

Middle East Report by Robert Dreyfuss

The 'business' side

Lebanon's Colonel Haddad is the go-between, and does the glue, for the Israel-Iran-Syria collaboration.

Colonel Saad Haddad, leader of an Israeli-backed militia in southern Lebanon, on Jan. 31 publicly offered to provide Iran with forces to strengthen its war against Iraq. The Haddad offer is only one of a number of signals which have appeared in the European press and from the Israelis, making the long-standing secret alliance between the regimes of Israel's Menachem Begin and Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini a matter of public record.

The day after Haddad's statement, Israeli Foreign Ministry official David Kimche, speaking on the British Broadcasting Corporation program, "Panorama" did not deny charges of the Israel-Iran link. *EIR* has learned that Kimche, working with one Colonel Nimrodi of the Israeli military, has made his own offers to sell arms to the Khomeini regime. According to conservative estimates, Israel has provided over \$200 million worth of arms to Iran, and Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon is reported to have recently made (unsuccessful) efforts to convince a major U.S. arms company to arm Iran.

In his Jan. 31 statement, Haddad, who has been the long-standing subject of attacks by the Khomeini regime as an agent of imperialism and Zionism, declared: "In response to Jordan's decision to send volunteers to Iraq to fight Iran . . . whoever wishes to participate with Iran in its war against Iraq should register. . . with military officials of his village. Iran will pro-

vide the weapons and equipment to these volunteers. . . . Travel will be at our expense from Free [Haddad-controlled] Lebanon to Syria via the Golan Heights, and at Syria's expense from Syria to Iran."

Haddad's statement so embarrassed the Khomeini regime that a day later Iran's Foreign Ministry attacked Haddad, reiterating Teheran's claim that Haddad is a Zionist agent.

Haddad's militia emerged in southern Lebanon as an Israeli mercenary force after Israel invaded Lebanon in 1978. Haddad has since been conducting a war of attrition against Palestinian guerrillas in Lebanon allied to Syria.

But in the Mideast, regimes that appear to be the sharpest rivals are often found to be secret partners when it comes to business. This is true of the current regimes of Syria, Iran, and Israel, which all hold a stake in the lucrative drug-trafficking routes from Iran through southern Lebanon to Europe, via Greece and Sicily.

Since the kidnapping of General James Dozier in December, the Italian government has exposed the link between terrorism and the drug traffic, pointing to the Lebanese-Israeli border area, the region Haddad polices, as an important drug-transshipment point.

Emboldened by Israeli military support, Khomeini last week established what London *Observer* reporter Patrick Seale called "a Shi'ite International." Comprised

of the Muslim Shi'ite minorities in Syria (the ruling Alawites), and the Al Amal clan in Lebanon, Khomeini's International aims to deploy terrorists and Jacobin mobs against certain Arab leaders, beginning with the rulers of Bahrain and Kuwait. Seale, who was one of the first to publicly extol the Iran-Israel alliance, reported Feb. 7 that Khomeini had set up a number of secret "cells" to challenge neighboring Arab states. Both Bahrain and Kuwait, though dominated by the majority Sunni branch of Islam, have restive Shi'ite populations which Khomeini hopes to activate. London *Sunday Times* reporter Amir Taheri commented Feb. 7 that Khomeini's aim is to undermine the governments of the Muslim world on behalf of the long-standing Muslim Brotherhood movement goal of a nation-less Islamic entity called an *ummah*, from North Africa to the Philippines.

Whether Khomeini and his Israeli and Syrian allies can succeed in such a design is doubtful, but in the short term they may create another Lebanon in the Arab world, giving them the opportunity to expand their narcotics trade.

Since 1978 the volume of hard drugs produced both in Lebanon by the Shi'ite Al Amal, and in Iran, has surged. According to "Panorama," the Syrian military forces in Lebanon are more concerned with protecting the hashish and opium fields in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, from which they take a substantial cut of the profits, than with keeping the peace. Two weeks ago Italian authorities extradited a Syrian narcotics dealer from Greece who was exposed as a "business partner" of Italian terrorist Rafaello Reggio.