

# **Libya Under Qadhafi: A Pattern of Aggression**

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## **Libya Under Qadhafi: A Pattern of Aggression**

### **Character of Libyan Policy**

Mu'ammar Qadhafi seized power in a military coup in 1969. Since then he has forcibly sought to remake Libyan society according to his own revolutionary precepts. Qadhafi's ambitions are not confined within Libya's borders, however. He fancies himself a leader and agent of historic forces that will reorder Third World politics to his taste. His vision provides both a motive and a rationale for providing military and financial aid to radical regimes, and for undermining moderate governments by supporting—or manufacturing—subversive groups and abetting terrorists. Qadhafi's aggressive policies increasingly have focused on undermining US and other Western interests in the Third World as he sees these as the main barrier to his radical and expansionist goals. Qadhafi's commitment of political, economic, and military resources in support of anti-Western activities worldwide may be surpassed only by the Soviet Union, its East European allies, and possibly North Korea or Cuba. He is particularly hostile to Israel and the United States. His tactics include a mixture of threats and material support for terrorism, offers of cooperation, economic incentives and intimidation, and outright military aggression.

### **Libyan Involvement in Terrorism**

Qadhafi has used terrorism as one of the primary instruments of his foreign policy and supports radical groups that use terrorist tactics. Tripoli operates numerous training camps for foreign dissident groups that provide instruction in the use of explosive devices, hijacking, assassination, and various commando and guerrilla techniques. Libya also abuses diplomatic privilege by storing arms and explosives at its diplomatic establishments, as occurred during the shootout at its embassy in London in April 1984.

The main targets of Libyan terrorist activities have been expatriate Libyan dissidents and leading officials of moderate Arab and African governments. In almost all cases, the assassins use handguns to kill their victims, often provided by the Libyan diplomatic

establishment in their country. Qadhafi generally uses Libyans for antiexile operations; for other types of attacks he tends to employ surrogates or mercenaries.

The Libyan Government in 1980 began a concerted effort to assassinate anti-Qadhafi exiles. By the time the first phase ended in 1981, 11 Libyan dissidents living abroad had been murdered. Libya in 1985 sponsored five attacks against exiled Libyan dissidents. Targets of these attacks lived in Greece, West Germany, Cyprus, Italy, and Austria.

Qadhafi has at least twice tried to murder Libyan exiles in Egypt only to have his agents intercepted by Egyptian security. In the more recent attempt, a four-man Libyan team was arrested in November during an attempted attack against a gathering of exiles near Cairo.

Libya also has plotted antiexile attacks in the United States. A Libyan exile in Colorado was shot and wounded by a Libyan-hired assassin in 1981. In May 1984, the FBI arrested two Libyans near Philadelphia for attempting to buy silenced handguns—the usual Libyan assassination weapon. A year later in May 1985, a Libyan diplomat at the United Nations was declared persona non grata and a ring of nonofficial Libyans was broken up in connection with a plot to kill Libyan dissidents in four states.

Qadhafi also targets moderate Arab governments for their refusal to continue the military struggle against Israel and for their links to the West. There is evidence of Libyan-backed assassination plots against such Arab leaders as President Mubarak of Egypt and former President Nimeiri of Sudan. For example, those arrested after last November's attempted attack on Libyan exiles in Egypt stated that Qadhafi's target list included President Mubarak. Jordan's King Hussein and Iraq's Saddam Husayn are almost certainly

on Qadhafi's list because of restored ties to Cairo and Washington, respectively.

Qadhafi also has been implicated in plots to assassinate other moderate heads of state. In September 1984 the Chadian Government uncovered a Libyan-sponsored plot in which a briefcase bomb was to explode during a cabinet meeting chaired by Chadian President Habre. More recently, Zairian officials thwarted a Libyan-sponsored plot against President Mobutu in September 1985.

