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The use of terrorism as a means to create a homeland for stateless refugees in the Middle East

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**THE USE OF TERRORISM AS A MEANS TO CREATE A HOMELAND FOR
STATELESS REFUGEES IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

**A THESIS
PRESENTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY**

**In Partial Fulfillment
Of The Requirement For The Degree
Master Of Arts**

**By
Chris D. Funk
December, 1991**

ABSTRACT

THE USE OF TERRORISM AS A MEANS TO CREATE A HOMELAND FOR STATELESS REFUGEES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

By Chris D. Funk

Terrorism in the Middle East may be considered an unfortunate but inevitable by-product of revolutionary nationalism. The Jews living in Palestine in the 1930s and 1940s, lived under a mandate system run by the British government. This system was set up after the first World War. The Palestinians lost their homeland after the state of Israel was established in 1948. After the Six Day War in 1967, many Palestinians were forced to live in what is now called the occupied territories, under Israeli rule. Terrorism was used by Jewish extremists and is used today by Palestinian extremists in order to propagandize their political causes to the world. This thesis will compare the success of the Irgun and Stern Gang in establishing a Jewish homeland in the area of Palestine to the seemingly unsuccessful attempt by Yasir Arafat and Al-Fatah in establishing a Palestinian homeland through the use of terrorism. It will then trace Arafat's movement toward a Palestinian homeland through the use of the Palestinian Liberation Organization as a political party.

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Introduction

Terrorism in the Middle East today is the inevitable by-product of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The 1967 War between Israel and its neighboring Arab countries changed the power structure and borders of the countries along the Israeli border. Israel's lightning six day attack destroyed most of the Egyptian and Syrian air force. Furthermore, Israel's ground troops captured the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the West Bank, including the eastern part of Jerusalem from Jordan.

Palestinian terrorism began in the early 1960's but did not come into its own until 1968. The Palestinians were the first group in the Arab community to come out fighting after the humiliating defeat from Israel. At the time, the goal of the Palestinians was not to regain part of their lost territory but to destroy Israel and push the Israelis into the Mediterranean Sea.

Terrorism in the Middle East today directed toward American citizens is also related to indirect American support of Jewish terrorism on British subjects during the British mandate of Palestine in the years 1944-48. Terrorism was used by Jewish extremists to expel Great Britain from Palestine and is used today by Palestinians under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) against their Israeli adversaries.

The Jewish militants of 1944-1948, known collectively as the Irgun Zvai Leumi, had formed in the 1930s to protect the Yishuv, or Jewish community in Palestine. After failed attempts of the Zionist revisionist movement of Vladimir Jabotinsky, calling for the immediate establishment of a Zionist state, the Irgun and the Stern Gang, another Jewish resistance group, used terrorist tactics to force the hand of the British to establish a Jewish state and to inform the world of the Jewish plight in Palestine. The United States never took a strong stance denouncing the terrorist activities during this struggle for a Jewish homeland. Moreover, in 1948, the United States was the first country to recognize the state of Israel after the British mandate was ended. The establishment of the state of Israel marked the beginning of extensive American political, economic, and military involvement in the Middle East. The American government set the stage for turmoil between the Arab nations and the United States and heightened the tension between Palestinians and Jews by guaranteeing the independence and territorial integrity of Israel.

After World War II, American foreign policy in the Middle East was predicated on three major international issues: nationalism, the rise of the Cold War, and the politics of oil. The rise of nationalism in the Arab world came from three sources. First, Gamal Abdul Nasser, who had led Egypt and the Arab world against the Ottoman Empire, was now opposed to French and British colonialism. Theodore Herzl's founding of Zionism was the second source of nationalism. Herzl supported a national homeland for the persecuted Jews during the Russian pogroms. Lastly, the

creation of Israel led to a clash of nationalism between Jews and displaced Palestinians.

The second international issue influencing the American foreign policy in the Middle East was the beginning of the Cold War. The United States came out of World War II with an unfamiliar role as world power. When President Truman addressed Congress in 1947 and announced the Truman Doctrine, the beginning of the Cold War in Greece and Turkey and specifically the Middle East was under way. The policy of containment forced the White House to back what was going to be an important strong hold in the Middle East: Israel.

The third major international political issue was the politics of oil. The United States had used much of its oil reserves to fight the war in Europe and the Pacific and looked to other areas of the world (like the Middle East) for its oil resources. The oil rich area of the Middle East created a new and viable military strong hold. The White House wanted to play a major role in the Middle East and Israel was going to be the significant military power in the area. For the United States to be the major player in the Middle East, the White House needed to support Israel. In the 1980's, America's role in the Middle East, shaped by five Arab-Israeli wars, various intra-Arab conflicts, and continuing uncertainty about the availability and cost of Arab oil, has become one of America's most critical foreign policy concerns.¹

¹"The Middle East," Congressional Quarterly 7th ed., (1990): 38.

Through the years, America has continued to show its support for Israel by refusing to acknowledge Yasir Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Why did Yasir Arafat, as leader of the terrorist group Al-Fatah (Movement for the Liberation of Palestine),² not gain the same success as did Menachem Begin and Abraham Stern against the British from 1944-48? As this thesis will demonstrate, there were four reasons: lack of coherent Palestinian leadership, lack of Arab world support, lack of international support, and Jewish reprisal attacks. First, the Palestinian extremists lacked coherent leadership within the PLO. Yasir Arafat had to contend with splinter terrorist groups such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and "Black September." Both the PFLP and "Black September" wanted to extend terrorist activities outside the Fertile Crescent to the international scene. This was in direct conflict with the PLO, creating problems of Palestinian cooperation.

The second reason for Fatah's lack of success was the lack of support from the Arab world. All the neighbor states which border Israel pursued selfish policies. Gamal Nasser, of Egypt, wanted to lead the Arab world, but Palestinian extremists challenged his leadership. King Hussein of Jordan wanted to represent the Palestinians and confiscate their land into Jordanian territory. Moreover, Syria wanted to use Fatah as a puppet regime to regain the Golan Heights from Israel.

²From this point on I will refer to Al-Fatah, as Fatah.

The world's nations never gave the Palestinian movement a chance. The United States and others simply would not recognize Arafat as the sole spokesman for the Palestinian people. The Soviet Union was opposed to the relationship Fatah developed with Communist China because the Soviets wanted to use Fatah as a puppet regime to gain a foothold in the Middle East. Arafat, however, refused to give up decision making power.

The fourth reason Arafat was unsuccessful in gaining a Palestinian state through the use of terrorism was because of Jewish reprisals. Israel fought terrorism with terrorism. Unlike Great Britain earlier, Israel was able to form a coherent policy to combat Palestinian terrorism through quick retaliatory attacks on Palestinian refugee camps. These air attacks were precise and made further terrorist attacks against Israel very dangerous and risky.

This thesis will compare the success of the Irgun and Stern Gang in establishing a Jewish homeland in the area of Palestine to the seemingly unsuccessful attempt by Yasir Arafat and Al-Fatah in establishing a Palestinian homeland through the use of terrorism. It will then trace Arafat's movement toward a Palestinian homeland through the use of the PLO as a political party.

There has been a vast amount written about Israel and the Arab world and the plight of the Palestinians. Much has been written about the Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Palestinian extremists. John Laffin is one of these authors.

John Laffin, author of Fedayeen, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, was an important source in my research. His book is important because it examines the rise of the fedayeen movement to the peak of its success and decline. Laffin succeeds in showing the significance of the movement to both Arabs and Jews and tries to separate myth from the reality that encompasses the conflict. One of Laffin's main goals is to say something definitive about the Palestinian refugees. He describes the first set of refugees as those people who left their homes during 1948 in the territory which is now Israel and took refuge in neighboring areas. The second major flight of refugees took place during the 1967 War. When war broke out, tens of thousands Arab families fled from their homes and sought refuge in Syria, Jordan and Egypt. Those left behind live in what is now called the Occupied Territories.

Laffin describes members of the fedayeen as those refugees who fled Israeli territory and have relocated outside the Occupied Territory and in neighboring states. However, Laffin only touches on the subject of why Arafat or leadership within the PLO has been unsuccessful in gaining more recruits from refugee camps in the West Bank or Gaza Strip. Laffin examines the raids of the fedayeen but his only explanation for their lack of success was poor leadership within the resistance and the constant struggle against Israeli retaliatory attacks. Laffin does not go into complete detail as to why there was a lack of leadership in the resistance nor does he go into much detail as to why the Israeli's were successful in fighting terrorism.

Walter Laqueur wrote The Age of Terrorism. His examination of Jewish terrorism during the British mandate in the late 1930s and 1940s shows the rise and success of the Irgun and Stern Gang. Laqueur shows the success of Jewish terrorism against the hapless British army and the terrified and defenseless Palestinians. Laqueur also explains the many reasons for the success of the Jewish resistance examining the noninvolvement or noncommittal stance of United States foreign policy toward Jewish terrorism.

Laqueur suggests the main reason for the Irgun and Stern Gang success was the lack of response by the British military. The British were ill-prepared or equipped to deal with this new type of fighter. The British simply could not bomb or take out Jewish settlements for two reasons: proximity and diplomacy. Laqueur points to the fact that the British military was stationed in the heart of the Jewish settlement. If they reacted with terror, the chance for Jewish civilians being hurt or killed was too great. Furthermore, the British homeland was so far away they simply could not come to grips with this new type of terror nor would the international community allow terror tactics against the Jews.

Laqueur also suggests that the Palestinians had no way to fight back. The Arab world would not support the displaced Palestinians after the 1967 War. Consequently, the Palestinians would receive no sympathy from the international community toward their drive to evict the Jews from their biblical homeland.

Laqueur spends most of his time explaining the numerous raids of the Irgun and Stern Gang. His emphasis here is to show the lack of American condemnation of Jewish terrorism. The United States refused to condemn any Jewish act of terrorism because of the guilt the White House had toward its lack of resolve or understanding of the holocaust in Germany. Laqueur stresses these two points: lack of British reprisal and the United States noncommittal stance on terrorism. Although Laqueur does an excellent job of promoting these ideas, they are not the only important points to the success of the Jewish resistance.

A. Y. Yodfat and Aron Ohanna wrote PLO Strategy and Politics. They attempt to present a comprehensive study of the PLO. They analyze the different Palestinian organizations, their strategies, and politics. This book is a good source for learning about the PLO's history, ideology, and the leading personalities and their roles. It is a good source to get a strong basis and understanding for the PLO.

Although this is a comprehensive examination of the PLO, it does not go into much detail as to why certain strategies have worked and why others have failed. The key point that is worth mentioning for this study is that the splinter groups within the PLO caused numerous problems for Arafat and his leadership. The clash for power and leadership over the activities of the extremists finally led to several splinter groups breaking away from the PLO. These splinter groups began to launch their own raids into Israel and other public domains internationally. This confrontation over when and where raids took place hurt the PLO in the eyes of the international community. This

is the most important example that Yodfat and Ohanna made in terms of the lack of success for the Palestinians.

Nicholas Bethell wrote The Palestinian Triangle, which gives a good overview of the many and complicated issues which are at the heart of the Israel-Palestinian problem. Bethell describes the makeup and functions of the Irgun and the Stern Gang. There are numerous accounts of the many raids by the Irgun against British military posts and Palestinian villages. Bethell gives a good and complete analysis of some of the issues that are at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For instance, he stresses the fact that American foreign policy has not supported, or come near supporting, the Palestinians, to the degree that it supported Israel. Bethell contends that the Jewish lobby in the United States has determined foreign policy in the Middle East for a few decades. This lobby, Bethell contends, has limited the success of the Palestinians because it has not allowed the Palestinians to gain leverage needed in the international community to force Israel to the bargaining table.

Bethell also contends that by not condemning Israeli counter attacks into Palestinian refugee camps, many of which are located on the border of Israel or inside other countries' borders, Israel has a free hand to combat Palestinian resistance fighters without having to answer to American retaliation. In other words, the Israelis may treat the Palestinians the same way the Jews were treated in Nazi Germany. This free hand has been detrimental to the Palestinian movement.

This comes to the crux of Bethell's argument. He tries to show the relationship between Israel, the Palestinians, and the United States by arguing from the Arab point of view. Bethell tries to argue that the White House needs to use its muscle and influence to force Israel to capitulate its stance toward the Occupied Territories for Palestinian right to self-determination. Many individuals contend that the United States, being the number one military and financial creditor to Israel, can use its long arm to dictate peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Although this relationship exists and is extremely important to both countries, it is much more complicated than simply having the United States flex its muscles toward Israel and bring peace to the Middle East. However, The Palestine Triangle was an important resource that led me to numerous other sources that have been used in my research and writing.

Fedayeen, written by Zeev Schiff, is an excellent book about the Palestinian resistance. It examines the rise of Palestinian consciousness and the rise of Yasser Arafat and Al-Fatah. It presents the struggles and turbulence of the Fedayeen. Schiff tries to examine the failure and success of the Palestinian resistance and he gives a good explanation about the failure of the movement. He also speculates on the future of the fedayeen.

Schiff stresses the fact that the single most important contributor to the lack of Palestinian success is the internal conflict within the fedayeen. Schiff suggests that the early resistance was much more successful because it had a small leadership with tight

units. There were only a few individuals making policy. Early on the goal of destroying Israel was unified within the Palestinian masses. However, when the raids accomplished their goal of international awareness, Schiff suggests that the leadership failed in gaining a unified front. New splinter groups wanted immediate decision making power. When the leadership could not decide on the time or place for raids, the splinter groups broke from the PLO, throwing more fluid in the already burning fire.

It was at this time that international raids began from the competing splinter groups. Consequently, the PLO received the condemnation of the international world. From this time on, Arafat had to compete with other factions for the leadership and representation of the Palestinian masses and the attention of world leaders. This is a good examination of one theory for the lack of Palestinian success. However, Schiff does not mention why the Jewish extremists were more successful than the Palestinians.

Alan Hart's Arafat: A Political Biography, is an historical account of Arafat and the rise of Fatah. It is based on Hart's personal travels and interviews with Arafat, his aides, and many other individuals in the hierarchy of Fatah and the PLO. Hart delivers a book that accounts for many of the raids that were carried out by Fatah under Arafat's orders. Hart also describes the fight to oust Ahmad Shukairy as head of the PLO and the struggle to retain his power by power-hungry splinter groups and leaders of other states.

Hart also touches on the theory that Schiff discusses in his reference to the splinter groups and other leaders of Arab States vying for Palestinian leadership. He examines the fact that there is little help or backing throughout the Arab world for the Palestinians. Leaders like King Hussein of Jordan or Hafez Assad of Syria want to take decision power away from the mainstream leadership to negotiate the fate of the Palestinians. However, both leaders are after their own selfish agenda, to regain land lost to Israel.

In his biography of Arafat Hart focuses on the number of PLO conspiracy theories as to why the West has not supported the Palestinian movement, in particular, the theory of a watergate connection that was used by some of Israel's supporters to break President Nixon and then to prevent him from honoring secret promises to King Feisal of Saudi Arabia. This conspiracy was believed to involve a strong push from Israeli lobbyists in Washington that help pressure the Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, to achieve his own agenda; he did not want Israel to give up land for peace. Furthermore, the Watergate scandal forced Nixon to step aside from direct negotiation with Israeli leadership and surrender the diplomacy to Kissinger. The problem with this conspiracy plot and other plots discussed by Hart, is that most of the sources he cites are Palestinian or Arab which leads one to believe that some of the information comes from a tainted point of view.

