

# Did British intelligence down Swissair Flight 111?

by Dean Andromidas

On the evening of Sept. 2, off the coast of Nova Scotia, 229 people died when Swissair Flight 111 crashed into St. Margarets Bay. On Sept. 3, within hours of that disaster, *EIR*'s Wiesbaden office received a phone call from one of our most reliable sources.

"Did you know that Richard Tomlinson was booked on Flight 111?" the source asked. "He's not dead. He never got on the aircraft."

Richard Tomlinson is the former agent of MI6, Britain's foreign intelligence service, whose revelations over recent weeks have been making headlines in the international press. He recently testified before Judge Hervé Stephan, the judge in Paris who is investigating whether Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed were the victims of a traffic accident or an assassination plot. He told Judge Stephan that Henri Paul, the security driver who died in the crash, was in fact a stringer for British intelligence. He has elsewhere revealed that MI6 has been paying a high-level German official of the Bundesbank, Germany's central bank, perhaps millions of dollars since 1986 for the most sensitive economic intelligence from the world's third-largest industrial economy. Information so sensitive that, if it proved true, could destroy not only Britain's relations with its European allies, but the entire euro currency project as well.

Had Flight 111 been the target of a bomb, and not an accident? Was that bomb placed by agents associated with British intelligence? Was the information Tomlinson holds so sensitive, as to justify, in the minds of those who masterminded the bombing, the sacrifice of 229 lives? Are the implications of such an operation enough to prompt the governments of the United States, Canada, and Switzerland to engage in a cynical cover-up?

*EIR*'s preliminary investigation, which involved detailed discussions with security experts, aerospace engineers, and "special operations" experts of several NATO countries, has put together a very strong case that Flight 111 was the target of a bomb attack.

## The sequence of events

A brief review of currently known facts points to a sequence of events almost unheard-of in civil aviation disasters, and should lead any responsible investigator to conclude that it was the work of sabotage or a bomb or incendiary device.

According to *EIR* information, the possibility that it was a bomb attack is in fact part of the investigation, but this has not been revealed to the public.

The known sequence of events is briefly as follows: At around 10:14 p.m., the pilots communicated with air traffic control the "Pan Pan Pan" code words for declaration of an emergency, announced they smelled smoke in the cockpit, and requested an emergency landing. They were directed to Halifax International Airport in Nova Scotia, and told to immediately implement emergency procedures for smoke in the cockpit, for which they had been trained and had just recently conducted exercises. They prepared for an emergency landing, including maneuvering aimed at dumping fuel over the water and reducing speed. Throughout this period, their communication indicated that they were in control of the situation. Ten minutes later, the pilots announced, "We are declaring an emergency." They requested immediate clearance to land. Then, shortly after, all communication ceased, and six minutes later the aircraft crashed into the sea at high speed.

Now, consider the following:

- Both the black box flight data recorder and the cockpit voice recorder stopped functioning six minutes before the crash, precisely the point at which communication ceased.
- The aircraft's angle of descent in the last five minutes was so steep that it must have been totally out of control. It hit the water perhaps at a speed of Mach 0.8-1. The wreckage of the aircraft was so compact that it not only covered an area almost smaller than the area of the aircraft itself, but parts of the tail section were found mingled with the nose section.
- All parts of the cockpit that were retrieved had been burned at a very high temperature, much higher than that of any normal electrical fire, or than the heat of the plane's burning insulation (as has recently been suggested) could possibly have reached in the five minutes before it struck the water. These signs of burning would indicate that the pilots had been totally incapacitated, if they were not already dead. Immediate radio contact with air traffic control was lost.
- Shortly after the crash, the FBI began an investigation of every passenger and person who had been booked on the flight, which originated from New York, but who did not board the aircraft. This is standard procedure when the cause of the crash is not known, and a criminal or terrorist cause

is suspected.

That Tomlinson was booked on that aircraft, and that this fact has not been reported by the major international media, also raises questions. Another passenger, one who unfortunately was on the aircraft, was Bandar Al Saud. According to the Saudi Arabian Embassy, he was a prince, a former Saudi Air Force pilot, and a businessman. According to sources, his “business” was arms procurement for the Saudi Air Force.

- Reports of “catastrophic electricity failure,” botched attempts at an emergency landing, or the idea that the pilots panicked, have been shown to be false by the investigators themselves. For example, it was suggested in the Sept. 20 London *Sunday Times* that in an effort to locate the cause of the alleged electrical fire, the pilots were systematically shutting down various systems. According to sources, the possibility of doing so was, in fact, investigated and proved false, because it could never have been accomplished in five minutes.

