



History of the Drug Traffic in Lebanon and Syria

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February 02, 2001

Introduction:

Last December, Syria published the names of 95 Lebanese prisoners still detained in its prisons. According to Syrian officials, all the detainees were common law criminals. And so you find people charged for passing counterfeit money, others for attempted embezzlement or theft, etc. But the most amusing fact is that 39 persons, i.e. a third of the detainees, are accused of drug trafficking and sentenced to at least 10 years in jail.

However, many of these persons were arrested in the '80s and '90s', in the period when Syria prospered thanks to the traffic of drugs and organized crime. In effect, due to Syria, Lebanon has become not only the center of international terrorism but likewise that of drugs. Syrian officers control the cultivation of poppies in the B'kaa, deriving enormous profits from that. And this, as of 1976, the date of the Syrian invasion of Lebanon.

This document is a collection of information about the drug traffic in Lebanon and Syria since 1976. All the data is known to the intelligence and the police services in all western countries without exception. And, for that matter, a visit to any of these services will provide the information contained in this document. But for groundless political reasons, the great powers have allowed the Syrian regime to act with impunity. And some western states have even facilitated the Syrian drug traffic directly or indirectly.

All the information included in this document was verified. Today, all the Lebanese and Syrian traffickers live peacefully and all have held, or are still holding, key positions in Lebanon and Syria.

The drug traffic has many benefits for Syria and its leaders, and is also a means of control over internal Lebanese politics, because most of the Lebanese military are or were implicated in this drug traffic.

The Laissez Passer Signed by Mustafa Tlass

An astounding document fell into the hands of western intelligence agents in Lebanon. It was signed by General Mustafa Tlass, the Syrian Minister of Defense. The document is a Laissez-Passer which authorizes its bearer to circulate freely in Lebanon and Syria, with his personal arms and luggage. The Syrian security forces are even requested to assist him.

The graphological analysis performed in the laboratory of a western anti-drug agency arrived at the conclusion that Tlass was indeed the signatory of this document. The Laissez-Passer was seized on a drug trafficker well known in Lebanon and Syria, who had paid a five digit sum in dollars in exchange for this document.

During the month of August 1989, the Syrian Minister of Defense distributed over a thousand Laissez-Passers of this kind among his friends and protégés in Lebanon. This explains the obvious improvement in Tlass' rate of living.

Western investigators have learned that the Syrian control over Lebanon by means of drugs is carried out on the institutional level. This is a structured network whose head belongs to the circles closest to President Hafez Assad. Mustafa Tlass possesses a charity foundation whose seat is located in Liechtenstein -- the Tlass Foundation. The president of this foundation, a resident of Paris, Nahed Ojjeh, who is Tlass' daughter and the widow of the Saudi arms' dealer Akkram Ojjeh, had offered M. Roland Dumas, when he was Foreign Minister in M. Michel Rocard's government, hi-tech electronic equipment including all accessories for a bargain sum of 8.2 million francs. The beneficiaries of this gift were the voters of the fourth district of the Dordogne. This [asset is one](#) among many that enables Mustafa Tlass to protect his drug traffic in France.

Syrian officers control the traffic of "made in Lebanon" drugs.

Hamad Ali El-Qis isn't a mere name. It is a file that figures in the archives of all the western security services. El Qis was the producer and trafficker of drugs in Baalbeck. Mustafa Tlass visited him in his Baalbeck home twice at least, in March 1983 and in March 1990. According to witnesses, the meeting ended in a transfer of funds from the Lebanese party to the Syrian party in exchange for Laissez-passeurs.

El Qis exported heroin via Turkey by way of Syria under the protection of Mustafa Tlass. Tlass has other friends trafficking in drugs in Baalbeck: Jamil Hami'yeh and his sons. Jamil and his brother Youssef had been jailed for drug trafficking, the former in the United States, the latter in Germany. But this hadn't prevented them from directing their traffic while in prison. Another friend of the Tlass family, Tala Qaisoum, lives in Kamar Ilouz, a picturesque Lebanese town. The name Qaisoum is likewise in a file of the security services. This man disposed of his merchandise via Cyprus. The network functioned, thanks to the emissaries who flew from Lebanon to the Damascus airport, or who left Lebanon by road through Syria and Turkey, from there to Europe and the United States, and under the protection of the authorities. In 1986, an embarrassing affair exploded at the Syrian embassy in Spain. The Spanish authorities didn't know how to react, as the members of the network were none other than Ambassador Sihadi, Consul Ibrahim Hadj Ibrahim and the embassy's security officer Mohammed Salah. All three were accused of transporting drugs and of distributing them in Europe. The trio had been using the diplomatic luggage and vehicles. However, it turned out when the investigation was over, and only then, was it known that the people at the Syrian embassy had not conducted a private sale for they followed orders from their chiefs who were in Syria.

