

CONDITIONS FOR UNITED STATES  
RECOGNITION OF THE PLO

James Richard McDonald



# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

## Monterey, California



# THESIS

CONDITIONS FOR UNITED STATES

RECOGNITION OF THE PLO

by

James Richard McDonald

December 1976

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Recognition of the PLO

by

James Richard McDonald  
Major, United States Air Force  
B.A., LaGrange College, 1960

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## ABSTRACT

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## PREFACE

The word Palestine is of Roman origin, referring to the Biblical land of the Philistines. For centuries the name fell into disuse until it was revived by the British as an official title for an area mandated to their control by the League of Nations after the breakup of the Turkish Ottoman Empire in World War I. The British mandate also applied to Trans-Jordan, although it did not lie within the area designated 'Palestine.'

Because the mandate applied to both regions there is the argument that the word Palestinian applies to persons east as well as west of the Jordan River. There is also the further argument that the word applies not just to Arabs but also to Jews and Christians who live in the former mandated area.

The United States has recently re-oriented its thinking of international affairs from Southeast Asia to the continuing conflict in the Middle East. The United States, its allies, and its opponents are closely watching the developments of the peace efforts, the preparations for war, and the role of the Palestinians in this area.

The objective of this thesis is to identify the possible conditions in which the United States may recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as a separate entity in world politics. To achieve this, the thesis is divided into four phases. The first describes the Fedayeen movement as





a group, particularly the objectives, backgrounds, and accomplishments of each major organization. The second gives a limited description of the organization of the PLO and the major Fedayeen groups. The third phase gives a description of the positions the United States has taken, principally since 1967. The fourth phase gives three proposals which may end the conflict concerning the Palestinians.

Because of the voluminous material written on the Palestinians, this thesis must, by necessity, narrow its subject. In describing the decisive aspects of the Fedayeen, this thesis will not give a complete history of the PLO or the Fedayeen organizations nor will it describe every Palestinian group. For the sake of simplicity, the discussion of the Fedayeen will concentrate on the PLO, Fatah, and the groups which comprise the 'rejection front.' The names Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organization will often be interchanged since Fatah is the controlling element in the PLO. Examination of the Fedayeen will be restricted mainly to the time frame of 1964 to the present and will not give a detailed analysis of the conflicts between the Fedayeen, Israel, and the Arab states.

Narrowing the subject in this manner does not mean this thesis will operate in a vacuum. However, it does define the principle concern of this thesis. To gain an individual in-depth knowledge of these groups and the different nations' positions, the student of this subject should become familiar with the numerous books, articles, and studies written of these groups.



The sources of data for this study have been primarily from recent books and current newspapers and magazine articles from the United States, Israel, Great Britain, and translations of Arab and foreign sources. I am deeply indebted to Dr. John Amos of the National Security Affairs Department, Naval Postgraduate School, for providing an insight and information on this subject.

This paper does not attempt to be one of historical summary or one of reinterpretation, but it endeavors to relate what happened yesterday, what is happening today, and what might happen tomorrow. The issue of the Palestinians is real, and no actor in or observer of the international political arena can ignore them.



## I. FEDAYEEN

Any understanding of the Palestine Liberation Organization must include a perception of the fedayeen groups which have given rise to militant Palestinian nationalism. Since the time of the British Mandate, the Palestinians reacted against control of what they considered their nation. Although there have been increases and declines in the popularity of this movement, it has constantly been advocated by both Palestinians and Arabs. Following the Israeli victory in the 1948 Palestine war, the agony of defeat and the dispersion of the Palestinian people to several nations caused a considerable decline in enthusiasm for the cause. The Arab nations have attempted to incorporate the Palestinian question in their own causes for their advantage, and this strategy caused a further decline in Palestinian nationalism.

Following the end of World War I, the Jews, through the World Zionist Organization, began to work for the realization of the Jewish National Home. The British further complicated the problem by giving this group official recognition. Events began to build up between the aspirations of the Jewish community and those of the Palestinians. Until 1929 the Arab leaders attempted to design an accord, based on legal means. The focal point of this time period was religious differences as the Palestinians, Arabs, and Jews maneuvered to gain what



each group considered their respective Holy places. Muslims throughout the Arab world were called on to assist the Palestine Arabs in preserving Islam's holy places in Jerusalem. This policy came into conflict with the Jews' desire to pray at the Western Wall which surrounded the Mosque compound. The result was an outbreak of riots in August 1929.

The 1929 riots marked the radicalization of the Palestinian struggle against Jewish ideology. Following the riots, there was a change in leadership in the person of al-Hajj Amin el-Hussaini. This new leader found support from among a group of young radicals who proposed that Zionism and the British be opposed by violent means. This Palestine ultraism during the 1930s became a part of what was happening in the rest of the Arab world as it approached independence. The event which was in contrast to this latter development was the establishment of the Jewish National Home and its gain in momentum. By 1939, the Jewish community in Palestine numbered 30 percent of the country's entire population -- about 450,000.<sup>1</sup>

In 1936 the Palestinians began a series of protests, demonstrations, strikes, and moves against the British forces in the country. The British forces were unable to contain this popular uprising, and they asked the pro-British Arab rulers to use their influence to prevent the

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis, M., and others, The Palestinians, People, History, Politics, p. 124, Transaction Books, 1975.





spread of the movement. For a time, there was a quiet in the area; however, during the late 1930s Palestinian activities continued on a random basis. The years of World War II saw a decline in the resistance, but the peace in 1945 witnessed the beginning of new developments in the struggle between the Jews and the Palestinians.

In May 1948 the state of Israel was established, and a great number of Palestinians were dispersed to refugee camps. The first reaction of the Palestinians was to resist any kind of rapprochement that would lead to a final settlement with the state of Israel. Small Palestinian groups residing in the Gaza Strip, Syria, and the West Bank took the initiative by undertaking commando action inside Israel. These raids prompted Israel to retaliate by carrying out raids into these territories. The Palestinians were not based on, or connected to, any political group, but were trained and led by Egyptian Army officers.<sup>2</sup>

The Palestinian groups which were politically active considered the Arab governments as responsible for the defeat in 1948. As a result, these groups became affiliated to, and politically active in, national Arab parties such as the Ba'th and the Arab Nationalist Movement. These groups appealed to the Palestinians since they called for Arab unity, believed by the Palestinians as the path to a strong unified Arab

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<sup>2</sup>Stetler, R., Palestine: The Arab-Israeli Conflict, p. 126, Ramparts Press, 1972.



state which would be capable of confronting Israel and liberating Palestine.

On the other hand, the Arabs, in the 1950s, were apprehensive about the inactivity which permeated the Palestinian problem, and they believed that the people themselves would forget the cause and accept its erosion. They believed that Israel would gain strength and would be accepted by the outside world. When this occurred, the Arabs believed, the Palestinians would accept their fate and would incorporate themselves into Arab countries. To counter this trend, the Arabs pressed a publicity campaign to keep the issue alive. An earlier Jordanian Government booklet stated:

The theme for the Palestinian problem is of the gravest consequence for the future of all Arabs is constantly stressed in Arab publications. Never before have the Arabs been so starkly exposed to danger.<sup>3</sup>

The Arab League in their meeting of 30 August 1960 concluded that all Arab states should preserve the Palestinian entity and should avoid whatever might bring its assimilation.

The inter-Arab rivalries have caused a basic dilemma in that the issue became more tangled with each camp attempting to gain supremacy for the Palestinian cause. Often, these rivalries have existed outside the Arab-Israeli question. Nevertheless, the importance of the

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<sup>3</sup>Harkabi, Y., Fedayeen Action and Arab Strategy, p. 2, Adelphi Paper, 1968.



Palestinian question has grown in recent years, so much that many Arabs began to call it a 'War of National Liberation.'<sup>4</sup>

The Palestinians themselves viewed their difficulties outside the realm of the inter-Arab rivalries. After the 1948 debacle, the Palestinians found themselves huddled in refugee camps with no methods to exploit their nationalism. They found themselves as pawns as the Arab states used them to gain position and status over each other. Arab nations would not allow them to form a Palestine government-in-exile. Instead, the Arab states were interested in annexing or occupying parts of Palestine or in preventing other Arab states from doing so. In the refugee camps the Palestinians found themselves leaderless and without a sense of hope. King Abdullah of Jordan refused to comply with the United Nations' partition recommendations which called for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the Arab part of the former mandate; this refusal established the ensuing conflict as an Arab-Israeli conflict with the Palestinians relegated to the role of non-entities. The Arab states considered them as lowly aliens in the states of their 'brethren' with only Jordan extending them the right of citizenship.

This complete sense of frustration, the dream of imminent return shattered, isolated in refugee camps, and a need for excitement and

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<sup>4</sup>McDonald, J., Fedayeen and Viet Cong: A Comparison, p. 6, ACSC, 1975.



money led many of the young Palestinians into the hands of emerging guerrilla organizations. These frustrations and desires on the part of the Palestinians gave rise to terrorist raids into Israel from Arab states, with the Palestinians becoming known for their tradition of terror and raiding parties. Not all the raiders were Palestinians nor were they true guerrillas in the mold of the Viet Cong, dedicated to a clear political objective.<sup>5</sup> As a rule, the raiders were committing criminal raids into Israel, or they were being used by the Arab states for vaguely defined motives.

In 1963 the Arab states learned of Israel's intentions of diverting waters from the River Jordan and its tributaries to the Negev in southern Israel. These waters were a constant source of Arab-Israeli debate since Israel needed the water and the Arabs refused to share any from their resources. In 1964 at an Arab summit, chaired by President Nasir, the Arabs failed to come to a conclusion about what should be done concerning the Israeli project. Syria advocated open war with Israel, a policy which was an extreme risk for Nasir and King Hussein of Jordan. Hussein stood to lose his territory west of the Jordan and possibly his throne while Nasir would face the loss of prestige.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>O'Ballance, E., Arab Guerrilla Power: 1967-1972, p. 16, Archon Books, 1974.

<sup>6</sup>Kerr, M., The Arab Cold War 1958-1970, p. 98, RIIA, 1971.







In July 1964 Israel completed the water project, and in the same month, the PLO came into being under Egyptian sponsorship. Nasir chose Ahmed Shukairy, a Palestinian Arab, to head the new organization. The choice was obvious for Nasir since Shukairy had always loudly advocated the Palestinian cause and was considered a safe Nasirite. Nasir would still not allow a government-in-exile but he did allow Shukairy to recruit Palestinian refugees to form the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA). The purpose of the PLA was to be the vanguard for the liberation of the usurped parts of Palestine. The aim of the PLA was to harass the Israelis with constant fedayeen raids, a task for which it was trained on the lines of the Algerian Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN), a popular organization in revolutionary circles.<sup>7</sup> Both Hussein and Nasir recognized that the PLO and PLA would delay a confrontation with Israel and that Nasir would insure they would be held to this purpose. Syria still advocated strikes against Israel but received no support from Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon who feared reprisals from Israel. To counter this, Syria assumed sponsorship of the Fatah and its military arm, Asifah.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>8</sup>Dodd, C. H. and Sales, M. E., Israel and the Arab World, p. 22, Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1970.



## A. THE EMERGENCE OF FATAH

The terms fedayeen and Fatah have meanings of a historical nature. Fedayeen is a common Arab term for Arab irregulars acting against Israel. The word is from the root sacrifice, that is those who sacrifice themselves or assume a suicidal mission. Historically, the name was used in the twelfth century by those who were selected to assassinate the enemies of the Isma'ili sect (the Assassins). Fatah's full title is "Tahir al Hatani al Falestini," the Movement for the National Liberation of Palestine. The initials HTF form the Arabic word for death and when reversed to FTH, form the Arabic word for conquest. The word Asifah means 'the storm.'

The first elements of Fatah were formed in the 1950s in Germany by Yasir Mohammad Arafat, Khalil al-Wazir and Salah Khalaf.<sup>9</sup> All of these men were Palestinian students and they looked to the FLN, then fighting the French in Algiers, for inspiration and guidance. The Fatah core group later expanded to include Faruq al-Qaddumi, Muhammed Yusif an-Najjar, Kamal Adqan, and Khalid al-Hassan.<sup>10</sup> The core of Fatah ideology was that all inter-Arab issues were secondary to the main challenge which was the liberation of Palestine. Fatah's initial recruiting and training activities were first based in Algeria and Kuwait. In 1964

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<sup>9</sup> Later known as: Arafat=Abu Ammar; Khalaf=Abu Ayad; al-Wazir=Abu Jihad.

<sup>10</sup> Later known as: al-Qaddumi=Abu Lutuf; an-Najjar=Abu Yusif; al-Hassan=Abu Said.



Fatah decided to move on the offensive against Israel. Fatah's belief that the 1948 defeat was accepted by the Arab states and the senior Palestinian leaders was rooted in a deep distrust of these leaders which was a factor in its search for a suitable base from which it could launch its attacks. It chose Syria which was an outcast from the Arab states since its withdrawal from the United Arab Republic. Syria, wishing to prove that the Ba'thist Party was the real leader of the Arab people, allowed Fatah to establish itself in its territory. Both Fatah and the Syrian government believed that time was working against and not for the Arabs. At this point, Fatah created its military arm, Asifa. Since this time, the names Fatah and Asifah have become synonymous. Initial recruitment for Asifah was slow since the Palestinians did not immediately rise to the cause. To overcome this recruitment difficulty, Asifah had to rely on individuals who were devoid of ideology and motivation. The initial raid was set for 31 December 1964 when four small groups were to stage from Lebanon to strike at four Israeli targets. The Lebanese government discovered the operation and prevented its initiation. Fatah reset its target date for 1 January 1965.<sup>11</sup>

Four main stimuli attributed to the surfacing of Fatah as an open fedayeen organization: the Israeli raid on Gaza; Nasir's coining the term "Palestine entity"; the Algerian victory by the FLN and Nasir's

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<sup>11</sup>Yaari, E., Strike Terror: The Story of Fatah, p. 55, Sabra Books, 1970.





decline; and the feelings in the Arab world concerning Israel's completing the National Water Carrier Project. Fatah initiated its first raid into Israel from Jordan when it struck the national water carrier near a small Israeli village. The initial strike was a success and the guerrillas returned to their sanctuary. To prevent reprisal raids on its territory, Syria insisted that Fatah not conduct its raids from Syrian territory. By launching its raids from Jordan, in cooperation with Syria's wishes, Fatah began to feel more of the hostility from the Jordanian government. When Israel retaliated against the Fatah camps in Jordan, Fatah found that access from this territory was becoming more difficult. At this time Fatah began to operate from Syrian territory, particularly the Gaza Strip.<sup>12</sup> Fatah kept itself separate from other PLO organizations during these forays into Israeli territory. The reason for this aloofness was that Fatah believed the PLO was ineffective because of its dependence on Arab governments for backing and inputs for the fedayeen cause. The Fatah doctrine remained that its members should give up all other affiliations and that Fatah should remain outside all inter-Arab disputes. The basic philosophy remained -- to liberate Palestine.

Raids continued into Israel from Jordan and Syria; however, Israeli reprisal actions were causing increased difficulty in mounting successful

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<sup>12</sup>Kosut, H., Israel & the Arabs: The June 1967 War, p. 25, Fact on File, Inc., 1968.





attacks by Fatah. On 1 June 1965 Fatah groups crossed from Lebanon for the first time to conduct its raids against Israel. Although the raiding parties did not inflict great damage, the Fatah groups did keep tensions high and they did provoke retaliation. This one characteristic of retaliation posed great problems for both Lebanon and Jordan, and Fatah found itself averting not only the Israeli troops but also the troops from these two countries. Even with these reprisals Fatah found that its popularity was increasing and that more Palestinians were joining the cause. In 1966, Fatah gained new support after a Syrian coup when the new government decided to give the fedayeen group more support and to allow more freedom of movement. The ultimate aim of the Syrian government was to embroil Jordan and Lebanon in conflict with Israeli troops. This goal was somewhat realized when Israeli and Jordanian troops met on 13 November 1966.<sup>13</sup> From this time until June 1967, activity on the Syrian-Israeli demilitarized zone was characterized by incidents ranging from small arms fire to artillery and air bombardment. To Fatah's delight, an Arab-Israeli war seemed imminent, and the conflict, for which Fatah was responsible more than any other group, suddenly erupted. Fatah had calculated that the Arabs would win; however, they were wrong as the Arabs lost with disastrous results.

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<sup>13</sup>Churba, J., Fedayeen and the Middle East Crisis, p. 29, Air University, 1969.



Fatah had achieved one of its goals, inciting war between the Arabs and Israelis. Fatah's raids into Israel caused Israeli reactions which led to the conflict, although Nasir had warned that the Arab world was not ready for any major action against the forces of Israel. The Six Day War was a disaster for the Arab nations; the war left not only the Arab regimes and people numbed and astonished but also the fedayeen groups dispersed and in disarray. This was a war in which neither the Arab masses or Fatah were involved. The most discredited agencies were the PLO and PLA which were ineffective in the conflict. During the war the PLA units which were in Syria and Egypt were incorporated into the regular armies of those nations. They had not taken any action on their own, and the leaders were fighting among themselves as to what their objectives should be. Toward the end of the year, Shukairy and most of his nominees were ousted from the leadership of the PLO. The PLA remained splintered and remained ineffective; the members found themselves being dominated by rival Arab governments.

#### B. POST-JUNE 1967

For awhile, the shock of defeat immobilized Fatah, but it soon realized that new areas with large Arab populations came under Israeli control. Fatah reasoned that its hour had come, that the time was ripe to apply the dogma of modern guerrilla warfare -- that of mobilizing the masses in the Vieg Cong manner to disrupt the government's



functioning by civil resistance and by using the masses as a source of recruits, intelligence, and supply. The pre-June policy of provoking open war by escalation ceased; instead of using commando raids, Fatah was to infiltrate into the occupied territories and carry out subversive warfare in the Viet Cong style. By August 1967 Fatah was ready to act. It had stored caches of arms and had organized and trained new guerrilla groups. Fatah began increasing the number of subversive incidents which caused the Israelis to mount a security offensive to discover and disband the guerrilla units. Through captured Jordanian intelligence and police documents, the Israelis were able to detect and detain many agents as they crossed to the West Bank.<sup>14</sup> By the end of 1967, the guerrilla network, for all practical purposes, was destroyed by Israeli actions which killed, captured, and jailed the Fatah members.

