

## 1949-1967 Armistice Lines



Credit: Modified from the United States National Imagery and Mapping Agency

## IV

## Development of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood/Hamas 1948-2000

By Yisrael Ne'eman

### Overview

The 1948 War represented a double failure for Palestinian Muslims. They neither destroyed the State of Israel, nor established their own state in the former Palestine Mandate. Jordan annexed the West Bank and Gaza remained under Egyptian administration. In Gaza the Muslim Brotherhood was harshly suppressed, first under King Farouk and later after Gamal Abdul Nasser took power. Secular Arab nationalism was triumphant, spawning Fatah and other secular Palestinian movements. In Jordan and the West Bank the Brotherhood was tolerated as a loyal opposition expected to stay within the limitations imposed on it by the authorities. Paradoxically, when Israel captured both Gaza and the West Bank in 1967, the Muslim Brotherhood activists were granted freedom of movement within the territories and were even allowed to cross into Israel.

Israel was sharply anti-Fatah/PLO and pursued Yasir Arafat as its most formidable enemy. On the other hand, the Islamists were allowed to build mosques, schools and a social welfare infrastructure in Gaza and the West Bank while organizing around religious study to strengthen their identity and opposition to the Jewish State. Freedom of religion in Israel allowed for expansion of Islamism in the Jewish State as well. The call to civil activity, or "*dawa*," was seen as harmless and as a useful alternative to the more politically astute PLO operatives involved in physical attacks against Israeli security forces and civilians.

Two events shook the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood in 1979; the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty and the Khomeinist overthrow in Iran. The other side of the *dawa* theological commitment is Jihad, which until recently had remained dormant. By the mid 1980s the Gaza Muslim Brotherhood, led by Sheikh Ahmed Yasin, would move into the activist phase of military resistance against Israel. By December 1987, the Intifada broke out and the

Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood now known as “Hamas” was born as an armed political entity.

By the early nineties, Israel gained the upper hand against the PLO and Hamas. A stark divergence of paths emerged between the two as the former engaged in peace talks while the latter saw any recognition of the Jewish State as a betrayal of sacred principles. Arafat and the PLO began the Oslo peace process while Hamas remained in vigilant opposition. The group initiated terror activities against Israel, but took little action against the PLO, which in time became the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israel’s “peace partner.” From 1993-2000, Israel and the PA signed interim agreements granting the Authority more control over Palestinian daily life as Israel sought increased security. Many Palestinians accused the PA of corruption and betrayal for negotiating with Israel. As a result, countless Palestinians shifted their support to Hamas, although the general election boycott by Hamas during this period obscured their true support among the populace.

Arafat kept Hamas at bay until the collapse of the Oslo peace process at Camp David in 2000. Beginning in September, the Fatah-led PA and Hamas fought together against Israel in the Low Intensity Conflict (LIC), known as the “Second Intifada” even though the Islamists declared the corrupt Fatah leadership to be no less an enemy than the Zionists. Hamas began from a point of weakness, but realized it was a golden opportunity to continue gaining popular support at the expense of the despised PA. While the PLO/Fatah dominated PA negotiated but did not achieve a peace agreement with Israel, Hamas moved to replace them as the new Palestinian leadership and steadfast adversary of Israel.

#### **The 1948 War to the 1987 Rise of Independent Hamas**

As shown in the previous chapter, the 1930s saw an eruption of violent Islamist guerrilla and terror activities led by Izz a-Din al-Qassam against the Jewish National Home and the British-administered Palestine Mandate. The 1940s witnessed Muslim Brotherhood military activities with the Egyptian invasion of the newborn Israeli State. Neither was successful in the physical sense, yet both left an Islamic ideological impact on Palestinian Muslim society with al-Qassam as the ultimate hero. What secular Arabs attempted to define as a national conflict between Israel and the Arab world would retain serious elements of a religious Muslim-Jewish conflict evidenced by Brotherhood activity throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Upon the cessation of hostilities in early 1949, violent Islamist activism on the Palestinian front underwent a twenty year demise before reactivating itself after the 1967 War. Haj Amin el-Husseini blamed the Arab world for the Palestinian defeat while

not uttering a word of accusation toward the Brotherhood.<sup>1</sup> In his “capacity” as Grand Mufti he continued to commend the Nazis, specifically Hitler, for the destruction of the Jews. He also made clear his demands for the destruction of the State of Israel, which he saw as a plot by “World Judaism” to expand and subjugate the Arab world.<sup>2</sup> Haj Amin remained the Palestinian symbol, one representing a murderous attitude toward the Jews and Israel, while lacking success both on the Arab national and Islamic political levels.

Two distinct pillars of Muslim Brotherhood ideology developed wherever the movement took root. The first included social welfare, education and the compassionate side of Islam representing everyday activities in alleviating the distress of the poor and downtrodden. The second invoked demands for Jihad and a resulting global Caliphate. It followed that Israel’s existence was an outrage. The 1948 defeat was a catastrophe or “*nakba*” and this humiliation demanded a reversal—the elimination of the Jewish State. UN Resolution 194, Clause 11, calling for a refugee return in “peace” or for “compensation” was one way to rectify the situation, but this never came about. On the domestic front, poor Palestinian Muslims viewed the Brotherhood and later Hamas as radiating love, care and compassion for their plight. Secular Arab opponents, the West and Israel in particular were destined to become victims of vicious fanatical Islamic fundamentalism, to be killed for the glory of the Koran or to survive under an eternal Islamic rule. Suicide–homicide bombings were the Jihadi prelude to such subjugation. The Muslim Brotherhood always had a double mission of service to the community of believers and Jihad against infidels and *dhimmis*.

With no independent Palestinian State, Brotherhood activities took place in two very different locations: Egypt’s Gaza Strip and Jordan’s annexed West Bank. Muslims in Israel had no possibility to rebuild the organization. Activists in Gaza were absorbed into the Egyptian Brotherhood and those in the West Bank into the Jordanian branch. The Gazans were much more revolutionary, having already represented the Palestinian Islamist stronghold in 1948. In Egypt, Faruk’s regime banned the Brotherhood the following year, forcing them to emphasize education and religion. Fortunes reversed when the Free Officers, led by Gamal Abdel Nasser, overthrew King Faruk’s rule in 1952. The Brotherhood changed course into a more military direction and took the initiative, whereby they became the leading political force in the Strip. Conflict broke out with President Nasser’s administration when violent

---

<sup>1</sup> Hroub, Khalid, *Hamas Political Thought and Practice*, Institute for Palestine Studies, Washington DC, 2002, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Lebel, Jennie, *The Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el-Husseini and National Socialism*, Cigoja stampa publishers, English translation, Paul Munch, Belgrade, 2007, pp. 299-300.

protests were organized by the Brotherhood in alliance with the communists and the Baath secular Arab nationalists against a proposal to resettle Palestinian refugees in Sinai. Previously the Egyptian Brothers were outlawed after an assassination attempt against the Egyptian president, yet harsh repression in Gaza began only after the protests. Forced underground, this was a devastating blow halting the overall Jihadi objective for the liberation of Palestine.

The Brotherhood organized military cells, deemphasized ideology and concentrated on the future armed struggle. Such preparations served the activists well, especially in the aftermath of Israel's Sinai Campaign in late 1956 and the ensuing four month occupation of the Gaza Strip. The Brotherhood led the resistance and spawned the Palestine National Liberation Movement (PNLM) in the late 1950s, establishing the foundation for the secular Palestinian nationalist Fatah several years later. The Brothers saw this as a major mistake. The appeal needed to be to all Muslims, not just limited to the Arab States. Any break-off group emphasizing secular nationalism was seen as destined for failure. The central issue at hand was the original first "*qibla*" or "prayer direction," before Mecca, meaning the need to emphasize Jerusalem and, by extension, all of Palestine. The Brothers saw religious commitment as much more powerful than secular ideals. In 1960, the Palestine armed resistance and the Islamists split; the latter accusing the former of being impractical and insisting on building a new "liberation generation" and not engaging in immediate armed struggle. The PNLM, or what became Fatah, owes its origins to the Muslim Brotherhood, while the Islamists themselves were seen as a failure. The Brotherhood lost the initiative to their more secular counterparts and waited until the 1980s before becoming proactive once again.<sup>3</sup>

The PLO, led by its senior Fatah participant, became the foremost Palestinian resistance organization by the late 1960s. Beginning in the mid-1960s, there was hope of an Egyptian Nasserite victory over Israel, and at the time little expectation of an independent Palestinian State. Instead, Palestine would become a province of one of the surrounding Arab nations. Led by Yasir Arafat, Fatah and later the PLO embraced an abundance of ideological jargon reflecting Islam, Arab nationalism, Marxist-Leninism, and a plethora of developing world liberationist ideals. One basic objective was unshakable: the elimination of Israel and its Jewish population through military means. There were no true socio-economic ideals, as opposed to

---

<sup>3</sup> Mishal, Shaul and Sela, Avraham, *The Palestinian Hamas, Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, Columbia University Press, New York, USA, 2000, p. 18. Hroub, pp. 19-24.

other left wing national revolutionary movements sweeping the Third World in the post WWII period. Violence was a value that existed for its own sake, and socio-economic issues were only to be confronted in the aftermath of victory over Israel.<sup>4</sup> The PLO was an empty barrel compared to the Muslim Brotherhood, and could not afford to focus on domestic concerns or *dawa* organizations serving the Palestinian population's needs. However, in aligning with Muslim Brotherhood thought, the PLO advocated and began implementing the armed struggle until final victory.

In parallel to the development of Fatah and the PLO, the height of Nasser's brutal anti-Brotherhood campaign culminated in 1965 after an attempted coup against his regime. A period of sharp repression followed, with sweeping arrests of suspects including Ahmed Yasin, who years later founded and led Hamas, and the execution of the leading Brotherhood member, Islamist theologian and ideologue Sayyid Qutb.

Brotherhood activities in the Jordanian-held West Bank were different. Whereas in Gaza, the Islamists were forced into a clandestine radical approach because of Nasserist opposition, their colleagues functioned under the Jordanian Hashemites as a loyal opposition throughout the 1950s, sharing a conservative, traditionalist platform opposed to the Egyptian revolutionary regime. After 1967, the two groups cooperated in the United Palestinian [Muslim] Brotherhood Organization. Ironically, Israel's "open bridges" policy with Jordan unlocked the borders into the Jewish State from both Gaza and the West Bank and allowed for expanding Brotherhood influence. Palestinian Islamists passed freely in and out of Jordan, Gaza and Israel. Their reach went beyond the Hashemite Kingdom, particularly among Israeli Arabs where Sheikh Yasin himself spent many Fridays preaching throughout the mosques in the Galilee and Negev.

The PLO and the Brotherhood worked together briefly after the 1967 defeat; however, controversy erupted between the two. Both established camps in the Jordan Rift valley from 1968-70 to facilitate raids across the Jordan River into the Israeli-held West Bank. The Muslim Brotherhood camps were situated in the north and administered independently even though they flew a Fatah flag (See Chapter II "Ideologues" Abdullah Azzam). Recovering from the Nasserite period, the Gaza Muslim Brotherhood remained outside the guerrilla initiatives, and did not send volunteers to these camps. Furthermore, the Brothers were deemed reactionaries and clashed with those from the different PLO factions, most notably sworn atheists and leftists.

---

<sup>4</sup> Rubin, Barry and Rubin, Judith Colp, *Yasir Arafat, A Political Biography*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2005, pp. 26-29.

Fatah was officially established in 1965. Once they realized the impossibility of achieving victory on their own, they hoped to force the Arab world into major hostilities with Israel through constant border clashes. After Black September 1970 and the expulsion of the PLO from Jordan, the Brotherhood's military efforts were halted and they returned to education, proselytizing and organizing to rally the "umma," or people. Playing their cards wisely, the Brotherhood remained neutral during the clash, and in its aftermath returned to Islamic educational initiatives. The armed struggle in Palestine was not yet ripe.<sup>5</sup> In particular, Sheikh Yasin introduced Sayyid Qutb's famous commentary *In the Shade of the Koran* for study without any objections from the Israeli authorities. Israel's non-intervention policies granting religious freedoms were a major improvement for Islamic activists as opposed to the continual Egyptian and Jordanian persecutions over the same issues.<sup>6</sup> Israeli authorities were oblivious to the political implications of Islamic studies and so overly focused on Arafat and the PLO that they were blind to a much more powerful adversary organizing for a day of reckoning.

Nasser's anti-Islamist, pro-Arabist policies repressed the Gaza Muslim Brotherhood for fifteen years, forcing them to work clandestinely with their emphasis placed on educational preparation for the postponed Jihad. Fatah projected military strength in the face of the recent Arab defeat and continued to work openly, while the Brotherhood built mosques and infused the people with Islam from 1967-76. According to the Hamas narrative, this was the "hard core" solidification of the movement while under an oppressive Israeli regime. Gaza proved a fertile breeding ground for the Islamist message, since half the residents lived in refugee camps, the population density was among the highest in the world, and poverty was a common denominator for most. Yasin concentrated only on religious preaching and educational *dawa* organizations, believing the Israeli authorities, like the Egyptians before them, would not interfere. His religious center *al-Mujamma' al-Islami* was finally legalized in 1978 and quickly became the foundation for religious and educational Islamic institutions in Gaza. The *Mujamma* was composed of seven committees: preaching and guidance, welfare, education, charity, health, sports, conciliation, as well as establishing a women's association. By the end of the decade, the Islamic Center was the most influential unifying force throughout Gaza. They battled against social ills such as pornography, drug usage, alcohol and carousing between men and women. Mosque activities took on exceptional importance by hosting

---

<sup>5</sup> Mishal and Sela, pp. 17-18 and Hroub, pp. 29-31.

<sup>6</sup> Tamimi, Azzam, *Hamas, A History from Within*, Olive Branch Press, North Hampton, MA, USA, 2007, pp. 36-37.



kindergartens, schools, medical facilities, vocational training, sporting clubs, social welfare and religious training.<sup>7</sup>

The Muslim Brotherhood realized it was on its own as far as gaining support from the pan-Arab movement and particularly Egypt. Nasser, for all of his bluster and mobilization of forces in 1967, would be remembered for admitting he had no plan for the liberation of Palestine and losing the Six Day War, while his successor, Anwar Sadat, was seen as betraying the Palestinian people when he signed the 1979 Peace Accords with Israel.<sup>8</sup>

Simultaneously, under both Labor and Likud governments, Israel allowed for the construction of new mosques and the expansion of religious activities while repressing the outlawed PLO and its nationalist initiatives. In 1967, there were 77 mosques in Gaza; twenty-two years later the number climbed to 200. Certain unifying factors also contributed to Islamist growth, whether it was the never-ending clash with the PLO, especially the Marxist PFLP, opposition to Israel, or support for the Iranian revolutionaries. Funding came internationally, mostly through the Saudis. The Palestinians were now exploiting the connections of the Brotherhood umbrella to attain international Islamic support for their cause.<sup>9</sup>

For the first decade after the June 1967 War, Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank—Judea and Samaria—was very limited, essentially concentrated just over the armistice lines in the Jerusalem region, or along the Jordan River and northwest Dead Sea shoreline. This was an area contained in what is known as the “Allon Plan.” The average Palestinian did not experience a feeling of omnipresent Israeli settlement. The Likud victory and right/religious governments (1977-84) led by Menachem Begin and Yitzchak Shamir changed the equation. Jews began to populate the West Bank and Gaza in order to implement “the Greater Land of Israel” ideology based on the Biblical-Hebrew scriptural understanding that the Jewish People would develop all lands between the Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea, heralding in the End of Days. This meant large-scale settlement activity throughout the Palestinian areas. It is interesting to note that the Koran itself supports these ideas in 7:137 and 17:103-104. Led by Gush Emunim of the national religious movement, Jews often established settlements in the heart of heavily populated Palestinian regions such as the former Jewish Quarter of Hebron. This certainly was an accelerating factor in strengthening the Islamists appeal. In any case, it should be recalled that the viciously anti-Jewish Muslim Brotherhood existed decades before the territorial argument

---

<sup>7</sup> Mishal and Sela, pp. 18-20.

<sup>8</sup> Tamimi, pp. 12-19.

<sup>9</sup> Mishal and Sela, pp. 21-23.



was enjoined over West Bank and Gaza sovereignty in the wake of the 1967 War.

Intensified conflicting claims over holy sites, in particular the Cave of the Machpela in Hebron and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, further catalyzed what had been interpreted as a national clash into the religious domain. It did not help that the Israel Defense Forces (Israeli army or IDF) were unable to protect Palestinians against Jewish extremists.<sup>10</sup> Fears were further exacerbated when the Jewish right wing and religious nationalists advocated moving most of the Russian immigrant population into Palestinian areas. On the other hand, Israeli “deterrence” weakened with the murder of Israel’s peace partner Anwar Sadat in 1981 by a Jihadi assassin and the corresponding success of the Iranian Revolution.<sup>11</sup> Soon afterward, the rise of the disenfranchised Lebanese Shiites brought about the formation of Hezbollah, whose Khomeinist Jihadi commitments led them to demand the extermination of the Jewish State. By the 1990s, Hezbollah challenged Israeli forces in south Lebanon much more successfully than the PLO had in the 1970s and early 1980s.

While the Brotherhood built their social, educational and religious infrastructures, the Palestinian left and secular organizations failed in their attempts to rally the population to their agenda. Radical Islam catapulted forward with the success of Khomeini’s Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the continuing popular resentment against Israel’s occupation. The Muslim Brotherhood moved forward rapidly, but not fast enough for the right wing splinter “Islamic Jihad,” a faction formerly part of the Brothers. Led by Fathi al-Shikaki and inspired by Khomeini, they demanded immediate military operations. For the first time, the Brotherhood faced a direct challenge from within. Should they continue with the one-track internal Palestinian social change, as had been the policy for years, or should they begin arming for a military showdown?

They devised a two-pronged approach. First, they organized militarily, collecting arms and ammunition, obtaining vital information and tracking down those working for Israel. Secondly, they launched popular protests against Israel’s involvement in Lebanon, where in 1982 the PLO was routed and forced to evacuate. This led to a general strike in Gaza as a protest against overall conditions. In 1984, Israeli security forces became aware of military planning and arrested the head of the Political Bureau in the Gaza Strip, Sheikh Ahmed Yasin, and several others. A year later, Yasin was released in

---

<sup>10</sup> Morris, Benny, *Righteous Victims*, Vintage Books, New York, USA, 2001, p. 572. Mishal and Sela, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> Morris, pp. 566-569.

the “Jabril prisoner exchange,” as a consequence of the 1982 War in Lebanon. It is interesting to note that three years prior authorities arrested Sheikh Abdullah Nimr Darwish, the Israeli Arab Muslim who led “The Jihad Family,” for possession of illegal weapons. On the surface, even Israeli Arab Islamists were surpassing their Palestinian comrades in taking action, leading many to believe the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood was betraying the cause and cooperating with Israel.

From 1984-87, Islamic Jihad became the activist role model and the orientation shifted to an armed struggle. Salah Shehadeh became the first military commander of the Palestinian Brotherhood. On the popular level protests continued as the most effective mobilization device, reaching levels of mass participation by 1985-86, especially among Islamized university students. The PLO was on the defensive, losing both funding and political control of the Islamic University to the Gaza Brotherhood. By the 1990s, the Gaza Islamic Center and Islamic University would not only unify, but began an internal Jihad to cleanse secular elements from Muslim society.<sup>12</sup>

While Fathi al-Shikaki left the social issues to the Brotherhood, he built a radical, Iranian Shiite-inspired Sunni activist organization eventually known as the Islamic Jihad whose sole purpose was to liberate Palestine. At the outset he paid a heavy price and was expelled from the Muslim Brotherhood in 1979 as a result of his actions. He proved himself in 1980, attacking Jews in the Hebron region, killing six and wounding seventeen, while forging an alliance with the great Jihadist Abdullah Azzam,<sup>13</sup> who later fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan and became Osama bin Laden’s mentor.

A snapshot of Palestinian society just prior to the Intifada civil resistance or “shaking off” in 1987 provides a glimpse of an extremely frustrated society suffering from multiple contradictions. Israel had allowed the establishment of seven universities where previously none existed. Islamic associations flourished, as did social and professional institutions. The Muslim Brotherhood was encouraged as a counterweight to Palestinian nationalism as heralded by the PLO/Fatah and led by Yasir Arafat. Sheikh Ahmed Yasin, the charismatic Brotherhood leader who was also a quadriplegic confined to a wheelchair, was allowed to operate freely despite his rabid antisemitism and ability to spread Islamist ideology. Yasin challenged Arafat and the PLO, demanding Islamic behavior. He was no less anti-Israel than they were, but added a vicious, overt antisemitism.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Mishal and Sela, pp. 21-24.

Hroub, pp. 29-34.

<sup>13</sup> Tamimi, pp. 43-44.

<sup>14</sup> Morris, pp. 561-564.

In contradiction to all logic, the Islamists continued to receive at least tacit support from Israel's right wing leadership, apparently because of the government's focused hatred toward Yasir Arafat and his vanquished PLO, the ultimate foes in the eyes of Prime Minister Menachem Begin and the Likud. Israel may have believed in its own ability to assure security, but Hamas was winning the hearts and minds of Palestinians through education, religious activities, social welfare programs and its universal Islamic ideals. To Muslims, this meant the religious world was their natural ally, and not the secular Arab States who conceded Israel's "illegal" existence. Hamas was instituting an unofficial regime, encroaching on PLO/Fatah influence and the Israeli civil administration. Most Palestinians were loyal to the PLO/Fatah for years, but remained under the Israeli radar. Hamas now sought to replace Palestinian secular loyalties with Islamic ones and eventually gain full dominion over all of Palestine through Israel's destruction.

By the early 1980s Palestinian incomes skyrocketed from where they had been prior to 1967. In Gaza, the per capita income went from \$80 to \$1,700. In the first ten years of the Israeli occupation, the Gaza GNP grew by an annual 12.1 percent and in the West Bank by 12.9 percent. By contrast, the Israeli average increased 5.5 percent. Roads, electricity and health care all improved. All this slowed significantly as a result of the world economic slump of the early 1980s, bringing hidden frustrations to the surface. By 1987, some 120,000 Palestinians or 40 percent of the work force sold their skills to Israel. There was no national Palestinian economic development to absorb their labor. Added to this were those who had relocated to the Persian Gulf and particularly Iraq years before and had sent home remittances, but now were forced to leave as a result of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88).<sup>15</sup>

The average Palestinian worker was building Israeli infrastructure and the Jewish nation state as opposed to his own, whether by choice or due to lack of choice. Soon, internal frustrations reached a boiling point. Contradiction over loyalties, such as the economic necessity to work in Israel versus national commitment to build a Palestinian State, opened the door for extremist, violent ideologies. Physical and ideological breakout was imminent in order to regain collective self-esteem. Fatah and the PLO were going nowhere, especially in the wake of the crushing defeat in Lebanon in 1982. Expectations grew as did the gap between education and personal economic well-being and the receding possibility of obtaining independent national and

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, pp. 564-566.

religious recognition. All of this brought Palestinian society to a breaking point in what is known as “relative deprivation.”<sup>16</sup> The Islamist mix of world Jihad coupled with an uncompromising antisemitism and anti-Israel rhetoric acted as a catalyst for a sweeping rebellion, not only against Israel but against the Fatah/PLO.

The die was cast—social change and the armed struggle took place simultaneously. Delay could no longer be countenanced; the dual priorities of Hamas would come to fruition at the opportune moment. Palestinian historian and political analyst Khalid Hroub listed three major reasons for Palestinian national despair: the defeat of Yasir Arafat and the PLO in the 1982 Lebanon War, the loss of Arab world interest and support for the Palestinian cause, and the internal socio-political pressure built up over twenty years of the Israeli presence in the West Bank and Gaza. Furthermore, a new generation had grown up since 1967. They saw Israel as an arrogant adversary and were not afraid of a confrontation. They chose an Islamist religious fundamentalism as their true identity, replacing the secular Arab nationalism and socialist ideologies adopted by the PLO and much of the Arab world—ideas they saw as outside of the realm of Islam and tainted with failure.<sup>17</sup>

Beginning in 1983, the Muslim Brotherhood began preparing for the confrontation with Israel and commenced by building organizational infrastructure. Catapulted by the Iranian Revolution and the Jihadi successes in Afghanistan against the Soviets, operations began in the spring of 1987 with the active Jihad designated for November. However, the movement sputtered and was desperately in need of a conflict to prove itself. The infamous December 8th traffic accident in Gaza, where several Palestinians were killed by an Israeli driver, and the resulting violent protests, came as a godsend to the Islamists and allowed not only for attacks against Israel, but demands for her destruction. The PLO, on the other hand, was pressured by the US to recognize Israel’s existence in the framework of a two-state solution. Arafat inferred recognition of Israel a year later and lost credibility with Palestinians in exchange for gaining Western support.<sup>18</sup> Battle-born

---

<sup>16</sup> Ted Gurr explains this theory in *Why Men Rebel*. The concept of “relative deprivation” is the “perceived discrepancy between value expectations and value capabilities” of individuals or groups. More simply put this is the gap between one’s everyday reality and one’s expectations. When the gap grows too wide, a level of frustration is reached whereby violence ensues. This analytical tool will be used more fully in the conclusion, discussed in Chapter X.

<sup>17</sup> Hroub, pp. 35-36.

<sup>18</sup> Tamimi pp. 45-53 and 61.

Hamas entered the world with a birth certificate completely differentiating it from the secular PLO/Fatah.

By late 1987, signed communiqués in the name of the Islamic Resistance Movement (IRM) accompanied actions strengthening a spirit of unity and resistance. Over a two month period there was a shootout with escaped Palestinian prisoners that killed four, a clash on the campus of the University of Islam in Gaza where dozens of students were wounded, the stabbing death of an Israeli in Gaza City, and a traffic accident between Israeli and Palestinian vehicles in December resulting in quite a few Palestinian casualties. Public outrage reached new heights and exploded the day after the accident.<sup>19</sup> Mass demonstrations and rioting broke out and the IRM used the acronym of those three letters in Arabic to form the term “Hamas,” meaning “zeal,” in its overtures to the public. Interestingly, the word means “violent theft” in Biblical Hebrew.<sup>20</sup>

The continuing protests were referred to as an “*intifada*” or in popular terms referred to as an “uprising.” The first official meeting and communique issued came from Sheikh Yasin, Abdul Aziz al-Rantisi, Salah Shehadeh, Muhammad Sham’ah, Isa al-Sashshar, Abdel Fattah Dukhan and Ibrahim al-Yazuri.<sup>21</sup> Mosab Hassan Yousef claims the seven participants to be Ahmed Yasin, Muhammad Jamal al-Natsheh, Jamal Mansour, Hassan Yousef, Mahmud Muslih, Jamal Hamami and Ayman Abu Taha.<sup>22</sup> One list or the other or a combination of the two made up the founding members of Hamas. The first communique was posted a few days later in Gaza and in the West Bank within a week. The loosely coordinated Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood solidified into the activist Hamas group with preexisting associated Islamic organizations joining the centralized body. Political action and armed resistance against Israel, and especially against “Jews,” manifested. Hamas planned to destroy the Jews with Allah’s help, as indicated in three excerpts from that first communique on December 14, 1987.

---

<sup>19</sup> Hroub p. 39.

Morris p. 573.

<sup>20</sup> “Word of the Day/Hamas the Terror Movement that didn’t do its Hebrew Homework,” retrieved February 2, 2015,

[www.haaretz.com/news/features/wordof-the-day/1.608751](http://www.haaretz.com/news/features/wordof-the-day/1.608751).

“Hamas,” Even Shoshan, Abraham, *The New Hebrew Dictionary* (Hebrew), Kiryat Sefer, 1992, Jerusalem, Israel, