

To: Brith Sholom Media Watch Subscribers
From: Jerry Verlin, Editor (jverlin1234@comcast.net)
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This Week In The Inq: What Made This Knight Different From All Other Knights?

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At this writing, no one has “claimed responsibility” for the killing in Damascus this week of a Hezbollah leader eulogized on Hezbollah TV, per the Inq’s article Thursday, as “a great resistance leader who joined the procession of martyrs in the Islamic resistance. . . . The martyr, may his soul rest in peace, has been a target of the Zionists for more than 20 years.” What made this latest member of this “procession of martyrs in the Islamic resistance” different from his predecessors in the procession was that the Inq’s headline this Thursday (2/14/08, top of A1) called him a “terrorist” – “A Most Wanted Terrorist Is Killed.” The sub-head – “A bomb in Syria kills Imad Mughniyeh of Hezbollah, long sought by U.S., Israel” – may explain this Inq difference. This otherwise “militant” was long sought not just by “Israel,” but in his case also by “the U.S.”

Mughniyeh stood accused, the Inq’s Thursday Washington Post story reported, of “some of the deadliest” pre-9/11 “strikes against Americans.” Despite Hezbollah’s involvement denial, “the United States accused Mughniyeh of orchestrating two bombings of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut – in 1983 and 1984 – that killed 72 people.” Israel accused him “of masterminding the 1994 bombing of a Jewish center in Buenos Aires that killed 87 people and of a role in the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in the Argentine capital that killed 28.” Mughniyeh “was blamed for kidnapping many of the more than 50 Americans, Frenchmen, Germans and other foreigners during the [Lebanon] civil war’s grimmest days.... Mughniyeh was indicted for his role in the hijacking of a TWA flight from Athens to Rome in 1985. The hijackers killed a U.S. Navy diver after taking the plane to Beirut.... Over the years, both Israeli and U.S. intelligence agencies relentlessly pursued him.”

Hezbollah last year fought something akin to a conventional military war against Israel, and Thursday’s AP article stated Mughniyeh “reportedly played a role in organizing Hezbollah’s defenses during the war.” Yet the Inq called this Hezbollah leader a terrorist, not a “military” leader of a “militant” group. Yet that is precisely – military leader of a militant group -- how the Inq described an Hamas leader Israel targeted a few years ago who stood accused of blowing up a famous food market, a shopping mall, a restaurant and an oceanside discotheque. Here’s how the Jerusalem Post (11/25/01) described the claimed career of Hamas’ Abu Hanuod, whom Shimon Peres called “a professional terrorist” and the Inq called a “military” leader of a “militant” group:

“[He was wanted for] masterminding the 1997 terrorist attacks in Jerusalem’s Mahaneh Yehuda shouk and Rehov Ben-Yehuda pedestrian mall, which killed 21 people. Security sources said he also had a hand in most of the major suicide bombings this past year, including the June 1 attack at the Dolphin disco in Tel Aviv and on August 9 at the

Sbarro pizza parlor in Jerusalem, which claimed the lives of 36 people and over 200 wounded. He was also behind the 1999 suicide bombings in Haifa and Tiberias in which there were no casualties. Abu Hanoud's expertise was the ability to link bomb makers with suicide bombers. Security officials said that Abu Hanoud had recently dispatched suicide bombers from Tulkarm, but those attacks were foiled at the last minute. He was in the midst of preparing more suicide attacks inside the Green Line, security sources said last night."

The Inq didn't exactly call HIM a terrorist. Incredibly, it wasn't until the 39th of 43 Knight-Ridder coverage paragraphs spread over two days that Inq readers got even a glimpse at this most-wanted person's alleged deeds: "The prime minister's office released a statement late Friday saying Abu Hanoud had been involved in a long string of terror attacks, including this year's bombings of a Sbarro pizzeria in Jerusalem and a discotheque near Tel Aviv. It noted that Abu Hanoud had been jailed for a time by Palestinian security officials, but had been set free."

What Inq readers did get on the first day (11/24/01) was that Hanoud had been the head of the "militant" Hamas group's "military" wing, for whom Hamas had declared three days of mourning. The Inq's headline the second day (11/25/01), "Israel Defends Assassination," headed the wire service article beginning: "An unrepentant Israel yesterday defended the assassination of the radical Hamas movement's military leader"

"Militant" group's "military leader," indeed. And the Inq is still at it, calling Hamas, now Gaza's government, "militants," even as Hamas takes express aim at the very residences of Israeli civilians. The AP, This Week In The Inq, used the term "militants" four times in an article (Inq, Monday, 2/11/08, A7), including in the expression: "Over the weekend, with growing defiance and confidence, Hamas militants called on Israelis to flee from border towns as the rockets rained down."

Dwell for a moment on that AP assessment of the "militant" Hamas group's "growing defiance and confidence." From what sources do that growing defiance and confidence spring? The Inq headlined that AP article this week "Olmert Opposes Invasion of Gaza," but the Inq This Week took a couple shots on its own at Israel's responses to bombers and rockets.

