

All roads lead to Damascus

The first in a series on Syria: the evil of terrorism, by Middle East Editor Thierry Lalevée in Wiesbaden.

Revelations made since late February have more than underlined the prime role played by the Syria of Hafez el-Assad in international terrorism. These concern:

- the arrest in Luxembourg of an Albanian intelligence service agent;
- the trial of three members of the Armenian terror group ASALA responsible for the death of eight passengers in July 1983 at Orly airport;
- the Red Army Faction (Baader-Meinhof) support network in West Germany;
- the takeover of Southern Lebanon by the "Crazies of Allah," the infamous Hezbollah.

Yet, some in Washington's State Department are seriously considering removing Syria from the list of countries harboring or fostering international terrorism which includes Libya, Iran, North Korea, and others. This has nothing to do with political blindness, stupidity, or lack of information. It simply represents a political deal with Syria's Big Brother and protector, Moscow, to strangle in the cradle the peace motion engineered by some of America's most reliable allies such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, as well as Israel.

The rationale of Moscow and Damascus is simple enough. A peace process would be more effective in destabilizing the bloody regime of the Assad Alawite clan, Moscow's most reliable ally, than any covert operations.

The fact that the State Department move comes only a few weeks after the Vienna meeting between Undersecretary Richard Murphy and Soviet envoy Vladimir Polyakov gives more than a strong hint of what was discussed there. Polyakov, it turns out, was the Soviet ambassador whom Egyptian President Sadat had expelled from Cairo for his involvement in running the terror network that ultimately killed Sadat on Oct. 6, 1981.

Whether the deal on Syria was made with or without White House knowledge or approval remains to be seen. However, Moscow made its point that outright American support for the Amman Feb. 11 agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and King Hussein of Jordan, and for President Mubarak's initiative, would be understood as offensive.

The first to pay the price would be the four Americans kidnaped more than a year ago in Lebanon by the "Islamic Jihad" but in fact held under the control of Syrian intelli-

gence. There is little doubt that the escape of CNN correspondent Jeremy Levin in February, after a year's captivity, was deliberately organized to confirm that the four others were still held hostage. Coinciding with the meeting in Vienna, Islamic Jihad announced that it had "judged and condemned to death" one of the remaining four as a "proven CIA agent," and said that his body would soon be handed over. As days went by, nothing more was heard of it. Was a deal struck somewhere?

According to some intelligence sources, one of the unwritten but mutually agreed-to commitments taken by Murphy and Polyakov would be that both superpowers will not become directly involved in the present Middle East peace overtures for the time being. If this is so, it amounts to giving the Soviets a blank check to mobilize their numerous terrorist assets in the region to physically eliminate the leaders of the new peace initiative while the State Department sits by and watches. Indeed, while Syria engineered the resurrection of a new Abu Nidal (the most notorious "Arab terrorist," supposedly dead last fall), who promptly announced his intention to assassinate at least Yasser Arafat and King Hussein and also issued dire threats against President Hosni Mubarak, the State Department went on record that the "time is not ripe for the United States to become involved in the Middle East," in the words of Kenneth Dam.

Such behavior gives credibility to the assertions of PLO chairman Yasser Arafat to the Paris based magazine *Al Watan Al Arabi* on March 7 that there is a "mutual understanding between Moscow and Washington" to back the PLO's arch-enemy Syria, to foster a "security agreement between Israel and Syria over Lebanon." This would have been discussed, continued Arafat, in meetings held in Washington, Tangiers, Geneva, and Kenya!

Autopsy of a global terror network

Hence, what the State Department is ready to cover up, as we will describe in upcoming articles of this series, is that Damascus is not only essential to terror in the Middle East, but essential, in cooperation with East bloc intelligence services, to anti-American terrorism in Western Europe. Investigations in France and West Germany are unveiling precisely the chain of command linking Syrian intelligence, Bulgarian and East German services, and local Mideast terror groups to the European left and right-wing terror groups.

As revealed in *Le Point* in early March, it is directly from Damascus that the violent “support committees” for the jailed members of the Red Army Faction have been steered. Under the leadership of a West Berlin lawyer who has been coordinating the pro-RAF support work in West Germany, as well as in France for the Direct Action terrorists, a major terror action is planned for West Germany, with the aim of forcing the release of the RAF members.

