing Arafat of being soft on Jordan's King Hussein. He was expelled from the PLO after his unannounced 1974 attack on the Saudi embassy in Paris. The PLO soon condemned him to death *in absentia*, after he was caught organizing an assassination plot against Arafat.

Since his break with the PLO, Abu Nidal has emerged as the most famous, and dangerous, Syrian-backed Palestinian terrorist. His targets have often been PLO leaders, especially those advocating a comprehensive peace with Israel, and Jewish civilians, especially during the midst of Mideast peace negotiations. In 1978, his group murdered Said Hammami, the first PLO leader to advocate recognition of Israel. In 1983, his group murdered PLO leader Isam Sartawi, when he attempted to secretly negotiate with Israeli representatives in Portugal.

Sartawi had told the Paris daily *Le Monde* a year earlier that Abu Nidal was not really "a maximalist of the Rejection Front, but a traitor who is working for the Israeli services. . . . Whose interest is it to discredit the Palestinian resistance by committing anti-Semitic crimes? We do not even ask ourselves these questions anymore, since members of the Abu Nidal group that we are detaining in Beirut are known to have been recruited by the Mossad."

Three weeks after Arafat paid a 1981 visit to Pope John

Paul II, and was received by the Italian President and foreign minister, in a major PLO diplomatic success, Abu Nidal's followers attacked a Rome synagogue, killing 3 people, and wounding 30. In June 1982, Abu Nidal's group attempted to assassinate Israeli diplomat Shlomo Argov in London—the incident that became the pretext for Ariel Sharon's decision for Israel to invade Lebanon the next day. The invasion succeeded in expelling the PLO from Lebanon.

On Jan. 14, 1991, Abu Nidal's group assassinated Abu Iyad, the head of PLO intelligence, in Tunis, on the eve of the Gulf War against Iraq. The PLO was then supporting Iraq.

Details about Abu Nidal's own curious ties with Israel emerged in an April 6, 1984 *Jerusalem Post* interview with his brother, Mohammed Khalil al-Banna of Nablus. Despite his brother's notoriety, Mohammed Khalil al-Banna was, the paper wrote, "the biggest fruit wholesaler in the West Bank," with extensive business ties to Israeli kibbutzim. "My father, Haj Khalil, was the wealthiest man in Palestine," he explained. "He used to market 10% of all the Palestinian produce to Europe." Part of the reason for the family wealth was its friendly ties with the Zionist movement. "My father was friendly with Avraham Shapira [the founder of the first Zionist terrorist organization, Hashomer] and with Chaim Weitzmann [later the first President of Israel]."

Although Syria is Abu Nidal's primary sponsor, his banking operations are tracked—naturally—to London. According to the London *Times* of July 21, 1991, Abu Nidal financed his terror campaign through the London branch of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), the bank that Bush and Thatcher had used to funnel arms to Iran, and to arm the Afghan mujahideen.

According to the statements of BCCI London official Ghassan Qassem to the Associated Press on Aug. 2, 1991, Abu Nidal opened an account at the bank in 1981. Qassem added that Abu Nidal visited London regularly, and that bank officials accompanied the terrorist on his shopping tours, and also arranged phony export licenses to allow arms to be sent to his group. According to the BCCI official, Britain's MI-5 intelligence service knew all about Abu Nidal's presence in London, and his arms purchases there, but took no action against it.

According to the London *Times*, Ben Banerjee, a London-based arms trafficker, was Abu Nidal's key intermediary for weapons transactions. Banerjee has been identified by the Iran-Contra hearings before the U.S. Congress as a business partner of Oliver North. The German magazine *Der Spiegel* of Oct. 7, 1991, further reported that the East German arms network run by East German Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski, which supplied North with arms for the Contras in 1986, also supplied Abu Nidal, and that the BCCI was the mediator in those deals.

In the aftermath of the scandal, the British government ordered an investigation, under the direction of Lord Justice Bingham. "Having made detailed enquiry of all the intelli-

gence agencies,” the Lord Justice reported, “the inquiry has found no evidence to suggest that the management of BCCI at any level above that of bank manager knowingly held or handled accounts of the Abu Nidal Organization or its front companies.”

George Habash—In Paris for health reasons

George Habash is the leader of the Syrian-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which was formed in December 1967, with the intent of creating a Marxist “revolutionary party.” Habash had been a Palestinian leader since the 1950s.

Upon its inception, the PFLP embarked on a terror spree that successfully wedded the image of “Palestinian” with “terrorist” in public opinion. In 1968, the group carried out the first modern air hijacking, when it took over an Israeli El Al plane flying from Rome, and forced it to Algiers. The group also pushed for a Palestinian confrontation with Jordan, coining the slogan, “The road to the liberation of Palestine goes through Amman.” The group’s hijacking antics in September 1970, gave Kissinger the pretext to order a Jordanian bloody crackdown on the PLO—known as Black September—even though the PLO had expelled the PFLP from its ranks.

In 1974, the PFLP established the Syrian-based Rejection Front, which attempted to stop PLO participation in any negotiated settlement, particularly through the Geneva Conference.

In order to discredit negotiations, the PFLP, like Abu Nidal, targeted Israeli civilians for violence. In May 1972, it launched a machine-gun and grenade attack at Israel’s Lod Airport, employing Japanese gunmen, who killed 26 people, and wounded 76. In June 1976, the PFLP hijacked an Air France jetliner to Entebbe, Uganda, which provided a pretext for Israel’s commando raid there. In May 1978, it carried out a machine-gun attack on passengers at Israel’s El Al airlines at Orly Airport in Paris, killing five people.

The PFLP has also worked with other terrorist outfits. In 1988, it held a joint press conference with the Kurdish Workers Party and the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia, in Sidon, Lebanon, to announce a common front. Both groups had been particularly active in France.

Evidence of French and Israeli patronage of Habash, emerged publicly on Jan. 30, 1992, when it was revealed that Habash had entered France that day, with a valid visa, to obtain a medical checkup. According to press accounts, Habash had suffered a stroke two days before. “Habash’s transfer to Paris for medical treatment followed an official and political agreement with the French government, which involved the Foreign and Interior ministries, as well as the Elysée [Presidential] Palace,” Abdel-Rahim Malluh, a PFLP official, told Reuters.

Although French President François Mitterrand expressed “shock” over his government’s decision to allow Habash into the country, and fired three senior officials, no

attempt was made to arrest and try Habash, despite the fact that he was formally wanted for dozens of murders on French soil.

Nor did Israel demand Habash’s extradition to Israel, for the numerous murders the PFLP had carried out there. “I am not making this a personal issue,” Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir told the French daily *Le Figaro*. “George Habash is a sick man, physically speaking. I think the French will find a solution to this misunderstanding. It is not a major problem.”

The Bush administration showed similar sympathy. “France’s decision to admit Mr. Habash was its own decision. We don’t have any comment on that,” State Department spokesman Joe Snyder told the press.

Habash returned to Damascus later that month, where he continued to mobilize against the PLO. He predictably denounced the PLO for striking a comprehensive peace deal with Israel at the Oslo talks in the summer of 1993. The Palestinian people, Habash told Reuters on Sept. 8, 1993, “will realize in the medium and long run that the agreement was a sell-out of the Palestinian cause, and a betrayal of the bloodshed to advance this cause.” He pledged that, despite the agreement, the fight against Israel would continue “unrelentlessly through the Intifada, and armed struggle, until we achieve all our goals.”

Ahmad Jibril and Pan Am 103

Former Syrian Army Capt. Ahmad Jibril is the founder and leader of the Syrian-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC). The group was created as a splitoff from the PFLP, a few months after Jibril joined it in 1968. It has operated as a wing of the PFLP, nonetheless, ever since.

The group began suicide operations against Israel in 1974-75. It overtly supported Syrian operations in Lebanon in 1975-76. It has worked closely with Hezbollah, which was created by Syria and Iran in Lebanon in 1982, and has aided Hezbollah clashes with the Israeli Army.

Jibril’s group was accused by ABC News in the United States of assisting Syrian arms- and drug-trafficker Monzer al-Kassar, in placing a bomb aboard a Pan Am jet that exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland on Dec. 21, 1988. The plane carried on board several CIA officials based in Lebanon, who were returning to the United States with specific information on Bush’s ties to al-Kassar’s narcotics trafficking out of Germany.

The PFLP-GC, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and Hamas also played a prominent role in an October 1991 Teheran conference, whose purpose was to organize a common front against the Madrid Israeli-Palestinian peace conference which began later that month, and which culminated in the Oslo accords between Israel and the PLO. Terrorist operations by the four groups played an instrumental role in electing Benjamin Netanyahu prime minister of Israel in May 1996.

II. French Imperial Roots

The Alawite sect's service to France

In 1921, in the aftermath of World War I, France added Syria to its empire, by virtue of the Sykes-Picot accord, which provided for the division of the Mideast between Britain and France. In 1936, six leaders of the Alawite sect of Syria sent an urgent petition to French Prime Minister Leon Blum. The leaders stated that the overwhelming majority of their sect rejected their proposed attachment to a French-ruled Syrian republic, and wished to remain under separate French administration. Among these six was Sulayman al-Assad, the father of current Syrian dictator Hafez al-Assad.

"We, the leaders and dignitaries of the Alawite sect in Syria," they said, represent a people who "are different from the Sunnite Muslims." The Alawites "refuse to be annexed to Muslim Syria," because in Syria, "the official religion of the state is Islam, and according to Islam, the Alawites are considered infidels." They reported that "the spirit of hatred and fanaticism imbedded in the hearts of Arab Muslims, against everything that is non-Muslim, has been perpetually nurtured by the Islamic religion."

The Alawites, as we shall detail below, are neither Muslim nor Christian; some believe that they have their origins in ancient Babylon.

The dignitaries compared their plight to that of the Jews of Palestine: "These good Jews contributed to the Arabs with civilization and peace, scattered gold, and established prosperity in Palestine, without harming anyone or taking anything by force, yet the Muslims declare holy war against them, and never hesitated in slaughtering their women and children, despite the presence of England in Palestine, and France in Syria." Imploring France to come to their aid, they emphasized that the Alawites are "a loyal and friendly people threatened by death and annihilation, who have offered France tremendous services."¹

France did not comply with the Alawite request, this time around, and the minority was attached to Syria, despite

1. The original letter from the Alawite leaders to Prime Minister Blum, was on file at the French Foreign Ministry archives (E. 412.2, file 393,8) until the ministry discovered in the late 1980s that it had, somehow, inexplicably disappeared. The full text of the letter is reproduced in *The Extremist Shiites: the Ghulat Sects*, by Matti Moosa (Syracuse University Press, 1983, pp. 280-291).

their protests.

But the letter, indicating the Alawite relationship to imperial France, goes a long way toward explaining how Hafez al-Assad came to power in 1970, and how he has remained in power for the past 26 years. The reason is that Assad is not a leader of the Arab world, but rather a legacy of French imperialist domination of the Mideast, which continues to dominate Syria to this day.

But the French, of course, are not the only imperial power in the region. There are also the British. They, too, as the record shows, had great interest in the Alawite sect, and the Assad family.

In 1942, the Arab Bureau of British Intelligence, headquartered in Cairo, sent one of its top officers to wartime Lebanon, Capt. E.E. Evans-Pritchard. Evans-Pritchard, who would become famous as the profiler of southern Sudan, and author of the bogus concept of the "Nilotic peoples," was asked to do an in-depth study of the Alawite sect. Following British SOP in such matters, Evans-Pritchard compiled a detailed profile of the sect's leaders. Among them, he cited Hafez al-Assad's father. In order to do the study, Evans-Pritchard relied on a prominent informant, a friend of Hafez al-Assad's father, who was also the son of the sheikh who ruled the Assad family's village, and another co-signer of the Alawite dignitaries' letter.²

How the Alawites took over Syria

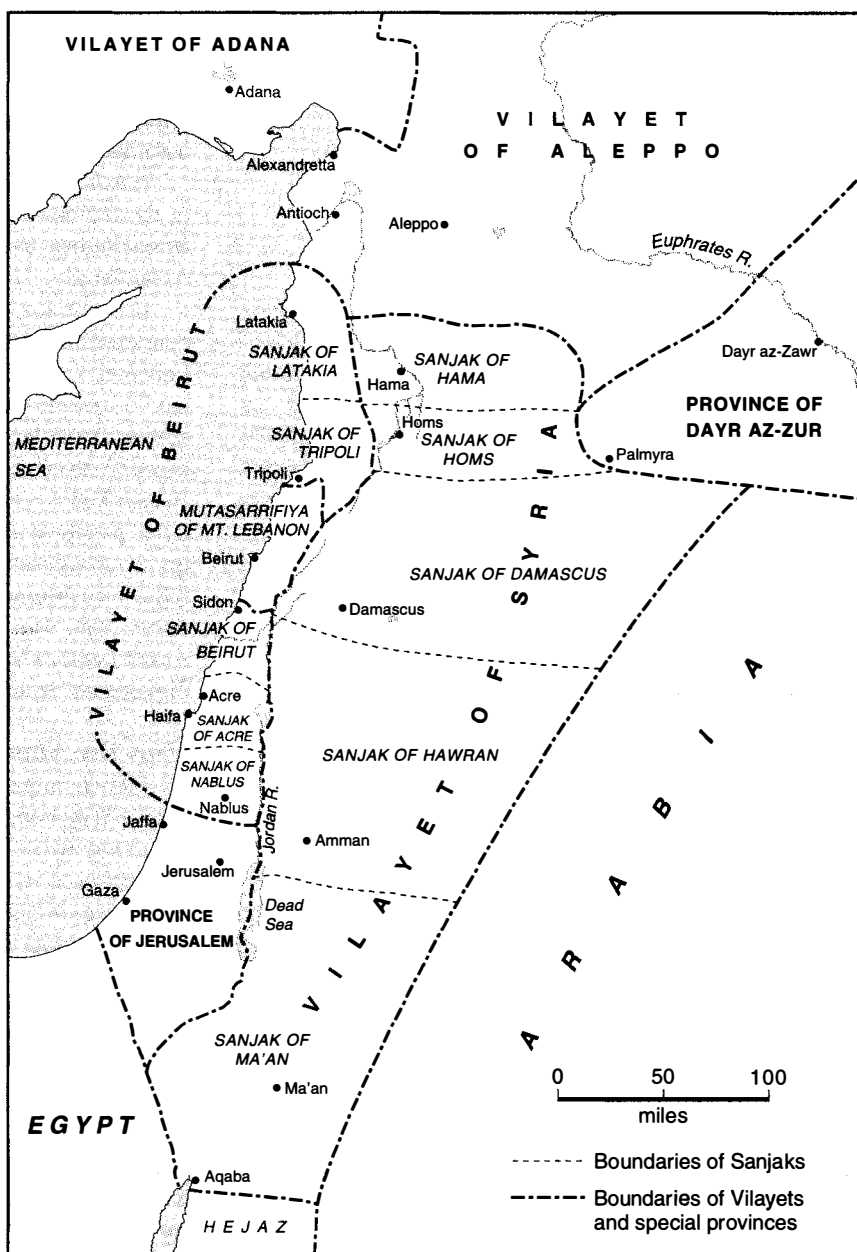
French imperial policy toward Syria during its post-World War I occupation, followed the standard practice of inflaming ethnic and religious divisions, to prevent unified opposition to its rule. Carving out minority states from the Syrian region it had seized, and favoring oppressed minorities in their conflict with the majority, was one way to accomplish this.³

Even before its 1921 Mandate, the French had singled out the Alawites, as important future clients. The future French governor of the Alawite state, which the French carved out of its Syrian lands, had already emphasized that they "could be extremely useful, perhaps even indispensable. They are all armed and possess weapons, and if they wished could put up a stiff resistance to us. We have the greatest interest in gaining their good feelings and even favoring them." They were, he added, "perfect musketeers, even in their pillage and brigandage one finds among them a well-tempered soul, a virile char-

2. Evans-Pritchard's unpublished intelligence report is cited in *Assad: The Struggle for the Middle East*, by Patrick Seale (University of California Press, 1988, pp. 13, 497). Seale reports that Evans-Pritchard was aided by Ahmad al-Ahmad, the son of the village sheikh. How Seale acquired access to the unpublished intelligence report is not explained.

3. For a general history of French colonial policy, see *The History of French Colonial Policy, 1870-1925*, Sir Stephen H. Roberts (London: Cass, 1963, 2nd edition). For a diplomatic and administrative history of the mandate, also see *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate*, by Stephen Hemsley Longrigg (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1958).

