

"An Outline of the Most Superior Fundamentals in the Art of Kidnapping Americans"

Strategic Insights, Volume III, Issue 2 (February 2004)

Translated by [Barak A. Salmoni](#)

Introduced by Barak A. Salmoni and Capt. Jeremy Waller, USAF

[Strategic Insights](#) is a monthly electronic journal produced by the [Center for Contemporary Conflict](#) at the [Naval Postgraduate School](#) in Monterey, California. The views expressed here are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of NPS, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

For a PDF version of this article, click [here](#).

Since the 1960s, hostage taking has been a standard part of the Middle Eastern non-state combatant's playbook. Place names such as Ma'alot and Entebbe bring to mind the near monopoly that Palestinian groups had over the hostage business in the years after 1967.^[1] Yet, as the PLO moved away from such operations, events in Mogadishu (1977),^[2] Iran (1979), Lebanon throughout (early-mid 1980s), and most recently the tragic kidnapping of Daniel Pearl and his murder in Pakistan (February 2002)^[3] have shown that hostage taking is a communicable concept. In particular, Islamic groups are increasingly abducting non-combatant citizens or political or military officials of opponent countries.

The document translated here, originally posted to the Jihadist website Al-Palsam,^[4] highlights the need to remain vigilant of this threat even during the the current war against terrorism. Along with scores of such web sites launched as quickly as interdicted by security services, it serves as a source of information, inspiration, and dialogue among a global community of technology-literate anonymous viewers and contributors advocating, though probably rarely undertaking, violent action against the West and Israel . They contain articles, essays, and increasingly complex tactical field manuals—how-to essays on bomb making or hostage taking—and justify violence through varying degrees of reference to Islam or Middle Eastern nationalist ideologies. As such, regardless of the affiliation of the web site or the individual author, most of the content of such sites are broadly supportive of al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and Palestinian Islamist nationalism.

The document before us raises two key questions. First, it is curious that a site perceiving itself as embodying Islam sponsors kidnapping, since hostage taking, hijacking, and kidnapping are not supported in Islamic law.^[5] Muslim scholars condemning kidnapping find easy scriptural support in the Qur'anic verse "if anyone killed a person, unless it was for murder or spreading mischief on earth, it would be as if he killed all of mankind. And if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he had saved the lives of all mankind" (5:32). During the Spring 2001 Philippine hostage crisis (the Abu Sayyaf operation referred to below), the rector of Al-Azhar University, Sunni Islam's intellectual epicenter, issued a statement saying that "such acts of violence have nothing to do with Islam...The Grand Imam asks people to use their wisdom and understand that it is better just to make individuals accountable for their own actions."^[6] Likewise, clerics have excoriated kidnapping on many levels. Most basically, the fact that hostage taking usually targets innocent, uninvolved people renders it "a great sin and cowardice, and [it] is entirely forbidden in Islam as you [sic] tend to take revenge from persons for your grievances other than from the concerned person." In this context it is also forbidden to bully, harass, or put stumbling blocks in front of travelers (just as killing an innocent traveler is inexcusable), while "it is exclusively forbidden in Islam to deceive anyone for any purpose whatsoever. The present day hijacking is completely an act of deceit." Finally, Muslim clerics in particular emphasize that only an Islamic court sanctioned by the state has the right to pass sentence on or punish anyone—even if that person is clearly guilty—just as jihad is the responsibility of the

established state's coercive forces (*fard kifaya*) and not the option of any individual or group thereof (*fard 'ayn*).^[7]

The absence of any attempt in this document to justify kidnapping in Islamic terms is glaring, since many Islamist kidnappers do so. In the first four centuries of Islam, hostage taking was considered a viable means of ensuring the good behavior of rival political entities, whether Christian or Muslim. Particularly during the "Abassid caliphate (758-1258), conflicts between contesting societies were resolved via *fida*", or ransom treaties.^[8] As such, Muslim states were emulating Roman, Byzantine, and Sassanid practice. Encouraging rival sovereigns—often relatives of the hostages—to honor terms of treaties, detainees were treated with kindness and respect as guests of the Muslim sovereign detaining them, and were considered intelligence sources, back-channel diplomats as well as bargaining chips to ensure peace. Treaties stipulated that once terms were made, hostages would be released, usually in ceremonial fashion, though they were often kept on hand as a sort of hostage-in-waiting for the next round of treaty requirements. If the terms were violated or war declared, the hostages were at times repatriated as a clearing of the decks in preparation for war.^[9] A history-minded Islamist—and a particular grasp of history often serves as the atavists' guidebook—could thus reach into Islamic history and find a defense of hostage taking. This is the case neither here nor in other al-Qa'ida affiliated venues.

Of course, advocates of armed jihad do argue that, given the West's thorough political, military, economic, and—worse yet—cultural invasion of the Islamic world, any armed action is indeed defensive. Likewise, militant Islamists could point to Israeli abduction of senior Hizballah and Hamas leaders from Lebanon and the Occupied Territories; American capture of Islamists in Pakistan and their extradition to the US; and American domestic law enforcement agencies' long term detention of American Muslims after 11 September 2001 as examples of a form of treachery requiring adjusting the rules of the Islamist game—or, in religious parlance, *ijtihad*, juridical efforts on behalf of the Islamic community. Furthermore, some Islamists would likely argue that no Westerners in such completely penetrated lands of Islam can honestly be considered non-combatants, as they all further infidel encroachment with varying degrees of intentionality.

