

Libyan-East German Terrorism Connection; Gadhafi's Bloodthirsty Record of Murder.

Veteran Reporter Says Libyan Agents Are Bloodthirsty Killers;
How Libyans Established Their Terror Base in East Berlin;
How the Libyans Carried Out the La Belle Bombing;
Libyan Plans to Kill American Schoolchildren;
East German Defector Killed by Libyan Hit Man;
Saudis Wanted Gadhafi Assassinated,
Saying He was 'Off His Rocker.'

Question: Any Doubt that Libya Bombed Pan Am 103?

Answer: None.

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Edited interview with John Koehler, veteran Associated Press correspondent, on the Libyan-East German terror connection, as detailed in his book *Stasi: The Untold Story of the East German Secret Police* (Westview Press, 1999). Conducted by Cliff Kincaid on his "Washington Connection" program on the Peoples Radio Network. Koehler served as foreign correspondent for the Associated Press for 28 years, including stints as chief for both the Berlin and Bonn bureaus. He also served as assistant to the president and director of communications under Ronald Reagan.

Q: Please explain the Libyan-East German terrorist connection.

A: It really began in the 60s when the chief of the East German secret police or the Ministry of State Security, on behalf of the Politburo, made a deal with the Soviet Union that East Germany would support certain so-called liberation movements in Africa...In 1985, when the Libyans killed a policewoman in

London and the diplomatic staff were expelled from London, they moved to East Germany to East Berlin, where since mid-1985 there was a steady increase of personnel. Some of the East German secret police were a little weary about this. They noticed that many of them were Libyan intelligence agents...They put them under surveillance.

But then the [East German] hierarchy said, 'Look, don't watch them too closely. Just make sure they don't do anything on our territory. Whatever else they do, we don't care.' That of course led up to the La Belle bombing in April of 1986 that killed two Americans and a Turkish woman and injured well over 200 persons, including 41 Americans, some very, very seriously.

The Libyan connection with the East Germans was solid. The bombing involved about 13 people -- 13 Arabs, Libyans and others -- and two German women, one was married to one of the Arabs involved, and her sister. They actually placed the bomb. The bomb was made with Semtex, an explosive produced in Czechoslovakia. The bomb weighed almost 4 pounds. It turned out later, from documents I found, that the Czechoslovakian communists had sold over 2,000 tons of that explosive to Libya.

Q: Some people might say, "How do you know all of this?"

A: I began to work on the book the day after the Berlin Wall fell...I contacted old sources and then in the spring of 1990, I visited with the president of the West German intelligence service...He said 'We have an East German colonel [Rainer Wiegand] who defected some time ago and who was very much involved in many operations. He's already been interrogated by us, the CIA, French Intelligence and the British. And you can talk to him.'

I did talk to this man...for several years. Very early on, he turned over to me documents which he had brought out when he defected. He defected with two suitcases of top-secret documents. Some involved not only the bombing of La Belle but matters concerning the harboring of terrorists by the East German government...

They [the East Germans] were absolutely in cahoots with terrorists. As far as the head of the East German secret police was concerned, as well as the government-- the whole Politburo knew about this...

Q: You document the Libyan role in the La Belle disco bombing. Is there any doubt in your mind that the Libyans carried out Pan Am 103?

A: None. What I know about the Libyan activities, they were insidious, really bad. The CIA and the NSA, National Security Agency, which monitors communications around the world, had early on -- before the La Belle bombing -- [intercepted] many, many conversations between Tripoli and Berlin, in which they talked about terrorist activities. And the East Germans monitored that as well. That's why Colonel Wiegand got so exercised about it. And the CIA itself established a new office in Berlin, which was to deal only with terrorist activities. Obviously, it was aimed at finding out what was happening in East Germany...

Wiegand was determined to prevent any terrorist attacks in West Berlin. For example, the U.S. had an embassy in East Berlin, and the children of these embassy employees were bussed every day to West Berlin to an American school. And they [the Libyans] were planning to bomb the school bus. That was prevented. Several bombings that the Libyans had planned were prevented by Wiegand and one of his very close associates, another lieutenant colonel in the East German secret police. They were just sick of the whole thing.

Q: So these Libyans are blood-thirsty killers?

A: They are. This one guy who was involved in the La Belle bombing - [Yasser] Chraidi - very early on was in Libya and was recruited there. The KGB was involved. They knew about this. All these guys had blood on their hands.

Q: Colonel Wiegand, the East German defector, was supposed to be a witness in the La Belle trial, and he winds up dead.

A: He was in protective custody for quite a while by the West German intelligence people. And then he established his own business -- as a business consultant -- and he was recruiting construction workers in Portugal. He was on a trip there with his wife. One night I got a call -- Wiegand is dead - - he rammed his car into the back end of a truck. I said 'impossible.' The second version was that he was stopped at a stop light and a heavy construction vehicle rolled over his car and crushed it. The third version was that it was a head-on collision. The Portuguese police conducted a secret investigation and I have not seen details of it anywhere, but I immediately suspected he was murdered. And so do officials of the West German general prosecutors office. Another Stasi defector said, "No way. This man was an excellent driver." In all the years that I've known him, he never had a drink. I believe that he was killed....

The other thing that is interesting is that, a year before the bombing, a member of Gadhafi's personal staff, charged with supervising Libyan intelligence, arrived in East Berlin. He spent a lot of time there. Shortly thereafter, an explosives expert arrives. The East Germans know about all of this. It was insidious.

I'll give you another example of how bad they were. For many years they would not allow Israeli citizens to travel through East Germany. Suddenly, in order to polish their international image, they said they're going to allow Israelis to travel to East Germany if they want to go to Poland or Czechoslovakia to visit people. When they did that, and the Israelis started coming through East Germany, they would take picture of their passports, which was normal. They did this with all foreigners. But they also questioned them about where they were going to stay, and where they lived in Israel -- details that normally wouldn't be asked. Then they took this information and turned it over to Arab organizations like the PLO, the terrorists. I've wondered all these years how many of these Israelis who traveled through there were killed.

Q: At the time that President Reagan ordered the bombing of Libya, in retaliation for the La Belle bombing, some said there was no proof of a Libyan link. But he not only had the proof that the Libyans did it, but that the East Germans and the Soviets knew in advance they were going to do it.

A: That's right. One of the persons who allowed some of the explosives to come in was a hostess with an East German airline. She had served in Libya and was a girlfriend once of Chraidi, one of the participants. Her job was that, when the Libya airplane arrived, to take the documentation and process it through Customs. One time she took a suitcase and put it in her private locker that she then, later on, when she went off-duty, took out without any checks. When they interrogated her, they found out that her whole family worked for the MFS, the Stasi. She didn't want to talk and when was threatened with jail, she produced a telephone number. They called this number and, lo and behold, on the other end was the KGB in Berlin. They immediately said to her, 'Don't say a word.'

A month before the bombing, the Ambassador to East Germany, Frank Meehan, went to the East German foreign office and said, 'We know that hostile acts are being planned by the Libyan Peoples Bureau -- as they called their embassy -- and we want you guys to take some action.' The East Germans just shrugged and said, 'We don't anything about it.' They knew everything about it.

Q: Is there any reason not to believe there is similar evidence in the Pan Am 103 case?

A: No. They must have it.

Q: But will it be produced?

A: They put a secret or top-secret stamp on it, and that's the end of it.

Q: Especially when you have an administration like this one that wants to re-establish relations with Libya.

A: I don't know why they would want to establish relations with Libya.

Q: They getting pressure from the oil companies.

A: Let me tell you a story. When I was doing some work for the Reagan Administration, I traveled through the Arab countries. I was asked to come to dinner one night by one of the ministers. In fact, he had the whole cabinet there. One of the cabinet members sat next to me and said, 'I just listened to Gadhafi this afternoon. He's sitting in his tent. I saw it on television. That man is crazy. He's nuts. You ought to kill him.' I said, 'What do you mean?' He said, 'The Americans ought to kill him.' All of them -- the Saudi Ambassador was there. They all said that Gadhafi is off his rocker. It was amazing to me.
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