

MERIA

THE TERROR AND THE PITY: YASIR ARAFAT AND THE SECOND LOSS OF PALESTINE

By Barry Rubin*

Abstract: As has so often happened before, some observers have underestimated Yasir Arafat's ability to survive political or military disasters partly of his own making. Others have overestimated Yasir Arafat's willingness to make peace or his ability to change his positions. This article presents a long-term view of Arafat's leadership and a short-term analysis on the current state of Palestinian politics.

In the year 2000, Yasir Arafat and the Palestinian leadership initiated a new, self-inflicted nakba, a catastrophe equaled only by the 1948 Arab defeat. The decision to reject a negotiated solution building on the Oslo peace process, the Camp David proposals, and the Clinton proposal constituted nothing less than a second, and long-term, loss of a chance to achieve a Palestinian state. Whatever rationales can be made for this choice, the cost already incurred--only a small part of the ultimate price--vastly exceeds any of these decision's supposed reasons and certainly any likely benefits to be achieved.

This debacle was brought about by the same leadership and thinking which had contributed to other, earlier disasters like those in 1967 (the provocation and loss of war with Israel), 1970 (the PLO's defeat and expulsion from Jordan), 1978 (failure to use the opportunity afforded by the Egypt-Israel Camp David agreements), 1982 (the defeat by Israel in Lebanon), 1983 (the defeat by Syria in Lebanon), 1988 (the inability to make a major policy shift toward negotiations), 1990 (the sacrifice of the U.S-PLO dialogue and Arafat's decision to back Iraq in the Kuwait crisis), and others.

In the atmosphere of self-justification at rejecting the opportunities of 2000 and of self-congratulation at having launched a war of independence, these issues have not

been seriously examined, at least publicly. Instead, traditional themes of Palestinian political thinking and structure have continued or reemerged. This article analyzes some of these main themes and structures. It has been very much influenced, and its arguments have been largely based, on many private discussions with Palestinian political figures and intellectuals.

The evaluation of Arafat's attitude toward the Oslo process itself is unknowable and is not this article's subject. Moreover, it is unnecessary to argue that Arafat has never changed but only that he has always kept major parts of his world view and strategic concepts consistent. Whatever permutations occurred in the course of his career, he was ultimately unable to break with the past.

Regarding the peace process, it is possible that he never intended to make an agreement (viewing the Oslo agreement merely as an escape from the dead end he faced in the early 1990s); or that he had no particular plan; or that he held ambiguous and conflicting ideas which predominated at different moments or over different specific issues. What seems unlikely, though, was that he could ever really have expected Israel--a country whose good intentions he never accepted--would offer him a political settlement in which he received all the territory he wanted plus the

acceptance of all refugees to live in Israel without even an end-of-conflict agreement.

Equally, it is not necessary to argue that Arafat has always, or even today, views his personal mission as Israel's destruction. Rather, his priority has proven to be keeping the door open for that goal's future achievement. Ironically, if he had been willing to compromise, he might have obtained a state on terms which would have allowed the pursuit of that goal at some future stage. What he refused to do was to set in motion a psychological, ideological, and structural process that might have led to permanent acceptance of a two-state solution or to run the risk of appearing to be a traitor to his original goals by making a compromise deal. In short, he would not "risk" making the agreement permanent or take responsibility for appearing to make a full and final peace treaty.

These factors, and not the precise wording of the agreement or a dispute over a tiny portion of the territory at stake, were the real cause of the peace process's failure. For this historic period, at least, it is likely to prove a "permanent" failure.

1. Why Yasir Arafat is President for Life

Reports of my demise, said the American writer Mark Twain, are greatly exaggerated. So has it been with Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat, in terms of both his physical and political longevity.

In fact, there is absolutely no reason to believe or expect that Arafat will ever be displaced as unchallenged leader of the Palestinians during his lifetime. And his lifetime is likely to continue for at least a few years more.

Arafat's situation is like that of a bumbling ship's captain who has repeatedly gotten lost and driven his boat onto the rocks.⁽¹⁾ The passengers grumble among themselves and wonder whether he knows what he is doing. But they have no desire to mutiny. He is the only captain they have, and he knows more about

running and navigating the ship than anyone else on board.

There are many reasons why Arafat's replacement is extremely unlikely. First, there is no specific individual who has anywhere near the charisma, gumption, or political standing to even think of taking his place. The fact that any remaining potential successors have been prevented from campaigning for his job keeps them from organizing a support base. They accept Arafat's decisions, even those they think wrong or disastrous, lest excessively vigorous dissent wreck their chances for succession.

Actually, the three best potential candidates to succeed Arafat are all dead. Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad) arguably the second most powerful PLO leader during the 1970s and 1980s-was slain, probably by Iraq, in 1991. Khalil Al-Wazir (Abu Jihad)-Arafat's personal favorite, was killed by Israel in 1988. Faisal al-Husseini, the Palestinian Authority (PA) cabinet member in charge of Jerusalem affairs, died of natural causes in 2001. Husseini's aristocratic family connections, charismatic personality, and the respect most PLO officials and activists held for him made him the last man who could have challenged Arafat. But Husseini decided not to seek Palestinian leadership, largely because he knew how difficult and thankless a task an anti-Arafat campaign would be.

Second, Arafat does remain reasonably popular even in the worst of times. Even those who hate or ridicule him know that he is, for better or worse, the father of their revolution. They save their jokes and angry criticism for private conversation while publicly toeing the official line. At the same time, Palestinians know that Arafat enjoys a level of international standing that no other Palestinian comes close to duplicating and any other leader would take years to equal.

Third, Arafat controls the security forces and institutions that enable him to punish anyone who challenges him. He combines three dominant roles as

simultaneously the PA's head, the PLO's chairman, and Fatah's chief. In addition, Arafat uses sophisticated methods to maintain psychological and political control over his lieutenants. To show that he is fully in command of everyone's fate, Arafat periodically builds people up and tears them down as he chooses. No one is secure, but, by the same token, everyone can hope for eventual readmission to the inner circle. Personally uninterested in wealth, Arafat knows about anyone else's corrupt or illicit activities and is prepared to use this information against them should the need arise.

