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Foreword

The *Encyclopedia of Terrorism* is a very important addition to our understanding of this complicated subject.

What is terrorism? Why does it exist in the world, and why do so many act out this hatred? These are critical questions that this outstanding work by Dr. Harvey Kushner and Sage Reference helps us answer.

President Ronald Reagan once observed that “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.” The FBI defined terrorism as “the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a Government, the civilian population, or any segment there of, in furtherance of political or social objectives.”

Osama bin Laden and his leadership council claim that their acts of terrorism are on behalf of the Islamic world against the West and specifically against the United States. In bin Laden’s mind, the bombings of the United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were attacks on the ultimate evil, the United States. But of the 252 people killed, 225 were Muslims, and only 12 were citizens of the United States. The deaths of 225 Muslims were not important to bin Laden. Fanatical religious terrorists such as bin Laden and his followers have no regard for public opinion, and the killing of large numbers of innocent people, including women and children, does not weigh on their conscience. They have thousands of supporters, some in the United States, who assist outright or applaud from the sidelines.

History hopefully will record 2001 as a turning point in the international fight against terrorism. September 11, 2001 was the bloodiest day in America since the Civil War. The heroic responders from the New York

City Fire Department, the Port Authority Police Department, and the New York City Police Department will never be forgotten, nor will the victims at the Pentagon or those brave patriots who crashed in a Pennsylvania field.

It’s not that these issues were not known; to the contrary, thousands of dedicated patriots worked day and night to protect this country from this threat. It was a combination of the great big heart of our policies, our traditional short memory, a general feeling that “it won’t happen here,” and, the vast silent majority in the United States who did not participate in shaping public policy. I believe the greatest threat to civil liberties and our freedom is our “inability to act” when action is necessary—waiting until events get out of hand or heavy loss of life pushes us into action!

Dr. Kushner has produced an authoritative and easy-to-use resource. It will be a handy reference for students, the media, law enforcement, the intelligence community, and decision makers at the federal, state and local levels, as well as for the public in general, who I pray daily will play a larger role in shaping public policy that contributes to the first responsibility of government—the protection of our country, our way of life, and our children’s futures.

—James K. Kallstrom

Director of the New York State
Office of Public Security

Former Assistant Director of the
New York Office of the FBI

A

ABBAS, MUHAMMAD **“ABU” (1948–)**

aka Muhammad Zaidan

Muhammad “Abu” Abbas is the leader of the Palestine Liberation Front–Abu Abbas Faction (PLF), a Marxist militant group perhaps best known for its hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* cruise ship in 1985. Abbas was a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) executive committee for many years, remaining loyal to Yasir Arafat during the 1980s when many other militant Palestinian leaders split with the PLO.

Abbas was born in 1948 in Haifa, in what is now Israel. He has often told interviewers that he was just 13 days old when his family fled to a refugee camp in Lebanon. He reportedly joined the PLO’s army in 1964, and fought with the Vietcong against U.S. forces in Vietnam.

Abbas joined Ahmed Jibril’s Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command (PFLP–GC) in the late 1960s. In 1977, he became alienated by the pro-Syrian leanings of the PFLP–GC and left to form the PLF. As a leader of the PLF, Abbas plotted several unorthodox attacks on Israel. In 1981, PLF members attempted to invade Israel by flying over the Lebanese border in hang gliders and a hot air balloon; both attempts were foiled by the Israeli military.

Abbas was deputy secretary of the PLF when the group split into three factions: pro-Arafat and his Palestine Liberation Organization, pro-Syrian, and pro-Libyan. Abbas led the pro-PLO faction and remained loyal to Arafat during the 1980s when

many others began to defect from the PLO leader’s control.

Abbas became a member of the PLO executive committee in 1984, and his close association with Arafat and the PLO soon came under international scrutiny. Four PLF members hijacked the *Achille Lauro* on October 7, 1985, off Port Said, Egypt, as it sailed toward Israel. Abbas’s men demanded the release of 50 Palestinians held in Israel and threatened to blow up the ship. They held hundreds of passengers hostage for two days. During the ordeal, the hijackers shot and killed an elderly Jewish man in a wheelchair named Leon Klinghoffer and threw his body overboard.

While the *Achille Lauro* was in the hands of the hijackers, Abbas negotiated with Egyptian officials and secured safe passage to Tunisia for himself, the hijackers, and another PLF official in return for the hostages’ release. An EgyptAir plane carrying the PLF members took off for Tunisia, but U.S. Air Force fighter jets forced the plane to land in Sicily, where Italian forces arrested three of the hijackers. Abbas and other PLF members, however, fled to the former Yugoslavia with the help of Italian authorities, provoking protests by the U.S. government.