Such a re-interpretation of Islamic history and law demonstrates the importance of the post-1960s phenomenon of newly literate, highly educated Muslims in secularizing states who have approached the holy texts and history of Islam on their own, without the often pacifying mediation of Muslim clergy. Conversely, it shows the effect of the proliferation of places of Islamic learning beyond the control of the state and established Islamic religious hierarchy, be it in the central Middle East, or on its margins such as Pakistan or Afghanistan, which in the latter case was the center of a globally-attractive jihad where the infidel enemy was as brutal and inhuman as al-Qa'ida has become.

Rather than Islamic niceties, then, the author of this document is quite cognizant of the tactical/political aspects of kidnapping. Students of terrorism are aware that distinction is commonly made between conventional force methods and unconventional force methods such as acts of terrorism. The former is often attributed to formal state actors and therefore deemed proper or legitimate, while the latter is reserved for non-state actors and viewed as illegitimate, improper, and immoral.^[10] The act of kidnapping someone and holding them hostage serves several larger functions that are simply a means to an end. First, possession of a larger power's citizens and their inability to free them affords the kidnappers an amount of status in the eyes of their constituency,^[11] especially when the hostages are American or Israeli citizens. Second, once the US or Israel decides to negotiate with the hostage-takers, they compromise their policy of non-negotiation with terrorists. By forcing this hand, terrorists obtain recognition of their legitimacy as an organization, movement, or group.

Kidnapping has been used as an effective tool during asymmetrical engagements, especially as it relates to acts of terrorism. Revolving around the simple fundamental that one party (usually a less powerful force both politically and militarily) possesses something the other (one that is more powerful) wants, hostages are used as bargaining chips. This has been called "redemptive terrorism." This form of terrorist act focuses on the willingness of one party to provide concessions. Redemptive terrorist acts are often effective because of the lack of ability by conventional or elite forces to resolve guerilla situations. Military

action to recover hostages is rarely successful because of the vast military, intelligence, political, and logistical resources required, thus tilting the tables to the advantage of the terrorist.^[12] RAND Corporation reports on commando raids published in 1985 showed a success rate of only 33% when conditional factors were calculated.^[13]

For example, Hizballah's kidnappings were committed for very tactical reasons on two levels. The first was an attempt to gain influence in the international sphere. The 1985 kidnapping of Soviet diplomats was an attempt to get the Soviets to put pressure on their Syrian ally for Islamic reasons. Most often though, kidnappings were used in an effort to gain bargaining chips. This is still the situation today as negotiation continues between Israel and Hizballah over the group's holding of three Israeli troops kidnapped in the disputed Sheb'a Farms region in 2000. As the document below indicates, all these factors were uppermost in the mind of its author, who relied—likely quite sincerely—on the patina of Islamism.

A second issue involves the origin of the selection. The author(s) of the document uses what is most likely the pseudonym of "Hekmatyar." Though not unknown among Middle easterners, it is a name associated with Central and South Asian Muslims. The substance of the document, however, suggests that the author is not from this part of the Islamic world, nor is he a member of al-Qa'ida speaking on its behalf.

Here, it is important to note that this is not an al-Qa'ida website and the identity of the author and his affiliation with al Qaeda is unknown, so the authenticity can only be assessed based on previous information about terrorist groups and similar publications. Review of the material tends to point away from al-Qa'ida itself and towards one more concerned with Israel, perhaps suggesting a Levant-based terrorist group.

Al-Qa'ida generally opens its publications with "in the name of Allah the Merciful and Compassionate," or similar phraseology.). The "Declaration of War on America" and the "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders"^[14] both open this way, as does the al-Qa'ida manual^[15] By contrast, this document is without the heavy embroidery of Islamic terminology, legal asides, and digressions into Islamic sacred history for the sake of moral lessons or justifications of proposed violent activities based on Islamic historical experiences. Further, al-Qa'ida rarely makes reference to Palestinians, and seldom uses the term "Jew," preferring instead "Zionists." In fact, Usama bin Laden's only reference to Jews in his declaration of war was in reference to matters in the mists of Islamic history.

Beyond this, at least in materials for public consumption, al-Qa'ida has never demonstrated interest in capturing individuals for the purposes of negotiation or influence, which is precisely what this document does. Bin Laden has generally been clear that his demands of the US are non-negotiable. This all suggests that this document emerges not from within al-Qa'ida ranks but rather from a sympathizer with a different geographic focus.

We might also note that the author's laudatory coverage of the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis also places him somewhat outside the al-Qa'ida ambit. As Wahhabi/Deobandi-inspired strict Sunni Muslims, bin Laden, Zawahiri, and their associates are usually exceedingly anti-Shi'ite, seeing the sect as a perversion of true Islamic belief and practice. By contrast, it has been the Sunni Hamas and Islamic Jihad of the Palestinian Territories, as well as the Shi'ite Hizballah of Lebanon, that have viewed Iranian Islamic activism as exemplary and inspirational—or financially supportive.

Thus, in spite of the curious reference to Americans in the document's title, one might suggest authorship originating in Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, or the Occupied Territories. Al-Qa'ida also rarely, if ever, makes the point that operations can be used to get money for further action—though this was one of the earlier purposes of the *fida* treaties.^[16]

Textual hints are important in this respect. Line 13 in the section that discusses "Goals of Kidnapping" makes the point that kidnapping can help the terror cause by "inciting the Jewish street against its government and demonstrating it cares nothing for the lives of its soldiers." This phrasing sounds more like the rhetoric of the PLO, Hamas, or even Hizballah. The latter made tremendous use of psychological operations against the Israeli people and government which led to the Israeli withdrawal in May 2000. Line 12 uses the term "movement" (*haraka*), a term used by Hamas and Hizballah, two groups with political agendas and political wings. Al-Qa'ida does not advertise its possession of such a branch.

