

Western intelligence confronts Qaddafi's terrorist onslaught

by Thierry Lalevée

In less than a week between April 5 and April 10, Libya suffered four diplomatic casualties, following close on the heels of the March 24-25 U.S. military actions in the Gulf of Sidra, which included the knocking out of Russian SA-5 anti-aircraft missile batteries on the Libyan coast. Several European governments have now dropped their reluctance to cross Muammar Qaddafi's "line of death," and have served notice on the mad dictator that terrorist controllers with diplomatic passports are no longer welcome.

In Paris on April 5, French police announced that two Libyan diplomats, yet unnamed, were to be expelled within 48 hours. Later statements indicated that not only were these diplomats suspected of plotting terrorist actions against American interests in France, but were actually found in possession of explosives. At the same time, two North African Islamic fundamentalists, Fethi Sherif and Rouini Hedi Ben Ali, thought to belong to an Islamic network "potentially" involved in terrorism, were also expelled. These measures were characterized by the French police as "preventive."

Then on April 10, the West German government took the unprecedented step of expelling two Libyan diplomats, Ahmed Omar Issa and Mahmud Ahmed Shibani, who had been working at the Libyan People's Bureau in Bonn since 1982-83 under the cover of administrative jobs. According to the West German government, both were Libyan intelligence officers who had displayed most "non-diplomatic" behavior. They belonged to a special intelligence team which kept close surveillance over anti-Qaddafi activists in the Federal Republic. The statement by the Bonn officials implied that they also were also responsible for planning terrorist strikes.

Both the West German and French governments (under previous French Socialist Prime Minister Laurent Fabius) had hitherto stubbornly rejected any actions against Tripoli. When a Libyan opponent of Qaddafi was shot to death in

Bonn in April 1985, no Libyan was expelled. Thanks to the long-standing relationship between Muammar Qaddafi and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Tripoli had only been politely asked to cease some of its more visible activities. One diplomat, Elamin Abdullah Elamin, whose name we shall meet again, quietly left Bonn at that time to join the staff of the Libyan People's Bureau in East Berlin.

The recent measures are not just a blow to Qaddafi, but also pull the rug out from under those who have been using the terror wave to widen the gap between Europe and the United States. Moscow's strategic wielding of the terror weapon—what Hitler called *Schrecklichkeit*—is aimed to force European capitulation to Soviet domination. But this "decoupling" drive does not only originate in the Soviet Union. While U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger ordered the bombardment of Libyan military targets, State Department officials undermined the effect of his policy by denouncing European governments. On April 4, State Department Counterterror chief Robert Oakley blasted the French government for refusing to act against Libya, just at the point that Paris was expelling the two Libyan diplomats. Oakley had kept silent when Socialist Prime Minister Laurent Fabius and Interior Minister Pierre Joxe were in the government, and were pursuing a policy of blatant appeasement of the terrorists.

The same bizarre behavior occurred in West Germany, as U.S. Ambassador Richard Burt on April 9 criticized the West German government for only "half-heartedly" fighting terrorism. Chancellor Helmut Kohl, in fact, was not bowing to U.S. pressures, when he insisted that Germany will not allow "the Americans to be bombed out of our country."

The new willingness to strike back that is emerging in Europe, comes at a point when the continent has become the battlefield in one of the most intensive terror waves of the decade, as all U.S. and NATO installations are on their highest state of alert in Spain, Italy, and the Federal Republic of Germany. French, West German, Italian, and Spanish intelligence services especially are on alert.

Yet the recent anti-terror actions are far from what is required to stop Qaddafi in his tracks. The expulsions have, at best, impaired the terrorists' logistics supplies for a few days. Neither the United States nor any of the European governments have been able to arrest one single terrorist since the beginning of the year, and terror incidents are increasing week by week.

The terrorist explosion

The number of terrorist acts since early February has required the global deployment of at least several hundred persons, ranging from those who actually planted the bombs, to those who organized the escape-routes, the safehouses, and the logistical supplies. A wave of bombings in France during February and March seriously wounded dozens and was claimed by the Solidarity Committee with Arab Political Prisoners (CSPPA)—understood to be merely the new name

for the Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Factions (FARL), whose leadership is now languishing in French and Italian jails. The CSPPA is now threatening similar actions in Italy. There has been a sudden reactivation of separatist terrorism in France, Italy, and Spain; a reactivation of "Euroterrorism" in Germany and Italy, with the murder by the Red Brigades on Feb. 2 of former Florentine mayor Lando Conti.

