

Expose Carter-era gun-running to Ayatollah Khomeini's hordes

by Edward Spannaus

A series of indictments and arrests in recent weeks and months, involving illegal exports of arms and spare parts to Iran, signals the breaking up of a widespread arms-smuggling ring which developed under the protection of the Carter administration. A determined effort, centered in the Treasury Department's Customs Service, and in the office of Attorney-General Edwin Meese, is now under way to root out this network, and could ultimately result in the unraveling of an official cover-up which dates back to the Khomeini coup in Iran and even before.

The recent round of prosecutions, initiated by a task force which is composed of the U.S. Customs Service, the FBI, and the Treasury's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), include the following:

- On June 27, Customs agents arrested Kazem Zamani, described as "an Iranian businessman," at his home in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Zamani is charged with shipping military radar and navigation equipment to Iran.

- On July 15, five Filipino immigrants, including a U.S. sailor, were arrested in San Diego, and an Iranian national was simultaneously arrested in London, as part of a ring charged with shipping spare parts for F-14 fighter jets to Iran. Authorities said that there are as many as 20 suspects in the ring, many of whom are U.S. military personnel. Parts had been diverted from the Kitty Hawk and other aircraft carriers.

- On August 1, six more individuals were arrested and charged with conspiring to ship sophisticated anti-tank missiles to Iran. This ring was based in Orlando, Florida, and included Lt.-Col. Wayne G. Gillespie, a West Point graduate who is assigned to the Army Materiel Command at the Pentagon.

- Additional arrests were also made in Chicago last October, and in Los Angeles last April, in other cases involving military equipment smuggling to Iran. More charges are expected to be brought later this month in Los Angeles in yet another case.

The first major attack on Iranian arms smuggling came with the indictments of the Hashemi brothers—Cyrus, Reza, and Jamshid Hashemi—in the summer of 1984, along with Capt. Cyrus Davari, former Iranian procurement officer in London, and two U.S. businessmen. Named as an unindicted co-conspirator in the Hashemi cases was J. Stanley Pottinger, a former assistant attorney-general in the Justice Department

in the mid-1970s. Pottinger was about to be indicted along with the Hashemi brothers, until the FBI "lost" the tapes on which Pottinger had been overheard by the FBI, advising the Hashemis on how to disguise shipments of military equipment to circumvent the U.S. arms embargo against Iran during 1980-81.

Secret accord

According to U.S. intelligence community sources, the arms smuggling network now being unravelled involves a secret arrangement with the Israeli Mossad faction linked to Ariel Sharon which has allowed the Mossad to conduct extensive penetration of U.S. military agencies. Secret accords negotiated as part of the Camp David agreement allowed the Israelis to sell arms to countries which had been cut off by the U.S. government, such as Argentina or those in Central America (often at a 300% markup). With the imposition of the arms embargo against Iran during the hostage crisis, Israeli networks continued to ship arms to the revolutionary Khomeini regime. According to some sources, the secret deal went so far as to allow the Israelis unrestricted access to certain port facilities in the United States, in which warehouse facilities were treated as sovereign Israeli territory!

The Khomeini connection

It is well known that the Israelis have been among the principal arms suppliers to the Khomeini regime. On March 8, 1982, the *New York Times* reported that documents showed that "\$100 to \$200 million in arms, spare parts, and ammunition were delivered from Western Europe in the last 18 months. . . . Intelligence sources said the documents indicated that about half of this was being supplied or arranged by Israel, and the rest by freelance arms merchants, some of whom may also have connections with Israeli intelligence."

The Khomeini regime created its current arms-procurement network following the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in September 1980. One of the principals of this network was Sadegh Tabatabai, a close friend of West German Interior Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who was arrested for opium smuggling in Dusseldorf, West Germany in 1983, but was quickly handed "diplomatic immunity" by Genscher. To set up the arms network, Tabatabai worked closely with Israeli arms dealers who had previously been involved in

arms sales to the Shah. A key figure was Jacob Nimrodi, the former Israeli military attaché in Teheran under the Shah. An Israeli couple, Andre and Jamie Frydel, have also been cited as major suppliers to Iran, working through their key contact in the Israeli defense ministry, Zvi Reuter, and front companies in Liberia and the Caribbean.

