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Defiant spy names two in plot to kill Gaddafi

artin Bright

Paris Correspondent

RENEGADE MI6 agent Shayler last night dramatically escalated his battle with the Government when he named two serving intelligence officers who he says were involved in a covert operation to assassinate Libyan dictator Colonel Muammar Gaddafi.

Shayler took the unprecedented step of naming the agents in an attempt to force the Government to launch an inquiry into the affair. In a bid to increase his government's efforts to stop his revelations about the security services, which he says are increasingly out of control, he is also calling for an investigation into Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's assertion in 1997 that his allegations were 'pure fantasy'.

He names the agents he

says were involved in the Gaddafi plot have been disclosed to *The Observer*, but for legal reasons we are prevented from publishing them. News that Shayler is revealing the identities of agents will send shockwaves through the intelligence services, whose officers are told to keep their jobs secret even from their family and closest friends. It will also intensify the Government's determination to pursue the errant agent, currently in exile in Paris, through the courts.

The Observer has discovered that Shayler sent Home Secretary Jack Straw full details of the alleged plot on 24 November last year, including the name of an MI6 officer who ran the operation and, according to Shayler, paid for the assassination attempt. The letter demanded a criminal investigation into his activities. It is now thought that

Shayler is also prepared to name the agent's boss at MI6, codenamed PT16, who is alleged to have authorised the operation. He may also identify his own MI6 line manager, to whom he voiced concerns about what he called a 'Boys' Own' operation.

In a weekend of high drama, it emerged that the Government is to sue the former MI6 officer and Associated Newspapers for damages for publishing Shayler's original revelations in August 1997. It also demanded the return of money Shayler has earned as a result of writing about his experiences.

"I have been quiet long enough," said Shayler from Paris last night. "Why has there been no inquiry? Now the Government is trying to sue me and that is persecution. They should be made to pay."

Shadow Foreign Secretary



Gaddafi. Shayler gave details to Home Secretary Jack Straw.

Francis Maude said last night: "There are two simple questions for Robin Cook: 'What was he told?' and 'Did he mislead the public?'"

In his letter to Straw, Shayler claims he was approached by an MI6 officer, codenamed PT16, in late summer 1996 to discuss a case he could not talk about over the telephone. At the time,

Shayler was working on the Libya desk at MI6. According to the officer, a senior member of Libyan intelligence had walked into the British Embassy in Tunis and asked for money to help fund a coup by Islamic extremists. In return, the source said he would hand over the suspects in the Lockerbie bombing when Colonel Gaddafi had been toppled.

Shayler claims he attended several high-level meetings between MI6 and MI6 throughout the autumn of 1997 at which the plot was discussed openly.

In early 1998 Shayler says he saw reports 'quoting Moroccan and Egyptian intelligence sources saying there had been an assassination attempt at Sirte, in northern Libya. This had failed because the plotters had learned the wrong car in a presidential cavalcade. In the

shootout that followed, security staff and civilians were killed and wounded. According to Shayler, PT16, who worked until recently at a British embassy in southern Europe, later claimed credit for the assassination attempt.

An intelligence document, known as a CX report, published on the internet two weeks ago, confirmed that Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) officers were told about the Islamic militants' plot by a Libyan source - codenamed Tunworth - at least two months before it happened and asked for help in carrying it out. The Parliamentary Intelligence Committee has so far refused to accept any evidence submitted by Shayler.

Shayler first made his allegations about the Gaddafi plot in August 1997 in the *Maid on Sunday*. He later fled to Amsterdam and Paris, where he was arrested in August 1998.

Robin Cook was first questioned about the plot on *BBC's Breakfast with Peter* programme. He said that it would have no interest in such an escapade.

In a crucial statement I said there was 'no SIS proposal to do it and I'm fair clear there has never been any SIS involvement'.

In the past month, Shayler has increased the intensity of his campaign for an amnesty to allow him to return to Britain. Shayler is also poised to release more details about MI6 reports into the bombing of the Israeli Embassy in 1996. He has always claimed that officers received early warning of the attack, but that a crucial memo was not passed on and was later found hidden in a cupboard. It is thought that Shayler is not willing to name the woman responsible for the error.

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Francis
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Defiant spy in plot to

by Martin Bright

Home Affairs Correspondent

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Shayler took the unprecedented step of naming the agents in an attempt to force the Government to launch a full inquiry into the affair. In a sign of his increasing anger with government efforts to stifle his revelations about the security services, which he claims are increasingly out of control, he is also calling for an investigation into Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's assertions in 1997 that his allegations were "pure fantasy".

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