

Paris judge attempts to crack Diana murder

by Jeffrey Steinberg

In the first dramatic move in months, Paris investigating magistrate Hervé Stephan, the man in charge of the probe of the Aug. 31, 1997 car crash that claimed the life of Princess Diana, Dodi Fayed, and Henri Paul, has convened an extraordinary meeting of witnesses to the crash. The gathering of more than 20 eyewitnesses, known in French court parlance as a *confrontation*, will take place at the Palace of Justice on June 5, according to a report first carried in *Le Parisien*. According to various news accounts, the witnesses will include at least nine paparazzi, who are still facing possible manslaughter indictments for their involvement in the crash, and several of the French police officers who were the first to arrive on the scene.

The purpose of the group interrogation is to attempt to draw out new testimony, to resolve contradictions between various eyewitness accounts, and to develop a more comprehensive picture of what took place in the moments immediately before and after the fatal crash in the Place de l'Alma tunnel.

Review of medical records

In a second, potentially sensational move, Magistrate Stephan ordered a thorough review of Princess Diana's medical dossier, to determine whether the French emergency medical teams which responded to the crash contributed to her unnecessary death. According to the London *Times*, the decision to reopen the medical file came "after claims that her life could have been saved if she had been rushed to the hospital immediately, rather than treated at the scene." At least one member of the emergency medical team that delivered Princess Diana to the La Pitié Salpêtrière Hospital, *one hour and 43 minutes after the first ambulance arrived at the crash site*, has been interrogated by the French police.

What makes the review of the medical file so explosive, is the fact that the on-the-scene rescue effort was directed by top officials of the French government. Paris Police Chief Philippe Massoni was one of the first officials to arrive at the crash site; he was in charge of the rescue effort and the preliminary probe. Interior Minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who was advised not to stop at the tunnel but to go directly to the hospital, and who was in telephone communication with Massoni and others at the tunnel, arrived at La Pitié Salpêtrière an hour before the ambulance carrying Prin-

cess Diana. In other words, the failed emergency medical rescue effort was steered, top down, by senior officials of the French government.

EIR first reported in September 1997 that Princess Diana could have likely survived the crash, had she been rushed to a hospital and into surgery to repair damaged arteries. French emergency medical experts backed up the *EIR* assessment, and pointed out that Princess Diana should have been brought the Val de Grâce military hospital, just a few miles from the tunnel. Val de Grâce has a helicopter ambulance that could have delivered her to surgery within a half an hour, according to one of the top emergency medical professionals in Paris.

The implications of Stephan's actions

On a deeper level, Magistrate Stephan's two bold moves—the convening of the *confrontation* and the reopening of the medical file—have broken the momentum toward a cover-up that, for the past month, had jeopardized the investigation of the death of Princess Diana. European and American sources have confirmed to *EIR* that there has been a coordinated effort, coming from the House of Windsor, the Tony Blair government in London, and the Lionel Jospin government in France, to black the investigation out of the media altogether, and, thereby, make it possible to enforce a cover-up of the evidence that Princess Diana and her companions were the victims of a murder conspiracy, not a traffic accident.

The most glaring piece of evidence that the car crash was anything but an accident, is the missing Fiat Uno, which collided with the Mercedes 280-S carrying the Princess, and then sped out of the tunnel and disappeared. In January 1998, when he was coming under intense pressure from the French government, the media, and the British monarchy to shut down the probe, Magistrate Stephan, in a rare public statement, asserted that the case could not be closed until the mystery of the Fiat Uno were solved.

Other unanswered questions about the circumstances surrounding the crash includes:

- A team of at least seven unidentified men, who had staked out the Ritz Hotel, where Dodi and Princess Diana spent their final hours. These men were not paparazzi, hotel guests, or tourists.
- The reported presence in Paris on Aug. 30-31, 1997, of a six-man team of British MI6 officers, who were reportedly dispatched to track the couple. Several British newspapers reported that the team was working with private security firms, made up of "retired" British Special Air Services (SAS) and other irregular warfare operatives, and that some of the paparazzi firms were linked to these companies.
- The role of Tiny Rowland, in a British monarchy-led slander and harassment campaign directed against Mohamed Al Fayed, the father of Dodi Fayed and a major figure in the London business community, who had been a longtime confidant of Princess Diana.