- According to Canadian law, the investigation of all air crashes is initially under the authority of the medical examiner’s office and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, until it is determined that the cause of the crash was not a criminal act. In this case, the investigation was turned over to the Canadian Air Safety authority within hours of the crash.

- One of the Swissair safety officials who was involved in the investigation, upon returning to Switzerland, was banned from speaking to the press, which is understandable, but claimed he could not speak even to his superiors. This is not at all understandable, and could only mean a tight security lid has been clamped on the case.

- Rumors circulating among Swissair pilots are that “it was a bomb, and the truth will never get out.”

## The booby trap

The investigation of a bomb attack does not start from the wreckage that lies 200 feet below the icy waters off the Nova Scotia coast, but from looking inside the sick but highly professional mind which planned it. The attack was not organized as a public terrorist act or political show of force conveniently attributable to some appropriate international terrorist organization. Such an attack would bring world attention to the affair. Remember, Pan Am Flight 103, which blew up over Lockerbie, Scotland in December 1988, had several highly placed Middle East intelligence operatives of the CIA and the State Department who had become “inconvenient” during the Iran-Contra affair. This fact was all but suppressed by the debate on whether Iran, Syria, or Libya was responsible for the bombing, despite the fact that no terrorist group ever took responsibility. An assassination that could later be credibly attributed to a terrible accident, would be much more convenient.

Several security specialists — some close to the affair and others with experience in construction of such devices — point to a classic “booby trap.” Such sabotage would be designed

to leave a false trail that could be credibly interpreted as a “terrible accident” or an “act of God.” This would also require drawing the attention of the pilots in a false direction, away from the instrument of their premeditated murder.

The device most likely had two parts. The first part would be placed under the pilot’s control panel, which would simulate smoke. Such a device could be very small, comprised of plastic that would burn once detonated, perhaps by an altimeter detonator that would be triggered when the aircraft reached a certain altitude. It could be placed away from the wires that could trigger the sensors that monitor the preflight checks. This would have focussed the concentration of the pilots toward a nonexistent electrical problem originating under the control panel. This would thus trigger the “wire bundle” fire theory, and lead to the initiation of the “smoke in the cockpit” procedures.

The second part of the device would be the actual bomb. Not a powerful, large explosive device, but possibly a magnesium sulfate device similar in principle to a signal flare, and no bigger in size than half of such a flare (10 cm × 4 cm). One expert told *EIR* that such a device could be placed in the control or fuse panel behind the pilots and on the right side of the cockpit. Independent of this source, *Aviation Week & Space Technology* reported on Sept. 28 that investigators are now looking at the possibility that the problem originated precisely in this panel. This device could be ignited by an inverted altimeter detonator, which would go off as the aircraft reduced altitude in preparation for an emergency landing.

Both devices could be placed in a matter of minutes during routine servicing. Such a scenario would necessitate that the operatives were highly professional, and likely linked to a state intelligence service.

## Why kill Tomlinson?

Every crime needs a motivation. Why kill Tomlinson?

Richard Thomlinson, a 38-year-old former MI6 operative, served Her Majesty between 1992 and 1995. He had operational assignments in Russia, the Middle East, and the Balkans, particularly in Bosnia. For some unknown reason, MI6 refused to renew his contract in 1995.

Following his attempt to publish a book in Britain on his experiences working for MI6, he was prosecuted, and in December 1997, was convicted for violating the Official Secrets Act. After serving six months of a one-year sentence, Tomlinson fled to Paris. Shortly after his arrival, on Aug. 1, he was arrested at gunpoint by French police and brought before a British police detective in Paris for questioning. Although he was later released, it was clear that the British authorities told their French colleagues that Tomlinson was a dangerous criminal when they requested his arrest. As could be expected, the French police sent a special, heavily armed intervention team, complete with ambulance, to arrest Tomlinson. They managed not to oblige the British by “acciden-

tally” killing him. The British were able to confiscate his personal computer and the encryption software that was on it.

After this experience, Tomlinson apparently concluded that his only defense against the long arm of British intelligence was the use of the sensitive information in his possession.