MAP 3
Pre-World War I Ottoman Syria



During the Ottoman Empire, the eastern Mediterranean coastal region was divided into the three governates (*vilayets*) of Syria, Aleppo, and Beirut, further divided into districts (*sanjaks*). The province of Jerusalem was separately administered by Istanbul directly. Because of French pressure, the Mutasarrifiya of Mt. Lebanon, dominated by Roman Catholic Maronites, had a special status within the *vilayet* of Beirut. The region as a whole, comprising what is today Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan, was a coherent economic and geographic unit known as Syria.

acter, something dignified.”⁴

Acting according to this policy, the French heavily recruited the Alawites and other minorities, into their native military units, while virtually banning the recruitment of the

4. “The Syrian Armed Forces in National Politics: The Role of the Geographic and Ethnic Periphery,” by Alasdair Drysdale, pp. 53-73, a chapter in *Soldiers, Peasants, and Bureaucrats*, edited by Roman Kolkowicz (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982).

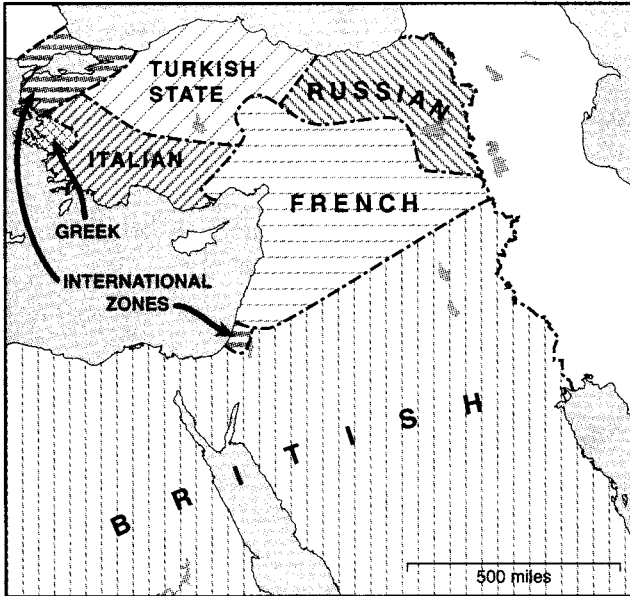
Sunni Arab majority.

French Foreign Ministry statistics tell the story:

The Alawites and Christians comprised 46% of all the soldiers in the Auxiliary Troops (Troupes Auxiliaries), for example, one of the three native units, in the years 1924-28. According to the Foreign Ministry, “the majority of [native] officers were Christian.” The total Alawite plus Christian population among the general Syrian population at the time, was 22%. Similarly, three of the eight infantry battalions in an-

MAP 4

Sykes-Picot agreement plotted breakup of Ottoman Empire



Under the 1916 Anglo-French war-time agreement negotiated by Sir Mark Sykes and George Picot, Britain and France, along with Italy, Greece, and Russia, intended to carve up the German-allied Ottoman Empire after the war. France would take present-day Syria and Lebanon, a huge region of present-day Turkey, and oil-rich northern Iraq. Britain would take Egypt (which it already effectively controlled), Arabia, the present-day Persian Gulf states, and southern Iraq. The strategic Bosphorus Strait and Palestine, were to be put under “international,” that is, joint Anglo-French, administration. The rest of Asiatic Turkey was to be carved up by Russia, Italy, and Greece, relegating a new Turkish state to a small section of the Anatolian peninsula.

other native unit, the Special Troops (*Troupes Speciales*), were composed mainly or entirely of Alawites, during the entire 1921-45 Mandate period. None of the battalions were Sunni in composition. And out of the 12 cavalry squadrons on which data are available for those years, 9 were composed of Alawite, Druze, Circassian, Armenian, Assyrian, or Ismaili minorities. Only three were made up of Sunni Arabs, and of these Sunnis, all were drawn from isolated border regions.⁵

The method by which the French put down the 1925-27

5. “Some Observations on the Social Roots of Syria’s Ruling Military Group and the Cause of Its Dominance,” by Hanna Batatu, *Middle East Journal*, vol. 35, no. 3 (Summer 1981), pp. 331-44; and “Minorities in Power: The Alawites of Syria,” by Peter Gubser, in *The Political Role of Minority Groups in the Middle East*, edited by R.D. McLaurin (New York: Praeger Press, 1979), pp. 17-47. See also Drysdale, *op. cit.*

MAP 5

Post-World War I Mideast



France and Britain did not get all that they wanted, because Mustafa Kemal Ataturk created the Turkish republic out of the remains of the Ottoman Empire, and kept control of much of the region which Britain, France, and their allies had intended to seize. Nonetheless, Turkey lost the Ottomans’ Arab lands. Britain took over present-day Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, the Arabian peninsula, and Egypt. France’s gains were much less than it expected. In addition to France losing vast amounts of present-day Turkey, to Ataturk, Britain betrayed the Sykes-Picot agreement, and grabbed northern Iraq, which had been promised to France. Britain also seized Palestine, which, under the plan, was supposed to be put under joint British-French control.

Sunni revolt against their rule, is instructive. Among the shock troops used, were the Supplementary Troops (*Troupes Supplétives*), which had been specially raised to crush the revolt. The force included six Druze, eight Circassian, three Kurdish, and several Alawite units, but no Sunni units at all. Over 6,000 people were killed during the revolt, and over 100,000 people (mostly Sunni Arabs) were left homeless. The bloodbath deeply embittered the Sunnis against the French, but also deflected some of that rage against France’s native collaborators.⁶

However, French “minority politics” was not the only reason that the French championed the Alawites. There was also a religious fascination, since French and British officials believed the Alawites were, or could be made into, Freema-

6. Batatu, Gubser, *op. cit.*

Post-World War I division of Greater Syria

Key to Map 6

One of France's first objectives after occupying Syria and Lebanon, was to reorganize the region, in order to provoke its population into internecine conflict. Accordingly, Gen. Henri Gouraud, of the French High Commission, established four French-administered "autonomous states" in the seized region within six weeks of his forces' entry into Damascus in July 1920. These states were:

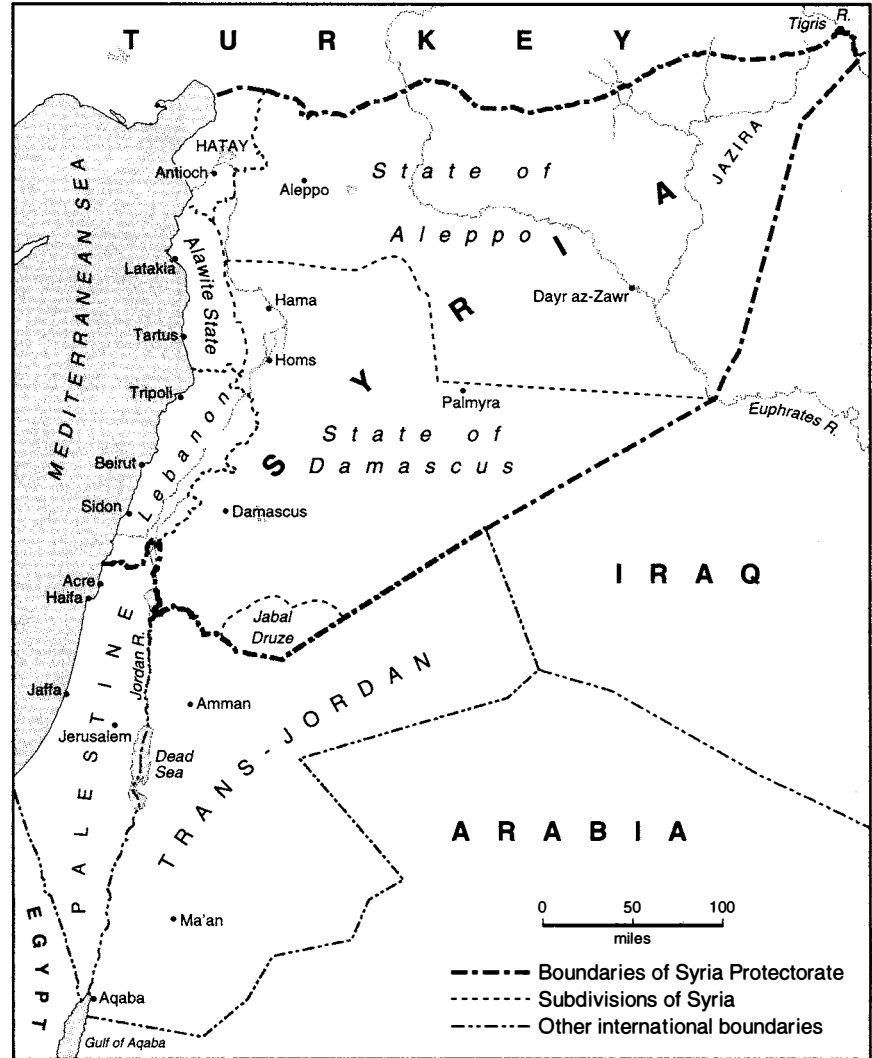
Greater Lebanon: The original Mount Lebanon *sanjak* was a relatively homogeneous district inhabited by Roman Catholic Maronites, who had been French clients for a century. Greater Lebanon, on the other hand, included many other areas that had never been under Maronite control, and were inhabited by populations which had been in conflict with the Maronites for, in some case, hundreds of years. Among the lands added to this new mini-empire were the half-Muslim city of Beirut; most of Tripoli, the overwhelmingly Muslim, natural gateway to Syria; and the whole of the Bekaa Valley, where Muslims outnumbered Christians two to one. It also included the districts inland from Sidon and Tyre, where Christians were a distinct minority. The new Maronite overlords constituted the largest community, but one which was less than half of the whole population.

The Alawite state: This isolated coastal region, north of present-day Lebanon, was carved out of the old *sanjaks* of Latakia and Tripoli, and handed over to the Alawites, a despised Muslim heretical sect, as their own, French-administered nation. The Alawites were almost entirely impoverished peasants, who lived in remote enclaves in the mountainous interior, and barely comprised a majority in the new state. The towns, the traditional seat of power and the residences of the Alawites' landlords, were largely Greek Orthodox or Sunni. The result was necessarily tumultuous.

The state of Aleppo: The old *vilayet* of Aleppo, named after the powerful merchant city which was its capital, also became a separate state, but was shorn of almost all of its old northern Kurdish territory, which had been lost to the new republic of Turkey. The Kurdish area that remained in Aleppo (Jazira) was separately administered by the French as a "military territory," as was its inland-desert that was inhabited by bedouin tribes. Aleppo's coastal district of Antioch (Hatay),

with its large Turkish population, was also placed under French administrative control, and was later lost to the new Turkish republic.

The state of Damascus: The old *sanjak* of Damascus also received a new status as a state, but was shorn of much of the Syrian *vilayet* of which Damascus had been the capital. The Druze mountains to the south (Jabal Druze) were severed, and put under separate French administration, while some of the eastern districts, such as the Bekaa Valley, were given to Greater Lebanon. Moreover, southern Syria, as per the Sykes-Picot accord, was severed from the rest of Syria, put under British colonial administration, and made into the new state of Transjordan and the Mandate of Palestine. This further inflamed the Sunni population of Damascus, in particular, because Britain made clear that it intended to turn over Palestine



to European Jews. As a result, Damascus, which viewed itself as the capital of the entire Syrian region, including present-day Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel, was left as a landlocked, desert territory.

The creation of these four states within French-held Syria was enthusiastically favored by the minority Alawites and Maronites, but was bitterly opposed by the Sunnis, who comprised two-thirds of the total regional population. Such conflict also served French interests.

Having set this turmoil into motion, the French changed gears and, in July 1922, suddenly proclaimed the "Federation of the Autonomous States in Syria," which created a single federation of Damascus, Aleppo, and the Alawite state, while preserving their autonomy. Lebanon was not included, and its status as a separate, French-administered state was finalized. By the end of the year, the French changed course again, dissolved the federation, and combined Damascus and Aleppo into one state, with a parliament. The state of the Alawites, on the other hand, was declared fully autonomous, and no longer linked with the rest of Syria.

Syria's 'compact minorities'

When France took over Syria and Lebanon, its population (estimated in 1912) was 3.2 million, of whom 1.8 million were Muslim, 1 million Christian, and 400,000 members of various sects. The overwhelming majority of the population was Arab. Although detailed census data on the population living within current Syrian borders at that time are not available, an estimate of the relative strength of minorities can be made, based on later data, because the comparative change would have been minimal. In 1964, for example, 80% of Syria was ethnically Arab. Its principal ethnic minorities were Kurds (9%), Armenians (4%), Turcomans (3%), and Circassians. Religiously, Syria was 70% Sunni Muslim. The principal religious minorities were the Alawites (11%), Druze (3%), Ismailis (2%), and various Christians (14%, of which the largest component, comprising one-third, was Greek Orthodox).

The sectarian and ethnic minorities have typically lived in small enclaves, within which they comprised the majority. Even in 1964, some 75% of the Alawites of Syria lived in the Latakia region on the northern coast, where they comprised 60% of the population (and where the Greek Orthodox constituted another 15%). Similarly, 90% of the Druze lived in the southern province of al-Suwayda (roughly the same as the old province of Jabal Druze), where they constituted 90% of the population. The Kurds were a majority in the northeastern province of Jazira, where the Christians were also strongly represented. Roughly 80% of the Ismailis lived as a minority in the central province of Hama, which is another Christian stronghold.

sons. That certainly was the view of Rev. Samuel Lyde of England, who lived among the Alawites from 1853 to 1859. According to his 1860 *The Asian Mystery*, which later served as one of the handbooks of the French occupation, the Alawites' secret handshakes, passwords, and ceremonial regalia, all attest to a possible link with the masonry.⁷

Part of the reason for that view is that the Alawite sect is a secret society, which does not reveal its canonical books to non-believers. The hidden doctrines of the sect's higher grades, are not even revealed to the general body of the faithful.⁸

The Alawites are so named, because they worship Ali as the incarnation of God, in contrast to the most basic tenets of Islam. (Another name for the group is the Nosairis, after their ninth-century founder.) According to their doctrine, God revealed himself in the form of a Holy Trinity on seven occasions. In his final emanation, God created Ali, who, in turn, created Muhammed. According to the sect, the first Alawites were stars in the world of light, into which an Alawite is transformed at death. If an Alawite sins, he is reincarnated as a Jew, Christian, or Muslim. The sect also syncretically incorporates various non-Islamic rituals. For example, it celebrates Christmas and Easter, and uses wine in its services.⁹

The French and British were particularly entranced by the "Moon sect," the largest Alawite denomination. According to their studies, the Moon sect's belief that Ali lived in the Moon, as well as their rituals, proved that the sect, and the Alawite religion in general, was pre-Islamic in origin, with possible ties to ancient Babylon. One of the six notables who sent the 1936 letter to Prime Minister Blum, was the leader of the Moon sect. Assad's village was the sect's traditional headquarters.¹⁰

Independence, but not quite

In 1946, Syria became an independent nation, but like many newly independent former colonies, it faced an enraged,

7. Moosa, *op. cit.*, pp. 409-418.

8. For such reasons, the Alawites are condemned by Muslims as *al-batiniyah*, referring to the esoteric nature of their cult.

9. Discussion of Alawite religious doctrine and practices is available in several works. The most comprehensive is Moosa, *op. cit.*, in which pp. 215-418 are devoted to a detailed analysis of the sect's doctrine and history.

The Sunnis and Shia have repeatedly issued religious opinions against the Alawites, because of their doctrine and practices. For example, the twelfth-century Shiite theologian Ibn Shahr Ashub, condemned the Alawites as "nihilists who relinquished Islamic worship and religious duties and permitted immoral and forbidden acts." The fourteenth-century Sunni Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya ruled that "those people who are Nusayriyya [the derogatory name for the Alawites], together with the Qaramita, are more infidel than the Jews and Christians; nay, they are more infidel than many polytheists." The nineteenth-century Sheikh Ibrahim al-Maghribi issued a ruling that it was lawful for a Muslim to kill an Alawite and confiscate his property—which no Muslim could lawfully do to a Jew or Christian. See Moosa, *op. cit.*, pp. 277, 414-415.

10. Seale, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

separatist, minority bloc, which had enjoyed special privileges under the empire. Revolt soon followed. The Alawites, led by Sulayman al-Murshid, rose in armed revolt. Al-Murshid was another of the six dignitaries who had sent the 1936 letter to Prime Minister Blum. His forces were soon crushed, and he was executed. In 1952, Murshid's son led another uprising, also crushed. In 1954, the Druze revolted. The suppression of the Druze revolt succeeded, temporarily, in making Syria a unified nation.