In March 1988, Italian policemen seized ten kilos of heroin and one kilo and a half of cocaine in Milan. Their market value: Some six million dollars. Two Syrians were arrested. The officer in charge is Syrian Colonel Iyad who runs, among other illegal enterprises, a part of the Lebanese plantations of hashish and poppies.

On 16 October 1988: Four Syrians and one Lebanese were intercepted in Glyfada, a southern suburb of Athens, trying to sell one and a half kilos of heroin to a policeman for fifty thousand dollars.

On October 20, 1988, the Italian police intercepted at the Milan airport Aline Ibrahim who was carrying 1000 counterfeit dollars, photographs of the American hostages held in Lebanon and fifty grams of heroin.

In 1989, in Paris, the captain of the boat "My Name is Cleopatra" Muhammed Fartousi, was arrested and sentenced to eight years in prison for drug trafficking. It is revealed during the trial that Fartousi had been in touch with Brigadier Hassan Ali of the Syrian intelligence services and former military attaché at the Syrian Embassy in France. The "My Name is Cleopatra" was captured near the French coast after it had cast four tons of hashish into the sea from the boat's upper deck. The hashish had been placed on board at the Tripoli seaport in November 1989, under the supervision of Syrian soldiers. Syrian General Ali Haidar, commander of Hafez Assad's presidential guard, was placed under "high surveillance" following this nasty episode.

Mohammed Daboul, alias About Salim, was a counselor of President Hafez Assad on administrative problems. In the course of the second half of 1987, a Peugeot was intercepted while passing through Djudeida on the Syrian-Lebanese frontier. Twenty kilograms of heroin were found in the car. The driver and the car are allowed to cross into Syria upon the personal intervention of Abou Salim. Lieutenant-Colonel Abu Hassan, security officer at the Damascus airport, had been working for numerous years with an old friend of Tlass Hassan Hamiyeh, from the same Baalbeck family. This officer was in charge of passing merchandise through the airport customs. His wife is a relative of President Hafez Assad.

Another Colonel, Mohsen Salman, inspired by his colleague in Damascus, was in charge of security in Western Beirut. The military post at the Beirut airport was under his command. Salman was in touch with two well-known drug traffickers - Ziyad Salam from the town of Bint el-Jbeil and Sami El-Anah from Beirut. In May 1990, twenty-five containers were seized at the Beirut airport. They were assumed to contain cheese but in fact contained drugs. The shipment documents of the merchandise destined for Europe carried the signature of the Commando Regiment commander Abu Hassan. The Lieutenant-Colonel had learned his lesson at the hands of a good teacher Brigadier Said, commander of the Syrian Commando Regiment stationed in the Tripoli region, who assured the exit of the drug through the Tripoli seaport by numerous ships.

Lieutenant-Colonel Naziyah Ben-Hassan Kadour, member of the Syrian intelligence services, kept in touch with many Lebanese drug traffickers, and especially with Badr Gandour from the town of Kamar Ilouz. One day, when the latter had a ready-cash problem, he paid the services of Lieutenant-Colonel Kadour, a customary price, with 15 kilograms of heroin. Another Kadour, Colonel Gassan Kadour, officer in charge of the intelligence services in eastern B'kaa, preferred the tithe (percentage) system: In 1987, his name was on the list of the Anti-Drug Bureau in the United States for having received the sum of

100,000 Lebanese pounds and 60 kilograms of opium in exchange for services rendered to the Hamadi family.

Colonel Haytim, former intelligence officer in the Syrian Northern Region Air Force Command, was responsible in person for the shipment of heroin to Turkey. The corrupt Syrian system is now pumping money into Lebanon, which has turned into one of the black-money safes of a restricted group, the Alawites, in the top echelon with Hafez el-Assad. The government rewards "deserving" officers by giving them a command post in the B'kaa. Their fortune made, they yield their place to a meritorious colleague.