When speaking about the Jewish organizations operating against the British or the Palestinian organizations operating against Israel, many labels could be used to

describe them: guerrillas, commandos, resistance or liberation fighters. "Terrorist" is a label given to the Jews by the British and in return given to the Palestinians by the Israelis. Both groups undoubtedly used terrorist tactics to try and evict their adversary. For my purpose in this study, my definition of terrorism is based on the definition given by the Office for Combating Terrorism. International Terrorism is "terrorism conducted with the support of a foreign government or organization and/or directed against foreign nationals with the purpose of overthrowing existing regimes, rectifying national or group grievances, or undermining international order as an end to itself."³

³Department of State Research Report, Patterns of International Terrorism (Washington D.C.: Office for Combatting Terrorism, 1982), 1.

Jewish Terrorism: 1944-48

Chapter I

Before discussing the activities of the Irgun and the Stern Gang, it is important to give a background to the events that led to the establishment of the two Jewish extremist groups. During the first world war, Britain was considered one of the strongest countries in the world. The first world war caused the break up of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of national boundaries for the Middle East. Meanwhile, Jewish interest in the land of their ancestors grew in intensity in the later part of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, as cruel anti-semitism spread throughout Central Europe and Russia. Many tens of thousands of Jews were massacred in pogroms which the Tsarist government did little to prevent. This led to the exodus of perhaps as many as three million Jews between 1870 and 1920.

It was these persecutions which gave the initial impetus and urgency to Zionism. Zionism had as its goal the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine which the Jews considered theirs, by historical and Biblical title, where the Jew was the owner rather than the tenant, of his own land and that of a national homeland.⁴ Chaim Weizmann and Nahum Sokolow were two leaders living in London who were part of the Zionist movement; they worked closely with David Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of Britain. On 2 November 1917, Britain decided to make a gesture

⁴Helen Anne B. Rivlin, "The Holy Land: The American Experience," The Middle East Journal 30, supplement 3, (Summer 1976): 384.

to the Jews in Palestine and all over the world by announcing the Balfour Declaration. James Balfour, the foreign secretary expressed support for the establishment in Palestine of a "national home" for the Jewish people, adding that nothing would be done which could prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in the region.⁵

II

All seemed to be going well for the Zionist movement with the support of Britain until the Arab nations put enough pressure on Britain to stop immigration into Palestine. There were basically two events that led to the rise of the Jewish resistance groups. The first event was the infamous White Paper which led to utter disgust and disappointment from the Jews because it appeared Britain changed its support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine to a mixed population with a majority Arab population. The White Paper, authorized in 1939, established a quota on Jewish immigration into Palestine that seemed to the Jews a disastrous blow to the development of a national home. The White Paper slowed down the flow of immigration from more than 400,000 Jews between 1923 and 1939, to 15,000 a year for five years. After 1939, Jewish immigration was disallowed.⁶ The second event that led to the rise of the

⁵"The Middle East," Congressional Quarterly, 7th ed., (1990): 38.

⁶"The Middle East," Congressional Quarterly 7th ed., (1987): 38.

Jewish resistance groups was the sinking of the *Struma*, a ship carrying 767 Jewish refugees in 1938.⁷ The ship had no running water or heat and the engines were not in working condition. The ship was located in a Turkish port but the Turkish government refused to accept the refugees. Britain could not afford to send a ship to save the refugees who were denied entrance into Palestine by Britain. The Turkish government finally sent the ship on its way with no power by using a tug boat to pull the ship out to sea. No one knows what happened for sure, whether the *Struma* was torpedoed, whether she hit a mine or whether there was a bomb on board, but she went down and 767 drowned in the Black Sea.⁸ The Jews held Britain accountable and the Irgun moved from protector to terrorist.

The Irgun had formed in the 1930s to protect the Yishuv from the Arab nations of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon. However, because of the aforementioned events, the Irgun, by the end of the European war in 1945, was now carrying out terrorist attacks against the continued British occupation. These attacks were condemned not only by the Arabs and British, but also by Chaim Weizman and David Ben-Gurion of the Jewish Agency in London, who believed that an independent Jewish state could be created in Palestine only gradually and after patient negotiation with the British government. The Jewish Agency had been created to help solve the question of a Jewish homeland in Palestine by cooperating with the British, but the extremists

⁷Nicholas Bethell, *The Palestine Triangle* (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1979), 117.

⁸*Ibid.*

had come to realize that despite the war's end, a Jewish homeland in Palestine was far from being established. The promise from the Labour government in London, and the atrocity of the German Holocaust of the Jews produced no significant changes from the British Mandatory Government in Palestine.

At the same time, the United States was doing very little itself to help with the problem. News of the death camps reached Washington in 1942. President Roosevelt received a number of passionate pleas from Jewish leaders in the United States to do something about the death camps. Rabbi Stephen C. Wise asked Roosevelt to at least state publicly that he knew of the Nazi extermination policy and that the United States would hold the Nazi leaders accountable for their actions.⁹ Other Jewish leaders begged Secretary of State Cordell Hull, to send airplanes and bomb the extermination camps.¹⁰ In both cases the administration took the pleas under advisement. Two years after the war only 5,000 Jewish refugees had been admitted into the United States.¹¹ This slow understanding of the Jewish plight led to the guilt Americans felt toward the Jewish struggle in Palestine.

The United States led the effort after the war to lift the restrictions of the White Paper. In August 1945, President Truman called for the free settlement of

⁹Richard Stevens, American Zionism And U.S. Foreign Policy 1942-1947 (New York: The Institute For Palestine Studies, 1962), 83.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Peter Mansfield, The Arabs 2nd ed., (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), 237.

Palestine by Jews to a point consistent with the maintenance of civil peace. Right from the start, American policy was one that undermined that of Britain.

III

Britain has always had an interest in the Middle East because at one time her colony extended to where the "sun always shown." However, by the end of World War II, the American stake in Palestine had grown tremendously. First, the Jewish lobby in the United States played an enormous role in forming foreign policy; second, America had used most of its oil reserves to fight the war in Europe and, third, at the end of the war, tensions grew between the two super powers which led to the beginning of the Cold War. Russia never had much influence in the Middle East, but because of the threat of the spread of communism and the support the Soviets were giving to the Irgun, the United States was forced to engage in active participation in the Holy Land conflict.

The Jewish lobby in the United States played an unprecedented factor in forming American foreign policy in the Middle East. Before the Second World War broke out, the Roosevelt administration tried to down play the Zionist movement in the United States. When the Jewish lobby presented a paper to the State Department in 1936, calling upon the United States to protest a rumored changed in the immigration policy to Palestine (The White Paper), neither the President nor the State

Department paid much attention to these assertions. Secretary of State Cordell Hull merely asked the American ambassador in London to repeat Jewish concerns in an unofficial manner to the Foreign Secretary.¹² After the release of the White Paper on 17 May 1939, Roosevelt remained somewhat reserved. But privately, Roosevelt expressed the belief that "the British are not wholly correct in saying that the framers of the Palestine Mandate could not have intended that Palestine should be converted into a Jewish state against the will of the Arab population of the country."¹³

However, in a few short years, the Jewish lobby gained enormous influence and power. Hull suggested to Roosevelt in the 1944 campaign that the leaders of both parties refrain from making statements during the campaign which might "tend to arouse the Arabs or upset the precarious balance of forces in Palestine."¹⁴ Roosevelt did not listen to Hull and was forced to speak out on the Palestine issue after the Republican candidate Thomas Dewey spoke out in October of 1944. At stake were the electoral votes of New York. New York in 1944 was entitled to 47 electoral votes, while only 266 electoral votes were needed to elect a President. Zionist leaders made it very clear that the "Jewish vote" was going to be the decisive factor in the election. Kermit Roosevelt believed that this change in policy on Palestine marked a

¹²Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York: Macmillan Company, 1948), 1528.

¹³Richard Stevens, American Zionism And U.S. Foreign Policy 1942-1947 (New York: The Institute For Palestine Studies, 1962), 82.

¹⁴Kermit Roosevelt, "The Partition of Palestine; A lesson in Pressure Politics," Middle East Journal II, supplement 1, (January 1948): 5.

significant change in the White House, often against the expressed advice of the War, Navy and State Departments.¹⁵ By the middle of the 1940s the Jewish population in the United States had reached over 5,000,000.¹⁶ Zionism began influencing United States foreign policy in the early 1940s and is still a major influence today.

There were two instances of American interference with Russian expansion in the Middle East. The first was in Greece and Turkey which led to the Truman Doctrine. Britain could no longer afford to keep its military support in Greece and a Communist-controlled guerrilla movement had an upper hand in the area. The Truman Doctrine began a new era in Soviet-American relations and aid to Greece kept its government out of Russian hands. Two weeks later, in October 1946, the Truman Doctrine was extended to Iran which repudiated a Soviet-Iranian oil agreement keeping communism from dominating Middle East politics. The Soviet Union missed its 2 March 1946, deadline to remove its troops from Iran. Joseph Stalin claimed that the removal of Russian troops from northern Iran would endanger the safety of the Baku oil-fields in southern Russia.¹⁷ The idea of Russian insecurity and the need to establish buffer states to protect the Soviet Union from a foreign invasion of Russian land brought the emergence of American-Soviet antagonism and its relation to the

¹⁵Ibid., 6.

¹⁶Middle East Journal 30, supplement 3 (Summer 1976): 385.

¹⁷Kuross A. Samii, "Truman Against Stalin in Iran; A Tale of Three Messages," Middle East Studies 23, supplement 1 (January 87): 97.

geopolitical position of Iran.¹⁸ Truman chose to pursue a hard-line policy toward the Soviet Union and gave orders to his military chiefs to prepare for the movement of ground, sea, and air forces.¹⁹ In fact, Truman threatened to use nuclear weapons if the Red Army were not removed from Iran immediately.²⁰ Stalin accepted Truman's bluff and pulled the Russian troops out, thereby avoiding a military conflict. It was during this same time that Winston Churchill on 5 March 1946, at Fulton Missouri, added the phrase 'Iron Curtain' to the rapidly expanding rhetoric of the Cold War. Churchill depicted the Soviet Union as the evil force threatening world peace.²¹ The Middle East now became the new battle ground for the Cold War emphasizing U.S. involvement in the Middle East.

However, support for the Jewish homeland was not the major White House interest in the Middle East nor was the Soviet Union. Rather, the major interest lay in the oil reserves of the region. A State Department analysis in 1945 described Saudi Arabia as "...a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history."²² The United States had never taken much interest in the

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹New York Times (NYT), 25 August 1957.

²⁰Time, 28 January 1980, 13.

²¹Kuross A. Samii, "Truman Against Stalin in Iran: A Tale of Three Messages," Middle East Studies, 23 January 87, supplement 1 (May 98): 98.

²²Noam Chomsky, The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel and the Palestinians (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 17.

Middle East, let alone Saudi Arabia. Before World War I, America had looked upon the Arabian peninsula as falling within Britain's sphere of influence. As such, Saudi Arabia occupied a position of strategic value to the British Empire. Indeed, the whole Middle East was virtually a landbridge that traversed Imperial lines of supply and communication.²³ The British owned oil concessions in Iran, Iraq, and Kuwait and a large refinery at Abadan. After World War I, the White House realized the strategic advantage of the vast oil resources in the Middle East. Relations with Saudi Arabia were on the upswing. King Ibn Saud received Roosevelt's emissary Minister Bert Fish several times and, after Yalta, Truman continued good relations with the King.²⁴ During World War I King Saud allowed transit rights and airfields on Arabian soil in exchange for Ibn Saud's request for an agricultural mission.²⁵ Roosevelt also ordered the opening of an American Legation at Jiddah. Britain no longer enjoyed its lone presence in the Middle East. American interest and involvement in the Middle East became entrenched.

²³Michael Barry Stoff, "The Anglo-American Oil Agreement and the development of National Policy for Foreign Oil, 1941-1947," (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1977), 52.

²⁴Ibid., 233.

²⁵Ibid., 68.

IV

By the end of the war, Palestine had become a pressure point ready to explode in Great Britain's face. The extremists had broken into two groups: the Irgun headed by Menachem Begin and the Lohamei Herut Israel, more commonly known as the Stern Gang, led by Abraham Stern. The resistance groups wasted no time in exposing the British soldiers to unseen terrorists. In February 1944, Begin announced his declaration of war on Britain. On 12 February 1944, the Irgun blew up immigration offices in Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel Aviv. On 27 February 1944, they blew up tax offices in the same cities. In March, the Irgun set a series of bomb attacks on police stations in Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Haifa.²⁶ In 1944, the Stern Gang was responsible for the assassination of Sir Harold MacMichael, British High Commissioner in Palestine. The attackers were followed into the village of Givat Shaul. Soon reinforcements arrived with police dogs, but as usual, no one in the village would help them trace the killers. No one would admit to seeing or hearing anything suspicious.²⁷ The war against the unseen enemy was on and Britain could do nothing to stop it. The Irgun and Stern Gang had an enormous advantage because they were fighting occupation forces whose home base was 2000 miles away. Later, Yasir

²⁶Nicholas Bethell, The Palestine Triangle, (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1979), 157.

²⁷Ibid., 162.

Arafat's Fatah group would also fight occupation forces whose home base was only a few miles away.

Britain became very upset with the way the American media was portraying the Jewish rebels as sympathetic freedom-fighting survivors of the Holocaust, struggling for their nationalism. Americans were sympathetic for two reasons: (1) traditional antipathy for British imperialism in an era of decolonization and, (2) the tendency to overlook the terrorist action of the Jews as an unfortunate but inevitable by-product of revolutionary nationalism.²⁸

At the same time, Americans could not escape the fact that the Jewish underground had wide support in the United States, a nation which felt a sense of guilt because of its slow understanding and reaction to the wartime persecution of the Jews. The Zionist battle over the British Mandate of Palestine seemed to Americans as a mere extension of its war against Naziism which required any means to an end. In 1945, President Truman sent a letter to British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, suggesting that an additional 100,000 Jews be allowed to enter Palestine. In December of that year, the United States Congress adopted a resolution urging American aid in opening Palestine to Jewish immigrants and in building a "democratic commonwealth."²⁹ However, by the end of December 1945, the White Paper

²⁸Robert Kumamoto, "Diplomacy From Below: International Terrorism and American Relations, 1945-1962," Terrorism (1991): 33.

²⁹"The Middle East," Congressional Quarterly 7th ed., (1990): 39.

immigration limitation of 75,000 had been met. No more Jews were allowed into Palestine. On December 27, the Irgun responded to this by attacking Jaffa police headquarters in Jerusalem, killing a total of ten soldiers and policemen.

In January, the Anglo-American Committee (a joint British-American agency) began developing its report. By April 1946 the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry recommended the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews into Palestine and continuation of the British mandate until a United Nations trusteeship could be established. On 23 April 1946, the Irgun raided the Ramat Gan police station in Tel Aviv killing one Arab policeman. Then, on 25 April 1946, the Stern Gang entered a British camp and murdered six unarmed soldiers, many of whom were sleeping.³⁰ This event inflamed British public opinion and almost brought British soldiers to the point of mutiny. This caused Britain to denounce further the report by the Anglo-American Committee.