By the end of the year, new fedayeen groups emerged to rival Fatah and the PLO. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), under the leadership of Dr. George Habash, became the chief rival of Arafat and Fatah. The PFLP came from a coalition of groups which had been active prior to the Six Day War. During the 1950s a group of Palestine intellectuals at the American University of Beirut became involved in the Arab Nationalist Movement which stressed the primacy of Arab unity and cooperation as a necessary precondition for the

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<sup>14</sup>Sully, F., Age of the Guerrilla, p. 72, Avon Books, 1968.





liberation of Palestine. These students formed the ANM around the leadership of Nabash, but the movement remained weak and decentralized with small regional groups organized in several parts of the Arab world. By August 1967, the Palestinian branch of the ANM, the Vengeance Youth, the Heroes of the Return, and the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), under Ahmand Jibril, formed a coalition which became the PFLP under the leadership of Habash.<sup>15</sup> In all, about 30 fedayeen groups announced themselves, but many later disbanded or joined Fatah, PLO, or PFLP. In 1968, a Syrian-based organization, Sa'iqqa, emerged as a Syrian controlled element of the fedayeen.

As the new groups emerged, factionalism became an increasing aspect of the PLO. After the Palestine National Council (PNC) was formed, the PLO realized that it could not separate itself from the fedayeen groups. In May 1968, the PLO allocated part of its 100 member quasi-legislative body seats to the fedayeen groups according to the groups' size and importance: 38 for Fatah, 10 for the PFLP, and 2 for various groups. The remaining 50 seats went to the representatives of the PLO administrative body, the PLA, the Palestine National Fund, and student and labor syndicates.<sup>17</sup> Rivalries and disputes increased

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<sup>15</sup>Quandt, W. B., Jabber, F., and Lesch, A. M., The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism, p. 58, UC Press, 1973.

<sup>16</sup>Hammond, P. V., Alexander, S. S., Political Dynamics in the Middle East, p. 239, American Elsevier Publishing Company, Inc., 1972.

<sup>17</sup>Kerr, op. cit., p. 136.





with the PFLP's refusing its cooperation with the PLO. The PFLP was unwilling to allow its freedom of action curtailed by restricting its tactics, and it was not satisfied with the number of seats it received in the PNC. Arafat and Fatah began to emerge as the most important bloc. Arafat dealt with heads of state and rallied the enthusiasm of the Arab masses with his insistence on continuing the struggle against Israel. Unlike the rashness of the PFLP, Fatah was furthering its goals by working within the PLO.

At this time, Jordan was beginning to more openly oppose the fed-ayeen groups in its quest to be the recognized representative of the Palestinian people. This nation began criticizing the guerrillas, particularly Fatah, and it began to require fedayeen groups to obtain permits to cross the Jordan River, the point of their base camps. At the same time, Fatah was attempting to establish a foundation in the West Bank for its operations against Israel. Terrorists' attacks mounted until the exasperated Israelis mounted a large scale operation against the Fatah base at Karameh on 21 March 1968. Before this time, the Israelis were attempting to force Hussein's hand by inducing him to curb the fedayeen's activities. The Israelis thought Hussein unable to do so, and they initiated this action to deny the fedayeen a sanctuary. The objective of the Israelis was to eliminate Fatah bases and force them to move to other areas.

For the first time in modern history, the Israelis struck across the Jordan border, using infantry, tanks, armored personnel carriers,



and air support. At the same time, paratroopers, using helicopter tactics, went ahead to secure the mountain area around Karameh. The objectives of this move was to prevent the fedayeen from escaping eastward and to stop any Jordanian reinforcements from arriving on the scene. This action resulted in a conflict between Fatah and Jordanian units against the Israelis, an action which Hussein wished to avoid. Although there were a number of Fatah casualties, the importance of the battle, for fedayeen recruiting purposes, was that for the first time, the Israeli army had been stopped in battle.<sup>18</sup>

The battle marked a significant turning point, bringing to an end the initial stages of the Fedayeen struggle. Revolutionary guerrilla warfare had failed. The second stage of preparation was more successful. The third stage, rapid expansion, was to begin. The PLO began to receive taxes from Palestinians who were in Arab territories, an action which had been endorsed by the Arab states. Hussein found himself pressured by other Arab leaders to permit Fatah free access and movement within its territories.

This pressure on Hussein had begun in earnest in the mid-1960's. Hussein had cooperated with the founding of the PLO, but he was unwilling to permit PLA activities within its territory. Additionally, Jordan refused Shukairy's request for withholding tax from the pay of Palestinians

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<sup>18</sup>Kuroda, Y., "Young Palestinian Commandos in Political Socialization Perspective," p. 239, The Middle East Journal, Summer 1972.



in government employ. Shukairy addressed his severest criticism at Jordan; his desire to establish for the PLO an independent military and political status in Jordan was viewed as nothing less than a challenge to its sovereignty. Hussein became increasingly aware of the disparity in purpose and objective of the PLO, and he viewed it in the broader context of reconciliation with Egypt and Shukairy's demands for the right to tax Palestinians, to conscript them into the PLA and to distribute arms at border villages. For Hussein to submit to these demands was not only a challenge of principle but also was bound to lead to Israeli retaliation or internal revolution, or both. However, Hussein took certain risks for a period of time. He attempted to gloss over the differences in understandings of amity first in January and again in March 1966. Cooperation and mutual consultation "on all matters concerning the Palestine problem and the liberation of the conquered fatherland" were pledged by Hussein. He permitted the PLO to acquire the right to establish regional offices, and he granted permission for a daily autonomous "PLO hour" broadcast on Amman Radio. He allowed PLO officials to travel without restriction in Jordan, and frontier posts were instructed to permit their free entry. Hussein also required civil servants to contribute to the PLO fund, and he gave the PLO the free use of telephones, telegrams, and postal facilities. He granted members of the PLO Executive and its senior officials Jordanian diplomatic passports.





These concessions clearly implied greater Egyptian influence in Jordan, and threatened to establish the PLO as a state within a state; however, they were still insufficient to mollify Shukairy. On 2 April, Jordan announced the purchase of American jet aircraft in preference to the opportunity of buying USSR aircraft at a lower price through the Unified Arab Command. This event signified a reversal for the PLO in Jordan. Hussein followed this arms deal with a sweeping arrest of 200 subversives, including Ba'thists, Communists, and the PLO staff who were then in Amman. This event broke the tenuous truce, and on 14 June Hussein through Radio Amman publicly ruled out further cooperation with the PLO. In this radio broadcast he stated that there was no longer any room for cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization in its present form and that all possibilities for cooperation had vanished. In this broadcast he also stated that any action which went beyond the framework erected by the (pan-Arab) summit conferences and the Unified Arab Command for the liberation of Palestine would split the Arab effort and lead only to catastrophe.<sup>19</sup>

This statement, coupled with Jordanian actions, led the leadership of the PLO to join with the Syrians in their cry that "the road to Tel Aviv goes through Amman." The UAR appeared to be reluctant at this

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<sup>19</sup>Jacobs, P., The View From Tel Aviv and Beirut, p. 7, Committee on New Alternatives in the Middle East, 1972.





time to end the detente it had observed with Jordan since the Cario summit. At the same time, it could not easily endorse Hussein's position despite the common agreement that the PLO had initially been formed as a facade of militancy to conceal a policy of relaxation and delay. The era of peaceful coexistence was coming to an end as the result of events external to the Arab-Israeli issue. The failure of the UAR to disengage from the Yemen, Hussein's support of King Faisal's attempt to create a broad Islamic alliance, and the power shift in Syria on 23 February 1966 combined to wreck the spirit of the summit and to hasten the end of any kind of peaceful coexistence. Syria supported Shukairy against Hussein and assumed a more vigorous role in the planning and operations of Fatah. The era of the summit was finished on 22 July 1966 when Nasir declared at a mass rally that Egypt would not participate in summit meetings and would not have further discussions with the "reactionaries." Termination of the summits meant that the period of collective action against Israel had ended. Syria was now free to openly sponsor its unconventional war against Israel. The Syrian Chief of Staff transferred all Palestine commanders to purely Syrian units under Syrian officers and the Defense Ministry took control of the money which had accumulated in Syrian banks for the use of Palestine units and laid claim to all future funds raised for that purpose. Simultaneously, the Syrian leadership announced the deportation of all Palestinian officers who had served in the Palestine units formed in 1961-62 by Iraq's former leader, General Qasim. This



action forced many Palestinian officers to leave the country with their families.

Egypt, at this time, was in disagreement with the conservative Arab regimes regarding Israel. It stressed the necessity for a clear superiority over the Israeli army and the elimination of feudal and reactionary Arab regimes as prerequisites to a successful war against Israel. On the other hand, Syria continued to actively promote unconventional war in preparation for the final incursion through which it believed the forces of revolutionary Arab socialism would unite. Egypt did not consider the Fatah strikes against Israel as contributory to the Arab goals. The fact that Fatah acted and the PLO merely plotted and issued belligerent statements raised the prestige of Fatah among the Arab refugees in Jordan. During the summer and fall of 1966, Fatah increased its terror raids against Israel. These acts caused a dilemma for the Israeli government which had to deal with public opinion. Israel realized the raids were staged from Jordan but that the Syrian government was also responsible for them. Any retaliatory strike against the well fortified Golan Heights would result in too many casualties and carried a risk of an all-out war with the Soviet client state. However, not to retaliate would exasperate public opinion and encourage further terrorism.

While the Israeli government was struggling with this dilemma, both the Egyptian and Syrian governments were concerned with the



possibilities of Israeli actions against either or both countries. Accordingly, the leaders of both countries met in Cario in November and signed a mutual defense treaty. The purpose of this pact was to bind Syria to advance consultation and to deter Israel from striking Syria. For the first time since Syrian secession from the UAR, diplomatic relations were restored.

The Israeli government did not want to risk war or a confrontation with the Soviets who were entrenched in both Syria and Egypt. The best option for the Israelis was an attack on Jordan which might induce Hussein to increase his vigilance and deny sanctuaries to the Fedayeen groups, particularly Fatah. This thinking resulted in a raid on the village of Es Samu on 13 November.<sup>20</sup> This action proved ineffective in achieving the desired results since its overall effect was to increase pre-existing tension between Hussein and the Palestinians on the West Bank. Discontent and frustration added to feelings against the government in Amman added to wide-spread riots on the West Bank. The demand now was for arms to defend the area against any future Israeli attacks. The attack did little to pacify Israeli public opinion; many felt the attack on the weaker Hussein was a sign of weakness. In Egypt, Nasir had the same opinion since he felt the Egyptian army acted as a

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<sup>20</sup>Stetler, op. cit., p. 134.





strong deterrent to large-scale Israeli action against an Arab state allied to Egypt.<sup>21</sup> Hussein did not share this feeling with Nasir and he was not convinced of the value of a deterrent value of a defense pact with Egypt. He felt that any Israeli action against the Arabs would be directed against Jordan since it represented an easier target. He also felt that Israeli action would be directed against Jordan since Israel desired security in depth by expansion of the Jordan River.

The raid on the Jordanian village affected Shukairy and the PLO. Until this raid, he had opposed terror raids for two reasons: the raids were beyond his control, and he remained faithful to the idea of "pan-Arab preparations" for the termination of Israel. Shukairy was faced with the fact that any continued opposition to the terror raids advocated by his rival, Fatah, would result in the risk of his losing the leadership of the PLO or would result in the disintegration of the group. The refugees on the West Bank observed Fatah action while the PLO was involved in a war of words. Shukairy realized his basic strength was with the militant refugees on the West Bank who had been enlisted in a crusade against the Hussein regime. In November Shukairy announced that Fedayeen raids from Jordan into Israel would begin again.

Hussein desired to keep both the Cario-supported PLO and the Syrian-directed Fatah out of his state. This underlined his awareness

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<sup>21</sup>Bawly, D. and Kinche, D., The Sandstorm, p. 84, Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1967.





that the revolutionary regimes in Syria, Egypt, and Iraq were promoting a coordinated campaign against Jordan. He also realized these nations would continue to send guerrillas from Syria to Jordan, an action designed to keep Jordanian-Israeli border tensions at a peak. Events proved his feelings. On 1 December Radio Amman announced a clash between a Jordanian Army patrol and saboteurs from Syria at a point close to the Jordan-Syria border. The broadcast also stated that three captured saboteurs had admitted they had been trained in Syria and sent into Jordan to destroy buildings, bridges, and military telephone lines. This was the first case of Arab terrorist action directly implemented against an Arab state rather than against Israel. Shukairy stated this would not be the last when he said, "We are going to open two fronts . . . one against Israel and one in Jordan."<sup>22</sup>

In the months preceding the June 1967 War, the incidents of Fedayeen activities against Israel were low. Despite Shukairy's statement, there were no known PLO-conducted raids against Israel in the months immediately preceding the 1967 war.

### C. THE EMERGENCE OF FATAH IN THE PLO

After the battle of Karameh in March 1968, Arafat began a determined move to take over the shattered PLO. His men seized PLO

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<sup>22</sup> Editorial, The New York Times, 7 November 1968.



offices in the Middle East and Europe while others of Fatah infiltrated into the PLO framework and were soon occupying key positions. The Palestine National Council met from 10-17 July 1968 and issued the Palestine National Covenant which stated that the only way to liberate Palestine was by an armed struggle and that fedayeen action formed the basis of this struggle. The slogan adopted was "national unity, mobilization, and liberation."<sup>23</sup> In September 1968 Arafat was elected Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee. Arafat wished to increase his influence in the Arab world and especially wanted the PLO seat on the Arab League and the resulting subsidy. The suspicious Arab heads of state were unwilling to allow him either one.

The popularity of the Fedayeen and Fatah increased, and Fedayeen action against Israel continued with a steady increase in the possibility of another Arab-Israeli conflict. This conflict erupted in October 1973, the Yom Kippur War. Again, it was a conflict between troops, and both Syria and Egypt scored initial successes. However, the tide of battle turned and the Arab nations found themselves asking for a cease fire, supervised by the UN. The importance of this war is marked by the Arabs' belief and conviction that they were the victors in this struggle. This attitude plays an important part in later discussions concerning Israel.

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<sup>23</sup>McDonald, op. cit., p. 17.



Meanwhile, Arafat continued to increase his influences not only in the Arab nations but also in the rest of the world. In September 1970, fighting broke out between Jordanian troops and Fatah. The conflict resulted in more Palestinian casualties by Jordanian action than had been inflicted by Israeli action in 1967. The war itself lasted for ten days, and formally ended on 27 September. However, conflict between the two groups continued for more than a year. The end result was that the action of the civil war failed to crush the commandoes or to dethrone the monarch. The casualties were nearly impossible to estimate since bodies were buried in mass graves and victims were reluctant to ask for medical aid for fear of reprisals.

Indirectly, the war may have taken the life of Egypt's President Nasir who was suspected of betraying Palestinian interests by agreeing to US-sponsored peace talks with Israel. Fatah thought he only half-heartedly pressured Hussein to end the conflict, despite his sending strong messages to the King and his organizing Arab leaders in Cario to take collective action for a cease fire. Nasir, ill and overtired, put his remaining energies into ending the struggle and died of a heart attack the day after the 14 point accord was signed at the Cario Summit.

At the same time, Hussein's stature in the Arab world suffered from his actions and the actions of his army during the conflict. He finally bowed to the demands of his army and gave the bedouins the freedom to put down the Palestinians who comprised two-thirds of the





Jordanian population in any manner they chose. This action earned the King the names of "Butcher of Amman" and "Nero." A further result of this was the enmity of the peoples of the Middle East nations.<sup>24</sup>

A further development of this civil war was that the Palestinians believed their suspicions were confirmed that when it came to providing help, many of their loudest supporters had other things to do. The Fedayeen were not concerned that this inactivity might have been due to pressures from the US or the USSR. Iraq, which had troops in the northern battle area stepped back from the combat areas. Syria did allow tanks and some Palestinians to move into Jordan from Syrian areas. Al-Ahram, an Egyptian newspaper, reported that three regiments of the Palestine Liberation Army were transferred from the Suez Canal to Jordan. Other newspapers reported that Libya sent three planeloads of regulars to aid the commandoes. Both Libya and Kuwait suspended annual subsidies to Hussein, losses of \$45,000,000 and 21,000,000 respectively.<sup>25</sup>

Israel gained the most from the conflict and openly cheered for Hussein's forces. The thinking of the Israeli government was that a victorious Fedayeen regime would never negotiate with their government. The civil war further benefitted Israel since during the war, commando

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<sup>24</sup>"Focus on Political Developments," Asia Research Bulletin, p. 2603, 30 April 1974.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.





raids on Israeli territory were down to one, in the Julilyah settlement.

The clash between these two forces had become inevitable, due to a series of continuous confrontations between the army and the fedayeen. The latter had made a series of exploits which received the attention of the world, a fact which maddened Hussein's men. The Palestinians had developed a meaningful strike force, and as these men daily walked the streets of Amman and other cities in Jordan, they were a reminder that they and not the Jordanian Army were fighting Israel. Minor confrontations between the two groups resulted in a growing number of casualties. Hussein stated that he tried to hold his army in check but they felt obedience to his orders made them look like women. He also said, "The army was very upset with moves made by the Palestinians. They've had enough. They aren't used to being insulted, denigrated, provoked without being able to strike back."<sup>26</sup>

The incident which probably added the final insult was the Fedayeen's skyjacking of four jetliners. The Jordanian Army was sent to the landing area to free the planes and hostages, but they were forced to stand helpless for six days because the commandos threatened to destroy the aircraft and people. This was the crowning piece of humiliation and Hussein decided to splinter the Palestinians. He formed a new cabinet

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<sup>26</sup> Moore, J. N., The Arab-Israeli Conflict, Vol II, p. 417, Princeton University Press, 1974.



on 16 September, named a new military governor, and directed his new premier to cope with the situation with appropriate effort, firmness, and fortitude to restore security, order, and stability.

The civil war formally began on 17 September with the army's fighting its way into Amman, using for the first time tanks and artillery on the city. In the northern part of Jordan the conflict quickly spread, especially along the commando supply routes to Syria. There were reports of heavy fighting at Irbid, Zerqa, Ramtha, Salt, and Mafraq, areas of heavy Palestinian populations.