The section on the kidnapping area warns to watch for security checkpoints, police, barriers, camps, any place guarded and mobilized, and especially any that do not have several patrols. These terms seem to indicate more of an on guard patrol presence than would be normally expected. The section on Specifications discusses the need to have a knowledge of Hebrew, which would indicate Israel. Christian neighborhoods are mentioned as good hiding places that will not attract attention. This infers that Palestinian Muslim areas *would* attract attention. The hiding place must not have checkpoints or inspection barriers between the kidnap site and the house, another indicator of the Israeli area.

The document states negotiations should be carried on outside the occupied lands (*al-aradi al-muhtalla*). This sounds more like the agenda of Hamas or a PLO breakaway faction such as the "Tanzim" popularized since the 2000 *intifada*, as their desires are more concerned with the Occupied Territories than are Hizballah's. Also, with one or two daring exceptions in the 1980s, Lebanese groups do not infiltrate Israel, preferring to stay in Iran, Syria, and Lebanon. Line 1 of Chapter 10 confirms this assumption, due to its attempts to gain influence from sympathizers who are non-Palestinians, as well as the recurrence of the term "movement." Again, it calls on forcing the hostage to cast doubt on the right of Jews to Palestine.

Ultimately then, this document presents a mixed bag. Though posted to an al-Qa'ida-supportive web site, the implicit geographical focus would suggest an author thinking more closely of the Middle East, and particularly the Arab-Israeli theater, than of global jihad. Likewise, its highly stripped down Islamic ambience, with no attempt to justify kidnapping or violence in Islamic terms or through Islamic historical referents, distinguishes it from al-Qa'ida publications of the recent past—and indeed from other Islamic extremist groups in the past twenty years that are more Arab-Israeli focused.^[17] This is also the case in relation to its Islamic jihadist ecumenicism beyond the Sunni fold.

Perhaps such a document is best read as an important indicator of the attraction to Islam as a baseline legitimating referent for violent action which is still tactical/pragmatic as opposed to strategic/principled in goals. Authors of such postings to the myriad of jihadist web sites represent a globalized phenomenon of shopping in a virtual supermarket of ideas and taking the most attractive elements off the shelf, to be combined in eclectic recipes based on the ideological movement of the day with the most élan. Just as important, it hints at the ability of ideas and methods not usually associated with the true believers—those who aim for spectacular public statements through mass violence—to gradually migrate into their very own consciousness.

Here, when one's organization has been fragmented into many smaller cells coordinating only notionally—as is likely the case since the war in Afghanistan—one can point and click into a new vista of operational possibilities. Inspired by Iranians, Abu Sayyaf, Hizballah, and the Chechen rebels, will al-Qa'ida affiliates begin to view taking Americans and Europeans hostage on a large scale as a ready means to undermine Western resolve? Will they no longer feel the need to justify such actions in terms of the world view for which they martyr themselves? Will a tactic of the 1970s and 1980s Middle East be dusted off, requiring new force protection measures for Western diplomats and military forces abroad? This document obviously provides no answers to these questions, but its existence in today's world forces us to ask them all.

Muwjaz al-qawa'id al-hassan fi fann ikhtitaf al-amrikan*

The Security Operations

These {consist of} carrying out lethal [combat] missions in the geographic and security heart of the enemy, after evading his security precautions or getting past them in approach and execution.

Their importance:

1. Realizing great results with little means
2. Shattering the morale of the enemy and shock [undermine] his stability
3. Raising the morale of the Ansar[18]
4. Avoiding reactions of the enemy or neutrals or Ansar

Types of Security Operations

1. Fundamental (such that the basis of our work is security work)
2. Selective (such that we select targets to carry them out secretly)
3. Nuisance (and they are used to harass the enemy and incite discord among the enemy)

Motives for the Security Operations

1. Political (where we do not want publicity or we want to liquidate some personalities)
2. Security (where it is difficult to carry out the action in the military fashion in order to direct security strikes against the enemy).
3. Psychological war (such that all the members of the enemy feel that they are exposed to murder and are insecure).

Types of Operations By Method

1. {Open} Attack [Raid]
2. Ambush

Open Attack

Intended for haste and speed

Technical Description:

The surprise kidnapping attack on a stationary target according to a studied plan and benefiting from camouflage and speed. (The attack is usually carried out against an isolated target, especially in Jihad wars.)

Goals of the Attack

1) Destroying the enemy's positions; 2) killing enemy personnel; 3) taking documents and secrets; 4) taking prisoners; 5) liberation of prisoners; 6) taking control of the enemy's positions; 7) Disrupting enemy surveillance; 8) luring the enemy into regions we want {him in}.

The Principles of Attack

1. Complete and exact information.
2. Secrecy in collecting intelligence, planning, training, approach, and attack.
3. Concealment in investing and getting into position.
4. Suddenness and Surprise in time, timing, and method.
5. Speed in the assault, execution, and withdrawal.
6. {Disciplined} control over the forces.
7. Power and resolve in execution.

8. Speedy evasion and disappearance [escape].

Types of Attack

- a) In terms of time: at night vs. daytime
- b) In terms of method: Silent vs. Loud
- c) In terms of mission: assault vs. firing from afar

The Sequence [Progression] of Attack

Approach... getting into position... firing... withdrawal

Approach... getting into position ... attack... assault... withdrawal

Approach... getting into position ... attack... assault... control

Stages of the Raid

1. Selecting and delimiting the suitable target ([in terms of] influencing the enemy, and which is within available means).
2. Surveilling the target and gathering operational intelligence on it.
3. making a well-conceived fixed plan and choosing the appropriate time to attack (the time at which the enemy will be lax and fatigued).
4. Choosing competent elements [agents] with expertise.
5. Providing necessary equipment
6. distributing the tasks and tools to the elements and explaining to each his element.
7. training according to the plan in conditions {similar to the operation} (as regards time, and the geography of the locale).
8. Restricting the Zero Hour and the target in the smallest possible circle of information.

The Raid Groups

1. Protection—their duty: securing advance and withdrawal for the remainder of the groups and interdicting aid to [emergency responses of] the enemy and crating diversions near [enemy] positions.
2. Support—their duty: crushing fortifications [barriers] of the enemy, preparation for the attack, and covering the withdrawal. Arms: medium and heavy weapons
3. The group carrying out the task—its task is to carry out the task (mission). {Armed with} light weapons and explosives, bombs, {tying} cord and knives and silencers.

Factors for the Success of the Raid

1. Seeking help of Allah and reliance upon him and pureness [sincerity] of intent.
2. Choosing the right time and method.
3. Proportionateness of the weapons to the size and protection of the target.
4. Control of the elements [raiders] and good control of fire.
5. Competence of the raiders, their expertise, and their harmony [fit, coordination] with each other.
6. Competence and expertise of the commander.
7. Speed in execution, withdrawal, and hiding.
8. Exact and updated intelligence on the target.
9. A complete, well-formed plan.
10. A lack of hesitation, and control of one's nerves during execution.

Types of Pursuit

a) Public [open, obvious], used to annoy and cause fear; b) clandestine, used to acquire intelligence.

...

The Goals of Kidnapping

Kidnapping can accomplish one or several of these goals, and they are legitimate [lawful]:

1. Liberation of prisoners detained by the enemy, by means of exchange.
2. One of the many sources for intelligence about the enemy.
3. Weakening the morale for all classes of the enemy.
4. Raising the morale of all classes of our people, especially those imprisoned [or in similar conditions], and also the display of power
5. Shattering the security theory among the Jews and, and bringing down their prestige [esteem] on all levels.
6. Preoccupying the enemy and the street [the enemy's public] with a hot, unceasing [ever-present] issue.
7. Directing regional and global opinion (especially the Arab and Islamic world) to the legitimacy of our cause (political and moral pressure).
8. Wresting the initiative from the enemy.
9. Taking control of documents, tools and provisions.
10. Kidnapping causes deterrence among all classes of the enemy.
11. Acquisition of funds through pressure.
12. Displaying the security and military strength of the movement[19] and its ability to maneuver.
13. Inciting the Jewish street against its government and demonstrating that it [the government] cares nothing for the lives of its soldiers.

The Types of kidnapping

a) kidnapping and concealment; b) kidnapping and detention; c) kidnapping, murder, and concealment [of the body]

...

Priorities [Primary Considerations] In Choosing the Target

...

We require a sensitive and distinguished target, or a large number of hostages.

Note:

Hiding [someone] might turn into detention if the location of hiding is uncovered. Detention operations are considered a failing prospect especially in Palestine because of the few resources. If the kidnappers sense trickery of the enemy, it is necessary to promptly kill the hostages and focus entirely on resisting the enemy.

...

First: The Target

Directions and conditions for choosing the target

1. [That it] realizes [accomplishes] the goal of the kidnapping operation.

2. Great repute [far-reaching mention].
3. [That there is] the possibility of controlling the target within the resources available to us.
4. That he is alone or isolated (isolated from people or means of electronic surveillance, through shadows, trees...).
5. [That the target is] weak of physical constitution [physically weak].
6. He should not be alert [ready to fight]; rather he should be in a state of laxity and calm.
7. [It should be] easy to direct [push] him and carry him.

Second: the Area of Kidnapping

1. Far from sensitive places (security points, the police, barriers, camps: any place guarded and mobilized [alert]).
2. [One that] does not have several patrols
3. Has more than one entry and exit, leading to different places. This is to make it difficult to catch or lay ambushes for them [the kidnapers].
4. That it be close to the rendez vous point (i.e., the secure point where the rotation of {snatch and guarding} teams occurs).
5. Ease of [that it ease] the covering [concealment; stealth] operation by which it will seem that the executors [of the operation] are normal people of the area.
6. That it not have been exposed to previous operations in the near term.
7. Ease of arrival and withdrawal in company of the kidnapped individual.
8. It is preferred that the kidnapping be accomplished in areas empty of passers-by and residents, like highways and open country routes.
- ...

Fourth: Those Who Execute [the Operation]

Specifications

1. Their shape [form; appearance, physiognomy] must match up with that of the region of kidnapping.
2. Sure knowledge of the Hebrew language, speaking and slang if possible. [\[20\]](#)
3. Capability, physical strength, and possession of close combat skills.
4. Military and security fitness.
5. Ability to drive a car.
6. Courage, initiative, and self-control [composure].
7. That [the operator] have gained expertise through previous missions.
8. Strength of courage [fortitude], sincerity, and discipline.
9. Intelligence and quick intuition.
10. That he not be emotional (that trickery not deceive him).