In its "In the World" squibs Saturday (2/16/08, A7), the Inq included a 3-paragraph AP squib, "Darfur Refugees Flooding Chad," which led: "Gunmen prevented humanitarian workers from moving traumatized new arrivals from neighboring Sudan's Darfur region to a refugee camp inside Chad, the U.N. refugee agency said yesterday." The squib mentioned 300,000 Darfur refugees just in Chad, and a half million refugees in that country's Central Africa region.

Across the top of the adjacent page, A6, to that 3-paragraph AP Darfur refugee squib, the Inq ran a six-times as large AP article on what another UN representative, the humanitarian chief, said the same day about Gaza. Article lead (emphasis added): "The

eight-month CLOSURE of Gaza has created ‘grim and miserable’ conditions that deprive Palestinians of their basic dignity, the United Nations humanitarian chief said yesterday.” He “urged that the territory’s borders be reopened to relieve the suffering.” “The CLOSURE has driven up poverty and unemployment,” the AP added on its own account. The article quoted an Israeli spokesman that “improvement depended on an end to rocket attacks on Israel from Gaza,” but the AP didn’t quote the UN official as blaming Gazans’ rocketing of Israel for Gazans’ plight, or blame Gazans at all. The AP just cited “the closure,” “the closure.”

“Remove West Bank Barriers, Retired [Israeli] Generals Say,” the Inq headlined its Thursday, 2/14/08, A5 AP article This Week In The Inq. The Inq sub-headlined this article: “The former Israeli commanders say checkpoints fuel Palestinians’ hatred and hurt peace efforts.” You don’t glean this from the headline and sub-head, but what the retired generals said [par. 2] was that the checkpoints “are excessive and that other military means can be used to prevent suicide bombings in Israel.” What one of them also said [par. 11 of 11] was that “Israel should quickly complete construction of its separation barrier with the West Bank, which has proven effective in keeping out suicide bombers.” So, at both the start and end of the article, these generals were advocating alternative defensive responses – “other military means” and the “separation barrier” – not helpless defenselessness against rockets and bombers. Yet only “Remove West Bank Barriers,” which “fuel Palestinians’ hatred and hurt peace efforts,” with no hint that these retired generals still believe Israel has the right to defend itself, comes through from the headlines.

Regards,
Jerry

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DO THIS, if you’re so moved: Print out the letter below, sign it and mail it to me at this address, or just append your name as the signer and email it back.

Jerome Verlin
c/o Brith Sholom
Suite 106
3939 Conshohocken Ave.
Philadelphia PA 19134

Mr. Bruce Toll, Chairman
Mr. Brian P. Tierney, Chief Executive Officer
The Philadelphia Inquirer
Box 41705
Philadelphia PA 19101

Dear Mr. Toll and Mr. Tierney:

May 15th, in Western calendar reckoning, will mark the State of Israel's 60th anniversary of its independence, a milestone that the Western media, including the Philadelphia Inquirer, will prominently cover.

I'm gravely concerned, based upon years of quotations from your paper enclosed with this letter, that the Inquirer will portray this milestone occurrence in a manner grossly unfair to Israel and the millions of Jews and Christians who recognize Israel not as a state artificially "created" or "founded in 1948," but as the Jewish people's continuous historical homeland since ancient times.

Specifically:

I object to the Inquirer's insistent substitution of expressions like "Israel's 1948 creation," "establishment," "founding," – i.e., anything abrupt, unilateral and artificial – for what actually historically happened, the UN's Partition of the remaining League of Nations Palestine Mandate between its Arab and Jewish populations, c. a million and six hundred thousand people, respectively.

I object to the Inquirer's religious rechristening of the multi-nation Arab invasion rejecting UN Partition as "the war that followed Israel's creation" without those invading Arab states so much as named.

I object to the Inquirer's adamant attribution of seemingly exclusively Arab refugees to that "war that followed Israel's creation" and not to the multi-nation Arab invasion.

I object to the Inquirer's persistent portrayal of these Arabs as "having fled or been forced from their homes," when many left with the encouragement of the Arab invaders.

I object to the Inquirer's incessant references to these Arab refugees from tiny Israel with virtually no reference whatever to that same era's greater number of indigenously Middle Eastern Jewish refugees from vast Muslim lands, the bulk of whom Israel absorbed.

For years, with as recent an instance as 2007, the Inquirer repeatedly preposterously exaggerated the c. half-million Arabs who left tiny Israel as "millions of Palestinian refugees and their descendants," sometimes as "nearly four million Palestinian refugees and their descendants," poisoning Western public perceptions of partitioned Palestine's actual 1947 population, which was less than two million, a good third of it Jews. That the Inquirer has apparently stopped repeating this preposterous exaggeration has not undone the persistent poisoning of public perception it wreaked. Real, if but partial, rectification can come only from the Inquirer ceasing to purvey the remainder of its persistent mis-portrayal of seemingly exclusively Arab (retrospectively called "Palestinian") refugees from a sudden "1948 creation" or "founding of Israel," a mis-portrayal of which these preposterously exaggerated "millions of Palestinian refugees and their descendants," still deeply ingrained in public perception, were a key formative part.

Very truly yours,