But, in a stunning irony, by 1963 the French-patronized Alawite secessionists had succeeded in taking over all of Syria, and rule it to this day. How was this possible?

A Syrian government study of the Syrian Army in 1949, gives an insight. The study found that "all units of any importance, as well as the important parts [posts], stood under the command of persons originating from religious minorities."¹¹ Even after independence, the Alawites still joined the military at much higher rates than the Sunni majority, where they were secured advancement by their officer brethren. In 1955, the Sunni head of the Army intelligence bureau, Col. Abd al-Hamid al-Sarraj, found to his reported astonishment, that 65% of the Army's non-commissioned officers were Alawites.¹²

On the civilian front, the Alawites scored increasing advances through their political front, the Baath (Renaissance) Party.

The Baath Party was founded in Damascus in 1940 by Michel Aflaq, a member of a Greek Orthodox grain-trading family, and Salah al-Din Bitar, a Sunni Muslim. Both had studied at the University of Paris, where they had been indoctrinated in the radical social theories that the French had used to undermine traditional society within their colonies. The Baath Party called for creating a socialist, secular society, through unifying the entire Arab nation, all the way from Morocco to Iraq.

Following independence, the party became a cloak for the reemergence of Alawite power in Syria. The party's advocacy of a secular state and society, particularly appealed to repressed religious minorities; their utopian call for unifying the Arab world, served to undermine the Syrian nationalist organizations, which tended to be dominated by the Sunni majority. Their call for class conflict helped mobilize the Alawite masses, many of whom were exploited peasants under the thumb of Sunni landlords.¹³

The main Syrian nationalist political parties were natu-

11. *The Struggle for Power in Syria: Sectarianism, Regionalism and Tribalism in Politics, 1961-1980*, by Nikolaos Van Dam (London: Croom Helm, 1981), p. 41. This exhaustive study, by a Dutch Foreign Ministry official, gives a detailed account of Syria's demographic and tribal structure, and its relationship to its political history, and especially the history of its army.

12. Moosa, *op. cit.*, pp. 294-295.

13. The use of the Baath Party as a vehicle for Alawite advance is detailed at great length in Van Dam and Moosa, *op. cit.*

rally dominated by the Sunni Arab majority, who made no secret of their view that the minorities were untrustworthy French collaborators.¹⁴

Syrian politics was turbulent and violent from its independence, as was the politics of the region as a whole. In 1952, the coming to power of Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt, however, gave new promise to the Mideast. Nasser's Pan-Arabism found powerful support within Syria, especially after the 1956 Suez crisis, when Egypt, because of its backing by the Eisenhower administration, defeated the combined military forces of Britain, France, and Israel. In 1958, Syria merged with Egypt to form the United Arab Republic. Although the union reflected Pan-Arabist principles that the Alawites claimed to espouse, the Alawites within the Baath Party opposed the union. The union, however, was supported by the Sunni population.

The United Arab Republic, however, did not function, and, in 1961, it broke apart after a military coup in Syria. By 1963, however, after a confusing period of turmoil and purges, the Baathists took power in a military coup, establishing the regime which later brought Hafez al-Assad to power.

How Hafez al-Assad earned his leash

Hafez al-Assad was born in 1930 to a family of French collaborators, and from a village that was the seat of one of the principal religious dignitaries of the Alawite sect, who was also a French collaborator.

In 1939, Assad moved to the port city of Latakia, to attend a *lycée*, which was then administered by Vichy France. Latakia, the main city in the Alawite region, was then a center of contending radical political movements. Assad fell under Baath Party influence, and joined the party there in 1947, after

14. The Sunni Arab nationalist movement in Syria, however, was under no less foreign imperial manipulation, than the minority separatist movements it fought. But the Sunni organizations tended to be under British, rather than French, control. The leading Sunnite organization in Syria, the Syrian-Palestinian Congress, formed in 1918, was a product of the Anglo-French-created Young Turks—who ran the Ottoman Empire during 1908-19, and Sheikh Muhammad Abduh of Egypt, a protégé of the Egyptian viceroy, Lord Cromer. All of the Syrian Sunni factions were controlled or manipulated by Lawrence of Arabia or his networks. See *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism 1920-45*, by Philip S. Khoury (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 514-534; and "Factionalism among Syrian Nationalists during the French Mandate," by Philip S. Khoury, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 13. no. 4, 1981.

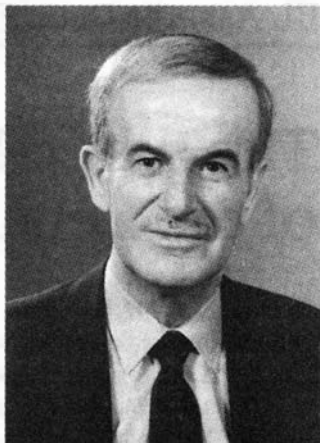
it was made legal. In 1951, Baathist student leader Assad was elected president of the nationwide Union of Syrian Students. He also entered the Military Academy in Homs that year, which had served as the springboard for military Alawite advancement.¹

In 1955, the Syrian government sent Assad, then a young Air Force officer, to Egypt, for further training. He returned to Syria in 1958, where he married into the prominent Makhluḥ family.

By 1959, Assad was back in Egypt, at which point he conspired with four other young officers stationed there, to form the Military Committee, a secret society within the Baath Party. Its other members were future Syrian President Salah Jadid and Muhammad Umran, both Alawites; and Abd al-Karim al-Jundi, the future head of Syrian intelligence, and Ahmad al-Mir, both Ismailis. In 1963, Umran, Salah, and Assad would oversee the military coup that brought the Baath Party to power.²

The initial blueprint for the coup, however, was not made at party headquarters, but at a 1960 meeting of Alawite religious leaders and elders in Assad's family village of Qardaha. Attending were Assad, Jadid, and Umran, now returned to Syria. The first step, it was decided, was to strengthen Alawite officer dominance of the Baath Party, in preparation for taking power. The elders decided to grant Umran the rank of *bab*, the highest degree in the sect; while Jadid was given the rank of *naqib*. At the follow-up meeting in 1963, immediately prior to the coup, Jadid was assigned the responsibility of leading the Alawites within the Army, while Assad was granted the rank of *naqib*.³

Once in power, the Baath Party systematically began to purge Sunnis from the officer corps. Sunnis were also discriminated against in recruitment to the Baathist military party organization; to the Baathist National Guard, the political branch of the military; and to the intelligence services—while



Alawites, and also the Druze, Ismailis, and Greek Orthodox, were given preferential treatment. Moreover, Sunni officers were transferred to less important posts, while Alawite officers who were their subordinates by rank, held virtual dual power in the regiments.⁴

By 1966, the Alawites were strong enough to run another coup to deepen their power over the Sunni nationalist parties, and over the military. Hafez al-Assad, who had been head of the Air Force since 1964, became minister of defense. Soon, Assad and Jadid held undisputed power in Damascus.⁵

Countdown to Assad's coup

The 1966 coup and its aftermath had succeeded in putting France's old clients, the Alawites, in power in Syria. But, at this point, a power struggle between the Assad and Jadid factions broke out, over who would gain total control.

The two factions put forward differing party programs. The Jadid group argued that Syria's priority had to be the "socialist transformation" of society. Jadid advocated closer ties with the Soviet Union to accomplish this, and rejected military and political cooperation with Jordan, Lebanon, or Iraq, which he termed "reactionary," rightist, and pro-Western. Jadid argued that the rejection of such cooperation was necessary, even if it were to be at the expense of the struggle with Israel.

The Assad group, on the other hand, argued that armed struggle against Israel had to be Syria's top priority, even at the expense of Syria's socialist transformation. It advocated military and political coordination with Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, despite their reactionary nature, as long as this benefitted the struggle against Israel.⁶

Despite the Assad group's fulminations against Israel, its actions were not exactly the most brilliant during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Assad's Defense Ministry announced the fall of the Golan Heights before it had actually occurred, leading to a rout of Syrian forces there.

The 1967 Arab-Israeli war turned out to be a repeat of the Suez imperialist adventure, but this time with the United States joining the French, British, and Israelis, against Nasser's Egypt.

The conditions for the war were laid, when Syrian jets engaged in provocative dogfights with Israeli jets on the Syrian/Israeli border, raising tensions to a fever pitch. Nasser was foolishly lured into ordering the blockade of Israeli

1. Patrick Seale, *Assad: The Struggle for the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 24-40.

2. Nikolaos Van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria: Sectarianism, Regionalism and Tribalism in Politics, 1961-1980* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), pp. 43, 49-50; Matti Moosa, *The Extremist Shiites: the Ghulat Sects* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1983), pp. 296-97.

3. Moosa, *op. cit.*, pp. 297-303. David Roberts, the British ambassador to Syria and Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s, also references this meeting, citing confidential diplomatic sources. See David Roberts, *The Baath and the Creation of Modern Syria* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), p. 50.

4. Van Dam, *op. cit.*, pp. 43, 52-53; Moosa, *op. cit.* p. 229.

5. Statistics again tell the story. The Alawites, who constituted 11% of the general population, soon constituted 38% of the officer corps. The Druze and Ismailis (who constituted 3% and 2% of the general population, respectively) soon constituted another 9% each. Reflecting the Alawite dominance of Latakia, 63% of the officer corps came from there (whether Alawite, Christian, or Sunni). See Van Dam, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102, Moosa, *op. cit.*, pp. 294-95.

6. Van Dam, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-84.

access to the Red Sea, in response. The blockade entrapped Egypt into an act of war with Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol was reluctant to retaliate with full-scale war against Egypt and the other Arab states. But, he was overruled by a war party, led by Shimon Peres, Moshe Dayan, Ezer Weizman, and Chaim Herzog, who ran a cold coup against Eshkol, and placed their operatives in the key positions of power. Israel launched a surprise attack against Egypt on June 5.⁷

The actions carried out by Syrian Defense Minister Assad during the war, are inexplicable from a military point of view.

First of all, during the critical first 22 hours of the war, Assad took no action against Israel—and this was at a point when Israeli forces were overwhelmingly concentrated in the south, on the Egyptian and Jordanian borders. Assad completely ignored Egyptian pleas for military aid, and stood back while the Israeli Air Force systematically destroyed the Jordanian and Egyptian air fleets on the ground. Moreover, Assad took no action to protect Syria's own Air Force, which remained on the ground, and was later destroyed there.

Even after losing air cover, Assad could have ordered an armored land invasion of Israel. The Israeli Army was then locked in combat on its southern front, and a Syrian invasion would have preempted any Israeli move on the Golan Heights. Instead, one day prior to the June 10 Israeli attack on the Golan Heights, Assad's brother Rifaat, then a tank commander in the Golan Heights, and Jadid's brother Izzat, turned their tanks around in retreat to Damascus, in order to "protect the revolution." Their action stripped the strategic Golan Heights of most of its tanks.

The next day, the Israeli Army invaded. Radio Damascus broadcast a report that the Golan had fallen, before it had occurred, triggering a rout that ensured defeat.

In 1968, the former Syrian ambassador to France, Sami al-Jundi, supplied some insight into Assad's strange behavior. In an interview with *al-Hawadith*, al-Jundi reported that he had met with Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban in Paris, two weeks before the war, on instructions from Damascus. Eban assured him that "the Israeli forces will not go beyond Qunaytira [the Golan Heights], even though the road to Damascus will be open."⁸

Although both Jadid and Assad were implicated in these disastrous actions, only Jadid seemed to suffer from them politically. On Feb. 25, 1969, Assad made his first coup attempt, which was not successful, but which did not weaken his own position.

It would take Black September to clinch the deal.

7. Umar F. Abd-Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria* (Berkeley, Calif.: Mizan Press, 1983), pp. 57-63. Also see Moosa, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-309, and Seale, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-141.

8. See Moosa, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

III. Assad's Drug Franchise

The narco-history of the Lebanese war

On Nov. 23, 1992, the House Subcommittee on Crime and Criminal Justice, under the direction of Rep. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.), issued a preliminary staff report entitled *Syria, President Bush and Drugs—The Administration's next Iraqgate*. The report, based on an exhaustive review of classified and unclassified information, accused the Bush administration of having systematically whitewashed the role of the Syrian government in making Lebanon into a center of the international dope trade.

"The U.S. Government now possesses extensive intelligence information implicating many Syrian Government officials in the Lebanese drug trade," the report states, "although the Administration acknowledges that a few Syrian officials are involved in the Lebanese drug trade, it simply refuses to admit the extent to which drug corruption has been institutionalized in the Syrian military forces now occupying Lebanon. Without Syrian military participation, the present system of growing, producing, and transporting drugs in Lebanon today would simply collapse."

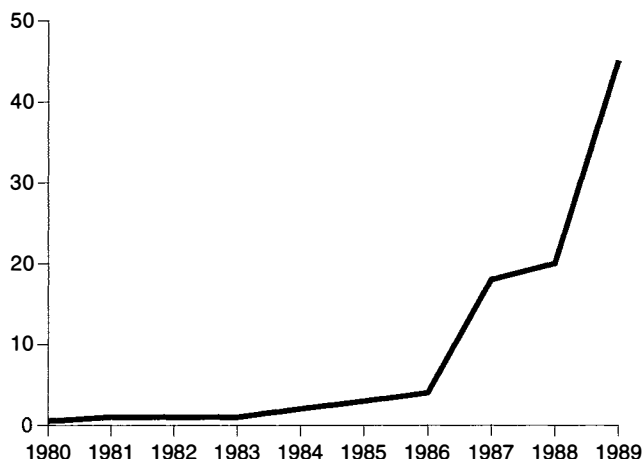
According to the report, "the level of drug corruption rises much higher than a few low-ranking Syrian soldiers. President Hafez Assad's own brother Rifaat; Syrian Defense Minister Mustafa Tlass; General Ali Dubah, Commander of Syrian Military Intelligence; and General Ghazi Kenaan, Commander of Syrian Military Intelligence in Lebanon, are all intimately connected with drug traffickers operating out of Lebanon."

The report concluded: "The present administration refuses to recognize overwhelming evidence and admit that the Syrian government benefits from the [Lebanese] Bekaa Valley drug trade. . . . It is clear from the record that this Administration's failure to prosecute the drug-running Syrian generals is consistent with, and apparently driven by, its current attempts to court the Assad regime."

In fact, as *EIR's* investigations have determined, Lebanon emerged as one of the world's most important dope plantations during the 1980s, because Vice President and then President George Bush handed Lebanon over to Hafez al-Assad, and protected his narcotics business.

As a direct consequence of these policies, Lebanon's dope production skyrocketed. By 1989, it was producing over 900 metric tons of hashish and 4.5 metric tons of heroin annually. Syria's potential revenue from the dope trade that year was \$7.9 billion, while the official total value of all of Syria's

FIGURE 1
Opium production in Lebanon
 (metric tons)



Lebanese opium production, which zoomed from 0.5 tons in 1980, to an estimated 45 metric tons in 1989, has been overseen by the occupying Syrian Army, which introduced extensive cultivation of opium poppy into the Bekaa Valley in 1983. All of the opium is refined into heroin, with about 20% exported to the United States, and the rest to western Europe. The data are taken from U.S., Lebanese, and UN statistics. Since George Bush gave all of Lebanon to Assad in 1990, the U.S. government has fraudulently claimed that Syria has ceased all drug production in Lebanon, making estimates based on U.S. data impossible. U.S. government officials report off-the-record, however, that opium production continues there on the same level as in 1989.

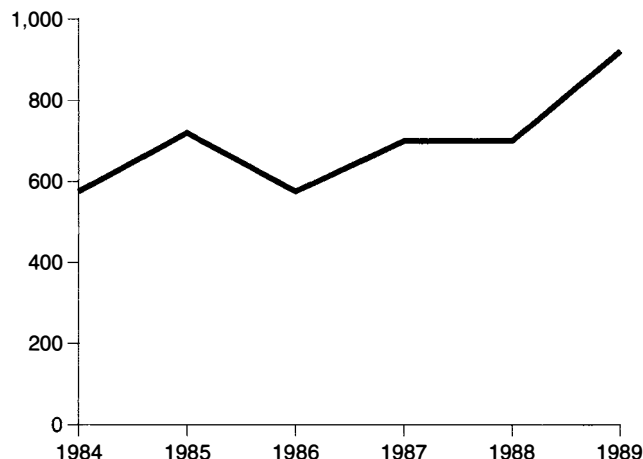
exports stood at only \$1.6 billion.¹

As of 1989, Lebanon was producing over half of the world's hashish, a highly concentrated form of marijuana, and had become a significant heroin producer as well. According to Schumer's committee, based on a review of U.S. government data, "at least 20% of the heroin consumed each year in the U.S. is from Southwest Asia—a good portion of which is from Lebanon."