Fourth, Arafat is willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure his continued popularity. Arguably, he did so in sacrificing the chance of obtaining a Palestinian state through a compromise agreement with Israel. When it comes to his domestic coalition, Arafat is definitely a 90 percent man, not a 51 percent man. It seems common behavior for a politician to put preserving his domestic constituency over satisfying external forces (like the United States), much less historic enemies (like Israel). Yet this apparently obvious conclusion is somewhat misleading. Leaders often put a priority on reaching material goals that require sacrifices and persuading their public to support hitherto unacceptable policies that the national interest requires or for its own benefit. One can cite innumerable cases here.⁽²⁾ In general, Arafat does not follow this pattern. Despite having seven years to do so, he failed to use his powerful leverage to persuade Palestinians to make a compromise peace or even make a start at doing so.

Finally, Palestinians are very conscious about the dangers of disunity, an attitude whose historical roots lay in the losing battles of the 1936-1939 revolt and the 1947-1948 defeats which are partly ascribed to internal divisions. Even Hamas knows that if it challenges Arafat, not only can he crush the group with force, but he can also discredit it for creating an internal conflict. Of course, in backing and

expanding the new intifada, Arafat acted to prove himself equivalent to the most militant, outflanking the radicals by having his own men basically duplicate their strategy and tactics, though not their ideology.

Given these and other factors, Arafat is unassailable. As is common with contemporary Arab leaders, Arafat's assets are position and power. His actual performance is relatively unimportant, and a failure to bring material benefits has never threatened his leadership. In accord with the system's nature and his personality, Arafat has no intention of picking a successor or even installing a permanent second-in-command.

2. Succession as Wishful Thinking

Obviously, Yasir Arafat will one day leave the scene and, given the realities of life span to which mortals are subject, that day cannot be all that distant. Thus, succession is certainly a valid subject for analysis. At the same time, though, the issue came to play a political role of its own in the contemporary debate.

On one hand, the idea that Arafat might soon die or be replaced--presumably by someone more moderate--seemed to offer a way out of the total deadlock brought about by his destruction of the peace process and a return to relying on violence as his main tactic and intransigence as his core strategy.

On the other hand, the idea that Arafat's departure might bring chaos or a more radical leadership seemed to suggest that peace could only be made with him and should be made as quickly as possible. In short, fear that Arafat's departure would make things worse became a rationale for insisting he be given an infinite number of chances and an endless parade of concessions in hope he would find these gifts acceptable before it was too late.

Both of these versions overrated the succession question's immediate importance and nature. In both cases, the most unlikely scenarios were highlighted while far more probable ones were

ignored, and individuals were suggested as likely replacements for Arafat despite their absolutely minimal-or less-chance for playing that role. Some Western observers considered certain individuals as candidates merely because they often appear in the Western media as public relations' spokespeople.

More importantly, any chance that radical Islamist forces, i.e., Hamas, could take on Arafat or take over Palestinian leadership, is extremely unlikely. Through all the ups and downs of the 1990s, Hamas never had more than 20 percent support from West Bank/Gaza Palestinians. If and when Arafat (or the nationalist camp) chooses to mobilize people and guns against them he could easily do so. No one knows this better than Hamas itself, which is why it always backed down on those rare occasions (notably in March 1996) when Arafat really cracked down on the Islamists and demanded that they stop using violence. In addition, Hamas is very much divided among factions and leaders. It has no conceivable candidate to replace Arafat.

Instead, any successor to Arafat would have to come from Fatah--the real ruling party of the PA and PLO--and would have to enjoy strong consensus support from Fatah's leading cadre. The logical choice would be someone from the senior echelon of the PLO and PA leadership. Yet the key people in this group are about the same age as Arafat and might not physically outlast him, or at least not for long.

This mortality factor applies to the most likely single successor to Arafat, Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazin). He is not particularly charismatic but his seeming disadvantages as a leader may appeal to those who want someone as an interim chief, hoping they will soon succeed this successor. Moreover, Abu Mazin's Fatah credentials are impeccable. He has for decades been one of the three Fatah representatives on the PLO Executive Committee--along with Arafat and Faruq Qaddumi--and is now secretary of that body, which is the PLO's highest organ. If Arafat died, Abu Mazin

would become the PLO's interim head. Abu Mazin has at times been ideologically hardline, even in comparison to Arafat, but more recently, he has been critical of Arafat's decision to keep the intifada going when it was doing so much damage to the Palestinians.

The two other best-known members of the older generation, Abu Ala and Faruq Qaddumi, have less of a chance of succeeding Arafat. Abu Ala, head of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) does not have a strong base in Fatah. He was a technocrat, not a leader, in the pre-PA PLO. While under the PLC's draft constitution he would have been the transitional leader after Arafat's death until elections were held, this document was shelved by Arafat. In a February 2002 interview, Arafat said that according to law, the PLC speaker (Abu Ala) would be the PA's caretaker chairman for 60 days until new elections are held.(3) Ironically, Arafat said in a February 2002 interview that, according to law, Abu Ala would be interim PA chief after his demise. But he himself had blocked confirmation of that law.

As for Qaddumi, he does enjoy more of a popular following than his two possible rivals--perhaps 20 percent of Fatah supporters according to polls--but also has significant negatives. He is too close to Syria to make Fatah leaders feel comfortable about his independence. Opposing the Oslo agreement, he decided to stay in Tunis until it was too late for him to change his mind. Thus, Qaddumi was excluded from any role in the PA or presence at the main scene of action.

It should be stressed here that "grassroots" leaders of Fatah organizations like the Tanzim who have played a leading role in the latest intifada--the best known of whom is Marwan Barghuti--are not likely candidates to succeed Arafat. For all his recent fame, Barghuti remains a local leader who is disliked and mistrusted by the security forces as well as by senior Fatah cadre. Equally misleading is the notion that all younger people, refugee

camp residents, or intifada activists support an insurgent leader in Fatah. Many of them back the Fatah establishment, while most Tanzim leaders are Arafat's men, and the organization does not even exist in the Gaza Strip.

Another myth is that Arafat's successor will be from the PA security forces. This is unlikely for many reasons. The forces themselves are divided between Gaza and West Bank commands and among almost a dozen different agencies, each with personal loyalties and institutional rivalries. There is no figure that has a wide following. Indeed, the candidacy of any individual "military man" would bring opposition from most, or even all, of the rest. Fatah officials would also oppose any such candidate, as he would be likely to reduce their own power and would give the PA the negative image of being yet another Arab military regime. In the long run, a military coup is possible but serious meddling by soldiers in politics would probably take a decade to develop.