#### **Libyan Links to Middle East Radicals**

Longstanding Libyan support for radical Palestinian groups is growing. Qadhafi has provided safehaven, money, and arms to these groups—including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command, the Fatah dissidents, and the notorious Abu Nidal Group. Training for Palestinians and other radicals frequently takes place at several locations in Libya. These anti-Arafat Palestinians are widely engaged in terrorist activities and focus their terrorist activity on Israel and the occupied territories. More recently, however, Libya's support has broadened to include logistic support for terrorist operations. For example, Libya provided passports to the Abu Nidal members responsible for the attack on the El Al counter in Vienna. The Abu Nidal Group is particularly appealing to Qadhafi because of its track record of successful terrorist operations. Abu Nidal's targeting of moderate Palestinians and moderate Arab leaders is consistent with Libya's antipathy toward participants in the peace process. According to Libyan press reports, Abu Nidal met with Qadhafi in Libya at least twice in 1985. Abu Nidal also gave an interview in Tripoli to a German publication last year and met with Qadhafi's chief lieutenant, Abd al-Salam Jallud. In addition, Libya has provided sanctuary, training assistance, and financial support to the Abu Nidal organization, and there are reliable press and other reports that its headquarters have been moved to Libya. The evidence points to Libya's having been involved in the bloody hijacking of Egyptair 648 (see section on Abu Nidal).

Libya is trying to improve ties to other regional terrorist groups. Qadhafi would also like closer links to Tehran's terrorist effort. He announced a "strategic alliance" with Iran last summer, which he hopes to

use as a foundation for joint operational planning for terrorist attacks against various regional foes. He also supports Egyptian and Tunisian dissidents.

Libya also provided refuge for notorious international terrorist Carlos, who headed a network of terrorists for hire. His group was responsible for numerous vicious attacks including the hostage-taking of OPEC oil ministers in Vienna in 1975.

#### **Libyan Terrorism Against the United States**

During the past 18 months, Qadhafi has made several public references to expanding his terrorism campaign to cover US targets. In a June 1984 speech, for example, he told his Libyan audience that "we are capable of exporting terrorism to the heart of America." During a speech last September observing the 16th anniversary of his takeover, Qadhafi remarked that "we have the right to fight America, and we have the right to export terrorism to them . . ." Qadhafi recently threatened in a press conference on 2 January to "pursue US citizens in their country and streets" if the United States takes action in response to Libya's alleged involvement in the Rome and Vienna terrorist attacks.

There have been several instances over the years of Libyan-sponsored attacks against US interests. These examples include the sacking of our Embassy in Tripoli in 1979 and the discovery by Sudanese authorities of a Libyan plot to blow up the American Embassy Club in Khartoum by planting explosives in stereo speakers. US personnel also have been on Qadhafi's target list, as indicated by the plan in 1977 to assassinate our Ambassador in Cairo.

#### **Radicalism in the Arab World**

Qadhafi's foremost ambition is to dominate and unite the Arab world. He frequently compares himself to Garibaldi or Bismarck and has justified his use of violence and terrorism against moderate Arab regimes as necessary to achieve Arab unity.

*Egypt*, because of its peace treaty with Israel, is a special target. Libyan agents have been active in Egypt since the 1970s, and Qadhafi has offered

support to various opponents of the Egyptian Government. In October 1981, immediately after President Sadat was assassinated, Qadhafi called on Egyptians to overthrow their government; within a week at Cairo International Airport, two bombs exploded that had been concealed in luggage unloaded from a flight originating in Tripoli.

More recently, Qadhafi has sought to embarrass the government of President Mubarak and undermine the Egyptian economy. A Libyan ship captained by a senior Libyan naval commando laid mines in the Red Sea and Gulf of Suez that damaged 18 merchant ships in July and August 1984. In May 1985 the Egyptians thwarted a plot by radical Palestinians backed by Libya to destroy the US Embassy in Cairo with a truck bomb. Last summer Qadhafi expelled over 10,000 Egyptian workers in Libya—confiscating their savings and most of their belongings—in what was in part an effort to place a greater burden on the strained Egyptian economy. Also during 1985, Cairo captured several teams of Libyan-supported Egyptian dissidents who reported that their plan was to destabilize the Mubarak government through sabotage and inciting civil unrest.