Throughout the 1980s, Lebanon became a safe haven for international terrorist organizations. According to the head of the Syrian-based Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), the Syrian government provided assistance to no fewer than 73 "libera-

1. See *EIR*, July 26, 1996, "Britain's Dope, Inc. Grows to a \$521 Billion Business," for the method and source of data used in *EIR*'s estimates of worldwide narcotics production. We are confident that we err on the conservative side. Where not otherwise indicated, information in this article is taken from interviews with sources in the region, former Lebanese Narcotics Authority records, documentation assembled by the National Alliance of Lebanese Americans (NALA), and newspaper articles, of which the most informative have been by freelance journalists Ralph Cwerman and Remi Favret.

FIGURE 2
Hashish production in Lebanon
 (metric tons)



The Syrian Army vastly increased Lebanese marijuana plant cultivation in the late 1970s, all of which was converted to hashish. The data available (beginning in 1984), show that hashish production increased by 50% by the end of the decade. Half of the drug went to western Europe, and the rest served the Mideast market.

tion" organizations during that decade.² This assistance not only meant safe-housing, training, and funding; it also meant giving them a cut in the dope trade. As a result, the PKK, for example, is now the biggest heroin distributor in Europe.

A new dope bonanza

It is the case, however, that narcotics played an important role in the Lebanese economy even before Syrian occupation. Lebanon was traditionally a major refiner of Turkish and Iranian heroin, and the major regional producer of hashish. But it was only following Syrian occupation, that Lebanon became a dominant factor in the world's narcotics trade.

The first region which the Syrian Army occupied after its invasion in 1976, was the Bekaa Valley, a 75-mile-long strip of land, on the average 10 miles wide, in the northeast of the country. Before the occupation, the valley had been Lebanon's breadbasket. It soon became the base for 30,000 of the 40,000 Syrian troops stationed in the country, and the site of Syria's dope fields.

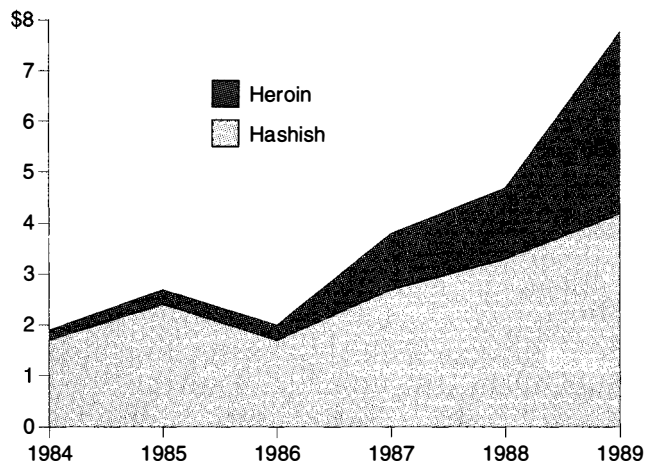
The Syrian Army immediately ordered the peasants in the Bekaa to cultivate marijuana rather than potatoes, and, in order to ensure quality dope harvests, introduced mechanized agriculture there for the first time. By 1980, marijuana fields covered nearly 90% of the agricultural land of the valley.

2. Abdullah Ocalan interview with journalist Mehmet Ali Birand, published in the Turkish daily *Milliyet* on March 23, 1991.

FIGURE 3

Value of Lebanon's hashish and heroin production

(billions \$)



Under Syrian occupation, Lebanon has become one of the world's biggest drug plantations. If all of the heroin and hashish produced there in 1984 were sold, Syria would have reaped \$1.9 billion; in 1989, Syria would have raked in \$7.9 billion. Syria continues the same level of production today—while the U.S. and other governments look the other way—and is making even more money, due to increased drug prices. Now, would anyone in his right mind, think that Assad would readily be willing give up this drug bonanza, in exchange for the return of the Golan Heights from Israel?

In 1982, the Syrian Army began to introduce opium poppy to the valley for the first time, and brought in Turkish poppy growers to teach local farmers how to cultivate the unfamiliar crop. The Army also built heroin refineries there. Soon, opium poppy fields began to displace marijuana fields. By 1990, some 30% of the farmers in the valley were growing opium poppy, producing about 45 tons of opium in a normal season (in turn converted into 4.5 tons of heroin).

This narcotics business was in no way covert. Every harvest season, for example, Beirut's newspapers published the local and international price of hashish, opium, and heroin.

Narco-terrorism

While the Bekaa Valley dope business was expanding during the 1980s, the rest of Lebanon was being systematically destroyed by warring sectarian militias. Every major city and every major factory was ruined. The aggregate destruction to the nation's infrastructure was several hundred billion dollars.

But, the civil war hardly touched the Bekaa. There, Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Sunnis, Shia, Druze, Kurds, and Palestinians, lived relatively at peace. Each group's militias were busily engaged in cultivating and refining narcotics.

It was only *outside* the production and refinement zones in the Bekaa, that these groups fought each other. And there, the fight typically took the form of a struggle over control over narcotics routes and ports. The reason that the militias fought over the routes and ports was economic. Dope sold for ten to a hundred times the price at the ports, compared to the price at its source, in the valley.

In order to ensure that the warring clans had the funds necessary to continue their civil war, Assad handed out dope franchises.

For example, Assad gave Hezbollah extensive opium plantations in Nabi Chit and Hermel. His brother Rifaat provided his own private security force to guard the plantations. According to Schumer's subcommittee, Hezbollah was taking in \$100 million a year in the heroin trade as of 1992.

Assad had the same policy toward non-Lebanese terrorist organizations that flocked into Lebanon in this period. For example, Abu Nidal's Palestinian terrorist sect was given a choice dope plantation in Bar Elias. Among others, the Kurdish PKK, the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), were based in the valley, attached to tracts of marijuana and opium poppy fields.

The profit from this trade was enormous, and financed the Syrian Army's occupation of Lebanon, and the operations of its militias and terrorist sects as well.

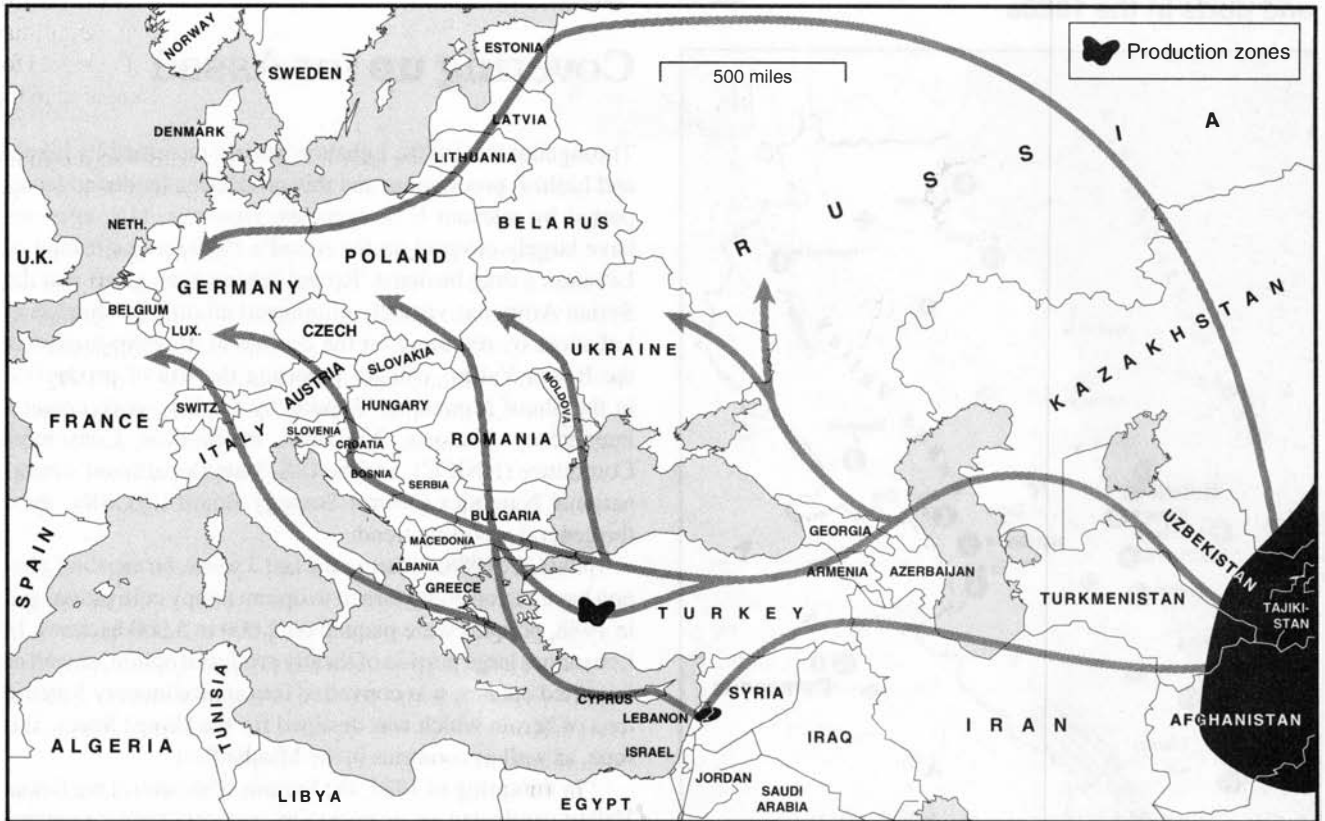
In 1990, the Lebanese Narcotics Authority, which operated in the small section of Lebanon which was then still independent, issued a report on its investigations of where the drug money went. According to their estimate, 40% of the profits went to Syrian Army intelligence, to finance the occupation. Another 45% went to finance the Syrian Army's smuggling network (which often employed terrorist sects as traffickers), local Syrian-backed militias, and terrorist training camps. The rest went to sustain local planters, and maintain infrastructure. Even according to the authority's very conservative estimate of a total income of \$1.3 billion annually, that comes to about a half-billion a year for the terrorist sects.

Assad also used the trade to extend Syrian influence into new areas.

Lebanese heroin soon became a medium of exchange for European terrorists' arms purchases. The Irish Republican Army, the Corsican National Liberation Front, and the Italian Red Brigades, among other groups, used Lebanese heroin to buy arms. All these groups developed a Syrian connection.

Second, the Bekaa emerged as a training ground and safe haven, for groups with no previous Mideast tie. For example, the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka. And, at the same time, the U.S., French, British, Greek, Bulgarian, Russian, Cuban, and East German intelligence agents and mercenaries who moved to the Bekaa to train terrorist groups there, became part of Syria's narco-terrorist nexus.

Central Asia-Mideast narcotics routes



Post-1990 reorganization

From 1976 through 1989, Syria emerged as the overlord of Lebanon. But a small portion of the country remained under the control of the legitimate Lebanese government, run in 1989 by Prime Minister Gen. Michel Aoun.

In the spring of 1989, the Syrian forces launched a massive assault against Aoun's forces, crushing them. Within a year, Lebanese sovereignty had been extinguished. According to knowledgeable sources, one reason for this assault, was that Aoun had begun to take over the various, competing militias' drug ports, since he saw that as the only way of stopping the civil war. No drug exports, no money to buy arms for the militias. Accordingly, the Bush administration began a major mobilization against Aoun, as did the French government of President François Mitterrand.

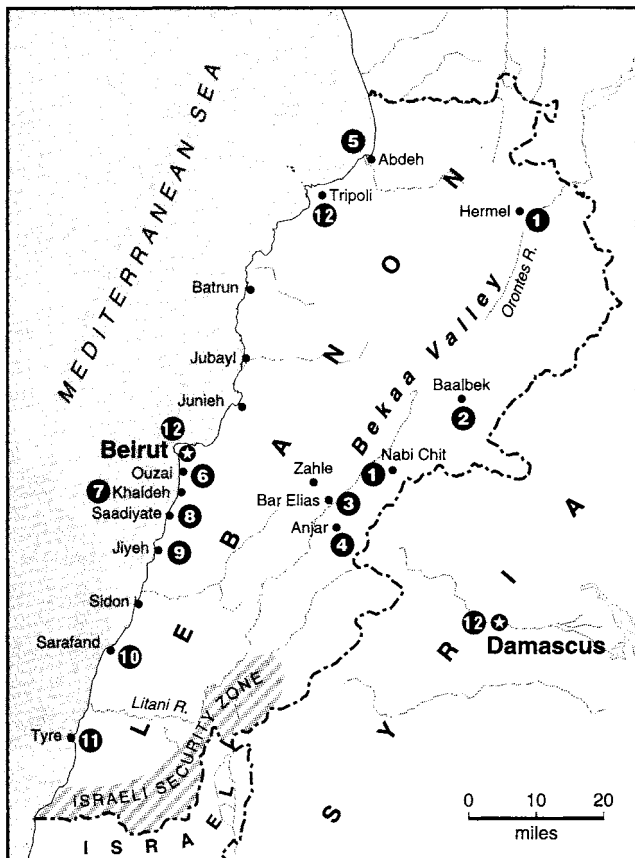
Jean-François Deniau, deputy head of the French National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee, pointed the finger at then-President George Bush: "The eruption of fighting in Beirut recently followed the decision of General Aoun to close the illegal ports, through which drugs were transiting," he told *Journal du Dimanche* in 1990. "The Americans know that Syria and the militia rake in huge profits from the poppy fields in the Bekaa Valley, where terrorist training camps are situ-

ated. The United States condemns drugs and terrorism worldwide, but makes an exception for the Syrians in Lebanon."

As a result of U.S., British, and French support, Assad soon was master of all of Lebanon. No sooner had Lebanon come firmly under Syria's control, than Assad began a reorganization of Lebanese narcotics production. Production itself was shifted from the valley to the Shouf Mountains, which flank the valley on its west. Opium production there, according to U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration sources, is at the same level that the Bekaa Valley reached in 1989. Assad also built new refineries to process opium grown in Afghanistan and Central Asia, increasing his role as a middleman.

This shift in Syria's narco-profile did not decrease its narco-revenues—far from it—but it did give the Bush State Department a pretext to whitewash Assad, and to even praise the Syrian Army for its "highly effective" efforts to eliminate Lebanese drug cultivation—pretending that dope could only be grown in the Bekaa. Continuing this Bush legacy, the State Department today fraudulently classifies Syria/Lebanese opium and marijuana production as "negligible." It admits that heroin refineries are still active, but it claims that these refineries, by being located in Hezbollah regions, are outside of Syrian Army control!

Lebanese narco-militias' plantations and ports in the 1980s



Key to Map 8

1. Hezbollah controlled the drug plantations in Hermel and Nabi Chit.
2. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard controlled the plantations in Baalbek.
3. Abu Nidal's organization controlled the plantations in Bar Elias.
4. ASALA controlled the Anjar plantation.
5. The port of Abdeh was used for Syrian Army drug export.
6. Ouzai was controlled by the Amal militia.
7. Khaldeh was controlled by the Druze militia.
8. Saadiyate was jointly controlled by the Druze and pro-Syrian Palestinians.
9. Jiyeh was run by the Druze.
10. Sarafand was run by Hezbollah.
11. Tyre was run by the Palestinians.
12. The major port cities of Tripoli and Beirut were used by the Syrian Army to export drugs, as were the airports in Beirut and Damascus.

Documentation

Covering up for Assad

Throughout the 1980s, Lebanon greatly increased its heroin and hashish production, and this production tended to be reported by relevant U.S. agencies. However, U.S. agencies have largely covered up for Assad's 1990 reorganization of Lebanon's drug business. Recent reports even assert that the Syrian Army has virtually eliminated all drug production in Lebanon, by reporting on the decline in drug production in the Bekaa Valley, without reporting the rise of production in the Shouf Mountains. Reports by the U.S. government's interagency National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee (NNICC), and the U.S. State Department's International Narcotics Control Strategy Board (INCSB), show the general reporting trend.

NNICC, 1988: "During the last 3 years, farmers in Lebanon have increasingly turned to opium poppy cultivation, and in 1988, poppies were planted on 2,000 to 5,000 hectares. In Lebanon, a large portion of locally produced opium, as well as imported opiates, was converted into approximately 5 metric tons of heroin which was destined for the United States, Europe, as well as countries in the Middle East. . . .

