

Syria's Assad cooks up Mossad-Saudi-al Qaeda plot to discredit pro-Western Lebanese government

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Syrian president Bashar Assad has drawn encouragement to go ahead with a drive to recover his grip on Lebanon from signals coming in from Barack Obama's team and from the peace overtures of Israeli transitional prime minister Ehud Olmert, DEBKAFile's Beirut sources report.

To this end, the Syrian president has concocted an improbable disinformation cocktail which brings together the al Qaeda-linked Fatah al-Islam terrorist organization, Saudi intelligence and the Israeli Mossad. This mix is designed to be explosive enough to discredit the Lebanese majority leader Saad Hariri and oust the pro-western government which stands in the way of Syria's domination of Beirut.

Thursday night, Nov. 6, Syrian state TV paraded four Fatah al-Islam terrorists who are charged with bombing Syrian security installations on the Damascus airport road on Sept. 27 at the cost of 17 lives. Shown with them were documents "proving" that a Saudi businessman had bankrolled the attack as the manager of this al Qaeda-linked organization's bank account.

Wafaa el-Abassi, daughter of the Fatah al-Islam leader, appeared next to "reveal" that she had heard her father say he had received moneys from Saad Hariri's Mustaqbal Movement in Beirut.

Syria has taken to using Fatah al-Islam as a multitask tool for its propaganda needs, including the pretext for its military concentrations around Lebanon's borders.

When he met US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice in New York last month, Syrian foreign minister Walid Muallem explained that Syria was forced to encircle Lebanon after Fatah al-Islam seized control of the northern Lebanese Tripoli region on orders from al Qaeda.

DEBKAFile's sources report that with two ingredients of Damascus's disinformation cocktail in place, Damascus is ready to go with the third.

The alleged Lebanese Mossad spy, whose detention was first revealed on Nov. 1, is about to be identified as Ali Jarrah, who was employed jointly by the Israeli Mossad and the Lebanese Saad Hariri. Damascus earlier implicated the spy in the murder of Hizballah's military chief Imad Mughniyeh in Damascus last February.

This "revelation" is meant to close the disinformation noose around Hariri's neck and undermine the reputation of anti-Syrian government leaders in Beirut as the sheet anchor of stable government in Lebanon.

Assad is presenting them instead as the hub of a roaring trade in operational plans, intelligence and funds among terror groups linked to al Qaeda, Saudi intelligence and the Israeli Mossad.

Israeli intelligence sources are highly critical of Olmert's willingness to put up with Assad's defamations of Israeli intelligence without protest for the sake of his prospective dialogue with Syria. Foreign minister Tzipi Livni and defense minister Ehud Barak are equally faulted for their failure to fight back.

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