The two security figures most often cited as candidates to succeed Arafat are not likely to do so. Jibril Rajub and Muhammad Dahlan are, respectively, the leaders of the Preventive Security force—an agency that is a relatively small portion of overall PA security forces—in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Their job was to fight terrorism, and thus to restrict the autonomy of Hamas and other extremist groups. This situation may have made them relatively moderate, but did not make them wildly popular. Rajub especially has many enemies within Fatah. Dahlan was for much of the 1990s a favored protégé of Arafat, though his opposition to Arafat's intifada strategy has left him as well as Rajub in the cold more recently. In the long run, perhaps Dahlan could become a candidate for Palestinian leader but not in the near future.

Thus, if Arafat dies or is disabled within the next five years, the most likely successor would be, like Abu Mazin, a member of the older generation with strong Fatah credentials. That person would

probably be a transition leader. But the longer Arafat lasts the better the chance for a younger figure. Over time, too, post-1993 credentials for activities in the West Bank or Gaza will increasingly matter more than a strong PLO record from previous decades.

Of even greater importance than the successor's identity is a set of factors which have been almost totally ignored and would have a major impact regardless of who came next. Among the most significant aspects of succession are the following:

--Despite Palestinian gossip and conspiracy theories, neither the United States nor Israel nor the Arab states for that matter are likely to have any significant role in the selection of Arafat's successor. This will be a purely Palestinian decision. Any rumors that "so-and-so" is the candidate of some foreign factor would hurt that individual's chances.

--The transition period is likely to be psychologically difficult but not violent. Palestinians are too focused on unity, and members of the Fatah elite know it must unite around a single candidate. Internal Palestinian battles may come over future successions but not over the immediate post-Arafat one.

--Perhaps the most vital but neglected issue is the fact that any transition from Arafat will probably create a period of a few years during which the reorganization of the system—now so heavily dependent on one man—takes precedence over anything else. In other words, in an immediate post-Arafat period, it would be even *more* difficult for Palestinians to negotiate a peace agreement with Israel.

--Even once a new leader has been installed, he would still be in a weaker decision-making position than Arafat. Anyone is going to be more dependent on consultation and coalitions than was Arafat.

--The new leader also would be under pressure to show that he is just as militant and steadfast as his predecessor. The most likely candidates for succession do not

have views widely at variance with Arafat, though they do seem more stable personalities. At any rate, they will be far more constrained about making major policy shifts.

--There could be a division of Arafat's jobs. One individual might not necessarily be head of the PLO, PA, and Fatah. If this change in the system were to take place, though, power to take decisions or change anything would be even harder. Over time, there could be widening splits between the external PLO and the PA, and even between the West Bank and Gaza political elites.

--To assume that the next Palestinian generation is more pragmatic and moderate than its elders seems at least partly based on wishful thinking. If anything, the opposite may be true. Rather than having lived through three decades of failure and defeat-which could be taken as a lesson to show the need to make peace with Israel and have good relations with the United States-the new generation has been raised by Arafat on dogma and utopian expectations. Additionally, having witnessed the IDF's unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon, many of the new generation's activists believe that violence and steadfastness (a mix to which they attribute to Hizballah's alleged success) will force more unilateral Israeli concessions as well as arguing that past failures were due to insufficient, rather than excessive, militancy.

The common outcome deriving from many of these points is that a successful peace process could be even harder to obtain in the immediate post-Arafat period. But since Arafat clearly cannot and will not make a final status, end-of-conflict political settlement based on compromise, that future is now unavoidable. Thus, neither succession nor Arafat's continued tenure in office offers a solution.

3. Yasir Arafat: The Man Who Threw Away Palestine

One could claim that the reason the Palestinian movement exists and the

Palestinian issue has so much visibility today is because of Arafat. Yet there could have been better ways to achieve that end. One could argue even more effectively that the reason there is no Palestinian state and so many Palestinian casualties today is also because of Arafat.

During a career spanning more than 35 years, Yasir Arafat has led the Palestinian revolution. But where has he led it? His strategies have included:

--An effort to involve the Arab states in war with Israel which played some small role in creating the defeat of the 1967 war.

--An attempt to launch a guerrilla/terrorist war in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967 which quickly failed.

--A campaign to attack Israel from Jordan using terrorist methods which did not lead anywhere militarily. Meanwhile, his increasing intervention in Jordanian politics, and tolerance for the even more extreme revolutionary efforts of his more radical Palestinian allies led to an avoidable but crushing and bloody defeat in 1970.

--Fatah and the PLO's involvement in international terrorism in the early 1970s with Arafat's authorization, partly under the Black September front group, further discredited the Palestinian cause and undermined Western sympathy for it.

--A campaign to use terror to attack Israel from Lebanon during the 1970s seemed to base PLO strategy mainly on the murder of the maximum number of Israeli civilians.

--At the same time, increasing PLO meddling in Lebanese politics played a role in intensifying the civil war there. His military build-up contributed to the 1982 Israeli attack which led to his expulsion from Beirut.

--Discontent within the PLO, inflamed by Syrian backing, then led to a revolt against Arafat which produced his second expulsion from Lebanon in 1983.

--His political hesitations in 1988 almost lost the opportunity for a dialogue

with the United States, then threw away that chance when Arafat's backing for continued terror forced even the reluctant State Department to break off the dialogue in 1990.

--Arafat's backing for Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 antagonized his main funders to the point where they cut off aid. More than 300,000 Palestinians were expelled from Kuwait or were forced to flee Iraq as a result of the ensuing crisis.

--While Arafat did sign the 1993 Oslo agreements and began a peace process with Israel, shortcomings in his implementation of the arrangements helped delay and weaken progress. He never prepared or mobilized Palestinians toward a compromise agreement, nor did he try to build strong Palestinian infrastructure and institutions as a basis for creating a state.(4)

--Faced with far-reaching offers at the Camp David summit and the Clinton plan in 2000, Arafat rejected these proposals as a basis for negotiation.

--Whether or not he played any role in the outbreak of violence, he quickly supported, organized, and tolerated a massive increase in terrorism. He had launched an unwinnable war which would destroy the Palestinian infrastructure, any serious support for a compromise agreement in Israel, and his backing in the West without bringing any real help from the Arab world.

--He rejected several ceasefire opportunities and did not seriously implement his own initiatives. Even when the September 11, 2001 terror attacks on the United States offered him tremendous potential leverage in returning to the bargaining table and "joining" the war against terrorism, he threw away this chance. The case of the PA's Karine-A weapons' ship was only one example. Indeed, if Arafat had succeeded and the arms had arrived, triggering a full-scale war, Arafat and the Palestinians would have been far worse off.

