

# Syria, the United States, and France: Whose game is it?

by Thierry Lalevée

The importance of West German Chancellor Kohl's denunciation of Gorbachov as a new Goebbels (see *International Intelligence*, p. 62-63) seems to have been missed by the specialists dealing with terrorism and the delicate negotiations over the Western hostages in the Middle East. True to their backers in Moscow, the Syrian and Iranian leaders have been engaged in a Goebbels-style psychological-warfare campaign of deceit, whose main aim has been to gain Moscow time to achieve its regional ambitions.

Such campaigns are also aimed at setting Western governments at each other's throats. Well-organized "leaks" on new military contracts between France and Syria led to a raving anti-French editorial in the *Washington Post* on Nov. 3, which characterized the French leadership as "traitors" and "cowards." The French government, through its ambassador in Washington, had to react officially the following day. This coincided with well-documented revelations coming from Teheran that Washington has been negotiating along with the mullahs, even delivering plane-loads of weapons.

Similarly, while Britain has been on the front line of the offensive against Syrian involvement in terrorism, and the Thatcher government formally broke diplomatic relations with Syria on Oct. 24, Britain is welcoming sometime in mid-November a new Iranian chargé d'affaires. While some Western countries believe they can play their "Iran" or "Syrian" card, Damascus and Teheran have become experts at playing their own "Western cards." French reporters, coming back on Nov. 3 from the hotbed of international terrorism in the Bekaa valley in Lebanon, underlined the precise and often insightful knowledge of the terrorist leaders on the particular internal situation of each Western country.

## Syrian deceit

The masters at the game of duplicity have been undisputedly the Syrian leaders, who have succeeded in maintaining an aura of credibility, despite the British revelations on their role in the Hindawi terrorist case (see *EIR*, Oct. 24 and Nov. 4). Key to that game has been a well-organized campaign out of Damascus, first underlining the so-called factional fights between the Assad Alawite clan and the Sunnite majority, and within the Alawites themselves, especially between Haf-

ez al Assad's brother Rifaat, Vice-President Abdel Halim Khaddam, and Defense Minister Mustafa Tlas.

A result of this faction fight, say the rumors coming from Damascus, would be Hafez al Assad's lack of control and knowledge over what his intelligence services do. Secondly, since last spring, the Syrian leadership began flooding Western capitals with reports that it wanted to loosen its ties with Moscow, even to break them! The craftsman of this campaign was Defense Minister Tlas, a Soviet-trained hardliner, who told French officials in the spring that Damascus wanted Western weapons. Granted the Soviet training of the Syrian army, Tlas implied that Damascus would want technical advisers too. Indeed, in no other way could the Syrian soldiers handle the French AMX tanks that he requested.

Since then, the rumor campaign has gone on unabated. The predictable result has been to gain Damascus what it wanted: time, money, and credibility.

## War preparations

Nonetheless, the game may be over soon. Several intelligence sources have confirmed that the Soviet Union has installed two radar stations in the Lebanese Shouf mountains, controlled by Druze warlord Walid Jumblatt. The two stations, which monitor the region from the Israeli Mediterranean coast to Jordan and up to Iraq, are manned by actual Soviet technicians in disguise. In short, the Druze have leased part of their territory to the Soviet Union! The implications are very serious. Not only is the presence of Soviet technicians in Lebanon an evident breach of Lebanese national sovereignty, but it underlines Syria's war preparedness. Such stations have no other purpose than to provide an early warning system against an Israeli attack.

That should come as no surprise. The early October celebrations of the Yom Kippur 1973 war led to an orgy of war cries in Damascus, from Chief of Staff Hikmat Shehabi to Baath Party Secretary General Mohammed Ahmar announcing, "Damascus has reached strategy parity with Israel." As we previously reported, these are no mere boasts, but statements based on military reality: In the last six months, Syria has received additional deliveries of SAM-5 missiles, new batteries of SS-23 and SS-21—the new generations of their

“Scud” and “Frog” missiles—and a preliminary pair of the advanced MiG-29 jetfighters, primarily for training and testing.