The Syrians control the inner Lebanese politics through the drug traffic.

The Syrians record with precision the drug business in Lebanon. The domination of this file guarantees the dominance over Lebanon's interior affairs. And when, from time to time, the Syrians claim to be engaging in anti-drug operations against drugs of Lebanese provenance, this has to be placed within the context of Syrian internal politics: Who is to gain, who is to lose?

Everything started for the Syrians in 1976, the year in which they invaded Lebanon. They knew that the majority of Lebanese politicians possessed fields for the cultivation of hashish in the B'kaa valley. The Syrians held a long list of Lebanese political personalities - former presidents, members of parliament, ministers, high functionaries involved in drug deals for personal or political ends. Syria started extortion activities on these personalities. In 1976, Syria threatened members of the government to reveal their implication in the drug traffic in case of non-cooperation. For instance, Rifaat el-Assad, Hafez el-Assad's brother, had become "an intimate friend" of Tony Frangié.

Those who've taken Rifaat el-Assad's place, are the chief of the Syrian military intelligence, General Ali Douba and his representative in Lebanon, Gazi Kanaan. Gazi Kanaan has succeeded in capturing the Druze leader Walid Joubblatt. The Druze lands in Lebanon, in the Chouf mountains, do not suit the cultivation of cannabis. To finance the Druze autonomy, small refineries of cocaine and heroin were built in the Chouf region. The raw material is imported from abroad, from Columbia and Bolivia. The merchandize is exported to Europe, particularly to Italy. Regular commercial ties exist with the United States. In exchange for a symbolic sum, Gazi Kanaan promised the Druze that El-Masna would leave the Chouf region. By exploiting the Druze's political-military dependence, Gazi Kanaan has, on the same occasion, established a connection between the Druze party and the pro-Iranian fundamentalist party Hezbollah. As a result, the Druze Jumblatt finds himself paradoxically in the same camp with the fanatic Muslim Sheikh Sabri el-Toufli. Hezbollah cultivates opium on the western slopes of the Lebanese B'kaa. The opium is later transformed into heroin in the Druze refineries.

And this is how the Syrian chiefs of the intelligence services in Lebanon have turned into intermediaries in the drug traffic, and how they receive commissions while simultaneously controlling two important Lebanese factions. If one of the two factions starts deviating from the political line, the collaboration will stop. Those in Lebanon who profit from the drug trade are all the Lebanese militias and politicians. The Presidents of the Republic (Hraoui, Franjia), ministers (Hobeika, Berri, Jumblatt) and the majority of deputies profit from drug cultivation. In Lebanon, war between ideologies stops at the edge of cannabis and poppy fields. There is not one organization - from the Palestinians to small local militias that doesn't benefit from drug revenues.

In Lebanon, the drug creates a bridge between ideologies. In the Shi'ite village of Brital, on the south-eastern side of the Baalbek-Zahle road, four heroin refineries function in a neighborly atmosphere. One belongs to a Christian family the Skaff - in Zahle, the second to a Shi'ite family Hamiyeh - in Baalbeck, the third, to a Christian family Habsheh in Deir el-Ahmar and the fourth - to the Sharif family of Alyamouneh. In this village, throughout all the years of the war, there hadn't been one single shot.

Tarraya, the village of the Hamieh, is a veritable Eldorado. The streets are strewn with new Mercedes and BMW's. Sadoun Hamieh had attended theological studies in Iraq that obtained for him the title of Sheikh (religious chief). Once back in his country, he promulgated a fatwa (religious edict) that authorized the cultivation of cannabis and poppies. Zahle, the town of Elias Hraoui, the second post-Taef president nominated by Syria, is the monetary center of drug money. Zahle is the meeting place for the major drug traffickers: Lebanese, Syrian and other nationalities. Zahle is where Syria possesses one of the biggest drug refinery laboratories. Elias Hraoui entered these affairs in 1968. He made a fortune by imposing himself as the representative of the Swiss Society for Petroleum Distribution, Gatoil, which belonged to a Lebanese, Khalil Ghattas, who was arrested and jailed in Geneva in 1988 for drug money laundering. During Amin Gemayel's presidency, Hraoui drew a monopoly contract with Petroleum Minister Victor Kassir, to whom he paid a commission for each ton of fuel delivered to the electricity plants of Jieh and Zouk. This business brought in for both of them many millions of dollars a year. Later, Hraoui associated himself with the B'kaa deputy, Albert Mansour, in an important enterprise for the treatment of poppies cultivated in the B'kaa for the purpose of extracting opium and heroin. Lebanese forces, such as the Shi'ite Amal or Hezbollah, as well as the Druze militia, made profits out of the drug traffic. All kept their part in the material's exit out of Lebanon: They all had contacts abroad, in communities of immigrants, in Syrian embassies, and certain political bureaus in western capitals or in certain commercial societies.