Abbas has repeatedly claimed that the hijacking was a mistake and that he had planned for his men to travel undercover on the *Achille Lauro* until it docked at Ashdod, Israel. The PLF subsequently moved its base of operations to Iraq.

Abbas has never served time in jail, although an Italian court tried him in absentia for his leadership role in the *Achille Lauro* hijacking and sentenced him to life in prison. The U.S. Department of Justice dropped its international warrant for Abbas’s arrest

2 Abdullah, Abdullah Ahmed (1963–)

after the Italian conviction, saying that there was not enough evidence to try him in a U.S. court.

Abbas left the PLO in 1991, after a foiled PLF raid onto an Israeli beach created a diplomatic crisis between the PLO and Washington. He did support the Oslo Accords in 1993 and publicly supported the peace process in 1996. He has announced that the PLF now follows a political path.

In 1998, Israeli officials allowed Abbas to travel through Israel to the Gaza Strip for a Palestinian National Council meeting. At the meeting, he voted to revoke the parts of the PLO's charter that call for Israel's destruction and soon returned to establish himself and the PLF in Gaza City. He reportedly now travels regularly between Gaza and his old base in Baghdad.

The U.S. Department of State continues to consider the PLF a terrorist group, and it included the organization in its most recent report on global terrorism. In November 2001, Israeli forces arrested at least 15 PLF members and accused them of plotting bombing attacks.

See also *ACHILLE LAURO* HIJACKING; PALESTINE LIBERATION FRONT—ABU ABAS FACTION; PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION; POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE—GENERAL COMMAND

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ABDULLAH, ABDULLAH AHMED (1963–)

aka Abu Mohamed al-Masri, Saleh, Abu Mariam

Born in Egypt, Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah is an alleged Al Qaeda conspirator said to be a top lieutenant and adviser to Osama bin Laden. He

was indicted by the United States for his role in the August 7, 1998, bombings of U.S. embassies in the African countries of Kenya and Tanzania. The FBI lists him as one of 22 "most wanted terrorists" for his role in those attacks.

According to the indictment, Abdullah is a member of Al Qaeda's tightest circle and sits on bin Laden's consultation council, or *majlis al shura*. Al Qaeda, an Arabic word meaning "The Base," is a violent international network bent on driving the United States from Saudi Arabia or other Islamic countries. The group carried out the devastating September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon near Washington, D.C. The group is known for establishing cells worldwide in areas where attacks are carried out, and often serves as an umbrella group for other militant organizations.

In the embassy bombings case, the U.S. indictment charged that prior to collaborating on the bombings, Abdullah was involved in other anti-U.S. activities in Africa. He and other Al Qaeda members allegedly provided military assistance and training to tribes opposed to U.N. and U.S. presence in Somalia during that country's civil unrest in 1993.

He later became involved in the Kenyan Al Qaeda operations. According to the indictment, Abdullah spied on the Kenyan embassy with coconspirators three days before the bombings. Having given the order for all Al Qaeda members to leave Kenya by August 6, Abdullah fled the country for Karachi, Pakistan.

On August 7, a bomb-laden pickup truck left the Nairobi villa rented by Al Qaeda operatives and drove to the U.S. embassy. In a synchronized attack 400 miles away, a truck bomb also approached the U.S. embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The bombs exploded just minutes apart, killing a combined total of 224.

According to the indictment, Abdullah had also arranged for a fake passport for accused Kenyan embassy bomber Mohamed Sadeek Odeh. That document enabled Odeh to travel with other Al Qaeda members to Afghanistan to meet with bin Laden.

In the fall of 1998, the United States asserted that Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda operatives were responsible for the embassy bombings. As retaliation, President Clinton ordered air attacks on Al Qaeda training grounds in Afghanistan and a pharmaceutical plant in the center of Khartoum, Sudan.

Three suspects in the bombing case pleaded guilty and cooperated with the prosecution. Their testimony was used in the 2001 trial that resulted in the conviction of four other men with ties to bin Laden. The four were sentenced to life in prison without parole. According to the FBI, Abdullah remains a fugitive. The U.S. State Department is offering a reward of up to \$25 million for information leading to his arrest or conviction.

See also AL QAEDA; OSAMA BIN LADEN; EAST AFRICAN EMBASSY BOMBINGS

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ABU NIDAL ORGANIZATION

aka Arab Revolutionary Brigade; Black June; Black September; Fatah Revolutionary Council

The Palestinian terrorist group Abu Nidal Organization (ANO) was the best-organized, best-funded, and most active terrorist network of the late 1970s and 1980s.