The Equipment

1. Rifles for all the operators; silencers; hand grenades; cold steel [blades] (and this is contingent upon the nature of the mission and the strength of target).
2. The appropriate means of transportation (for scouting [probing, reconnaissance] in front of the snatch car, for the kidnapping, for carrying to the hideout, for scouting in front of the carrying [car that takes kidnapped to hide-out]).
3. Means to subdue the target:
--Tranquilizer (injection or inhalant), and a 60-70 centimeter-long strong and high {tension?} cord for strangling, and a stun gun or tazer

--A broad adhesive bandage, blindfold, or pillowcase {to put over the head}, or darkened sunglasses to cover the vision like a blindfold.

...

Sixth: The Hiding Place (a home, cave, open country [vacant lot], automobile...)

Specifications for the home

1. That it is separate but not isolated
2. [That it be] far from suspicious areas which the enemy would expect. It is preferred that it be in a calm [tranquil] area (Christian neighborhoods, [under] government influence, [or] Jewish).
3. That it have more than one entry and exit.
4. That it dominate its environs so that one can maneuver to defend if the enemy attempts assault.
5. That roads leading to it should not have inspection check points.
6. That it be rented under a false name a suitable period of time before [the operation] and with an appropriate, solid cover [name].
7. That it not be exposed [visible] to neighboring houses.
8. That the house owner and neighbors not be inquisitive, or with frequent service calls.
9. That it be big with lots of rooms.
10. It is preferable to be able to bury the body if it is executed.
11. It must be distant from caves and underground hideouts, because the enemy will begin searching in them first.

The Gear

a) Means of Living:

Provision of sufficient logistical supplies, according to the period of detention (food, drink, blankets, clothing, medicine)

b) Means of Taking Down the Target:

Sedatives placed in food and drink, which render the target heavy-headed, drowsy [lethargic], or asleep; fastening handcuffs [restraints] in the wall to tie up and secure the hostage (it must be in proper locations far from windows).

c) Security Equipment:

1. Changing the locks of the house and fortifying the doors and windows without attracting the attention of neighbors.
2. Supplying the house with camouflaged cameras to surveil the entries and the environs of the house.
3. Placing real booby-traps [obstacles] in the areas [directions] from which the enemy might assault.
4. Placing false booby-traps that cause warning light[s] and sound[s] (the alarm is to be heard only inside the house).
5. Supplying rifles to all the kidnapers as well as hand grenades and explosives.

d) Ways of Deception and Misinformation:

They are for use during filming and sound recording (backgrounds, so that the scenery gives the impression to the viewer that the filming is in an area other than the correct one; also, sounds that create the impression that the place is other than the true place). This includes taking a cassette recorder to a market or near to a main thoroughfare, and playing the cassette during the interview [interrogation] of the hostage. This will make it appear that the place is near a market or main road, while it is {actually} in a vacant, abandoned place. Or we [can] include the sound of a call to prayer when the place [of detention] is in Jewish or Christian locales. Or we might bring canvas sacks and have the hostage sit next to them or in front of them during the filming, so that the viewer will suppose that the location is in the countryside, while the residence is in the city. And the opposite: we might place behind him a scene that suggests he is in the city when he is in fact inside a cave, etc.

e) Concealing the hostage from the outside environment:
So that he won't see or hear anything from the surroundings (he must not come close to the windows).
One can distract his hearing with headphones on his ears, and run tapes, so that he does not hear what goes on around him, in addition to blindfolds. Also, do not inform him of the time.

...

The Negotiations

1. Defining the demands and the desired guarantees, and determining who is authorized to decide matters relating to the hostage.
2. The negotiator must know nothing about the detention site and who can tell him.
3. He must know nothing about the abductors.
4. He must know nothing about the telephones or their numbers even if they are cell phones.
5. Setting the mechanism [mechanics] of communication with the negotiator, on condition that all possibilities are taken into consideration.
6. Communication [calls] from public telephones, no repeat calls from the same telephone, and no calls from the area of kidnapping or detention.
7. It is necessary to establish rules for the negotiator:
 - a) The demands (The greatest extent [goal] that we aspire to achieve... [and] the least that we can accept).
 - b) The guarantees [assurances] that we want.
 - c) The period of time [for negotiations] defined exactly.
 - d) A mechanism [way] to inform [the enemy] about the hostage [that we have him], and which office [of the enemy] to inform, and the mechanism for providing the tape [video of the hostage] or an indication that we have the kidnapped person.
 - e) Determining the means to inform [the enemy] of the execution, and how to verify that, and the manner of negotiating over the corpse.
 - f) Determining the fashion of giving up the hostage or the corpse if the enemy yields [complies]: 1) the place; 2) the mode of transporting [the hostage] to the place; 3) the manner of assuring that demands are met.
8. Note: It is preferable that the negotiations take place outside the occupied lands^[21] if that is possible.
- g) One must make contingency plans for all the stages.
- h) One must make a plan for emergencies, and that is by finding solutions to any eventuality:
 1. If pursuit of the kidnappers occurs in any phase.
 2. If they are seen, or if their identities or automobile are discovered by anyone.
 3. If they encounter resistance by the target.
 4. If some incident [glitch] occurs with them or their auto breaks down.
 5. If the hostage dies during the kidnapping or it was necessary to kill him.
 6. If one of the operators was injured, killed, or detained.
 7. In a case where their route is interrupted by one of the patrols of the enemy or the authority.^[22]
 8. In a case where the enemy attempts to assault the hiding place.
 9. In case the neighbors notice a suspicious movement resulting from behavior [actions, conduct] of the detained people.
 10. If the relief group is delayed or never arrives.
 11. In a case of interrupted communication between groups.

