

The Israeli hand behind the international terror wave

by Joseph Brewda

On Feb. 24, Israeli President Chaim Herzog traveled to Britain on the first state visit there ever made by an Israeli President. Upon his arrival, Herzog told BBC that Israel was engaged in a "major battle against Iranian-controlled Islamic fundamentalism." "It's true that there's no Soviet Union now threatening," he explained, "but there are all sorts of lunatic states like Iran and Iraq and so forth, which could upset the whole balance in the world."

Two days after Herzog's claim, a car-bomb exploded in the underground garage of the World Trade Center in New York City, killing six people and injuring hundreds. Also that day, Herzog met with British Prime Minister John Major, where, according to Herzog's spokesman, he warned that Islamic fundamentalism is not just a threat to Israel, "but to other countries as well."

Then on March 12, over 200 people were killed in Bombay, India as a result of at least 12 bombs exploding in the commercial district. The bombings were rapidly traced, it is said, to Muslim fundamentalists, and it was claimed that the same type of explosive was used as in New York. The shooting of several CIA officials at the entrance of CIA headquarters in Virginia on Jan. 25, attributed to a Pakistani Muslim, had already achieved world-wide media attention.

In all these incidents, a similar pattern of evidence has emerged.

Who says there is an 'Islamic' menace?

In the case of the World Trade Center bombing, nearly all of the experts called upon by the media to comment are Israeli or Israeli-linked. These experts include:

- **Uri Dan**, the authorized biographer of Gen. Ariel Sharon, who first charged Islamic responsibility for the New York bombing, within hours of the blast;
- **Wolf Blitzer**, the former *Jerusalem Post* bureau chief in Washington now employed by Cable News Network;
- **Steven Emerson**, whose writings center on the threat of the Arab lobby over Washington and an analysis of the Iran-Contra affair which leaves out the role of Israel;
- **Robert Friedman**, whose frequently critical exposés of Israel are always based on Israeli sources;
- **Roy Godson**, who while at the Reagan National Security Council was responsible for liaison with Israel regarding Iran-Contra operations;

● **Avigdor Haselkorn**, the U.S.-based Israeli anti-terror expert.

A review of their claims, whether made before or after the arrest of the Islamic ring allegedly responsible for the blast, shows that they all have the same line: An "Islamic fundamentalist international" has been created, which was trained in Afghanistan during the war, and which has bases in Iran and Sudan.

But, one might object, does such an Afghan-trained "Islamic international" really exist? If it does, then must it not be controlled by the CIA, British intelligence, and the Mossad, since it was these forces that recruited, trained, funded, and armed the Afghan resistance?

The most comprehensive statement of this Israeli line came out even prior to Herzog's mission to Britain, in a 93-page report by the House Republican Research Committee Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, released Feb. 1 and entitled "The New Islamic International."

The author of the report, staff director Yosef Bodansky, is the former editor of the Israeli Air Force's magazine, who later became technical editor at the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA) in Washington. During the Reagan administration, Bodansky was appointed to a sensitive post in the Defense Department, despite his Israeli citizenship; he quietly left that post after Jonathan Pollard was caught spying for the Mossad in 1985, and reports surfaced even in the Israeli media that Bodansky was Pollard's controller.

The 'evidence' that doesn't quite add up

The second pattern is the astonishing wealth of "evidence" that promptly emerged pointing to Islamic involvement in the bombings, especially Islamic terrorist elements trained in Afghanistan.

In the case of the World Trade Center, we have the accused, Mohamed Salameh, who returned on three occasions to a Jersey City rental company to get a deposit back on the van allegedly used in the bombing. Salameh used his real identification and address to rent the van; authorities claim they know the van was used to house the explosives because they had found its one-inch identification plate among several tons of rubble. Police then found nitrates on Salameh's papers and explosive-making equipment in his apartment. It

turns out that Salameh maintained a joint bank account with chemist Nidal Ayyad; explosive-making materials were found in a storage locker that they jointly rented.

Then, tracing out their joint bank account establishes a financial link to one Mahmud Abohalima, described as a top lieutenant of Jersey City Islamic fundamentalist cleric Sheik Abdel Rahman. Rahman had earlier acquired notoriety when one of his followers was tried (and exonerated) for the murder of Jewish Defense League founder Meier Kahane. Rahman had earlier been tried for the murder of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981, and has continued to call for violence against Egyptian leaders in his group's newspaper, which is published in Pakistan. Nonetheless, Rahman has had no trouble not only entering the United States on a visa, but even obtaining a residency permit (greencard). As for Abohalima, four days after the explosion, he flew to Egypt, residing at his family's home, where he was easily found. The press reports that all of these fellows are also tied to the Afghan mujahideen resistance movement. Of course, the media leave out the fact that Rahman et al. were under 24-hour-a-day surveillance.