U.S. cover-up

The U.S. side of this network developed as a product of the Carter administration's support for the Islamic fundamentalist coup which overthrew the Shah in 1979. Based in Cyrus Vance's State Department, Zbigniew Brzezinski's National Security Council, and in sections of Admiral Turner's CIA, these pro-Khomeini Carterites were fully committed to support for the Islamic fundamentalist upsurge being created by British intelligence circles. Brzezinski justified such support as creating a "bulwark against communism"—a pitiful contention, in light of the growing Soviet hegemony over the Middle East, while the United States has been all but driven out.

Cyrus Hashemi was the key U.S. figure in supplying arms for the Khomeini insurgency. His controller in the U.S. was Stanley Pottinger, who, according to some sources, channeled nearly \$4.5 million through Hashemi and his brother Reza. When war broke out between Iran and Iraq in September 1980, Pottinger picked up the thread again, advising the Hashemis on how to use dummy corporations in Panama and elsewhere to ship badly needed spare parts and military equipment to Iran.

The Hashemis and Pottinger quickly came under investigation, including FBI electronic surveillance, in late 1980. The FBI's role in asserting jurisdiction over the investigation was for purposes of squeezing out other agencies and keeping lid on. Federal grand juries were examining the Hashemi brothers, Andre and Jamie Frydel, and their string of front companies from 1980 on, but it was not until 1984 that indictments were finally issued—at the initiation of the Customs Bureau, not the FBI. The FBI then "lost" the tapes on which Pottinger had been overheard, preventing his indictment.

Not only arms smuggling, but drug-smuggling and murder have been the hallmarks of this operation.

George Perry, a U.S. businessman linked to this network, was the middleman between his Brazilian gun-running employer, "Still, Inc." and Sadegh Tabatabai. Another Still official, Milan Jedlicka, was convicted of cocaine smuggling in New York in the summer of 1982 along with one John Henehan. Henehan, suspected of being an informant, was soon thereafter murdered with bullets through the eyes; two weeks later, the prime suspect in Henehan's murder was also killed. In January 1983, Tabatabai was arrested for drug smuggling in Dusseldorf; a few days later, Perry disappeared from his New York hotel room, to be fished out of a lake north of New York City three months later. Sources in Europe linked Tabatabai to the killing.

Casablanca summit:

by Thierry Lalevée

The failure of Saudi Arabia's King Fahd to attend the Arab Summit in Casablanca on Aug. 7, was the death knell of the conference, even before it started. As later came out, Fahd had agreed to this extraordinary summit called by King Hassan of Morocco, but canceled his trip after a long telephone conversation with Syria's Hafez al Assad on Aug. 5. Instead, he decided to be represented by Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, who was in Casablanca on holiday, and is known as the leader of the "pro-Syrian" party in Saudi Arabia, if only for his close marital ties to the Assads.

The conference's failure will have widespread consequences, many of which are not expected by those countries which, for varying reasons, decided either not to attend at all, or to send low-level delegations. The only heads of state present were Jordan's King Hussein, PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, the Emirates' Sheikh Zayed, and Morocco's King Hassan.

Hassan had called for the summit in June to review the Lebanese/Palestinian situation. In mid-July the project was resurrected, and chances of success seemed good. Most Arab countries not directly associated with Syria agreed to support it, and agreed that the Jordan-Palestinian peace initiative should be the main agenda item.

Then Iraq's Saddam Hussein decided that the Gulf war was too preoccupying for him to leave Baghdad; Kuwait's Sheikh Jaber thought that the last three terrorist operations of the Iranian "al Jihad al Islami" didn't allow him to leave his emirate; Tunisia would be represented only by a high-level ministerial delegation, and was visibly displeased that Morocco had taken such an initiative without consulting it; so was the Arab League delegation of Chadli Klibi. Algeria, meanwhile, decided that the tension between Rabat and Algiers prohibited its President from meeting with King Hassan, and warned that the summit might "deepen Palestinian disunity."

The Syrian boycott was no surprise. Syrian President Assad declared that he saw "nothing which requires discussion within the framework of an Arab summit." Syria's satrap, Lebanon, was ordered to stay home; and South Yemen, facing a leadership crisis, has no desire to antagonize Damascus and Moscow right now. Libya, bound by a "Treaty of Unity" with Morocco, sent a pro-forma delegation to the foreign ministers meeting on Aug. 5. Avoiding the issue of