
IV. Profiles

Assad's terrorists and drug-runners

In the 1970s and 1980s, Syria and Syrian-occupied Lebanon emerged as the safe haven for the most important Mideast terrorist organizations. All the Palestinian "Rejection Front" sects opposing the PLO are based there. So are the Kurdish and Armenian sects that are warring against Turkey. Assad has even provided a safe haven for groups as far away as the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka.

Even the U.S. State Department, in a rare display of honesty, has acknowledged this reality. "From the mid-1970s through 1983," its November 1986 *White Paper on Syrian Terrorism* reads, "Syrian personnel are known to have been directly involved in terrorist organizations. These organizations were primarily directed against other Arabs, such as Syrian dissidents, moderate Arab states such as Jordan, and pro-Arafat Palestinian as well as Israeli and Jewish targets. By late 1983 Damascus had curtailed use of its own personnel. Instead, it began to rely more heavily on terrorist groups made up of non-Syrians. As long as Syria does not stop terrorism from its own territory, or areas of Lebanon under its effective control, the security of all the states in the region is jeopardized."

This remains the case 10 years later, because no action has been taken against Syria for its protection of these groups.

Two of the most important terrorist groups that Assad protects are the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) and the Hezbollah of Lebanon. We provide profiles of these below. Both are deeply involved in the dope trade, and are currently and accurately classified as "narco-terrorist," by the U.S. government.

The PKK and Hezbollah are not merely supported by Assad; both also find support in the capitals of Europe, and among Bush's circles in the United States.

Since 1983, the PKK has been leading a brutal civil war in southeast Turkey, which has claimed 18,000 lives. Its actions, in the border region of Turkey, Iran, and Iraq, have provided a nice handle for the imperial powers to block any economic development of the region. Without the continuous support provided by the French and British governments, especially, as well as from key factions in Russia and the United States, the PKK would not exist. French President François Mitterrand's widow, Danielle Mitterrand, is one of the PKK's patrons. Her objective is frankly imperial: It is to use the PKK to create the conditions for implementing those features of

the Sykes-Picot accords, which had been blocked by Turkish leader Kemal Ataturk back in the 1920s. Among her allies in this venture, are Lord Avebury of Britain, Newt Gingrich of the United States, and numerous parliamentarians from throughout Europe.

The Hezbollah, which was created by Syria and Iran in Lebanon, in the aftermath of the 1982 Israeli invasion, is another one of these terrorist pawns. It has been especially used to prevent a comprehensive peace in the region. Hezbollah has been instrumental in keeping Lebanon in a state of turmoil, through its militarily senseless rocket attacks on northern Israel. Its 1980s kidnapping spree against Americans, gave Bush and Thatcher the pretext to arm Iran, in exchange for the hostages' release. Last spring, it teamed up with Islamic Jihad and Hamas, to launch a series of rocket attacks and bus bombings, which created the hysteria in the Israeli population needed to put Benjamin Netanyahu and Ariel Sharon in power.

The narco-terrorist Kurdish Workers Party

Name of group: Kurdish Workers Party (PKK).

Headquarters: Bekaa Valley, Lebanon; Damascus and Latakia, Syria; important representative offices in London, Paris, Brussels, Moscow, Athens, Teheran, Washington, and throughout Germany.¹

Founded: The PKK was formed in 1974, as the offspring of the Federation of Revolutionary Youth (Dev Genc) of Turkey, which was banned following the 1970 military coup. Abdullah "Apo" Ocalan, the PKK founder who still leads the group, was a political science student at the University of Ankara. The group moved out of the universities and into the Kurdish marshes in 1975, and became a formally distinct revolutionary party in 1978. Its military arm, the People's Liberation Army of Kurdistan (ARGK), was formed in 1984. The PKK formed the Kurdish Peoples Liberation Front (ERNK) in 1985, whose European center of operations was in Cologne, Germany until Germany banned the PKK and ERNK in 1993. In 1994, the PKK formed the Kurdish Parliament in Exile, headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. It has also

1. Unless otherwise indicated, sources include interviews, PKK literature, and press accounts. Other published sources, of varying reliability, include "Transnational Sources of Support for the Kurdish Insurgency in Turkey," a speech delivered at the 25th annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, on Nov. 24, 1991, by Prof. Michael M. Gunter; *The Kurdish struggle*, by Edgar O'Ballance (St. Martins Press, 1996); and *Modern History of the Kurds*, by David McDowell (London, Minority Rights Group, 1966).