

Bush's Irangate role: in deeper and deeper

As *EIR* reported last week ("North Trial Spills the Beans on Bush Irangate Role"), many of the minor figures in the Iran-Contra arms deals, the "pawns" who have been "hung out to dry" to cover up for the culpability of their superiors, have begun to talk. During the trial of Oliver North, new documents have surfaced implicating not only former National Security Advisers Adm. John Poindexter and Robert McFarlane, but also George Bush himself.

Explosive revelations appeared earlier during the trial of *United States v. Heinrich Rupp*. Rupp, as we reported last week, claims that he flew a plane carrying Bush and William Casey, the future director of the CIA, to Paris on Oct. 19, 1980 to meet with top Iranian officials, during the height of the Iran hostage crisis—and two weeks before the U.S. presidential election. According to a deposition heard by the judge without the jury present (*in camera*) by former CIA agent Richard Brennecke, Bush and Casey arranged to have the hostages released only *after* the election of the Reagan-Bush ticket.

Defendant Rupp was born in Switzerland and was recruited during World War II by OSS Switzerland (i.e., Allen Dulles). Later he became the personal pilot of Saudi Crown Prince Fahd (now the king of Saudi Arabia). He seems to know the details of the financial aspects of the Iran-Contra arms deals, especially in Switzerland, including the U.S. connection of former Swiss Justice Minister Elisabeth Kopp and her husband, Hans.

Participants in the Paris meetings with Iranian representatives reportedly were, besides Casey and Bush: Donald Gregg, later national security adviser and CIA liaison to Vice President Bush and a major Irangate figure; Richard Allen, national security adviser to President Reagan; Cyrus Hashemi, the Iranian arms trader and informant for the U.S. Customs Service (now deceased, under mysterious circumstances); French intelligence operative Robert Benes (a relative of the late Czechoslovakian leader President Eduard Benes); Iranian arms-dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar, a protégé of future State Department adviser Michael Ledeen; and a representative of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the future Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, and one Secret Service agent for Bush.

A kind of curse surrounds many of those involved in that

fateful trip to Paris. *EIR* has just learned of the latest known victim of the "curse": Bin-Laden, a wealthy Saudi businessman close to the Royal Family, who happened to be the owner of the plane flown to Paris by Rupp. He died last summer in a mysterious plane accident near Austin, Texas.

What follows are excerpts from the *in camera* testimony of Brennecke during the *United States v. Heinrich Rupp* trial in Denver, Colorado on Sept. 23, 1988, before Judge Jim R. Carrigan.

The Brennecke revelations

The Court: Now Mr. Scott [defense attorney], the reason for this hearing in chamber is that you wanted to offer some evidence which might be relevant to sentencing from a witness who might not be available later; is that correct?

Scott: That's correct. . . .

Mr. Brennecke, do you have personal knowledge that Mr. Rupp has been engaged in activities in behalf of the Central Intelligence Agency and/or the National Security Council. . . ?

Brennecke: I have known Harry Rupp since about 1957, and he has been engaged in that activity since that time. . . . I met first Mr. Rupp in Southeast Asia.

Scott: And do you have any personal knowledge of any flying activities that Mr. Rupp was involved in on or about October 1980, involving a vice-presidential candidate at that time by the name of George Bush?

Brennecke: Yes, sir, I do. On the 19th of October, Mr. Rupp brought Mr. Bush, Mr. Casey, and a number of other people to Paris, France, from the United States, for a meeting with Iranian representatives.

Scott: And were you engaged in any meeting after the arrival of Mr. Casey, Mr. Bush and other personnel?

Brennecke: Yes, sir, I was. I was involved in a meeting which involved Mr. Casey specifically. . . . We're talking about William Casey who later became the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, sir. . . . I believe at that time he was the chairman of the Republican Presidential Campaign. . . . The meeting I was engaged in was held at the Hotel Florida, in Paris, France, on the 20th of October, 1980. Present were acquaintances of mine from France, an individual by the name of Robert Benes. Also present was Mr. Donald Gregg.

The Court: G-r-e-g-g?

Brennecke: Yes, sir, G-r-e-g-g. And he was, at that time, affiliated with the National Security Council of the United States. . . . Present were Mr. Casey, a representative of Mr. Rafsanjani. . . . a gentleman by the name of Cyrus Hashemi; Donald Gregg, as I've said; Robert Benes. There were other people present from time to time during the day, Your Honor. . . .

The Court: Be as specific as you can with dates and names, will you, please?

Brennecke: In October of 1980, I was present in Paris,

France, at a meeting that was the third of three meetings held within a two-day time period on the 19th and 20th of October, 1980. The meetings were held at the Crillon Hotel and two of the meetings were held there. The third meeting was held at the Hotel Florida.

