

Al Qaeda`s Neo-Nazi Connections

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On the surface there would seem to be little to unite the Aryan racialists of the neo-Nazi movement with the terrorists of radical Islam. To the neo-Nazis, Muslims are almost all members of ``inferior`` races; and to the Islamic terrorists, the neo-Nazis are almost without exception either atheists or members of fringe quasi-Christian sects.

But the reality is that there has been close cooperation between Muslim extremists and Fascists ever since the founding of the Nazi movement in the 1920`s. For all of their differences, Muslim extremists and Nazis have always been united by a common group of beliefs and goals: hatred of Judaism (and conventional Christianity), hatred of democracy, and a desire for the destruction of Israel and the United States.

A little background is in order. During World War II the rabidly anti-Semitic Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin Al-Husseini, pledged his unequivocal support to Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist movement. The Grand Mufti was put on the Nazi payroll in 1937 after he met with Adolf Eichmann in Palestine. In fact, when the Grand Mufti had to flee the Middle East in 1941 after the failure of the pro-Nazi coup in Iraq, he was welcomed to Berlin by Hitler and provided with high-power transmitters in order to broadcast pro-Nazi propaganda to the Middle East.

The Grand Mufti also organized an all- Muslim unit of the SS for Hitler and was instrumental in forming the pro-Nazi Muslim Hanschar brigades in Yugoslavia. After the war and his conviction for war crimes by the Nuremberg Tribunal, the Grand Mufti fled to Egypt where, as part of the ODESSA network of former SS operatives, he maintained close ties to former high-ranking Nazis who were now engaged in gun-running operations to Arab countries fighting the fledgling State of Israel.

One such ex-Nazi gunrunner was Major General Otto Ernst Remer (1912-1997), known as the ``Godfather of the neo-Nazi movement.`` Remer had a major part in thwarting the Generals` Plot against Hitler in July 1944. Hitler rewarded Remer by putting him in charge of his protection detail. In the chaos of the immediate post-war period, Remer escaped de-Nazification and returned to Germany.

In 1949 Remer and his associates founded the Sozialistische Reichspartei in Lower Saxony, but the party was banned in 1952 as a neo-Nazi political organization. Remer then settled in Egypt where he began his close friendship with the Grand Mufti and also became security adviser to Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Remer, along with his associate Alois Bunning (who was Eichmann`s assistant in the SS), operated his gunrunning company, the Orient Trading Company, out of Damascus for many years. In the 1980`s, when the statute of limitations expired for the crimes he was alleged to have committed, Remer retired and returned to Germany where he became a close adviser to Michael Kuehnen, the most important neo-Nazi leader of the postwar period in Germany.

It should be pointed out that National Socialism had a profound impact on the political philosophies of many radical Islamic political organization, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood (founded in Egypt in 1928), Nasser's Young Egypt movement, the Social Nationalist Party of Syria founded by Anton Sa'ada, and the Ba'ath Party of Iraq. One of the main leaders of the 1941 pro-Nazi coup in Iraq was Khairallah Tulfah, the uncle and guardian of Saddam Hussein. When Saddam failed in his attempt to assassinate the Iraqi leader Abdel Karim Qassim in 1959, he fled to Egypt where he was given protection by Grand Mufti- protégé Nasser and ODESSA-connected former Nazis. The rest, as they say, is history.

The Third Position

The rise of Al Qaeda and the explosion of neo-Nazi activity in Germany and elsewhere coincided with the breakup of the USSR in the early 1990's and the political vacuum created by the absence of the former Soviet behemoth. Neo-Nazis in both Europe and the United States began making overtures to Islamic terrorists and even to Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam movement. The resulting admixture of Nazi and Islamicist ideologies is something that is termed the ``Third Position.``

Simply put, adherents of the ``Third Position`` oppose both communism and capitalism, the latter category subsuming Israel, the United States and all other democratic countries which are believed to be under the control of ``International Jewry.`` To this end, the socialist portion of Nazi beliefs is emphasized (as opposed to Hitler's reliance on corporatism), but the core belief in anti- Semitism is left unaltered. Like the original Nazis, the Third Positioners are eager to form alliances with Muslim (and black) extremists who share their anti-Semitic beliefs.