"In the spring of 1987, the Syrians who control the Bekaa Valley conducted an operation to eradicate opium poppies; however, the results were negligible."

NNICC, 1990: "Lebanon supplies regional demand for heroin and ships drugs to Australia, Canada, Europe, and the United States. Most of the warring factions in the country, as well as some known terrorist organizations, are involved in one or more aspects of the illicit narcotics trade. Sixty-five percent of the country is controlled by Syria. Periodic reporting suggests Syrian army control over drug production in the Bekaa Valley. Almost all opium is converted locally to heroin. Large amounts of heroin may be smuggled to the United States."

NNICC, 1991: "Lebanon remained a major illicit narcotics production and trafficking country in 1991. About 37 tons of opium were produced in 1991 from 8,398 acres of opium poppy. Numerous credible reports suggested that some Syrian military officers protected drug activity in the Bekaa Valley and provided transportation for the export of narcotics produced in the region. . . .

"Syrian forces assisted Lebanese government elements in limited eradication operations directed against opium poppy cultivation in Lebanon. The Syrian government cooperated in international investigations of alleged drug trafficking."

NNICC, 1992: "Opium poppy cultivation in Lebanon was significantly reduced due, principally, to bad weather but also due to some eradication undertaken by Lebanese and

Syrian forces. However, heroin production from opium and morphine imported through Turkish brokers from Afghanistan and Pakistan continued apace.”

NNICC, 1995: “In the Middle East, opium poppy cultivation in Lebanon significantly declined. As a result of eradication campaigns, less than 90 hectares were available for harvest. In 1994, an aggressive joint eradication program was conducted by Lebanon and Syria, but pre-eradication production levels were maintained by using imported drug supplies.

“To block the flow of hashish from Lebanon, Syrian and Lebanese government forces aggressively increased efforts to eradicate cannabis in 1994. During the spring and summer of 1994, Lebanese officials, in conjunction with Syrian counterparts, mounted a large and effective eradication program. As a result of this program, cannabis cultivation in Lebanon dropped 50%, from 15,700 hectares in 1993 to 8,100 hectares in 1994. Production similarly decreased from 565 metric tons in 1993 to 275 metric tons in 1994.”

INCSB, 1996: “Illicit opium and cannabis cultivation in Lebanon remains significantly diminished due to strict enforcement and highly effective continued eradication efforts

by joint Lebanese-Syria authorities. As a result, there was an appreciable decrease in domestic cannabis cultivation, and almost no opium cultivation in 1995. Nevertheless, Lebanon did not successfully reduce the amount of narcotics imported into the country for purposes of process conversion and re-export. The joint Lebanese-Syrian effort to eradicate cultivation of illicit crops in the Baalbek-Hermel region, which was initiated in 1992, has produced notable results . . . the almost total eradication of these crops and no re-cultivation.

“The almost 20 years of large-scale unimpeded narcotics production activity in Lebanon appears to have ended. The focus now must be set on the downstream aspects of the narcotics trade as opium and morphine base continue to enter Lebanon from Southwest Asia through Syria for conversion into heroin. The heroin labs in the Bekaa Valley are small, mobile, well hidden, and consequently difficult to detect. Further complicating the already difficult efforts at lab discovery is the fact that they are largely in Hezbollah territory.”

According to the same report, Lebanon’s production of opium was 45 metric tons in 1989, 32 in 1990, 34 in 1991, 0 in 1992, 4 in 1993, 0 in 1994, and 1.5 in 1995.

Syria’s Monzer al-Kassar was Bush’s arms partner

Monzer al-Kassar, together with his brother Ghassan, were two of the Syrian regime’s primary arms- and drug-traffickers throughout the 1980s, according to the book *Godfather of Terror*, by a German police investigator writing under the pseudonym Manfred Morstein. The duo were low-level pushers, until Ghassan married the daughter of Gen. Ali Dubah, the head of Syrian Intelligence, who also supervised narcotics production in occupied Lebanon.

In the United States, Monzer al-Kassar was under investigation by the FBI, CIA, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and the U.S. Customs Service, for crimes ranging from arms- and drug-trafficking to airline-hijacking and kidnapping. Nevertheless, Vice President George Bush routinely used Monzer al-Kassar to sell arms to the Contras and the Iranians. The arrangement is just one indication of the secret Bush and Assad dope and terror partnership.

As of 1984, the DEA had identified Monzer al-Kassar as the Syrian drug-lord responsible for distribution of heroin and hashish in France, Italy, and Spain. The DEA, other U.S. agencies, and other governments were investigating the al-Kassar family-owned Banco de Bilbao of

Spain. Syria’s General Dubah, Hafez al-Assad, and Rifaat Assad all maintained sizable accounts in the bank.

The DEA and other agencies were also investigating al-Kassar’s ties to Colombian cocaine barons Jorge Luis Ochoa and Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha, who were then rapidly expanding their European operations, in partnership with Syria.

However, at the same time as al-Kassar was wanted by the DEA and other law enforcement agencies, he was a business partner with Lt. Col. Oliver North in shipping East bloc-made assault rifles to the Contras, on behalf of the Bush-directed secret support apparatus established under National Security Decision Directives 2 and 3. Al-Kassar’s other partners in the venture were Maj. Gen. Richard Secord (ret.), and former CIA official Thomas Clines—both longtime subordinates of former CIA official and Bush Presidential campaign speechwriter Theodore G. Shackley. A number of front companies of the Special Air Services (SAS), the British elite “anti-terrorist” commando force, with Mideast headquarters in Oman, were also involved.

Al-Kassar also proved helpful to Bush in selling arms to Iran. A 1987 investigation into the Italian firm Borletti, on suspicion of running arms to Iran, revealed that the operation was coordinated from Barcelona, Spain by the Bovega company, a front company of Monzer al-Kassar, on behalf of Rifaat al-Assad and his son, Firaas al-Assad.

Monzer al-Kassar later figured as the principal suspect in the 1988 downing of Pan Am Flight 103.

IV. Profiles

Assad's terrorists and drug-runners

In the 1970s and 1980s, Syria and Syrian-occupied Lebanon emerged as the safe haven for the most important Mideast terrorist organizations. All the Palestinian "Rejection Front" sects opposing the PLO are based there. So are the Kurdish and Armenian sects that are warring against Turkey. Assad has even provided a safe haven for groups as far away as the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka.

Even the U.S. State Department, in a rare display of honesty, has acknowledged this reality. "From the mid-1970s through 1983," its November 1986 *White Paper on Syrian Terrorism* reads, "Syrian personnel are known to have been directly involved in terrorist organizations. These organizations were primarily directed against other Arabs, such as Syrian dissidents, moderate Arab states such as Jordan, and pro-Arafat Palestinian as well as Israeli and Jewish targets. By late 1983 Damascus had curtailed use of its own personnel. Instead, it began to rely more heavily on terrorist groups made up of non-Syrians. As long as Syria does not stop terrorism from its own territory, or areas of Lebanon under its effective control, the security of all the states in the region is jeopardized."

This remains the case 10 years later, because no action has been taken against Syria for its protection of these groups.

Two of the most important terrorist groups that Assad protects are the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) and the Hezbollah of Lebanon. We provide profiles of these below. Both are deeply involved in the dope trade, and are currently and accurately classified as "narco-terrorist," by the U.S. government.

The PKK and Hezbollah are not merely supported by Assad; both also find support in the capitals of Europe, and among Bush's circles in the United States.

Since 1983, the PKK has been leading a brutal civil war in southeast Turkey, which has claimed 18,000 lives. Its actions, in the border region of Turkey, Iran, and Iraq, have provided a nice handle for the imperial powers to block any economic development of the region. Without the continuous support provided by the French and British governments, especially, as well as from key factions in Russia and the United States, the PKK would not exist. French President François Mitterrand's widow, Danielle Mitterrand, is one of the PKK's patrons. Her objective is frankly imperial: It is to use the PKK to create the conditions for implementing those features of

the Sykes-Picot accords, which had been blocked by Turkish leader Kemal Ataturk back in the 1920s. Among her allies in this venture, are Lord Avebury of Britain, Newt Gingrich of the United States, and numerous parliamentarians from throughout Europe.

The Hezbollah, which was created by Syria and Iran in Lebanon, in the aftermath of the 1982 Israeli invasion, is another one of these terrorist pawns. It has been especially used to prevent a comprehensive peace in the region. Hezbollah has been instrumental in keeping Lebanon in a state of turmoil, through its militarily senseless rocket attacks on northern Israel. Its 1980s kidnapping spree against Americans, gave Bush and Thatcher the pretext to arm Iran, in exchange for the hostages' release. Last spring, it teamed up with Islamic Jihad and Hamas, to launch a series of rocket attacks and bus bombings, which created the hysteria in the Israeli population needed to put Benjamin Netanyahu and Ariel Sharon in power.

The narco-terrorist Kurdish Workers Party

Name of group: Kurdish Workers Party (PKK).

Headquarters: Bekaa Valley, Lebanon; Damascus and Latakia, Syria; important representative offices in London, Paris, Brussels, Moscow, Athens, Teheran, Washington, and throughout Germany.¹

Founded: The PKK was formed in 1974, as the offspring of the Federation of Revolutionary Youth (Dev Genc) of Turkey, which was banned following the 1970 military coup. Abdullah "Apo" Ocalan, the PKK founder who still leads the group, was a political science student at the University of Ankara. The group moved out of the universities and into the Kurdish marshes in 1975, and became a formally distinct revolutionary party in 1978. Its military arm, the People's Liberation Army of Kurdistan (ARGK), was formed in 1984. The PKK formed the Kurdish Peoples Liberation Front (ERNK) in 1985, whose European center of operations was in Cologne, Germany until Germany banned the PKK and ERNK in 1993. In 1994, the PKK formed the Kurdish Parliament in Exile, headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. It has also

1. Unless otherwise indicated, sources include interviews, PKK literature, and press accounts. Other published sources, of varying reliability, include "Transnational Sources of Support for the Kurdish Insurgency in Turkey," a speech delivered at the 25th annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, on Nov. 24, 1991, by Prof. Michael M. Gunter; *The Kurdish struggle*, by Edgar O'Ballance (St. Martins Press, 1996); and *Modern History of the Kurds*, by David McDowell (London, Minority Rights Group, 1966).

established "Kurdish Information Bureaus," or similar front groups, throughout Europe and the United States.

Location of operations, areas active:

Primary operations:

- *Turkey:* The PKK is primarily active in the Southeast Anatolian region of Turkey ("Kurdistan"), especially in the provinces of Van, Hakkari, Bitlis, Siirt, Sirmak, Batman, Marden, Diyarbakir, Bingol, and Tunceli. The PKK has led a brutal civil war there since 1984. The region is infiltrated from PKK bases in neighboring Syria, Iran, and northern Iraq.

"Kurdistan" is a vast, largely mountainous area straddling Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran, with a total population of some 20 million ethnic Kurds. The number of Kurds living in Turkey is about 12 million, out of a total of 65 million people in Turkey. The Kurds are an Iranic people divided into over 50 primary tribal confederations, who speak mutually incomprehensible dialects. Most of the Kurdish population are exploited peasants and shepherds, who work for the sheikhs and aghas (feudal landlords) of their tribe. Since the beginning of the civil war in 1984, many of these peasants and shepherds have fled to the rapidly growing cities of the region, where most are unemployed. Smuggling, banditry, and mercenary activities are other primary occupations.

Regional operations:

- *Syria:* Since the Turkish military coup in 1980, Syria has provided a haven for PKK founder and leader Abdullah "Apo" Ocalan and the PKK, and has allowed the PKK to launch raids on Turkish territory. Without Syrian support, the PKK would not exist. In 1985, Turkey constructed an electrified wire fence along its entire border with Syria, protected by mine fields and patrols. Somewhat less than 10% of the Syrian population is Kurdish, primarily living on the border with Turkey.

In July 1987, Turkey's Prime Minister Turgut Özal signed a security protocol in Damascus. Syria agreed to prevent the PKK from raiding Turkey from its territory, and to close down the PKK camps. Turkey, which in the meantime had nearly completed the Ataturk Dam on the Euphrates, which flows into Syria, agreed to supply Syria with no less than 500 cubic meters of water per second. A request for the extradition of Ocalan, however, was refused.

Syria's compliance with the accord, however, took the form of moving PKK camps to the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, supposedly outside its legal control, where they remain to this day. Since September 1992, Syria has claimed that these camps have been closed down. According to an October 1989 Turkish government statement, Ocalan is a good friend of President Assad's brother, Rifaat Assad, one of the regime's top narcotics capos.

In January 1995, Turkey's Prime Minister Tansu Ciller admitted, for the first time, that Turkish Armed Forces had recently entered Syrian territory while on "anti-terrorist" missions. Syrian support of the PKK is a primary cause of Turkey's tense relations with Syria.

MAP 9

PKK area of operation



PKK terrorism has led to emergency rule in 10 Turkish provinces.

- *Iran:* Iran has provided support for the PKK, but covertly, and at a much lower level than Syria. In 1989, Apo Ocalan's brother, Osman Ocalan, established a liaison office in Teheran, and in the following year negotiated the creation of 20 operational bases on the Iranian border with Turkey, targeting especially the Turkish provinces of Van, Agri, and Kars. Simultaneously, the PKK, which is ideologically opposed to Islamic fundamentalism, began to publicly praise the Iranian revolution for the first time. Turkish government sources in 1991 reported that the PKK had important camps in Selvana, Rezhan, and Ziveh in Iran.

In the aftermath of Turkish attacks on PKK bases in Iraq in summer 1995, the PKK established eight more camps in Iran, close to the border with Turkey, according to the Turkish daily *Sabah*. The PKK reportedly now has several offices and safe houses in Teheran. The paper reports that the Iranian agency responsible for aiding the PKK is the Komiteh ye Panahandehgan, a committee established to aid those who want asylum in Iran.

- *Iraq:* The 1991 Anglo-American war against Iraq eliminated the Iraqi government's control over its northern, ethnic Kurdish region. Since that time, Britain and France, with the support of the Bush administration, established and administered a Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq, under the provisions of the UN's "Operation Comfort." The enclave has also provided safe haven for the PKK.

This Kurdish region has always been a problem for Iraq, and was a target of Iranian-organized insurrection, even prior to the Iranian revolution, under the Shah. During the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War, Iran armed the Barzani clan's Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), which occupied much of the 550-mile Iraqi-Turkish border. Iran also armed the Talabani clan's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), which operated around Kirkuk. The Iran-instigated attacks on oil pipelines and the like, were used to pin down Iraqi troops in the north.

Simultaneously, Iranian ally Hafez al-Assad established

PKK camps in northern Iraq, on the border with Turkey, in the same general area dominated by the Barzani clan, which has since been allied with the PKK. As a result, virtually the entire border region between Iraq and Turkey fell under the control of Kurds controlled by Syria and Iran. It is unclear what effect the Barzani clan's September 1996 ouster of Talabani forces from northern Iraq will have on the PKK, and whether Barzani will continue his alliance with the PKK.

International operations:

The PKK deploys a vast network throughout western Europe, which is used to safehouse cadre, raise funds through narcotics trafficking, and engage in propagandistic operations.

- *Germany:* The external base of PKK operations (outside of its regional safe haven in Syria) is Germany. There are some 1.6 million Turkish nationals in Germany, of which 400,000 are ethnic Kurds.

PKK headquarters in Germany is located in Frankfurt. There are also important offices in Mainz, Offenburg, Rüsselsheim, Olderburg, Cologne, and Dortmund. In 1989, the PKK began publishing a newspaper, *Serxwebun (Independence)*, in Germany. Its front organization in Germany, the Kurdish Peoples Liberation Front (ERNK), began publishing *Berxwedan (Defense)*. Copies of both publications were smuggled back to Turkey. Germany is also a primary source of PKK income, through narcotics trafficking, and through extortion of the Kurdish ethnic population. According to German police (BKA) statistics, the PKK has a \$27 million war chest in Germany at its disposal.

In November 1993, the German government declared the PKK to be an illegal organization, in the aftermath of PKK-coordinated attacks on Turkish diplomatic and commercial facilities in 18 European cities on June 24, and then again on Nov. 4. As a result, the PKK moved its external command center to London, Brussels, and Paris. Nonetheless, the main PKK cadre force remains in Germany.