The purpose of the meetings was to negotiate, not only for the release of the hostages then being held at the U.S. Embassy in Teheran, but also to discuss—if the negotiations were successful—the means by which the terms that were agreed to would be dealt with, how we would go about satisfying everybody involved. The French were present because they would become a major factor in satisfying the requests. In the end, agreement was reached; and the logistics of transferring \$40 million for the purchase of weapons was worked out. And it was for this meeting that Mr. Rupp brought the then vice presidential candidate George Bush and Mr. Casey. . . . Subsequent to that, Mr. Casey went on to Frankfurt; the Vice President, who remained less than 24 hours, returned to the United States. And a number of people were left in Paris to deal with the disposition of the funds placed at their disposal and to deal with the logistics of getting those weapons delivered to the Iranians. . . . As a result of this meeting, certain French individuals did go on and did purchase weapons; did in the end exchange those weapons for—or at least as part of the condition of—the release of American hostages then being held in Teheran.

The Court: Exchange them with Iran?

Brennecke: They exchanged them with the Iranians, sir.

The Court: So you are saying the \$40 million was paid to the French and the French bought weapons with it?

Brennecke: Sure. Approximately \$40 million was placed in a number of bank accounts in Europe. It was placed at the disposal of the individuals involved in the purchase and exchange of weapons. Some of those people doing the purchase were French; others were Iranian—Mr. Ghorbanifar, for instance. . . . The people involved have, as I say, either, in my opinion, been killed or systematically discredited over a considerable period of time.

The Court: Which ones have been killed?

Brennecke: Cyrus Hashemi, for example. And I would be happy to furnish the Court with a copy of the autopsy report for Mr. Hashemi, who was at that time an informant of the U.S. Customs Service. I knew Mr. Hashemi and his family. He had discussed [the Paris meeting] with his family. . . . His brother subsequently died, and I personally question the circumstances. . . . You ask who else. An individual by the name of Steven Carr, who participated in the Contra portion of the activities, died of an overdose of drugs while under the protection of the Federal Witness Protection Program. I am not, sir, talking about people I have read about in the newspaper. I'm talking about people I have met and upon whom I can at least evaluate whether they died of natural causes or were—were—otherwise.

Now I will say, I have made these statements to Senator

Kerry's committees and the United States Senate—again, under oath. I have made these statements and I've given this information to investigators from the Tower Commission. They have found me to be accurate with my information; they have found it to be precise and detailed. And I've spent innumerable hours talking to Senator Kerry's staff, for instance, and their investigators. They have decided, for whatever reason, not to pursue this.

The Court: Were you at this meeting in Paris as a member of the CIA or what?

Brennecke: Yes, sir, I was. . . .

The Court: How do you know it was \$40 million?

Brennecke: Because that was the figure that the director—William Casey and Mr. Gregg discussed at the meeting. . . .

O'Rourke [the prosecutor]: Has anybody attempted to kill you?

Brennecke: Yes, sir. Approximately two years ago, I was shot at in Portland, Oregon. I reported the incident to the state police; they investigated and found residue of a bullet shell, of a bullet which had been fired at my vehicle, which missed my face by about an inch and a half.

Scott: Do you know who shot that bullet?

Brennecke: No, sir, I do not. I do know I was called afterwards and told if I spoke with anyone about anything, this would happen again. My son was—in addition to that—my son was threatened and was detained against his will. . . . I will find out someday; and, sir, I will tell you exactly who they were, and then I will tell the world. . . .

Scott: Has anybody ever tried to kill Heinrich Rupp in the past since this meeting in October of 1980?

Brennecke: I don't know. I would suggest that what's being done now is going a long way towards doing it.

Scott: Are you suggesting that the United States Attorney's office for the District of Colorado presented this matter to the Federal Grand Jury, here, is some effort to discredit Mr Rupp? . . . Are you saying that someone, in the jargon, has framed Heinrich Rupp?

Brennecke: Yes, I am.

Scott: Are you suggesting that someone has fabricated evidence. . . ? Are you suggesting that someone in the FBI has done this? . . . Are you aware that in July 18th 1984 Mr. Rupp was bound and gagged in an hotel room near the airport in Denver? . . ."

Brennecke: Yes, I am. . . .

At the end of this in camera session, Rupp gave a short statement defending himself. He stated in particular that "I am sorry to say that my division chief in the Middle East, Mr. [William] Buckley, was brutally killed, due to revelation of our government that he was the station chief." This extremely serious allegation did not provoke any request for clarification from the court. Rupp was convicted and sentenced to 41 years in prison, where he now sits.