In Germany, the neo-Nazi leader Gottfried Kuessel has maintained close ties to Farrakhan's Black Muslims, and Karl-Heinz Hoffmann, thought to have been involved in the murder of Jewish publisher Shlomo Levin as well as the Oktoberfest bombing of September 26, 1980, in which 13 persons were killed and over 200 injured, has long maintained ties with Arafat's PLO and even moved his paramilitary training camp to Lebanon in 1980 with PLO assistance.

In France, the neo-Nazi leader Robert Faurisson maintains close ties with Ahmed Rami, the former broadcaster of the now- defunct Radio Islam, a viciously anti-Semitic station that operated out of Stockholm for a number of years. And for some time, Sweden's neo-Nazis have provided skinheads for use as Rami's bodyguards.

Much of the coordination of neo- Nazi/Muslim terrorist activities is done in the United States. Since overt Nazi activity is outlawed in Germany and many other European countries, neo-Nazis and Islamic extremists have taken advantage of America's First Amendment protection of almost all political activity. In fact, the headquarters today of the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei is in Lincoln, Nebraska. The Internet and electronic banking make communication and the transfer of funds instantaneous. Even when the transfer of funds needs to be done in person, American

law permits every individual to enter or leave the country with \$10,000 in cash or negotiable securities without reporting it.

The First Gulf War in 1991 was a catalyzing event in the development of neo- Nazi and Islamic terrorist relations. Early in 1991, the German neo-Nazi leader Michael Kuehnen contacted the Iraqi Embassy in Bonn and offered to train and equip a squadron of neo-Nazi mercenaries to assist Saddam in the coming war against the alliance led by the United States. Indeed, when Kuehnen was arrested for the last time by German police in April of 1991 (Kuehnen died shortly afterwards of AIDS), included among the documents found in his apartment was a copy of a draft treaty between the ``Anti-Zionist League`` and the ``Government of Iraq.``

Another German neo-Nazi leader, Heinz Reisz, appearing live on Hessian state television on January 25, 1991, gained a great deal of notoriety by proclaiming, ``Long live the fight for Saddam Hussein, long live his people, long live their leader, God save the Arab people.``

Although upwards of as many as 500 neo- Nazi mercenaries, formed into a so-called Freedom Corps, were sent to Iraq in 1991, their military effect was negligible at best. Eyewitness accounts say that most of the mercenaries did little other than parade around Baghdad in SS uniforms. The members of the ``Freedom Corps`` fled Iraq after the first night of Alliance bombing. Regardless of the ignominious military performance of the neo- Nazis in Iraq in 1991, this was an important event because it led to greater ties and cooperation among American right-wing extremists, European neo-Nazis and Islamic terrorists.

Oklahoma City

Domestic terrorism in the United States also rose greatly in the aftermath of the first Gulf War. Timothy McVeigh, himself a veteran of that conflict, stunned the world by his bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in 1995 in Oklahoma City. But the evidence suggests that the neo-Nazi/Islamic terrorist network played a significant role in this act of terrorism.

First, the choice of a terrorist target in Oklahoma is very telling. Although Oklahoma is a conservative southern state that has a reputation for patriotism and sends an unusually high percentage of its young people into the military, it is also one of the bastions of the neo-Nazi movement in the United States. In 1991, the Oklahoma Klan leader Dennis Mahon led a rally in support of Saddam Hussein in Tulsa. And Oklahoma is also home to Elohim City, a neo-Nazi paramilitary compound that has served as a training ground for right-wing extremists for the past thirty years. Groups associated with Elohim City have included The Order, Covenant Sword and Arm, White Aryan Resistance and the Aryan Republican Army. The latter group included Timothy McVeigh among its members.

Extremists residing at Elohim City received military-style training from a number of sources. One of the trainers there was Andreas Carl Strassmeir of Germany, a neo- Nazi

and the son of Guenter Strassmeir, a chief aide of disgraced former German chancellor Helmut Kohl. The elder Strassmeir is widely regarded as the architect of Kohl's reunification plan that merged the former East Germany with the Federal Republic in 1991. And Guenter's father was one of the original members of the Nazi Party in the early 1920's.

Andreas Strassmeir is important to this story because he not only became a close friend and confidant of Timothy McVeigh, but also because he is regarded by many investigators as John Doe #2, the unknown person assisting McVeigh and Terry Nichols at the scene of the Oklahoma City bombing who was seen by a number of eyewitnesses.