His first move was to give two hours of testimony to Judge Stephan. According to press reports, he told Judge Stephan that the driver of the car in which Diana and Dodi were killed, Henri Paul, was an MI6 agent, and that one of the other bodyguards was an MI6 contact. He also is said to have claimed that MI6 was planning an assassination attack in Paris on another foreign personality. This testimony was given in the last week of August, seven to ten days prior to the crash of Flight 111.

After his testimony before Judge Stephan, Tomlinson was invited to New York by NBC News for an exclusive interview. NBC booked him on Flight 111 for his return flight to Geneva. He never got on the flight, because upon his arrival at New York’s Kennedy Airport, he was immediately deported and put on the next flight to Switzerland. Did special operations team A of Her Majesty’s Secret Intelligence Service, fail to tell its team B, the bombers? These things do happen.

Tomlinson’s choice of Geneva as a safehaven is not accidental. This famous “open city,” a center for the United Nations and international diplomacy as well as for high finance, is perhaps one of the most controlled security environments in Europe. He, in effect, put himself under the security of the Geneva police, who run the security side of this environment like a Middle Ages fiefdom.

On Sept. 11, Tomlinson revealed an alleged plot to assassinate Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic in Geneva. The alleged plan, which was obviously never carried out, would have involved blinding the Serbian strongman’s driver with a laser device while his car entered a tunnel—the apparent model for the hit against Diana and Dodi.

### **A British spy in the Bundesbank**

But, the most potentially devastating revelation, one that could bring down not only Her Majesty’s global spookery but more importantly Britain’s entire European strategy for the last decade, was revealed on Sept. 16. Tomlinson drafted a letter, addressed to his attorney, which he requested be passed on to the British Intelligence Services Parliamentary Select Committee, revealing the existence of a British spy in the Bundesbank, Germany’s central bank, codenamed “Orcada.” He posted it on the Internet, and it was reported in the Sept. 20 *Sunday Times*.

In this letter, Tomlinson wrote: “Orcada is a German national. . . . He was recruited by MI6 in approximately 1986. . . . His motive is entirely financial and he is paid very substantially. Indeed, he is among the best paid and most important of any of MI6’s agents. He provided regular and detailed

information on the German position during the Maastricht Treaty negotiations.” He added, “The primary intelligence requirement against Germany . . . is economic intelligence,” and such spying is “accorded the same level of secrecy and need to know indoctrination as highly sensitive Russian casework.”

One of the agent’s alleged handlers was a British MI6 operative named Andrew Mitchell, stationed at the British Embassy in Bonn and operating under the cover of a commercial attaché. The British government has confirmed that an Andrew Mitchell was in fact commercial attaché in Bonn during 1993-96. These operations are conducted by the UKB unit, consisting of about 10 officers based at MI6 headquarters at Vauxhall Cross, south London, and given the generic name, Jetstream. Germany was not the only victim of such economic espionage, but France, Spain, Italy, and Switzerland were as well. French military intelligence is also one of the primary penetration targets.

Tomlinson also warned British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, that if the British government tried to deny the existence of such a spy, he would reveal the spy’s name. The British government has to this day not issued any statement on this revelation, despite the fact that the *Sunday Times* had it on its front page. Nonetheless, the Bundesbank has launched an official investigation.

The report of a British spy operating in the Bundesbank since 1986, corresponds to information contained in recently released official documents concerning German unification. On the personal orders of former Chancellor Helmut Kohl, these documents were released almost 20 years earlier than the officially mandated 25 years. They document the ganging up on Kohl by Margaret Thatcher, François Mitterrand, and George Bush to allow unification only if Germany and its economy were shackled by the chains of the Maastricht Treaty and the euro currency project.

Also occurring within this time frame, was the assassination of Deutsche Bank Chairman Alfred Herrhausen, a murder which to this day remains unsolved. Herrhausen was Kohl’s chief economic adviser, and at the time of his assassination on Nov. 30, 1989, he was deeply involved in drafting economic proposals that would have linked German unification to an initiative to transform the collapsing East European and Soviet economies, through cooperation and massive investment in renewing their industrial and infrastructure capabilities. The hand of British and French intelligence involvement in this assassination was widely believed but never spoken of publicly, outside of *EIR*.

Then again, if a real live British spy were to be arrested in the Central Bank of fellow NATO-ally Germany, and then brought to the light of day, who would consider their nations safe? What about France, or Italy? What about British spies in Her Majesty’s former colony, the United States? Sources close to Tomlinson have told *EIR* that he has more to tell, should he stay alive.