...

Tenth: Exploiting the Victory

1. Besides the demand to release our members, the demand to release people outside our movement,^[23] and non-Palestinians, in order to gain friendship and sympathy and in order to support their groups and those like them.

2. Forcing the hostage to make admissions about his tasks in the army, and to record them and publicize them through the media.
 3. Forcing the hostage to begin to doubt the supposed right of the Jews to Palestine.
 4. Forcing him to direct a message to the Jewish street, to make them doubt the political and military purity [honesty, probity] of the enemy's leadership.
 5. Compelling him to talk about our good treatment of him, and forcing him to show our power and standing.
 6. That he consent to and justify our kidnapping of him and that he consider it our right and that it is the only way to liberate our prisoners and reclaim our rights.
 7. That he aim a message to the street and demand that the Jews pressure the government to respond favorably to the demands of the kidnapers.
 8. {That he} demand members of groups other than [our] movement in the process of exchange.
 9. That there appear on him [no signs] of pressure [maltreatment] while filming him.
 10. If it is decided to kill him, [one must] hide the body and negotiate about it subsequently.
- ...

Addendum

From the Scene of the Milestones^[24] of Jihad

The Hostage Crisis Between Detention and Freeing [Them]

Praise to God himself, and blessings and peace upon him [Muhammad] who has no prophet after him.

The hostage crisis and its associated events which took place recently in the Philippines continues to attract people's attention and turn all of their concern to it, especially attracting the attention of members of the Islamic movements to the success and good fortune the kidnapping operation accomplished—by the grace of God. For the successive catastrophes and the uninterrupted woeful calamities [that have befallen] the Muslims and the Jihadist movements in all places require that they use new and successful methods in order to harm the enemy (and {of course} war is deception).

So, in this brief little sketch hastily thrown together, we take a look at some of the kidnapping or detention operations which have occurred in the past years, in order to derive some lessons and insights from which Mujahidin can benefit.

The First Operation:

The "Abu Sayyaf" Organization's Kidnapping of Western hostages.

We begin first with the last of the operations to take place, and the best in terms of results, and that is the action of the "Abu Sayyaf" group [Jama'at Abu Sayyaf]. And we must point out the fact that [our] brother Abu Sayyaf, after whom the organization is known, was killed—may God have mercy on him—in one of the operations against the infidel [kafir] Philippine army, achieving in such fashion the most magnificent of examples of martyrdom and sacrifice. We ask of God that He show boundless mercy upon him. He—may God favor him—was among those who answered the call to jihad in Afghanistan during the Red Army's invasion. He then returned to his country and formed his group, and the group undertook to teach the Philippine government several lessons during the confrontations that took place between them.

As for this {particular} operation, its events began about six months ago, and it achieved tremendous success as a result of several factors which we summarize as follows:

1) Success in good reconnaissance of the target and place of abduction.

Members of the organization were able to reconnoiter quite effectively the place of abduction, determine the demands of the mission they were undertaking, and implemented it extremely well. They set out to detain the hostages from islands belonging to Malaysia. They then took them [the hostages] on small boats [skiffs] and then led them away to a secure location, without exposing any of the hostages or members of the action group to danger. This was due to their awareness of the route and their diligent study of it. Also, the element of surprise [suddenness] had a big impact on the success of the operation, such that neither Malaysia nor the Philippines knew about the kidnapping until after the group announced it.

The geographic nature of the area [also] had a big impact on their enemy hesitating several times {before} trying to attack to rescue the hostages. {This is because} the area was composed of a rugged mountainous region and thick forests. {Also}, dispersing the hostages in different places made it difficult for the enemy to come by intelligence about the hostages and the members of the group. The Philippine general commanding the region stated that his mission "was like looking for a needle in a hay stack." Rather, when the enemy considered assaulting the place, there were continuous objections from everywhere, and the government of France stated that it held the Philippine army responsible for and death or losses which might occur to the hostages.

Yet, {ultimately}, they [the army] had no choice but to attack, in which they used five thousand soldiers of the naval infantry [marines], and police forces, and aircraft and artillery like mortars and the like. The casualties in the ranks of the group were few, while most of the casualties were among civilians. According to stories told by local residents sympathetic to the group, there were several casualties in the Philippine army, including killed and injured. Likewise, the Philippine army was not able to come upon their hide outs, just as two weeks passed after the promise of the Philippine President that the crisis would end after a week. He suffered a setback in front of his masters in the West, and we ask God to shame him in this world and the next.

2. Expertise in the struggle:

{This is that which} provided the members of the group with courage and boldness, and expectation of their enemy's reaction through the history of their jihad against them. For in 1970, the enemy had tried to do away with the Mujahidin in that country, but it was beset by devastating failure. And so expertise in the struggle was one of the reasons for success {granted by} exalted God.

3. Choice of target:

This is represented in their kidnapping of Western hostages, which highlighted the group's cause in the global media. Also, their kidnapping of the hostages for a long period of time had a large influence in demonstrating the weakness of their enemy, and in showing the awesome power of the members of the organization.

4. Perseverance and firmness:

The organization did not satisfy itself with this operation alone. Rather, it was able to capture some Frenchmen from the Philippines and then an American hostage; this showed their power and fortitude in spite of the intense attack {on them} by the Philippine Army.

