

French Socialists plot against Tunisia

By Philip Golub and Thierry Lalevée

Executive Intelligence Review has been informed by well placed Western intelligence sources that leading elements of the French Socialist Party are involved in a plot to remove Tunisian Prime Minister Mohamed Mzali from office and to replace him with a former interior minister, Driss Guiga.

According to these sources, Eric Rouleau, the French ambassador in Tunis, is the principal actor in the operation. A half-dozen or more French special agents have been sent to Tunis over the past few weeks as part of the operation.

Rouleau

Rouleau is not an ordinary ambassador. Appointed in the early summer of 1985 to the dismay of Tunisian authorities, he is a specialist in Libyan and Palestinian affairs. His self-advertised pro-Libyan sympathies made the assignment to Tunis all the more provocative, coming in the midst of a growing Tunisian-Libyan crisis which culminated in the expulsion of Tunisian workers from Libya in late August and early September of last year. Immediately prior to his appointment, Rouleau, then a "journalist" for *Le Monde*, had played an instrumental role in the secret negotiations between the French Socialist government and Qaddafi over the crisis in Chad, and arranged the meeting between Mitterrand and Qaddafi on the island of Crete.

Born as Elie Raffoul in Egypt some 60 years ago, Rouleau became a member of the re-created Egyptian Communist Party in the 1940s. He socialized with Henri Curiel, another wealthy Egyptian-born communist who later founded the notorious "Curiel network," which operated out of Paris during the 1960s. In 1952, Rouleau became a personal friend of present Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, then visiting Cairo. According to several reports, Raffoul/Rouleau was expelled from Egypt in 1956. In 1960 he joined *Le Monde*. He functioned as a power broker of some influence during the period of the overthrow of the Shah of Iran, and was identified as a strong supporter of the Bazargan/Yazdi/Bani-Sadr wing of the Khomeini regime, having served as their legal and political advisor from the time of Khomeini's exile in Paris.

Rouleau has been assigned to many secret missions and has acted as part of a specific Socialist International intelli-

gence network, with significant power and influence in the present French and Greek Socialist governments.

The July 22 issue of the French weekly, *Valeurs Actuelles*, reports that the American government has issued standing orders to deny Rouleau access to certain American government archives. Such orders are given only in regard to agents of unfriendly foreign powers.

The coup plot

The obvious aim of the coup plot is to derail the succession plan of President Bourguiba. Clearly chosen by the President as his legal constitutional successor, Prime Minister Mzali represents continuity and stability for Tunisia in a period of growing crisis in the Maghreb as a result of both Libyan and Islamic fundamentalist subversion. Trapped like all other developing sector countries in an economic crisis aggravated by IMF policies, Tunisia remains one of the few real allies of the West in the southern Mediterranean, and a true democracy.

Until now, the political strength of President Bourguiba has prevented even major crises from getting out of control. This is true of the quick and determined reaction of the Tunisian government after the Libyan commando attack on Gafsa in 1980, the bread riots of 1984 and, more recently, the positive U.S. reaction to the Israeli raid on Tunis in October. By seeking to destabilize the constitutional succession process, the French Socialist government is not only promoting institutional instability, but playing with the fire of fundamentalist subversion, chaos, and insurrection.

The French Socialists count on some of their Tunisian allies, such as ex-Interior Minister Driss Guiga, presently based in Paris and close to a clique in Tunisia. Guiga was trained by the Socialist-leaning section of the West German BND foreign intelligence agency in the 1950s; he was removed from his Tunisian post in 1984 after attempting to force the removal of Prime Minister Mzali over the bread riots—which Guiga is said to have encouraged.

The French Socialists have clearly encouraged the development and growth of the fundamentalist MTI (Mouvement de Tendance Islamiques) and used it as a pressure point against the Tunisian government. The MTI is financed by both the Libyan and Iranian governments and is close to the Mouvement Democratique Algerien of Ahmed Ben Bella. In turn, the MDA is financed by the Iranians and the Nazi Swiss banker, François Genoud.

Legislative elections occur in France on March 17, and the anticipated victory of the opposition may play a useful role in neutralizing the Socialists' subversive plot. But the network in motion against Tunisia will remain active out of the Elysée and Socialist Party headquarters. Is Qaddafi really so important to the French socialists that they are willing to risk the destabilization of all of Northern Africa? Unfortunately, the answer seems to be yes.