

White House, citizens all around the world were treated to newsreels showing Egyptians, many of whom were still carrying their Muslim prayer mats, suddenly worshipping Pagan Idols, and welcoming their conqueror as some form of Living God.

Africa is a large continent, containing 53 countries, with unresolved hostilities and no country powerful enough to dictate terms to the rest. While African leaders started discussing on a treaty that would cement a continent-wide alliance against the invaders, the false God was marching towards Medina and the Mecca.

The Muslims of the world did not wait for the emergence of a treaty, Pan-African or not, that could defeat the Nile Empire. Nor did the Muslims of the world expect any help from the Delphi Council or the Bureau des Tempêtes or the Earth Defense Forces. What the Muslims of the world did was band together, as well as possible in the chaos that marked the beginning of the Invasion.

This alliance never reached the full Pan-Islamic scale that some dreamt of, but after several attempts, a loose federation emerged, and took the name of Federation of Saladin. While it started as a Pan-African grassroots movement, it has quickly grown into an uneasy global alliance designed principally to save Muslims all over the world.

HISTORY

By opposition to the other Agencies of the Reality Choir, the Federation of Saladin is largely a global-scale grassroots movement.

While the movement gathered followers as fast as Facebook and word of mouth made it

FEDERATION OF SALADIN¹⁵



When the Invasion started, the world was already at war. The US called it the Global War on Terror but some other countries already called it an invasion. So much so that, when the Nile Empire landed in Egypt, the news of several countries assumed that a US army was marching on Cairo.

This was, of course, not the case. While outraged Egyptian leaders were trying to get answers from the US embassy and the

¹⁵ This Arabic writing is pronounced "tadamun". It translates into "Solidarity". The full name of the Federation of Saladin is "اتحاد صلاح الدين الايوبي", pronounced "aitihad salah aldiyn alaywby".

possible, it took several months to actually acquire a stable identity. In its first iteration, the movement was largely controlled by the Al'iikhwat Fi Alaslam Almuqadas¹⁶ (Brothers in Holy Islam), a political organization that made no secret that its first objective was to promote Shi'ite Islamic revolutions around the world. Internal power struggles soon replaced the Brothers in Holy Islam by the equally militant – and much more violent – Almuharibun Yawm Alqiyama (Warriors of Judgment Day), an organization known for terrorist actions in North-Africa.

After four more iterations, some of them

up in charge. The OIC, who clearly realized that continuing on the same vein would be tantamount to declaring war on the USA and the Delphi Council, cleaned house, expelled from the Federation all the organizations which showed too much enthusiasm for violence, and eventually nominated Doctor Abyad al-Hannan, president of the Red Crescent, as the director of the Federation of Saladin.

Doctor Abyad al-Hannan, a pragmatic administrator but also a former member of Doctors without Borders, immediately set in stone the main principle of the Federation of



scary, the much more pragmatic leadership of the Office for Islamic Cooperation ended

Saladin: while the movement is a Pan-Islamic federation of independent cells, it is first

¹⁶ With the exception of the Red Crescent and the OIC, all the organizations in this list are meant to be fictive.



and foremost a humanitarian organization, dedicated to the assistance of civilian populations threatened by the Reality War.

