



Department of Justice

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OHIO MAN SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS FOR TERRORISM CONSPIRACY TO BOMB TARGETS IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON – Christopher Paul, a/k/a Abdul Malek, a/k/a Paul Kenyatta Laws, a 44-year-old U.S. citizen born in Columbus, Ohio, was sentenced to 20 years in prison today for conspiring with others to use a weapon of mass destruction, namely explosive devices, against targets in Europe and the United States.

The sentence, which was handed down by U.S. District Judge Gregory L. Frost in the Southern District of Ohio, was announced by Matthew G. Olsen, Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security; Gregory G. Lockhart, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio; Executive Assistant Director Arthur M. Cummings, II, of the FBI's National Security Branch; and Keith L. Bennett, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Cincinnati Division.

On June 3, 2008, Paul pleaded guilty to count two of a three-count indictment charging him with conspiracy to provide material support and resources to terrorists; conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction (explosives); and providing material support and resources to terrorists. At his guilty plea, Paul agreed to a sentence of 20 years in prison. The government agreed to dismiss counts one and three of the indictment.

“Today’s sentence brings an end to the long, militant career of Christopher Paul, an Ohio native who joined al Qaeda in the early 1990s, fought in Afghanistan and Bosnia and conspired with others to target Americans both at home and abroad,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General Matthew Olsen. “His lengthy prison term demonstrates our continuing resolve to protect the American public against terrorism.”

“The Paul case represents the culmination of extraordinary efforts by the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force as a whole and, in particular, the JTTF Paul case agents: FBI Special Agent Latisha Hartsough, Westerville Police Detective Mike Shaheen, and Franklin County Sheriff’s Deputy Jerry Goetz. Without the JTTF’s efforts and those of our international law enforcement counterparts, this case would not have been possible,” said U.S. Attorney Gregory G. Lockhart.

“Thanks to the work of the agents and officers at our Columbus Joint Terrorism Task Force, American-born Christopher Paul’s actions in support of al Qaeda were disrupted and exposed. Through our partnerships around the country, we will continue to

investigate and bring to justice those like him who threaten the safety and welfare of American citizens,” said Executive Assistant Director Arthur M. Cummings, II, of the FBI’s National Security Branch.

According to a statement of facts read by the case agent during the change of plea hearing for Paul in June 2008 and acknowledged to be true by the defendant:

In the early 1990s, Paul traveled to Pakistan and Afghanistan to join the mujahedeen. At an al Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan, he received initial training in, among other things, the use of assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenades, and small unit tactics. After successfully completing this training, he joined al Qaeda and stayed at the Beit ur Salam guesthouse, which was exclusively for al Qaeda members. Having distinguished himself to al Qaeda, Paul was then selected for and obtained advanced training in explosives, climbing, and military history. Paul then fought in Afghanistan alongside other mujahedeen.

After fighting in Afghanistan, Paul returned to Ohio, where he began instructing individuals in martial arts in Columbus. He also began recruiting local individuals with extremist intentions in order to establish a jihadist group in Ohio. Over time and through his association with al Qaeda, Paul became dedicated to committing jihad and furthering the objectives of al Qaeda and other radical Islamic fundamentalists.

From 1993 through 1995, Paul, using various passports and names, traveled to the Balkans in Europe and fought in conflict zones such as Bosnia, establishing further contact with radical Islamic fundamentalists, and creating a master list of al Qaeda leaders and other Islamic radicals worldwide. This list and bomb-making information was seized during the execution of a search warrant at the defendant’s home.

Paul returned to Columbus after fighting in the Balkans, and, in 1997, received a fax from two al Qaeda co-conspirators in Europe asking, on behalf of "the brothers," for Paul to find them a "true group and place to make jihad." While in Columbus, Paul conducted training operations in Burr Oak State Park in Ohio with several members of his local group, replicating terrorist training he had received in Afghanistan and Bosnia.

Preparing to travel again overseas, Paul obtained a new passport after claiming his old passport – in one of his other aliases – had been damaged by water. Beginning in March 31, 1999, and continuing through Jan. 31, 2000, Paul made 44 calls to an Islamic fundamentalist co-conspirator in Europe, who was arrested in 2003 and later convicted of a terrorist conspiracy.

On April 16, 1999, Paul traveled to meet with members of an Islamic terror cell in Germany, who knew him as an expert in bomb-making/detonation devices. In Germany, Paul provided explosives training to the cell knowing that it was planning to use this training to construct bombs, car bombs, and similar devices to be used against Americans while they vacationed at foreign tourist resorts. The German terrorist cell also planned to

use bombs against Americans in the United States, and against U.S. facilities abroad, such as U.S. embassies, diplomatic premises and military bases in Europe.

Upon his return to Ohio from Germany, Paul had a member of his group in Columbus purchase a printer / scanner in May 1999. The printer/scanner was then sent to one of the German terror cell members in order to help the cell manufacture fraudulent documents to facilitate worldwide travel. The cell member did not claim the package in Germany and it was sent back to Paul. During this time, Paul also bought other equipment to be used by extremists, including night vision equipment and a laser range finder. Additional similar items were found during the execution of search warrants by the Columbus FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force. Furthermore, in November 1999, bank records show that Paul wire transferred \$1,760 to one of the principal members of the German cell.

The Paul investigation was conducted by the Columbus FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, a multi-agency operation led by the FBI that includes agents and officers from 10 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

The case was prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Ohio and the Justice Department's National Security Division.

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