*Sudan* also is a priority target. Qadhafi has long offered training and support to Sudanese dissidents and sponsored acts of sabotage against the government of former President Nimeiri. He was a major source of arms and money for southern Sudanese rebels that began a guerrilla war against the central government two years ago. In February 1983 the Sudanese, with Egyptian assistance, thwarted a Libyan-sponsored coup attempt, and in March 1984 a Libyan TU-22 bombed Omdurman, Sudan, in a failed attempt to destroy a radio station there that broadcast condemnations of Qadhafi's policies by Libyan oppositionists.

Since Nimeiri's fall from power, Qadhafi has exploited the resumption of diplomatic ties to Sudan to build a network for subversion inimical to Sudan's efforts to establish a parliamentary democracy. A number of known Libyan terrorists have been assigned to the Libyan People's Bureau (Embassy) or airline office in Khartoum. Qadhafi also has provided arms, funding, training, and probably direction to the Sudanese

Revolutionary Committees, a small group in Sudan dedicated to establishing a government on the Libyan model in Sudan. In May, a planeload of these dissidents arrived in Khartoum armed with assault rifles.

Qadhafi also is working to expand his influence in the countries of the *Arab Maghreb*. Qadhafi refuses to negotiate with *Algeria* to determine the correct location of the Libyan-Algerian border. Perhaps angered over President Bendjedid's moderation, Qadhafi reportedly provides money to Algerian dissidents such as Ahmed Ben Bella.

In *Tunisia*, Qadhafi has long sought to bring down the pro-Western government of Habib Bourguiba. In 1980, Libyan-supported guerrillas attacked the southern Tunisian mining town of Gafsa; when France offered its support to Tunis, Libyan mobs burned both the French and Tunisian Embassies while security forces stood idly by. Following bread riots in Tunisia in January 1984, saboteurs originating in Libya dynamited a pipeline near the Libyan-Tunisian border. In an effort to exacerbate social tensions this past year, Qadhafi expelled over 30,000 Tunisian workers and confiscated their property. In September, when Tunisian newspapers attacked Qadhafi for the expulsions, a Libyan diplomat attempted to mail letter bombs to the critical journalists. Several exploded, wounding two postal workers and causing Tunis to sever diplomatic relations.

Libya is staunchly opposed to the *Middle East* peace process, and Qadhafi is doing all he can to subvert it. In *Lebanon*, Libyan arms and money have flowed to different militias and Palestinian groups actively opposed to the government of President Gemayel. Qadhafi has been especially eager to undermine the influence of *PLO* Chairman Yasir Arafat because Qadhafi perceives him as too willing to consider a negotiated settlement with Israel. As a result, Qadhafi has thrown his support to *radical Palestinian groups*—including the Fatah Revolutionary Council led by Abu Nidal—that advocate continued war against Israel. Since 1981 Qadhafi has shipped these groups items as prosaic as uniforms and as powerful

as tanks and BM-21 multiple rocket launchers. In 1984, Libyan troops participated in the Syrian-backed assault on Arafat's forces in northern Lebanon.

The *Persian Gulf* also is an arena for Libyan meddling. Qadhafi has allied himself with *Iran* in its war against *Iraq* and has provided Tehran with T-55 tanks, antitank and anti-aircraft artillery, ammunition, and even Scud rockets. In addition, Libya provides arms and money to Kurdish separatists in northern Iraq and to the antigovernment group the "Union of Iraqi Democrats." In 1984 and 1985, Libyan agents attempted to disrupt the Islamic pilgrimage ceremonies in *Saudi Arabia*; in 1984 entire plane loads of Libyan "pilgrims" were discovered to be carrying arms. Libya continues to enjoy good relations with and has provided support to the National Democratic Front that operates out of Marxist South Yemen against the government of President Salih in *North Yemen*. Although Libya restored diplomatic relations with *Somalia* last May, Qadhafi has not severed his relationship with Somali opposition groups he has long supported.