The Second Operation

The Event of the Hijacking of the Indian Aircraft

This is one of the most famous, successful operations which the Mujahidin undertook to free some of the Mujahid prisoners which the Hindu Indian forces held. The incident began in the airport of Nepal where the brothers [brethren] were—by the grace of God—able to bring some weapons onto the plane. They then suddenly accomplished taking control of the aircraft and all of its passengers and crew. The courage

and boldness which distinguished the five hijackers was a big factor in the affair succeeding, and in the trip continuing in the course that they wanted it to go. When the Indian forces attempted to hamper the aircraft's course, the Mujahidin killed one of the Hindu hostages and threw him from the plane immediately. This caused fear and dread among their enemy. This took place at the second landing spot in India when the crew requested refueling, directly after which the Mujahidin headed towards Pakistan with the aircraft, and from there to the Kabul airport. Yet, because the {Kabul} airport cannot accommodate aircraft at night, they turned immediately towards {Abu} Dhabi. They spent the night there and took on the necessary fuel and provisions, and in the morning the Mujahidin directed the aircraft to Kandahar, where the negotiations occurred, and where the identity of the hijackers began to become clear.

Beforehand, the Emirates [UAE] had stated that the hijackers had been Sikh, and neither India nor any other state could learn of the identity of the kidnappers until after they announced their demands and their identity. And thus the secrecy through which the operation occurred had a great impact on the success which was on their side-by the grace of God. The negotiations between the Taliban and the Mujahidin began, and they put forward their demands, at the forefront of which was the release of Shaykh Mas'ud Azhar. Thank God, the shaykh and some of his brethren were released, whereupon they arrived at Kandahar airport in an Indian airplane. With the departure from the territory of Afghanistan of the shaykh and his brothers, the phases of this successful, difficult operation were completed. And, thus, with the help of exalted God, this operation met great success in several fields.

1) The media field:

These brothers were clearly able to lend greater prominence to their cause. The whole world began to deal with the Kashmir issue anew and according to a new perspective, while the criminal Indians were afflicted with broken spiritedness, submissiveness, and groveling as they carried out the demands of the Mujahidin in front of the whole world.

From another perspective [on the other side], the Taliban movement became more prominent in the media, inasmuch as it attained a media victory in ending the operation in a peaceful fashion, and in obtaining the release of the hostages, and in realizing the most important demands of the hostages. Likewise it [the operation] had a great impact on raising the morale of the Mujahidin in the entire world.

2) As for the military aspect:

Success accompanied these brothers, and God willed for them success and good fortune in spite of the meager resources on which they could rely, be it in smuggling aboard the airplane some weapons or in smuggling a number of men capable of taking control of the scene and rotating periods of sleep and rest. Likewise, they were blessed with good fortune in choosing the target and the place of negotiations. Yet, the greatest success in the matter was the speed of decision-making and resoluteness in the event, when the Indian forces delayed [tarried] in supplying fuel. They were also blessed by the other stops at which they landed. Also, their love of self-sacrifice and martyrdom was also clear in their demands, and therefore, Allah's beneficence accompanied them during the whole period of hostage taking.

Yet, more important than all that in this operation was that they provided a lesson to the rest of the Mujahidin that materiel is not the only, basic factor in success. Rather, there are other basic factors, the most important of which is faith in Allah and confidence in his promise, and the love of self-sacrifice and martyrdom in the path of God. We ask of God exalted that He end [sunder] the captivity of all of or imprisoned brethren.

The Third Operation

The Taking of American Hostages in their Tehran Embassy

The details of this event go back to the end of the 1970s in the year 1979, with the occurrence of the Islamic revolution. A group of Iranian students loyal to the Republican Guard, as it was called, undertook

the occupation of the American embassy building, and the detention of a great number of workers in the diplomatic (spying) track. It is known that the Americans used to prepare [draft, count on] the Shah's regime in Iran to protect its [US] interests in the Gulf, and to strike at any Islamic movement which might appear in the Arab states. However, they forsook the Shah's regime, and were not able to strike at the Iranian revolution. And one of the reasons for not striking [at the revolution] was the taking of a great number of American hostages within the American embassy in the capitol Tehran. The Iranian students continued to hold the hostages for a period of 444 days. And among the reasons for success, in spite of the length of time, was the nature of the ground, for it was a locale sympathetic to the revolutionary Iranian government, and when the Americans thought to liberate the hostages it ended in devastating failure which we mention later, and one of the reasons of the success also was the insistence by the hijackers on their positions and demands.

The great number of people involved in the hostage taking operation was also one of the factors in its success, since they were able to consolidate their dominance over the place and the hostages. Therefore, the enemies benefited from this point [of knowledge], and began, at times of protests, to immediately issue orders for the evacuation of the people doing spying work and their families, just as happened before the strike on Afghanistan, when the Americans evacuated all of their citizens from Pakistan, considering the [potential] reactions. And this is [also] what they did in the recent events, when there were angry demonstrations in the states of Islamic peoples when they protested the pollution [contamination, soiling] of the al-Aqsa mosque by that Zionist (Sharon), such that Israel pulled its citizens out of Egypt, Jordan, and Mauritania. Likewise, America closed a number of its embassies as a precaution against any developments, although the disaster came upon them from a quarter they did not expect (such that it occurred in the sea), and we here call attention to the necessity of these operations occurring quickly and secretly, so that the desired goal will be realized. And this is what occurred in the hostage taking operation in Iran, when America was forced to submit to the demands of the hostage-takers in the embassy, the most important of which was not interfering in any fashion in the affairs of Iran.