The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry was supported by Truman, but British negotiators who knew their government's pro Arab and anti-Zionist sentiments demanded that the underground Jewish rebels disarm and disband themselves. The war of terrorism had to end, and the promise of the security of British personnel not be compromised if Britain were to continue negotiations. However, the United States would not force the disarmament of the underground rebels for two reasons:(1) it would leave the Yishuv exposed to an Arab majority and, second, the British

³⁰Nicholas Bethell, The Palestine Triangle (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1979), 233.

considered Jewish terrorism as the primary obstacle to peace in the Holy Land, (2) Americans tended to view the Irgun and the Stern Gang as an unfortunate, but necessary means of Jewish nationalism in the search for self-determination.

Domestically, American Jews were forming a very strong lobbyist group that warranted serious consideration in the White House. Again, in the 1944 election, the Democratic and Republican platforms openly endorsed free immigration to Palestine because of the growing strength of the Jewish support at home. Truman continued to press Britain on the Palestine problem by issuing a statement to Britain in November of 1946, calling for "substantial immigration" into Palestine "at once" and expressed support for the Zionist plan for creation of a "viable Jewish state" in Palestine. The question that must be raised is how many survivors of Hitler's Holocaust would have lived if the choice were given to them to go to Palestine or the United States?

Professor Henry Feingold of Rutgers University has suggested that if the American Zionist movement had pushed for immigration to the United States, instead of exclusive immigration into Palestine, tens of thousands of Jewish displaced persons in camps would have survived. There is a belief that there was an unspoken Zionist concern that fewer European Jews would resettle in Israel if the possibility existed of getting to the United States.³¹ This may be one reason for the strong Jewish support for Zionist legislation. It also demonstrates the guilt that Americans felt for not

³¹Henry L. Feingold, The Politics of Rescue (Rutgers: New Brunswick, 1970), 13.

reacting swiftly to Hitler's Holocaust and saving the lives of millions of Jews. The White House simply wanted to relieve itself from guilt and placed the burden of the displaced Jewish survivors from the Holocaust on Great Britain and the Arabs in Palestine.

On 16/17 June 1946, the Irgun destroyed eight bridges in and around Palestine. On 18 June 1946, two British soldiers were killed and six were held hostage. The boiling point had finally reached its climax. On 29 June 1946, the British reacted to the recent raids with an all day search, resulting in arrests and mass detention of the Yishuv throughout Jerusalem. Over 100,000 troops and ten thousand police raided Jerusalem detaining over 2,700 Jews during the infamous "Black Saturday" raids.³² Reactions to the raids were immediate. Pro-Zionist members of the House of Commons rejected the raids. Members of the Jewish Agency cried out in despair. Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, called for support by the United States to oppose the "gestapo" tactics of the Mandatory Government. Mr. Attlee found no support.³³ The President responded to the Jewish Agency in Washington; he regretted the raids as well as the fact that he had not been previously informed.³⁴ It was evident that the

³²Ibid., 235.

³³Robert Kumamoto, "Diplomacy From Below: International Terrorism and American Foreign Relations, 1945-1962," Terrorism (1991): 33.

³⁴Ibid., 11.

non-committal stance the White House was taking was undermining Anglo-American relations.

The Irgun, as expected, did not take "Black Saturday" lightly. On 22 July 1946, the King David Hotel (the hub of the British Administration), was bombed, killing 91 Britons, Jews, and Arabs. The bombing elicited world-wide condemnation as Anglo-American relations were further jeopardized. Great Britain was looking to the United States to finally speak out forcefully and denounce the latest terrorist attack. This was very important to Britain, since negotiations to implement the Anglo-American report were taking place. Great Britain had already stated that negotiations to solve the Palestine conflict were being thwarted by terrorism and therefore wanted the edge in negotiations by demanding a strong condemnation by the United States. On 23 June 1946, Truman stated that he felt deep regret over the bombing and condemned the "wanton slaying of human beings," but not the perpetrators involved. He also stated that terrorism would "retard" peace-keeping efforts, but that was as far as he was willing to go.³⁵ This further disrupted relations between the two nations. The United States simply would not take a strong stance on terrorism.

Why did the United States not support Britain during the Palestine Mandate by denouncing terrorism by the Irgun and the Stern Gang? The strong American sympathy of the persecuted and displaced Jews, the perceived Soviet threat in the Middle East, the politics of oil and the fact that the White House had simply lost in

³⁵Ibid., 10.

coming to grips with terrorism are four main reasons. By this early stage of the game, there was no detailed American policy to deal with the phenomenon.

Menachem Begin was born in Brest-Litovsk, on the present Polish-Soviet border, and was influenced by the 19th century revolutionary writings of Russian intellectuals Mikhail Bakunin and Sergey Nechaev. They were among the first to advocate the "systematic use of terrorism as a revolutionary strategy" and were heavily influenced by the Narodnaya Voyla, the most feared underground group in 19th century Russia.³⁶ This was something the United States never had to deal with before. During World War Two, American technology had been geared toward creating weapons capable of mass destruction on a wide scale. Now soldiers were required to face "invisible" enemies in personal confrontations. Neither the American government nor military officials were equipped to deal with terrorism. How does one deal with a group that expresses itself through violence? One of the problems that Yasir Arafat would later face was that the Palestinians were launching terrorist strikes against a state which had perfected the use of terrorism. Menachem Begin knew how to respond to the Fatah attacks. The American public did not applaud Jewish terrorism, it simply reacted to the issues linked to the Zionist movement; as a result, American actions were construed by Great Britain as sympathetic to the Jewish terrorist, causing great frustration and irritation from the British. Moreover, the American public had other pressing needs at home. The goals of Americans after

³⁶Walter Laqueur, The Age of Terrorism (New York: Meridian Books, 1987), 16.

World War II were speedy demobilization, production of consumer goods, and an end to war time restraints. Americans were tired of war and they wanted their boys home from Europe and the Pacific as quickly as possible. Consumer goods had been scarce during the war because most industrial production focused on war materials. Furthermore, individuals wanted the scarce materials that had been unavailable during the war and were willing to pay dearly for them. Americans were afraid of the return of the Great Depression. Roosevelt's New Deal did not wipe out unemployment. It was the war that accomplished that feat. It was America's prosperity that was on the minds of the American people, not Jewish terrorists in the Middle East.

American foreign relations took a turn for the worse after the King David Hotel bombing because the Democratic administration was willing to jeopardize relations with its strongest allies in order to protect the Jewish-American vote. Britain believed that the issues of immigration and terrorism were the same while the White House maintained a distinction between the two. Truman refused to disarm the Jewish militants and condemn the Irgun and the Stern Gang because this would expose the Yishiv to the surrounding Arabs. Furthermore, there was still the moral obligation felt by Truman and many Americans to the world's displaced Jews. This constant undermining of Britain's Mandate of Palestine continued to make it that much more difficult to negotiate an Anglo-American accord. Because America turned the tide in Europe and saved Britain from the ravages of Hitler, Truman felt the sense of a new world order and America's prominent position in it. The White House could afford a

strain on American-Britain relations because of its role in forming a new international order. Furthermore, Britain would never cutoff relations with the United States because Britain was afraid of the threat of communism as well as the rest of western Europe. Britain's economy was shaky after the war and it now had to compete with a much stronger industry in the United States who now became the world's premier industrial power.

The Anglo-American Committee was still trying to hammer out an agreement despite the vast differences over the issue of terrorism between the United States and Great Britain. The Committee culminated its negotiations after Truman's rejection of the Morrison-Grady Plan, which called for the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab territories, two neutral zones, and the immediate admission of 100,000 Jewish immigrants. The question of a Jewish state still had not been settled.

Truman rejected the Morrison-Grady Plan because intense Jewish hostility to the plan had made public support a domestic political liability at home. Specifically, neither Republicans nor Democrats could afford approval of the plan prior to the November mid-term congressional elections.³⁷ The outcome may have saved congressional elections in November, but Britain refused to accept the entrance of 100,000 Jews into Palestine. The consent to the immigration was part of a "package deal," not one of isolation. The only individuals hurt were the Jews. This could only lead to more terrorism, an action the White House must have taken into consideration

³⁷Nicholas Bethell, The Palestine Triangle (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1979), 270.

when declining the proposal. A big factor for the success of the Irgun and Stern Gang and for the lack of American public outcry was that the homeland of Britain was not threatened or bombed. The majority of terrorist attacks took place in Palestine against military installations and personnel. Even though the Jewish leadership spoke out against the attacks, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir privately sanctioned them. One of the problems that Arafat would face later was strong retaliation from Israel not only to his Fatah group but also to the countries that allowed terrorist attacks to be launched. Moreover, Israel always responded militarily to a terrorist attack.

Britain was extremely upset and protested vigorously over the American press which seemed sympathetic to and supportive of Jewish terrorism. After a 4 May 1947, rescue mission by the Irgun to save their comrades from British gallows, a full-page advertisement in several New York newspapers was published. It was a letter to the Palestine terrorists which read, "Every time you blow up a British arsenal, or wreck a British jail, or send a British railroad train sky high, or rob a British bank, or let go with your guns and bombs at British betrayers and invaders of your homeland, the Jews of America make a little holiday in their hearts."³⁸ The British Foreign Minister, Ernest Bevin, described the ad as "nothing more than an appeal for funds to Jewish terrorist activities in Palestine, which are resulting almost daily in the loss of British lives."³⁹ Bevin was also upset with the American League for a Free Palestine

³⁸Nicholas Bethell, The Palestine Triangle, (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1979), 309.

³⁹Ibid., 310.

(ALFP), which raised funds from American supporters for the formation of a Jewish militia and the resistance of the Irgun and Stern Gang movements. Like many organizations, the ALFP was granted tax exemptions. British Labourite, Tom Driberg reasoned that as long as the ALFP were granted tax exemptions, "the United States Treasury was indirectly subsidizing the assassination of British Soldiers."⁴⁰ However, British complaints simply had no effect on the Truman administration for the simple reason that to have suspended the fund-raising activities would have been a violation of civil-liberties and sure political suicide, endangering the large Jewish-American vote. To the British, this was yet another example of the soft stance on terrorism by the United States.

When the Anglo-American conference failed to resolve the Palestine question, Britain turned to the United Nations in early 1947. The United Nations set up an inquiry, which ultimately recommended that Palestine be divided into separate Arab and Jewish states, with Jerusalem becoming an international zone under permanent United Nations trusteeship. Immediately, Jewish and Arab leaders rejected the plan. The time was ripe for Great Britain to leave Palestine. While the Jews and the Arabs of Palestine were preparing to resolve the issue themselves through military confrontation, the British ended their thirty-two year mandate on 14 May 1948. Zionist leaders in Tel Aviv immediately proclaimed the state of Israel, and Truman

⁴⁰Robert Kumamoto, "Diplomacy From Below: International Terrorism and American Foreign Relations, 1945-1962," Terrorism (1991): 34.

was the first to grant Israel de facto recognition. The Soviet Union recognized the new state of Israel three days later.

War broke out the day after the Zionists announced the State of Israel as 25,000 Arab troops from Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, and Transjordan invaded Israel. However, the Irgun, Stern Gang and Haganah (the Jewish army) forces were largely consolidated into the Israeli army with the Irgun high command largely intact. Along with the leadership of Begin, the Israeli army received military leadership and aid from the Soviet Union and they had a strong foundation from the American Jewish charitable organizations to throw off the attack from the Arab nations. A United Nations imposed cease-fire in June gave the newly formed provisional government in Israel time to strengthen itself. Israel received additional aid from Yugoslavia via the Soviet Union. The Soviets were busy courting the Irgun and Stern Gang promising military support to the state of Israel in all of Palestine.

The original goal of Menachem Begin was to end the British mandate and form a Jewish state. Because of the resistance efforts, this goal was accomplished. However, Begin realized that the Jewish people would not stand for more terrorism and he convinced the Irgun to disband and begin work as a political party. This was accomplished in December 1948. The Arab armies again tried to attack Israel in October, but the Israeli army put down the offensive. An Israeli state, however fragile, had been established through the help of the Irgun and Stern Gang. In this instance, the use of terrorism wore down the British, raised the consciousness of the

entire world, and helped gain a Jewish homeland for the displaced Jews in the World. Little did Begin realize that the philosophy he brought to Palestine and used by the Irgun and Stern Gang would be later duplicated in the same area by Palestinian refugees.

The United States stance on Jewish terrorism was a direct result of global considerations that were placed on the displaced, persecuted Jews. The United States believed that by supporting terrorism or by taking a noncommittal stance on the Jewish cause, it was stopping the spread of communism in the Middle East, protecting the influence in the oil rich Middle East, supporting the strong Jewish lobby group at home and our humanitarian concern for the survivors of the Holocaust. Little did the United States know that by supporting Jewish terrorism and undermining the British Mandate, it opened up an undesirable situation that would later unleash terrorism in the Middle East and world wide on a level unimaginable. The future leaders of the Palestinian resistance observed the treatment of Menachem Begin. At one time the most wanted man in Palestine, Begin would become one of the most influential men in Israel and received in the United States with great fanfare. Furthermore, Yitzhak Shamir, a former member of the Stern Gang, succeeded Begin as Prime Minister. Through the 50s, 60s, 70s, and early 80s, the United States refused to recognize the PLO and Arafat as the leader of the Palestinian people. The White House refused to recognize terrorism as a viable means toward securing a national homeland for the Palestinians. Now in 1990, the United States is ready to start peace talks between

Israel and the PLO. However, it has been a long, hard struggle for Arafat and the Palestinians to reach this stage of their crusade for a homeland. Did the use of terrorism gain this advantage or was it the move to the political process that has given the PLO the possible chance to negotiate a peace settlement with Israel?

Palestinian Terrorism: 1965-73

Chapter II

Palestinian nationalism arose in the early 1930s after Britain agreed to Iraq's independence. It was a full scale revolt against British policies concerning the admittance of Jewish immigrants to Palestine. The Balfour Declaration in 1919, which established a Jewish homeland in Palestine, did not originally create a furor because, at the time, the admittance of a few thousand Jews was not a serious issue. However, by the early 1930s, with British support, the Jewish population began to expand at a tremendous rate. Palestinians consequently rebelled between 1936 and 1939, but were ruthlessly suppressed by Great Britain. By 1938, Britain had over 20,000 troops in the country restoring order. Many Palestinians were deported or jailed. Over two hundred of the Palestinian leaders were either killed or deported from the country by British intelligence agents. By World War II, the Palestinian movement had been fairly well destroyed.

However, the war removed the French from Syria and Lebanon and the Italians from Lybia, leaving Great Britain as the only colonial power in the Middle East. Furthermore, by 1948, because of two events, Palestinian nationalism was revived. The first event was the massacre of Palestinians in the village of Deir Yassin in 1948. This act of Jewish terrorism had two effects: the exodus of Palestinians from Palestine and the rise of Palestinian extremists. On 10 April 1948, some 260 or more

Palestinian men, women and children were slaughtered by members of the Irgun and the Stern Gang. Menachem Begin and Yizhak Shamir led the attack. Palestinians were stabbed to death and one pregnant woman had her stomach cut open with a butcher's knife.⁴¹ Because of this event, along with the psychological warfare waged by Jewish terrorists, many Palestinians fled Palestine. By the end of 1948, close to 20,000 Palestinians of the upper class left the country with as much of their wealth as possible. But those who remained were ready to fight the Israelis until death.

