

Earl Raab

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THE AL HOUT SCANDAL

During the past couple of weeks, our State Department has acted like a branch office of the PLO. It has contrived to bring a PLO agent into this country illegally - and then has urged private American institutions to give him a hearing!

Shafik Al Hout is an official of the PLO, the director of that organization in Beirut, Title 8 of American immigration law describes those people who are ineligible to receive visas, and who are to be excluded from admission to this country. Section 28f says that one of the groups to be refused visas and admission are: "Aliens who are or have been members of organizations which advocate or teach the duty, necessity or propriety of the unlawful assaulting or killing of any officer or officers of the government of the United States or any other organized government...or the unlawful damage, injury or destruction of property..." And Section 28f goes on to describe other attributes of terrorist organizations abroad.

There is no single organization in the world which better qualifies as "terrorist" under this American law than does the PLO. It not only advocates the murder of public officials, but has committed such murders -- including the assassination of a U.S. Ambassador in Khartoum.

Within the past few weeks the PLO has advocated and promised "the unlawful destruction" of American property. On March 27, in Baghdad, Yassar Arafat said to Arab Foreign Ministers: "I call upon you to adopt the most violent means against the U.S. and her interests in the region." On April 1, Hani el-Hassan, an official of the PLO and colleague of Al Hout's, told the Lebanese Daily that the PLO will destroy American property in Europe, citing as example the blowing up of a computer factory in Hamburg.

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But what is the point of multiplying citations? Surely no one doubts that the PLO fits the description in Section 28f. Last June, the State Department itself declared that "we view the PLO as an organization, elements and members of which advocate and carry out acts of terrorism...as a matter of policy, we consider any official of the PLO and its designated or self-proclaimed agents or spokesmen, ineligible for visas."

But this month the State Department specifically prevailed upon the Attorney General to wave the law, and allow Shafik Al Hout to enter this country. The excuse is that Al Hout holds himself out to be a moderate member of the PLO who does not personally believe in terror! That is like acquitting a high official of the Mafia because he says that he really can't stand the sight of blood. Furthermore, the State Department is actively pushing Al Hout. The State Department has urged groups of influentials to give Al Hout audience.

In general, the PLO is ineradicably an enemy of the U.S., ideologically Marxist, tied to the Soviet Union. The PLO is opposed to peace in the Middle East. As PLO spokesman Abu IYad said in Beirut on March 22,: "Sadat's treason is not that he is signing a separate peace treaty...but because he brings peace with Israel." And, of course, for that reason, the PLO is opposed to the peace treaty which our President went to such great lengths to establish. Yet it is not the Soviet Foreign Office, but the American State Department which exerts itself to sneak a PLO spokesman into this country to help him campaign before influential American groups! What is going on here?

It is likely that the State Department is beginning a naked campaign to soften up the American people for the American pressure on Israel during the upcoming "West Bank" negotiations. If Americans can be sold that there is a bunch of "nice guys" within the PLO then Israeli resistance to a PLO-dominated Palestinian state will be undercut.

However PLO "moderates" are those who believe that the war can be postponed for a little while, until they have been installed in their own Soviet-armed state. The PLO, moderates and all, have just rejected once again the request by the United States that the PLO creditably disclaim its prime objective of war against Israel.

In any case, the "Al Hout Caper" by the PLO is an under-handed act which violates American law, and American national interests. The citizenry should tell the President in no uncertain terms that his efforts for peace are being illicitly undermined by the State Department; and the citizenry should tell their Congressmen that this is a scandal worthy of investigation.

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