

Al Qaeda Training Manual

Military Studies in the Jihad against the Tyrants

Found in the apartment of a suspected al Qaeda member in Manchester, England, May 2000

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In May 2000, British investigators searching the apartment of a suspected Al Qaeda terrorist in Manchester discovered a veritable "terrorist cookbook." This revealing document, which later was submitted as evidence in the African embassy bombing trials in the United States, clearly outlines the goals of terrorist cell members and many of their techniques.

This edition, translated by the FBI Counterterrorism Division, provides a wide-ranging view of Al Qaeda's ideology and operational philosophy, as well as the kind of hard-headed, practical advice it inculcates in its members. The manual discusses the development of security plans for terrorist acts, including assassinations, establishment and maintenance of safe houses and meeting places, and the use of counterfeit currency, forged identity documents, and codes and ciphers. Other sections deal with weapons training and the manufacture of explosive devices and booby traps. Some sensitive parts of this section have been redacted to allow for public release.

In one particularly chilling "lesson," the manual states: "The religious scholars have also permitted the killing of a hostage if he insists on withholding information from Moslems. . . The scholars have also permitted the exchange of hostages for money, services, and expertise, as well as secrets of the enemy's army, plans, and numbers."

Of particular interest are the sections on surveillance detection and evasion, how to maintain cover in foreign lands, and how to deal with arrest and interrogation. Most important, the manual provides insight into the general mindset of radical Islamic terrorists and should prove useful to law enforcement officers involved in counterterrorism investigations, as well as members of the military, scholars researching the theory and practice of contemporary terrorism, and anyone interested in the mentality and operational activities of Al Qaeda and related groups.

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