On 18 September the military governor, Field Marshall Habis Majali, issued an ultimatum to the Palestinians -- surrender or die by the firing squad. This action was ineffectual as was the continuous appeals and cease fires. The government announced curfews, only to lift them soon afterwards. There were claims and counter-claims by both sides as to who attacked whom and with what.

On 19 September the major event of the war occurred with the appearance of approximately 250 tanks which came from the Syrian border. Observers noted the emblems of the Palestine Liberation Army which were on the sides of the tanks which were supported by 5,000 men of the Hitten brigade. Although Iraqi troops moved their equipment, tanks, and men out of the way of these troops, the Palestinians charged them with allowing Jordanian tanks and artillery to pass through their lines. The resulting battles between the two forces, some very near Amman, caused



large number of casualties on both sides. With no decisive victories on either side, the Palestinians contradicted a long-standing policy and called for the overthrow of Hussein. Prior to this, the Fedayeen leaders had repeatedly stated their sole aim was the dismantlement of Israel for a secular Palestine, not for the goal of governing Jordan. After the war, Arafat insisted the commandos had not sought control of the government.

The civil war affected not only Jordan and the Palestinians but also the major powers, the Arab League, and others. US Secretary of State, William Rogers, asked Syria to stop the invasion since it carried the danger of a broadened conflict. Syria denied its military presence in Jordan, and the US retaliated with a strong show of force in West Germany and the US. Several transports stood in readiness at Turkish and European air bases. In the Mediterranean four aircraft carriers, two guided-missile cruisers and other vessels steamed eastward. The big four were in constant contact as they exerted words and veiled threats to end the war. The US and the Soviets collaborated to stall a Security Council session on Jordan and to restrain Arabs and Israelis from intervening in the war. The US State Department acknowledged that Hussein had made a request of them for help, but they refused to admit whether he had actually sought military intervention. Hussein was also reportedly to have asked the big four to exercise their influence in getting the Syrians to pull out their forces which had entered the northern part of Jordan. The request was for diplomatic not military assistance.





At this time, others were reacting to the events in Jordan. The Pope made three appeals for a truce and Peking announced its resolute support for the Palestinians. Colonel Kaddafi of Libya threatened to send armed forces to aid the commandos. In Israel, the cabinet held at least one special session, moved armored detachments to the eastern borders, and expansively sent massive truck convoys to Jordan with relief supplies from the West Bank. The Israelis explained the Allon Doctrine allowed them to offer help to "neighbors and regimes seeking peace with Israel." Meanwhile, Arab leaders postponed an emergency meeting and sent a four man fact-finding delegation, headed by Sudan Chief of Staff Gaafar al-Numeiry, to Amman. On the day after the group arrived, tanks and troops began to withdraw toward the Syrian border. Probably, the reason for Iraq's inertia and Syria's wariness about entering the conflict was the tough words received in public and private from Moscow. On 23 September President Nikolai Podgorny warned: "The Soviet Union has consistently come out for this (a truce) in its appeals made recently to a number of states - both those belonging and not belonging to the area - and firmly stressed the inadmissibility of external interference in developments in Jordan under any pretext whatsoever."<sup>27</sup> On 24 September the US considered the situation to have cooled to a point where military intervention was not needed to evacuate its nationals from Jordan. Instead, it sent three chartered aircraft to

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<sup>27</sup>"Inside Fatah," The Arab World Weekly, p. 9, 2 October 1972.



airlift its citizens to Beirut.

Numeiry, who had left Amman, returned to that city on 25 September and got Hussein and Arafat to agree to a temporary cease-fire which would be augmented with a formal peace declaration. Almost immediately, the fedayeen groups charged the Jordanians with ignoring these conditions. On 26 September Libya broke relations with Jordan and the infuriated leaders in Cairo cabled Hussein and bluntly told him to halt what they called a conspiracy to liquidate the Palestine resistance or face retaliation from Arab countries. After receipt of this message, Hussein's cabinet quit and the king rushed to Cairo on 27 September to face his accusers and to make peace. Out of this session came a 14 point accord that dealt with everything from withdrawals of both commandos and the army from Amman and prisoner releases to restitution of pre-war rule in Jordan's cities and towns. At least seven articles set out the duties of a supreme follow-up committee in enforcing the peace. Its teeth were to be provided by collective and unified measures upon transgression by any side by the nine signatories.

After Nasir's death on the 28th, there were numerous reported truce violations and the follow-up committee had to keep running around Jordan. With Nasir's death and the Arab League's reluctance to provide real military might in Jordan, doubts grew about the punitive powers described in the accord. Continued clashes, menacing movements and the committee's own failure to enforce deadlines further weakened its efforts.



The aftermath of the hostilities were different for both groups. Hussein, in October, appointed a new government under Wasfi et-Tal to replace that of Premier Toukan. Tal was considered by the Fedayeen as their avowed enemy who had planned one of the Jordanian Army's sweeps against the commando bases in Amman. It was this action which helped to escalate the September fighting. This appointment was also viewed with concern by the other Arab states. Arafat announced that the commandos had been strengthened by the war and were ready for action. However, two key Fedayeen leaders, George Habash of the PFLP and Nayef Hawatmeh of the PDFLP, had a \$14,000 price tag on their heads by the Jordanians. There was speculation that their disappearance from the scene might drive their groups underground. Both before and after the war, much was made of the differences between the Fedayeen leaders. However, these disputes did not affect the rank and file of the Fedayeen who maintained the same goals. Indeed, the war only intensified their feelings. The Cairo Agreement banished thousands of Fedayeen regulars from the cities, but it left intact the all-important militia.

As for the Jordanian government, it began to take deliveries from the US on ammunition shipments, and Washington planned to replace their weapons and tanks lost in the war. This fact led to speculation that Hussein might begin a policy of suppression.

For approximately one year after the signing of the Cairo Agreement, the Jordanian situation blew hot and cold so fast as to create a





great deal of confusion as to what was going on. Both Arafat and Tal delivered speeches in which they called for peace and quiet and for ending the strife. During this period of time, both sides violated the truce agreements. Commando actions generated speculations of new tactics against the Jordanians. In Amman their action was aimed primarily against three targets: police stations, the electricity stations, and the water stations. These actions, along with cutting telephone lines, affected directly day-to-day life in Jordan. They indicated that any further confrontations with the Jordanian Army would not be face-to-face but would be in actions where they could hit and run. Commando articles admitted that they committed a grave error in fighting a classical warfare with the Jordanian forces. PDFLP's Hawatmeh was reported to have said they would resort to actual guerilla warfare in the Jordanian cities.

The Follow-up Committee issued statements that both sides had violated the agreements. They reported Fedayeen attacks and also reported violations by the Jordanian forces against commando areas. The Arab governments issued many statements to indicate their concern about the situation; however, they appeared to be helpless in putting an end to the tensions. For example, the Syrian government issued statements that Syria would not stand idly by regarding the attempts at liquidations of the commando movement. At the same time, they also issued messages and statements that both sides should stick to the agreements between them.





The importance of this civil war is several fold. First, the conflict strengthened Arafat's and Fatah's dominance of the PLO; secondly, the war and its results affect the current political situation as to the recognition of the PLO. Thirdly, the war indirectly led to the Arab leaders' recognition of the PLO as the representatives of the Palestinians. Lastly, the war was one of the factors which contributed to the split of the 'rejection front' from the PLO and Arafat.

The winner of the war is still undecided since Hussein was pressed into a cease-fire before his army completed the finishing actions against the Fedayeen. At the same time, Fatah was reminded by several leaders that the enemy was Israel and not Jordan. The conflict of representation is still alive since neither will give up his adamant claims of representation, privately or publicly.

Although Fedayeen action was continuing, Fatah and Arafat scored a tremendous victory in October 1974. The Arab leaders met at the Rabat Summit and declared that the PLO should be the sole spokesman for all Palestinians and should head an independent national authority to be set up on any Palestinian land that was liberated from Israeli control. The vote came on 28 October after several days of heated debate by the 20 Arab leaders. This unanimous decision was taken at the seventh Arab summit conference and was a blow to Hussein who had to agree to the resolution and who had to relent on his resolve to exonerate Jordan of all responsibility for the task of recovering the West



Bank. Much of this conference had been given to the claims by both Jordan and the PLO concerning the West Bank. At one point, the PLO threatened to withdraw from the talks unless they received support for a three point proposal for PLO responsibility over all liberated Palestinian territory. A spokesman for the PLO, Sayed Kamal, complained on 24 October about the lack of response to the Palestinian proposals and said that they had been met with 'complete silence from all Arab countries.'<sup>28</sup> On the same day, the conference approved a joint Egyptian-Syrian working paper aimed at unifying the Arab stand regarding the Middle East crisis but left the PLO-Jordanian rift unresolved.

After two days of debate, Hussein agreed with the 19 other countries' leaders on the resolution which stated:

1. The assertion of the rights of the Palestinian Arab people to return to their homeland and determine their own destiny.
2. The assertion of the rights of the Palestinians to establish national authority under the leadership of the PLO, as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, over any liberated Palestinian territory. The Arab states should back this authority when it is established in all respects and at all levels.
3. To support the PLO in exercising its responsibilities on both the national and international levels within the context of the Arab commitment.
4. To call on, respectively, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Arab Republic of Egypt, and the PLO to lay down a formula organizing relations among them in the light of these resolutions and for the sake of their implementation.

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<sup>28</sup>"Arab-Israeli Affairs," Arab Report and Record, p. 465, 16-31 October 1974.



5. All the Arab states should undertake to preserve Palestinian national unity and should not interfere in the internal affairs of Palestinian action.<sup>29</sup>

Several Arab newspapers printed that in return for Hussein's concessions, the PLO had agreed to be represented at the next stage of the Geneva peace conference as part of a joint delegation under the name of Jordan. After the vote Arafat reportedly thanked Hussein for his patriotic attitude and Hussein in turn pledged his support for the Palestinian cause. After the conference a spokesman for the summit declared that Israel and the US must bow to the Arab's decision to create an independent Palestinian state or accept the risk of a new military showdown, which the Arabs felt they could win due to their 'rapidly increasing power.' Both Arafat and Hussein made public statements in which they promised to solve the problems existing between them. Hussein promised, in his statement, to continue all material commitments to the people in occupied territories and to continue existing administrative arrangements until other institutions were set up. He also promised any Palestinian who chose to become a Jordanian citizen would enjoy the rights and duties of full citizenship without prejudicing his original rights in Palestine. He also promised that any who chose the Palestinian identity would have the same rights enjoyed by citizens from other Arab countries in Jordan. Saudi Arabia and

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid.





other oil-rich nations promised Syria and Egypt one billion dollars a year to devote to arms. Hussein was allocated 300 million dollars annually while the PLO was to receive 50 million dollars annually.<sup>30</sup>

While Hussein lost his quest to represent the Palestinians, he did gain substantial aid for his flagging economy.

Other than the resolutions from the Arab leaders, there were two other occurrences which came about from the conference and affected the PLO. The action at the Rabat Summit was the final event which finalized a PLO split. On 26 September the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine had withdrawn from the PLO Executive Committee, accusing the PLO leadership of making secret contacts with the United States. The PFLP was convinced that a Middle East settlement was being prepared, and this would result in the expansion of US influence and the legalizing of Israel and its security. At this point they were also concerned about any concessions to what they termed the 'puppet regime of Jordan.' In other statements, the PFLP charged the PLO with meeting with representatives of the US government to improve the PLO position. The 'rejection front' is comprised of the PFLP, the PFLP-General Command, the Arab Liberation Front (ALF), and the Popular Struggle Front (PSF). After the Rabat Summit, the 'rejection front' completely withdrew from the PLO. At the root of the

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<sup>30</sup>Glubb, F., "Hussein and the Rabat Verdict," Middle East International, p. 19, December 1974.



dispute was an ideological conflict. The Marxist PFLP, opposed not only Arafat but also such "reactionary" leaders as Hussein and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. Faisal had given generously to Fatah while allocating nothing to the PFLP. The PFLP clings to the goal of creating a secular Palestine where Jews, Christians, and Moslems would live together. Fatah would settle temporarily for Palestinian control of the West Bank and Gaza. They argue that the alternative is that the territory might return to Israeli control.

The 'rejection front' stated the reconciliation agreement reached at the Rabat Summit flagrantly violated the PLO's aim of liberating all of Palestine and the aim of setting up a progressive regime on the ruins of the Jordanian regime. This was an open challenge to Arafat's leadership, and the four declared they were standing up to condemn and categorically reject the reconciliation resolution. They stated the PLO had deviated from the revolution's line and that the only representative of the Palestinian people is the rifle, which is fighting for liberation of all Palestinian territory. <sup>31</sup>

Fatah's rise as the representative of the Palestinians received a boost in November 1974. In October the UN had voted to allow a Palestinian representative to address the UN General Assembly, and on 13 November Arafat fulfilled this function on the first day of the debate

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<sup>31</sup>Martin, H., "Palestine," The Montgomery Advertiser, p. 1, 3 March 1975.



on Palestine. Arafat spoke in Arabic and had a pistol in his pocket. He began his speech to the Assembly with "I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun."<sup>32</sup> He asked the Assembly not to let the olive branch fall from his hand and called upon the Jewish people to 'turn away from the illusory promises made by Zionist ideology and Judaism and Azionism.' Later, during the speech, he stated that the Palestinians were not against the Jewish faith but were in opposition to what he termed the colonialist Zionist movement. He stated that in this sense, the Palestinian issue was a revolution for the Jew.

Arafat spoke for one hour and twenty minutes. He pointed out that those who encouraged Jewish emigration to Israel were depriving more Palestinians of their homes and that the small number of Arabs remaining inside Israel were treated as second-class citizens. He also commented on the anti-Palestine crowds outside the UN building and asked the US and its people why were they fighting the Palestinians and did this serve the interests of the US. At the end of his speech he was given a standing ovation and was escorted from the rostrum by the UN Chief of Protocol, an honor usually accorded to heads of state. The US delegate to the UN, John Scali, remained seated during the ovation and was absent from the reception which was given in the evening. Israel's right of reply was restricted due to an earlier vote to bar any delegate from

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<sup>32</sup> "United Nations, " Arab Report and Record, p. 499, 1-15 November 1974.





speaking more than once in the debate on Palestine. The Israeli delegate had spoken on 13 November in reply to Arafat and was prevented from speaking again.

The debate on the Palestine issue continued until 22 November. At the end of the debate the UN General Assembly voted on and adopted a resolution which recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians. Besides this point, the resolution also reaffirmed the right of self-determination without external interference and the right to national independence and sovereignty. The resolution affirmed the right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they had been displaced and uprooted. A further resolution granted the PLO observer status at the UN.

Support for the Palestinians continued to build in the UN, sponsored by the Arab and Third World nations. On 18 December 1974 the UN adopted a resolution which called on Israel to allow the Palestinians to return to their homes. Another resolution stated it was illegal for Israel to exploit the resources of the occupied territories. The importance of these resolutions for the PLO and the Palestinians was the fact that the UN was going in a different direction from the UN Security Council Resolution 242 which stressed the Palestinian refugee problem. This term had long been a source of contention for the Palestinians. This was the main difference between 242 and the General Assembly Resolution 3236, passed in November 1974.





During 1975-1976 the Palestinian issue continued to be an integral part of the business of the UN. The UN delegate for the PLO, Farouq Qaddoumi, participated in debates and expounded the views of the PLO. In November 1975 the UN had a Palestinian Week, and the General Assembly passed three resolutions supporting the Palestinian cause. The first resolution called for inviting the PLO to take part in all efforts, debates, and conferences on the Middle East on equal footing with all other parties. The second resolution formed a committee to follow up the exercise by the Palestinian people of their own rights. To the PLO this meant the UN would establish a committee which would devise a formula to enable the Palestinians to exercise their legitimate rights so that the question of Palestinian people's rights would not remain more words on paper. The third resolution was the most controversial, probably in the history of the UN. This resolution condemned zionism and considered it to be a form of racialism. This resolution caused an immediate furor and debates headed by the US and the common market states. The Soviet Union formally addressed a message to the US in which it officially requested a resumption of the Geneva conference and participation of representatives of the Palestinian people through the PLO on the same footing as other parties concerned. The most important aspect of this Soviet initiative was that it made no mention of Resolution 242. This shift on which the conference was originally based changed the character of the talks. The conference, if convened,



would discuss the question of the national rights of the Palestinian people and would not address the problem as only a question of refugees.

In 1976 the Security Council voted to allow the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate with the rights of a UN member, an action which caused great opposition by the US. Egypt, which had been scheduled to be the first speaker, turned over its place to the PLO representative. By this action the Arab states were signaling that the main purpose of the debate would be to increase the political standing of the PLO. Qaddoumi in his speech stressed that there had been no change in the PLO's hostility to Israel. He stated his group refused to recognize the existence of Israel and had rejected the key Council resolutions - 242, adopted in 1967 and 338, adopted in 1973 - which were viewed by most countries as the basis for a future negotiated settlement. He said that neither took account of the rights of the Palestinians. Other Middle East nations debated for the inclusion of the PLO in any settlement and the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied territories.<sup>33</sup>

This speech by Qaddoumi was in contrast to Arafat's statement after visiting Moscow in December 1975. In this statement the PLO for the first time agreed that the Palestine problem could be solved on the basis of guaranteeing the rights of the Palestinian people and establishing a Palestinian state 'according to UN resolutions.' This meant the

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<sup>33</sup>Gwertzman, B., "Security Council Votes to Seat PLO," The Palestine Digest, p. 2, February 1976.



recognition of the existence of Israel. Such a Palestinian attitude had never before been defined in any official or joint statement. Since that time, there have been PLO statements which indicated the PLO would deal with Israel and recognize its existence. At the same time, after such statements were made, PLO representatives have stated that the aim of the PLO for the the termination of Israel has not changed.

The prestige of the PLO continued its rise despite internal conflicts, particularly with the 'rejection front.' After each gain by the PLO in world and international politics, the 'rejection front' published statements which condemned the PLO and maintained the PLO had deviated from the historic purpose to which all Palestinians were and are dedicated. For Arafat and the PLO a historic decision was made on 6 September 1976 when the Arab League unanimously accepted the PLO as a full member of that organization.

