

Kissinger's record: war and terrorism

by Scott Thompson

On April 11, 1989, at a press conference of the Trilateral Commission in Paris, Henry Kissinger said that he never lets morality interfere with policymaking, which is one reason why he "rather likes" Syria's Hafez al-Assad. "God may punish me" for it, Kissinger said.

Kissinger's relationship with Assad spans two decades, and he was instrumental, with Israeli intelligence, in the November 1970 coup that made Assad the strongman of Syria. In his memoirs, *The White House Years*, Kissinger praised the Syrian dictator to the skies: "Less visionary than Sadat, [Assad] nevertheless gave Syria unprecedented stability and, against the background of the turbulent history of his people, emerged as a leader of courage and relative moderation."

In the second volume of his memoirs, *Years of Upheaval*, Kissinger wrote: "Withal, I developed a high regard for Assad. . . . He was far from being a Soviet stooge. He had a first-class mind allied to a wicked sense of humor. I believe that I was the first Western leader with whom he had dealt consistently. . . . He grasped the opportunity for some free tutorials."

What this really means, can be judged from the report of former State Department official Edward Sheehan, that their relationship had become so close that Kissinger regaled Assad with tales of his sexual exploits, and even offered Syrian leaders names from his "Black Book."

Role in 'Black September'

As soon as he took office as Nixon's national security adviser in 1969, Kissinger set out to undermine the comprehensive Mideast peace plan of Secretary of State William Rogers. As Seymour Hersh documents in his book *The Price of Power*, Kissinger found a close ally in Israel against Rogers, who wanted Israel to withdraw to its pre-1967 borders.

In September 1970, King Hussein of Jordan, a close ally of the United States, became a victim of Kissinger's Middle East machinations. When Kissinger, according to CIA sources, fomented an uprising of Palestinian radicals against King Hussein, it triggered a U.S.-Israeli showdown with Syria, which ended with King Hussein expelling the Palestinians into Lebanon, and with a coup that placed Hafez al-Assad in power. This is the root of the present crisis in Lebanon, as Prof. Bassam El Hachem shows in the accompanying articles.

Once the revolt against King Hussein began, Israeli intelligence on Sept. 20 reported that there was a massive invasion of Syria by Jordanian tanks to defend the Palestinians. Kissinger circulated these wildly exaggerated estimates in the name of the CIA, without revealing their Israeli origin. Andrew N. Killgore of the State Department later said: "We started getting these reports as if it were El Alamein. They were invading in full force."

Kissinger argued that the Soviets were backing Syria to the hilt, to challenge the United States. As Kissinger brought the world to the brink, Syrian Air Force Gen. Hafez al-Assad refused to provide air cover for Syria's tanks, forcing their withdrawal from Lebanon. This gave Kissinger a "victory," for having faced down the Soviets.

As a result of the crisis, King Hussein expelled all Palestinian organizations from Jordan, despite the fact that PLO leader Yasser Arafat suspended George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, whose terrorist acts had precipitated the crisis. Kissinger, according to CIA reports, reorganized some of the more radical Palestinians to create a phony "Black September" network, under the joint control of British, U.S., and Israeli intelligence, whose later terrorist acts helped trigger the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

Israel was given massive military supplies, having "proved" that it was America's sole ally in the region against the Soviet Union. And Assad used the fallout from the crisis to mount a coup that brought him to power two months later. Thus, Kissinger's two future allies for rejecting any real Middle East peace were lined up. As Kissinger admits in *Years of Upheaval*, Assad's intransigence against a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, combined with that of Israel, became his major weapons against any rebirth of the Rogers Plan.

The plan to partition Lebanon

Kissinger drew up a plan in 1975-76 for the partition of Lebanon. He welcomed the Syrian intervention and subsequent occupation of Lebanon, describing it as an essential buffer against the PLO.

The "Sarajevo incident" that triggered the war in Lebanon was the March 1975 assassination of Saudi King Faisal, an act that ended the mirage of peace resulting from Kissinger's diplomacy. (There is evidence to place Faisal's murder at Kissinger's doorstep, as Jordanian officials have recently pointed out to his successor, King Fahd.) One month later, the Lebanese civil war erupted, as Kissinger proceeded with his partition plan.

Kissinger was present at meetings at the ranch of Israeli Defense Minister Gen. Ariel Sharon, where the 1982 Israeli invasion and partitioning of Lebanon were planned. Kissinger's former National Security Council deputy, Alexander Haig, then secretary of state, gave Sharon a green light, unbeknownst to President Reagan.