Turkish government officials have, on occasion, condemned Germany's handling of the PKK. For example, Gen. Kenan Evren, the former President of Turkey, told the Turkish daily *Milliyet* on Nov. 13, 1991: "The country that offers the best sanctuary to this organization [PKK] is; unfortunately, Germany, with whom we have historically friendly ties. During the time that I was President, 700 million marks were raised for the PKK in Germany. I spoke about this to German President [Richard von] Weizsäcker and expressed our dismay. They were cautioned repeatedly, but they always gave their constitution as an excuse. He said: 'We cannot stop them as long as they are not engaged in violence here.' They do not engage in violent acts in Germany. They do it here, but organize it there."

- *Britain:* The movement to create "Kurdistan" has been based in Britain since the 1890s. In the recent period, operations of the Kurdish insurrectionary movement in general, and the PKK in particular, have been coordinated by Lord

Avebury (Eric Lubbock), who is routinely in touch with all of its leaders. In October 1994, the European representative of the PKK, Kani Yilmaz, was arrested in Britain, en route to meet Lord Avebury, on German charges that he conspired to commit arson in Germany.

British support became more overt in 1993, after Germany had banned the group. Britain gave the PKK access to the satellite TV broadcasting station MED TV, which broadcasts every day into Germany between 5 and 11 p.m. The yearly budget of the station is estimated at \$7 million. The station routinely airs interviews with Ocalan from his headquarters in the Bekaa Valley, and issues marching orders to PKK cadre. Programs of the station are, in part, produced by the so-called "exile council" of the PKK, which was established in the Netherlands in spring 1994. According to the German press, the Bonn Interior Ministry stated, in respect to the station: "We have requested our colleagues in neighboring countries in Europe to put measures into effect in order not to compromise internal security in our country." In a March 1996 interview with the station, Ocalan called for the assassination of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel.

- *United States:* The PKK has maintained an office in Washington, D.C. since 1993, under the name American Kurdish Information Network, which has been used to lobby Congress, often drawing on propaganda published by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

On April 12, 1996, the head of the PKK's U.S. office, Kani Xulam, was arrested for holding a false passport, and for entering the country illegally. On April 26, Ocalan denounced the arrest of his "friend," in an interview on MED TV, saying it "may shed light on the U.S. position." He said that the arrest indicated that the United States "will want to accelerate the Turkish-Israeli strategy, pressure will be applied to Syria."

One of Xulam's collaborators is U.S. Rep. John Porter (R-Ill.), who is also a top advocate for the U.S. Greek and Armenian lobbies. Porter's wife, Katherine, defended Xulam's use of false papers, in comments to the press on April 16, saying that such activities were necessary to protect his relatives back home from Turkish government reprisal. She also testified as a character witness for Xulam. According to his personal papers, seized by police, Xulam had been scheduled to have lunch with Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) the week following his arrest.

The Turkish government, and Turkish media, have occasionally condemned U.S. support for the PKK.

On Aug. 17, 1991, the Turkish daily *Hurriyet* carried a government leak entitled "Aid Dropped to the PKK by Air," which reported that on Aug. 15, 1991, a Turkish mobile gendarmerie unit saw a U.S. C-130 transport aircraft drop supplies by parachute in the foothills of Mount Cudi, Turkey, where the PKK is known to be active. The paper reported:

"Several of the PKK militants captured during recent operations in the region were carrying U.S. aid supplies, which

they claimed to have received from American troops in the region. It is believed that this information, as well as other factors, was behind State of Emergency Governor Hayri Kozakciolu's statement that foreign elements were active in the region and that the 'area was full of agents.' According to various allegations, several foreign elements contacted the PKK militants shortly after arriving in the region. It has been established that the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the General Staff had been receiving information on these contacts with the PKK militants for some time before they asked the command headquarters to take appropriate action."

The "appropriate action" decided upon included a temporary ban on U.S. military flights in the region, unless their cargo was inspected by Turkish military authorities.

In February 1992, Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel met with President George Bush in Washington. According to a Turkish State Radio and TV network report on Feb. 16, 1992, Demirel raised charges about U.S. support of the PKK. "Demirel indicated that both President Bush and other officials firmly denied allegations about U.S. aid to the PKK," according to the report.

- *Russia:* The PKK's Parliament of Kurdistan in exile convened its third session in Moscow on Oct. 30-Nov. 1, 1995, in the context of increasing Russian anger over Turkish covert military and logistical support for Chechen insurgents. Viktor Ustinov, chairman for the committee on geopolitics of the State Duma (parliament), called on Kurds and Russians to engage in "joint work" to create an independent Kurdish state.

The U.S. State Department immediately issued a sharp blast at Russia for hosting the session: "The activity of the Kurdish Parliament in Exile is financed and led mainly by the PKK, an organization composed of inveterate separatist terrorist elements, whose operations in Turkey and Western Europe represent a threat to the lives of citizens of the U.S., Turkey, and other countries. We have stated repeatedly our unequivocal position, which is that, owing to their terrorist focus, neither the PKK nor the KPI [Kurdish Parliament in Exile] should be recognized as legitimate entities."

A few months earlier, on July 10, 1995, the newly founded Russian-Kurdish Friendship Society held a press conference at the Moscow Kurdish House. The Ekspresskhronika press agency reported that "the society's purpose is to inform Russians as to the problems of the Kurds living in Russia, the CIS countries, and abroad and also as to the Kurdish peoples' national liberation struggle for the creation of the independent state of Kurdistan. Another purpose of the creation of the society is assistance to Kurdish refugees from the zones of armed conflicts." The meeting was organized by Makhir Belat, the Moscow-based "representative of the Kurdistan National Liberation Front," a PKK front.

On Oct. 20, the PKK established its own Radio Voice of Media radio station in Moscow, at the old site of the Soviet TV and Radio agency, complementing its broadcasts from London. The stated purpose of the station, which broadcasts

in Kurdish, Turkish, and Arabic, is "the unification of the 40 million Kurdish people."

- *Greece:* In the spring of 1995, the deputy speaker of the Greek Parliament, Panaviotis Sgouridis, led a Greek delegation to the Bekaa Valley to meet with PKK leader Ocalan. Accompanying Sgouridis were Pasok party operatives Costas Bantouvas, Dimitris Vounatsos, and Leonardos Hatziandreous; Ionnis Stathopoulos, a deputy from the New Democratic Party; and Mari Machaira, a deputy from the Political Spring Party.

Athens News Agency reported in May that "an informal inter-party parliamentary committee responsible for issues concerning Hellenism and Orthodoxism visited Kurdistan National Liberation Front President Abdullah Ocalan at his hideout several months ago. The Kurdish leader told the Greek deputies that Turkey's effort to quell the Kurds' struggle not only failed, but showed Ankara's intransigence over the Kurdish issue. Mr. Ocalan said he would not allow an oil pipeline to cross through Kurdistan unless the parties involved negotiated with the Kurdish leadership."

In April 1996, the Clinton administration raised the issue of Greek support of the PKK, during the visit of Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis. At a press briefing on April 10, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns confirmed that these concerns were raised with the prime minister, and added: "There's no evidence that the Greek government supports the PKK . . . with logistical or financial support . . . but we are concerned that private groups in Greece may be supporting the PKK. That there are PKK operatives in Greece is a source of concern to us."

- *Armenian diaspora:* On April 6, 1980, the PKK, the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) held a press conference in Sidon, Lebanon, to announce a "declaration of cooperation" between the three Syrian-based terrorist organizations. Armenian guerrillas joined with the PKK in battles against Turkish troops who were trying to oust them from their northern Iraqi sanctuary in May 1983 and October 1984, according to the *Armenian Reporter*, a New York City-based ASALA mouthpiece.

ASALA, which was formed in Lebanon in 1973 and was headquartered in Syria, assassinated 30 Turkish diplomats or their family members at Turkish embassies and offices throughout the world, between 1975 and 1985. The group, which is now defunct, was financially based on heroin smuggling.

This Kurdish-Armenian alliance was editorially endorsed by the London *Economist* in its June 18, 1983 issue, in an article entitled, "The Common Enemy": "It may be that a tactical alliance between Kurds and Armenians, said to have been concluded three years ago, is in operation on the ground. Armenian brains and world-wide links combined with Kurdish military experience would produce a formidable guerrilla liberation movement."

This is not the first time that the British have promoted a Kurdish-Armenian link. In August 1927, Dashnag, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (which was set up by British intelligence in the 1890s), sent an envoy to French Lebanon to participate in the creation of the "Khoybun," a Kurdish separatist organization which soon led an uprising in the Mount Ararat area of Turkey. The purpose of the revolt, which was coordinated by Lord Cornwallis, was to bring down the new Turkish republic of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. The Dashnag actively participated in this Kurdish revolt in hopes of creating a Greater Armenian state.

• *France*: The British movement to create Kurdistan, which dates back to the nineteenth century, also involved Britain's junior partner, France, operating out of French Syria. Reflecting this tradition, the government of President François Mitterrand was instrumental in providing propagandistic, diplomatic, and military support to Kurdish insurgency against Turkey and Iraq, including to the PKK. Among France's operations on the Kurds' behalf, was its authorship and sponsorship of UN Security Council Resolution 688, which established "Operation Provide Comfort" in March 1991.

The resolution created a PKK-dominated Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq, under Anglo-French patronage, outside of the control of the Iraqi (and Turkish) governments. Mitterrand Humanitarian Affairs Minister Bernard Kouchner was the author of the resolution.

Danielle Mitterrand, the widow of President Mitterrand and the head of the "Fondation France Libertés," has long aided the PKK. In the winter of 1995, Mitterrand testified before the U.S. Congress Human Rights Caucus, on a foundation report which was an account of her so-called fact-finding trip to "Kurdistan" in August 1994. Katherine Porter, the PKK-supporting wife of Representative Porter, was one of four officials who accompanied Mitterrand on the trip.

The Mitterrand report complains that "after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920 recognized the Kurds, and promised them their own state. However, this was not implemented." (Ataturk made the treaty a dead letter.) However, "since this time, the Kurds have battled to achieve some form of self-determination." The report demanded that Turkish, Iraqi, and Iranian "Kurdistan" be protected from "genocide" carried out by their respective governments, and called for the creation of an International Criminal Court to try Turkish, Iraqi, and Iranian government officials.

Major terrorist actions: Since 1984, the PKK has carried out a terrorist, guerrilla war in southeast Anatolia, involving hundreds of small incidents per year. Thousands of villages have been evacuated, fields abandoned, and schools shut down.

According to Turkish Interior Minister Nahit Mentese, speaking in June 1995, more than 19,000 people have been killed in the war since 1984—most since the 1991 Anglo-American war against Iraq. In 1993, there were 7-10,000 full-

time PKK fighters, supported by another 50,000 part-time militia, according to unofficial Turkish government estimates. In October 1994, a PKK spokesman in Athens estimated its total guerrilla force at 30,000. The government estimates the PKK's total sympathizer-base at 375,000.

Beginning in the early 1990s, the PKK also began to carry out arsons and bombings in western Europe, often targeting Turkish sites there. In November 1993, the German government declared the PKK illegal, after it attacked, and in some cases briefly seized, Turkish diplomatic sites in 18 European cities on June 24, and again on Nov. 4. In March 1996, one hundred and fifty policemen in Dortmund, Germany were injured in a PKK-instigated riot. Banners of the rioters termed Germany "the number-two enemy," after the number-one enemy, Turkey.

The PKK has also increasingly integrated its operations with those of a new generation of German terrorist organizations, particularly that of the Anti-Imperialist Cells (AIZ). The AIZ has carried out numerous bombings and arson attacks against selected politicians, and it has threatened, in a manifesto in 1995, to "carry the war unto the doors of the private homes and working-places of the power elites." According to October 1996 reports of German Channel 2 TV news and the Germany weekly magazine *Focus*, the PKK has been training AIZ members in Lebanon. Some are sent back to Germany for actions there; others remain in the region to take part in PKK operations against Turkey.

Leaders' name and aliases: Abdullah Ocalan (nicknamed "Apo"—uncle) has led the group from its 1974 inception, when he was then working in the Political Science department of the University of Ankara.

Groups allied to nationally and internationally:

The PKK has relations with a number of other narco-terrorist organizations and front groups, and anti-Turkish parties. These have included the ruling PASOK party of Greece; the Greek terrorist EOKA-B; the Party for Democratic Socialism of Germany (former East German SED); the Greens of Europe; the now-dormant Armenian ASALA; and the Turkish Workers Party Marxist-Leninist, with which, however, the PKK is occasionally involved in shoot-outs over control of narcotics-trafficking routes.

The PKK was a founding member of the London-based Revolutionary Communist Party's Revolutionary International Movement, which had been established by former Kissinger National Security Council agent and Maoist ideologue William Hinton.

The PKK's involvement in the Central Asian-Afghan narcotics trade has also brought it into business relations with the diverse Islamic- and Turkic-formatted terrorist organizations, including groups hostile to Kurds. For example, the PKK has business ties with the Grey Wolves and the Nizami Alem, both "Pan-Turkic" terrorist organizations, which often kill Kurds. All three groups are involved in arms- and drug-trafficking operations in the former Soviet Caucasus, aiding the

Azeri and Chechen separatist movements.

Motivating ideology: The PKK is Marxist-Leninist in ideology, calling not only for freedom for "Kurdistan," but also freedom from "feudalism, colonialism, and class distinction." It is the only Kurdish party (of which there are at least a dozen) which does not have a tribal chief on its central committee, or is not merely a mouthpiece for a particular clan or tribe.

An April 21, 1996 interview with PKK chairman Ocalan, broadcast on London's MED TV, is illustrative. "What is important is that the struggle being waged against the peoples since the 1960s is continuing. The PKK emerged from the fire of this struggle. Just as the special war incorporated the counter guerrilla and the civilians in the aftermath of the 1960s, so have the peoples established their army. The Turkish Peoples Liberation Army is one step taken in that direction. So are the Turkish Revolutionary Youth Federation, and the Turkish Worker Peasant Liberation Army and Marxist-Leninist Youth. Instead of viewing them as opposing movements or movements within an ideological chaos, I believe that they should be assessed as individual movements with the class struggle that developed in the aftermath of the 1960s. I would like to add that the PKK is a manifestation and sum of all these movements."

Current number of cadres: An estimated 7-10,000 full-time fighters in the region, supplemented by a 50,000-man militia, according to unofficial Turkish government sources. There are an additional 4,000 cadre abroad, mostly in Europe, according to estimates of the Turkish defense minister in April 1995.

Training: The PKK is trained in Syria, the Bekaa Valley in Syrian-controlled Lebanon, and Greek Cyprus. It also receives secondary training in Iran.

The primary training camps for the PKK since 1980, have been in Syria and the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon. Instructors at these sites are composed of Syrian military personnel, and, previously at least, instructors from the Syrian-based Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, led by Nayif Hawatmeh. According to a 1988 Turkish government press statement, the PKK has also received instruction at these sites from Soviet, Bulgarian, and Cuban instructors. In 1989, the Turkish press quoted a former PKK member saying that the PKK maintained a training camp on the Greek island of Lavrion, and that General Matafias, a former commander of the Greek Cypriot National Guard, trained the PKK in Syria. The Russian press reports that the PKK continues to maintain training camps in Greek Cyprus.

Drug connections: The PKK is one of the few groups formally classified as a "narco-terrorist" organization by the U.S. government. It has one of the most important cannabis and opiate production and distribution networks in Europe.

- At a March 1, 1996 State Department press conference, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Robert Gelbard said, "We are

quite concerned about the involvement of the PKK in trafficking in heroin. And, as you're well aware, I have said that before, in some previous years. But I think there has been some reliable information that has been developed over the course of this last year, which really proves it."

- According to a Turkish government statement of May 17, 1995, "The PKK smuggles narcotics brought from South-east Asia and the Middle East to Europe. Surprisingly, perhaps for the first time, a terrorist organization is involved in all aspects of the drug connection, namely, the acquisition, importation, and distribution of drugs, mainly to Europe. The money generated from drug trafficking amounts to hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars. Some of this amount is used to purchase firearms and other equipment, while the rest is pocketed by those who carry out these illegal activities on behalf of the PKK. The PKK exerts sustained efforts to keep its involvement in the drug trafficking under cover, in order not to attract public reaction, particularly in Europe. However, the evidence suggesting the PKK's involvement in drug trafficking is continuously increasing."

- In January 1994, the Turkish commissioner in charge of anti-narcotics activities stated that narcotics smuggling into western Europe was dominated by the PKK, and that in 1993, Kurds had been involved in 70% of the cases in which heroin had been seized on its way from Turkey to western Europe.