The second event that helped revive Palestinian nationalism was the creation of the state of Israel. On 14 May 1948, Britain pulled out of Palestine and the Jews in the country declared their independence. The next day the State of Israel was proclaimed. Israel fought a furious War of Independence against Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Palestinian fighters. After an Armistice Agreement was signed in 1949, Israel was in control of all the land allotted to it by the United Nations Partition Plan and more than half of the land allotted to the Palestinians. The other half was claimed by Jordan and Egypt; thus Palestine had ceased to exist and the Palestinians were stateless, creating the Palestinian refugee problem. More than one million Palestinians were forced out of their homeland by mid-1949.⁴² At the same

⁴¹Michael Palumbo, The Palestinian Catastrophe (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1987), 57.

⁴²Alan Hart, Arafat, A Political Biography (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984), 59.

time, the Arab world turned against the Palestinians and forced them to surrender their arms. A serious and almost fatal blow was struck to Palestinian nationalism.

In the early fifties, there was a power struggle between Gamal Abdul Nasser and the Moslem Brotherhood for the overthrow of Egypt's King Farouk. After Nasser's Free Officers Movement overthrew Farouk's regime, the Palestinians believed that Nasser would lead the support for a Palestinian homeland. Nasser wanted to inspire Arab nationalism, but he was more concerned with Cairo becoming the center of the Arab world than helping the Palestinian cause. When United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles withdrew American financial support for Egypt's Aswan High Dam, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal to help finance the dam. In October 1956, Israel, France, and Britain without American knowledge, invaded Egypt. Israel invaded and controlled the Sinai desert, while France and Great Britain gained control of the Suez Canal. After an American and Soviet-sponsored United Nations cease fire and the evacuation of the canal and the Sinai, Nasser gained enormous prestige in the Arab world. But he paid little attention to the Palestinian cause. With Nasser seemingly uninterested in the Palestinian issue, Yasser Arafat, a young student at Cairo University, vowed that he would do everything in his power to preserve the identity of the Palestinians and the goal of a Palestinian homeland. The basic principle that guided Arafat then still applies: "if the Palestinians rely on others

to make decisions for them, they will never recover any of their lost land and rights."⁴³ Arafat set out to lead the Palestinian cause without sacrificing the independence of Palestinian decision-making. It was as early as 1952-53 that Arafat began talking about an independent Palestine liberation movement.

In 1953, he and Khalil Wazir set up the first Fatah cell. Fatah stands for Movement for the Liberation of Palestine. They organized and set up the underground network of cells from which Fatah emerged. The original idea came to Arafat in his days as a student in Cairo. Arafat produced a magazine called "The Voice Of Palestine" which was distributed throughout the fertile crescent. This magazine as much as any other achievement during the fifties established the beginning of Fatah cells throughout Gaza, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. Each cell was a group of Palestinians ready to fight to evict the Jews from Israel. The specific idea behind Fatah was to use terrorism to provoke Israeli reprisal attacks against the Arab world. The more the Israelis could be provoked into attacking the Arab states, the more Arab states would have to arm themselves and counter attack. Arafat and Wazir were hoping that a successful Arab attack on Israel would restore the land of Palestine. Thus far, however, the Palestinian nationalist movement has failed because of four reasons: lack of support from the Arab world; lack of coherent leadership in Fatah and later in the Palestine Liberation Organization; lack of support

⁴³Alan Hart, Arafat: A Political Biography (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984), 87.

from outside the Arab world, particularly the United Nations, the United States or the Soviet Union; and the instant retaliation or reprisals by Israel.

II

Arafat belonged to one of the units that helped Nasser in the early fifties with raids against the British in the Suez Canal zone. Most raids were spontaneous and disorganized and accomplished little. In 1956, most terrorist attacks, about 26%, consisted of tossing hand grenades at targets and 23% were ambushes of a single civilian or passing car.⁴⁴

Arafat based his revolution on two national liberation movements of his time: the Jewish extremists, who had been successful in ousting the British out of Palestine and the F.L.N.(Front de la Liberation Nationale) which had success in Algeria in ousting De Gaulle and France. Algeria was the first country to lend support to Arafat. Arafat opened a Fatah training camp in Algiers and received support for future operations against Israel. However, Algiers was far from the border of Israel and the early costs of training and transporting freedom fighters ran high. In 1964, the Ba'ath Socialist Party of Syria gave Fatah complete support. This turn of events ignited Fatah because Syria bordered Israel and the possibilities for support from Damascus were virtually unlimited.

⁴⁴Alan Hart, Arafat: A Political Biography (Indianapolis: Indian University Press, 1986), 46.

On the night of 2 January 1965, the first Fatah terrorist mission was launched against the state of Israel. Although the mission to blow up the Ilbon pumping station, part of Israel's \$40 million National Water Carrier, failed, it marked the beginning of extensive terrorist attacks against Israel by Fatah.⁴⁵ In February, Fatah members placed mines on the Israeli border, injuring seven members of an Israeli patrol. During the first three months of 1965, Fatah carried out ten sabotage raids against Israel. Seven were across the Jordanian border and three from Gaza. By the end of 1965, Fatah had made 35 raids into Israel, 28 of them from Jordan, and nearly all against civilian targets.⁴⁶ Fatah was emerging from the state of anonymity through radio broadcasts in Damascus and Cairo. Even though many of Fatah's raids were not completely successful because of lack of training, its announcements of successful terrorist acts were read on daily fifteen minute radio shows devoted to the fedayeen movement.⁴⁷ Many of these announcements stated that dozens of Israeli soldiers were killed and key military installations destroyed as a result of their terrorist actions.⁴⁸ These announcements helped to sway the Arab masses in favor of Fatah.

⁴⁵Zeev Schiff and Raphael Stein, Fedayeen, Guerrillas Against Israel (New York: David McKay Company Inc., 1972), 16.

⁴⁶John Laffin, Fedayeen, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma (London: Cassell & Company LTD, 1973), 17.

⁴⁷Ibid., 135.

⁴⁸Donald R. Browne, "The Voice Of Palestine: A Broadcasting House Divided," The Middle East Journal 29, supplement 4, (Summer 1975): 144.

Fatah's first active year as a terrorist organization faced an up-hill battle to gain stability. In June of 1965, the Palestinian National Congress met in Cairo. Fatah delegates met the world press and announced their policy as a liberation group-"to entangle the Arab nations in a war with Israel."⁴⁹ The directness of Fatah, to wipe Israel into the sea, was hard for the international community to support. Neither Nasser nor King Hussein of Jordan, was interested in going to war with Israel. Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon worked together to stop Fatah operations from their perspective borders. From November 1965 to April 1966, Fatah was able to launch operations only from Syria. Neither country wanted to contend with Israeli retaliatory attacks or possible war.

In 1964, Nasser created the Palestine Liberation Organization at the Arab summit conference to oppose Fatah. Nasser wanted to keep Fatah under control and at the same time did not want to lose face with the Palestinian masses. Ahmad Shuqairi was appointed as head of the PLO and his primary job was to discredit the activities of Fatah. Nasser and the PLO posed a serious threat to Arafat and would typify the lack of support Fatah would receive from the Arab world.

III

From the conception of Fatah, Nasser was opposed to Arafat and the rise of Palestinian nationalism. Nasser saw Fatah as a threat to his rule and prestige. When

⁴⁹John Laffin, Fedayeen, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1973), 17.

Nasser placed Shuqairi as the head of the PLO, Nasser's objective was to undermine Fatah and promote his own image with the Palestinian masses. Nasser never completely supported Fatah, although after the victory of Karamah (where the Palestinians held off the Israeli army) he did help Arafat become head of the PLO. But Nasser never gave complete financial or military aid to Fatah nor did he allow Fatah operations to be launched from Egypt's border for long.

In December 1965, at the Arab summit conference in Casablanca, Nasser called for a resolution recommending that all acts of terrorism against Israel be halted and no aid be given to Fatah. Nasser got what he wanted. A month later, the Joint Arab Command ordered all nations that border Israel to prevent terrorist operations from being launched from their borders.⁵⁰ This was only a temporary setback for Fatah.

As early as 1966, King Hussein of Jordan had seen the danger of Fatah. Hussein himself wanted to lead the Palestinian people and denounced Fatah and the PLO as soon as they were created. After the 1967 War, Hussein opposed Fatah's occupation of Jordanian territory from which it launched operations into Israel. Hussein was afraid that Israel would retaliate by invading Jordan and conquering more land. At the same time, the King was afraid of the prestige and power Arafat was gaining in Jordan which undermined Hussein's authority. Hussein never completely

⁵⁰Zeev Schiff and Raphael Rothstein, Fedayeen, Guerrillas Against Israel (New York: David McKay Company Inc., 1972), 64.

accepted the PLO's occupation of Jordan and when the possibility of gaining the West Bank arose in return for peace with Israel, Hussein finally expelled the PLO during "Black September" in 1970.

Syria was the first nation to give aid to Fatah during its conception in 1964 and provide training bases for the young Palestinians to learn about explosives and gain military experience. However, after the coup by the leftist Ba'ath, Syria wanted to control Fatah and use it as a puppet regime to gain strongholds in Lebanon and Jordan. When Arafat refused to give up Palestinian decision making, the Ba'ath party made it extremely hard for Fatah to operate and actually held back munitions sent from China. The Ba'ath party set up its own terrorist party proclaiming a "war of popular liberation" as the key to recovering Palestine. However, Syria no longer could avoid blame for acts of sabotage against Israel as was previously done with Fatah. Israel often responded with artillery bombardment and air strikes. After the Six-Day War in 1967, in which Syria lost the Golan Heights, Syria limited terrorist operations from Syrian soil, in the hopes of regaining the lost territory through negotiation. In the end, Fatah was left with no support from any Arab country. It had to stand on its own two feet and try to find financial and political backing elsewhere.

Fatah also failed in liberating Palestine through military means because of its internal organization. The goal of Fatah was to create a differentiated and flexible organization that produced a format or plan which tied Fatah and the resistance to

Palestinian society. However, the infrastructure of Fatah was not totally functional to the Resistance as a whole. The original creators of Fatah wanted to carry out military actions against Israel from the border states. But immediately friction occurred as to how, when, and where these operations should take place. Because of this conflict, splinter groups arose, each having different principles. Each group developed its own goals for the resistance and means to carry out its goals. Thus, each independent splinter group created a different power base. The result was that there was no mechanism to promote a consensus-building process because each leader was relatively immune to sanctions from Fatah short of force. This created an obvious problem because the Resistance ended up spending more time disciplining or fighting each other rather than focusing on the task at hand, creating a strong and united resistance.

One person who opposed Arafat's leadership was George Habash, who created the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). He based his philosophy on the Marxist-Leninist movement and called for international terrorist activities, causing great rivalry between the Palestinians.

Under the guise of the PLO, a third new splinter group led by Shafik el-Hut, emerged to challenge Fatah: the Heroes of the Return. Although their first mission in October 1966 failed with three men killed by an Israeli border patrol, the Heroes of the Return showed ruthless fighting tactics and were a threat to Fatah's rising prestige.

A second effect of the internal struggle in Fatah was the lack of a program after Palestine were liberated. There was no form of implementation or structure for

the new government. The lack of a program prevented many Palestinians from taking up arms against Israel. Earlier, the leaders of Irgun and the Stern gang had worked within the established Jewish leadership that developed during the British mandate. The Jewish extremists followed the idea of Zionism which had leaders ready to step in and form a government.

Fatah was also unsuccessful in liberating Palestine because of the lack of international support outside the Arab world. In particular, Fatah could not gain any support from either the Soviet Union, the United States, nor the United Nations. Arafat tried several times to lobby support from Moscow but leaders in Russia refused. Moscow wanted a puppet regime it could control in the area but again Arafat refused to give up Palestinian decision making. Moreover, Moscow knew that the Palestinians did not think of themselves as communists, thus limiting possible control of the movement. Moreover, Moscow did not like the developing friendship between Communist China and Fatah. China had been sending arms to Fatah throughout its struggle and Moscow was concerned with this unique friendship.

The Soviet Union seemed to be the logical choice to offer Fatah help. The geography of the Middle East, and especially those parts of the region that lie directly across the Soviet borders, is of great military importance to the Soviet Union. Russian policy ever since Germany invaded the Soviet Union during World War II, has been to keep a hostile power from being able to attack from the Middle East or

any direction.⁵¹ In addition, Russia had become an imperial power with global reach. Consequently, Russian expansion for power and influence led through the Middle East.

Despite the Soviet Union's successes since 1955 in pushing its influence into the region, it had not displaced or even matched the position the United States held in the area. The Soviet Union was looking to gain more influence in the area and Fatah was in desperate need of an ally. The Middle East is an area the Soviet Union feels is on their doorstep and distant from America, (comparable to the Caribbean area in reverse) therefore, the Soviets see this as an unacceptable long term proposition.⁵² The United States has its Monroe Doctrine; the Soviet Union likewise wanted its "doctrine" of influence over its neighbors.

The Soviet Union became involved in the Middle East in the 1950s with financial support to Egypt and backing to the Ba'ath party. Russia had additionally supplied Syria with MIGS that were shot down over the Golan Heights prior to the Six-Day war. With Russian connivance, Nasser asked the United Nations to remove its troops out of the Sinai Peninsula. This preemptive move forced Israel's hand. Israel launched its military campaign on June 5, and in a matter of hours, destroyed

⁵¹Professor Stan Underdal, lecture, San Jose State University (Summer, 1990).

⁵²John C. Campbell, "The Soviet Union In The Middle East," The Middle East Journal 32, supplement 1 (Winter 1978): 3.

300 of 350 Egyptian planes.⁵³ Air fields in Jordan and Syria were also attacked, wiping out most of both countries' air capability. The air strike allowed Israel's ground forces to crush Egyptian ground forces. By the time the United Nations Security Council requested a cease-fire on June 9, Israel had achieved full control of the Sinai Peninsula, the Jordanian West Bank and Syria's Golan Heights. It was a humiliating loss for Nasser and Fatah's strategy to regain Palestine had backfired in the most spectacular way possible. Russia became so entrenched with support for Egypt and Syria that support for Fatah was no longer needed. Because the Palestinian resistance was not a high priority within the Arab world, support for Fatah by the Soviet Union slipped through the cracks. The Soviet Union found its "doctrine" of influence from two major players in the Middle East: Egypt and Syria.

Meanwhile, the United States was involved in Vietnam and President Lyndon Johnson put vast resources into the war. Public support for Johnson was extremely high at the outset of the war. However, as the war dragged on, public support turned against the President and American involvement in Vietnam. The public's mind was not on the Palestinian issue, except for one big voting constituency: the Jewish vote.

When Israel launched a preemptive attack and won the 1967 War in six days, Johnson was faced with the decision whether to keep Israel militarily superior or lose the Jewish vote. Israel had wiped out the Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian air forces.

⁵³John Laffin, Fedayeen, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1973), 24.

Russia became more entrenched than ever before in the Middle East. It was the huge build up of Russian tanks that was now part of Israel's captured booty in the Six Day War and the Arabs were dependent more than ever on Russia for rebuilding their armed forces.⁵⁴ Further, half the Arab states had broken diplomatic relations with the United States. President Johnson decided that American involvement in the Middle East had to focus on a growing relationship with the state of Israel. Our commitment was to maintain a "military balance" in the region. In practice, this translated into maintaining Israeli military superiority, thus further expanding Soviet military relations with its friends in the region.⁵⁵

This commitment to maintain a "military balance" was further evident because France, dependent on Arab oil, announced an embargo on all arms sales to the Middle East. President Charles De Gaulle even blocked delivery to Israel of fifty mirages that had been ordered and paid for.⁵⁶ Russia sent new aircraft to Syria and Egypt immediately after the war. Johnson had no other choice but to back Israel. The United States became Israel's chief supplier of sophisticated weaponry with the 1968 sale of fifty Phantom F-4s.⁵⁷ American support for the Palestinians had been sold to

⁵⁴Alexander J. Bennett, "Arms Transfer As An Instrument Of Soviet Policy In The Middle East," The Middle East Journal 39, supplement 4 (Autumn 1985): 752.