In 1989, The Empress, a ship used by the Lebanese Forces to transport voyagers between Junieh and Larnaka, was sequestered in Cyprus by request of the local branch of the American DEA Drug Enforcement Administration . On board - three kilograms of heroin shipped by the Lebanese Forces.

In December 1987, the Stups Brigade arrested in Paris a 40 years old Lebanese Jawad Al-Husseini. The investigation led to the interception of three kilograms of heroin and the summoning of the brothers Riad and Raymond Karam. All three had been working for the Lebanese Forces. The relationship between the Lebanese Forces commanded by Samir Geagea and/or Elie Hobeika and between the Moslem militias and Damascus were fragile when dealing with the transportation of the drug from the B'kaa up to the Mediterranean. The so-called Christian militia saw to the transit taxes, all that under the benevolent eyes of the Syrians. The military battle in 1990 between the Lebanese Army and the Geagea militia was no less a political than an economic war. The seizure of the Lebanese Forces' barracks in Jdeide in the northern Metn allowed for a realistic assessment of the amplitude of the drug traffic, as well as of the traffic in cars and other merchandises conducted by Geagea's militia.

The Americans had financed the Geagea militia so that the latter would join the Taef Accords, accords which had been the cause for the war between the militia and the Lebanese Army and which allowed for Lebanon's annexation by Syria. Later, these same Americans permitted Geagea's arrest and sentencing on Syrian orders for life imprisonment.

The drug traffic brings in very large sums of money. In 1989, a very senior functionary earned 2,500 francs a month. A B'kaa farmer sold his kilo of tomatoes to the wholesaler for 30 cents. A kilogram of heroin was negotiated at 240,000 francs, and resold in Paris for 1.2 million.

In 1995, Yahya Shamas, an old Syrian protégé, designated by them as deputy, was dragged before the Lebanese justice for drug trafficking. But the trial never took place because Monsieur the Deputy threatened to publish the names of some Lebanese leaders implicated in that traffic. Among those names figured members of parliament and ministers, as well as Roy Hraoui, son of Elias Hraoui, chosen by Damascus as the second post-Taef Lebanese president.

Syria transforms Lebanon into a gigantic center of the drug.

In 1975, the crop of Lebanese hashish reached 100 tons a year. In 1985, under Syrian control, Lebanon managed to produce 2000 tons of hashish a year. In 1989 there was a reduction of tonnage to 1000 tons due to the transition from the cultivation of cannabis to the massive cultivation of opium. In 1991, in the Lebanese B'kaa, 3000 poppies were in flower, from which could be extracted 30 tons of opium, or 3 tons of heroin a year. The cannabis covered areas of 8500 to 12000 hectares and it raises no problems of irrigation. The climate alone prevented Lebanese entrepreneurs from cultivating coca. But there, too, there is a solution: the raw material is imported by Syria under the surveillance of the authorities. With this raw material, the 12 to 50 Lebanese refineries produce heroin and cocaine. These refineries are located in the regions of Hermel, Baalbeck, Deir el-Ahmar and Zahle; all are fully controlled by Syria.

The Consumer Countries of Lebanese Drugs:

The Syrians control all the ports and routes of the drug. 40% to 50% of Lebanese hashish is exported to Egypt, 30 to 40% to the United States and Canada, 20% to 30% goes to Europe. The rest goes to Australia and Israel or serves for local consumption. The total, almost, of Lebanese opium is exported to Egypt. The major part of Lebanese heroin goes to the United States, Europe and Israel. A part of the drug is also diverted to Syria. The Syrian consumer has moved from the traditional products hashish and opium to heroin, cocaine, and the amphetamines found in Lebanon. 75% of the traffic in hashish was done by sea, 20% by road and 5% by air. Heroin was dispatched by air in refrigerators from different private airports in the region. When shipped by sea, it is concealed in voyagers' luggage with Cyprus as the center of transit.

