

Middle East Report by Thierry Lalevée

Behind the 'unified terror command'

New terrorist groups are springing up almost daily, but investigations reveal the same old faces. Who benefits?

Libya's Col. Muammar Qaddafi announced on March 31 the creation of a new "National Command of the Arab Revolutionary Forces," a unified military command aimed at striking Western—and especially American—interests worldwide through "suicide commandos." Qaddafi was addressing an audience of potential kamikazes from among the opposition movements of Egypt, Iraq, Sudan, plus a few Palestinians and Europeans from Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, and Poland.

"Only the suicide action of the masses," Qaddafi declared, "can liberate Arab lands." He went on to praise the terrorists who have attacked American and Israeli forces in Lebanon.

The last two months have seen a proliferation of terrorist groups in the Middle East and Mediterranean, aimed at building a smokescreen between the terrorists themselves and the real brains behind them. Recent suicide squad operations against Israeli forces in southern Lebanon were claimed not only by the infamous Islamic Jihad group, but also by an Islamic Liberation Front, a South Lebanon National Liberation Front, and the nazi Popular Syrian Party or Syrian National Socialist Party. Credit for the kidnaping of Western diplomats was claimed by the Islamic Jihad as well as by the Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction, the hitherto unknown Khaybar Brigades, and the Revolutionary Organization of Socialist Muslims.

Bomb attacks against the Jordanian airlines offices in Nicosia, Rome,

and Athens were claimed by the Black September terrorists. The bombing of a Jewish cinema in Paris on March 29, which wounded 20, was claimed by Islamic Jihad and assorted neo-nazi groups. On March 25, the creation of yet another Palestinian group was announced, the Palestinian National Salvation Front, representing a merger of the Democratic Alliance and the National Alliance.

Linking these multifarious groups is their common godfather, President Hafez al Assad of Syria, and their opposition to PLO chief Yasser Arafat.

Ultimately these terrorist groups can be grouped into two basic factions: Shi'ite Moslem fundamentalists and Eastern Orthodox Christians. The latter grouping includes former members of the Syrian and Lebanese Communist Parties, who joined either George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) or the Organization of Communist Struggle (OCAL); their precise geographical origins are known. The same individuals are found in Black September, a new name for the resurrected organization of the notorious Abu Nidal.

A Politburo member of the Al Amal Shi'ite militia of Nabil Berri revealed in London at the end of March—whether voluntarily or not is not known—that all these groups operate under a joint "military command," which, under the leadership of Al Amal, includes the Hezbollah of Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah (to which the Kaybar Brigades belong), the Islamic Amal of Hussein

Moussavi, the Druze of Walid Jumblatt, warring Sunni militias such as the Mourabitoun drug-smugglers, the Syrian Popular Party, and the Palestinian dissidents of Abu Musa. The job of the joint command is to decide the division of labor among the groups, to deploy them for military attacks against Israel and for terrorist operations.

But the military independence of the "command" is a joke: The Syrian army and Syrian military intelligence calls the shots. Even the direct relationship between Hezbollah boss Sheikh Fadlallah and Ayatollah Khomeini can be no more than a logistical connection, if Damascus chooses to veto any action.

Teheran and Damascus operate, however, through mutual interdependence—financially and militarily. Thanks to Iran's involvement in international terrorism, Syria can blackmail the Gulf countries into more and more financial support, under the pretext of mediating with Khomeini.

Investigations recently published in the French newspapers *Le Monde* and *Liberation*, trying to disentangle the threads of the diverse terrorist groups now operating, exposed the precise connections between each of these entities and Syrian intelligence services, even proving that the so-called Shi'ite fundamentalist organization Islamic Jihad and the Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction, a left-wing Eastern Orthodox organization, are in fact one and the same. Different names account for different operations in Europe or the Middle East, but all came from the intelligence branch of the Syrian National Socialist Party, a veteran suicide commando organization modeled upon Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party, and whose ideological influence over Syria needs no proof. Assad's wife is the chairman of the party for Syria!