

Charges brought against former Green Beret

More connections between US agents and embassy bombings

Martin McLaughlin
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Several reports appearing in the American press reveal new connections between the August 7 bombing of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the activities of US intelligence agencies and paramilitary forces. These reports pose the question whether the embassy bombings were the product of a US government operation gone awry. They moreover highlight the role played by US and other intelligence agencies in the activities of terrorist and alleged terrorist organizations, which raise the possibility that such tragedies as the embassy explosions may involve an element of provocation on the part of these agencies.

The *New York Times* reported October 30 that a former Green Beret sergeant and instructor has been secretly charged by federal prosecutors in connection with the bombing of the embassies in Nairobi and Dar es-Salaam. The charges are sealed so that the nature of the indictment is not known, but the former soldier, Ali A. Mohamed, is in custody at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York City.

Former Sgt. Mohamed's career gives an extraordinary glimpse of the relations between the CIA, the Pentagon and Islamic militants recruited by the US government for the war against Soviet forces who invaded Afghanistan in 1979 and waged a decade-long war against guerrilla forces backed by the US, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Mohamed, born in Egypt and educated at the Egyptian military academy, served in the Egyptian army and then as a security officer for Egyptair, the country's airline, before emigrating to the United States in 1985. According to a report that appeared in the *Boston Globe* in 1995, Mohamed was brought into the United States under a special CIA program that

provides visas and citizenship for key informants.

The former Egyptian officer served as a special warfare instructor for the Green Berets at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina from 1986 to 1989, helping train American special forces who were to operate in Afghanistan and in other predominately Moslem countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Mohamed appeared on army videotapes that were used to educate soldiers and officers bound for the Persian Gulf war zone in 1990.

At about the same time, Mohamed had begun training former Afghan guerrilla fighters now living in the United States, including some of those who were later arrested in the World Trade Center bombing or convicted on charges of planning other bomb attacks in the New York City area.

The *Times*, citing intelligence sources, suggests that like many of the Islamic fundamentalists who collaborated with the CIA in Afghanistan, Mohamed turned against the US government after it dispatched hundreds of thousands of troops to Saudi Arabia and waged war against Iraq.

Such a political transformation, however likely, does not explain Mohamed's alleged involvement in training former Afghan guerrillas in bomb-making in 1989, while he was still on active service in the Green Berets, and while the Afghan mujehadeen were still allies of the Pentagon and CIA. It is also significant that well after his alleged break with the US government, in the early 1990s, Mohamed worked as an informer for the FBI in efforts to detect smuggling of undocumented workers from Mexico.

According to the *Times* account, the key link between Mohamed and those involved in the World Trade

Center bombing was El Sayyid Nosair, the Egyptian immigrant imprisoned in the assassination of the fascist Zionist extremist Meir Kahane.

Nosair was put on trial for allegedly assisting the World Trade Center bombers while he was in prison. His defense, largely unreported at the time of his trial, was that the group of immigrants from the Middle East was receiving paramilitary training from Mohamed as part of a US government program to prepare them for combat in Afghanistan.

By the time of the World Trade Center bombing, Mohamed had left the United States, working first as a security officer for Saudi construction magnate Osama bin Laden, then seen in Afghanistan in 1992 at a camp for Islamic guerrilla fighters built with US government funds and staffed with recruits from all over the Moslem world, under bin Laden's supervision.

Most of this information must have been provided to the *Times*, the *Washington Post* and other newspapers by CIA and military intelligence sources, seeking to portray bin Laden as the mastermind of a huge terrorist apparatus which must be combated by mobilizing US military forces. But the details raise many questions about the close collaboration between bin Laden and the US government.

A second series of press reports revealed that the CIA had received explicit warnings about the attacks on the Kenya and Tanzania embassies only a few months before the bombs which killed 270 people, the vast majority innocent civilians.

Another Egyptian man, Mustafa Mahmoud Said Ahmed, jailed in Tanzania in the bombing investigation, walked into the Nairobi embassy in November 1997 and gave a detailed account of the bombing plans. Ahmed was questioned intensively, but his story was discounted by the CIA, according to the *New York Times*, after 'a foreign intelligence service that cooperates with the agency believed that Mr. Ahmed was a fabricator of information.' The foreign intelligence service was almost certainly the Israeli Mossad.

It is significant that although Ahmed clearly had advance knowledge of the bombing and could be an important witness, if not a suspect, the Clinton administration has made no attempt to extradite the Egyptian citizen from Tanzania, although similar actions have been taken against several other suspects

in the embassy bombings.

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