The Reaction of Consumer Countries:

The Egyptians have always been consumers of heroin. The drug provided by Lebanon naturally satisfies them. As long as the Israelis approve of the Syrian politics in Lebanon, they can do nothing against the growing abundance of drugs in their country. This abundance is due to the permanent contacts between Lebanese, Syrian, and Israeli traffickers.

The Europeans don't want to do anything, because the sole impression one gathers from their attitude is that they are being terrorized by the Syrians. In October 1989, Madame Catherine Trautman, mayor of Strasbourg, submitted to the then French Prime Minister M. Michel Rocard a file on the drug traffic. Madame Trautman, who was at that time president of the International Mission for the struggle against drug addiction, wrote among others the following: "The cannabis resin is produced essentially in Morocco and in Lebanon. More and more heroin coming from the Near East (Lebanon, Turkey, Syria) has been appearing lately on the French market. This phenomenon is tied with the political situation in Lebanon.

The heroin is being cultivated there in the B'kaa valley under Syrian occupation. Exports are carried out by the Christian and Moslem militias." Again in the same report: "It seems that the Lebanese traffickers go sometimes to Turkey and Iran to bring back raw morphine that the veterans of "the French connection" as well as Lebanese or Italian chemists refine in Beirut. Note must be made that links exist at present between the Napolitany Camora and the Lebanese traffickers". "The shipping of this heroin is destined essentially for consumers in Latin countries (Italy, France, Spain) and is done by air (double-deck suitcases), by ship (including traffic of cannabis) from Tyr, with transit through Cyprus, Paimon, Naples and Marseilles, and finally by truck over the Balkans' route. One must stress the very few interceptions of drugs coming from Syria and that the Syrians' dispatching route isn't really known. As for the traffic in cocaine, the report notes: "the increase in the number of interceptions of over 10 kilograms. Cocaine is dispatched to France by air or by sea. It is the job, essentially, of South-American traffickers, particularly Colombians, but also of Lebanese.

The French Government's Reaction: It thanked Mme Trautman without changing its politics towards Syria.

The Americans have never wanted to do anything because they are for the Syrian annexation of Lebanon so that it will negotiate a peace accord with Israel. And so according to the Americans, any obstacle to the Syrian policy in Lebanon would disturb Syrian-Israeli negotiations. Thus, the Americans prefer seeing the Syrian trafficking in drugs as opposed to bothering them. Curiously, Ann Rubelski, American Deputy Secretary of State on drug affairs announced on March 3, 1989 that President Bush had decided to remove the name of Lebanon from the list of countries involved directly or indirectly in operations facilitating the traffic of drugs in the world. In return, she underlined that the name of Syria still appeared on this list "because this country has shown no cooperation on this level and because the major part of the drug traffic occurring on Lebanese territory comes from regions under Syrian control." Despite that, perhaps for the sake of a calm conscience, all the American governments have paid and are still paying large subsidies to the Syrians for the fight against drugs. For example in 1987, the United States gave the Syrians a little over one billion dollars. And so, he who grants his protection is paid twice: by the trafficker and by the government of the consumer country the United States.

An amusing fact: The Americans have removed the name of Syria from the lists of countries responsible for the traffic in drugs. The Drug Enforcement Agency and the CIA employ informers, many of whom are very well known drug and arms traffickers (see next paragraph). The majority of these traffickers used to receive checks from bank account #2843900 of the First American Bank in Washington DC, which is just a branch of the Bank of International Credit and Commerce (BCCI).

The BCCI, owned by Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan, Emir of Abu Dhabi and the Pakistani Agha Hassan Ali, is no more than a criminal organization whose role is to launder money from the drug traffic, to finance clandestine arms sales, extortion of monies and assassinations. "Businessmen" Syrian, Libyan, Palestinian and Saudi - specialized in the traffic of drugs and arms own accounts in the BCCI, particularly in London. Among its notorious clients, the arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi, a friend and relative of the Assads.