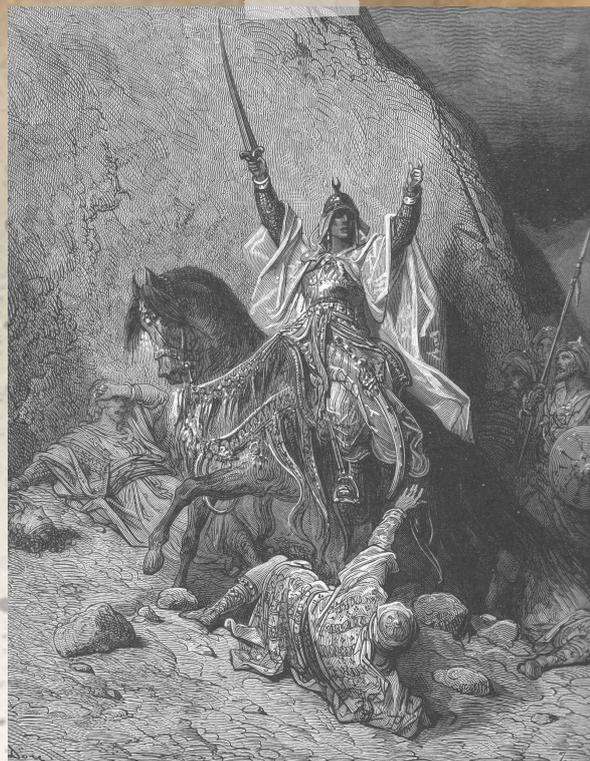
Sadly, the pedigree of some of the organizations which helped create the Federation prompted the Delphi Council to add the Federation of Saladin to its list of terrorist organizations.

MEMBERSHIP

Strictly speaking, the Federation doesn't know its own numbers. Its budget is extremely limited – sufficient to bring Operatives all over the world, smuggling them if necessary, but generally not to equip them with more than the basics.

Thanks to the enthusiasm caused by the creation of this Federation, it has managed to attract a surprising number of Psionics (who are treated as holy men and women) and Hackers. Most of the enthusiasts who applied as agents of the Federation turn out to be young men – in fact, while many cells have women, the women-to-men ratio is very low, on par with that of the Bureau des Tempêtes.

Also, individual cells vary considerably. While most are composed of adventurous and idealistic Operatives who will save anyone they can, a few will be less civil and inclined to violence, disregarding the safety of non-Abrahamic Believers or even of non-Muslims. This is, clearly, contrary to the general principles of the Federation, but some will point out that the member agencies of the Delphi Council, Bureau des Tempêtes or Earth Defense Force are well-known to employ Operatives who disregard just as much the life of citizens of poor countries – and that many Shield of Atlas Operatives tend to be even worse. Even more than the Delphi Council, the Federation of Saladin currently has no oversight on the actions of its Operatives.



While the Federation did not start as government-backed, roughly one third of African nations have progressively decided to make it their protector Agency, as well as a dozen of smaller nations across Asia. This includes the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Tajikistan, Yemen, Ethiopia (partially invaded), Tanzania (despite the fact that the majority of inhabitants are Christian and that many of the Muslims of the country are members of Ahmadiyya Islam, which is considered heretic by many Muslims), Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Zambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Angola, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Bosnia, Turkmenistan, Botswana and Kazakhstan. This is something of a complication for the Federation, as most these countries are among the poorest in the world – certainly too poor to be accepted as part of the Treaty of Atlas – and their membership did not come with any meaningful increase in donations. Still, these countries provide safe houses and bases to rest, rearm, plan and recover from missions.

One can estimate that the Federation has rough 1,000 Storm Knights around day 90 of the Invasion and will grow beyond 8,000 before the end of the first year.

CURRENT PRIORITIES

As other members of the Reality Choir, the main mandate of the Federation of Saladin is to fight off the Invasion.

1. Wherever possible, save defenseless civilians from the Invader and from the War. This priority is extremely open to interpretation by individual cells, some of whom will restrict themselves to Abrahamic Believers (Muslims, Jews and Christians), or only to Muslims, or only to poor populations. Such is the price of acting as a quickly-assembled federation bound together by a religion that has as many different interpretations as it has Imams.
2. Protect the Holy Sites of Islam from the Invasion. This includes Medina, the Mecca and Jerusalem, as well as numerous smaller sites.
3. Determine if the Invasion is an Act of God or the Devil. Find out who is on the side of God, who on the side of the Devil.
4. Rescue oppressed Muslim populations, anywhere in the world. Again, this priority is highly debatable by individual cells. If given the opportunity, Federation cells will certainly try and extract Uyghurs from Xinjiang.
5. Locate funding, equipment, followers.
6. Make contacts with Muslims in all Cosms, ideally also in Invading Realities.