#### **Involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Tripoli views black Africa as a principal arena for forging a group of anti-Western radical states that will strengthen Libyan influence in international forums and confer upon Qadhafi status as a world leader. Qadhafi's aggressiveness has been strengthened by the propensity of the international community to ignore his often blatant disregard for the sovereignty of small African nations.

*Chad*, of course, is the most egregious example. In 1973 Qadhafi forcibly annexed the northern portion of Chad known as the Aozou Strip. Throughout the 1970s, Libya supported various tribal and guerrilla groups in Chad in a bid to install a pliable regime in N'Djamena. Having failed to achieve this indirectly, in October 1980 the Libyan army entered Chad and attempted to impose a union between the two countries. The Libyan occupation force withdrew in November 1981, but returned in 1983 when the pro-Libyan Chadian leader Goukouni Oueddei was ousted by current President Hissen Habre. Only intervention by French armed forces confined the Libyan occupation to the northern 40 percent of Chad.

French forces were withdrawn in the fall of 1984, but Qadhafi reneged on an agreement reached with President Mitterrand and continues to occupy northern Chad with an army of several thousand.

The drought-battered countries of the *Sahel* offer Qadhafi many opportunities for meddling. Qadhafi continues to provide arms and training to the nomadic Tuareg tribesmen in an effort to undermine the Governments of *Mali* and *Niger*.

Qadhafi also is determined to topple President Mobutu of *Zaire*. Qadhafi is motivated by hostility to Kinshasa's close ties to the West, its recognition of Israel, and its support for Chadian President Habre. Qadhafi also is aware of Zaire's role as a leading producer of cobalt and other strategic minerals. Tripoli provides training in sabotage and small arms to several different guerrilla groups including the National Front for the Liberation of the Congo and the Congolese National Movement. Libyan diplomatic facilities in countries bordering Zaire are centers of support for these groups.

#### **Meddling in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Qadhafi's determination to strike at US interests and to spread his philosophy of revolution has led to a more aggressive Libyan posture in Latin America. Although many governments and groups in this region are wary of Qadhafi, some are willing to accept his financial and military support.

Tripoli views *Nicaragua* as its base in Central America and accordingly seeks to strengthen the Sandinista dictatorship in Managua. In addition to several hundred million dollars in economic assistance, Qadhafi's support to the Sandinistas has included anti-aircraft guns, SA-7 surface-to-air missiles and launchers, and small arms. At least several dozen Libyan military personnel are in Nicaragua. Libyan support has enhanced the Sandinistas' ability to subvert neighboring states. In addition, Libya has provided some arms and money to insurgents in *Guatemala* and *El Salvador*, as well as the M-19 terrorist group in *Colombia*. During the past year Libya has provided training,

guidance, and funds to a key far-left terrorist group to enable it to expand armed action against the Government of *Chile*.

Libyan agents have been increasingly active among the Caribbean islands, especially since the summer of 1984. The loss of its People's Bureau in *Grenada* following the collapse of the Bishop government in 1983 forced Tripoli to attempt to establish its centers for subversion in other diplomatic posts in the region. Qadhafi also has used religion as a cover for intelligence activities in the area, sponsoring Islamic conferences in which the Libyan participants often are intelligence officers or operatives of the Libyan Revolutionary Committees. Leftist leaders from the *Dominican Republic, Dominica, Barbados, Antigua, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, the French Departments*, and elsewhere have also been invited to Libya for "seminars" and paramilitary training. Particularly worrisome is Libyan urging of leftist politicians to undertake violent action rather than pursue legal means to replace moderate governments in the region.

#### **South and Southeast Asia**

As elsewhere, Libyan diplomatic missions in this region provide the infrastructure for Libyan subversion, disbursing funds, and arranging for the training of leftists and other dissidents.