The BCCI is also specialized in difficult transactions, such as the sale to Saudi Arabia of Chinese missiles equipped with the Israeli system of telemetry, or the sale of North Korean Scud C missiles. All BCCI operations were known to the American administration who closed its eyes because most of the operations conducted by the BCCI were of "national interest." One of those famous operations occurred in mid-March 1992 in the Persian Gulf waters. American war ships had allowed the North-Korean ship Dae Hung Ho to anchor in the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas. The ship carried a load of Scud C missiles with a range of 500 kilometers, namely twice the range of Scud B's. The missiles were later taken to the Syrian port of Latakia. The Iranians paid the price of the missiles and all the bank transactions were carried out by the intermediary of the BCCI. The aim of this operation was more political than military; the Americans' objective being to apply pressure on Israel re the peace negotiation in the Middle East. And yet, the Syrians received their missiles that today target Israel. Let us state, finally, that the financing of the Syrian army of occupation in Lebanon (40,000 soldiers) is done by Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf countries.

Political frontiers disappear in front of the drug market

By its political and military occupation of Lebanon, Syria controls one of the biggest markets in the Near East and in the world: the traffic in drugs. And so Syria and Lebanon are connected to networks well established in Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Israel. For that matter, Syria continues to pretend that Syria is responsible for the drop in cultivation of poppies and cannabis, if not removed entirely in Lebanon, and it continues to this day to request financial aid to prevent a renewed cultivation of these two plants. The reality, however, is completely different: Syria has created research laboratories that enable it to purify heroin of high quality, which will be distributed, later, on the international market. In 1993, Lebanon receives from the UN a sum of 4,2 million dollars in financial aid to allow Lebanese farmers to cultivate a substitute to cannabis. Despite this, in 1993, the total area of cultivated lands amounted to 2000

hectares, principally in the Shi'ite villages of Younine, Taraya, Chemstar, Chaat, Nahl and Jurd-el-Hermel as well as in the Christian villages of Deir Al Ahmar and Inata.

The morphine base arrives via Syria from Turkey and Afghanistan and is later sent to Lebanese laboratories for the transformation into heroin. These laboratories are located in Beirut and the B'kaa. The raw materials for cocaine arrive in Lebanon via Africa and certain Mediterranean countries, and they are later transformed into cocaine chlorhydrate in Kamed-El-Lawz in the B'kaa region, which is controlled by Hezbollah. The pro-Iranian militia controlled by Damascus, uses the drug monies to finance its terrorist activities and also to control the Shi'ite community of Lebanon. It must be noted that the laboratories installed in Lebanon produce products of up to 99% purity, whose price is therefore rather high. For instance, the price of one kg of pure cocaine was in 1994 around 80,000 American dollars. At present, is it sold at over 100,000 dollars.

Syria's regulation of the drug traffic enabled the Lebanese and Syrian trafficker to establish well-determined "routes" for the dispatching of the drug, to see that the concerned countries are aware of all their activities, and also to better divide the money. Thus, the drug traffic was transformed into a real "family" enterprise, controlled by neighboring countries and run by "business men" who take care of investments, production and drug-money laundering. Thus, transports to Turkey are fully active and the Lebanese ports of Tripoli, Jieh and even Naquoura in southern Lebanon were and are utilized as ports of transportation. And Lebanon has also interested Armenian militants for the financing of their war in High Karabakh. Likewise, the Sicilian and Russian mafiosi use Lebanon to transit their merchandises. In general, Cyprus still serves as a place of transit. The Syrians have installed a very efficient and discreet system for drug transportation: taxis. One of its businessmen known by the name of Khaled, owns a taxi company which runs between Beirut, the B'kaa and Damascus. Khaled and most of the entrepreneurs are protected by the Syrian army which knows very well when and where merchandise has to be delivered. These businessmen constantly carry arms for their protection.