AUTONOMY OF AGENTS

Agents of the Federation are autonomous to the point of anarchy. While an operation manual has been written and drilled into new recruits, the Federation remains a collection of enthusiasts with very little experience and who will regularly forget to report their missions or to synchronize with local cells. This causes regular problems which leadership attempts to smooth out through the limited communication channels.

Beyond this, groups of Operatives will routinely vote on whether they agree with the objectives or means of the operation. Operatives that reject one or the other will typically attempt to find what they consider a better mission or a better way to reach the objectives, with highly variable results.

PRISONERS

In most countries, the Federation generally does not have the means to bring prisoners back to a secure location.

The Federation condones neither murder nor torture but individual cells are expected to make their own choices.

DIPLOMACY

The Federation of Saladin is generally well-perceived by Muslim populations, much less so by others.

DELPHI COUNCIL

While the Delphi Council has other priorities, it is at war with the Federation. No Delphi Council Operative will be blamed for taking a shot at a Federation agent.



BUREAU DES TEMPÊTES

While several of the member countries of the Bureau have followed the lead of the Delphi Council and labelled the Federation a terrorist organization, the Bureau itself refuses to do so. Rather, the Bureau has more than once attempted to open communication channels for negotiation.

However, the Federation does not trust the Bureau and in particular the Cyberpapacy. It is unlikely that any alliance will be made any time soon.

EARTH DEFENSE FORCE

The Earth Defenses Force doesn't seem to overly care about the Federation, one way or the other.

The opposite is far from true. Federation leadership is actively looking for means to rescue the Uyghurs and Rohingya from Pan-Pacific Alliance territory. In a not too distant future, this will certainly lead to war between these agencies.

TREATY OF ATLAS

It is no secret that many nations have signed the Treaty of Atlas specifically to avoid dealing with the Federation and that one of the tasks of the Shield of Atlas is to prevent the Federation from achieving too many visible successes.

So far, this has not led to bloodshed between organizations – the Shield of Atlas has always been content with implied threats – but this may change.

IN THE MEDIA

Worldwide, the Federation is largely ignored by the media. While there are reports of "Victories by Muslim Storm Knights" in Mecca, for instance, these victories remain largely uncredited to the Federation. In particular, many governments of Muslim coun-

tries explicitly censor news of the Federation, fearing that it could lead to revolutions.

On social networks, the situation is reversed: the feats of the Federation grow with each retelling, without proportion to what ever actually happened.

STRENGTHS

The main strength of the Federation may be the enthusiasm of its members. Most of them have enrolled to finally do something against the Invasion, and it simply feels good! Moreover, the act of enrolling is, for many, a Moment of Choice, causing the Federation to have a surprising number of Storm Knights.

Since the Federation doesn't have proper communication channels, it uses social networks and online video games for communication. So far, this has proven remarkably good at escaping monitoring from Echelon. Well, either that or the Delphi Council is waiting for the right opportunity to use the information.

Finally, the variety of background of Operatives and the origin of many of them from poorer countries of Africa and poorer regions of Pakistan makes them very good at improvising and finding low-tech solutions to all sorts of problems.

WEAKNESSES

The main weakness of the Federation is its disorganization. Cells have no clear chain of command, no clear manner of requesting assistance, etc. So far, individual cells have managed remarkably well given these limitations. However, many Operatives may end up spending way too much time debating and voting to determine whether a specific civilian or group of civilians deserves to be saved, or whether a foe shouldn't be offered to surrender (or convert!) before start-

ing a firefight. Also, while Operatives are given hasty training by army officers, members of Doctors without Borders, or sometimes experienced Operatives, one must admit that most members of the Federation are beginners.

