

Terrorists, not patriots

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Roy Meachum's Jan. 18 column builds to a Hitlerian indecency, the allegation that Israelis he calls "hardliners" and in the past has equated with the Israeli government bombed the Pan Am jet and murdered more than 275 people, mostly Americans, including Jews. His convoluted and entirely baseless reasoning is that they "have more to gain than Abu Nidal," followed by the irrelevancy, the fictitious, "if the deaths . . . could have been hung on the PLO." Nobody in his right mind does blame Arafat and his PLO faction.

Mr. Meachum concludes with the false pretense that he answers my many criticisms of his defense of Arab terrorists by representing that they are limited to allegedly confusing Abu Abbas with Abu Nidal. My point was and remains that Mr. Meachum stated without any ifs or buts that the Arab terrorists are not terrorists but are merely patriots, sort of modern-day George Washington's

Until Mr. Meachum either defends what he actually wrote and has not retracted or apologizes and retracts now, there is no way he can escape responsibility for what he did write after that earlier outrage that he then quite specifically defended, the terrorists' piracy and cold-blooded murder of the aged and infirm American, Leon Klinghofer, whose body terrorists threw into the Mediterranean along with his wheelchair.

Forgetting his defense of terrorists by insisting they are only patriots, he now says "I defended their upholding international law," referring to Italy and Yugoslavia turning Abu Abbas free although the United States wanted him tried.

"Abu Abbas," Mr. Meachum pontificates, "was subsequently tried by an Italian court (and is) a convicted terrorist which he was not before the trial." He was a terrorist before the trial, but, obviously, until he was tried he could not be "convicted." It is clear that "international law" did apply to Abu Abbas. Otherwise he could not have been tried at all.

Perhaps in all that world-wide experience of which he has boasted so often Mr. Meachum never heard of piracy. One doesn't need the credentials he claims to know that murder is murder and piracy is piracy and has always been a violation of the law.

I don't pretend full knowledge of all things Arab. Maybe the omniscient Mr. Meachum will report whether or not there is any connection between Abu Abbas and Abu Nidal. If, for example, Abu Nidal is the top boss of those international terrorists, including Abbas, if so the alleged confusion is not mine.

Now that he has gone through his journalistic

slight-of-hand so long after most readers and probably editors (if any editor dare lay a pencil on what he writes) can no longer remember what he actually wrote, now that he misrepresents the thrust of my criticism he ignored for so long, perhaps Mr. Meachum will go back to those columns of the time immediately after that Abu Abbas "patriotism" and still deny that he said the Arab terrorists were not terrorists — only patriots.

Something like 900 acts of international terrorism have been attributed to Abu Nidal's gang of murderers and bombers of places of worship by our government. Included are those great patriotic exploits of bombing the Rome and Vienna airports in which many Americans, including children, were killed. Maybe — if he ever once did it — Mr. Meachum can now reprint his contentaneous condemnations of terrorism as terrorism and of the Abu Nidal gang. I don't remember his ever doing that. Only after Arafat got away with pretending he guaranteed what he in fact did not guarantee did Mr. Meachum murmur a word against Abu Nidal.

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