Another Syrian trafficker known by the name of Atef, established his network in hotels patronized by clients, mainly among the young, and a sum of 5000 dollars is offered them for transporting the drug between two neighboring countries, plus "the running car" which was sometimes offered to the intermediary. Atef and two of his friends, an Algerian and a Saudi, have even bought two hotels, one near the Gare du Nord in Paris to lodge immigrant workers and the other in Amsterdam for the young. Thus, the drug would arrive, sometimes directly, to Tel Aviv, and was then dispatched through Lebanon. The transit is conducted at present between Amman and Damascus, Amman, and Saudi Arabia, as well as between Gaziantep (Turkey) and Alep or Lattaquie (Syria). All the frontier posts of these countries are informed when traffickers want to cross with their merchandise. When the driver of the bus reaches the border post, he deposits an envelope full of green bills and continues on his way with no search carried out. Even when the guards are absent, the envelope is deposited. Good accounts make for good friends. In general, the envelope is supposed to contain 200 dollars per passage. In this way, pure heroin leaves the ports of Mediterranean countries which, on their part, import cocaine and other drugs. Often, certain customs officials unaware of these arrangements intercept merchandise. And this is where politics intervene to liberate the confiscated merchandise and to transfer the over-zealous customs official. For instance, in 1995, at the border post of Halet Ammaar in Saudi Arabia, Captagone and other amphetamines were intercepted, The intercepted vehicles had covered the route Turkey Syria Jordan.

In Tel Aviv, the drug phenomenon has become a normal occurrence. In the center of town, Allenby street is now the most popular sales point. According to some official sources, the dealers have representatives in each hotel who can welcome the young. Cannabis is sold in Tel Aviv in bars and on the street in front of a police station. A phenomenon turned into a banality. A kg of cannabis costs around 2000 shekels or 480 American dollars. For those who wish to buy the pure stuff 100 grams would cost 170 shekels.

Laundering of the "Made in Lebanon" Drug.

The laundering of the drug arriving from Lebanon is done especially in Switzerland. The drug is sold in Europe, chiefly in Spain, the money is then placed in a branch of the Swiss Bank in the Iberian peninsula and then transferred to three different banks located in Switzerland, thanks to multiple transactions.

The recycling of the sales money is done in the form of legitimate revenue or investments by a head of family: Auto-loans, fictitious societies, insurance, false sale of real estate. Highly qualified lawyers assure these banking transactions appear legitimate. The Lebanese connection provoked the fall of Mme Elisabeth Kopp, Minister of Justice, in November 1988. The Shakarchi Trading SA in Zurich, a company directed by the husband of the Swiss Interior and Justice Minister, was accused by the Ministry of Public Affairs of having laundered the money of Lebanese traffickers through the intermediary of the three biggest Swiss banks – a matter of 1.4 billion Swiss francs. This money served to fill the coffers of the militias and to enhance the money of their chief and of the Lebanese politicians in Europe and the United States. If one of the banks for drug laundering is discovered, there are still at least a hundred big banks throughout the world that serve for this dirty job.

According to French specialists, the importing of weapons to Lebanon has cost some 400 million dollars a year between 1978 and 1986. Even if you add the salary of the military and their running upkeep, the revenues from the drug were higher than the military expenditures. Considerable margins remain which will swell the fortunes accumulated abroad.

One person implicated in the Lebanese connection -- Yassar Avni Musullulu, a drug trafficker working between Italy and Switzerland. Musullulu, who was living peacefully in the Zurich area, left Switzerland in 1984 without asking for his dues, as he'd become the object of an Interpol search warrant. The Hebdo magazine published a facsimile of this document at the bottom of which the federal office of the police had added the note "not to be arrested". Musullulu has left Switzerland for Sofia.

Who Constitutes the Lebanese Connection?

With its multiple international ramifications from Lebanon to Switzerland passing through Syria, Turkey, Bulgaria, Italy, and the United States, the Lebanese connection encompasses a large number of drug networks throughout the world, such as the Colombian cocaine mafia. The South-Americans, particularly Colombia, Bolivia, and Brazil, are also implicated in the Lebanese drug traffic. One of the simplest methods is the use of embassies located in Damascus. The Lebanese drug is dispatched to Damascus, delivered to highly qualified people in the concerned country's embassy and dispatched to that country by diplomatic mail.