In *South Asia*, Libyan activities are focused on the Islamic states. No doubt reflecting his dependence on Russian arms, Qadhafi is one of the few Muslim leaders who does not criticize the Soviet invasion of *Afghanistan*. Although Libya maintains relations with *Pakistan*, it has also been involved with the "al-Zulfiqar" terrorist group. Qadhafi, in addition, has provided training and money to opponents of President Ershad of *Bangladesh*.

In *Southeast Asia*, Qadhafi concentrates on Muslim minorities. For some time, he has provided paramilitary training to the small Muslim insurgency in southern *Thailand*. In the *Philippines*, Libya continues to send assistance to the Muslim Moro separatists on Mindanao despite a 1976 agreement with Manila to cease such aid. *New Caledonia*, a French possession in the South Pacific, has no appreciable Muslim

population, but Libya has nevertheless provided military training and some funding to the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front, the group responsible for most of the proindependence violence on the island. Libyan intelligence operatives are known to be active on other islands in *Oceania*.

#### **The Erosion of International Norms**

Qadhafi's subversion is not confined to those countries that are the direct object of his ambitions. The international community as a whole suffers from Qadhafi's disrespect for international norms of behavior and accepted practice. Qadhafi has abused diplomatic privilege for terrorist purposes, reneged on international agreements, and blatantly used terrorist violence against political opponents. In addition, Qadhafi's support of terrorism, regardless of his direct operational involvement in a given terrorist act, helps legitimize terrorism as an acceptable political activity.





### Chronology of Libyan Support for Terrorism 1980-85

#### 1985

- |           |               |   |
|-----------|---------------|---|
| December  | Italy/Austria | Passports used by Abu Nidal terrorists in attack on El Al counter provided by Libya.  |
| November  | Malta         | Hijacking of Egyptair airliner by Abu Nidal supporters may have involved Libyan support.  |
|           | Egypt         | Four-man team of Libyan agents arrested shortly before attempting to attack gathering of Libyan exiles. Former Libyan Prime Minister Bakoush was the main target.   |
| October   | Greece        | Libyan merchant wounded in Athens by two gunmen; the victim had left Libya five years earlier.  |
| September | Tunisia       | Libyan diplomat smuggles about 100 letter bombs addressed to journalists into Tunisia. Several explode injuring two postal workers and causing Tunisia to sever diplomatic relations.   |
| May       | United States | A Libyan diplomat at the United Nations was declared persona non grata, and 16 nonofficial Libyans were subpoenaed to appear before a US grand jury in connection with a plot to kill dissidents in several different states.   |
| April     | West Germany  | Moroccan citizen resident in the FRG since 1960 killed by a Libyan, who was arrested at the scene.<br><br>Anti-Qadhafi Libyan student killed in Bonn by Libyan gunman who was arrested. The assassin also wounded two German passers-by, one seriously. The victim had been a target of the Libyan regime for at least two years. |
|           | Cyprus        | Libyan businessman assassinated in downtown Nicosia by an unidentified gunman. The victim was the director of an offshore holding company and was believed to be an opponent of the Libyan regime.  |
| March     | Italy         | Libyan jeweler murdered in his shop in Rome. A silencer-equipped pistol was left at the scene by the assassin.  |