The above list is not intended to underestimate the real problems faced by

Arafat-including lack of a state apparatus, multiple Palestinian groups and ideologies, Arab state interference, and Israeli policies--during these decades, nor does it mean that all these disasters and mistakes were fully Arafat's fault. Nevertheless, however one evaluates all these specific events, the overall record is a remarkably negative one. Yet despite this record, Arafat remains the unchallenged and unchallengeable leader of the Palestinians and arbiter of their fate.

In turn, this history suggests another interesting point. If the Palestinian movement had always been victimized by externally induced persecution and repression, why then does it still exist and why has Arafat survived? After all, the many disasters gave its enemies-Israel, the West (especially the United States), and Arab states-innumerable pretexts and opportunities to destroy it by massacring its leaders, seizing its assets, systematically repressing it, making all-out attempts to take it over, and even assassinating Arafat.

Why has this not happened, despite so many limited blows directed against it? Why, instead, were Arafat and the movement given opportunity after opportunity to revive and offered incentives to change their policy?

The answer, contrary to sincere Palestinian (and Arab) belief as well as propaganda, is that Israel and the United States wanted some peaceful, lasting, and stable solution to the Palestinian problem which would be acceptable to moderate Palestinian goals. The hope (and belief) was that at some point Arafat, the PLO, or some other Palestinian leadership would change its policy and strategy enough to make such an outcome possible.

While discussing all these specific arguments and analyzing the many situations in the movement's history would require a length presentation of facts, details, and interpretations, it should be pretty apparent that Arafat and the movement did not take advantage of their opportunities-ranging from the pre-Arafat 1947 partition plan through Oslo and other

examples-to achieve a state; gather in the exiles; and build a Palestinian identity, culture, economy, and polity.

There are two principal underlying reasons for the failure to change and reap a large-if not total-reward and benefit in doing so.

First, there was a refusal to take the steps necessary to accept a two-state solution and to give up clearly and irreversibly the PLO's original, long-standing, and extremist objectives. Even today the movement tends to view violence as its central strategy and as the guidepost of progress. Whatever its intentions, there is a strong unwillingness to close the door to a "second stage" in which the main goal would be Israel's elimination. The demand for a "right of return" and rejection of an "end of conflict" provision in an agreement-along with the movement's internal propaganda and indoctrination norms-demonstrate this factor.(5)

It cannot be proven whether Arafat, in his innermost mind, was ready to accept peace with Israel based on a two-state solution. But what can be shown is his refusal to make such a peace in a way that would discourage him or persuade his successors and his people from easily reversing that decision. Without such a step, there could be no diplomatic settlement and hence no Palestinian state.

Second, there have been Arafat's own shortcomings as a leader, including:

--His inability and unwillingness to undertake the full transition of organization, ideology, and institutions necessary to achieve a clear acceptance of a permanent two-state solution.

--His persistent patterns of encouraging or permitting chaos and violence while disclaiming responsibility for these situations.

-- He refused to do more to centralize the movement and tolerated the destabilizing actions of radical groups as long as he thinks they serve his purpose. Nevertheless, he miscalculated and let extremists undermine his position, today as

happened during past decades in Lebanon and Jordan.

--By failing to show an interest in anything but high politics and armed struggle, Arafat disdained the kind of economic, educational, institution-building, and other kinds of activities needed to achieve a state.

These problems were almost but not quite balanced by Arafat's brilliance at international public relations. His combination of promises, creativity with facts, and conspiracy theories worked well in the short- to medium-run but always caught up to him in the end. In short, his image-building efforts were undermined by his actual policies. The theme of Palestinians as victims, underdogs who deserved the world's pity and help, was overwhelmed by that of the Palestinians' image as terrorists. The theme of moderation-Palestinians just want to end occupation and have their own homeland-was repeatedly destroyed by the theme of militancy-excessive demands and the goal of destroying Israel. The idea of Arafat as sincere or at least a potential realist was betrayed by Arafat's visible lack of credibility and flexibility.

Thus, each cycle had a high point-Arafat as a powerful figure waging war from Jordan or Lebanon; Arafat at the UN; Arafat in dialogue with America; Arafat as PA leader directly governing two million people-followed inevitably by a low point-Arafat being expelled from Jordan and Lebanon; Arafat losing the dialogue; Arafat besieged in Ramallah. The Palestinian movement's history was not one of real progress in the march toward a state but rather a circular route alternating between short-lived, illusory triumphs and real, very costly failures. This uniquely endless series of ups and downs were not just coincidental but a natural result of Arafat's own strategy, goals, methods, and behavior.

Several other persisting problems endemic in the movement also contributed to this tragic story. One of these has been a profound misunderstanding of Israel by

Arafat, his colleagues, and much of the Palestinian public.

On one hand, they argued that Israel's existence was like the Christian Crusades, a temporary conquest of Palestine doomed to inevitable destruction. Israel was an artificial entity; the Jews were not a nation and had no right to the land. Zionism was the personification of evil, a new version of colonialism, a drive for world conquest.

On the other hand, Israel's existence was explained by Western imperialism, with parallel leftist and Islamist versions. It was inconceivable that the Jews, so long despised and quiescent in the Muslim world, could be the authors of this conquest. Thus, in the Fatah platform it is explained, "The 'Jewish State' was established in order to secure continued imperialist robbery and exploitation of our country." Arafat's mind was filled with conspiracy theories. He was convinced that Israel was a U.S. or Western "military base," not a real country. Israel, he once said, was the creation of a secret 1907 conference of Western leaders who decided to establish "a hostile, alien nation" to ensure the Middle East remained "disunited and backward."⁽⁶⁾

The implicit revolutionary doctrine developed by Arafat and Fatah blended Islam, Marxism-Leninism, Arab nationalism, and Third World radicalism. But several specific aspects of this stance would continue to shape the organization, and the Palestinian movement as a whole, throughout its history and down to the present day. Arafat and his followers would never quite shake these basic assumptions, nor did they try very hard or systematically to do so even when temporarily and ostensibly viewing them as outdated.

--Their basic beliefs and analysis all argued that victory was certain and, consequently, any compromise short of wiping out Israel would be both treasonous and unnecessary. Therefore, it would be very hard to accept any other solution or even have an open debate on goals without the more moderate side being called

traitors. Achieving a Palestinian state was, for all practical purposes, always subordinate to getting all of the land. If there was a contradiction between these two goals the harder line would always have the advantage.