The second weakness of the Federation is that it has been added to the terrorist list by the Delphi Council. All Federation Operatives, as well as Federation leadership *automatically* have a status of either *Bag and tag if possible* or *Terminate if possible*. This makes stealth critical and attempts at diplomacy suicidal in many cases. Worse: if the Delphi Council were to murder the leadership of the Federation, it is quite possible that the real terrorist organizations who have been attempting to gain control of the Federation since the early days would benefit from this and finally succeed. This wouldn't turn the Federation terrorist overnight – the decentralized structure of the Federation would not make this possible – but it would progressively shift the core principles, training and support to encourage its most violent Cells.

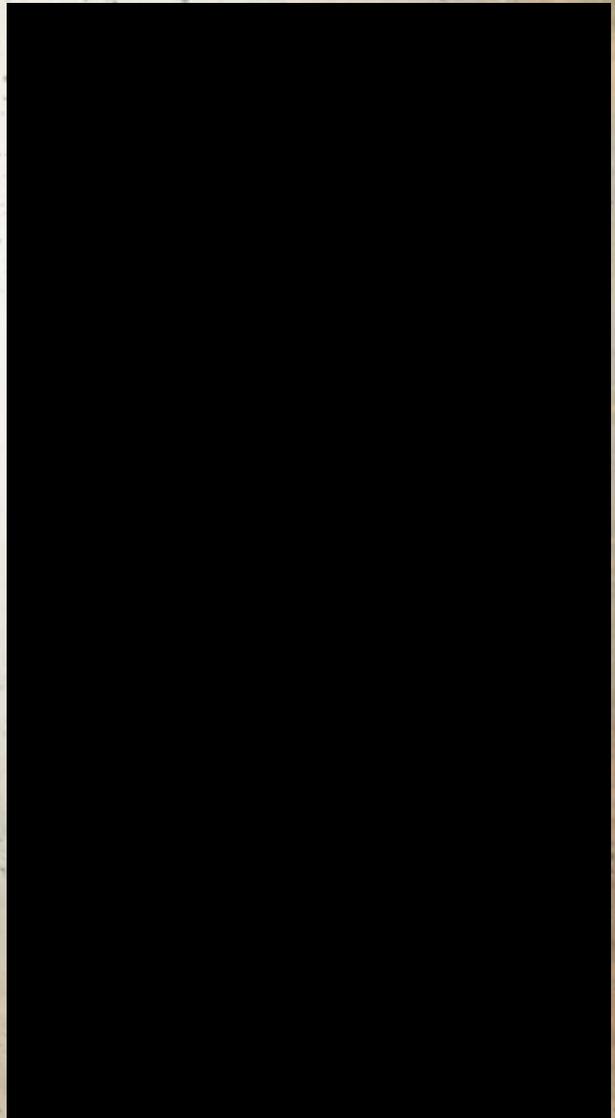
Also, while communications within the Federation mostly manage to elude surveillance technologies, this decentralization makes it hard to share hard information and very easy to spread rumors. Operatives will find all sorts of gossip, claiming anything from a “Zionist alliance” with Doctor Mobius, sightings of Iblis¹⁷ incarnated in Tharkold to the presence of underground Maelstrom Bridges under Japan. Who knows what is true, if anything?

The Federation is also considerably hindered by a lack of resources. While several countries will donate, these are some of the poorest countries in the world, and all the

money promised by rich Middle Eastern and North African countries has instead been used to fund the Shield of Atlas.

ONE YEAR LATER

The successes of the Invaders are driving everyone desperate. Some cells finally start drawing a page from the terrorist handbook. Expect bombings in the Nile Empire and attempts to unroot Nile Empire and Orrorsh Stelae by brute force. Expect fighting against other cells from both the Federation and other Agencies who do not want this to happen.



¹⁷ That's the Muslim version of the Devil. Like Jewish Devils and by opposition to Christian Devils, Iblis is generally described as obeying God, rather than being God's enemy.