February	Austria	Former Libyan Ambassador to Austria severely wounded by two shots fired from a car outside his home in Vienna. The victim had supported Qadhafi's seizure of power in 1969, but he quit his post in disgust at the regime in 1980.
<b>1984</b>		
November	Egypt	President Mubarak announces that four assassins sent to Egypt by Libya to kill former Libyan Prime Minister Bakoush had been arrested and forced to send fake pictures to the Libyan Embassy in Malta showing Bakoush apparently dead. Official Libyan press sources then claimed Bakoush had been executed by suicide squads sent abroad "to liquidate enemies of the revolution."
September	Italy	A Libyan exile was found gagged and strangled in a hotel in Rome. The victim had been the subject of Libyan requests for deportation to Libya.
	Chad	Chadians discover plot to assassinate President Habre with an attache case bomb. Evidence of the plot, including photographs of the bomb, was provided to the United Nations the following February when Chad lodged a complaint against Libya.
August	United Kingdom	One of six Libyans awaiting trial for bomb attacks in London in March 1983 found shot to death in a London apartment. The victim may have been silenced by the Libyan Government.
	Belgium	A bomb wrecks a car parked in front of the Zairian Embassy in Brussels.
July	Belgium	A bomb exploded in the Brussels office of Air Zaire.
	Red Sea	Libya mined the Red Sea, damaging 18 merchant ships of varying nationalities.
	Greece	Two Libyan students found murdered in their apartment in a crime reminiscent of Libyan killings of anti-Qadhafi students in 1980 and 1981. The two were beaten, strangled, and gagged before being shot twice in the back.
June	Greece	Anti-Qadhafi Libyan editor of an Arab newspaper in Athens killed by two men on a motorbike.
		A Libyan-born citizen known to distribute anti-Qadhafi literature at his store shot by a Libyan employee of Libyan Arab Airlines.
May	Libya	Jana, the official Libyan news agency, announces "the Libyan masses have decided to form suicide commandos to chase traitors and stray dogs wherever they are and liquidate them physically."

April	United Kingdom	A bomb hidden in an unclaimed suitcase probably unloaded from a Libyan airliner explodes at London's Heathrow Airport, injuring 25.
	Libya	A number of British subjects in Libya arrested on trumped-up charges as hostages in order to pressure British Government during siege of Libyan People's Bureau in London.
	United Kingdom	British policewoman killed and 11 anti-Qadhafi demonstrators wounded by gunfire from London Libyan People's Bureau. After a siege, British authorities found weapons and spent shell casings in the vacated embassy.
March	United Kingdom	Four bombs explode in London and Manchester near homes of Libyan exiles or at businesses frequented by them. Over 25 people injured. Three other bombs defused. Nine Libyan suspects arrested.
	Sudan	One Libyan TU-22 bomber drops bombs on Omdurman, Sudan, site of a radio transmitter used by anti-Qadhafi oppositionists.
February	Libya	Following annual Libyan General People's Congress, the Libyan Revolutionary Committees announce that all Libyan exiles must return to Libya or face "the death penalty."
		Libyan authorities take no action while a mob burned the Jordanian Embassy in Tripoli.
	Congo	Chadian dissidents ready to negotiate with Government of Chad threatened in Brazzaville, Congo.
<b>1983</b>		
August	Upper Volta	Libya gave material support to coup in Upper Volta.
July	Chad	Libya invaded Chad for the second time. Occupation continues into 1985.
June	West Germany	Eight Libyan students in West Germany, all members of an anti-Qadhafi group, complain Libyan agents are harassing and threatening them.
February	Libya	Libyan General People's Congress warns all Libyans in exile to return home or face the "anger of the Libyan people."
<b>1982</b>		
		No incidents known.

**1981**

November	Sudan	Several bombs explode near government installations in Khartoum.
October	Sudan	Planned assassination of visiting Chadian official, Hissein Habre, failed when those sent to conduct the operation surrendered.
	Egypt	Two bombs explode in luggage being unloaded from a plane coming from Libya via Malta.
August	Libya	Two Libyan SU-22s that fired at US Navy F-14s over Gulf of Sidra shot down.
July	United States	Anti-Qadhafi Libyan student killed in Ogden, Utah.
June	Sudan	Bomb explodes in front of Chadian Embassy in Khartoum.
February	Italy	Libyan gunmen open fire on passengers arriving at Rome's airport on a flight from Algiers. Prominent anti-Qadhafi exile was the target.