- Vox TV, Germany, February 1993: "The estimated figure the PKK earns from the narco-trade is more than 56 million deutschemarks [more than \$35 million]."

- Focus magazine, Germany, Oct. 24, 1994: "In the last eight years, 315 PKK members were involved in drug trafficking around Europe, 154 of whom were captured in Germany."

Turkish police reports, according to the Turkish government, indicate:

- "Some Afghans in Iran cooperate with the PKK to provide drugs from Afghanistan and hand the drugs to PKK members in the border between Iran and Turkey."

- "The police have strong evidence that a network composed of PKK militants is involved in drug trafficking in Zaho, northern Iraq [under U.S./British/French occupation]. . . . During the operation against the PKK, the Turkish Army discovered a large farm where the terrorists cultivated hemp . . . near the PKK's Pivela camp in Bihara Valley. . . . The amount of drugs captured during the operation in northern Iraq reached 4.5 tons."

- "Turkish Police found that hemp seeds had been cultivated by the order of the PKK in villages and hamlets of Hakkari, Diyarbakir, Van, Sirnak, Bingol, and Batman."

Arms suppliers: Arms are supplied from Iran, Armenia, and Syria, but are primarily purchased on the open market in Europe, the Mideast, and Central Asia, through the proceeds earned from narcotics trafficking.

Known political supporters, advocates: The PKK is historically a "derivative" operation of British, NATO,

French, and Russian intelligence, with added input from Israel, Greece, Iran, and the United States—all of which work through Syria.

This support was increased in 1995, when the PKK formed a government in exile. The main external support for the PKK is provided by Britain, with propaganda coordinated by Lord Avebury and his Parliamentary Human Rights Group.

The so-called Kurdish Parliament in Exile held its founding meeting in The Hague, Netherlands, on April 12-16, 1995, and established its headquarters simultaneously in Brussels, Belgium, (also headquarters city of NATO). The group reports that it held elections for seats for its parliament in Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, North America, and Australia, electing 65 delegates.

Sixty members of parliament and party figures from Europe attended the founding parliament, and another 100 sent messages of support. The following list includes the more important individuals; those who personally attended are in bold type.

- **United Kingdom:** Lord Hylton, Parliamentary Human Rights Group; Marc Philips, parliamentarian, Wales; Lord Avebury, chairman, Human Rights Group; Baroness Gould; Alice Mahon, member of Parliament (MP); David Martin, member of the European Parliament (MEP); Peter Crampton, MEP; Harold Pinter, writer.

- **Germany:** Martin Seelig, parliamentarian, Party for Democratic Socialism (PDS); Matthis Gartner, parliamentarian, PDS; Sigrun Steinborn, parliamentarian, PDS; Stefan Trippach, MEP, PDS; Anke Biesterfeld, manager, Green party; Hans Branscheidt, manager, Medico International; Angelika Beer, MP; Angelika Graf, parliamentarian; Christa Maria, the Greens; Eva Bulling Schrater, MP; Friedel Grotzmacher, state legislator.

- **Serbia-Yugoslavia:** Dobrica Cosic, former President, Yugoslavia

- **Greece:** Panayotis Sgouridis, deputy speaker, Greek Parliament, Pasok; Dimitris Vunatsos, parliamentarian, Pasok; Kostas Badouvas, parliamentarian, Pasok; Leonardos Hatziandreu, parliamentarian, Pasok; Kostas Hatzidimitrius, parliamentarian; Nikolas Ikonomopoulos, parliamentarian; Panaiotis Kammenos, parliamentarian.

- **Cyprus:** Christos Mavrokordatos, parliamentarian, AKEL; Demetris Eliades, parliamentarian, EDEK; Demetris Odyseos, parliamentarian.

- **Belgium:** Claudia Roth, leader of the Green faction of the European Parliament. Roth is also vice president of the EU's Turkey Committee, and in September 1995, opened an office in Istanbul to deal with the "Kurdish question"; Jan Meesters, senator; Jef Sleenck, parliamentarian, SP; Michel Maertens, senator; Nelly Maes, senator; Paul Pataer, senator, MP; Yves de Seny, senator, PSC; Rob van de Water, external affairs secretary, Party of European Socialists; Leo Tindemans, MEP; Leoluca Orlando, MEP; and Ursula Schleicher,

MEP.

- **Italy:** Angela Bellei Trenti, parliamentarian, Rifondazione Comunista (Party of Communist Refoundation); Danieli Franco, parliamentarian, La Rete (The Network); Massimo Marino, CRDP; Maurizio Menegon, MP; Theodore Pangalas, MP, Socialist Party.

- **Sweden:** Karin Starrin, MEP; Per Gharton, MEP; Per-nilla Frahm, parliamentarian.

- **France:** Alain Callès, general secretary, MRAP; Etienne Pinte, National Assembly; Alain Boquet, GR, Communiste.

- **India:** Romesh Chandra.

- **Spain:** Joaquim Xicoy, chair of the Catalunya Parliament.

Thumbnail historical profile: The PKK was created as an offspring of the Federation of Revolutionary Youth (Dev Genc) in 1974, and by 1978 was involved in significant terrorist operations in southeast Anatolia.

Abdullah "Apo" Ocalan, the founder of the group, was a Turkified Kurd, who did not even speak Kurdish at the time the group was founded. During the 1970 military coup, he was a student in the political science department of the University of Ankara, and was involved with Dev Genc, which had been founded in 1969, and served as a mother organization for most of the revolutionary movements of the 1970s. He was also involved in the Ankara Higher Education Association, another leftist sect. Dev Genc was closed down by the coup, but its adherents regrouped; the PKK is one of those regroupings.

Following the amnesty of 1974, Ocalan formed what became the PKK, as a Marxist-Leninist Kurdish liberation movement. In 1975, Ocalan and his first followers concentrated on the regions of Urfa, Elazig, Tucei, Gaziantep, and Maras. Unlike the other Kurdish separatist and revolutionary groups, Ocalan's initial recruits came exclusively from the working class, rather than the peasantry.

The 1980 Turkish military coup, and the declaration of martial law in the Kurdish provinces (in some cases remaining to this day), sharply curtailed PKK activities. At that time, the PKK moved many of its operations to western Europe (especially Germany and Belgium), as well as to Syria and the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley in Lebanon. Germany and Lebanon remain its main bases today.

From its bases in Syria, the PKK attacks Turkish military installations and other Kurds. Since 1980, the PKK has also received help from the Barzani clan's Kurdish Democratic Party of Iraq, and established bases in northern Iraq, used for launching operations into Turkey.

During 1984-91, Turkish military operations against the PKK had some success. However, the 1991 U.S.-British-French war against Iraq, and the elimination of Iraqi authority from northern Iraq, under the guise of Operation Provide Comfort, led to a massive expansion in Kurdish insurgent operations there, especially that of the PKK.

In mid-April 1995, former Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit called for a new military alliance with the United States, replacing Provide Comfort, and expelling British and French forces. According to *Hurriyet*, which interviewed him on April 16, "The British and French forces serving the Provide Comfort force would leave, since the [proposed U.S. defense] agreement pertains only to American forces. With the departure of the British and French forces from Provide Comfort, it will be possible to control the attempts to set up a Kurdish state in the region that would be independent of the central administration in Baghdad. Behind the suggestion that the British and French forces should be left out is the uneasiness Ankara feels in the activities in northern Iraq of the non-governmental organizations. These organizations, benefitting from the security umbrella provided by Provide Comfort, are claimed to be attempting to establish an independent Kurdish state using 'humanitarian relief work' as a pretext."

The Hezbollah

Name of group: Hezbollah (Party of God).

Alias: Hezbollah is a federation of some 13 different organizations, including Jundallah (Soldiers of God) and Islamic Amal (a split-off from Amal, a Shiite militia). It is a political party which currently holds 8 seats in the 128-seat Lebanese parliament; a militia, engaged in combat with Israeli forces occupying southern Lebanon; and a terrorist organization, which operates under the name Islamic Jihad.¹

Headquarters: Hezbollah's political headquarters are in Beirut; its military headquarters are in the northern Bekaa Valley, in Baalbeck and the Hermel district, which is also the center of its opium plantations. It also has important military bases in southern Lebanon, where many of its heroin refineries are located. Historically, Hezbollah has been directed out of its representative offices in Damascus, Syria and Teheran, Iran.

Founded: June 1982, in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanon.

Location of operations, areas active: Lebanon and Israel, with sporadic activity in Kuwait. According to unconfirmed reports, Hezbollah may have also been responsible for

the July 18, 1994 bombing of the Buenos Aires headquarters of the Argentine-Israeli Mutual Association, which killed over 100 people.

Major terrorist actions: Hezbollah has been the primary Syrian-run terrorist group active in Lebanon, targeting U.S. diplomatic and military installations, and kidnapping U.S. diplomatic personnel.

- April 18, 1983: Suicide car-bombing of U.S. embassy in Beirut, killing 63 (including 17 Americans). The dead included R.C. Ames, the CIA's top Mideast expert, and four of his deputies, who had arrived that day from Washington for a meeting with the CIA Beirut station chief and four other CIA officials (who were also killed).
- Oct. 23, 1983: Suicide truck-bombing of U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 245 and wounding 146.
- Oct. 23, 1983: Suicide truck-bombing of French military headquarters in Beirut, killing 58 and wounding 15.
- January 1984: Saudi diplomat kidnapped (released May 1985).
- Jan. 18, 1984: President of American University of Beirut (AUB), Malcolm Kerr, assassinated. [February 1984, U.S. evacuates Marines from Beirut.]
- February 1984: AUB professor Frank Regier kidnapped, rescued in April.
- March 1984: CNN bureau chief Jeremy Levin kidnapped (escaped February 1995).
- March 16, 1984: CIA Beirut station chief William Buckley kidnapped, and killed in June.
- May 8, 1984: Rev. Benjamin Weir kidnapped (released September 1985).
- Sept. 20, 1984: U.S. Embassy Annex in Beirut car-bombed, killing 14.
- December 1984: Kuwaiti flight hijacked to Teheran; two USAID officials killed.
- Jan. 8, 1985: Father Lawrence Martin Jenco kidnapped (released July 1986).
- March 16, 1985: AP bureau chief Terry Anderson kidnapped (released December 1991).
- March 22, 1985: Marcel Carton and Marcel Fontaine, consuls at the French embassy, kidnapped.
- March 26, 1985: British journalist Alex Collet kidnapped (killed in April 1986).
- May 28, 1985: AUB professor David Jacobsen kidnapped (released November 1986).
- May 22, 1985: Two French citizens, Kaufmann and Seurat, kidnapped (one killed in March 1986, the other released).
- June 10, 1985: AUB professor Thomas Sutherland kidnapped (released November 1991).
- June 14, 1985: A TWA flight from Athens to Rome is hijacked, and flown back and forth across the Mediterranean. A U.S. Navy diver on board is killed. The hijackers demand the release of detainees, mostly Lebanese Shiites, from an Israeli detention camp. Thirty-nine U.S. citizens held as hos-

1. Sources for this report include interviews, Hezbollah literature, and newspaper accounts. Other sources, of varying reliability, include: *Militant Islamic Movements in Lebanon*, by Marius Deeb (Center for Arab Studies, Georgetown University, November 1986); *Terrorism: National Security and the Homefront*, Stephen C. Pelletiere, editor (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1995); *Amal and the Shia*, by Augustus Richard Norton (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987); *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* by John Esposito (London: Oxford University Press, 1992).

tages for 17 days.

- July 1985: Hezbollah claims credit for a bombing of a synagogue in Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Sept. 9, 1985: American educator Frank Reed kidnapped (released in April 1990).
- Sept. 12, 1985: AUB accountant Joseph Ciccipio kidnapped (released December 1991).
- Oct. 21, 1985: American writer Edward Tracy kidnapped (released August 1991).
- April 17, 1986: American hostage Peter Kilburn is murdered.
- Jan. 30, 1987: British “Iran-Contra” intermediary Rev. Terry Waite kidnapped (released November 1991).
- January 1987: AUB professors Jesse Turner, Alan Steen, Robert Polhill, and M. Singh kidnapped (released October 1991, December 1991, April 1990, and October 1988, respectively).
- February 1988: Col. Richard Higgins, a U.S. member of the UN military observers office is kidnapped, and subsequently murdered.
- April 1988: Kuwaiti airliner hijacked; two U.S. hostages murdered.
- August 1990: Hezbollah claims credit for Ankara car-bombing which wounds a Saudi diplomat.
- October 1990: Saudi diplomat in Beirut murdered.
- March 1991: Hezbollah claims credit for Ankara car-bombing which wounds an Iraqi diplomat.

Trademark terror signatures: Suicide bombings and kidnapping supplement its conventional military actions. Since suicide is explicitly condemned as a grave sin in the Koran, Hezbollah’s decision to carry out suicide bombings required a complex exegesis.

Leaders’ names:

Sheikh Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah is its founder and spiritual leader.

Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah is its current secretary general, replacing Abbas al-Musawi, who was assassinated in 1992.

Sheikh Subhi al-Tufayli, one of its founders, left Lebanon for Iran in 1992, because of his opposition to participating in the elections.

Known controllers/mentors/theoreticians:

Hezbollah is a product of the Shiite theological academy in Najaf in southern Iraq, which the British also used to organize the 1979 overthrow of the Shah of Iran. All of Hezbollah’s leaders were trained there, many when Ayatollah Khomeini held court there as the academy’s most prominent theorist. According to Sheikh Tufayli, in an Aug. 20, 1985 interview with the Iranian newspaper *Ettelaat*, “Our relationship with the Islamic revolution [in Iran] is one of a junior to a senior . . . of a soldier to his commander.”

Hafez al-Assad is the other controller of the group. “As long as Hafez al-Assad is the director of the orchestra, Hezbollah does not have to worry,” Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah said in 1993, when the United States was

involved in brokering an Israeli-Hezbollah deal, with Syrian assistance, restricting weapons fire to military targets.²

The primary Iranian coordinators of Hezbollah have been the Karrubi brothers, both of whom have worked with George Bush and company since at least 1980. They have been aided in this capacity by their close associate, Ayatollah Ali Akbar Motashemi.

Ayatollah Hassan Karrubi was a top Khomeini adviser, who had lived with him in exile for 15 years prior to the revolution. He was one of the figures who oversaw the taking of the U.S. hostages at the U.S. embassy in Teheran in 1979. He reportedly met with then-Reagan campaign director Bill Casey, and vice presidential candidate George Bush in October 1980, in Paris, in order to ensure that the hostages would not be released before the elections. Karrubi later was a primary negotiator with the Reagan-Bush administration, over the release of the American hostages seized by Hezbollah in Lebanon. Hezbollah hostage-taking also provided the pretext for constant meetings between Bush operatives and Hafez Assad, and was later used as the pretext to justify arming Iran—allegedly to get the hostages released.

Ayatollah Mehdi Karrubi, his brother, oversaw foreign operations of the Iranian Revolutionary Committee, and later became speaker of the parliament. His Martyr’s Foundation, Iran’s largest, was Hezbollah’s primary funder. Mehdi Karrubi also reportedly met Casey, Bush, et al., beginning in 1980.

Ayatollah Ali Akbar Motashemi was the Iranian ambassador to Syria, in the immediate post-revolutionary period, where he oversaw funding of Hezbollah, among other tasks.

According to the Reagan-Bush administration account, as presented before the Congressional “Iran-Contra” hearings, Hassan Karrubi led the “moderate faction” in Iran, while his brother Mehdi was one of the leaders of a centrist faction potentially inclined toward the moderates, and opposed to the “extremists.”

Iran-Contra testimony confirms that the administration considered Hassan as someone with great influence over Hezbollah. On Oct. 27, 1985, Karrubi told U.S. National Security Council official Michael Ledeen that he and his group were ready to commit themselves to halting terrorist actions against the United States, and to put pressure on Hezbollah to release the hostages. The meeting occurred in the context of the spring 1985 Hezbollah hostage-taking spree. Karrubi repeatedly traveled to Lebanon during that period, meeting with Hezbollah, according to contemporary press accounts.³

2. As quoted in *Al Quds* of London, April 25, 1996.

3. Information on the Karrubi’s dealing with the Reagan-Bush administration is found in *Iran-Contra Affair* (Washington, D.C.: Report of the Senate and House Committees [S. Rept. No. 100-216, H. Rept. No. 100-433, and depositions thereto, November 1987]). Also see *A Very Thin Line—the Iran-Contra Affairs*, by Theodore Draper (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991); and *Profits of War; Inside the Secret U.S.-Israeli Arms Network*, by Ari Ben-Menashe (New York: Sheridan Square Press, 1992).

