

Report from Paris by Yves Messer

French take leadership against terror

Chirac's government is willing to internationalize cooperation against Moscow's "low-intensity warfare."

From the March and September 1986 terrorist acts that threatened France's national security, to Feb. 21, 1987, when French police dismantled the Direct Action terrorist group, one can say that Gaullist Interior Minister Charles Pasqua took in hand his office most effectively, responding to the war that was declared on France and even turning the tables. French police are dismantling terrorist networks at the unheard-of rate of one or two a month.

These successes were crowned when, at the personal initiative of Charles Pasqua, Paris became the one-day world-capital of the war on terrorism and drugs, on May 28. It was the first time ever that countries like the United States, Canada, and Japan met with the "Trevi" anti-terrorist study group of the European Community, made up of officials of West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Denmark, Great Britain, and France.

The European police services had already moved to reinforce international cooperation. Immediately after the discovery of Direct Action documents in the Indres-et-Loire region, a confidential meeting was held in mid-May with West German, Italian and Belgian anti-terrorist officials at Pasqua's ministry, where the May 28 meeting also took place. The ministry was turned into a fortress as 1,800 policemen strengthened the 2,500 already deployed throughout the city. The U.S. delegation was officially composed of Attorney General Edwin Meese and Ambassador Bramer.

The Soviets, who recently officially asked EC officials if they could be included in this matter, were not invited by Pasqua.

While little filtered through the official statements, the clear intention was to set up a permanent cooperation structure of exchanges of information (France reportedly presented a 200-name list of the most-sought terrorists) and notably by establishing a "red telex," capable of transmitting photos, and which avoids the usually slow diplomatic channels, too slow to deal with internationally coordinated terrorism.

Pasqua's purpose is clearly to reverse the "low-intensity" warfare which Moscow is waging to undermine Western governments' resistance. He had declared during winter 1985 to the *Politique Internationale* review: "In Europe, the U.S.S.R. utilizes force, in the East, in order to put down the independence movements of its satellite countries; it develops psychological action, in the West, to undermine the defense reflexes of the free countries, notably in fostering pseudo-pacifist and anti-militarist movements."

This meeting was well timed, starting three days after the latest threat by a Mideast terrorist group called CSPPA (Solidarity Committee for Arab and Mid-Eastern Political Prisoners), which claimed all the terrorist actions that shook France's institutions in 1986. The official demand was that France release three terrorists,

FARL's Georges Ibrahim Abdallah and Anis Naccash, and ASALA's Varoujian Garbidjian. The real reason is that the Soviet Union seeks to force France to withdraw from the Middle East. The communiqué, sent the same way as before the September bombings, threatened a new "hot summer." Although the threat is being taken seriously, the French police have taken apart various terrorist networks that took part in the September bombings that killed 15 and injured 250.

On March 21, when the DST (internal security) arrested a pro-Iranian Tunisian network led by Fouad Ali Saleh and Mohamed Mouhajer, this made possible the arrests of two Moroccans on April 20 and four Lebanese, one Senegalese, and one Algerian a week later, all of them likely involved in the CSPPA attempts. This also led to the discovery, May 26, of an arms cache in the Fontainebleau forest containing 8.8 kilos of C4 plastic explosives, the same material used by the CSPPA in Paris, and 11.5 kilos of narcotics, made of a mixture of heroin, morphine and caffeine, typical of the Syrian-controlled Bekaa region traffickers—proving Iranian-Syrian cooperation in the CSPPA actions. This was a result of American-French cooperation, as the United States provided a sophisticated electronic mass-detector called "Doppler."

Another example of successful international cooperation, is the French-Spanish moves on the Basque terror group ETA. Right after the Paris summit, Pasqua's security undersecretary Robert Pandraud flew to Spain with high officials of French Foreign and Internal secret services, the DGSE and DST, to meet their colleagues Interior Minister Jose Barrionuevo, Security Minister Rafael Vera, Guardia Civil general director Luis Roldan, to pioneer the "red telex" system.