⁵⁵Ibid., 750.

⁵⁶Stephen E. Ambrose, Rise To Globalism, American Foreign Policy Since 1938 Sixth Revised Edition (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 225.

⁵⁷Ibid., 225.

the Jewish constituency in the United States. On 19 June 1967, President Johnson announced his peace plan for the Middle East. It set forth five points for peace: right of each country's national existence, fair and just treatment of Arab refugees, freedom of innocent maritime passage, limitation of arms buildup, and guaranteed territorial integrity for each Middle East country⁵⁸. Not one word about the Palestinian resistance was mentioned. In the eyes of the United States, the Palestinian issue was dead.

The United Nations also failed to help Fatah's goal to attain a homeland. In the fifties, the only statement or resolution that came from this international body came on 13 September 1951, when the United Nations Palestinian Conciliation Conference with Israeli and Arab delegates opened in Paris. The goal of this meeting was to overcome the differences set out in the United Nations partition of Palestine. However, by 21 November 1951 the United Nations Commission ended its efforts at mediation, citing the "rigid positions" of both Israel and the Arab states.

During the sixties, the United Nations continued its lack of support for the Palestinian resistance. Even after the Six Day War in 1967, the United Nations Resolution calling for a cease fire, did not mention the Palestinians. On 22 November 1967, the United Nations adopted Resolution 242 for bringing peace to the Middle East.⁵⁹ Again, nothing in the resolution referred to the Palestinians.

⁵⁸"The Middle East," Congressional Quarterly (1990), 259.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 267.

The United Nations once again, in 1970, had a chance to recognize the Palestinians' right to a homeland by supporting the Jordanian-Palestinian peace pact. This peace pact among other things, called for Arab leaders to support the Palestinian struggle against Israel. United Nations support, calling for a homeland for the Palestinians, not necessarily for the overthrow of Israel, would have gone a long way in support for the Palestinian resistance.

Fatah was also unsuccessful in its drive for liberation because of Israeli mastery in countering Palestinian terrorists through a high degree of sophistication and effectiveness. Israel developed a policy of quick retaliation after Palestinian terrorist operations. On 13 November 1970, shortly after the mining of a patrol vehicle near the Jordanian border, four thousand Israeli troops crossed the Jordan border and raided the village of Samu. With the use of tanks and the number of soldiers, 18 Jordanians were killed, 134 wounded and 127 buildings were destroyed.⁶⁰ This became the typical response by Israel to Palestinian terrorism. Israel also used instant retaliation through the air because Israeli intelligence reports were very accurate. Bombings through the air destroyed many Fatah sabotage units and kept the Palestinians constantly on the move. In Jordan, Israeli responses through the air were so precise that Fatah units were pushed further from Israel's border, making operations more dangerous and less successful.

⁶⁰John Laffin, Fedayeen, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma (London: Cassell & Company LTD, 1973), 122.

In 1968 Israel created an operation in the West Bank called "Operation Ring." Israeli soldiers would enter a town periodically and pick up all the males and put them into compounds for scrutiny by Arab informers. Then soldiers would enter homes to search for ammunition and arms. In the town of Nablus, two arms caches were found and 74 people were identified as members of terrorist organizations. This type of security was not fool proof in capturing all terrorists in the West Bank, but it made terrorist operations extremely risky.

Israel, unlike Great Britain during the Mandate years, was able to formulate a plan to fight terrorism. The British had been unable to come to grips with the new type of military operations because they lacked adequate intelligence reports or military capabilities to counter terrorism. This made the Jewish terrorists groups that much more effective. Israel was much more able and willing to use terrorism to counter terrorism because many Israeli leaders had belonged to the Irgun and Stern Gang in the 1940s. Leaders within the Israeli government were not about to leave Palestine and lose out to terrorism as the British government had earlier.

IV

Fatah had been very successful prior to the Six-Day war. Between January and June 1967, Fatah carried out 37 operations compared to the 41 for all of 1966.⁶¹ However, the question now arose, what of Arab and Palestinian nationalism after the humiliation of the Arab forces? Members of Fatah met in Damascus on June 23 for

⁶¹Ibid., 25.

the organization's first congress. Two issues convinced Fatah to continue terrorist activities against Israel. The first issue was the belief that Israel was planning to withdraw from Arab land captured in the 1967 war for all out peace with the Arab states that bordered Israel. Many members of Fatah believed that if Israel suggested this proposal, all of the Arab states would agree to peace with Israel. If this were to happen, the Palestinian cause would be lost because the Jewish State would be recognized inside the pre-1967 borders that would be guaranteed for all time. Thus, the Palestinians would not be given any international recognition. Fortunately for Arafat and Fatah, Israel did not make such a proposal.

The second issue that made Fatah continue its activities was the influence of Hani Hassan, a Palestinian student in West Germany. Hassan favored continuing terrorist activities because of the support from Palestinian student unions in Western Europe and the most aggressive student union in West Germany. The support from Palestinians outside the country who were ready to fight was enough encouragement for Palestinians in the occupied territories to carry on the movement for the liberation of Palestine. The leaders of Fatah knew that it was not the poor Palestinian fighters that lost the 1967 War, but the corrupt Arab regimes that caused the demise of the Arab Armies.

On 17 September 1967, Fatah carried out its first post Six-Day War operation against Israel by blowing up an irrigation pipe at Kibbutz Yad Hannah. Two days later, Fatah planted explosives in a Jerusalem hotel and four people were injured. A

short time later, a Kibbutz factory and a civilian residence were sabotaged killing a three-year old child.⁶² Fatah gained much notoriety for being the first Arab entity to recover so quickly from the humiliating defeat from Israel. Palestinian masses came to join Fatah which gained 500 volunteers from the West Bank and Gaza. Hani Hassan had 500 student fighters from West Germany ready to fight for the Palestinian cause. Syria was the first country after the 1967 war to re-open its army bases for Fatah training. Algeria re-opened its training base for Palestinian youth. Nasser allowed some Fatah activities in Egypt fearing he would lose support from the widespread affection among the Arab masses toward Fatah's resurgence.

But Israel struck back like lightning. Israel was able to intercept communication lines between one front-line Arab state and another. And with the help of Syrian intelligence, Israel was able to uncover and destroy Fatah cells and networks in the occupied territories. Again, the lack of Arab support by the Syrians forced the Palestinians to capitulate. The Syrian government would do anything to regain the Golan Heights even if it required feeding the Israeli government information of the whereabouts of Fatah training camps. By December of 1967, hundreds of Fatah commandos had been killed and more than 1,000 had been captured. The resistance was taking a beating and hope for a peaceful end looked dreadful.

V

⁶²Zeev Schiff and Raphael Rothstein, Fedayeen, Guerrillas Against Israel (New York: David McKay Company Inc., 1972), 76.

Arafat failed to secure a popular Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza. Most Palestinians were now willing to accept Israeli withdrawal from the occupied areas and hoped to be able to return to their lands and homes in Israel. Israel's swift and efficient destruction of Fatah's organization also made it easier for Palestinians to stop the struggle by military means alone. Israel set curfews, cordons, and house-to-house searches. There were restrictions on travel and movement. Long prison terms for Fatah sympathizers were given out. There was mass destruction of homes and shops belonging to those who gave, or were suspected of giving shelter to Fatah members. By 1969, close to 516 houses had been destroyed.⁶³ Israel's ruthlessness simply lowered Palestinian desire to fight in the West Bank and Gaza.

On 22 November 1967, the Arab world, the United States and the Soviet Union sold out the Palestinians' right to a Palestinian homeland with the passage of United Nations Resolution 242. This Resolution was going to be the basis for a just and lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The resolution emphasized the "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every state in the area can live in security."⁶⁴ The resolution included the application of both the following principles:

⁶³John Laffin, Fedayeen, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma (London: Cassell & Company LTD, 1973), 247.

⁶⁴"The Middle East," Congressional Quarterly (1990), 23.

(i) Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict; (ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within the secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.⁶⁵

Resolution 242 simply addressed how the front-line Arab states could remain at peace. It did not answer the question of the Palestinians' right to self-determination. It treated the Palestine problem as a "refugee problem," not one concerning the rights of the Palestinians. Resolution 242 simply swept the Palestinian issue under the rug and gave international legitimacy to Israel's refusal to come to terms with the real Palestinian problem. At the same time, Arafat and Fatah had failed to generate popular support for the idea of armed struggle in the occupied territories, therefore killing the movement.

One would think that in 1968 Arafat would have given up his idea for armed struggle against Israel. But a political and negotiated settlement could not happen because Resolution 242 simply would not give the Palestinians justice. Arafat continued to keep the idea of struggle alive, but Fatah had to find a new location for its headquarters. The West Bank was simply too dangerous. Syria continued to support Palestinian raids from its borders but the Syrian government refused to locate

⁶⁵Ibid., 23.

Fatah headquarters there. Arafat decided to locate to Jordan at a refugee camp called Karameh. Fatah wasted no time after the 1967 war to begin operations against Israel.

Fatah in 1968 was very successful in its operations. The number of across-the-border attacks totaled 927, with 334 Israeli casualties.⁶⁶ The one terrorist action that caused the biggest Israeli reprisal was on 18 March 1968, when an Israeli school bus traveling along the Jordanian border ran over a Fatah mine. The bombing resulted in two deaths and twenty-nine injuries.⁶⁷ On 21 March 1968, Israel sent in tanks and paratroopers to surround Karameh. Upon Israel's entrance into Karameh, members of Fatah exploded into action jumping on tanks' and throwing hand grenades in the tanks cock pits. Others strapped sticks of dynamite to their bodies and thrust themselves onto the tanks. Both sides suffered many casualties but if it had not been for the intervention of the Jordanian army, Fatah would have been wiped out by the superior Israeli forces. Israel decided to cut its losses and retreat back home. Fatah's victory at Karameh was viewed as the "resurrection of the Palestinian people."⁶⁸ In the next eighteen months, 25,000 volunteers joined Fatah to fight. The Arab world could no longer dismiss the place of the Palestinians in the Middle East.

VI

⁶⁶Alan Hart, Arafat, A Political Biography (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984), 261.

⁶⁷Ibid., 262.

⁶⁸Ibid., 263.

What Fatah needed was support from one of the two superpowers if it was ever going to gain legitimacy in the international world. The United States endorsed Resolution 242 in 1967 because it wanted a quick end to the Arab-Israeli problem. The politics of oil pushed the United States into supporting the resolution. As long as hostilities remained, oil sanctions against the America were very possible. The Middle East holds close to eighty per cent of the world's petroleum reserves.⁶⁹ Saudi Arabia alone controls half of the world's reserves and accounts for forty per cent of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries sales.⁷⁰ It seemed very evident that the United States and its allies saw the Middle East as a stupendous area for oil reserves and an important strategic military location.

During the 1960s, the quantity of Middle East oil did not seem to be a problem for the near future. However, the price of oil is what concerned foreign policy makers. Furthermore, the Soviet Union in the late 1960s made a move in the Middle East that caused great concern in the United States. In 1969, the Soviet Union completed two separate agreements with Iraq. The first agreement dealt with Soviet participation in the development of oil fields in southern Iraq and the second agreement provided a Soviet loan to develop the North Rumaylah oil field. Later, a third loan was granted to build an oil refinery, pipeline, and other projects. The total

⁶⁹Mercury News Staff Report, "An Oil Crisis in the Making?" San Jose Mercury News 3 August 1990, Front page.

⁷⁰Thomas L. Friedman, "Gulf crisis looks like U.S.-Iraq showdown over Saudis," San Jose Mercury News 4 August 1990, p.16(a).

value of this assistance amounted to \$366 million, to be paid in crude oil.⁷¹ Thus, an important share of Iraq's oil production would thereby be channelled toward the Soviet Union. Another consequence of Soviet access to Middle Eastern oil is that the Russia would find it easier to free Siberian oil for sale to Japan. If a proposed Japanese built pipeline from Irkutsk to the Pacific in return for Siberian oil were built, such a pipeline could disrupt Japanese-American trade relations, especially in regard to oil sold by American companies.⁷² The move to secure Middle East oil and possibly corner the market was on between the two superpowers.

Another worry of America, its allies, and other industrialized nations was the threat of one power moving into the Middle East and cornering the petroleum market through conquest. One such threat was the Soviet Union, a nation which borders many states in the Middle East and therefore represents a launching pad for easy military access to oil fields. However, any attempt by the Soviet Union to acquire satellite countries risked the loss of most, if not all, of the influence it had carefully built in the region since 1955. Moreover, interruptions in the Middle East oil deliveries immediately reduced the incomes of the Arab countries, particularly Iran.

⁷¹Jean-Jacques Berreby, "Oil in the Orient," The New Middle East 2, supplement (Summer 1971): 8.

⁷²Gardner Patterson, "Declining American Involvement," Soviet-American Rivalry in the Middle East (New York: J.C. Hurewitz, 1984), 89.

This consequently endangered Arab development and the ability of Iran to repay its debt to the Soviet Union.⁷³

Moscow endorsed Resolution 242 also, but it had been supporting Syria and Egypt and felt secure about oil trade in the Middle East. Consequently, leaders of Fatah looked to the Soviet Union for support. However, this they did not obtain for three reasons. First, the Soviets did not like the relationship Fatah had developed with China which sent arms to Fatah. Second, Fatah was far too independent of Syria and thus would refuse to become a puppet regime of the Soviet Union. Finally, despite international support, Israel was retaliating to every terrorist attack posed by Fatah and other terrorist splinter groups. Fatah continually was pushed farther away from the border of Israel, making their operations more risky and less successful. Thus, in the eyes of the Soviet Union, supporting Fatah could risk unnecessary political repercussions from Israel and other Arab States.

Today, oil is the key reason the United States is present in the Middle East.⁷⁴ American reaction to the Middle East events is proportionate to the risk to its oil supply. Arafat has been unable to persuade Arab oil producing countries to cut oil supplies to the west and force a settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. President Saddam Hussein of Iraq has demonstrated the importance of Middle East petroleum to

⁷³Rachkov, "The Russian Stake in the Middle East," The New Middle East (May 1969): 36.

⁷⁴Noam Chomsky, The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel and the Palestinians, Boston: South Bend Press, 1983), 17.

the world economy, particularly to the United States, with the invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990. The Iraqi invasion dramatically shifted the balance of power in the Persian Gulf and doubled the amount of oil reserves Saddam controlled and increased his leverage in OPEC. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait resulted in two significant outcomes: increase in crude oil prices and American military involvement in the Middle East. The price for crude oil increased from 4 cents to 25 cents a gallon within 24 hours of the invasion of Kuwait.⁷⁵ Within two days, crude oil prices jumped more than \$3 a barrel.⁷⁶ And within one week of the Iraqi invasion in Kuwait, local gas prices in the San Francisco Bay area, jumped fifteen cents a gallon.⁷⁷ Oil may be the only weapon left for the PLO to use in order to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, influencing the Arab world to use oil as a weapon to gain a Palestinian homeland is another problem.