In 1992, the Karrubi brothers, and Motashemi, were swept from power, with Mehdi Karrubi, then speaker of the parliament, even losing his individual seat in the elections that year. However, in October 1996, after four years of dormancy, Mehdi Karrubi announced the reactivation of his party, the Militant Clerics Society. President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's term of office ends July 1997, and he is barred by the Constitution from another term. The Karrubi faction is expected to soon regain much influence.

Groups allied to nationally and internationally:

Internally: Hezbollah has allied with (and has also fought with) Amal (Groups of the Lebanese Resistance). Amal was formed in 1974 by Imam Musa al-Sadr, a pro-Syrian operative, who disappeared in Libya in 1978. Al-Sadr's cousin and mentor, Sheikh Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, was a dominant figure at the Najaf theological academy in southern Iraq, and a decades-long collaborator of Khomeini. Amal played an active role in the first, 1975-76 phase of the Lebanese civil war, acting on Syria's behalf.

Amal split apart in 1982, after al-Sadr's successor, Nabi Berri, advocated limited collaboration with the Maronite Catholic militia, in order to fight the Israeli invasion. Husayn al-Musawi, Amal's liaison officer with Iran, opposed this collaboration, and formed a breakaway group, Islamic Amal, which soon joined Hezbollah.

Rivalry between Amal and Hezbollah broke out into violent clashes in 1988-90. Amal defeated Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, and expelled it from the area. Syria and Iran simultaneously backed both competing organizations, but Syria tilted in favor of Amal at that time. Hezbollah was only allowed to return to southern Lebanon after Iran brokered a cease-fire between the two groups in January 1989. Since then, Hezbollah, with Syrian support, has emerged as the hegemonic Shiite militia in southern Lebanon.

Externally: Hezbollah external allies include: the Islamic Jihad of Palestine (reportedly distinct from the Islamic Jihad of Lebanon), Hamas, and the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), run by former Syrian Army Capt. Ahmad Jibril. All three groups are part of the Syrian-steered Palestinian rejection front. PFLP-GC cadre joined with Hezbollah in clashes with the Israeli Army in July 1993.

Delegates from all four organizations attended a conference in Teheran, Iran, in October 1991, whose purpose was to organize a common front against the upcoming Madrid Israeli-Palestinian peace conference which began later that month. The conference was chaired by Ayatollah Mehdi Karrubi, then speaker of the parliament. Ayatollah Ali Akbar Motashemi, then head of the parliament's Defense and Revolutionary Guard committee, also played a prominent role.

Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and Hezbollah also teamed up in the spring of 1996, to launch rocket attacks against northern Israel, and bus bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, which ensured Benjamin Netanyahu and the Likud's election vic-

tory. The Islamic Jihad of Palestine has its main offices in Damascus, London, and Tampa, Florida; Hamas is controlled out of London, England and Amman, Jordan; the PFLP-GC is merely a Syrian Army front.

Motivating ideology: Liberation of Lebanon from Israeli occupation, and the ultimate creation of a Lebanese Islamic Republic modeled after Iran.

The group explains its origins in the 1982 Israeli invasion and the "Zionist-Phalange [Maronite militia] coordination" that betrayed the country. It calls for military and terrorist actions to end Israeli occupation, and Phalangist domination.

"Our people could not withstand all this treason, and decided to confront the imams of infidelity of America, France, and Israel. The first punishment against these forces was carried out on April 18, and the second on Oct. 23, 1983," the group has said, referring to the bombing of the U.S. Embassy and Marine barracks, respectively.

It lists its objectives as: "Israel's final departure from Lebanon as a prelude to its final obliteration . . . ; The final departure of America, France, and their allies from Lebanon . . . ; Submission by the Phalange to just rule, and their trial for the crimes they have committed."

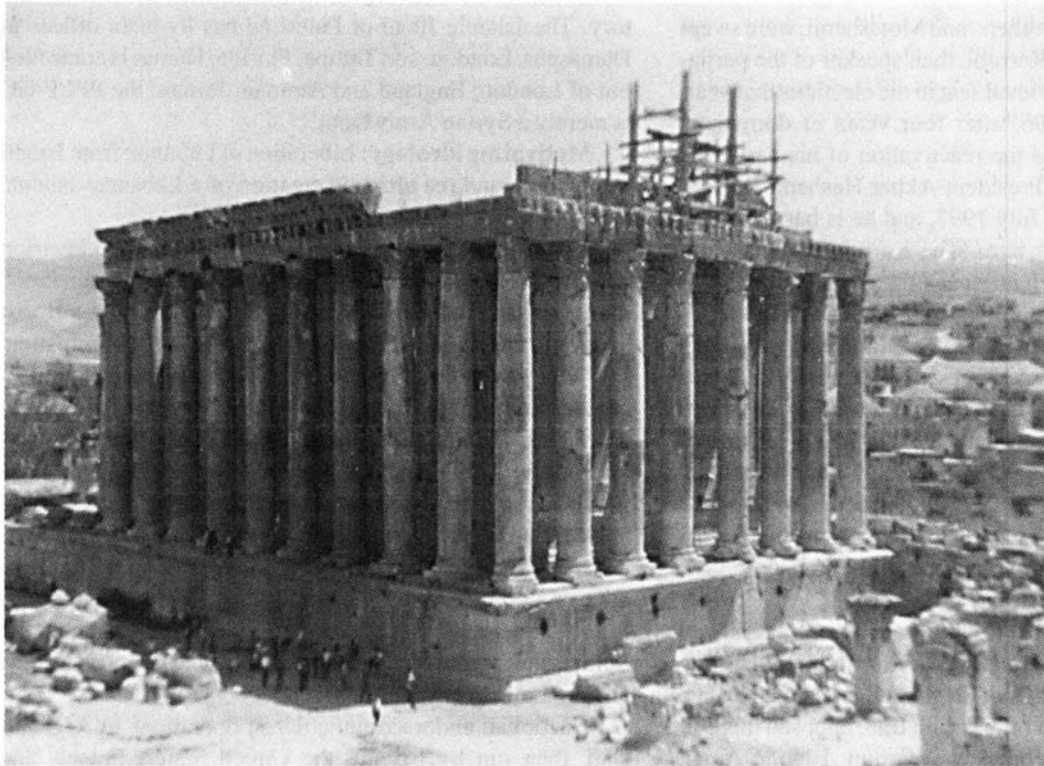
Hezbollah endorsed mujahideen operations in Afghanistan, then run by Britain, the United States, France, and Israel: "We stand against any western or eastern imperialist intervention in the affairs of the oppressed. . . . While denouncing America's crime in Vietnam, Iran, Nicaragua, Grenada, Palestine, Lebanon, and other countries, we also denounce the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the intervention in Iran's affairs, the support for Iraqi aggression, and so forth."⁴

Current number of cadres: An estimate of a militia base of 5,000 (whether or not including reservists) is standard. The Hezbollah militia is lightly armed, with automatic rifles, mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, and Katyusha rockets.

Training: The Iranian Revolutionary Guard's Zabadani base in western Syria, and its Sheikh Abdullah Barracks in the Bekaa Valley, have been Hezbollah's main training centers.

Evidence of Hezbollah's training by Israel, using Russian nationals, emerged in 1993. On Feb. 11, 1993, the Algerian newspaper *Liberté* reported that a group of Russian officers who trained Hezbollah forces in Lebanon, was executed in the fall of 1992, after it was established that they were working for the Israeli intelligence service, with the aim of establishing mole cells inside Hezbollah, and assassinating its leaders. The paper said the officers arrived in Lebanon via Teheran, and that Hezbollah is now recruiting former East German officers for the same purpose. It said the Iranian authorities, who

4. The complete text of the Hezbollah document, entitled "Open Letter Addressed by Hezbollah to the Downtrodden in Lebanon and the World," dated Feb. 16, 1985, is reprinted in Norton, *op. cit.*



Ruins of the Roman Temple of Bacchus in Baalbek, in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley (photo taken before the Lebanese civil war). Today, the military headquarters of Hezbollah is located in Baalbek, which is also the center of the region's opium plantations. In Lebanon's long history, Baalbek has often been a center of oligarchism: from the Phoenician cult of Baal, to the Roman cult of Bacchus, to the lunatic narco-terrorists today.

strictly control the passage of equipment to Hezbollah and examine each new recruit, approved of the recruitment of the officers.

According to a statement in the Israeli Knesset (parliament) by former Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Gur, Hezbollah also has training camps in the trinational Iguazu national-park region on the borders of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina.

Drug connections: Hezbollah has been heavily involved in opium and marijuana cultivation, and heroin refining, since its inception.

Hezbollah's headquarters in Baalbeck and the northern Bekaa Valley, are in the traditional center of Lebanese marijuana cultivation, and, since 1983, the center of Syrian-Lebanese opium cultivation and heroin refining.

According to Lebanese Narcotics Agency 1990 reports, Hezbollah ran extensive opium plantations in Nabi Chit, Hermel, and Qasr in the Bekaa Valley, operating under the protection of Rifaat Assad's private militia. According to a 1992 report by U.S. Rep. Charles Schumer's (D-N.Y.) office, Hezbollah's "income from drug trafficking reportedly exceeds \$100 million a year."⁵

The Hezbollah remains headquartered in the Hermel dis-

trict in the northern Bekaa, cultivating and refining opium-heroin. Its product is shipped to Europe by the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK).

In addition to refining Lebanese opium, Hezbollah is also a primary refiner of Central Asian and Afghani opium, shipped there via Iran and Turkey.

Arms suppliers: Iran, via Syria; and Syria.

Funding: Its funds are derived mostly from narcotics sales, but Iran also reportedly provides it about \$60 million annually. Iranian funds for Fadlallah, used to establish Hezbollah militias, were channeled through the Martyr's Fund, run by Ayatollah Mehdi Karrubi, George Bush's "Iran-Contra" negotiating partner.

By 1987, Hezbollah was reportedly receiving \$120 million annually from Iran. Some Lebanese officials say Iranian aid to Hezbollah has been as high as \$300 million per year.

Because of these funds, Hezbollah has been able to deliver social services, unlike the paralyzed Lebanese government. Its hospitals, schools, discount supermarkets, and so on, are an important basis for its 1992 electoral victory, and popularity in general. Some of these latter functions are also funded by Saudi Arabia.

Known political supporters, advocates: Hezbollah has broad popular support within the Islamic world. Unlike many other regional organizations, however, it is not prominently supported, in an overt way, in the non-Islamic world.

Thumbnail historical profile: Hezbollah was one of a number of Islamic-formatted military and terrorist organiza-

5. Syria, President Bush, and Drugs—the Administration's next Iraqgate, staff report of the Subcommittee on Crime and Criminal Justice of the Committee on the Judiciary, chaired by Rep. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.), issued on Nov. 23, 1992, p. 14.

tions that emerged in Lebanon in 1982, in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion, and the expulsion of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Prior to 1980, there were no Islamic-formatted political organizations in Lebanon of importance, except for Amal.

The origin and proliferation of Hezbollah, and related sects, is based on several factors:

- *The Israeli invasion of Lebanon:* The June-September 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and its subsequent occupation of the southern half of Lebanon (until 1983), was the major factor in the creation and growth of Hezbollah.

Most importantly, the Israeli Army selectively obliterated the PLO's infrastructure, and forced its leadership, and some 10,000 cadre, to leave Lebanon that summer. Syria finished off the job by the end of 1983. According to eyewitness accounts, the southern Lebanese Shiite population initially welcomed the Israeli invasion, thinking it would clean out the PLO, which then dominated the region.

The elimination of the PLO also broke the back of the Lebanese National Movement (LMN), the coalition of secular leftist anti-Syrian parties which had been hegemonic among Lebanese Muslims prior to the invasion. The Syrian- and Iranian-funded and -armed fundamentalists of Hezbollah sprung up in their place, rising to prominence in the same areas that had been the PLO bases of power, notably: Beirut, Tripoli, Baalbek, Sidon, and Nabatiyya.

- *The Islamic Revolution in Iran:* The rise of Khomeini's regime inspired many Lebanese Shiites, and served as their model. Hezbollah was formed in same Bekaa region where 1,500 Iranian Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran) were based. Hezbollah's leaders were all clerics trained at Najaf. The Iranian embassy in Damascus, then run by Ali Akbar Mojtahedi, coordinated Hezbollah operations, working closely with Gen. Ali Dubah, head of Syrian military intelligence. Its leaders regularly traveled to Iran.⁶

- *Syrian intervention:* Syria invaded and occupied the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon in 1976, under the pretext of stabi-

6. On June 8, 1981, the Iranian parliament approved legislation authorizing "volunteers" to go and fight Israel in southern Lebanon. In November, Khomeini established an Islamic Revolutionary Council assigned to oversee Shiite revolutionary activities in Lebanon, Iraq, and the Gulf states.

The day after Israel invaded Lebanon, a high-level Iranian delegation, led by Col. Sayyed Shirazi, traveled to Damascus. On June 10, Iranian Prime Minister Mir Hussein Mussavi called for "war until victory in el-Quds [Jerusalem]," and asked parliament to budget funds for the war. In the aftermath of these events, 1,300 Revolutionary Guards, led by Sheikh Emami, established a base in Baalbek. Eventually, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Zadeh was de facto made high commissioner for Lebanon, acting in coordination with Gen. Ghazi Kanan, a Syrian intelligence officer stationed in Beirut. Others involved included the Iranian ambassador to Damascus, Ayatollah Ali Akbar Mojtahedi, and Mahmoud Nurani and Issa Tabatabai, who had been appointed by the Revolutionary Guards to oversee Palestinian refugee camps in the Tyre and Sidon regions. See *The Iranian Triangle: the Untold Story of Israel's Role in the Iran-Contra Affair*, by Samuel Segev (New York: The Free Press, 1988).

lizing the country, and ending the civil war. Since that time, until it finalized its control of Lebanon in 1990, Syria pursued a policy of arming and deploying numerous ethnically or religiously based militias, most notably the Shiite minorities. From its inception in 1982, in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley, Hezbollah has opposed any collaboration with Christian militias, even in limited pacts directed against Israel. It has also fought Muslim-based groups advocating such collaboration.

Najaf origins

The idea of creating Hezbollah reportedly goes back to the first phase of the Lebanese civil war in 1975-76. Already at that time, Sheikh Fadlallah, its future founder, complained about the ascendancy of the Lebanese National Movement secular parties, and called for Muslims to organize their own, religiously based, party. Fadlallah's importance within Lebanon was based on his position as general representative of Abu Qasim al-Khui, one of the leading Shiite clerics of his day. Al-Khui, Fadlallah's former teacher, was then the leading Shiite cleric in Najaf, Iraq, together with his close friends, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and Sheikh Muhammad Baqir-Sadr. Fadlallah was also the Lebanese representative of Islamic Call, a Najaf-based covert organization involved in preparing the Khomeini coup.

Fadlallah, Hezbollah's founder, was born in Najaf in 1934 to a family of Lebanese clerics. He studied under Khui as a youth, and moved to Lebanon in 1966. He founded Hezbollah in 1982. By 1984, he was reportedly considered one of the three most prominent Shiite clergymen in Lebanon.

Hezbollah's other co-founders were also trained at Najaf. These include:

- Sheikh Subhi al-Tufayli, who was born in 1948 in Baalbek, in the northern Bekaa Valley. He studied theology at Najaf for nine years, as a student of al-Sadr. He also studied at Qum. Tufayli objected to Hezbollah participating in the Lebanese elections, and now resides in Iran.

- Abbas al-Musawi (deceased), who was born in 1952 in Nabi Chit in the northern Bekaa Valley. He studied religion in Tyre, and then in Najaf for eight years, where he was also a student of al-Sadr. He returned to Baalbek in 1978.

- Ibrahim al-Amin, who was born 1953 in the northern Zahleh region of the Bekaa Valley. He also studied theology in Najaf, but mostly at Qum, the Iranian holy city south of Teheran. He was Amal's representative in Teheran, until he broke with them in 1982.

- Sheikh Hasan Nasrallah, the current head of Hezbollah, who visited Khomeini when he was teaching in Najaf. Nasrallah is from southern Lebanon, and later served as Hezbollah's chief mobilization officer in the Bekaa. He was also Hezbollah's representative in Iran.

Other Hezbollah leaders included Sheikh Muhammad Ismail Khaliq, who was Ayatollah Montazeri's representative in Lebanon.