In addition to training various neo-Nazi and militia groups, Strassmeir was involved in a number of very curious activities. According to an FBI report dated May 10, 1995, ``Additional documents reveal that at one time Strassmeir was attempting to purchase a 747 aircraft from Lufthansa; however, the reason for the purchase is not reflected in the documents.``

In 1995 it would not have been unreasonable for an FBI investigator to give Strassmeir's attempted purchase of a Boeing 747 mere passing notice. In light of 9/11, however, Strassmeir's aborted airliner purchase gives one pause and raises the real possibility that 9/11 type attacks were being planned as far back as 1995 by insiders in the neo-Nazi/Islamic terrorist network. (And flying a privately owned jet or one operated by remote control would save the problem of hijacking airliners en route.) Strassmeir left the United States shortly after the bombing and currently resides in Berlin.

Mutual Enemies, Mutual Interests

The many points of contact between the neo-Nazis and the Islamic terrorists and their mutual targets of large public buildings demonstrate what I would like to term the ``Strangers on a Train`` scenario of current terrorist activity. In the Alfred Hitchcock movie of that name, two men unknown to each other meet on a train and start talking. Each needs to dispose of a person. They agree to kill each other's intended victim, thereby eliminating the element of motive from the ensuing police investigations. In a similar manner, evidence of late tends to support the idea that Al Qaeda is farming out terrorist work -- which is why American investigators have been so interested in the remote area of South America where Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay border each other.

It is there that wealthy German ex-Nazis, Islamic terrorists, Basque and IRA terrorists on the lam as well as narco-terrorists are known to be in steady contact. The possibilities for Mafia-style terrorist ``contracts`` are virtually unlimited.

It may come as something of a surprise to some when they realize just how well funded the various neo-Nazi organizations are. Authorities have known for years that a Swiss banker by the name of Francois Genoud has been funding neo-Nazi activities throughout the world. Genoud first gained prominence as the financial adviser to the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. He is alleged to have funded neo-Nazi activities through the

use of confiscated Jewish funds that were deposited in Swiss banks by the Nazis. Genoud funded the legal defense of Eichmann during his trial in 1961. And most chilling of all, Genoud was closely associated with the Palestinian terrorists who murdered Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972.

Another Swiss financier of neo-Nazi and Islamic terror is Ahmed Huber, (nee Albert Huber), a former journalist who converted to Islam. Swiss authorities raided Huber's suburban home outside of Berne on November 8, 2001, when U.S. officials identified him as one of the chief financial operators for Al Qaeda. Huber had been very active with the Al Taqwa (literally ``Fear of God``) international banking group, an Islamic terrorist front organization that had been funding the activities of Hamas and other Muslim extremists. According to a report released by Germany's Bundesamt fuer Verfassungsschutz (``Office for the Protection of the Constitution``), Huber ``sees himself as a mediator between Islam and right-wing groups.``

Huber and others of his ilk have found that Holocaust denial organizations provide the ideal venues for coordinating the efforts of the neo-Nazis and the Islamic terrorists. Indeed, Holocaust denial is the one area in which the beliefs of the neo-Nazis and Islamic terrorists coincide completely. And given the levels of post-9/11 security, international Holocaust denial conferences now have greater importance for planning and coordination among the neo-Nazi/Islamic terrorist networks.

This is due to the unfortunate fact that Holocaust denial organizations have the patina of scholarly respectability. Groups such as the Santa Barbara, California-based Institute for Historical Review produce glossy quasi-academic-style journals complete with footnotes and bibliography and well-designed and user-friendly websites. Holocaust denial groups sponsor international meetings that allow representatives of neo-Nazi and Islamic terrorist groups to meet because they narrowly fall within guidelines in most Western countries allowing for the free exchange of ``ideas.`` And with the current embrace of anti-Semitism by most leftist academics (in addition to their traditional anti-Americanism), there is now often very little difference between the symposia sponsored by officially recognized Middle Eastern Studies organizations in America and Europe and those organized by Holocaust denial groups.

While American forces continue to identify and destroy Al Qaeda's ability to conduct terrorist activities on its own, we must become more vigilant to the increasing possibility of ``terror by hire`` as neo-Nazi and other right-wing extremists step up to fill the void.

The next 9/11-style terrorist attack may not be attempted by a keffiyeh-wearing Arab terrorist spouting quotations from the Koran, but by an IRA terrorist whose services were purchased by a left-wing European intellectual attending a Middle Eastern Studies caucus of some leftist academic group during an annual conference in Omaha or Chicago or San Francisco.

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