In April 1976 even the Israeli government seemed to soften its stand on the PLO. Israeli premier Yitzhak Rabin stated: "In the very, very hypothetical eventuality that the PLO recognized Israel, Israel would try to determine what this meant in practical terms and draw the conclusions from the answers we receive."<sup>34</sup> Rabin stressed such a change of policy by the PLO would have to include abandonment of the PLO national charter which calls for the establishment of a secular state to

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<sup>34</sup>"Rabin Softens Stand Against the PLO," San Francisco Chronicle, p. 9, 1 May 1976.





replace Israel. However, he also said this was not likely to happen. This statement was a step back from previous statements in which Rabin stated the PLO would never gain recognition from Israel even if recognized by the US. He had termed Arafat's speeches in the UN as declarations of war.

Even with these gains, not all was well for the PLO. With dissension within the Fedayeen organizations and with interest waning in the PLO, its fortunes of political prestige were in trouble.

#### D. PLO PRESTIGE -- DECLINING?

Today, it is difficult to establish the influence of the PLO and Fedayeen groups on issues in the Middle East and Arab politics. The contention of this writer is that after a show of support for the PLO and Fedayeen, the Arab governments are still not willing to give full independent status to these groups. The main factor which has contributed to this belief was the situation of the civil war in Lebanon, an event which still occasionally rises from the ashes of this war.

The PLO and Fedayeen groups became embroiled in this conflict which was between Christians and Moslems. As the Palestinians became the dominant factor on the Moslem side, they were counting on the support from the Arab governments. The purpose of this thesis is not to give a detailed account of this war; however, it is important to note that Syria, which became involved as a peace-keeping force, turned on the Palestinians and did not give them support. Instead, the



Palestinians found themselves fighting not only the Christians but also the Syrians.

Relations between the Egyptians and the PLO deteriorated rapidly after a PLO warning in February 1975 that any partial settlement on Sinai would be a betrayal of the Arab cause. This statement was made after a session of the PLO Executive Committee and was addressed specifically to Egypt. This release stated that this was a conspiracy against the Arab cause and that the plans were aimed at undermining the Palestine revolution and 'stabbing the Arab liberation movement step-by-ste.' After hearing this statement, President Sadat refused to receive a PLO delegation to discuss Arab-Israeli negotiations. In a move which was tantamount to suspending relations with Egypt, the PLO recalled Palestinian representatives from that country.

The windfall of the PLO in the UN was also declining. In a harshly worded message on 19 May 1976, the PLO told the UN Security Council that it would hold the Security Council responsible for the 'serious situation' in occupied Palestine. The document likened the Israeli measures to Nazi atrocities during World War II. In September 1976 the UN undertook terrorism as a key issue for debate. Interest in this issue, which had been on the General Assembly's agenda every year since 1972, was revived by the Palestinian hi-jacking of a French airliner to Uganda in July 1976. West Germany immediately announced it intended to seek anti-hijacking action in the Assembly. Some of the



Arab governments began to have second thoughts about the legitimacy of terrorism since it was being used against them by some of the Fedayeen groups. Although the PLO had not participated in this action and even though they had tried terrorists in some incidences, they became the victim of this feeling against terrorism.

From its peak of spectacular prominence at the UN in 1974, the PLO plunged in stature in world councils in October 1976. At this time the General Assembly decided to deny the Palestinian observer delegation access to the rostrum on the last day of general debate. The PLO representative, Zehdi Labib Terzi, had sought to address the plenary session in reply to charges made against it by Lebanon. In three weeks of general debate, a majority of the 126 speakers failed to give any mention to the Palestinians. This was in striking contrast to the two previous sessions in which tributes were routine. The most obvious factor in this setback was the losses the movement suffered in combat in Lebanon, a military collapse at the hands of Syrian armed forces, once the Palestinians' staunchest supporter. Another factor was the over-all mood of the General Assembly and its preoccupation with the problems of southern Africa. This seems to have pushed Arab delegations into a backseat role in deference to the more immediate concerns of their African allies who had supported the Palestinians.

With the tensions and troubles mounting in Lebanon and the divisions inside the Arab world, the presence of eager Palestinian representatives





became what seemed like an embarrassment to many Arabs. This problem still exists for the Palestinians and their different organizations. The established Arab governments are more concerned with internal and external problems than with the Palestinians. For example, Jordanian spokesmen stated they were waiting for the PLO to prove it is incapable of bringing about an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. They also stated that Jordan would not accept the task unless requested to do so by the Arabs. Egypt also later asked the PLO to allow Jordan to negotiate a disengagement of forces agreement with Israel. The Egyptian President stated no chance of a successful Geneva Peace talks would come about unless the Arabs presented a unified front, particularly in solving the contradictions between Jordan and the Palestine resistance movement.

The hopes and the future of the PLO, the Palestinians, and the Fedayeen are inescapably tied to the politics of the Arab world.





## II. ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS

The structure of the Palestinians' institutions have changed radically since their inception. The reasons for these changes are numerous and often difficult to explain, and it is not the purpose of this paper to delve into the complexities of these differences. However, in studying the Palestinian organizations and leadership, one must be aware of several factors which have importance in the internal affairs of the Fedayeen. One factor is the differences between the Arab states. Some of these states are sometimes bitter rivals and concern themselves with issues which go beyond the issue of the liberation of Palestine. Another factor is that the leaders of the Fedayeen groups are not in tune with the main body of Palestinian nationalism, but they have instead sought to expand the scope of their political activity and importance to the surrounding Arab countries. Also, some of these leaders are from minority Moslem and other religious groups, and as a result they have an interest in pushing for secular policies, such as those of the Marxist-Leninist camps. Another factor is that cultural differences often foster competition between the vested interests of the Palestinian leaders. This factor, coupled with that of differences in social origin contribute to splits within the Fedayeen groups. Some of these groups have been more successful than others in their quests.



The triumph of the Algerian revolution in 1962 gave more weight to the principle of independent Palestinian entity. The Algerians were able to recruit material and support from various Arab regimes and, through armed struggle, to attain their independence. This led some Palestinians to believe they could adopt the same kind of policy if they took the initiative and maintained their freedom of action.

#### A. PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION -- PLO

On Nasir's initiative the first Arab summit conference met in Cairo 13-16 January 1964 to discuss Israel's plans to divert the waters of the Jordan River. Nasir was convinced that Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia were trying to involve Egypt in a war with Israel, and he was determined not to be pushed into a battle with that state until there was unity between all Arab countries. This stand led the other Arab states to the conclusion that Nasir had no intention of entering an Arab-Israeli war when Israel would begin to pump water from the Sea of Galilee to the Negev. The members of the conference issued a statement in which it decided to organize the Palestinian people to enable them to have a part in liberating Palestine and in determining its future.

Ahmed Shukairy was appointed as the representative of Palestine at the Arab League. Shukairy, a Palestinian lawyer, had been assistant secretary general of the Arab League and was later a member of the Syrian delegation to the UN. After that, he was the UN delegate of Saudi Arabia. The Arab leaders asked him to carry out consultations



with representatives of the Palestinian people for the formation of a new general government in exile. He was also asked to visit various Arab capitals to discuss the means which the Arab governments would place at his disposal for the fulfillment of this task.

On 19 February 1964 Shukairy began his tour of the Arab states to discuss with the governments and Palestinians the drafting of the Palestine National Charter. Also discussed was a draft constitution of a liberation organization on which the "Palestine entity" would be based. He returned to Cairo on 5 April 1964 and announced he had met with thousands of Palestinians and had explained the charter and the basic system of the new liberation organization.

On 28 May 388 representatives of Palestine from Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Gaza, Qatar, Kuwait, and Iraq met in Jerusalem to open the Palestine National Congress. This congress was held under the auspices of the Arab League and adopted several important resolutions.

1. It established the PLO to be set up by the people of Palestine in accordance with its statutes.
2. It called for immediate opening of camps for military training of all Palestinians to prepare them for the liberation battle.
3. It established a Palestine National Fund to finance the PLO.
4. It elected Shukairy as chairman of the executive committee of the PLO.

The second Arab summit conference, 5-11 September 1964, endorsed the PLO and fixed the obligations of each Arab state towards the organization.





It also endorsed the PLO decision to establish a Palestine Liberation Army to be stationed along the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula. The PLO absorbed a number of the small organizations which had been established in the early sixties. Some, such as Fatah and the ANM maintained their separate identity, but they did participate in the PLO National Congress.

Between this time and June 1967 the independent Palestinian organizations called for armed struggle to liberate Palestine. The independents were held back by the Arab regimes which opposed independent guerrilla warfare. Syria was the exception since it found in Fatah the incorporation of its slogan calling for a popular war of liberation.

The Arab defeat in the June 1967 war with Israel proved to the Palestinians that dependence on the Arab regimes and armies for the liberation of Palestine would lead to atrophy. They felt there was no empathy on the part of the Arab masses since their mind set was determined by their actions of the Arab governments which feared to arm the masses. After the war there were a number of conferences to formulate a Palestinian response to the defeat. The only formula approved was that of armed struggle. Since these meetings did not lead to any practical results, the independent Fedayeen organizations renewed their military operations unilaterally.

In January Fatah called for a meeting of all Palestinians, including the PLO and PFLP to be held in Cairo 17-19 January 1968. The PLO



and PFLP did not attend the meeting on the grounds that some of the invited organizations did not have significant or political weight. The groups at this meeting established the Permanent Bureau for the Palestinian Armed Struggle which included Fatah and eight lesser organizations. This bureau existed until the fourth Palestinian National Congress; however, the military wings of these organizations merged with that of Fatah.

On 10 July 1968 the fourth Palestinian National Congress, attended by the different commando organizations was held in Cairo. Ahmed Shukairy did not attend this congress since he had been forced to resign from the presidency of the PLO after a long struggle between him and the majority of the Executive Committee. Other Palestinian organizations had been a part in forcing this resignation; they accused him of being singularly responsible for the Palestinian decline and of being more inclined to political maneuvering than to the running of the PLO. The congress elected Yehya Hammouda, formerly the president of the Jordanian Lawyers' Association, as acting president of the Executive Committee. Hammouda had been barred from Jordan since 1957, being accused as a communist. As president of the PLO Executive Committee, he was given the responsibility of contacting the Palestinian commando organizations and holding the fifth Palestinian National Congress within six months.

The Executive Committee held several meetings with the different commando units, and from these meetings a formula of representation



for the National Assembly of the PLO was devised. Fatah received 33 seats, 12 to the PFLP, 12 to al- Sa'iqah, 11 to the executive committee of the PLO, five to the PLA, one to the National Fund of the PLO, three to students', workers' and women's organizations, and 28 to independents.<sup>35</sup> The PFLP rejected this formula and refused to participate. Instead it proposed a formula of one organization, one vote. Fatah agreed to the executive committee's formula and issued a political statement a few days prior to the congress. It announced its belief in the PLO as a general and proper framework for Palestinian national unity and stated it would participate in the conference and the Executive Committee.

The fifth National Congress convened 1-4 February 1969 in Cairo, and at the conclusion of the congress a new executive committee was formed, headed by Yasir Arafat, official spokesman for the Fedayeen group, Fatah. At the end of the congress a statement was issued, declaring the Palestinian cause was facing the danger of liquidation in the interests of Zionism and imperialism through the UN Security Council resolution 242. The statement rejected any Arab policies or international interventions which contradicted the Palestinians' right to their country. It also urged Arab states to facilitate the residence, work, and movement of Palestinians found on their soil. After the

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<sup>35</sup>Setler, R., op. cit., p. 141.





Congress Fatah announced it would retain its organizational independence.

Since 1969 Fatah has retained its control over the PLO and the Executive Committee. This has not been an easy task for Fatah and Arafat to do, because different Fedayeen groups, such as the PFLP and the rejection front, have continually called for the dismissal of Arafat. These groups often cite what they term as Fatah's deviationist behavior toward the Palestinian cause. Arafat has had his moments of concern but has always received the necessary vote of confidence to remain in his position of power.

#### 1. Organization\*

The PLO has made its headquarters in Damascus since the PLO/Jordanian civil war in September 1970. The Palestine National Council meetings are usually held in Cairo at the Arab League Headquarters.

The Chairman of the PLO is Yasser Arafat who has been in this post since 1969. He was last re-elected to the post on 12 January 1973.

##### a. Palestine National Council (PNC)

By PLO statutes, the PNC is the highest authority in the PLO. In 1973 the number of members was increased to 180, and in 1975 the number expanded to 270. The members are selected according to a set formula from among the Fedayeen groups, popular organizations,

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\*Appreciation is given to Dr. John Amos, Naval Postgraduate School, National Security Affairs Department, for advice on structure.





and Palestinian communities in the Arab world. The delegates serve three-year terms. The PLO statutes call for members of the PNC to be popularly elected; in actuality, the delegates are appointed by their organizations or communities.

Officially, the Council's functions are to legislate policy and resolutions and to elect members of the PLO Executive Committee which is to carry out PNC policies. The problem has not been to formulate policy and resolutions but to carry them out.

Of the membership of the PNC, 85 members represent Fedayeen groups, with Fatah's being the dominant organization. The PNC is headed by Speaker Khalid al-Fahum, and the PNC is organized into committees. The PNC must approve any amendment to the PLO's constitution and National Charter by a two-thirds vote.

b. Central Council (CC)

The Central Council was established to be a liaison between the PLO and the PNC. The CC has 41 members and includes all members of the Executive Committee, as well as representatives of Fedayeen groups. Theoretically, the CC is the PLO's supreme authority when the PNC is not in session.

c. Executive Committee (EX COM)

This group is elected by the PNC and is the PLO's highest executive authority. It is the actual center of power in the PLO since the Chairman is in effect the Palestinian Chief of State.



The EX COM was begun in 1964, but from late 1970 to July 1971, it was absorbed by an ad-hoc committee which was created to enable the PLO to coordinate all efforts in the struggle with Jordan. This committee was dissolved in 1971.

The EX COM has varied in size; it presently consists of 13 members since the PFLP withdrew from the EX COM and the CC in September 1974. However, the PFLP did keep its seats in the PNC (about 15). The EX COM is organized into departments, headed by EX COM members. These departments correspond roughly to cabinet positions.

(1) Political and International Affairs Department

This department is headed by Fatah member Faruq Qaddoumi who is in effect the PLO's foreign minister. The Deputy Director is Sa'id Kamal, and the UN representative is Sa'adat Hasan. This department supervises PLO offices abroad, which, according to Palestinian sources, number 143.

(2) Military Department

This department is headed by Sa'iqqa chief, Zuhayr Mushin. It theoretically supervises the PLA, but the problem is a long-standing feud between the groups. There are two main divisions in this department: the PLA and the Popular Armed Struggle Command. The PLA has three brigades: Ain Jallut, Hittin, and Qaddisiyya. All are stationed in Arab countries and are controlled by the host



governments. The Popular Armed Struggle Command is confined mostly to police duties in refugee camps. Each of the six major Fedayeen groups under the PLO has its own military arm independent of the PLA, but each is expected to coordinate its military activity through the General Command.

d. General Command of the Palestine Revolution

This department is headed by Arafat and is a coordinating body designed to control and integrate the activities of all Fedayeen groups.

e. Popular Organizations Department

This department includes labor unions and student groups with membership in Palestinian communities. The most prominent of these are the General Union of Palestine Students (Europe and Middle East nations) and the General Union of Palestine Workers with headquarters in Damascus. The department was headed by the PFLP EX COM representative, Ahmed Yamani who withdrew from the EX COM in September 1974. He has not been replaced.

f. Information Department

This department is headed by Yasser Abd-Rabbou, PPDFLP EX COM representative. The department supervises the Unified Information Command, led by Fatah member Majid Abu Sharrai.

The following are the publications of the PLO: Falastin al Thawra and Palestine Information Bulletin. The department also includes





the PLO news agency, WAFA and the Voice of Palestine Radio, Cairo, which was closed by Sadat on 11 September 1975.

In addition, each major Fedayeen group publishes its own information bulletins or newspapers:

- PFLP -- Al Hadaf (Beirut Weekly)
- PDFLP -- Al Horriya (Marxist Weekly)
- PFLP/GC -- Elal Amam (Beirut Weekly)
- ALF -- Al Tha'u al-Arabi

g. Other Bodies reporting directly to the EX COM

(1) Palestine Planning Center

This department is headed by Nabil Aha'th and conducts studies which are of interest to PLO leaders.

(2) Palestine National Fund

This group is the PLO's treasury. Funds for the PLO come from contributions from Arab governments, taxes on PLO employees, and fund-raising drives such as the Joint Palestine Appeal. The PNF is directed by EX COM member, Walid Qamhawi.

B. FATAH

Armed resistance has been a way of life for Palestinians since they took up arms against foreign rule during the British Mandate. Even before the revolution of 1936, there had been a long period of political struggle by the Palestinians by protests, demonstrations, strikes, and



attempts at dissuading the British from supporting the Israelis' move for independence. In 1948 the state of Israel was established and the Palestinians found themselves without a homeland and dispersed to refugee camps. The first reaction was to resist any kind of rapprochement which would lead to a final settlement with the state of Israel. Active Palestinian groups became affiliated with national Arab parties which called for Arab unity. The Palestinians believed this was the road to a strong unified Arab state capable of confronting Israel and liberating Palestine. In the light of these activities, Fatah came into being.

In Gaza the Palestinians who had not been allowed by the Egyptians to organize independently, formed their own underground during the short Israeli occupation. These cells formed in 1956 became the nucleus for Fatah and its various rivals despite the Egyptians who were anxious to avoid provoking the Israelis after the 1956 War. The Egyptians for the next ten years arrested anyone suspected of any kind of commando activity. The nucleus for Fatah was formed by Arafat (Abu Ammar) with Khalil al Wazir (Abu Jihad) and Salah Khalaf (Abu Ayad). In the summer of 1957 these men, along with a few others, met outside the town of Kuwait. Most were from Gaza, but some had come from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Besides the original three, there were Faruq al Qaddoumi (Abu Lutuf), Muhamed Yussif al Najjar (Abu Yusif), Khalid al Hassan (Abu Said), and Kamal Adwan. These seven men and



Arafat remained the core of Fatah leadership which gave the organization a factor of cohesion and stability. Abu Yusif and Kamal Adwan were later killed by Israeli raiders in Beirut.

This group founded an organization to liberate Palestine. They decided on the name Fath, a name composed of the initials, spelled backwards, of the words:

Harakat

Tahreer

Falasteen

These words mean the Movement of the Liberation of Palestine, and the initials are pronounced Fatah. The word Fath had special significance for the founders, since it meant victory and was an allusion to the Koranic account of the promise given by God to the Prophet Mohammed when he was in Medina. God promised him victory over his enemies if he would return to Mecca which he did and was victorious. Fatah equated the Palestinians' return to Palestine with Mohammed's return to Mecca.