More recently, there was the April 2 bomb explosion aboard the TWA flight 840, en route from Rome to Cairo, which killed four people.

Then came the terrorist bombing of the "La Belle" discothèque in West Berlin on April 5. The disco was frequented by U.S. military personnel. U.S. intelligence agencies had previously intercepted communications from Tripoli to the Libyan People's Bureau in East Berlin, referencing plans for a terrorist attack. The U.S. services immediately contacted the Soviet Union, in an attempt to avert the attack, but received no cooperation.

On April 8, a leading Greek industrialist was assassinated by the "November 17" terror group.

The same day, an unsuccessful bombing attempt was directed against Defense Secretary Weinberger in Thailand. A bomb exploded in the parking lot of the Erawan Hotel in Bangkok, 90 minutes before he was scheduled to give a speech there. Weinberger would have passed within five yards of the bomb site.

Aimed at confusing Western intelligence, these terror acts have been claimed by previously unknown groups, as if on Dec. 31, 1985 all previous terrorist organizations had decided to moult their skins. The FARL became the CSPPA; Abu Nidal became the Arab Revolutionary Cells, as well as the Anti-American Arab Liberation Front, as far as the April 2 and April 5 explosions are concerned.

These changing labels merely underline the cohesiveness existing among several intelligence services. As long as Libya's terror deployment is not understood as just a part of a broader nexus, which includes Syria, Iran, and the East bloc, anti-terrorism efforts will remain ineffective.

Investigations into the West Berlin bombing may become a case study of how terrorism functions. According to a report released on April 10 by West German intelligence officials, the operation was perpetrated by a group of Palestinian mercenaries on behalf of Libya. Decoded radio transmissions between East Berlin and Tripoli revealed that Qaddafi was personally involved in planning the action, together with diplomat Elamin Abdullah Elamin, the same one who slipped out of Bonn last year.

The action required at least three simultaneous decisions and authorizations: 1) Libya had to decide on the operation, its timing and location; 2) it had to receive the support of the Syrian-based Palestinian group, a decision which could be reached only with the approval of Syrian intelligence; 3) East German intelligence had to be aware of the plans.

This pattern of behavior will be found in many of the currently ongoing terrorist operations in Western Europe.

America Battalion: a new phase of narco-terrorism

by Héctor Apolinar

For nearly two months, 15,000 Colombian troops, backed by heavy artillery, Urutu tanks and armored cars, T-33 and T-37 bombers, and artillery helicopters, have been deployed in battle in Colombia's Cauca and Valle provinces, against a new South American narco-terrorist army, the "America Battalion." Formed of Ecuadorian, Peruvian, and Colombian terrorists, the Battalion sought to surround, and then seize, Valle's capital city, Cali.

Colombia's army has delivered heavy losses to the terrorists, but they have been unable to knock them out. The Battalion struck for the first time in Peru in late March, taking responsibility for a wave of bombings. Behind the terrorists stand the extensive resources of the cocaine mafia, and the Soviet international terrorist apparatus coordinated through Qaddafi's Libya. The emergence of the America Battalion marks a new phase in the mafia's warfare against the nations of Ibero-America, this time on a regional scale.

"America Battalion" leaders are explicit that their purpose is to destroy national sovereignty and territorial integrity in South America. Alvaro Fayad, a leader of one of the Battalion's member groups, the Colombian M-19, defined the nature of the new transnational terrorist enterprise. "We are experiencing and will experience phenomena which have not been seen since Simón Bolívar," he told the Jesuit Mexican newspaper *La Jornada*, on March 3. "Everyone fighting, without international sponsorships, without support from states or revolutions. . . . To see Colombians, Ecuadorians, and Peruvians as the armed force of democracy is a phenomenon that has not been seen since Bolívar. . . . We are not setting up International Brigades . . . but a Bolivarian army. . . ."

Fayad died in a clash with Colombian security forces a few days later, but his policy has been implemented. April 2, the head of the M-19's rural operations, Marcos Chalita, reiterated that the terrorists no longer consider themselves a guerrilla movement, but "an army of liberation." Stated Chalita in an M-19 communiqué, "The guerrilla is a resistance force. It harasses with surprise attacks and withdraws to avoid confrontation. An army seeks another kind of confrontation. We don't hit and run."

In announcing its participation in the America Battalion, on Feb. 24, the Peruvian terrorist group, Tupac Amaru Rev-