The kidnaping of a leading political personality, or a mass-terror operation aimed at forcing Bonn to back down to the RAF, could be on the agenda. These were talked about at the meeting this same lawyer held in Damascus with intelligence personnel and is known to have continued on his way back to West Berlin, in East Berlin, with representatives of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine of Assad’s ally George Habash. As exposed by the daily *Die Welt*, it was a meeting of Syrian and PFLP intelligence officers held in East Berlin in early January which had decided on the January terror wave.

The role of the PFLP, an integral part of Syria’s intelligence apparatus, was also exposed at the end of last month in Paris during the trial of ASALA terrorists Waroujan Garbidian, Ohannes Semerci, and Soner Nayir, who were condemned to life imprisonment and 15 and 10 years in jail, respectively, for the July 1983 Orly terror bombing. Found in the Armenians’ apartment were numerous false passports as well as two actual passports given to them by the PFLP and Syrian intelligence. The last belonged to two members of the neo-Nazi terrorist group *Hoffmann Wehrsportgruppe*, Uwe Mainka and Udo Albrecht, who had been trained in 1980 in Lebanon by the PFLP. Udo Albrecht, as the weekly *l’Express* reported, is an internationally wanted terrorist who is known to live quietly in a city where such warrants have no effect—East Berlin.

Weapons bought in Austria in 1975 by the Bulgarian drugs-for-arms company, Kintex, were also found in the apartment of these same Armenians!

The very same combination was found in a more active operation recently as Luxembourg police arrested last Feb. 24 an Albanian intelligence service agent preparing a series of terror bombings against the NAMSA NATO firm in Luxembourg. Holder of a false Yugoslav passport, the Albanian worked together with some members of the European terror groups, Direct Action (France), the West German RAF, and the Belgium Communist Combatant Cells who succeeded in escaping after having stolen more than 347 kg of explosives from a nearby company.

The arrest of the Albanian proved the case of the direct involvement of East bloc intelligence services in European terrorism, but also brought to light the strange role played by Albania with East bloc intelligence as well as its longstanding relationship with Mideast terrorism. The flow of Iranian and Syrian delegates in recent years to Albania should remind us that Albania’s capital, Tirana, actually means “Little Teheran”—and was purposely named so.

France

Fight surfaces over beam-weapon defense

by Laurent Rosenfeld

In the Paris daily *Le Figaro* of Feb. 22, General Etienne Copel, former deputy chief of staff of the French Air Force, published a vigorous defense of the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative, taking open issue with the official stance of the French government.

Less than two weeks later, on March 6 *Le Monde*, the other major Paris daily, ran a front-page analysis over the pen name “Hoplites,” by a top-ranking active-duty general. He called for full mobilization of the nation’s resources for a French Strategic Defense Initiative.

Copel and “Hoplites” are only two of several voices in France, particularly among high-ranking military leaders and strategists, which have started publicly contesting the Mitterrand regime’s policy of parroting the Soviet line on “Star Wars.” Officially, the Mitterrand government claims that President Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative would trigger a new arms race in space—precisely the lying Moscow line.

This pathetic policy was put out early last month in Munich, at the same Wehrkunde (military strategy) meeting of Feb. 9-10 where West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl had announced that his country was firmly on board with the SDI. There, French Defense Minister Charles Hernu announced, “France wants space to remain peaceful.” Many French political and military figures share his attitude: not so much out of concern for peace in space, as from fear of seeing France’s nuclear forces, its *force de frappe*, become obsolete—fear of seeing France unable to retain its traditional “strategic independence,” or keep up with the high rate of progress the SDI implies.

But two months ago, Jean-François Revel, a journalist connected to important political-strategic circles, wrote an article calling on Europe to keep up with the new military, scientific, and industrial challenges posed by the SDI. After Revel wrote, other articles began to appear which, if not always well informed, created intense debate on the subject.

The French government reacted with self-serving comments—“The SDI is not going to work before 20 or 30 years anyway; we have time to think about it”—and with, at least officially, a policy of “hardening” French missiles to try to preserve the kill capability of the *force de frappe*. But several