Arafat insisted Fatah must not follow any particular ideology except the liberation of Palestine and that it was the duty of Palestinians to put aside their political party loyalties and unite for this single objective. In an interview in 1975 Arafat stated: "Our ideological theory is very simple. Our country has been occupied. The majority of our people have been kicked out by Zionism and Imperialism from their homes."





He went on to say, "We wait for the justice of the United Nations, for the justice of the world, while our people are suffering. But nothing of this was realized. None of our hopes. We have believed that the only way to return to our homes and our land is the armed struggle. We believe in this theory without any complications and with complete clarity and this is our aim and our hope."<sup>36</sup>

Fatah did not agree with the Arab states' doctrine of preparing for an inevitable decisive confrontation at some unspecified date in the future and avoiding military involvement in the meantime. Instead, Fatah believed the Palestinians should take their fate into their own hands. It also rejected a related scheme for a war of surprise which would last one week and would eliminate Israel in a single rush. Fatah believed this strategy would not give the Palestinians any function in the struggle and there would be no cure for the psychological and spiritual sickness which had kept them dormant for two decades. They believed the Arab states would have to be dragged into a war with Israel.

Fatah went about realizing its own concept of the liberation of Palestine by establishing training camps for commandos and Palestinian youth. The commando course lasted for three months, a course recruits had to follow before joining one of the Asifa fighting units. To begin the course, the men had to pass medical, physical fitness, and psychological

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<sup>36</sup>"An Interview with Yassir Arafat, Chairman of the PLO," World Marxist Review, p. 126, February 1975.





tests. At the end of the course, the men had to undergo a week of maneuvers. If they failed this test, they were assigned to nonmilitary tasks or had to repeat some part of the course.

The youth of Fatah are organized into paramilitary youth training units called Ashbal. Ashbal was begun in 1967 and is intended for boys who range in age from eight to fourteen. Fatah explains to visitors that the Ashbal is not just a paramilitary organization, but rather it is a morale-building and educational movement to prepare the well-rounded future citizen of Palestine. He will be equipped and trained to defend his nation but also to be a good, productive citizen.

Fatah, in addition to the services provided by the UNRWA, had established its own clinics, hospitals, convalescent homes, and special schools for the children of its own 'martyrs' who had been killed in action. Of particular importance were the 'Popular Resistance Militia' whose men report for training by Fatah professionals in their spare time and return to their homes at night. They are difficult to distinguish from regular Fedayeen because they wear the same diversified kind of outdoor clothing. The militia, which numbered more men than the regular commandos, played a vital role in the various confrontations between the Jordanian government and the Fedayeen movement.

The leadership of Fatah has remained basically the same and the group has had its ups and downs. They became the most powerful group in the PLO and remain the dominant force in that organization. This



has been in spite of the conflict with the 'rejection front' and some distrust from the major Arab governments. Fatah leaders, in their role as spokesmen for the PLO, have spoken before the UN, and it has established offices in more than 140 cities in the nations of the world. The freedom of movement for the group has been severely curtailed in conflicts such as the Jordanian Civil War in 1970 and the civil war in Lebanon.

After the Jordanian conflict Fatah lost its freedom of movement from Jordan, and it suffered a great number of casualties. The most important result of the war for Fatah was its recognition in 1974, as the leading group in the PLO, as the representative of all the Palestinian people. This led to recognition by the UN through the PLO, an important event since Arafat spoke to that organization. The civil war in Lebanon perhaps caused the most changes in Fatah. Syria entered the conflict against Fatah and the Fedayeen groups, although Fatah, at times, attempted to play the role of peace-maker. The war caused Fatah-Sa'iqa clashes in Lebanon. For example, these units fought on 6 December 1976 at the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp near the northern Lebanese town of Tripoli. The battle came after a Fatah member and a Sa'iqa member had a dispute on the day before and the Fatah member was killed. The man's friends and relatives attacked the Sa'iqa headquarters in the camp, killing 25. Ten Fatah members were also killed



in the fighting.<sup>37</sup> The result of the battle was Sa'iqa's calling for the removal of the PLO leadership, including Arafat, Farouq Qaddoumi, and Khalil Wazir.

The war also resulted in the PLO's and Fatah's calling, for the first time, for military conscription. They stated the conscription would be for every able-bodied man between the ages of 18 and 30. The war also continued the rift between Fatah and the PFLP despite a rapprochement in early 1976. The differences between the two groups arose in August 1976 over an Arab League-sponsored plan for a ceasefire in Lebanon. The PFLP leader who had not taken part in the proposed solutions launched a bitter attack against Arafat. Habash accused Arafat and the Arab League of planning a solution which would stop the Palestinian revolution and would force the Palestinians to become a part of the established Arab nations. There does not seem to be a solution to this rift in the near future.

The war in Lebanon did outwardly change the goals of Fatah in that it turned from guerrilla attacks on Israel to a position of possible negotiated settlement. Qaddoumi, on 15 November 1976, expressed support for a plan for the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This was in response to a UN plan which called for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from these areas.

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<sup>37</sup> "Arab Affairs," Arab Report & Record, p. 743, 1-15 December 1976.





The plan also provided for a phase in which the UN would arrange for Palestinians displaced since 1948 to be given a choice of returning to their homes or receiving compensation. This also prompted another spokesman to state that Fatah and the PLO were willing to consider a change of tactics which would end attacks against Israelis and explore chances of Arab-Jewish coexistence. Fatah was reported to be conducting contacts with 'an increasing number of Jews' about transforming Israel into a non-sectarian state for Arabs and Jews. The spokesman announced that no Israeli settlement where some inhabitants were taking part in such a dialogue would be attacked by Palestinian guerrillas. He added that Arafat and the PLO Executive Committee had agreed to discuss the amendment of its national charter to state that all Israelis would be welcome to take part in an Arab-Jewish state.<sup>38</sup>

What is the future of Fatah? This question is vital to the interests of Fatah and may well be determined by the positions it takes in any Arab-Palestinian-Israeli settlement. Since the October 1973 War, the position of Fatah has been characterized by flexibility and moderation over tactics and means related to the ultimate goal of liberation. The linkage between Palestinian patriotism and Arab nationalism seems to reflect Fatah's interest in avoiding the negative charge of local patriotism. Concerning the ideology of a proposed new state, Fatah takes no position

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<sup>38</sup>"Arab-Israeli Affairs," Arab Record & Report, p. 680, 1-15 November, 1976.



and leaves it to the people to decide the political and socio-economic framework upon which their state should be built. Since the beginning of Fatah, it has avoided casting its political program within any ideological context. It has insisted that its primary goal is Palestinian national independence from what it terms the Zionist enemy. It has retained the principles of a Palestinian entity and of liberation; however, it has adopted a moderate attitude toward a peaceful approach. Because of the preponderant military and political weight of Fatah within the Palestinian resistance, this new element of moderation seems to have been adopted by the general organizational framework of the resistance organizations, the PLO. By staying away from ideology, Fatah seems to have maintained the traditional content of Palestinian political thought. However, it has introduced such important changes as political flexibility and a realistic appraisal of available options, thus helping the PLO to gain international recognition for the national rights of the Palestinian people. Should Fatah, as a moderate group, fail to achieve the establishment of a Palestinian state, the prospects are that the PLO will either be overtaken by the radicals, or possibly, the PLO will turn to radicalism. The consequences of such an occurrence are numerous. Such a development would be a danger to Israel, would result in more human losses to the Palestinians, a possible radicalization or the overthrow of moderate Arab regimes, and a possible fifth Arab-Israeli confrontation.



### C. THE POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE (PFLP)

The PFLP's ideology reveals a deep seated rejection of conciliation with Israel and a relatively long tradition of belief in the necessity of Arab unity as a precondition for the recovery of Palestine. This organization can trace its roots to the 1948 War and the experiences of Dr. George Habash.

In 1952 the publication of a secret weekly bulletin was begun by the Committee for Resisting Peace with Israel, composed of students at the American University of Beirut. This group was the nucleus of the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM), founded by Habash. Habash was a student of medicine at the AUB, and he was stirred by the approaching crisis as the time for British withdrawal from Palestine neared. On his return to his home in Lydda, he was in the company of thousands of refugees; it was this flight of Palestinians which was the turning point for Habash who resolved to combine his medical career with political activity.

The members of the ANM devised a small non-ideological movement which had the overriding objective of liberating Palestine. It had as its motto, "Unity, Liberation, Revenge."<sup>39</sup> Its main objective was to mobilize all Arab parties against any peaceful settlement with Israel. The ANM was suspicious of any plans initiated by the UNRWA and the

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<sup>39</sup> Shimoni, Y. and Levine, E., Political Dictionary of the Middle East in the 20th Century, p. 307, The New York Times Book Company, 1974.





US to settle the Palestinian refugees in Arab countries, because they felt these two parties were interested in the elimination of the tension which existed between the Arab states and Israel. In this light, the ANM spoke through its weekly, al-Tha'r (The Revenge), and stated that Palestinians should resist any program intended for the betterment of their living conditions lest this lead to a solution of the Palestinian problem short of the recovery of Palestine.<sup>40</sup>

The ANM, as a rule, embraced the principles of Nasir. About 1957 it added the ultimate objective of building a unified socialist-democratic Arab society in which social justice and liberty would be the prevailing doctrine. After Egypt and Syria formed the United Arab Republic in 1958, the ANM dropped the emphasis on revenge and emphasized the theme of "Unity, Liberation, Progress, the Recovery of Palestine," and later developed the theme of "Unity, Freedom, Socialism, and the Recovery of Palestine." Habash argued against the use of commandos to fight the Israelis; he was more interested in political organization than in guerrilla warfare. Until now, Fatah was the only group which called for the adoption of the principle of armed struggle as the means to liberate Palestine and believed the Palestinians should begin armed struggle regardless of the reaction or plans of the Arab governments. The Palestinian branch of the ANM called for coordination

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid.





between the Palestinian armed struggle and the plans of the progressive regimes, like the United Arab Republic. The reason for this thinking was to avoid a premature confrontation between the Arabs and Israelis. The break between Egypt and Syria in 1961 raised a series of heated debates within the ranks of the ANM. Within the ANM there were two groups who were attempting to better define the ideology of the organization. Nabash, along with Hani al-Hindi, Wadi Haddad, and Ahmad al-Khatib, insisted the doctrine of socialism must be undertaken in a peaceful way. The other group, which was less powerful and led by Muhsin Ibrahim, argued for an ideological framework which would be based on the Marxist theory of class struggle. Following this, the second group maintained that the liberation of Palestine should follow the Marxist-Leninist revolution based on class struggle and a people's war of national liberation.

The Palestinian branch of the ANM formed a military group in 1964 to undertake reconnaissance operations inside the occupied territories and to establish a network and arms caches. This branch of the ANM became known as Abtal al-Audah (Heroes of the Return) and begun its military operations in November 1966. After its emergence Abtal al-Audah became associated with the Palestine Liberation Army for financial reasons.

The June 1967 War affected the thinking of Habash and strengthened the ideological position of Ibrahim's faction of the ANM. The war



reinforced the leftists' position that neither the programs of Nasir or the Bathists in Syria could liberate Palestine. In the light of this background Abtal al-Audah merged with the Popular Liberation Front and the Vengeance Youth to form the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The date of this merger varies with different versions, but the PFLP did begin its military operations on 6 October 1967. The Six Day War frustrated Habash and the moderates, and they acquiesced to the demands of the left wing. They saw that Nasir and the Bath parties had failed to achieve Arab unity and the liberation of Palestine, and they turned to Marxism-Leninism to emulate what they considered to be victories in Vietnam, Cuba, North Korea, and elsewhere.

Numerically the PFLP is much smaller than Fatah and is considered to be more extremist than Fatah. It is Fatah's main competitor for the hegemony of the Palestinian movement, and in this light the PFLP has disagreed with Fatah's and the PLO's policies of the Palestinian homeland. It has also disagreed with the procedures and tactics to regain the homeland. It began to sponsor a long series of imaginative exploits of terrorism and hijackings of airliners to emphasize that the war with Israel was and is a national liberation war which requires the recruitment of the widest sections of the Palestinian people. Habash stressed that the leading cadres of the PFLP should be in the hands of those who are committed to the ideology of the proletariat.



The PFLP began its exploits on 23 July 1968 with the hijacking of an El Al airliner flying from Rome to Tel Aviv. The plane was flown to Algiers where the crew, one of whom was wounded, and 15 Israeli passengers were freed with the plane. The hijackings continued until the high point of this tactic was reached on 6 September 1970. On that date PFLP commandos hijacked a TWA 707, a Swissair DC-8, and a Pan American 747. The TWA and Swissair aircraft were flown to "Revolution Airport" (Dawson Airfield) in Jordan; the Pan Am aircraft was flown to Cairo Airport where it was destroyed after the passengers had been released. An attempt on a fourth aircraft, an El Al 707, was foiled when Israeli Security men on board killed one of the hijackers and captured Leila Khaled, a heroine of a 1969 hijacking. The aircraft landed at London's Heathrow airport. The commandos demanded the release of seven of its commandos held in prisons in Switzerland, West Germany, and Leila Khaled in England. They also demanded the release of commandos held by the Israelis. The British appeared reluctant to comply with the demands, so on 9 September the PFLP hijacked a BOAC VC-10 aircraft with 104 passengers and crew on board. This airplane was also flown to the airfield in Jordan, near Zurqa. The PFLP exchanged the hostages for the freedom of its commandos in Europe, including Leila Khaled; the commandos then destroyed the aircraft on the Jordanian airfield.<sup>40</sup> The PFLP continued its exploits

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<sup>40</sup>"List of Arab Hijack Operations Since 1968," The Arab World Weekly, p. 16, 13 May 1972.





both inside Israel and in Europe. The organization began to use teenagers, particularly in Europe, to carry out acts of terrorism. The PFLP began to develop working relationships with other revolutionary organizations in various parts of the world. This was in line with their doctrine of hitting Israeli targets wherever they may be. This differed from Fatah's doctrine of restricting its operations to inside Israel.

In March 1972 the PFLP Congress defined the principles of revolutionary action, including 'Making a profound and comprehensive acquaintance with all the principles and tactics of guerrilla warfare and learning from the experiences of other struggling peoples.'<sup>41</sup> To follow this principle, the PFLP established ties with the Japanese Red Army, the Turkish Liberation Army, the Black Panthers in the US, the Tupamaros in Brazil, the Irish Republican Army, and the Baader-Meinhoff gang in West Germany. The impact of these relationships for the PFLP would be considerable in that its foreign operations would be aided if it had help from the revolutionary groups of the countries where operations would be carried out. The foreign groups could also assist the PFLP by providing information which would be essential to the planning of an operation and by providing personnel and arms. An example of this relationship with foreign groups is the hijacking of an Air France airliner in July 1976 to Uganda where the PFLP was aided by members

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<sup>41</sup>"Palestinian Commandos and Foreign Groups," The Arab World Weekly, p. 13, 19 July 1975.



from the Baader-Meinhoff gang. This hijacking resulted in Israel's mounting a daring rescue operation to destroy the terrorists and to rescue the crew of the airplane and the Israeli hostages who had been retained by the commandos.

Habash and the PFLP leaders developed the philosophy behind this type of operations. The PFLP has no illusions about being able to hurt Israel seriously or to defeat the Israelis with such exploits. However, they feel this kind of action focuses world attention on the Palestine national movement and what the commandos would like to call the 'revolution.' If the world refused to take note of the Palestinians as a nation, the PFLP would force it to do so. According to PFLP philosophy, the group uses teen-agers to point out to the world that the whole Palestinian community is imbued with revolutionary fervor. The PFLP was anxious to convey the idea these people were not the usual stereotypes of the Arab, such as the refugee who forever exchanges one miserable hovel for another in his camps.

Habash and the PFLP attempt to interact with Fatah in such a way that it can force Fatah to the left. This, on occasion, has been successful; however, Fatah in its rise to power has forced the PFLP to go more underground. Habash continually attacks the PLO and Fatah doctrines and calls for a unified struggle against Israel. To date, it has not had much success, since the ruling Arab regimes are reluctant to embrace the philosophy of this radical group. They, instead, mount their support



behind the less radical Fatah and the PLO as the hopes of the Palestinians.

Ideology has mattered more to the PFLP than to Fatah. The latter has maintained the traditional content of Palestinian thought while the PFLP and others have emphasized the importance of ideology for the promotion of the goals of the Palestinian resistance movement. These movements have been a modernizing factor in Palestinian politics since they introduce the ideas of Marx, Lenin, Mao, and Trotsky into Palestinian political thought.

There are three central themes in the PFLP ideology: the enemy camp, the Arab Front theory, and the Marxist-Leninist principle. In the enemy camp theme the PFLP identifies four parties as enemies: Israel, world Zionism, world imperialism, and Arab reaction. The group also divides the Palestinians into two groups: those who live under Israeli occupation and whom Israel wants to use to establish a Palestinian mini-state on the West Bank; the second group comprises those Palestinians who may be inclined to join the revolution. The PFLP divides the Arab states into two categories: nationalist and reactionary. The nationalists, such as Iraq, Algeria, and Libya, to the PFLP, oppose imperialism and refuse to accept a peaceful settlement with Israel. The reactionary regimes, such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan, are portrayed as the protectors of imperialism in the Arab areas and are considered the most likely to strike the first blow against





the revolution. The PFLP also contends the Palestinians are involved in a struggle of an international dimension which is complemented by movements of national liberation and revolutionary forces world-wide.

On the Arab Front theory the PFLP centers on Arab unity and on an Arab nation. In this it calls for a broad national front, comprised of all Palestinian groups, to be prepared to join the fight against Israel. The PFLP introduced concepts such as 'Arab Hanoi' and the 'Arab Front,' and it emphasizes this will be a front to contain Israel on all sides.