In the midst of such remarkable police-work, the *New York Times* reports that it has received an Arabic-language letter from the previously unknown Liberation Fifth Army Battalion, claiming responsibility for the blast and threatening additional actions against U.S. civilian and military targets, including "nuclear targets."

A similar pattern is seen in the Bombay bombings.

Immediately following the March 12 car-bombings, Bombay police found an abandoned vehicle from which they recovered AK-56 rifles, empty magazines, and the address of one Yakub Mominalian Memon, an Indian national of Iranian origin, who, together with his five brothers, owns several businesses in India and the Mideast. Then, two days after the explosions, the authorities found an abandoned scooter, loaded with seven to eight kilograms of the same explosives that had been used in the bombings. Police speculate that the bombs in the scooter failed to detonate. The owner of the scooter, it turns out, is the same Memon, and the keys to the scooter-bomb were found in his unoccupied apartment.

Then, in another turn in the investigation, police who estimated that at least \$1 million was required to purchase car-bombs and related materials, studied the Memon family bank accounts and found that one week prior to the blast some 700,000 rupees had been withdrawn. Police then arrested two people who had procured seven cars and jeeps for the Memon family. Six of these vehicles were reportedly used in the blast; the seventh was found parked outside the Memon home. The Memons, however, were nowhere to be found; they had told neighbors that they were making a pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia. Despite their alleged flight, however, over 10 million rupees' worth of cash and valuables were found in their home.

With the FBI already involved in the investigation, and

with claims that the same explosive was used in Bombay and in New York, the *Hindustan Times*, the *Pioneer*, and the *Hindu*, three leading government-linked papers, began claiming that Pakistani intelligence had masterminded the incident. Echoing Bodansky, the *Hindustan Times* claimed that all leads had narrowed down to the Pakistani-linked Afghan mujahideen and to other Islamic groups having bases in Algeria, Sudan, Tunisia, and Egypt. Other Indian media reported that government investigators had already gotten a lead about an Iranian mercenary organization, operating on the Indian-Pakistan border, threatening India two days before the bombing. The group, they say, is the Islamic Rapid Action Force, part of a shadowy force of 15,000 guerrillas comprising Islamic fundamentalists from Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Iran, Pakistan, Sudan and the Israeli Occupied Territories—all trained in Afghanistan.

Madcap adventures

Although the sleuth work of government investigators in respect to the quick identification of the alleged perpetrators was, shall we say, stunning, these same investigators did not fare so well, except in the New York case, in finding these perpetrators.

For example, in respect to the Bombay case: First there was a March 16 shootout with two Indians reportedly involved in the explosion. They escaped.

As for the Memon family: Although police had already determined the Memons' involvement the day of the blast, they also discovered that the six brothers had left India from March 3 to the morning of March 12, the last two leaving nine hours before the first bomb went off. All six brothers reportedly flew to Dubai using their real names.

By March 21, however, Dubai police chief Brig. Dhahi Khalfan told a news conference that the Memon brothers had already left Dubai. Angrily responding to criticism, Khalfan reported he had never been formally notified of the Memons' presence in Dubai, nor did he receive a request to arrest them. "I cannot arrest anybody without official authority," he said. "The Indian authorities did not inform me, nor did Interpol." Part of the reason for the ease of the Memon "flight," is that the Indian government has not yet revoked their passports. "It is not easy to revoke passports," Home Minister S.B. Chavan explained to the Indian parliament on March 23.

As for the shootings at CIA headquarters on Jan 25: The reported perpetrator is Mir Aimal Kansi, a Pakistani fundamentalist who entered the United States in March 1991, promptly getting a job with the only outside courier service employed by the CIA. According to press accounts, Kansi left the United States for his home town of Quetta, Pakistan several days after the killings, but only one day before U.S. authorities determined that he was the prime murder suspect. Finally, on Feb. 8, two weeks after the killings, police first publicly identified Kansi as the prime suspect—alas, one day after he had left Quetta, allegedly for Afghanistan.