Some Lebanese implicated in the Lebanese connection the brothers Jean and Barghev Magharian, were arrested in Switzerland July 7, 1987. The two Lebanese were staying at Hotel Nova in Zurich and were known as moneychangers. The working permit of both had expired in 1985. Moreover, on November 27, 1986, three suitcases containing some 3 million dollars were discovered at the Los Angeles airport. The American investigators established that this money came from the Colombian drug traffic and was destined for the Magharian brothers. The DEA and the FBI had discovered that considerable sums of money had been transferred several times from the United States to Zurich for the two brothers. The sums dispatched amounted to one billion dollars. Part of this money formed the object of Bank transactions, while several hundreds of millions of Swiss francs were dispatched clandestinely from Turkey via Bulgaria. From Sofia, these funds reached Switzerland by airplane. It was likewise established that 30 million dollars from the sale of Colombian cocaine wound up in the hands of the Magharian brothers via California. The accrued narco-dollars were then placed into numerous bank accounts, especially in Geneva and in Tessin. The investigation brought out as well that enormous sums of money originating in Bulgaria or arriving directly from Lebanon were destined for societies located in Switzerland. On August 30, 1987, the Italian navy seized, near the coast of Bari, an old armed cargo ship carrying a Lebanese flag, the "Boustany One". On board, they discovered an anti-tank rocket launcher, a Soviet RPG, an American missile, 2kgs of heroin and 15kgs of hashish. The Italian police arrested 32 people. Among them: the directors of an import-export company, an intermediary of Canadian origin and two Italian mafiosi.

The weapons were destined for a terrorist network operating in Europe that financed its activities thanks to the drug traffic. The boat, whose proprietor was a Greek ship-owner, could fly a Lebanese flag under the name of "Boustany One", but also an Honduras flag under the name of "Good Luck". When leaving Italy, the ship transported in its hold to Iran via Syria, anti-personal mines destined officially for Spain or Nigeria. The mines were fabricated by a company in Brescia, La Valsella Meccanotecnica, whose co-owner with FIAT was Count Ferdinando Borletti, one of the most well-known Italian industrialist.

CONCLUSION:

One single question imposes itself: who should be blamed, Syria or its protector, the United States of America?

The Americans and the Europeans pretend they're fighting the drug traffic, but in reality, they attack exclusively the small traffickers. These small traffickers are not protected politically and thus become easy targets. The governors of the countries that export the drug have always been in cahoots with the Westerners. In the Near East, the two countries concerning us are Syria and Morocco.

According to the American administration, Syria and Lebanon were removed from the list of countries trafficking in drugs because these two countries aren't included among the big producers of drugs. Technically, a country that traffics in drugs is a country that cultivates annually 5000 or more hectares of illegal cannabis (marijuana) or 1000 hectares of opium or coca. And effectively, this definition doesn't apply anymore to Lebanon nor to Syria. But the Americans don't take into account the laboratories that prepare the heroin before it is exported. Furthermore, the Americans think that the "made in Lebanon" drug does not really affect the American market as do the drugs from Latin America countries.

Moreover, Hafez Assad's pro-American politics allowed the latter to receive enormous financial assistance. But this assistance has never served to improve the life of the Syrians but rather to buy

weapons and to raise the life-style of the upper leadership. The Americans had wished, through this financial assistance, to prod Assad to negotiate peace with Israel, which he has never done. Assad manipulated the Americans, the Israelis, and the Lebanese, in order to rule Lebanon definitively while inflicting a painful, political defeat on Israel. Most of the Israeli leaders were complacent towards the Syrian, others have also proved an irresponsible naivete.

The turbulence in Judea and Samaria is the incontestable result not only of the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon but likewise of the fact that Monsieur Barak prevented the SLA men from staying home and defending their villages. The Israeli withdrawal from Southern Lebanon and Monsieur Barak's betrayal were taken by the Palestinians as a symbol of Israel's decline and ultimate disappearance. Furthermore, Hafez Assad had built one of the most destructive arsenals in the region while convincing the world that he was ready to use this arsenal to wage war on Israel. The Syrian dictator was useful to the Americans and so he became a great friend of theirs. Hence, why he was allowed everything: the massacre of his own population (20,000 people killed in the Syrian town of Hama in 1982), the massacre of the Lebanese population, the bombing of civilians, the destruction of Lebanese cities and the annexation of Lebanon. One should not forget the crimes perpetrated by the Syrians on westerners in Lebanon (the murder of the French ambassador Louis Delamarre and of the French military attache Gouttiere, the destruction of the French soldiers' barracks (70 dead) and of the American Marines (250 dead) in West Beirut) or abroad (participation in terrorist attacks in Paris, particularly the attack in the Rue de Renne. It would seem today, that the new world order belongs to the drug traffickers and the war criminals.