In the Marxist principle as a guide to action the PFLP believes in an organizational doctrine to build a revolutionary party. It also believes a political doctrine is indispensable for the identification of the enemies of the Palestinian revolution. The PFLP doctrine does not preclude other classes from joining the peasants and workers, provided they do not aim to help formulate policy. This is a Marxism which gives priority to armed struggle and national liberation over ideological purity. The PFLP believes, too, in a military strategy which would be able to cope with a military enemy which has both experience and a superior war potential. It recommends a strategy which incorporates two key elements. The first is a guerrilla type of protracted war of national liberation. The second is a mobilization of the Arab and Palestinian masses and the enlisting of the support of the socialist countries and movements of national liberation in the Third World. It calls for a Jordanian-Palestinian national front which will be bent on the overthrow





of the regime of Hussein; in this way Jordanian territory would be the natural point of departure for military activities against Israel. The PFLP terms the central objectives underlying the struggle as the realization of the aims of the Arab revolution against imperialism and capitalism and the destruction of the political and socio-economic structures of Israel. The PFLP argues that once this occurs, there will be a supremacy of the national bond over the bond of the family or clan.<sup>42</sup>

The focus is on the struggle between the PFLP and Fatah for the supremacy of the Palestinian cause. If Fatah, as a moderate, fails to establish a Palestinian state, then the PFLP is ready to step in and turn the movement more towards the radical.

#### D. AL-SA'IQA

This Fedayeen group is probably the most important one to have been formed after the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War. It came into being as a result of the Syrian regime's desire to increase its influence within the Fedayeen movement. The official term for this group is The Vanguard of the People's War of Liberation, but it is more commonly known as al-Sa'iqa (the Lightning Bolt). The ruling Ba'th Party, after June 1967, decided to withhold support from Fatah and the ANM, and instead, it formed its own commando force. Sa'iqa drew on Syria for funds and arms and surpassed the PFLP in size. The men of this organization

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<sup>42</sup> Muslih, M. Y., "Moderates and Rejectionists Within the Palestine Liberation Organization," The Middle East Journal, pp. 136-137, Spring 1976.



include drafted Syrian officers and men from the Syrian Army and its main bases are in the Damascus-Darra region of Syria, with branches now in Lebanon.

Sa'iqa was organized into a more hierarchical and rigid organization than were the other commando organizations. This reflects the more rigid training which was given to the Syrian officers and men. At first Sa'iqa sided with Fatah and supported the doctrine of liberation before the settling of ideological quarrels. It was, as a rule, more hostile to the PFLP, reflecting the Syrian attitudes towards its rival. However, it was usually cooperative with some of the other Fedayeen groups.

Internal Syrian politics seem to have directly influenced the growth of Sa'iqa. Salah Jadid, deputy head of the Ba'th Party, seems to have attempted to use Sa'iqa to further his own position and ambitions within the party by using the group as a military instrument against the military arm of the party. Hafiz al-Asad took control of the Ba'th Party and the leadership of Syria in November 1970, and he immediately changed the leadership of Sa'iqa. Until this time, the group had been headed by Muhammad al-Mu'aitha and Dafi Jumai'ani. Asad appointed Zuhayr Muhsin as the spokesman for the group; however, the real power continued to be wielded in Damascus.

During the Lebanese Civil War a major rift developed between Fatah and Sa'iqa due to the fact that the latter supported the Syrian Army in its moves against the Palestinians in Lebanon. This rift



contributed to differing discussions in the PLO EX COM, although the Syrian organization did not withdraw from the EX COM. This rift seems to have been settled, although there have been flare-ups of violence in Lebanon since the peace accord was established.

Syria and Sa'iqa have been playing a role in softening the position of the PLO towards the peace process. There have been strains in the relationships between Syria and Egypt and Egypt and the PLO after the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli Sinai Accord in September 1975. Syria seems to have been a moderating influence on the PLO, especially after the Syrian-Jordanian rapprochement in August 1975. This rapprochement was a Syrian-Jordanian accord which stipulated the coordination of the political, military, economic, and educational programs of the two countries.

Although there have been differences between Sa'iqa, Fatah, and the PLO, these three, with the influence of Syria, have combined to propose solutions to the Palestinian problems.

#### E. THE POPULAR DEMOCRATIC FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE (PDFLP)

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine's drift towards the left did not satisfy its own left wing which wanted complete identification with the international revolutionary movement. In May 1968 Habash went to Damascus to inquire about a supply convoy which had been confiscated, and he was imprisoned on a charge of plotting to overthrow





the Syrian government. Before his rescue, Nayef Hawatmeh, an East Bank Christian Jordanian, effectively usurped the leadership of the PFLP. At first the movement was effective since most of the PFLP's Central Committee joined the new organization. However, this success was soon followed by failure and weakness. Their differences with Habash soon deteriorated into street brawls, and the better armed Habash faction was able to use force to intimidate the younger group.

The two factions turned to Fatah in mediating their dispute, and in February 1969 the PLO recognized the PDFLP as a separate commando organization. The PDFLP won control of the party newspaper, al-Hurriyah, forcing the PFLP to publish its own journal. The PDFLP accepted aid from Syria while the PFLP turned to Syria's bitter rival, Iraq, for support.

The importance of the PDFLP was unquestionable, because they served as a focus for young European leftist intellectuals who were beginning to take an interest in the Palestinian movement. These Europeans, who offered their services as volunteers, identified more easily with the PDFLP's purely Marxist or Maoist concepts than with Fatah's Palestinian nationalism.

Ideology was the basis of the PDFLP's split from the PFLP. The former called for the breaking off of all relations of subservience with the Arab regimes whether they were progressive or reactionary. They also criticized the other Palestinian groups, especially Fatah and the



PLO, saying they were led by the 'petty bourgeoisie' and its ideology. The PDFLP believed this had proved its failure in the 1967 defeat. The PDFLP called for a long-term war of popular liberation against imperialism and Zionism and also called for the establishment of a Marxist-Leninist party which would be completely committed to the ideology favorable to the dispossessed peasants and workers. Both the PFLP and the PDFLP were in agreement on the rejection of Fatah's policy of non-involvement in the internal matters of Arab states. They both maintained that the overthrow of reactionary regimes and revolution throughout the Arab world are prerequisites to the liberation of Palestine.

The difference between the two groups focused on the method of conflict and the nature of the Palestinian state. The PFLP believes in maintaining certain relations with the progressive Arab governments. They see these relations as necessary to secure financial and military support which is vital for the survival of the group and the resistance movement in general. The PFLP maintains armed conflict is the method by which to unite the masses. The PDFLP seems to place initial emphasis on political and educational organization and only after that, armed struggle. As to the nature of the state, the PDFLP was the only one of the Fedayeen groups which accepted, seriously, the slogan of a 'Democratic Palestine.' They indicated they did not mean by this one man, one vote but rather a popular democracy. The platform of the



PDFLP recognized that the Israelis constitute not a religious community but rather a community with a cultural identity of its own. With this concept the group has attempted to initiate discussions with like-minded Israelis such as the leftists in the Matzpen party in Israel. The PDFLP calls for an Arab federation, a concept which is much less far-reaching than the call for complete unity. This concept has aroused many of their previous supporters against them, and those supporters have returned to the original PFLP.

The conflict between the two organizations continues. The stronger PFLP continues to attack the offices and personnel of the PDFLP. As this is occurring, the less-powerful group continues to attempt to gain support from whatever source it can.

#### F. POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE - GENERAL COMMAND (PFLP-GC)

This is another group which split from the main PFLP organization. It is on the opposite end of the political spectrum from the PDFLP; this is a small but comparatively effective terrorist group and is supported by Syrian and Libyan sources. The PFLP-GC split from the PFLP in the fall of 1968 and is headed by Ahmad Jibril. This group has operated under various names, such as Palestine Liberation Front and the al-Aqsa Fedayeen Front.<sup>43</sup> Jibril is described as the most effective terrorist organizer, and he is opposed to any development





which constitutes a deviation or a supplement to the Palestinian National Covenant. He is also opposed to any cooling of the Lebanese-Israeli border. The goal of this group is to renew the fedayeen spirit and to carry out suicide missions. The PFLP-GC believes the resistance should be primarily concerned with military operations and not politico-ideological matters.

The Arab Report & Record reported in its issue 1-15 October 1976, page 617, that on 7 October fighting broke out between rival members of the PFLP-GC. The fighting occurred when a dispute arose between the supporters of Jabril and supporters of the spokesman, Abul-Abbas. Abul-Abbas, in a statement on 7 October, reported Jabril had been dismissed as leader of the organization because of his 'treacherous practices' as an ally of the Syrian conspirators. Jabril was reported to have replied on 8 October with a statement accusing Abul-Abbas of being an Iraqi agent. Damascus Radio reported on 9 October that the PFLP-GC Central Committee had issued a statement on the 'criminal aggression' on the PFLP-GC by the agents of the Iraqi Intelligence service in Lebanon.

The status of the politics of leadership within the organization is not known. However, this writer supports the belief that Jabril, with his followers, maintains control.

#### G. ARAB LITERATION FRONT (ALF)

This group is the Iraqi equivalent of the Syrian Sa'iq'a and was formed in 1969 after Iraqi-Fatah disputes. The ALF quickly became involved in





the rivalry between Fatah and the PFLP and is a member of the rejection front. The group is headed by Abd al-Wahhab al-Kay-yali, Secretary General, and Dr. Zeid Haydar.

## H. LEADERSHIP OF FEDAYEEN GROUPS

The purpose of this section is not to give a complete biographical background, but it is to give the reader an insight to the personal history of each leader. These brief histories will aid the reader in understanding the philosophies of these leaders, thus often determining the philosophies of their organizations. The information for these biographies were compiled from data found in An-Nahar Arab Reports profiles.

### 1. Yasir Arafat (Abu Ammar) -- Chairman: PLO/EX COM

The details of Arafat's early life are sketchy. According to PLO claims, this is because the PLO does not wish to create a cult of personality in the resistance movement.

Arafat was born in Jerusalem in 1929 and is related to the prominent Husayni clan. When he was young, his family moved to Egypt, and at the age of 17 he became involved in Palestinian politics when he returned to Jerusalem to be secretary to Abd al-Qadir Husayni, a hero of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. He owes his political philosophy largely to Husayni and to Abd el-Kader who achieved fame during the 'Great Arab Revolt.' After 1948 Arafat returned to Egypt where he studied engineering at Faud (Cairo) University. Here, he concentrated his



efforts in organizing the Palestinian students at the university and developed friendships with a number of those who would later be his colleagues in Fatah. He founded the Union of Palestinian Students in Egypt, a forerunner of the General Union of Palestinian Students. This organization had close ties with the Muslim Brothers which called for a return to Islam. Because this group attempted an unsuccessful assassination on Nasir, Nasir allegedly was always suspicious and contemptuous of Arafat.

Arafat was graduated in 1956 and then served as a demolition expert with the Egyptian Army in the 1956 Suez Canal fighting. It was here he received his experiences as a fedayeen and conceived the idea of sending his own fedayeen forces against Israel. He was expelled from Egypt (his followers say departed), and he spent 1957 in Kuwait. It was here that the first meeting of Fatah was held. Arafat worked for a time for the Kuwait government and then began his own construction firm. This latter move allowed him to give more time to Fatah recruiting.

In early 1960 Arafat spent some time in Algeria, and he was impressed with the FLN and their efforts at independence. He met with little success in his early efforts to imitate FLN recruiting procedures, and he had to rely on the criminal element for recruits. In his later attempts to emulate those recruiting procedures, he was more successful, mainly because of the June 1967 War.



In 1967 Arafat was commander of Fatah's Jordanian forces and in early 1968 he was named Fatah spokesman and de-facto chief. In February 1969 he was named Chairman of the PLO and the Executive Committee. Since that time, he has gained international recognition. He has been invited to speak privately with the leaders of many nations, and in 1974 he was invited and did speak before the UN General Assembly. He has withstood several challenges to his leadership from both inside and outside the PLO and Fatah.

Arafat is unmarried and a Summi Moslem who practices his religion faithfully. He speaks some English, and he is an intense, active individual who spends much of his time in Fatah refugee camps.

## 2. George Habash -- Secretary General, PFLP

Habash is slightly older than the general run of commando leaders. He gives the impression less of a guerrilla than of a distinguished, rather scholarly physician. Habash was born in 1926 to Greek Orthodox parents in Lydda. He studied in Jerusalem and earned a BA at American University of Beirut in 1947.

As the time for British withdrawal from Palestine approached, he was stirred by the approaching crisis and returned to Lydda. At the time of the 1948 war, he fled with thousands of Palestinians to Ramallah in the Arab-held part of Palestine. Here, he resolved to combine his medical career with political activity to avenge his people.

His ideological roots are in the classic version of Pan-Arab nationalism. He founded the Arab Nationalist Movement in 1950 after





returning to American University of Beirut to study medicine. He received his medical degree in 1951 and went to Amman where he opened a medical clinic and continued to be active in politics. He was forced to leave Jordan after he had been implicated in the anti-regime riots of 1957, and he fled to Syria. In both Amman and Damascus his clinics became known as places where the poor could expect free attention. Habash was forced to leave Damascus when the Ba'th Party achieved its coup in 1963, and he went to Lebanon. Younger radicals in the ANM introduced Marxist ideas and began to attack Habash and other original members. The ANM became a Marxist group and by December 1967, the PFLP was established over which Habash, in time, assumed total command.

In May 1968 Habash went to Syria to inquire about a supply convoy which had been confiscated. He was arrested in Damascus and was imprisoned on a charge of plotting to overthrow the government. After he had been held for six months, his men succeeded in staging a daring rescue. They seized him as he was being transferred from one prison to another during an attempted coup. After his escape, he returned to Jordan. While he was in prison, he maintained his leadership of the PFLP.

Habash is often in conflict with Arafat over the concept of the liberation of Palestine. Habash believes Palestine can be liberated only through the union of Arab states into a single, dedicated nation,



strong enough to overpower Israel. He is also anti-American and has developed a central theme that Israel is America and America is Israel. He believes that ultimately all American interests will have to be driven out of the Middle East. In 1974 he led the PFLP out of the PLO/EX COM and blasted Arafat's 'capitulationist' leadership. He maintains this position at the time of this writing.

Habash has been in poor health for some time and suffered a heart attack in 1972. In 1974 he was treated in Bulgaria, apparently for his heart. Habash is married and has two daughters. Because of frequent threats to his life, he lives in strict secrecy and his movements are guarded.

3. Zuhayr Muhsin -- Secretary General, al-Sa'iqa

Muhsin was born in Tulkarm about 1936. At the age of 17 he joined the Ba'th Party and was imprisoned in Jordan in 1957 for political activities. After his release, he taught school in Qatar, but he was deported from there for illegal political activities and moved to Kuwait. He remained there as a school teacher until 1967 when he moved to Damascus. Here, he became active in Ba'thist activities. He became vice chairman of the PNC in 1968 after he had joined Sa'iqa in 1967. In 1970 he became commander of Sa'iqa forces in Lebanon. After the Syrian coup in 1970, Sa'iqa was split, and Muhsin led the pro-Asad Sa-iqa forces and took control of the group. He became a member of the PLO/EX COM in 1971 and became head of the Military Department.



Muhsin is an ally of the moderate wing of the PLO, and he has hinted at PLO recognition of Israel, providing Israel withdraws to the borders established in the 1947 partition plan. He does not give up on the PLO declared aim of a democratic, secular state in all of Palestine, but he maintains the implementation of the partition plan would halt the state of war between the PLO and Israel. During the recent civil war in Lebanon, Muhsin supported the Syrian moves in that nation, a fact which brought him and Arafat into conflict. Presently, these two seem to have resolved their differences.

Muhsin is unmarried, and he has a brother, Majid Muhsin, who is commander of Sa'iqa forces in Lebanon. The other members of his family live in Tulkarm. As a member of the Ba'th Party, he has close ties with Syrian leaders. His thinking usually reflects official Syrian policy on Middle Eastern and Palestinian matters.

#### 4. Nayef Hawatmeh -- Secretary General, PDFLP

Hawatmeh was born in 1935 in Salt to a Greek Orthodox family. He is one of the few Palestinians' leaders who come originally from the EastBank. Hawatmeh received his early education in Amman, and then, he studied at Cairo University. He finally earned his degree in the mid-1960's from Arab University of Beirut.

Having joined the ANM in 1954, Hawatmeh, in 1957, was imprisoned by the Jordanian authorities and was exiled from that country. He moved to Iraq where his politics landed him in trouble and he reportedly





spent some time in prison before leaving that country in 1963. After Iraq, he went to Beirut where he remained until after the June 1967 War. After the war he went to Aden where he was an advisor to the leaders of the new People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. He has written a book on his Yemen experiences: The Crisis in the South Yemenite Revolution.

Hawatmeh has had a poor relationship with Habash, and he pulled out of the PFLP in February 1969, forming the PDFLP. He is usually considered a moderate and endorses a West Bank/Gaza National Authority. He agrees with Arafat on most issues, but the two disagree over the form of Palestinian government-in-exile. He has good relations with the USSR and is often referred to as the Soviet's man in the PLO.

The PDFLP disavows terrorist activities outside the 'occupied territories' and has not been involved in hi-jackings. However, in May 1974 the PDFLP attacked an Israeli school in Ma'alot and Hawatmeh stated such activities would continue.

Hawatmeh, a bachelor, understands English, but he does not speak it well. He divides his time between Beirut and Damascus.

5. Ahmad Jabril -- Secretary General, PFLP-GC

Jabril was born in Yazur, near Jaffa, about 1936. His family was refugees in 1948 and settled in Syria where he entered the Syrian Military Academy. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Syrian Army Engineer Corps in the mid-1950's. In 1958 he was dismissed from the Army because of his communist leanings. He remained





in Damascus and formed the Palestine Liberation Front in 1961. The PLF was supported and trained by the Syrian government to carry out limited raids in Israel. After June 1967 he joined forces with the PFLP, but because of ideological differences, the PLF withdrew from the PFLP in November 1968. It then became the PFLP-GC. Since the split, the group has concentrated on terrorist activities.

Jabril joined with the PLO after the June 1974 PNC meetings. This caused an adverse reaction within the PFLP-GC, and the group virtually disintegrated. It did, however, become a part of the 'rejection front.' Indications are that the group was revitalized and resumed operations.

Jabril speaks excellent French and English. He is sometimes referred to as Abu Jihad. He is an explosives expert and is considered the most knowledgeable military tactician in the Palestinian ranks. He has a reputation for skill and resourcefulness in sabotage operations.

6. Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyali -- Secretary General, ALF

al-Kayyali was born either in Haifa or Jaffa in 1939. He received a BA from American University of Beirut in 1961 and an MA degree in international relations in 1965. In 1968 he earned a PhD in history at London University. His dissertation, a study of political history of Palestine from 1880 to 1960, was published as a book.

In April 1969 the Ba'th Party of Iraq formed the ALF in reaction to Syria and Sa'iqa. al-Kayyali joined soon afterwards. He has been



Secretary General since 1971 and a member of the PLO/EX COM since January 1973. He is a member of the 'rejection front' and is an opponent to any negotiations between Israel and the PLO. He also opposes a Palestine National Authority. He walked out of the June 1974 PNC meeting and announced he had withdrawn from the EX COM. However, he apparently still heads the PLO's Cultural and Educational Department.

al-Kayyali married an American, Susan Sweeney, in Washington, D.C., in 1966; they have one daughter, Randa, born in 1970. He is a publisher of many books (all Arabic) about the Palestinian problem. He speaks fluent English and has visited the US several times. He now lives in Beirut and edits a monthly journal of cultural and intellectual affairs, Arab Issues.



### III. UNITED STATES POLICIES

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the policy of the United States as it concerns the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinians themselves. Because the vast majority of the policies of the US deal with the major Middle East Countries, this chapter must be limited to the policies which affect the Palestinians. Also, because the policies of the United States have mainly been centered around Israel, the policies of Israel, concerning the Palestinians, will be included. It is not feasible to include every political statement which has been made concerning this subject. Therefore, only those statements which will give the significance of this problem will be included.

#### A. ORIGINS OF INVOLVEMENT

The United States was first attracted to the Middle East after World War I when Great Britain attempted to monopolize the vast oil reserves of this area. Britain moved into this region by securing a mandate from the League of Nations to Palestine and Iraq (then known as Mesopotamia). British companies managed to corner more than half of the world's known reserves by 1919. The US, having fueled the war from its reserves, protested British tactics and demanded its share. US companies joined with a European group in 1928 to operate the Turkish (Iraq) Petroleum Company.





The United States had little influence on postwar peace settlements in the Middle East and Palestine policies. However, a strong strategic interest did emerge at the end of World War II when the US gradually began to fill the political role which the British and French were forced to relinquish.

The fundamental reason for the United States' Middle East policy is its commitment to Israel, dating from decisive support for the United Nations' plan which led to the creation of the Jewish state. However, support for Israeli created strong anti-American feelings in Arab countries, opening many of them to Soviet influence. Paradoxically, Egyptian President Sadat regards the United States as the only country that can pressure Israel into returning Arab territory since Israel depends on the US for support. Anxious to reduce his own country's dependence on the Soviet Union, Sadat expelled its military advisers in 1972, and on 14 March 1976, he abrogated Egypt's treaty of friendship with that nation. Sadat has staked his peace efforts on US diplomacy.

The United States is fearful of both a new oil embargo and a revival of Soviet influence in the Middle East if peace talks fail. In this light, President Ford, in discussions with President Sadat on 1 June 1975, emphasized that "the United States will not tolerate stagnation in our efforts for a negotiated settlement -- stagnation and a stalemate will not be tolerated."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> "Ford Talks With Sadat," San Francisco Chronicle, p. 1, 2 June 1975.



B. 1967-1968

The United States had little concern about the Palestinians until the event of the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War. This conflict lasted for six days and brought the Palestinian issue to the attention of the US politicians. President Johnson, in his first major statement on US Middle East policy after the war, stated on 19 June 1973 that the Israeli troops must be withdrawn. However, he made it clear he would not press for a withdrawal to prewar lines in every respect. In this speech he stated the US was committed to peace in the Middle East, based on five principles. Included in these principles were the right to national life, justice for the refugees, and political independence and territorial integrity for all.<sup>44</sup>

On 22 November 1967 the United Nations approved Security Council Resolution 242 which was aimed at bringing peace to the Middle East. This resolution called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Arab territories, an end to the state of belligerency between the Arab nations and Israel, territorial integrity and political independence of every nation in the area, the establishment of secure and recognized national boundaries, and a just settlement of the refugee problem.

Much disagreement between nations has been evident concerning the precise meaning of this resolution. The Arabs contend that the

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<sup>44</sup>Sobel, L. A., Israel & the Arabs: The October 1973 War, p. 113, Facts on File, Inc., 1974.



document requires total Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, the West Bank of the Jordan River, and the eastern sector of Jerusalem. On the other side, the Israelis have insisted the phrasing of the resolution - withdrawal 'from territories' - did not require a total pullback from the 1967 cease-fire lines. For the Palestinians the source of disagreement with the resolution is the phrasing of the refugee problem. The Palestinian organizations are adamant in their efforts to delete this phrase from UN discussions.

#### C. JANUARY 1968 - JANUARY 1977

Resolution 242 provided the basis for subsequent United States peace proposals in the Middle East. The major elements of the US diplomatic position were outlined by Secretary of State, William P. Rogers, on 9 December 1969. In what is known as the Rogers Peace Plan, Rogers called on Israel to withdraw from Arab territories which it had occupied in the 1967 war. This step would be in return for Arab assurances of a binding commitment of a Middle East peace. These proposals were rejected by Israel and were scorned by the Arabs. The PLO and the Fedayeen groups were all unanimous in their rejection of the plan, because it had no firm, acceptable solutions for the Palestinian problem.

In the meantime, the United States continued its support of the UN efforts of Gunnar V. Jarring to mediate a settlement between the Arabs





and Israelis. On 25 January 1970 President Nixon reaffirmed US support for Israeli's insistence on direct peace negotiations with the Arabs. Five days later, he asserted that the United States was "neither pro-Arab nor pro-Israeli. We are pro-peace."<sup>45</sup>

Later in 1970, Nixon reiterated that the United States would not allow the military balance to shift against Israel. Rogers had stated the US had not excluded the possibility of participating in a Middle East peacekeeping role, but he did rule out any joint US-USSR force in the area. In the next year, the Nixon administration offered a new proposal for indirect, American mediated talks between Israel and Egypt on an interim peace settlement which included a troop pullback and reopening of the Suez Canal. These negotiations made little headway due to the opposition from both Israel and Egypt. The Palestinians, along with Syria, denounced these proposals on the basis they did not include them in any settlement.

By the time of the October 1973 War, Henry A. Kissinger had assumed the office of US Secretary of State. After this war Kissinger and the United States assumed a leadership role in attempting to bring about a peace settlement. Kissinger initiated what he called his 'step-by-step diplomacy.' These Kissinger shuttles produced troop disengagement accords between Israel and Egypt in the Sinai Peninsula

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<sup>45</sup> Martin, H., "Palestine," The Montgomery Advertiser, p. 1, 3 March 1975.





on 14 January 1974 and between Israel and Syria in the Golan Heights on 31 May 1974.

The United States had begun to mend its relations with the Arab States during this time, relations which had been weak or nonexistent since 1945. Kissinger and Sadat agreed to resume diplomatic relations which had been broken since 1967. United States and Syrian relations were resumed in the summer of 1974. These diplomatic relations were immediately denounced by the Fedayeen groups. Fatah and the PLO asserted that no peace in the Middle East could be effective unless they were involved in the negotiations. The PLO continued to hold to its Palestine National Covenant which included Article 9 which states that armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine. It also held to Article 19 which states that the partitioning of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of the state of Israel are entirely illegal. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine led its anti-American campaign with warnings to the Arab world of American influence in the Middle East and American aspirations to develop an American state in the area.

The PLO, since the 1967 war, had become an influence which the United States and the Arab world could not ignore. This organization came more to the fore-front in any settlement of the Middle East problem. After the 1973 war, the US took a more active interest in the PLO and its role as the representative of the Palestinian people.



This was particularly true after the Rabat Summit in 1974 which recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians.

Kissinger visited the Middle East again on 5 November 1974. During this trip he met with the leaders of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. In his talks with Kissinger Sadat urged him to consider a change in American policy towards the PLO. At the same time he received assurances from Kissinger that Egypt-Israeli negotiations would not be affected by the Rabat decisions. According to Arab sources, Kissinger proposed a peace plan for the Middle East. It was reported the plan had four points. The first was a partial withdrawal of Israel from Sinai in exchange of non-belligerence by Egypt. The second point was for a final settlement on the Jordanian front, giving Hussein administrative control over the major towns of the West Bank, except Jerusalem, while giving Israel control of the countryside. The third point advocated a partial withdrawal of Israeli forces on the Golan Heights in the area of Qunaitra but continued occupation of strategically important areas by Israel. The fourth asked for a unanimous resolution by the Arab oil-producing states to lower the price of oil.<sup>46</sup> The PLO immediately rejected these peace proposals and warned that Israel was preparing for another war. It accused the US and Israel of trying to force a settlement outside the framework of the Geneva conference and of trying to exclude both the PLO and the USSR from

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<sup>46</sup>"Kissinger Again in the Middle East," Arab Record & Report, p. 497, 1-15 November 1974.



from the talks. The PLO called on the Arab states to use the oil embargo as a weapon to force the United States to meet Arab demands. Arafat stated he would like to have talks with Kissinger, but he warned the US against any military intervention in the Middle East. He also warned the Arab states to be aware of any attempts to impose an American solution on the Middle East. He then repeated that the US must change its attitude and that Kissinger had to recognize the PLO.<sup>47</sup>

The PLO received presidential attention on 24 November when President Ford and Soviet Communist Party leader Leonid Brezhnev issued a joint communique after talks at Vladivostok. This communique referred to the 'legitimate interests of the Palestinian people.' It went on to state that the search for peace in the Middle East should be based on UN Security Council Resolution 338, 'taking into account the legitimate interests of all the peoples in the area, including the Palestinian people, and respect for the right to independent existence of all states in the area.'

This communique followed the UN recognition of the PLO on 22 November. The UN General Assembly passed a resolution containing nine points. These points included: the right to self-determination without external interferences and the right to national independence and sovereignty; reaffirmed the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.





and uprooted and calls for their return; and requests the Secretary-General to establish contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization on all matters concerning the question of Palestine.<sup>48</sup>

Zuhayr Muhsin followed these statements with his own on 25 November. In an interview he stated that if Israel would withdraw to the borders of the Jewish state decided by the United Nations in 1947, then the Palestinians would continue their struggle by peaceful means. He added that withdrawal to the 1967 borders would not be sufficient 'to prevent individual Palestinians from seeking to restore their full rights by force.' Yitzak Rabin, Israeli Premier, gave an immediate reply by stating Israel would never agree to talks with the PLO even if the US granted it recognition. He described Arafat's UN speech as a declaration of war. Rabin totally rejected the establishment of a Palestinian state to replace the Hashemite regime of Jordan. He stated: "A change in status would begin with one thing - with Soviet arms flowing into Jordan."<sup>49</sup> Israeli Information Minister, Aharon Yariv, followed this statement with an address to the Knesset. He promised that the Israeli Security Forces would deal unceasing blows at the terrorist bases and routes in Lebanon and promised that all

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<sup>48</sup>"UN Recognizes the PLO," Arab Record & Report, p. 529, 16-30 November 1974.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 528.



manpower and resources would be fully mobilized for this war against terrorism.

Kissinger continued his visits to the Middle East and his 'step-by-step diplomacy.' He met with little success as far as the Palestinians were concerned; this is indicated by their statements after his visits when they almost always condemned his tactics. In the meantime, others in the US political arena were beginning to address the Middle East situation. Senator George McGovern, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, visited seven Middle East nations from 21 March to 9 April 1975. On his return he submitted a report to Senator John Sparkman, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. This report did not constitute a recognized policy of the United States. In his report Senator McGovern addressed what he termed 'certain permanent realities.' These were Israel, the Arab states, and the Palestinians. On Israel he stated that the vital interests for the US is in the survival and security of that nation as an independent state. On the Arab states he stated that the presence and growing power of permanent, independent Arab states, some of them richly endowed with oil, is a firm reality. He indicated the US and Israel could benefit from good relations with them. He went on to state that the presence of several million Palestinians with an uncertain future and an unsatisfactory present were an inescapable reality. He also stated that peace cannot be made or



before the Special Subcommittee on Investigations of the House Committee on International Relations. This testimony contained the first comprehensive US government analysis of the Palestine problem and contained new elements in the government's view of the Palestinian problem and ways of solving it.

The document emphasized the importance of the role of the Palestinians in the peace process and the fact that the Palestinians did constitute a political factor and were not just refugees. It also asserted the necessity of involving the Palestinians in negotiations, but it did not state how or on what basis since there was no clear definition of the goal of Palestinians. It stated the necessity of finding a reasonable definition of the interests of the Palestinians. Saunders stated that two main conditions, besides interests, should be met before the Palestinians could join in negotiations. The first was to find a common basis for negotiations which would be acceptable to both Palestinians and Israelis. He supported the thesis that this could be achieved through the joint acceptance of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. He pointed out that these resolutions did not deal with the political aspect of the Palestine problem. His second condition was that there must be agreement on who will carry out negotiations in the name of the Palestinians. Saunders told the committee that the United States believed that Jordan would be a reasonable negotiator of issues relating to the Palestinians, and then reminded the committee the Rabat Summit had recognized the





designated as the legitimate representatives of the Palestinians. Senator McGovern also reported that any discussions with Arafat and the PLO need not imply formal recognition of the PLO or any Palestinian organization. He also supported Hussein's proposal for an interim UN regime on the West Bank and in Gaza, to be followed by a permanent arrangement which would be chosen by the Palestinians through a UN prebiscite. He also urged the United States government to declare that it will recognize Palestinian self-determination as part of a general settlement.

On the issue of borders Senator McGovern said that practical modifications could be worked out if the parties would agree, contingent on the negotiations of a general settlement, to accept Israel's existence and normalize relations and to recognize Palestinian self-determination in the West Bank and Gaza. The most difficult problem would be to settle the status of Jerusalem.<sup>50</sup>

As was stated, Senator McGovern's report did not become an official policy of the United States government. However, it is important in that it does give indications of future US policies and positions concerning the Palestinians.

On 12 November 1975 Harold H. Saunders, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, testified

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<sup>50</sup> The source of Senator McGovern's remarks comes from a report issued by the US Information Office in Beirut and reprinted by The Arab World Weekly, pp. 14-17, 14 June 1975.





maintained without their consent and that they are entitled to be heard and to the same principle of self-determination that others treasure.

In his conclusions he defined the interests of the United States in the area. He stated that the US has a clear interest and moral obligation to the survival and security of Israel. Israel, according to the statement, must not be allowed to disappear, and the Arabs must come to the full awareness that the US commitment to Israel's survival and security is permanent. He also indicated that since the Arabs and Israelis live in the same region, any settlement must be negotiated by them and not be imposed upon them against their will. In his remarks he included the capability of the economic capacity of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to sustain all Palestinians who wish to reside there. He stated that the US must be ready to assist the economics of this area. The United States should also consider offering aid to Palestinian refugees and Arab governments for the purpose of permanently settling those Palestinians who choose to remain in Arab states.

On reciprocal recognition, the report stated that the Arabs must recognize that there is a Jewish state of Israel. It went on to say that neither Israel or the US should or can designate the PLO as the present representative or future government of the Palestinian people. This is a point for the Palestinians to decide, and an imposed decision from outside would deny the principle of self-determination. It also stated that, at the same time, could anyone else, such as King Hussein, be



PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. He then stated that the PLO does not recognize resolutions 242 and 338, nor did it recognize the existence of Israel. Because of this, he said, the US did not have a framework for negotiations in which the PLO would take part.

Concerning a solution to the dilemma, Saunders specified that there was no American solution for finding a way by which the Palestinians can be included in negotiations. He then added that the US had not closed its mind to any reasonable settlement.

The Saunders Document did not constitute a change in the policy of the US towards the PLO. It neither recognized the PLO nor the fact that it constituted the accepted sole negotiator on behalf of the Palestinians. However, by presenting, for the first time, the fact that a settlement of the Palestinian problem is essential and basic for the success of the peace process, it did indicate that the United States government had developed a Palestinian policy.<sup>51</sup>

Israeli and Arab reaction to the Saunders Document was immediate. Although Kissinger assured the Israeli government that there had been no change in the position of the US concerning the PLO, the Israeli government issued a statement in which it criticized the document, describing it as biased and containing many mistakes. The government then asked the US for clarifications and said it was not satisfied with the assurances of Kissinger. What worried the Israelis most about the

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<sup>51</sup>"The Palestinian Issue," The Department of State Current Policy, pp. 1-3, November 1975.



document was that it considered the Palestinians to be a political factor, essential for the peace process and it considered the PLO as a possible negotiator if certain conditions were met. Israel maintained its policy that a settlement of the dispute must be found by states of the area and that the problem of the Palestinians should be solved within the Jordanian-Israeli framework. The government then stated it was concerned that the document considered the Arabs living within the pre-1967 borders of Israel to be Palestinians.

The Arabs and Palestinians reacted to the document by stating it was a statement of flowery words, void of meaning or commitment. They said Saunders' statement just repeated an old American cliché about the need to give consideration to the Palestinian people's interests. They accused the document of stopping at the usual barrier, arguing that the problem is that the PLO does not recognize Israel, and therefore, the United States could not talk to the PLO or recognize it. The Palestinians called it the same US-Israeli game with Israel's feigning anger at the document. In this, the Palestinians referenced Rabin's statement in 1974 in which he said that the state of Israel would not negotiate with terrorist organizations whose sole objective is the destruction of Israel. Both the Arabs and Palestinians then called for a viable US policy which recognized the PLO as the spokesman for the Palestinians. The main thrust of their arguments was the reference to resolutions 242 and 338 which the PLO refuses to recognize.





In addition to McGovern's visit to the Middle East, the year 1975 saw many other unofficial visits to the area. In May Arafat briefed Senator Howard Baker, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on the Palestinian position. Baker, on his return to the US, stressed the necessity of establishing a Palestinian entity. In June Senator William Fulbright met with Arafat. After these discussions Fulbright emphasized that the Palestinians are a main party to the dispute and should be invited to the Geneva Conference. He expressed his hopes of a legal text which would secure a special entity for the Palestinian people and urged the US to recognize the PLO. At the end of the year a group of 25 Americans, including university professors and former officials, sent a message to President Ford. In this message they urged Ford to begin exploratory talks with the PLO in order to establish a basis for the PLO's participation in peace talks. Arab diplomatic sources reported there had been contacts between the US and the PLO at the lower level. These diplomats expressed their beliefs that because the contacts were at this level, the US was still hesitant to commit itself to any higher level meeting with the PLO to discuss its role in the peace process.

The year of 1976 was an election year for the US, and the Palestinian problem was still in evidence. In July, during the civil war in Lebanon, US Embassy Officials in Beirut stated the US had had direct contacts with the PLO concerning the US evacuation of foreign nationals



from Lebanon. An Embassy official admitted this was not the first contact with the PLO, because the US had been in contact with the PLO for some time to ensure the safety of the embassy and its staff. The spokesman also stated the PLO had been contacted at the end of June with the aim of discovering the assassins of US Ambassador Francis Meloy, Jr. and his counsellor, Robert Waring. President Ford thanked all who had helped with the evacuation, and a State Department spokesman later affirmed this included the PLO. The State Department then issued an affirmation to the Israeli government that the contacts with the PLO were strictly on security matters, and the US would not recognize the PLO as a negotiating partner as long as the PLO refused to recognize Israel's right to exist.

On 25 July Jimmy Carter, Democratic Party presidential nominee, stated that if he were elected, his commitment to Israel would be unequivocal and that the US would provide them with adequate military and economic aid so that they can defend themselves. He then said that the Palestinians should be recognized and that Israel should cede major portions of occupied territory. He went on to say, "I think the Palestinians should be part of Jordan and be administered by Jordan."<sup>52</sup>

On 6 October the US presidential candidates, President Ford and Jimmy Carter, gave their views on the Middle East. Carter came out

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<sup>52</sup>"Carter Pledges US Support," San Francisco Chronicle, p. 1, 26 July 1976.



strongly against the Arabs and accused Ford's administration of making Israel the scapegoat in the October 1973 war. He also recalled the US threat of reassessment of its policy on Israel; he then criticized the failure of Ford's administration to combat the Arab boycott. President Ford, in his reply, stated his administration had not neglected its commitment to Israel and gave figures of US arms shipments to Israel. He then reaffirmed the US commitment to the state of Israel; he also pledged there would be no imposed solutions and there would be no one-sided concessions.

D. JANUARY 1977 --

After assuming the office of President in January, Carter set up meetings with leaders from Israel, Egypt, and Syria. In speaking with the Israeli official, Carter promised the US would support the right of Israel to have what he termed 'defensible borders.' He also spoke with the Arab leaders about peace in the Middle East, and he indicated that the Palestinians and the PLO should be recognized.

In the meantime, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, conducted a tour of the Middle East in February to discuss views on a Middle East Settlement. Vance emphasized his tour was a quest for peace with the emphasis on an over-all settlement rather than limited agreements. He reiterated the US was deeply committed to the security and survival of Israel and its values.





Presently, the position of the US is that the state of Israel must continue to exist; however, according to this position, Israel should withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza to allow the establishment of a Palestinian state. In view of this position, all sides seem to have taken a wait-and-see attitude to determine if this is the final stand of the United States.

#### E. ISRAELI POSITION

In discussing this issue, it is difficult for anyone to obtain a secure feeling as to what the Israeli position is or might be. This is because the issue is a matter of politics on the part of both the Israelis and Palestinians.

The Israeli government, in its official statements, has consistently refused to recognize the PLO because of its charter. Recent international events have stirred some apparent softening on Israel's position. However, the 1977 elections in Israel may have negated this trend. Two events forced Israel to make more statements on the PLO than it had before (as regarding statehood): the Rabat Summit which recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians, and the recognition of the PLO by the United Nations. Another problem for the Israelis is that theirs is a coalition government, made up of many political parties. These parties often have different viewpoints.

In an interview on 3 November 1974 Arafat stated it was his understanding that the majority of the Israeli Knesset members were against





any withdrawal from the West Bank. He went on to say that there was no use in establishing a Palestinian government, because such a government could not be established until definite interests had been specified. Israeli Premier Rabin replied to this interview on 5 November by stating that Israel would never negotiate with the PLO and said the Rabat decisions assigned an organization of murderers to establish a Palestinian state. He went on to say Israel would never agree to negotiate with an organization of terrorists.<sup>53</sup>

In 1975 a Palestinian spokesman indicated the possibility of a Palestinian state. This would be practical if the Palestinians could gain sovereignty over part of their land. The spokesman indicated this territory would be a base for continuing the struggle to establish the legitimate rights of the Palestinians in accordance with United Nations resolutions. Israel immediately rejected this statement. Both sides continued to issue such statements, the Arabs calling for the establishment of a democratic secular state, and the Israelis rejecting each plan. At the same time, the Palestinians rejected each Israeli proposal, such as a Jordanian-Palestinian federation.

In 1976 there appeared to be a move by the PLO to modify its position. Farouq Qaddoumi in 15 November expressed support for a plan for the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity in the

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<sup>53</sup>"Arab-Israeli Affairs," Arab Record & Report, p. 497, 1-15 November 1974.



West Bank and Gaza. This was in response to UN Palestinian Rights Committee plan. Another PLO spokesman, Nabil Shaath of the PLO Planning Committee, reported that some Palestinians, including Fatah, were willing to discuss a change of tactics which would end attacks against Israel and explore the chances of an Arab-Israeli coexistence. The 'rejection front' responded to this by stating it would never stop its actions against Israel. Rabin responded by saying Israel preferred direct talks but was ready for contacts in any form which would lead to a change in the Middle East reality and to the building of a system of peaceful relations. He went on to say that Israel did not believe that the question of Palestine could be solved by the creation of a state in the occupied territories. He termed such a state as a time bomb at the door of Israel.

Rabin seemed to soften his stand in a later interview. These remarks included the fact that Israel would study any Palestinian proposal of recognition if the PLO recognized Israel. He stressed any such a change of policy by the PLO would have to include abandonment of the PLO National Charter which calls for a secular state to replace Israel. These remarks were a step back from other Rabin interviews in which he said Israel would never deal with the PLO even if it gave up the secular state idea.

One difficulty for the Israeli government in establishing a Palestinian policy had been proposals by individuals and groups both in and



out of the government. One of the first of these was the Allon Plan of the Israeli Deputy Premier, Yigal Allon. This plan, first put forward in 1967, was never officially adopted by the government. Allon suggested Israeli withdrawal from 65 percent of the West Bank except for an eight-mile wide security belt along the Jordan Valley. This area included 12 Israeli settlements and included some areas near Jerusalem. The remainder of the West Bank would revert to Arab rule. A corridor would run from near Jerusalem through Jericho to Jordan and would link the West Bank in a federation with Jordan. In this plan Allon said Israel would keep the fertile flat land running down to the Jordan River, the mountain range above the flat land, and the Judean desert beginning near Jerusalem. Land settled by Jews would be considered sovereign Israeli land and therefore Israel had to be careful and selective in choosing settlement sites so that it did not uproot Arab farmers or cause political obstacles or complicate the peace negotiations which may come.

In another statement Major General Ariel Sharon, who led the Israelis in crossing the Suez Canal in October 1973, announced on 23 December 1974 that the establishment of a Palestinian state to replace the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was inevitable. He suggested the new state should be linked to Israel, either by coalition or federation. However, he was opposed to Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and indicated Israel should oppose the return of any Palestinian refugees in Arab countries, except to reunify split families.





In December 1974 the Secretary General of the Israeli Mapam Party, Naftali Fader, admitted meeting a PLO official in Paris. Fader termed the meeting as casual, and no statement was given by either party. The Israeli Government announced earlier that no Israeli-PLO meeting had taken place.

The Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace was established on 10 December 1975. In February 1976 it issued a 12 point statement which contained their aims, beliefs, and objectives. Included in this statement were the following points. (1) This land is the homeland of its two peoples -- the people of Israel and the Palestinian Arab people. (2) The only path to peace is through co-existence between two sovereign states, each with its distinct national identity; the state of Israel for the Jewish people and a state for the Palestinian Arab people. (3) The establishment of a Palestinian Arab state alongside the State of Israel should be the outcome of negotiations between the Government of Israel and a recognized and authoritative representative body of the Palestinian Arab people, without refusing negotiation with the Palestine Liberation Organization, on the basis of mutual recognition.<sup>54</sup>

On 16 September 1976 Allon proposed a new plan for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories. The plan included Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, to enable it to become a single

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<sup>54</sup>"Declaration of the Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace," SWASIA, p. 3, 6 February 1976.



Jordanian-Palestinian state. It also called for the withdrawal from Gaza City, which would become the port for the new state. These areas would become demilitarized zones. According to the plan, almost all of the Arab population of the occupied territories would come under Arab rule and this would solve the problem of Palestinian identity. The plan would allow Israel to keep part of the occupied territory to permit it to have an essential minimum of strategic depth for security. Allon said precise boundaries could be fixed in negotiations with Arab states.

In Israel the question of the legality of Israelis meeting with Palestinians without the sanction of the government. On 10 November 1976 the Israeli Justice Minister, Haim Zadok, rejected a demand by the Likud Bloc for action against several Israelis who had made contacts with the PLO representatives. In what was described as a significant softening of the Israeli line, Zadok gave the legal opinion that, although the contacts were politically objectionable because they were not consistent with the government's unconditional opposition to negotiations with the PLO, they were legally permissible so long as they did not violate state security abroad.

The question for Israel is whether or not to recognize the PLO. There did seem to be some softening of the official Israeli policy before 1977 as was evidenced by Zadok's legal opinion and the Sinai Agreement negotiated between Israel and Egypt in September 1975. In this agreement the US pledged to refuse recognition of the PLO so long as the



PLO does not recognize Israel's right to exist and does not accept Security Council Resolution 242 and 338. This agreement strengthened Israel's position and received denouncement from some Arab states and all Palestinian groups.

The Israeli voters in 1977 elected the Likud Party to power and increased its number of seats in the Knesset. This party is one of the right-wing parties in Israel, and after the election the leaders of the party reaffirmed its refusal to recognize the PLO. The position of the Palestinians and the Arab states had been to wait until the formation of a coalition government before they come to any firm conclusions as to whether or not this government will be different.



#### IV. PROPOSALS

Proposed solutions to the Palestinian problem are as numerous and varied as the interests of the parties involved. Because of these interests it is hardly surprising that none of the major proposals has been acceptable to all parties. The problem which faces any proposal for recognition is the quality of nationalism; two nationalisms which meet head-on in the struggle for what is known as Palestine. This one land, two people.

The Israelis maintain they have historic rights in Palestine because their forefathers conquered the land in the days of Joshua and King David, and, according to the Torah, God had promised them this land. The Arabs point out their ancestors lived in this land, long before the Jews arrived, and that Arab tribes have occupied the land continuously for thirteen centuries since the Arab conflict.

These proposals offered in this thesis are based on the hypothesis that the United States will recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization if the Palestinians gain a state of their own.

##### A. A PALESTINIAN STATE ON THE WEST BANK AND IN GAZA

This is probably the most-publicized proposal for an independent state for the Palestinians. The PLO has recently made statements which indicate they are favorable to this solution to their problem. The





Soviet Union and the Arab States now support the idea of creating a separate Palestinian state in territory now occupied by Israel. The important fact for the US is that under the Carter administration, this proposal has been stated as the position of this administration

Israel has opposed the proposal on the ground that radical Palestinians would control any such state and use it as a base from which to work for Israel's destruction. There are political reasons for opposition to this proposal in Israel, in addition to the security problem which a Palestinian state could create. Religious and conservative groups probably would bring about the downfall of any Israeli government that advocated giving up Israeli-held land to the Palestinians. This actuality was brought in focus in 1977 when the right-wing Likud Party won the elections in Israel on the basis the Labor Party was becoming moderate in its thinking concerning the West Bank and the establishment of 'illegal' settlements in the West Bank.

For the United States, Israel, and Jordan a Palestinian state on the West Bank and in Gaza could pose innumerable difficulties and possible dangers. For any US administration there is the fear that such a state might turn to the Soviet Union for military and political support. This fear might be well-founded since the PLO representatives and other Fedayeen members have made several trips to the Soviet Union. The Israelis are aware that even if PLO leaders were denied any significant voice in the Palestinian government, there would be pressure on any government to seize more of the territory from Israel.



Parallelling the Israeli viewpoint, Jordan would not welcome the creation of a state in this area. Although Hussein reluctantly agreed to the Rabat Summit's decision, some observers believe he expected the PLO to fail in its aim, giving him opportunities to reassert his claims to the West Bank. Although there has been some reconciliation between Jordan and the PLO, there is still the fact that many of the Fedayeen believe Hussein is a detriment to the Palestinian cause and advocate his overthrow or death.

Not all Arab leaders regard the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank as practical. Tunisian Foreign Minister Hahib Chatti was quoted in The Washington Star-News, p. 10, 24 March 1974, when he stated: "The only workable solution to the Palestinian problem, and one which we are sure their leaders would accept, is the creation of a new Palestinian state. But the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip would not suffice for such a state. The Palestinians would need more than these overcrowded bits of territories and that additional land would have to come from Israel and Jordan."

#### B. PALESTINIAN-JORDANIAN FEDERATION

In 1972 Hussein proposed to the Jordanian Parliament a restructuring of the country into a federal state. This state would be made up of two autonomous regions, Transjordan and the Israeli-occupied West Bank, and each region would have equal representation in the national



parliament in Amman. The central government would be responsible for defense, foreign affairs, and other matters of purely national interests. Hussein implied that residents of the Gaza Strip could freely join the new state which would be called the United Arab Kingdom. There was immediate reaction to this proposal by both the Israelis and Palestinians. Israel was cool to the suggestion, and it was denounced by the PLO and Fedayeen groups as a sellout.<sup>55</sup>

This was a move by Jordan to regain at least a part of the West Bank and a plebiscite by its inhabitants. Some observers had the opinion that the West Bank Arabs would opt for a separate non-PLO type of state with close ties to both Jordan and Israel. This was based on the fact that the West Bank had an economic structure which supported itself, a structure better than that of the other Palestinians.

The most difficult and emotional issue to be solved in such a proposal would be the fate of Jerusalem, a holy city to the Israelis, Moslems, and Christians. Israeli leaders have repeatedly and insistently declared that Jerusalem is not negotiable. In this light, it is unlikely that the devout Moslem leaders would accede to any overall peace settlement which did not provide for at least shared control of this city.

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<sup>55</sup> "The Vicious Circle," The Arab World Weekly, p. 2, 30 September 1972.





Such a proposal as this, bringing more Palestinians under the Jordanian rule, would present dangers to Hussein and Israel. The population of Jordan is already made up of a large number of Palestinians, and the addition of those on the West Bank and Gaza would increase pressures for the replacement of the Hashemite Kingdom by a Palestinian state. A Palestinian state such as this would bring little peace to the security-minded Israelis who insist on a neutral zone to prevent or inhibit terrorists from entering Israel. There is also the fact that a movement exists in Israel not to cede any land which it has gained from the past Israeli-Arab wars.

### C. SECULAR DEMOCRACY

Visionaries on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian debate have often expressed the view that the ideal solution to this problem would be the establishment of a secular, democratic state where Jews, Moslems, and Christians could coexist peacefully. Recently, some Palestinians, including most PLO leaders, have attempted to draw a distinction between Jews and Zionists by insisting Palestinians and Jews have lived and can again live in friendship once the 'exclusivist, discriminatory, imperialist Zionist state' is abolished. Israelis who are sympathetic to such a state have urged the PLO to amend their Palestinian National Covenant to permit all Jews, regardless of their immigration dates, to remain in the new state if established. Some of these Israelis have



offered resolutions to the Knesset for the creation of a Palestinian state and a federation between Israel and the new state. According to this proposal, it would put an end to mutual fear and suspicion and would permit a peaceful pooling of political power and economic resources.

The reaction to such a proposal had been predictable. For Israel it would mean an end to its existence as a separate nation for Jews. Few Israelis would be willing to give up its existence for an assimilation into one people with the Palestinians. Most of the Fedayeen groups would be unwilling to have a state comprised of all groups since they, with some exceptions, insist that all provisions of their covenant be maintained.

#### D. SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

Before the dream of a recognized, separate Palestinian state is fulfilled, there must be a look at how it would affect other nations. Israel feels that the territorial concessions it is asked to make are unfair in the light of its military successes in past wars. They insist that Israel continues to maintain its existence, with or without support from others. There are two schools of thought in Israel. There are those who believe Israel must and can prevail by superior strength. On the other side, there are those who have come to the conclusion that the great lesson to be drawn from history is not that Israel must



have more space in which it can defend itself but that this is a last chance to come to terms with the Arabs.

In the United States there is also a division of thought on the subject. The energy crisis of 1973 made many Americans aware of the extent of the cost of support this country bears for the sake of Israel. Inevitably, some Americans will turn against Israel and will insist on closer relations, regardless of the cost to Israel, with Arab nations to avoid another energy crisis.

For the Arabs there is a real danger in any kind of proposal for a settlement of this problem. If there is a settlement, the strength of the moderates will be consolidated and a period of stability in the area will follow. If there is no settlement, there will be no consolidation, no stability, no peace. In any case the moderates in the Arab World will find themselves under more pressure by the radical forces. These leaders, such as Sadat and Hussein, will be accused of being 'lackeys' of the United States. Hussein will be accused of wiping out the Fedayeen and Sadat will be castigated for having expelled the Soviets, depriving the Arabs of the military backing they need to match the power of Israel.

Any kind of settlement poses difficulties for the Fedayeen. Fatah will probably disappear or become captive of the moderate regimes in the Arab world. While this is occurring, the radicals in Fatah, the 'rejection front', and the other groups will go underground. They will



undertake the mission to overthrow the monarchies, then the moderate republics, and finally the 'liberated regimes.' In every Arab state these groups will have a fifth column working for them. For the PLO there is the problem of keeping its aspirations in the limelight. If they are recognized and become an independent state, they will have the problem of support. On what nations can they depend to give them the military and economic aid needed to maintain their independence. If there is no separate state for the Palestinians, the problem for the PLO will be the apathy to its cause by other nations. There is already indications that these nations, particularly the Third World, are becoming less concerned with the Palestinians and more concerned with their own needs.

The problem of the Palestinians is real. Because they are homeless, because they have aspirations and are frustrated, and because they find little solace to their problems, the Palestinians are in the Middle East what the Jews were in similar situations -- catalysts of revolutionary change.





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