During October, the Syrian army held two sets of large-scale maneuvers. In the first week of October, there were the largest-ever naval maneuvers off the coast of Latakia, attended and closely monitored by a Soviet team. Following the high-level visit on Oct. 19 of Colonel-General Pankin, Chief of Staff of the Soviet Air Force, the Syrian Air Force began another series of maneuvers in the northern region. According to intelligence reports, these maneuvers aimed at testing the coordination between the air force and the anti-aircraft artillery units which have responsibility for the new ground-to-ground missiles.

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The persons directing and planning such maneuvers have been the very same as those involved in deploying international terrorism. Indeed, Air Force intelligence commander Maj.-Gen. Mohammed al-Khouli, whose role in running the planned terrorist atrocity of last April was conclusively proven in the recent Hindawi trial in London, was appointed in recent months as the acting chairman of the National Security Council, chaired by President Assad. A close associate of Assad, Khouli is the hierarchical chief of Maj.-Gen. Subhi Haddad, the Air Force Chief of Staff.

Moreover, his position of command at the NSC puts Khouli above such figures as Vice-President Rifaat al Assad or Defense Minister Mustafa Tlas. The NSC is also the body which controls the deployment of the entire Syrian army, and the national police in times of war. It controls not only the paramilitary “Defense,” “Struggle,” and “Republican” guards in Damascus, but also the six Command areas of the Syrian army, the Special Units, the Coordinating Staff dealing with the administration, logistic, research, and local military intelligence, as well as the two corps headquarters of the armies deployed in the Golan Heights and in Lebanon.

This very coordinated and centralized hierarchy leaves no room for personal initiative. Under the control of Khouli’s NSC, the Coordinating Staff of the army has gone quite far, according to Israeli reports, in equipping Syria’s missiles with chemical warheads. The threat is taken very seriously by the Israelis, who completed on Oct. 31 their first large-scale maneuvers on the Golan Heights, equipped to fight a chemical war.

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## Interview: S. C. Birla

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### ‘An unprecedented violation of rights’

*The following statement by S. C. Birla, an advocate in the Indian Supreme Court, is being distributed to lawyers, judges, and concerned citizens, with the recommendation to send telegrams to the Reagan administration, the Senate Judiciary Committee, and the House Judiciary Committee.*

On Oct. 6, 1986, U.S. federal marshals, Virginia State troopers, and other law-enforcement personnel raided the offices in Leesburg, Virginia, and Boston, Massachusetts, of several organizations associated with Mr. Lyndon H. LaRouche, an American political figure and economist known for certain views on the need for a new economic order and progress of underdeveloped countries, especially countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The Oct. 6 incident was unprecedented in the history of American administration in respect of enforcement of law, as the number of armed troopers and complement of helicopters and armored personnel carriers, etc., were those generally used to crush rebellions, not against people who believe in human rights and civil rights and who very much abide by American laws. The action of U.S. authorities was very much vindictive and aimed to finish dissent by using *might*.

On that day, the two offices associated with Mr. LaRouche were ransacked and sealed, while several tons of documents were removed by the authorities. All work in the offices was stopped.

It is evident that the privacy of the democratic organization has been violated. We understand that in criminal jurisprudence seizure or search is done when we expect that something contraband or illegal is to be found, and it is not used for depriving the democratic rights of the people who are functioning democratically. The grand jury system in the United States is to protect the citizens’ rights, and should not be used to persecute and harass individuals and organizations functioning within their democratic rights.

We feel that the United States, which is the torch bearer of liberty, should not become a place where civil rights are violated as was done in the incident of Oct. 6 in Leesburg, Virginia.

In India, lawyers stand for a rule of law, constitutional guarantee for the fundamental rights of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, etc., which we have borrowed from the American Constitution. We are shocked to know and read about the vindictive, ruthless action of Oct. 6. We support