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Book Review

'Terrorism: The Soviet Connection'

By RIZWAN SALIM

Ray Cline and Yonah Alexander have written an informative book detailing hard evidence that the Kremlin supports and trains various international terrorist groups, especially the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Within the span of a short volume, the authors reproduce and discuss a selection of captured PLO documents which are concrete evidence that various PLO factions receive training — terrorist as well as conventional military — at camps in the Soviet Union and other Eastern European satellite nations.

The documents—along with tons of military hardware — were captured by the advancing Israeli army in Lebanon in 1982. The authors also show that "The PLO has also served as a transmission belt for the export of KGB terrorist techniques to other regions and hence constitutes an essential element in Soviet regional and global strategy."

The authors' evidence comes from many sources. In addition to the captured PLO papers, Cline and Alexander rely on terrorist confessions and reliable newspaper stories on terrorist activities reported in European and Middle Eastern newspapers.

Both authors have impressive credentials to analyze the evidence of the Soviet support and training of international terrorism.

Ray Cline has served as the deputy director of intelligence at the Central Intelligence Agency. He is now professor of international relations at Georgetown University, and also functions as a senior associate at the school's Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

Yonah Alexander is a senior researcher at the CSIS; he is also professor and director of the Institute for Studies in International Terrorism at the State University of New York. Alexander has written extensively and published monographs on the subject of terrorism.

The chief merit of the book for the serious student of international affairs, and those wishing to learn more about a subject the liberal media studiously ignore, is that it accumulates in one concise and lucidly written volume a damning indictment that terrorism is a calculated instrument of Soviet foreign policy — its roots going back to the early history of the Communist state.

The Appendix to *Terrorism: The Soviet Connection* includes 17 documents showing Soviet military intelligence's links with the PLO. These documents include graduation certificates awarded to PLO operatives for military training in the USSR, Hungary — and Vietnam, too.

For example, there is a certificate awarded to a PLO captain by "The Ministry of Defense, USSR," for completing the course at Vystrel Academy.

Cline and Alexander insist that "Thousands of PLO members have been trained by Soviet and satellite instructors...in staff and command courses, as well as a variety of professional subjects such as communications, electronics, engineering, artillery, pilot training, biological and chemical warfare, and military weapons maintenance."

The conventional warfare instruction also includes "the preparation of electrical charges, the production of incendiary devices, and the methods of exploding metals and destructing bridges."

And all this to what end? Is it merely the Soviet desire to help the PLO? The authors argue that "The PLO is useful in its capacity as a resource center for terrorist organizations, seeking to subvert non-Communist regimes everywhere."

As an example, the authors reproduce a translated document titled "Relations of Palestinian Terrorist Groups with the 'Front for the Liberation of the Central Arab Desert.'"

The document reads: "The secret activity of the revolution, deep in Mali territory, continued. The revolution organized a widespread underground movement by recruiting masses of people, ideologically guiding them, and by the establishment of a monetary fund."

But helping Islamic Socialists in Mali is not the only terrorist support activity the PLO engages in.

The rabidly pro-Moscow faction of the PLO — the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) — maintained relations with the Argentine Workers party, the Revolutionary Front for the Restoration of East Timor's Independence, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Eritrea, the PLO documents reveal. During 1980, the PFLP hosted a delegation from the Chilean Communist party and the Workers and Farmers party in Chile, according to the documents captured by the Israelis.

The Kremlin-PLO cooperation goes beyond various PLO factions maintaining fraternal relations with revolutionary movements throughout the world, the authors show. Cline and Alexander relate several incidents where PLO factions worked as an extra arm of the Soviet intelligence services.

"In 1979 a wide-ranging Soviet intelligence network was reported to exist in Pakistan, aided by Palestinian terrorists. The Soviet ambassador to Pakistan, Sarvar A. Azimov, who was formerly stationed in Beirut, was reportedly in charge of the operation, and he used the PLO ties he had made during his stay in Lebanon," the authors report. And they say that the PLO has assisted the Soviet KGB "for expanding covert PLO activity among the Palestinian communities in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates."

The PLO service to the Kremlin does not stop with the pro-Moscow factions working in close cooperation with Moscow.

Cline and Alexander assert that "The PLO trained some 10,000 terrorists from all regions of the world in its camps in Lebanon, Syria, Algeria, Iraq, Libya and South Yemen." And the statistics are stupendous. "From January 1980 through June 1981 alone, 2,250 foreign terrorists from 28 countries in Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa participated in courses of one to four months' duration."

In addition to serving as the "transmission belt" for the Soviet KGB, "The PLO has served as a conduit for Soviet arms transactions with terrorist movements throughout the world," say the authors.

The Marxist-Leninist PLO factions — the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine — have maintained operational ties with or trained the West German Red Army Faction, the Japanese Red Army, Basque separatists, Turkish-Armenian terrorists, the Irish Republican Army, Argentinian Monteneros, the Brazilian Vanguarda, and extremist groups from the Philippines, Cline and Alexander reveal.

In short, the PLO factions are at the center of the international terrorist movements. And the PLO "outreach" reaches into Central America. "An extensive PLO training and aid mission was virtually integrated into the Nicaraguan army framework with PLO instructors teaching the operation of Soviet equipment," Cline and Alexander point out.

Terrorist groups receiving PLO assistance reciprocate. The authors say that during the military clash between PLO fighters and the Jordanian army in 1970, "the Sandinistas fought with the PLO against King Hussein's troops."

Other examples of the PLO "outreach" make disturbing reading. The authors write that "A journal found in a PLO command post in Tyre relates ties with terrorist groups in Malawi, South Africa, El Salvador, Haiti and Turkey."

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In another example, a collection of monthly reports recovered by the Israeli army in Lebanon details the Popular Front (PFLP) contacts with the Soviet Union, Eastern European satellite regimes, Cuba and Yugoslavia as well as "with leftist organizations in Chile, Japan, Cyprus, Denmark, Turkey, Greece, Spain and Sri Lanka." The last country is very much in the news these days as the violent acts of Tamil separatists have proliferated.

What emerges from the book *Terrorism: The Soviet Connection* is a picture of the PLO — especially its pro-Moscow factions — which continually and relentlessly acts as Moscow's surrogate in assisting, training and coordinating activities with terrorist groups in every country where the Kremlin feels it can exacerbate existing cultural, social and economic disequilibriums.

In a short concluding chapter, Cline and Alexander argue that the United States strategically counter "expansionist 'liberation' moves by Communist totalitarian states wherever they are in progress."

And the authors recommend that the United States use both conventional and military force and needed covert-action intelligence work to counter "Soviet-sponsored forward thrusts." Precisely how to do all this, the authors refrain from pointing out — perhaps out of fear the ensuing controversy would detract from the merits of the book.

In the preface Ray Cline notes, "We have attempted to provide a badly needed public account of a systematic political and moral challenge to the way of life in the United States and other pluralist societies." In this the authors have succeeded exceptionally well. Cline adds: "In my opinion, nothing quite so informative is available outside the restricted intelligence files of governments, and perhaps not even there." ■

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