This point can easily be taken for granted but it is extremely important. After all, if the movement had believed that Israel was strong, would exist permanently, had firm Western support that would not evaporate, and the Arab world was not expected to do too much for their own cause, then the Palestinians could consider themselves fortunate to make a good compromise deal. But if Israel is weak, doomed to disappear or be defeated, the Western support could be removed, the Arab world was going to fight for the Palestinians, and the PLO could find some military strategy that would triumph, then why should they make concessions? Fighting for additional years would yield total victory and was thus preferable to concessions.

In this context, Israel's conventional military superiority was always discounted. Israel lacked the willpower to fight, its soldiers were cowards, or terrorism would make its civilians surrender. The Arab armies would defeat Israel, its Western sponsors would let it collapse or order it to make unilateral concessions. The courage of the Palestinian fighters, their willingness to sacrifice themselves (perhaps literally through suicide bombings), and the Palestinian people's readiness to give up everything and postpone material gratification for the cause would bring victory. A diplomatic agreement would perhaps be acceptable if the Palestinian side had all its demands met but there was no need to accept anything less. This was the basic philosophy that dictated Arafat's choices and Palestinian strategy over the negotiations in 2000.

--The Palestinians were guiltless victims entitled to use any means to redress their grievances. Since, in Arafat's words, Israel was "An embodiment of neo-Nazism...intellectual terrorism and racial

exploitation" there need be no restraint on Palestinian tactics.(7) The Palestinian public would not only accept such behavior but would cheer it and flock to join those capable of such deeds of revenge. Thus, the deliberate, premeditated murder of civilians was from the start a central part of Arafat's strategy and not some temporary or easily jettisoned factor.

The actions of Arafat's movement would often discredit it internationally and its profound miscomprehension of Israel would also lead it into many errors. At least for the first quarter-century or so of his leadership, whatever public relations'-oriented lip service he gave to "multicultural" solutions, Arafat held onto a chilling idea: The Palestinians had been victims of genocide and the only possible solution would require genocide, in the sense of destroying another national community, society, and state. "The PLO's aim is not to impose our will on the enemy," said its magazine *Filastin al-Thawra*, "but to destroy him in order to take his place...not to subjugate the enemy, but to destroy him.(8)

--There was the absolute glorification of violence as simultaneously the movement's highest value and foundation. Moreover, there were never any moral constraints placed on that tool. At best, the timing of a specific attack might be wrong or inconvenient. Arafat himself would often say that struggle, not political organization, held Fatah together. It was an armed force, not a political party which would lead the masses through battle and not political organization.(9) As Article 9 of the PLO's Charter makes clear, in terms repeated almost daily by Palestinian leaders, "Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine and is therefore a strategy and not tactic."(10) Accepting the Oslo peace process was an apparent contradiction of this principal principle, but it has reappeared in full force since August 2000.

Arafat has always seen himself to be a general, rather than a president. Palestine, he said from the beginning, could be recovered only "by blood and iron; and

blood and iron have nothing to do with philosophies and theories." He had contempt for politicians, "It is the commandos who will decide the future."(11) His whole career has been built on projecting an image of being a fighter, rejecting prospective alternative roles as a bureaucratic administrator, a politician preaching the art of the possible, or a diplomat favoring unpalatable compromises to achieve a portion of his goal.

Equally, neither Fatah nor the PLO ever put the emphasis on organizing and mobilizing the masses that were usually, if not always, reduced to spectators of their heroes' exploits. The intifada, which began with a self-image of mass struggle through demonstrations and stone-throwing, soon became a shooting war carried out by armed bands.

Arafat explicitly saw violence as the glue holding the movement together and building it further. "Armed struggle restores a lost personal and national identity, an identity taken away by force which can only be restored by force. Palestine had been taken away by fire and steel, and it will be recovered by fire and steel."(12)

But this was a dangerous concept, what Marxists called "militarism," a dogma avoided by virtually all successful national liberation or revolutionary movements and embraced by scores of failed ones. Violence justified as the highest value would become an end in itself, a beast that could not be tamed whose primacy and justification would dominate the movement, crowding out diplomacy and delegitimizing compromise. Moreover, this was a creed of violence without limit in which any act of terror and any murder could be justified as heroic and beyond criticism. If violence was the only thing that could restore national identity, what would happen to national identity, unity, and the leaders' permanent tenure without violence?

These characteristics became embedded in the Palestinian movement with terrible

consequences. First, merely continuing the revolution constituted success, whereas success should be defined as achieving some sort of improved long-term result. Transforming the permanent revolution into a regular state would seem a form of betrayal. Second, being able to carry out attacks on Israel in some fashion was a triumph in itself rather than being assessed on the basis of whether these were leading to some well-defined objective. Third, the chances and actuality of victory was constantly overestimated. Time after time, Arafat and his lieutenants cheered themselves as they headed straight toward catastrophe or redefined the latest defeat as another glorious achievement.

By the same token, while it was understandable that Arafat wanted to avoid an ideology that would alienate some and divide the movement, the refusal to articulate a positive goal and any competing value such as better lives for the people, an end to death or suffering, the actual enjoyment of a peaceful national existence--also made violence and permanent revolution ends in themselves that would ultimately block any other approach.

Hani al-Hasan said, "We in the Palestine revolution aspire to the day we will begin our social revolution, but it is nonsense to insist that we wage both revolutions together, because if we do we will lose both."⁽¹³⁾ This statement had a logical basis but it should also be noted that many revolutionary and national liberation movements--including a high, perhaps higher portion of the victorious ones--took the opposite position.⁽¹⁴⁾ It could be argued that not waging both revolutions together was the surest way to lose both.

Thus, for example, the goal of educating young Palestinians would not be so they could make a contribution to having a strong future state but only to participate in more fighting. If there would be no "good society" to look forward to, how could the vision of material achievement based on compromise

overcome endless battle for an unreachable objective of total victory no matter what the cost? How could humanitarian values or even tactical limits be introduced into the movement? Here, too, decisions taken by Arafat and his colleagues would poison their movement and doom it to be an instrument of suffering rather than reconstruction.

While a response to the specific Palestinian situation, this manner of thinking was also due to Arafat's narrow, almost totally political vision. This is clear in his view of "social revolution" as merely a question of political line. In his clearest response, he told an Arab interviewer:

What meaning does the left or the right have in the struggle for the liberation of my homeland? I want that homeland even if the devil is the one to liberate it for me.... Are you demanding that I already define the type of government that will rule Palestine after its liberation? If I did so, I could be compared to the man who sells the bear's hide before hunting it down.⁽¹⁵⁾

Yet Arafat never seemed to understand that a willingness to rely on "the devil" to achieve victory could also well define his own strategy, tactics, and other decisions as well as to his choice of external allies. And it should also be remembered that, according to all the major religions, the devil is always on the losing side.

