
Weapons Traffic

Why is Genscher out to help Khomeini?

by our Wiesbaden bureau

Former Iranian Deputy Prime Minister Sadegh Tabatabai, son-in-law and confidant of Ayatollah Khomeini, was arrested on Jan. 8 at the Düsseldorf airport in the Federal Republic of Germany, with 1.7 kilograms of raw opium in his suitcase. Phones began to ring off the hooks in Bonn, and particularly in the Foreign Ministry and the headquarters of the Free Democratic Party (FDP), for Tabatabai, as everyone knew, was the friend of the FDP chairman, Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher.

During the 1979-80 Iranian hostage crisis, Genscher's house was the scene of negotiations between Tabatabai, Genscher, and Carter administration official Warren Christopher. Bonn rumor-networks report more: cocaine parties involving these illustrious diplomats. And the current issue of an Iranian exile newspaper published in Paris, *Nehzat*, reports that Tabatabai had "sexual relations with a German minister."

On Feb. 23, a court in Düsseldorf granted Tabatabai *diplomatic immunity*—even though he was not a diplomat—and he was released, charges dropped. The European Labor Party (EAP) in West Germany has called for a full investigation into the affair, the resignation of Genscher, and the expulsion of Tabatabai as *persona non grata*.

How did such an abuse of justice occur?

The day of Tabatabai's arrest, the Bonn Foreign Ministry immediately declared that he was "not a diplomat." Five days later, Jan. 13, the Iranian embassy in Bonn confirmed that he had no official mission in the Federal Republic. But then the real tug-of-war began. On Jan. 31, the Iranian foreign ministry sent a letter to Bonn stating that Tabatabai had been a "special emissary" since Jan. 18. Tabatabai himself claimed in an interview with the German Press Agency (DPA) that the Bonn foreign ministry had recognized his diplomatic status and his immunity since the summer of 1982. However, the situation was dramatically changed by a decision which nobody had hoped would occur, after the days of most intensive political coercion "from forces above." The Judges of the 12th Chamber of the Düsseldorf regional court ruled on Feb. 24, that the so-called "status of diplomatic immunity" Tabatabai had claimed cannot be applied to the Iranian "because of new facts coming to the attention of the court." An expert on international law testified to the conclusion that

Tabatabai's diplomatic status was not safe: because the so-called "status as special envoy" was provided for only in an international convention at the United Nations which, however, has not yet been signed and ratified. "Therefore, since there was not any documented treaty arrangement between Bonn and Teheran, Tabatabai's claimed status as diplomat could not be recognized."

Immediately after the court made public its decision, Tabatabai was arrested and imprisoned "because of justified concern about his eventual escaping of prosecution." While the court case is still not concluded, this partial victory does open a chance for a real trial investigation of the whole affair.

A weapons ring

Evidence suggests that Tabatabai's "secret mission" in Europe this time involved the purchase of 100 million marks' worth of tanks. During his detention in Germany, he still seemed to be involved in this deal. One visitor from Switzerland, reportedly an exporter of war materiel, was detained for a time after a visit with Tabatabai in the Düsseldorf prison.

Once before, in June 1981, Genscher had prevented Tabatabai's arrest. Court proceedings are continuing to this day in Kassel against four Germans and one Iranian who were said to be involved in an arms deal of Tabatabai's. The contract, which involved the purchase of 50 American M-48 battle tanks, had been signed in Düsseldorf. Tabatabai violated the law governing the sale of German weapons to war zones, since no license from the federal government existed. Tabatabai, although not accredited as a diplomat, went scot free in the summer of 1982 through Genscher's intervention.

In August 1982 another arms deal was concluded: 500 Soviet T-72 tanks, captured by the Israelis from the PLO and Syrian forces in Lebanon, were delivered to Iran. Iran paid through supplies of cheap oil to Israel. To erase the traces of this amazing trade-off, a Swiss firm was engaged, Draycott Trading and Finance Ltd., operating out of Fribourg, Switzerland. The president of the board of Draycott, Lovat McDonald, attended the first contact meeting in April 1981 at the Hotel Président in Geneva. Others present were: Sadegh Tabatabai, the Italian terrorist and arms dealer Stefano delle Chiaie, and the Zürich entrepreneur Hans Albert Kunz.

Kunz was the last host of Italian banker Robert Calvi, the head of Banco Ambrosiano and a member of the Propaganda-2 Freemasonic lodge, on Calvi's flight to London before the banker was found hanging from Blackfriar's Bridge. Delle Chiaie is charged with being the principal string-puller for the murderous bomb attack on the Bologna train station. It was through the intervention of Tabatabai that Della Chiaie was able to set up an arms-trading company in Teheran.

Despite the plotters' efforts at secrecy, the Israeli-Iranian weapons deal became known when one of the Argentine transport planes mysteriously crashed in July 1981 over Soviet territory. The planes had been chartered in Switzerland by Tabatabai.

Thousands of miles away, in the state of Texas, a portly

British millionaire arms-trader, Ian Smalley, went to trial in February for his role in the biggest arms conspiracy case in American history. Smalley allegedly was the middleman who sold Tabatabai howitzers and recoilless rifles from Israel, and who is charged with planning to pay massive bribes to U.S. government officials to complete an illegal \$560 million arms deal for Ayatollah Khomeini.

This gives an initial glimpse into Tabatabai's involvement in the international arms-smuggling trade. As Italian investigations have shown, weapons are usually paid for by funds from the drug traffic. Fascist delle Chiaie is one of the top dealers in the Latin American cocaine market. *EIR* is preparing a comprehensive dossier on Tabatabai's international arms and drug network.

Neither Genscher nor Tabatabai has yet explained what that opium was doing in the "secret diplomat's" suitcase.

Drug Traffic

Italians catch the 'men above suspicion'

by Marco Fanini in Milan

Inaugurating the judicial year of 1983, the attorney general of Milan, Antonio Corrias, gave advance notice of explosive initiatives against the so-called *finanza della droga*—the "holding company" of the drug cartel. In fact, Operation Saint Valentine's of Feb. 14 has shown itself to be the most spectacular anti-drug action ever to take place in Italy, and perhaps in the world.

The data are impressive, not so much for the quantity of arrests, but for the fact that what was hit were those financiers of the mafia in charge of recycling dirty money from illegal-drug trafficking, kidnappings, and so forth.

One hundred sixty-four arrest warrants, 40 real-estate companies indicted in Milan alone, 600 businesses linked to the mafia placed under investigation, 200 searches in Rome, and wall-to-wall investigations among the financing companies and the export-import firms with a mafia smell to them. Arrested in Milan, Antonio Virginio, owner of four big hotels in the center of the city; shut down, the best known hangouts in Portofino and Santa Margherita on the Italian Riviera; arrested in Milan, Luigi Monti, president of Italian Sanyo and Panasonic as well as owner of the holding company "Mo Fi Na" which in turn headed up 40 companies, all involved in the recycling of dirty money.

Other stunning arrests: the brothers Alfredo and Giuseppe Bono, trustees of the Bonanno family, sent from New Jersey

to put the Italian Cosa Nostra back into shape; Gian Pasquale Grappone, who functioned in Naples as the financier of that city's underworld, the Camorra, through the bank Credito Campano and Lloyd Centauro; and Nicola Capuano, owner of a well-known jewelry store at the Spanish Steps in Rome.

But how was this important result achieved? Dr. Antonio Fiori, of the Criminal Police in Milan, had turned a voluminous report over to the attorneys general of Milan and Rome in April 1981. From that report the judges had drawn up a document of 500 pages which led to Operation St. Valentine's. In an interview with the press an officer of the tax police (an arm of Italy's Ministry of Finance) said: "About two years ago Criminalpol started to sketch the outlines of the big mafia groups, establishing the links and contacts. [What ensued was] a long labor of checking and wiretaps, undertaken together with the Americans, to identify the connections with the groups in the U.S.A. . . . The new anti-mafia law was the decisive card; it was that law that permitted us to go into the banks, all the banks of Italy. With some of the small-change banks, little banks, there were some problems in getting cooperation. The explanation is simple: certain institutions were kept in business strictly with mafia money."

But if the new anti-mafia law approved after the assassinations of parliamentary deputy Pio La Torre and Carabinieri General Dalla Chiesa in Sicily last year was indubitably an important factor, as the investigators report, even more decisive was collaboration with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. In fact, the battle against the mafia is a predominantly political problem and the work of the Italian prosecutors has been able to proceed in virtue of the existence of a determination on the American side to conduct the war for which a cabinet-level coordination center has been set up in the Reagan administration, known by the name of "war on drugs."

Dr. Fiori of Criminalpol stated in this connection to *Il Giornale Nuovo* of Feb. 17: "In our report there are references to the ties between the mafia now in jail and politicians. The subject is very hot."

A blow against Cosa Nostra

In confirmation of what has been said, let us analyze the most decisive arrests of Operation St. Valentine's: the brothers Alfredo and Giuseppe Bono.

It is necessary to know that the big European criminal machine which is in the business of drugs, arms, and kidnappings was set up for Cosa Nostra by Joe Adonis in 1956. The role of liaison between Cosa Nostra and the Sicilian Mafia, initially covered by Luciano Liggio and Frank Coppola after the death of Adonis, ended up in the hands of the Sicilian bosses Gerlando Alberti, Tomaso Buscetta, and Gaetano Badalamenti. For about two years the Sicilian Mafia has been torn by internecine battles which Cosa Nostra would like to end at all costs: this was the reason Giuseppe Bono was sent at the beginning of 1982 by the Bonanno family from New