VII

Arafat needed a new location to carry out Fatah's operations against Israel. In 1969, Fatah moved some of its bases into southern Lebanon in the Mt. Hermon area and began new operations. At the same time, the Popular Front for the Liberation of

⁷⁵Patrick E. Tyler, "Congress, Consumers fear gas price gouging," San Jose Mercury News 7 August 1990, p. 10 (A).

⁷⁶Shelb Grad, "Gasoline Cost Jumps Again; Some Cry Foul," San Jose Mercury News 4 August 1990, p.13 (A).

⁷⁷The San Jose Mercury News ran several articles about the increase of crude oil and gas prices after the invasion of Kuwait.

Palestine (a splinter terrorist group of the PLO) was continuing its objectives. In June 1969, a portion of the Anglo-American Petroleum Tapline in the Golan Heights was blown up. Additional operations carried out in Jerusalem damaged pipelines leading to the Haifa oil refinery. There were also rockets fired into Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, causing damage to buildings and a few casualties.

Israel responded by attacking irrigation canals of the American financed Ghor Dam in Jordan and began air retaliations in the Fatah infested villages inside Lebanon. Fatah chose its bases in villages and refugee camps as a matter of deterrence. Israeli air raids would result in the killing of civilian women and children. Fatah's losses were much more considerable than Israeli loses. Fatah lost a total of 938 members while Israeli deaths amounted to 748 between June 1967 to January 1971.⁷⁸

By 1969, Jordan was becoming a pressure point between the Palestinian nationalists and King Hussein. Arafat had established a strong base on the East Bank and in the capital of Amman. Many people saw a state within a state being developed with Arafat as co-leader with Hussein. In June, no longer able to tolerate this threat to his rule, Hussein moved his troops against Fatah and the PFLP in order to drive them out of the capital. The Popular Front seized two Amman hotels and held as hostages 32 American, British and West German citizens. The terrorists threatened to kill the hostages and blow the International hotel up. The PFLP was able to blackmail

⁷⁸Zeev Schiff and Raphael Rothstein, Fedayeen, Guerrillas Against Israel (New York: David McKay Company Inc., 1972) 91.

Hussein into allowing the organization to stay in Amman. Arafat showed his influence with Hussein by forcing him to include several pro-Palestinian politicians in his government. The conflict in Jordan was ripening into a bitter battle.

On 15 June 1970, generals of the High Command of Jordan's armed forces told King Hussein that unless he gave the order to smash the Palestinian terrorists, they would do the job without his blessing. Hussein had to abide or take the chance of losing his leadership. Civil war in Jordan broke out. At the same time Arafat squared off against George Habash, leader of the PFLP. Again, internal struggle for control and leadership led the Resistance astray from achieving a coherent policy. Arafat wanted to keep the fighting against Israel confined to the border states. Habash wanted to take terrorism to the international level. When Arafat and Nasser had become somewhat solidified in 1969, Nasser helped Arafat become the Chair of the PLO during the fifth Palestinian National Convention in Cairo. This put Arafat and Habash on competing sides for direct control of the liberation movement. Both terrorist entities in Jordan caused the instability of Hussein's rule. Hussein launched two tank brigades with 25,000 soldiers into Amman in June and attacked the Palestinian nationalists. Fighting continued into September. The Fatah members were overwhelmed by the Jordanian army. However, Fatah held strong in the north of Jordan and threatened to carry out terrorist attacks. On September 27, Arafat and Hussein negotiated a cease-fire arrangement.

In 1969, the Rogers plan was introduced in the Middle East by William Rogers, the United States Secretary of State. It required Egypt to make peace with Israel in return for Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai Desert. It called for negotiations between Jordan and Israel to bring about the eventual Israeli withdrawal from the occupied West Bank and peace with Jordan. The third part of the Rogers plan called for the settlement of the future of Jerusalem and the Palestinian refugee problem. There were two problems with the Rogers plan. First, it gave the West Bank back to Jordan without recognizing the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. This lack of international support from the United States again discredited the Palestinian movement. The Rogers Plan treated the Palestinian question as a refugee problem not a Palestinian problem. The second problem was that Henry Kissinger, Nixon's National Security Adviser, was opposed to any peace initiative which required the Israelis to give up occupied territory in return for guarantees of peace. This posed a serious problem in the peace process because there could never be peace without Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories. Today, this is still a major sticking point in the Israeli-Arab problem. Israel wants to negotiate bilaterally for peace, with each of its neighboring states. Therefore, it can decide how much land, if any, it will give up. The problem with bilateral negotiations is, Israel can decide the fate of the Palestinians without representation, while negotiating a peace settlement with neighboring countries. Because the government of Israel does not recognize Fatah or Arafat as the sole representative of the Palestinians, it can treat

the Palestinians as a refugee problem and brush the idea of a Palestinian State under the negotiation rug. Furthermore, unless the Palestinians have the support from one of the two superpowers, Israel does not feel any outside pressure to recognize the leadership of Fatah or the PLO.

In 1970, Arafat and Nasser worked together behind the scenes for a peace agreement. An unspoken understanding arose that if the PLO did not try to sabotage the peace agreement between the Arab countries and Israel, based on Resolution 242, then Nasser would encourage Hussein to allow the Palestinians to exercise their right to self-determination in the West Bank. This was all based on the Second Rogers Plan in July of 1970.⁷⁹ Two events took place at this time. First, splinter groups like the PFLP began to increase attacks on Israel and called for the overthrow of Hussein. The radical splinter groups were still calling for the complete destruction of the Jewish State. Although Arafat was not as outspoken anymore toward the destruction of Israel, the international community still saw Palestinian terrorism as a problem. Ultimately, the call for the overthrow of Hussein is what finally led to the Jordanian civil war. Secondly, Israel was not ready to make peace with Jordan by giving up the West Bank. Israel is like the Soviet Union in the sense that it wants buffer states around its borders to help prevent an invasion. In Israel's first ten years of existence, it had been attacked three times. The Israeli nation needed to feel as secure as

⁷⁹Alan Hart, Arafat, A Political Biography (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984), 302.

possible. In May and June of 1971, Hussein's army went on the offensive, shelling Fatah bases near Jeralt and Salt. Nearly 2000 Palestinians were dug in for the offensive, but this time the Jordanian forces were too much for the Palestinians. By the middle of July, the final assault took place, killing about 200 Palestinians. The Jordanians took 2,300 prisoners with the majority released and allowed to return to their homes. About 750 members of the PFLP were executed.⁸⁰ "Black September," which began in September of 1970, was over.

The PLO's expulsion from Jordan caused Arafat to relocate his headquarters in Lebanon. Lebanon had always been a last resort for the Fatah leaders because of the historical neutrality of the state. However, Fatah operations had already caused conflict within Lebanon. On 28 December 1968, Israeli commandos destroyed 13 civilian airliners on the ground at Beirut International Airport.⁸¹ According to Israel, the raid was a reprisal for a Palestinian guerrilla attack on an Israeli airliner at Athens a few days earlier. Allegedly, the Palestinian terrorists came from Lebanon and had been trained there.⁸² Considered the Switzerland of the Middle East, Lebanon was the playground for many rich Arabs and a vacation site for Europeans. It was, however, a growing place of hostility between the minority Maronite Christians and

⁸⁰John Laffin, Fedayeen, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1973), 69.

⁸¹Michael C. Hudson, "The Palestinian Factor in the Lebanese Civil War," The Middle East Journal 32, supplement 3, (Summer 1978): 263.

⁸²Ibid.

the majority Shiite Muslims. Lebanon was on the verge of civil war. Arafat did not want the PLO to be the impetus that caused the Lebanese civil war because the PLO was already on shaky ground in the eyes of the international community.

In 1968 and 1969, Arafat had already sent brigades of Fatah members to Lebanon to set up bases in the Palestinian refugee camps at the foot of Mt. Hermon. After the Six-Day War, there were over 200,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The refugee camps became the setting for paramilitary training, political propaganda, mass mobilization and arms stockpiling.⁸³ By 1971, Lebanon became dominated by Palestinians which the Israelis called "Fatahland." Mt. Hermon provided logistic backing by the Syrians and the Israeli border just miles away.

In 1969, the first clash between the Lebanese Army and the PLO took place in southern Lebanon. Lebanese President Charles Helou wanted to restore some semblance of order in his country because the PLO was unwilling to accept any limitations on its activities against Israel. They were determined not to be outmaneuvered or isolated. The PLO had learned its lesson in Jordan by failing to win over the Palestinians and Jordanian subjects of King Hussein. Members of the PLO took an active role in Lebanese politics and certainly supported the reform program of the National Movement which called for an end to, or at least a

⁸³Ibid., 266.

diminution of, "Maronite preponderance and socioeconomic `injustice.'"⁸⁴ Because the PLO received backing from Syria and President Helou was afraid of a Syrian invasion, a compromise was reached. The Lebanese government would facilitate PLO operations from Lebanon into Israel, in return for Arafat's commitment to refrain from interfering in the domestic affairs of the Lebanese country.⁸⁵ Lebanon offered secure political, military and logistical bases. But the PLO eventually encroached upon Lebanese sovereignty and provoked Israeli reprisals into Lebanon. At times, Israel reacted violently against attacks on civilian population targets like airlines and embassies. In December of 1968, Israel raided the Beirut airport and in April 1973, commando operations were launched against PLO headquarters in the Lebanese capital. Altogether, in the 44 major Israeli attacks into Lebanon between mid-1968 and mid-1974, approximately 880 Lebanese and Palestinian civilians were killed, according to Lebanese government officials.⁸⁶ Israeli retaliation was too precise and violent for the Lebanese government. The Lebanese had no choice but to provide the PLO with political and diplomatic shelter.

⁸⁴Michael C. Hudson, "The Palestinian Factor in the Lebanese Civil War," Middle East Journal 32, supplement 3 (Summer 1978), 266.

⁸⁵Raphael Israeli, PLO In Lebanon, Selected Documents (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 3.

⁸⁶Michael C. Hudson, "The Palestinian Factor in the Lebanese Civil War," Middle East Journal 32, supplement 3 (Summer 1978): 267.

Fatah continued to launch hit-and-run operations against Israel. One particular operation incensed the Israeli government. In February 1972, terrorists ambushed an Israeli engineer and decapitated him, then killed another man, his wife and three soldiers. The Israeli army unleashed a three day reprisal operation into Lebanon, sweeping through Fatah bases and destroying buildings. On 19 June 1972, two Israeli civilians in a bus were injured and two soldiers wounded by a Palestinian landmine.⁸⁷ Israeli planes promptly attacked Palestinian targets in Hasbaya, ten miles north of the border. Lebanon was taking an enormous amount of Israeli reprisals. The Lebanese Government set up military checkpoints throughout southern Lebanon, making it extremely difficult to carry out operations. The PLO was about to be choked off at the neck. If it were expelled from Lebanon, the PLO had no other place to go. It would be a terrorist group without a country from which to launch their attacks.

VII

The year 1972 marked the beginning of new types of Palestinian terrorism. The rise of the "Black September" Organization brought new and bloodier acts of terrorism that Arafat did not want associated with the Palestinian cause. Black September and the PFLP were committed to international terrorism when Arafat was

⁸⁷John Laffin, Fedayeen: The Arab-Israeli Dilemma (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1973), 76.

looking to ease up on terrorist activities and move toward political legitimacy as the way to liberate Palestine. Finally, the break Arafat had been waiting for: support from an Arab neighbor. On 28 November 1971, in Cairo, Arafat was about to sign an agreement with Wasfi Tal, the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense in Jordan, but Tal was assassinated by Black September. The agreement specified that the PLO would return to Jordan as a political organization and pursue the liberation struggle by political means alone.⁸⁸ Jordan would then recognize the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Because the leaders of the PLO were about to abandon armed struggle as the way to liberation, the PFLP split from the PLO and the Black September Organization, an offshoot of Fatah, was created.

In 1972, two events plummeted Black September into the international scene which caused great harm to the PLO in the eyes of the world. The first event took place on 5 September 1972. Members of Black September held nine Israeli athletes hostage at the Olympic Village in Munich. The goal was to get 200 PLO prisoners released, gaining international notoriety. The plan backfired when Israeli commandos attacked the Palestinian terrorists, killing the Israeli athletes and eliciting world condemnation. Israel's response to the Munich operation was a massive air and land invasion of Lebanon. Between 300 to 500 Palestinians were killed; most of the dead

⁸⁸Paul A. Jureidini, William E. Hazen, The Palestinian Movement In Politics (Toronto: Lexington Books, 1976.), 16.

were civilian women and children from Israeli air fighters.⁸⁹ The international community sat in silence.

The second event that caused great harm to the PLO was a hostage-taking operation in Sudan. Eight Black September terrorists entered the Saudi Embassy in Khartoum and held four hostages. When their demands were not met, Curtis Moore, the American charge d' affaires, Cleo Noel, the United States Ambassador, and Guy Eid, the Belgian charge d' affaires, were taken to the Embassy basement and machine-gunned to death.⁹⁰ Again, Black September and the PLO were condemned and reviled around the world.

Arafat had to appease Black September because he was afraid of losing control of the PLO. However, after the Khartoum incident, Arafat was able to disband Black September. He had a little help from Israel. A special Israeli commando group entered Beirut and killed Kamal Nasser, spokesman for Black September, along with other Black September terrorists. By the beginning of 1973, Arafat's main strategy was a defensive one. He just wanted to keep the PLO alive.

Arafat and Fatah failed to gain any of their primary objectives from the use of terrorism. Arafat was unable to gain Arab strength and coordination to launch an all out military attack against Israel and win. Fatah was unable to gain one inch of

⁸⁹Alan Hart, Arafat: A Political Biography (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984), 353.

⁹⁰Alan Hart, Arafat, A Political Biography, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 1986), 361.

Palestine back. Israel continued to occupy Gaza and the West Bank. There was no successful uprising from the Palestinian masses in the occupied territories. The only success Arafat and Fatah gained through the use of terrorism is that they raised the consciousness of the international world. However, the rise of Black September and the activities of the PFLP, hurt the image of the Palestinian struggle in the international community.

By 1973, there were three things that had to take place for Arafat and the PLO to be successful in liberating a part of Palestine. First, Israel had to be convinced that the PLO's military potential was dangerous to Israel. Second, Arafat had to unify all factions of the Palestinian movement into one organization that was truly representative of the Palestinian masses. Third, the PLO had to gain trust throughout the Arab world in order to gain continuous and strong backing from the Arab world and eventually one of the two superpowers. By the beginning of the Yom Kippur War, Arafat's military strategy was one of survival. He wanted to keep his own power within the PLO and pursue the liberation struggle by political means alone.

The Political Movement: 1973-79

Chapter III

On the eve of the Yom Kippur War, it was difficult to see that Arafat's Palestine liberation movement had any future. The PLO lacked any serious military capability to move against Israel. The terror machine of Black September had been shut down with the assassination of the group's two leaders in Beirut on 10 April 1973. Israel was in the process of disrupting PLO headquarters and training camps in Lebanon. The organization of the PLO was in disarray and the Palestinians seemed to have no direction or desire to continue the resistance.