Sabri al-Banna, better known by his nom de guerre Abu Nidal (meaning "Father of Struggle"), founded the ANO in 1974. Previously a high-ranking member of Yasir Arafat's Fatah, a part of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), al-Banna broke with that group in 1974 over what he perceived to be its abandonment of armed struggle for Palestinian liberation in favor of political settlement. Both al-Banna and the ANO have been influenced by the ideology of the Ba'th party, which called for the unification of the Arab peoples into a single state. The ANO saw the elimination of Israel as a necessary precursor to Arab unity and hoped that fighting a common enemy (the

Israelis) would help to forge such unity. The ANO reviled Arafat and other pro-Western Arab leaders who, at the time, were willing to support the continued existence of Israel in exchange for an independent Palestine. Accordingly, the ANO has targeted moderate Arabs as frequently as it has Israelis.

While working as a recruiter for Al Fatah, al-Banna was based in Baghdad, Iraq, a Ba'th stronghold run by the dictator Saddam Hussein. Following al-Banna's 1974 defection, Hussein helped him to organize the ANO and provided him with funds in exchange for the use of the ANO's services, primarily against Syrian targets. (The Syrian division of the Ba'th had been feuding with the Iraqi Ba'th for years.)

The ANO as created by al-Banna would emerge as one of the most extensive and effective terrorist networks of the 1980s. Front organizations for the ANO were established in almost every Arab nation to attract recruits; these recruits were then sent to training camps in the ANO's host country (at various times Iraq, Syria, and Libya). Once proficient in the necessary terrorist skills—weapons training, explosives, intelligence, and covert operations—members joined a small four- or five-person cell and awaited instructions. The ANO was estimated to have about 500 members at its peak, carrying out operations in more than 20 countries across Europe and the Middle East.

The ANO attacked the Syrian embassies in Rome, Italy, and Islamabad, Pakistan, and assassinated PLO representatives in London, Paris, Kuwait, and Brussels. Its most significant action, however, was a June 1982 assassination attempt on the Israeli ambassador to England, Shlomo Argov, in London. This attack precipitated the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, where the PLO had its headquarters, and was a serious blow to that organization. A striking feature of the ANO was its versatility and ability to adapt its tactics to various situations. ANO attacks have taken the form of car bombings, kidnappings, hijackings, suicide bombings, and assassinations.

In 1983, Hussein expelled al-Banna and the ANO, in the hope of acquiring Western support for his war with Iran (1980–1988). Al-Banna resettled the ANO in Syria; in so doing, he displayed his willingness to abandon former enmity when it was to his advantage, a trait that has led some observers to characterize the ANO as merely a mercenary organization. The Syrians never fully trusted al-Banna, however, and

4 Abu Sayyaf Group

less than two years later, he moved the organization to Libya. This period, the mid-1980s, was the ANO's most active. The ANO carried out a campaign against Jordan, assassinating several Jordanian ambassadors. The ANO also attacked the counters of the Israeli airline El Al at the Rome and Vienna airports on December 27, 1985, killing 17 people and wounding more than 100. On September 6, 1986, the ANO massacred 22 worshippers at a synagogue in Istanbul, Turkey; on that same day ANO terrorists hijacked Pan Am Flight 73 in Karachi, Pakistan, eventually massacring 22 people when negotiations failed.

During this period, the ANO began to recruit more actively. Al-Banna, renowned for his paranoia, began to worry that his underlings might be plotting to overthrow him. In 1989, two of his top deputies accused him of massacring 150 of his own men in an effort to forestall a coup. This internal dissention was magnified by the efforts of the Jordanian government to counter terrorism; some sources suggest that the Jordanian security forces threatened to kill members of al-Banna's family if he did not stop his campaign. These threats seriously affected the ANO's ability to carry out attacks. After a July 1988 attack in Athens, Greece, in which nine people were killed, the only major attack attributed to the ANO has been the 1991 assassination of Abu Iyad, a former colleague of al-Banna and a high-ranking figure within the PLO.

During the 1990s, state support for the ANO—which was the organization's major source of funds—declined rapidly in response to that decade's apparent progress in bringing peace to the Middle East. By the end of the 1990s, al-Banna was forced to leave Libya. In 1999, he was reported to be in Cairo, Egypt, receiving medical treatment. In the latest twist in the ANO's convoluted history, at the time of this writing he is believed to have left Cairo and returned to Iraq at the invitation of Saddam Hussein. Given the ANO's inactivity over the past decade, and al-Banna's declining health, the organization may be finished as an active terrorist group. However, it is as yet unknown whether al-Banna's return to the land that gave his group the ANO birth will spark a resurgence. In August 2002, al-Banna was found dead of multiple gunshot wounds in an apartment in Baghdad.