(At the conclusion of this installment [lesson; rotation], I ask of God that Islam and the Muslims gain and benefit from it [this lesson], for it does not require going to the lands of jihad [geographical field of jihad]; rather it requires sincerity, determination, and believing trust in Allah. I thus call [invite] the Muslims, and implore them to speedy action, and to offer [present; give] something for their religion).

Your brother,
Hekmatyar

And do not permit us to forget the righteousness of your call.

For more insights into contemporary international security issues, see our [Strategic Insights](#) home page.

To have new issues of *Strategic Insights* delivered to your Inbox at the beginning of each month, email ccc@nps.navy.mil with subject line "Subscribe". There is no charge, and your address will be used for no other purpose.

References

1. Bruce Hoffman, *Commando Raids: 1946-1983*, The RAND Corporation, Prepared for the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, N-2316-USDP, Sponsored under contract number MDA903-85-C-0030. The report was part of a larger study for the Office of UNSECDEF called "Military Options in Response to Terrorism."

In the northern Israeli town of Maalot, the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine occupied a school, taking scores of hostages. Twenty Israeli children and teachers were killed in the

Israeli rescue attempt. In July 1976, PLO-affiliate terrorists hijacked an Air France flight to Entebbe Uganda, taking 103 passengers and crew hostage. In the Israeli rescue raid, twenty Ugandan soldiers, one Israeli officer (Yoni Netanyahu, brother of former Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu), three hostages and seven hijackers died.

2. SpecialOperations.com "[Lufthansa 737](#)."
 3. Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "[Pakistan: Death of Daniel Pearl](#)," U.S. Department of State.
 4. [alpalsam.com](#) This site has been off and online since 22 January 2004, the target of recent interdiction efforts.
 5. See B.A. Robinson "[Does Islam Allow the Taking of Hostages, Suicide, etc.?](#)" Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance.
 6. "[Top Islamic Authority in Egypt Slams Philippine Hostage-Takers](#)," Islam Online.
 7. See Mawlana Wahiduddin Khan, "[Hijacking: A Crime](#)."
 8. Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), 215-218. Also see Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 1996); Reuven Firestone, *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (London: Oxford university Press, 2002).
 9. Khadduri.
 10. Gary C. Gambill, "The Balance of Terror: War by Other Means in the Contemporary Middle East," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 28, no.1 (Autumn 1998): 52.
 11. Op cit. pg. 53
 12. ibid
 13. These reports examined military commando raid success from 1946-1983. Initially, success rates for international raid operations is 61%, but when carried out in non-permissive environments (no support or cooperation from the local government) success fell to 33%. The prime example of this is the failed 1980 Desert One operation to rescue the American hostages held in Iran. See (all RAND) Cordes, Jenkins, Kellen, et al., *A Conceptual Framework for Analyzing Terrorist Groups*; B. Jenkins, *Future Trends in International Terrorism* (P-7176); idem., *International Terrorism: The Other World War* (R-3302-AF); Bruce Hoffman, *Shi'a Terrorism, the Conflict in Lebanon and the Hijacking of TWA Flight 847* (P-7116); ibid., *The Prevention of Terrorism and Rehabilitation of Terrorists: Some Preliminary Thoughts* (P-7059). All this material, while dated, highlights the important contribution of quantitative inquiry.
 14. "[World Islamic Front Statement Urging Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders](#)," Federation of American Scientists.
 15. "[The al Qaeda Manual](#)," The Disaster Center.
 16. Khadduri, pg. 218.
 17. Martin Kramer, "[Hijacking Islam: A Religion in Danger of Deteriorating into a Manifesto for Terror](#)," *National Review*, 19 September 2001.
- * A note on translation: we have attempted to remain as faithful to the Arabic as possible, with only a limited amount of smoothing out for ease of reading. We have attempted not to be excessive in location analogues in English for technical/tactical terms. We have, however, assumed some license in translating neologisms. For example, in reference to kidnapping equipment, we have rendered 'asa kahraba'iya aw bakhakh as "stun gun or tazer," though 'asa kahraba'iya means literally "electric baton." In places of obvious original author misspelling (see below), we have provided an English term reasonable given the context. Words in brackets as [...] indicates alternative translations; words in {...} are smoothing additions implied by the Arabic. Also, sections of text separated by "..." indicate excision on translator's part. We thank Robert Morrison of Whitman College for his assistance.
18. In Islamic sacred history, *ansar* refers to those residents of Medina in Arabia, who became Muslim and assisted Muhammad and his fellow emigrants (*muhajirun*) from Mecca after the 622 *hijra*, or emigration, which began the Islamic era. So those who aid Islamist groups are often called *ansar*. Curiously, the main Israeli detention center for Lebanese and Palestinians during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the 1987, 2000 intifadas has come to be known as Ansar.
 19. Arabic: *haraka*.
 20. The translator has made the educated guess that the original author intends "Hebrew." The Arabic is *'ibra*, which can only make sense in this context if it is a typographical error, the correct writing of which would be *'ibriya*, "Hebrew."
 21. Arabic: *Aradi al-muhtalla*, usually used in reference to the West bank/Gaza Strip.

22. Arabic: *sulta*, perhaps a reference to Palestinian security services. Palestinian National Authority = *al-sulta al-wataniya*.
23. Again, *haraka* for movement, suggesting Hamas, or an author thinking in such terms.
24. Arabic: *ma'alim*, recalling Sayyid Qutb's *Ma 'alim fi-l-Tariq (Milestones Along the Road)*, the seminal, foundational ideological work of contemporary Islamic activism.