However, the Yom Kippur War would be a blessing in disguise. Anwar Sadat, successor to Gamal Nasser in Egypt, attempted to become the hero of the Arab world. Through secret negotiations between King Feisal of Saudi Arabia and President Assad of Syria, with backing from Henry Kissinger, United States Secretary of State under President Richard Nixon, Sadat launched a surprise attack against Israel. Over 90,000 Egyptian soldiers overran Israeli defenses and established a defensive zone around the Suez Canal. Sadat had the chance to invade all the way to Tel Aviv and accomplish what Gamal Nasser said was impossible to do. Sadat however, was not interested in fighting a Moslem war; he had his own agenda: to regain the Sinai through negotiation. Palestinians were convinced that Sadat had sold them out by not advancing. After Israel counter-attacked and regained the Golan Heights (which Syria

had partially recovered) and part of the Sinai, Kissinger was able to persuade Israel and Egypt, and then Israel and Syria, to sign United Nations Resolution 338. Under Resolution 338, Sadat got back a little part of the Sinai which was enough to persuade Sadat to work with the White House in order to get back all of the Sinai. He also agreed to attend a postwar peace conference with Israel and to endeavor to convince the other Arab states to participate also.

If Sadat signed a peace agreement with Israel that returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in return for Egypt's recognition of Israel's secure borders, then the Arab world and especially the Palestinians, would be left in the cold. Without Egypt, Syria and Jordan and other Arab states could not fight Israel even if they wanted to. In that event, the Arab states would be forced to make peace on Israeli and American terms. The PLO would lose out and King Hussein of Jordan would once again be the voice and representative of the Palestinians.

Arafat was able to respond quickly after the Yom Kippur War because of two reasons. First, after Munich, Arafat began to make progress in his effort to persuade those in Fatah who turned to terror that its use was counter productive and was seriously eroding support for the Palestinian cause. Second, the Sadat "sell out" to Kissinger united many of the leaders in Fatah and the PLO and made compromise essential. Four months after the Yom Kippur War ended, the Central Council of the PLO issued the "Working Paper." It called for the Arab and international recognition of the right of the Palestinians "to establish a national authority on any lands that

could be wrestled from Zionist occupation."⁹¹ The Working Paper should have been a clear signal to Israel and the world that Arafat had finally unified the Palestinian resistance. Arafat and a majority of his colleagues in the PLO were committed to working for a political settlement. The PLO was willing through compromise to reach a settlement which would require the Palestinians to accept the loss of the majority of their original homeland in exchange for a mini state of their own on the West Bank and along the Gaza Strip.

The intention of the Working Paper was a compromise the senior colleagues of Arafat had decided was their last hope for a Palestinian homeland. However, the reality of the matter was that the leadership needed time to sell the compromise to the rank and file of the resistance movement. If Arafat were to announce his true intentions to the world, he would have been repudiated and rejected by the majority of the Palestinians who were actively engaged in the liberation struggle of one hundred percent of its land.

Arafat had to move slowly and wisely in order to educate and convince the Palestinian masses that compromise was the last and best solution to creating a Palestinian national homeland. Arafat began to lose influence and could not establish an effective operational presence in the occupied territories, so Fatah/PLO had to set up an expatriate government. Arafat had to work with traditional West Bank and

⁹¹Alan Hart, Arafat, A Political Biography (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984), 379.

Gaza leaders who were primarily under Jordanian influence.⁹² Pro-PLO nationalist leadership eventually began to grow in the occupied territories because of four events.

First, Sadat's attempt to become the Nasser of the Arab world by brushing the Palestinian issue under the carpet through the Yom Kippur War continued the established practice of Arab leaders overlooking the Palestinians. Second, in 1974 the Arab summit in Rabat recognized the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." Moreover, a second resolution was passed at the summit which required King Hussein to hand over the West Bank to the PLO, after its liberation, thus removing King Hussein as the self proclaimed spokesman for the Palestinians. Hussein was no longer free to determine the future of the Palestinians in the West Bank nor to negotiate the return of the West Bank without the PLO as his negotiating partner. Third, the PLO was admitted to the United Nations as an observer, consequently recognizing the PLO as the official body representing the Palestinians and reinforcing Arafat's legitimacy as leader of the liberation movement. Finally, the Palestine National Council in 1974 adopted two resolutions. Both resolutions reaffirmed a new movement that defended the use of the "diplomatic route" as a possible means for liberation, thereby down playing the "armed struggle" option.⁹³

⁹²For information on traditional political leadership in West Bank, see Middle East Journal 42, supplement 2 (Spring 1988): 219-223.

⁹³ The Middle East Journal 42, Supplement 2 (Spring 1988): 220.

Finally, after years of frustration and many human loses, the PLO finally began to establish a legitimate hold as the sole representative of the Palestinians.

Before Sadat and Syria launched their unexpected assault on Israel, Kissinger and Nixon in early February of 1973 were having secret talks with Egyptian War Minister, Hafiz Ismail, aiming at an overall peace settlement.⁹⁴ Nixon was prepared to engage the United States diplomatically with Israel to urge them to make concessions with Egypt. However, this type of secret negotiation which was different from the public track that called for a complete peace settlement which included the Palestinian problem, is a major reason why the Arab world distrusts the United States. Kissinger followed Israeli policy of wanting to negotiate bilaterally and brush the Palestinian question under the carpet.

Arafat finally gained a significant acknowledgement from the Arab World through the use of the oil weapon. On 18 October 1973, Saudi Arabia announced a ten percent cut in oil production and pledged to cut off all American oil shipments if American support of Israel continued. The day before, OPEC ministers meeting in Kuwait had agreed to reduce oil production by five percent each month until Israel withdrew from the occupied territories and agreed to respect the rights of the Palestinians.⁹⁵ Although this was a far cry from recognizing the right to a Palestinian homeland, it gave Arafat the necessary recognition from the Arab world that he had

⁹⁴Henry Kissinger, Years of Upheaval (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1982), 210.

⁹⁵"The Middle East," Congressional Quarterly (1990): 263.

been looking for since the beginning of the resistance. Arafat wanted the Arab world to use the oil weapon to force the White House to pressure Israel to recognize the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians and to sit down at the negotiating table.

The cat and mouse game continued in October between the Arabs and the United States. On 19 October 1973, President Nixon asked Congress to appropriate \$2.2 billion for emergency military aid for Israel. The Israeli military suffered enormous losses in the first few days of the war and needed emergency help to sustain the final push to thrust back Egypt and Syria. The Arab world responded: Libya cut off all oil exports to the United States and raised oil prices from \$4.90 to \$8.92 per barrel. Saudi Arabia halted oil exports the very next day to America. On 21 October, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Dubai announced suspension of all oil exports to the United States, thus marking a total cutoff of all oil from Arab states to the United States. This same day, the United States and Soviet Union presented a joint resolution (338) to the UN Security Council calling for a cease-fire. It was adopted by the Security Council and a cease-fire took effect on the Egyptian-Israeli front. However, Iraq and the PLO rejected it. Nixon put American forces on military alert, as tension grew over whether the Soviet Union would intervene in the Middle East crisis before Syria, Egypt, and Israel signed a peace agreement on 11 November 1973.

The year 1974 became the most important and successful year for the PLO. First, in January of 1974, Kissinger's "shuttle diplomacy" resulted in the Suez Disengagement Accords. The accords were signed on 18 January 1974. The chief provisions to the accords were: Israel was to abandon its western bank brigade and withdraw from the eastern bank about twenty miles from the canal; Egypt was to keep a limited force on the eastern bank; a United Nations truce force was to patrol the buffer zone; and Sadat was to press Syria to begin talks with Israel.⁹⁶ Second, the Arab world began responding to the PLO in the manner which would help pressure Israel and the U.S. into negotiating with the PLO. Third, the PLO received the international support it had been seeking since the beginning of the struggle: United Nations recognition.

On 14 September 1974, in Cairo, the Palestine Liberation Organization, Egypt, and Syria declared the PLO to be the sole representative of the Palestinian people. This was truly a remarkable achievement because Egypt in the past was simply interested in gaining the Sinai back and becoming the center of the Arab world. Likewise, Syria was only interested in its own agenda. The goal for the Syrian government was to regain the Golan Heights and to gain influence and control in Lebanon. Arafat held out on numerous occasions not to concede power or representation of the Palestinians to Syria or any other government that wanted to use the PLO as a puppet government. The wave of momentum was beginning to grow

⁹⁶Henry Kissinger, Years of Upheaval (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1982), 838-845.

and Arafat could finally see concrete achievement from their resistance movement. However, the greatest achievement of the Palestinian movement was about to happen. It struck Arafat by complete surprise. On 14 October 1974, the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly passed a resolution inviting the PLO to take part in its debate on the Palestine question thus giving the PLO international recognition it had sought for so long. The United Nations resolution legitimized the existence of the PLO in the international community as the sole representative of the Palestinians. Fourteen days later on 28 October 1974, at the Rabat Summit in Morocco, the twenty Arab League heads of state, unanimously recognized the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people on any liberated Palestinian territory."⁹⁷ The Rabat Summit accomplished two things: legitimacy and negotiating power. The PLO was given the status of a government within the Arab world; the PLO's future was thus guaranteed by the Arabs in so far as it was possible for them to guarantee it. Second, the other resolution passed by the summit required King Hussein to commit himself to handing over the West Bank, when it was liberated, to the PLO. Furthermore, Hussein was no longer free to determine the future of the Palestinians of the occupied West Bank or to speak for them; he was no longer free to negotiate the return of the West Bank without the PLO as his negotiating partner. This victory for Arafat theoretically should have meant two things: Israel had to accept the PLO as the

⁹⁷Alan Hart, Arafat: A Political Biography (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984), 405.

sole representative of the Palestinian and sit down at the bargaining table with the PLO. Second, if the United States wanted to participate in a peace conference it could no longer set preconditions of not allowing the PLO into the negotiation process. The tide of good fortune continued for the PLO in 1974. On November 13th, Yasser Arafat made his dramatic appearance at the United Nations to open the General Assembly debate on "The Question of Palestine." He was honored and treated as a Head of State for the day. As he entered the United Nations chambers, Arafat was greeted by a standing ovation by the representatives of the nations of the world. Only the American representative remained seated while the Israeli Ambassador left the chamber. Arafat in his 101 minute speech described the PLO's goal as "one democratic [Palestinian] state where Christian, Jew, and Moslem live in justice, equality, and fraternity."⁹⁸ Finally, on 22 November the international community, with the exception of Israel and the United States, passed a resolution recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to independence and sovereignty and giving the PLO observer status at the United Nations.⁹⁹ Arafat by the end of 1974 accomplished two critical objectives that had formerly eluded him: Arab and international recognition. The PLO was now formally recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians. However, Arafat still lacked two crucial ingredients to accomplish his

⁹⁸Lester A. Sobel, Peace Making in the Middle East (Facts on file, New York 1980), 67.

⁹⁹Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, Twenty-ninth Session, Vol. I (A/9631); Resolution 3237 (XXIX), "*Observer Status for PLO*," (22 November 1974), 5.

goal of a Palestinian homeland: a strong and unified internal structure within the resistance, and support from one of the two superpowers.

Arafat was getting closer in uniting the rank and file of the PLO. However, it was extremely hard to control and discipline splinter groups like the PFLP and the Palestine Democratic Front (PDF). On 19 November, just six days after Arafat's appearance at the United Nations, four Israeli civilians, including two women, were killed in an attack from the Popular Democratic Front in an apartment building in Beit Shean.¹⁰⁰ The attack was to demonstrate that although the Palestinians were ready to compromise it did not mean they had no alternative. This idea that the Palestinians would demonstrate from a position of power hurt the PLO once again in the international community. Arafat desperately needed to pull in the reins from the off-shoot resistance groups. Moreover, Arafat still had not gained support from the United States or the Soviet Union. Now that the PLO had international status, it had to keep that status through political negotiation. The White House needed to feel pressure from the international community in order to put pressure on Israel to sit down and talk with the PLO. Arafat was still a long way from this goal.

In January of 1975, Kissinger felt that it was time to get tough. In a Business Week interview, Kissinger warned that the United States might use force in the Middle

¹⁰⁰Alan Hart, Arafat: A Political Biography (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984), 410.

East "to prevent the strangulation of the industrialized world" by Arab oil producers.¹⁰¹ Kissinger's remarks aroused angry world reaction. Later that month, the Pentagon announced the Israeli purchase of two hundred Lance missiles, which are capable of carrying nuclear warheads. The White House at this stage of the dilemma continued to show a lack of restraint toward Israeli support.

But the Palestinians continued to gain support from the United Nations. On 21 February 1975, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights adopted resolutions condemning Israel for carrying out the "deliberate destruction" of Qenitra, a Syrian city in the Golan Heights, and for "desecrating" Moslem and Christian shrines.¹⁰² Although this was not a direct Israeli assault on the Palestinians, it did directly relate to the resistance because the UN was not closing its eyes to Israeli intransigence.

Another example of Arafat's inability to control splinter group activity at a time that called for complete termination of terrorism, happened on 5 March 1975. Eighteen persons, including six non-Israeli tourists, were slain when eight Palestinian guerrillas seized a shorefront hotel in Tel Aviv. Seven of the attackers were killed by Israeli troops and one was captured. At this juncture of the Palestinian movement, political noise making, not violence, is what the PLO needed from its inner circle.

¹⁰¹Business Week, 2 January 1976, 46.

¹⁰²Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, Thirteenth Session, 16 Sept.-17 Dec. 1975; Resolution 3376 (XXX) (10 November 1975).

This one event did not drastically erode Palestinian relations with the Arab world or at the United Nations. In October, Anwar Sadat urged Washington to open dialogue with the PLO while the United States and Egypt signed four economic exchange agreements. On 10 of November 1975, a peculiar event took place: the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution defining Zionism as "a form of racism or racial discrimination" on a 72-35 vote with thirty-two abstentions and three absences.¹⁰³ Another resolution recognized Palestinian rights to self-determination and to attend any United Nations Middle East negotiation.¹⁰⁴ Naturally, the United States and Israel rejected the resolution with President Ford condemning it by saying "...the United States deplores the characterization of Zionism as a form of racism and believes that the adoption of this resolution undermines the principles on which the United Nations is based."¹⁰⁵ Finally, Pope Paul VI on 22 December 1975, appealed to Israel to "recognize the rights and legitimate aspirations" of the Palestinians.

The momentum for peace continued to rumble on in January 1976 when the United Nations Security Council opened its Middle East debate by voting 11-1 with three abstentions to allow the PLO to participate with the speaking rights of a

¹⁰³"UN Anti-Zionism Resolution," The Middle East Journal 2, (November 1975): 825-30.

¹⁰⁴Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, Thirteenth Session, 16-Sept.-17 December 1975. Resolution 3375 (XXX) "Invitation to PLO to participate in the Middle East Talks," (10 November 1975), 3.

¹⁰⁵Middle East Journal "U.N. Anti-Zionism Resolution," II, (Winter, 10 November 1975): 826.

member.¹⁰⁶ The resistance had finally reached the peak of its movement because many leaders believed that the United Nations had to take an active role in the Middle East peace talks. By allowing the PLO to speak and lobby within the United Nations, the PLO was guaranteed to have some say in the final outcome to the Israeli-Arab conflict.

Later that same month, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin visited Washington and ruled out any negotiations with the PLO in an address to a joint meeting of Congress. Rabin departed Washington with the understanding from President Ford that the United States would promote the convening of the Geneva Conference without the PLO. Israel continued to press the White House as much as it could to thwart any attempt by the PLO to gain that final leverage they needed for a peace conference to the Middle East crisis.