**1980**

November	United Kingdom	Anti-Qadhafi Libyan student brutally murdered in London.
		Two children of an anti-Qadhafi Libyan poisoned by eating peanuts containing thalium.
October	Chad	Libyan forces occupied Chad. Qadhafi attempted to force a Libyan-Chadian union.
	The Gambia	Libyan subversion in The Gambia caused break in relations. Senegalese troops intervene under a mutual defense treaty.
June	Italy	Anti-Qadhafi exile wounded in Rome.
		Libyan exile killed in Milan within hours after expiration of a deadline set by Qadhafi for all Libyan exiles to return home.
May	Italy	Libyan exile shot at in Rome. The arrested Libyan gunman says he was sent by Libya "to kill an enemy of the people."
	Greece	Libyan exile killed in Athens. His throat was slit.

	Italy	Libyan businessman found strangled to death in Rome.
	West Germany	Libyan exile gunned down in Bonn.
	Italy	Libyan exile killed in Rome by two gunshots to the head.
April	United Kingdom	Libyan lawyer shot and killed in London.
	Italy	Well-known Libyan businessman killed. The arrested assassin said he was an enemy of Colonel Qadhafi.
	United Kingdom	Two gunmen kill an anti-Qadhafi Libyan journalist.
February	Libya	Tunisian and French Embassies in Tripoli sacked and burned by a mob while Libyan authorities took no action.
<b>1979</b>		
December	Libya	An estimated 2,000 Libyans set fire to the US Embassy in Tripoli. The Libyan authorities did not respond to requests by the Embassy for protection.
November	West Germany	Two Libyans arrested with three suspected Palestinians for an unspecified terrorist operation.



## The Abu Nidal Group

### Introduction

The Abu Nidal Group is among the most dangerous of the Middle Eastern terrorist organizations. It is probably the best organized and most effective of the radical Palestinian terrorist groups, carefully planning its operations and keeping its information tightly compartmented.

The group has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to operate in any country it chooses. It has staged attacks in over 20 countries on three continents and operates throughout the Middle East.

Abu Nidal has conducted over 60 terrorist attacks during the last eight years—at least 30 of them since the beginning of 1984. Two-thirds of the group's nearly 20 attacks this year have taken place in Western Europe, as innocent bystanders increasingly have become casualties of the group's assaults:

- The simultaneous attacks on airline offices in Rome and Vienna on 27 December, which have the hallmarks of Abu Nidal, left more than a dozen dead, including five Americans.
- The Egyptair hijacking in late November ultimately cost the lives of 59 passengers.
- The group bombed the British Air office in Rome in September injuring 15 persons, many of them passers-by.
- Abu Nidal members threw grenades at Rome's Cafe de Paris in September, injuring 38 tourists—among them Americans, Germans, Britons, Italians, Argentines, and Brazilians.
- The group bombed two hotels in Athens, one in September that injured 19, mostly British tourists, and one in August that injured 13 Britons.
- In Spain, Abu Nidal attacks in July at the British Air office and the nearby Alia ticket office killed one and wounded 24 customers and employees.
- Also in July the group was probably responsible for the bombing of two restaurants in Kuwait, killing eight and injuring almost 90.
- In April, an Abu Nidal terrorist fired a rocket at a Jordanian airliner as it was taking off from Athens airport. The rocket hit the plane but did not explode. Hundreds of casualties might have resulted had the operation been successful.

The official name of the Abu Nidal organization is "Fatah—Revolutionary Council," which it usually employs when attacking Israeli targets. But it has employed a number of covernames for its operations. Originally the group operated under the name Black June; more recently, the group has used the name Arab Revolutionary Brigades when it staged attacks against Persian Gulf targets. It also acts as Black September when it attacks Jordanian and Palestinian targets and employs the name Revolutionary Organization of Socialist Moslems (ROSM) as its signature for attacks against British targets. It added Egyptian nomenclatures when it hijacked the Egyptair plane in November.