See also AL 'ASIFA; HIJACKING; SADDAM HUSSEIN; PAN AM FLIGHT 73 HIJACKING

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ABU SAYYAF GROUP

The Abu Sayyaf Group is a Muslim terrorist organization based on Basilan Island, one of the southern islands in the Philippine archipelago. Since the mid-1990s, the group, whose origins are somewhat obscure, has carried out terrorist attacks in the Philippines, including a series of high-profile kidnappings in 2000 and 2001.

For centuries, the southern Philippines have had a substantial Muslim population. Sixteenth-century Spanish colonizers spread Christianity to the northern islands, treating the Muslims as a despised minority; the area has seen periodic violence ever since. Its people are among the poorest in the country. In the early 1970s, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) began a war of secession against the Philippine government. Although the fortunes of the MNLF and its splinter group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), have risen and fallen over the past 30 years, violence and lawlessness have been a constant in the southern islands. Defections, desertions, and ideological disputes have resulted in many armed bands roaming the islands.

Abu Sayyaf began as one such band of former guerrillas, led by Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalania, a charismatic former Islamic scholar who had fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Abu Sayyaf means "Bearer of the Sword." The group first came to light about 1994; at that time, it was thought to be a small splinter faction of the MILF. Most observers now consider it to be an entirely independent group. Early in its existence Abu Sayyaf established connections with international Muslim terrorist organizations, including Al Qaeda, and members may have received training and support from these groups.

Abu Sayyaf professes a desire for an independent Muslim state for the Philippines' Muslim population, to be governed under *shari'a* law. In practice, however, the group's attacks and particularly its kidnappings seem to have been motivated more by potential profit than by ideological or military significance; the Philippine government has long considered them to be mere bandits. In the mid-1990s, Abu Sayyaf's strength was estimated at 500 members. Ransom money received from kidnappings has since increased that number, with some commentators believing the group to have as many as 4,000 members. Its stronghold is Basilan Island, though it operates on other Muslim-populated islands as well.

Starting in the late 1990s, Abu Sayyaf increased its numbers of kidnappings in Basilan and elsewhere. At first it targeted wealthy Filipino businessmen, usually releasing the captives after ransom had been paid, but sometimes killing them regardless. In March 2000, the group gained international attention after raiding a local school, taking 27 hostages, most of them children. On April 23, the Army launched a dangerous raid against the Abu Sayyaf compound housing the hostages. Four terrorists were killed; 15 hostages were freed—10 of them seriously wounded. Most of the terrorists escaped into the jungle, taking 5 hostages with them.

Later that day, a different faction of Abu Sayyaf struck again, this time abducting victims from a resort on the nearby island of Sipidan, which is part of Malaysia. The second group took 23 hostages, 19 of them Malaysian and Filipino hotel staff but also several foreign tourists. Some of the journalists covering the kidnappings were also abducted; the hostages eventually included French, German, Finnish, Lebanese, U.S., and South African nationals. The international spotlight was now focused on the Philippine government, which felt compelled to act. Concerned for the safety of their citizens, the French, German, and South African governments prevailed upon the Filipinos to negotiate with the second group of hostage takers rather than launch another risky raid. A Libyan diplomat offered to act as a go-between and negotiations began. After months of negotiations, a ransom of undisclosed amount was paid to Abu Sayyaf and a dozen of the hostages were released. The kidnappers refused to part with the remainder, and President Estrada launched a massive military strike against the group in September 2000. The risky move secured their release. In May 2001, another

kidnapping was similarly resolved through military action.

Following the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, and taking into consideration Abu Sayyaf's connections to the Al Qaeda terrorist network, in January 2002 the U.S. government acceded to the request of Philippine president Gloria Arroyo and pledged \$100 million in military aid for the elimination of Abu Sayyaf. The United States sent 660 U.S. Army Special Forces troops to act as military advisors, training the Philippine Army in counter-terrorism tactics. The aid package caused considerable controversy in the Philippines but seems to have the support of the public, especially as President Arroyo pledged that the Special Forces troops will remain only for a short time. The success of the operation was thrown into question, however, when some surviving members kidnapped six Jehovah's witnesses on the island of Jolo and killed at least two of the victims.

See also ALEX BONCAYAO BRIGADE; NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY

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ACHILLE LAURO HIJACKING

On October 7, 1985, four Palestinian militants seized the Italian cruise liner *Achille Lauro* off Port Said, Egypt. The hijackers, under the command of Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) leader Abu Abbas, held the more than 400 people aboard hostage for two days. The hijackers shot New Yorker Leon Klinghoffer, an elderly, wheelchair-bound, Jewish passenger, and

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