The years' events continued to put pressure on Israel to finally recognize the PLO. On 23 March 1976, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, William Scranton, told the Security Council that the United States considered the presence of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories to be "an obstacle to the success of the negotiations for a just and final peace."¹⁰⁷ Almost ten years after the 1967 war, a high ranking United States official took a negative stance against Israeli

¹⁰⁶The Middle East, Congressional Quarterly, Seventh Edition, "Chronology" (Washington D.C.: CG, 1990): 266.

¹⁰⁷"The Middle East," Congressional Quarterly (1990), 267.

settlement in the occupied territories. It seemed possible that the Palestinians' cry for justice and the PLO's political movement had begun to chip away at American intransigence.

Two days later, the United Nations Security Council voted 14-1, for a resolution that deplored Israel's efforts to change the status of Jerusalem. The resolution also refrained Israel from using measures to harm the inhabitants of the occupied territories, and called an end to Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. However, the White House vetoed the resolution. The American veto demonstrated the influence and power the United States had in the Middle East as well as its dedication to Israel.

Although the White House spoiled the United Nations declaration of the occupied territories rightfully belonging to the Palestinians, the very next month the Security Council at the end of the Middle East debate, presented a majority statement deploring Israeli measures altering the demographic character of the occupied territories. Although this was a far cry at establishing a time for peace negotiations, it certainly made clear the international community's displeasure of how the Palestinians were being mistreated. The United States disassociated itself from the statement.

On 6 September 1977, the PLO was unanimously granted full voting membership in the Arab League. Arafat had finally achieved a major goal. Not only was the PLO accepted by the Arab world as the sole representative of the Palestinians, but Arafat had authority to debate and vote on issues that directly affected the

Palestinian drive toward a homeland. He established the PLO as a major player in the international community on issues reflecting the Arab-Israeli conflict. And for the time being, he had the UN focusing on Israeli behavior in the occupied territories. In fact, on three separate occasions in November, the Security Council reprimanded Israel. On 11 November 1977, the United Nations Security Council, in a consensus statement, deplored the establishment of Israeli settlements in occupied Arab territories and declared "invalid" the annexation of eastern Jerusalem by Israel.¹⁰⁸ On 23 November 1977, the General Assembly voted 118-2, with two abstentions for a resolution calling on Israel to halt resettlement of Palestinian refugees in Gaza and to return all refugees to their camps.¹⁰⁹ The very next day, the General Assembly passed another resolution by 90-16 with thirty abstentions, the report of the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People proclaiming the right of Palestinian Arab refugees to establish their own state and reclaim former properties in Israel. This historical approval, although not binding, gave Arafat the international recognition to establish a Palestinian homeland somewhere within the occupied territories. The question for Arafat and his inner circle was, what was their next move?

¹⁰⁸Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, Thirty-Second Session, 20 Sept-27 Dec-1977, No. 45 (A/32/45); Resolution 32/20, "The Situation in the Middle East," (29 November 1977), 24-25.

¹⁰⁹Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, Thirty-Second Session, 20-Sept-27 Dec. 1977, No. 45 (A/32/45); Resolution 32/40 "Question of Palestine," (2 December 1977), 24-25.

Once again in February of 1977, the United Nations spoke out against Israeli behavior. On 17 February 1977, the United Nations Human Rights Commission accused Israel of practicing torture and pillaging archeological and cultural property in the occupied territories. Pressure from the international community began building up on Israel and the United States. As long as the PLO played its cards right and continued to use the political process, eventually the White House would have to succumb to the pressure and entice Israel to the bargaining table. On 6 March, George Habash, leader of the PFLP told reporters that the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and three other rejectionist groups would break from the PLO if the Palestine National Council decided to participate in a Geneva peace conference or recognized Israel. An ideal situation would have the entire resistance movement under the same umbrella with the same goals for implementing and carrying out the movement. However, every time a splinter group like the PFLP went against the wishes of the mainstream movement, the PLO lost prestige in the international community. But now, with these splinter groups announcing their complete separation from the PLO, their actions were not necessarily associated with the PLO. Arafat would have had to do two things to keep his present status in the international community: first, he could have tried to liquidate the remaining splinter groups. That, however, would have been political suicide within the Palestinian community. Second, any time one of the splinter groups committed an act of terrorism, Arafat would have needed to denounce the act as harmful to the peace process.

The PLO was on the verge of fulfilling its final stage to its peace movement. Arafat had convinced most of the rank and file to follow with the political movement as a means to settling the Israeli-Arab conflict. He gained wide Arab support for his movement only to enhance that support with a 9 March meeting with King Hussein in Cairo. It was the first time they had met since "Black September" in 1970. Furthermore, Arafat and the PLO gained international notoriety and status with the acceptance of observer status at the United States. What was still lacking was support from one of the two super powers.

On 12 March 1977, the Palestine National Council opened. Sadat pledged that Egypt would not cede a single inch of Arab land. On 16 March 1977, an historical event occurred. President Jimmy Carter, the first American president ever to do so, endorsed the idea of a Palestinian homeland. This announcement was the beginning of a whole new direction in the Middle East peace movement. However, it must be remembered that nothing in the Middle East happens very quickly, especially peace talks.

The next few months proved to be filled with much hope as negotiations and diplomacy took place like never before. On 4 April, Sadat visited Washington and told President Carter that the Palestinian question was the "core and crux" of the Arab-Israeli dispute. On 9 May 1977, President Carter and Syrian President Assad met in Geneva to discuss Middle East peace prospects. The same day Saudi Prince Fahd said the PLO would be likely to recognize Israel in the context of an overall

peace settlement. Later that month, Carter pledged "special treatment" for Israel in regard to arms requests; however, he again called for a Palestinian homeland and said, "there's a chance the Palestinians might make moves to recognize the right of Israel to exist."¹¹⁰ What these moves were remained to be seen. What looked to be legitimate diplomacy may have been lip service to all the publicity the PLO had been receiving. What Arafat had to do was actively pursue diplomacy from his side of the table. He had to convince the 300 members of the Palestine National Convention that political compromise was the way to end the Israeli-Arab conflict.

In Israel, Menachem Begin, the former leader of Irgun, on 17 May unexpectedly won a plurality in the Israeli election and formed Israel's next government. On 19 May 1977, Begin called for new Jewish settlements in the Israeli-occupied territories thus setting off international verbal condemnation. On 17 June 1977, United States Vice President Walter Mondale delivered a major speech on the Middle East that outlined the Carter's administration's views and emphasized a three point peace plan: a return to approximately the 1967 borders; creation of a Palestinian homeland; and establishment of complete peace and normal relations between countries in the area.¹¹¹ Menachem Begin on 23 June 1977, giving his first major speech as Prime Minister, announced that Israel would not "under any circumstances" relinquish the West Bank or allow the creation of a Palestinian state west of the Jordan

¹¹⁰"The Middle East," Congressional Quarterly 1990): 286.

¹¹¹Ibid., 287.

River.¹¹² At first sound, this statement sounded like Begin had issued an ultimatum to the United States. However, it could be said that at least Begin did not dismiss the idea of a Palestinian homeland. When dealing with such a complicated issue, compromise had to start somewhere.

Events continued to turn in the PLO's favor in 1977. On 29 June 1977, the European Economic Community issued a statement endorsing the idea of a Palestinian homeland. On 22 July 1977, the PLO became the first non-state to have full membership in any United Nations body when it was accepted as a member of the Economic Commission for Western Asia of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Arafat and the PLO were at the height of their movement. Six days later on 28 July 1977, President Carter at a press conference stated, that "the major stumbling block" to reconvening the Geneva Conference was "the participation by the Palestinian representative."¹¹³ Carter wanted to discuss the matter with the PLO and to advocate a possible Palestinian role at Geneva if the PLO would agree to recognize Israel and to negotiate on the basis of United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338. Arafat simply could not recognize Israel before Israel recognized the right to a Palestinian homeland.

Israel and the United States had consistently insisted that the PLO could not become a party to negotiations until it recognized the existence of the State of Israel. On the surface, this demand seemed very reasonable. If the PLO were prepared to

¹¹²"The Middle East," Congressional Quarterly (1990): 268.

¹¹³Ibid., 269.

give formal de jure recognition to Israel at the end of the negotiating process, why could it not do so at the beginning? There were two reasons why: first, according to international law, the acquisition of territory by war does not give the conquering and occupying power the right to title to, or sovereignty over, the conquered and occupied territory.¹¹⁴ In regards to the Israel-Arab conflict, Israel's occupation of Arab land beyond the borders of the United Nations 1947 Partition plan was illegal according to international law.¹¹⁵ Second, acquisition of territory by war can be legitimized only if the other parties with the claim to the territory occupied recognize the occupying power. Thus, according to international law, the Palestinians would be waving their rights and their claim to their land the moment they recognized Israel. This was the reason Arafat could not accept President Carter's offer to recognize Israel for the privilege of being allowed to take part in negotiations about the Palestinian future.

Diplomacy seemed to stall in August after Secretary of State Cyrus Vance officially ended a Middle East peace mission with a round of talks with Israeli officials stating, "both sides remain far apart on the basic issues that have to be resolved before the Geneva talks can resume."¹¹⁶ On 14 August, the Israeli government announced it would extend "equal rights," the same as those enjoyed by residents of Israel, to

¹¹⁴Gerhard von Glahn, Law Among Nations (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986), 627-636.

¹¹⁵Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, Thirteenth Session, Supplement No. 34 (A/10034); Resolution 3414 (XXX) "The Situation in the Middle East," p.6-7.

¹¹⁶"The Middle East," Congressional Quarterly (1990): 269.

Arabs in the occupied territories. The word "Arab" seemed to be interchangeable with the word "Palestinian." Three days later, the Israeli government approved plans for three new settlements in the West Bank. Carter reiterated the administration's position that Israel's plan for new settlements in the west bank was "illegal" and an unnecessary obstacle to peace.¹¹⁷ The PLO continued its political pressure by denouncing the White House peace efforts in the Middle East. The PLO stated its objection to 242 as the basis for a settlement, calling for an agreement that recognized the Palestinian people's right to independence and sovereignty.¹¹⁸

The PLO received one last superficial statement from the United States State Department on 12 September emphasizing that the Palestinians had to be involved in the peace-making process. However, the PLO's status within the United States began to digress from this point. Carter favored the PLO involvement in a Middle East settlement, but did not consider the organization "the exclusive representative of the Palestinians." Carter also wanted the PLO to pull out of Lebanon as part of the procedure which would reconvene the Geneva conference. Israel, naturally agreed with the U.S. that the PLO should pull out of Lebanon before the talks in Geneva began. Arafat rejected the offer and said that the PLO would not pull out of southern

¹¹⁷Ibid., 273.

¹¹⁸Allen Hart, Arafat: A Political Biography (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984), 362.

Lebanon. Negotiations broke down for a Geneva conference and bilateral negotiations began between Sadat and Begin.

The year 1978 marked the beginning of the collapse of the PLO's heightened popularity. The lime light seemed to move away from the Palestinian question and moved on to other actors in the Middle East. On 4 January 1978, Said Hammani, chief representative of the PLO in Britain was assassinated in London. No one knows who killed him, but many in the inner sanctum of the PLO believe the West was in on it.¹¹⁹ Arafat again lost trust with the United States.¹²⁰ The year also marked the beginning of talks between Sadat and Begin which eventually led to the Camp David Agreements. Hostilities between the Moslems and Christians reached new heights in Lebanon along with the invasion of Israel into Lebanon.

The PLO also seemed to lose ground in 1979. The international community seemed to be focused on other events such as the seizure of the United States Embassy in Tehran on 14 February, an Iranian oil price hike of thirty percent, and of course, the signing of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel on 26 March. After being chased through the Lebanese country side and the destruction of Palestinian camps and weapons, the PLO withdrew from southern Lebanon and closed its headquarters in Tyre. Then on 28 June, OPEC ministers agree to raise the average price of oil

¹¹⁹Alan Hart, Arafat: A Political Biography (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984), 362.

¹²⁰Ibid., 363.

sixteen percent, causing an outrage in the West. However, this move by OPEC was not for the benefit of the Palestinians, but from pressure from Iran and Saudi Arabia upon the American backing of peace between Egypt and Israel. After several years of having the United Nations pass resolution after resolution in support for the PLO, on 29 November 1979, by a vote of 75-33, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring that the 1978 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty had no validity for the Palestinian people.¹²¹ The popularity of Arafat and the PLO within the international community at the end of 1979 seemed to have slipped back into a deep sleep in the minds of the people of the world.

¹²¹"The Middle East," Congressional Quarterly (1990): 273.

Conclusion

Chapter V

Arafat in just over seven years of pushing a program for peace through political diplomacy accomplished more for the Palestinian movement than ten or twelve years of terrorism. Menachem Begin was successful in using terrorism as an instrument to help achieve the State of Israel because of four reasons. First, the lack of reprisals from the British Army never hampered Jewish raids. Second, a strong internal leadership in the Jewish resistance helped keep splinter groups to a minimum. Third, the resistance had Jewish leaders with a policy and government ready to establish and govern the new state of Israel. Finally, support from the United States as well as closed eyes from the international community allowed the resistance to work uninhibited. Conversely, Arafat's Al-Fatah/PLO lacked all the ingredients that made the Jewish resistance successful. Fatah/PLO lacked a strong coherent structure to carry out terrorist attacks and implement a government when and if the movement succeeded in creating a Palestinian state. The resistance lacked Arab support for the first ten or fifteen years of the movement. Arafat always resisted giving up decision making power to governments that waited to use the movement as a puppet regime to gain their own political needs. The resistance also lacked international support from the United Nations for the first ten or so years, never received support from the Soviet Union, and received mostly lip service from the United States. The major sticking

point between the U.S. and the PLO was the fact that Arafat would not give up Palestinian rights and their claim to their land by recognizing Israel, just for the privilege of being allowed to take part in negotiations about their own future. And finally, the PLO could not escape the awesome program of Israeli retaliation that kept the extremists on the run and made a military threat to Israel harder and harder to achieve.

Arafat made enormous strides when he was able to convince the rank and file of the PLO that political diplomacy, rather than terrorism, would create a Palestinian homeland. The one thing Arafat lacked entering the decade of the eighties was strong backing from the United States. Another war against Israel was highly unlikely especially after the Egyptian-Israeli peace. Terrorism against Israel was not going to force the Israelis to the bargaining table. When Arafat made his dramatic speech to the United Nations in 1974, he ended his speech with two sentences for which he will always be remembered: "I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand."¹²² Arafat had spent most of his life using a freedom fighter's gun to fight for Palestinian rights. Although he would not hesitate to use his gun again if forced to, however, Arafat has enough wisdom and courage to continue the struggle through political diplomacy. The question is whether the rank and file of the PLO will continue to support the hand that

¹²²David Hirst, The Gun and the Olive Branch, 2nd ed., (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1984), 335.

holds the olive branch. If Arafat is unable to hold on to his support, the PLO could turn to the direction of a more reactionary leader like George Habash who would revert to a reliance on terrorism. The next option for the Palestinian resistance if diplomacy fails is terror within the United States own borders. The United States is becoming extremely populated with an Arab immigration. This Arab immigration is not limited to those tired of the constant fighting in the occupied territories, but Arabs and Palestinians who have money and the reactionary spirit to carry out terrorist acts here in the United States. The time has come to end the Arab-Israeli conflict before the olive branch has fallen.

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