### Background

The group, which is headed by Sabri al-Banna (who uses the nom de guerre Abu Nidal), grew out of elements that broke away a decade ago from PLO Chairman Arafat's Fatah organization. The group is committed to the use of violence to destroy diplomatic efforts designed to reconcile Israel and the Arab states, especially those mounted earlier this year by King Hussein and Arafat's PLO. The Abu Nidal



Group also calls for the destruction of ruling "reactionary" regimes such as Jordan, Egypt, and the Persian Gulf states and is critical of what it sees as Arafat's and the PLO's moderation and lack of revolutionary base and zeal. Consequently, the group contends that both inter-Arab and intra-Palestinian terrorism are needed to force the all-embracing Arab revolution, which in turn would lead to the liberation of Palestine.

The group was formed in 1974 after Arafat instituted a ban on PLO involvement with international terrorism outside Israel and the occupied territories. Abu Nidal's radical views found favor at the time with the Iraqi regime, which helped him create the organization that Abu Nidal called Fatah—the Revolutionary Council to promote his claim that his organization, rather than the one led by Arafat, was the legitimate Fatah. He has similarly duplicated other Fatah organizational titles to suggest a parallel structure with the original.

Beginning in the early 1980s, Baghdad suppressed activities of the Abu Nidal Group out of Iraq. Elements of the group then moved to Damascus. Since early 1984, Libya began to provide increased support to the group, and Abu Nidal himself and many of the group's operations may have moved there within the last 12 months.

The group probably has several hundred members, although an accurate count is difficult. We believe the group has a number of cells throughout Western Europe and the Middle East and makes use of the large number of Palestinian students studying abroad, sometimes involving them in operations after only perfunctory training. These new recruits, for example, were involved in the five grenade attacks staged by the group in 1985.

#### **Current Operations and Trends**

Based on the style of Abu Nidal attacks, it is evident that the group is willing to cause indiscriminate casualties. Apart from assassinations of particular individuals, Abu Nidal operations through November 1985 resulted in nearly 70 deaths and 201 wounded among innocent bystanders—and the number could have been much higher if the Jordanian airliner

attack in Athens had been successful. In the previous year, 111 died in the crash of a Gulf Air jet on which an Abu Nidal bomb may have exploded.

The Abu Nidal Group has concentrated on attacking Jordanian interests since 1984. These attacks were provoked by the Jordanian agreement to host the PNC meeting in November 1984 and King Hussein's February accord with Arafat to restart the stalled Middle East peace process. Abu Nidal operatives are thought to have assassinated former West Bank mayor and Palestinian moderate Fahd Qawasmeh in December 1984 shortly after his election to the PLO Executive Council. The anti-Jordanian/PLO campaign has not abated. As long as Jordanian and PLO efforts toward Middle East peace negotiations continue, attacks against both Jordanian and Palestinian targets probably will also continue.

Aside from the attack on Alia offices in Madrid in July and the attempt to down a Jordanian airliner over Athens in April, other incidents involving Jordanian targets in 1985 have included:

- The 24 November assassination of a Palestinian in Amman.
- The murder of a Jordanian publisher in Athens in September.
- A plot to assassinate the Jordanian Ambassador to Greece in August.
- The murder of a Jordanian diplomat in Ankara on 24 July.
- A rocket attack on the Jordanian Embassy in Rome in April.

The group has also targeted British interests. ROSM claimed responsibility for the kidnaping in March 1985 of a British journalist in Lebanon and the assassination of British diplomats in India and Greece in 1984. The purpose of the attacks probably is to force the United Kingdom to release group members imprisoned for the attempted assassination of the Israeli Ambassador in London in June 1982.

Even before the recent attacks on the Vienna and Rome airports, Abu Nidal had begun to concentrate his field of operations in Western Europe. Although

his targets have been his usual enemies—for example, British, Israeli, moderate Arab—he has become very indiscriminate about injuring bystanders. The relatively relaxed controls in West European countries have been conducive to his operations there. The pattern of concentrating his efforts in Europe has coincided with the strengthening of his links to Libya. The likelihood of Libyan financing, safehaven, and logistic assistance should be very helpful to his future international terrorist operations.