During this first period of armed struggle, the pattern was set for Arafat's strategy in the quarter-century that followed and began again in the year 2000. It was a terrorist strategy. The word "terrorist" here is not an epithet to delegitimize Arafat or his movement but an accurate description of the goal and methods. For Arafat and his colleagues believed that precisely by terrorizing the Israeli population they would, on the one hand, induce that society to collapse and surrender while, on the other hand,

inspiring enthusiastic support on the side of Palestinians and Arabs who found such tactics acceptable. The struggle's success, heroism, and impact would be judged mainly on the number of Israelis killed, regardless of whether they were civilians or soldiers. From the 1970s onward, certainly, the attacks were rarely on economic assets, institutions or military bases but almost always focused on inflicting the maximum number of casualties.

This focus was openly propounded by the statements of Arafat and his lieutenants from the 1960s on, sometimes in different form but always with the same basic analysis and prescription. The goal of Palestinian violence, Arafat explained in 1968, was to destroy tourism, prevent immigration, and weaken the Israeli economy, "to create and maintain an atmosphere of strain and anxiety that will force the Zionists to realize that it is impossible for them to live in Israel."

Two years later, he added, "The Israelis have one great fear, the fear of casualties." He intended "to exploit the contradictions within Israeli society." Killing enough Israelis would force the country's collapse. A PLO colleague said that same year, "Any objective study of the enemy will reveal that his potential for endurance, except where a brief engagement is concerned, is limited." (16) This theme continued into the 1980s. As one PLO document put it, the enemy's "greatest weakness is his small population." Attacks against civilians in the streets would supposedly demoralize the Israelis and make them give up. It was also the alternative to confronting Israel's army on the battlefield, a contest Arafat usually remembered would result in defeat. These same ideas are daily expressed today and have infected the thinking of the next Palestinian generation as well, despite all the historical and contemporary evidence to the contrary.

Given this analysis, the strategy of terrorism was quite logical. The aim of the PLO's attacks, Arafat said in 1968, was to

"prevent immigration and encourage emigration.... To destroy tourism. To prevent immigrants becoming attached to the land. To weaken the Israeli economy and to divert the greater part of it to security requirements. To create and maintain an atmosphere of strain and anxiety that will force the Zionists to realize that it is impossible for them to live in Israel." By achieving these objectives, the PLO would "inevitably prevent Israel's consolidation and bring about its disintegration and dissolution." (17)

It was anti-civilian violence which the PLO thought would bring Israel's collapse or, in Fatah's more modest immediate goal in the revolutionary war of independence begun in 2000, produce its unconditional withdrawal from the territories. Such attacks, the PLO magazine *Filastin al-Thawra* explained in 1970, would make each Israeli feel "isolated and defenseless against the Arab soldier in his house, on his land, on the road, in the cafe, in the movie theatre, in army camps and everywhere." Each Israeli would then be bound to value more highly "the life of stability and repose that he enjoyed in his former country" compared to "the life of confusion and anxiety he finds in the land of Palestine. This is bound to motivate him towards reverse immigration." (18)

This assessment of Israel, and hence of how the Palestinians would win victory, was quite mistaken. Arafat consistently misestimated the balance of forces. He believed that Palestinian steadfastness plus Israel's weakness plus Arab intervention plus international sympathy would overcome his side's lesser military, economic and technological power.

Even when Palestinian politics and opportunities were transformed, the leader did not change his ideas, style, or assumptions to take advantage or adjust to these changed circumstances. Instead, he put forward a strategy that guaranteed deadlock, defeat, and bloodshed. Western observers could simply not believe that such a situation, which ran counter to the behavior of other movements and leaders

as well as the principles of *realpolitik*, could be happening. Surely if Arafat was given one more chance, or one more concession, or if there was one more turn of events everything would change. This view has proven almost as mistaken over the last 30 years as has Arafat's own strategy.

4. The State of the Non-State: The Balances of Palestinian Politics

Faced with the culmination of the peace process and the opportunity of a reasonable negotiated settlement-even based on modifications of the Camp David and Clinton plans-Arafat decided against this approach. Instead, he launched a war of independence. But this would be independence on his own terms allowing him to lay a basis (or keep the door open) for the next stage of struggle. The Palestinian strategy was based on the old mix of terror (to make Israel surrender) and pity (to gain international support and intervention).

In this context, the Palestinians would be portrayed in two contrasting and conflicting ways. On one hand, they were heroic warriors who had gone on the offensive and launched their independence war and would fight courageously until total victory was won. Their people were eager to sacrifice themselves and to endure any suffering. They were on the offensive to end a ruthless occupation. All evidence and memory of the fact that Israel had already offered to end the occupation and the United States had acted as the Palestinians' patron had to be shoved down the memory hole. Arafat was now the courageous revolutionary leading his people in revolt. They would refuse any dealings that did not quickly and on a guaranteed basis give them what they wanted.

On the other hand, the Palestinians would be portrayed as helpless victims who were on the defensive. They were under assault by a ruthless Israeli attack designed to wipe them out or make them emigrate. They were eager to end the

fighting but Israel simply refused to do so. If the Palestinians were helpless, Arafat was the most helpless of the helpless since he had no control over the situation and was powerless to stop the violence.

Arafat was able to give another remarkable performance and many people-notably European leaders and some Western intellectuals-were convinced. Nevertheless, the results fell far short of his expectations. He had done his routine too many times and, once again, terror subverted pity. Arafat's rejection of viable peace plans could not be forgotten so easily. The United States was unprepared to let Arafat make a fool of another U.S. president and the September 11, 2001 terror attack on America followed by a war against terrorism also reduced any willingness to overlook Palestinian terror.(19) Even the Arab states, while willing to give lip service to the Palestinian cause and to try exploiting it in their own interests, could barely conceal their disgust with Arafat. They certainly did not give the Palestinians much real help.

On the Palestinian front, however, Arafat was far more successful. Whatever the private complaints or fears of his people (some of which are measured in public opinion polls), they put aside their criticisms of Arafat and yearning for peace in the face of demagogic appeals and the stirring up of national and religious hatred. Ironically, Arafat tried to convince the world he was weak at the very moment when he was most strong, at least in domestic terms. The belief that Arafat was weak combined with an assessment of his dangerous incompetence to make many observers conclude erroneously that he would soon be forced out of power.

Yet Arafat continues to exercise overwhelming authority-when and as he wishes-over Palestinian politics. Basically, he orders thousands of people in his loyal security forces to stand around and do nothing while some of his soldiers, militias mostly loyal to him, and "rivals" who usually act within boundaries he has set, operate freely to wage war on Israel.

Most Palestinians support Arafat, or at least recognize that they have no viable alternative leadership. Arafat's credentials as leader of the movement for over 30 years are essential to this point, but so is his ability to bridge gaps and build united fronts. They logically believe that only Arafat can maintain the PA's unity, continue its struggle, avoid major concessions, and someday father a Palestinian state. When Arafat dies, he will have to be replaced. Until then, the question of succession will never get onto the Palestinian agenda. Since candidates for succession have been unable to campaign or organize, they have no reliable personal factions and every incentive to keep Arafat favorable toward them.

Thus, it is no mystery that most of the Palestinian political elite support Arafat and have done so for many years. They see no alternative leader or system at present, and fear chaos and their own loss of power without Arafat at the helm. Arafat himself enhances this view by dispensing favors such as apartments, jobs, and contracts, or excluding people from such benefits. Being on good terms with Arafat opens doors to making money, legitimately or through corruption. Yet these material factors merely enhance the overwhelming sense that support for Arafat is a patriotic duty.

There is remarkably little discussion any more about Outsiders and Insiders as time is eroding these distinctions and the intifada has united both. There is much factionalism but it is along far more personal and institutional lines.

At the same time, the leaders of all the PA security forces have remained very loyal to Arafat and will back his decisions. Even when he has humiliated them and shoved them aside in favor of patronizing the Tanzim, they know that their power is completely based on enjoying his favor. Force-17, the security agency closest to him and his personal control, has also been the one most involved in launching attacks on Israelis.

In short, Arafat has a very strong base of support that will remain steady. While his popularity fluctuates in public opinion polls, there is a huge gap between his rating and that of any other potential leader. He has outmaneuvered Hamas and his other opponents alternatively using permissiveness and repression. Even critics acknowledge his power and popularity, openly agreeing that any attempt to confront him would lead to their own defeat or, at worst, a disastrous civil war.

In his post-peace process, intifada phase, Arafat has increasingly depended on two groups--the Veteran Radicals(20) and West Bank Fatah militants who reject compromise with Israel and favor a revolutionary war of independence strategy. This process has also led him to permit a high level of Fatah-Hamas military cooperation. Yet the idea these are forces threatening him or outside of his control are also quite wrong.

The Veteran Radicals is a small, but well-positioned, group of veteran PLO and Fatah officials who basically continue to hold to their historic radical positions. This stance can be identified with Qaddumi but also with such key people as Abbas Zaki, head of Fatah's operations; Sakr Habash (Abu Nizar), chief of the Revolutionary Committee (the body below the Central Committee) and Fatah's Ideological Mobilization Department; and Salim Za'nun, the PNC's head.(21) This group has been responsible for much of the anti-Israel incitement and extremist statements coming from PA and Fatah sources. They clearly favor a long-term strategy to destroy Israel completely.

Despite their extremist statements, Arafat never disowned nor punished them. Now with the revival of the more militant line and the new intifada, he has moved closer toward this group than previously, playing them off against Abu Ala, Abu Mazin, and others who prefer a compromise negotiated solution or have been critical of his revolutionary war of independence strategy.

The Fatah Militants refers to a relatively small but significant group of West Bank activists who have often been critical of Arafat for not giving them more influence as well as for insufficient militancy and have taken a leading role in some sections of the Tanzim (the Fatah grassroots organization) and in the new intifada. They include Marwan al-Barghuti, Fatah's West Bank leader, and Husam Khadir, a leader in the Balata refugee camp, both of whom Arafat kept off Fatah's slate in the 1996 elections for the legislative council but who won any way.

They used the Tanzim as an alternative institution to give them power since they were shut out of the PA. This group is mainly significant in the Nablus-Ramallah area. Historically, Barghuti's view was that the Palestinians should seek peace with Israel but this could only be achieved through more militant means. After the outbreak of violence, however, Barghuti increasingly seems to have seen this as his route to prominence and leadership with the revolution-as it had been for Arafat-becoming a virtual end in itself.

Barghuti's prominence and the Tanzim's apparent importance have been used to claim that Arafat has little control over the Tanzim or Fatah's violent activities. The fact is, however, that most of the Tanzim is totally loyal to Arafat and always follows his orders, while the rest still views Arafat as its leader and is careful not to disobey him. The Tanzim does not exist in Gaza and most of the West Bank leaders are his appointees. Moreover, the Tanzim became more prominent largely because Arafat restrained the security agencies-which previously kept it in check-and supported its violent activities as a deniable way of levying war on Israel.

In his post-peace process strategy of revolutionary violence, Arafat has found also Hamas to be more ally than rival. Certainly, there have been occasional clashes between Hamas and Arafat's forces and the specific timing and nature of some Hamas' attacks have not been to Arafat's liking. In general, though, the two forces

have had a parallel set of strategy and tactics since the fall of 2000 and Hamas has basically accepted-never trying to challenge, except in the most limited ways, or overturn-Arafat's leadership.

The nationalists usually say they are fighting a war of independence to force a unilateral withdrawal of Israel from the territories and creation of an unrestricted Palestinian state without giving up a claimed "right of return" or agreeing to end the conflict. The Islamists have no problem with that set of goals but simply put more explicit emphasis on continuing the struggle until Israel is destroyed and want an Islamist rather than Arab nationalist Palestine.

Whatever potential disagreements might arise if the first part of this program would be realized, under Arafat's current strategy these have little immediate importance. At most, Hamas does not accept Arafat's desire to raise and lower the level of violence or the use of suicide attacks at particular moments.

Arafat, then, continues to have a virtual monopoly on power in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The areas he does not directly control or constrain exist as a result of his choice and not of the imposition of other powerful forces or the overwhelming demands of public opinion.

Many times, it has been claimed that Arafat had to deliver material goods and to show he was making progress toward a state in order to keep support among Palestinians. But in fact none of these factors were important compared to the political value of maintaining the struggle, a situation which shoves aside all other quarrels and criticisms of Arafat. It is easier politically for Arafat to rally the troops with militant slogans, maximalism and violence. The truth of this self-inflicted new nakba is hidden behind a thick veil of self-righteousness, self-congratulation, self-pity, and self-manufactured claims that this is all made necessary by a brutal Israeli enemy that completely ignores Palestinian rights and only wants to continue the occupation permanently.

This fact does not mean, however, that he couldn't have persuaded them to make an attainable agreement with Israel or that he rejected a deal from fear of public opinion. At most, it might be said that he did not want to challenge the existing lines and views, as a path of least resistance. He had a viable alternative strategy which some of his colleagues favored: get a state, gather in exiles, split Hamas, show the material and psychological benefits of his program, mobilize support among Palestinians, get Arab and international aid, and improve people's lot. Being careful to maintain peace, his commitments, and good relations with the United States would have helped preserve these gains.

Is Yasir Arafat a representative leader of Palestinian views and aspirations? Of course he is but this can also be a misleading concept. Ronald Reagan, Richard Nixon, Bill Clinton, and Jimmy Carter were all representative leaders of American views and aspirations. The same can be regarding Israel for Ehud Barak, Yitzhak Rabin, Benjamin Netanyahu and Ariel Sharon. The point is that there is a range of views among every people which a leader can shape and direct. Arafat has always been the sole Palestinian leader who never-or at least very seldom in very limited ways-sought to redirect their vision and beliefs. In general, he could only play a single chord.

As a way of bettering the condition of the Palestinian people or of obtaining an independent Palestinian state, Arafat's strategy now and in the past has been disastrous. In terms of making the activists (and often the masses) feel proud and successful, keeping the movement united, and maintaining his own leadership, however, Arafat's strategy has been a great success. This fatal combination of ingredients seems unlikely to change now or for some time to come.

* Barry Rubin is director of the *Global Research in International Affairs*

(*GLORIA*) Center of the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) and editor of the Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) Journal. His books include *Revolution Until Victory? The Politics and History of the PLO* and *From Revolution to State-Building: The Transformation of Palestinian Politics*, both published by Harvard University Press. He is author of *The Tragedy of the Middle East* (Cambridge University Press), *Islamic Fundamentalists in Egyptian Politics* (Second, revised edition, Palgrave) and, with co-author Judy Colp Rubin, of a forthcoming biography of Yasir Arafat (Palgrave).

NOTES

1. The word for ship's captain in Arabic, *ra'is*, has also become a term used to describe a national leader and was a title used by Arafat.
2. This is the path taken by prime ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Ehud Barak in Israel, for example.
3. Associated Press, February 7, 2002; interview in *al-Mussawar*, February 7, 2002.
4. Of course, there were also Israeli shortcomings in implementation but these were related to slowing the process and retaining territories longer or were interlaced with Palestinian actions (notably the continuation of attacks). It was hardly in Arafat's or Palestinian objective interest to add new causes for postponing the conclusion of an agreement that would end occupation and establish a state.
5. See for example, Faisal al-Husseini's interview in *al-Arabi*, June 24, 2001. <<http://www.memri.org/sd/SP23601.html>>
6. Fatah platform, cited in Raphael Israeli, *PLO in Lebanon: Selected Documents* (London, 1983). These and other quotations given in this article are provided as examples. Dozens of similar statements can be found for each point throughout the history of the PLO and from Arafat himself. After 1993 the PLO, Fatah, and

Arafat did not explicitly say their goal was Israel's destruction but that point does not contradict this article's conclusion that they also sought to avoid closing this option. For other examples of statements used in preparing this article's analysis see the author's books *The Transformation of Palestinian Politics: From Revolution to State-Building*, (Cambridge, Ma., 1999) and *Revolution Until Victory?: The Politics and History of the PLO*, (Cambridge, Ma., 1994), as well as his forthcoming biography of Yasir Arafat.

7. *International Documents on Palestine 1968* (hereafter IDOP) (Beirut, 1969), pp. 301, 379.

8. *Filastin al-Thawra*, June 1968.

9. John Amos, *Palestinian Resistance: Organization of a Nationalist Movement*, (NY, 1980) pp. 136, 140.

10. Barry Rubin and Walter Laqueur, *The Israel Arab Reader*, Sixth Revised Edition (NY, 2001), p. 117.

11. IDOP, op. cit.

12. *Arab World Weekly*, December 2, 1974; *al-Nahar Arab Report*, July 15, 1974 and August 2, 1974.

13. Hani al-Hasan interview in *al-Amm*, April 23, 1970.

14. Examples of successfully fighting while building institutions, ideology, and social transformation include the American, French, Russian, Chinese, and Iranian revolutions as well as Israel's Zionist movement.

15. Arafat interview in *al-Sayad*, January 23, 1969.

16. "Yassir Arafat," (sic), *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 8 No. 2, April 1986; and also South January 1986 p 18; *al-Anwar* symposium of March 8, 1970, cited in Y. Harkabi, *The Palestinian Covenant and its Meaning* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1979), p. 12; Arafat, May 1969, IDOP 1969, pp. 691-2. IDOP, 1968, p. 400.

17. Interview, January 22, 1968 in IDOP, 1968, p. 300.

18. *Filastin al-Thawra*, January 1970, p. 8. Compare this statement with a remarkably similar PLO document a dozen years later, the enemy's "greatest weakness is his small

population. Therefore, operations must be launched which will liquidate immigration into Israel" by attacking immigrant absorption centers, sabotaging water and electricity, "using weapons in terrifying ways against them where they live...attacking a tourist installation during the height of the tourist season." Holidays were said to be the best time for assaults since there were more human targets on the street. Cited in Raphael Israeli, *PLO in Lebanon: Selected Documents* (London, 1983) p. 31.

19. Actually, even September 11 could have been an opportunity for Arafat. For a brief period between the attacks and the Taliban's defeat in Afghanistan, the United States felt a desperate need for Arab support. If Arafat had quickly ended the fighting in a ceasefire, returned to negotiations, "joined" the war on terror, and demanded some specific concessions in exchange for a deal, he probably could have received U.S. backing for something even closer to his terms.

20. I have previously used the term "Outsider Radicals" to define this group. While they were indeed Outsiders, i.e., long exiled Palestinians who came from what is now Israel, this aspect of their identity has become less important since their return.

21. On Zaki's return, see Voice of Palestine, September 7, 1995 in Federal Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), September 8, 1995. For his criticisms of Arafat and Khuri, see *Financial Times*, April 26, 1994. Like Qaddumi, Zaki was welcome in Damascus and among the anti-Arafat Palestinian groups there. See *al-Bilad*, July 12, 1995 in FBIS, July 12, 1995. On opponents of Oslo in Fatah, see also *Jerusalem Times*, February 3 and September 15, 1995; *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, March 5, July 23, and October 22, 1995; *Mideast Mirror*, March 23, 1995; *al-Hayat*, March 23 and November 18, 1995.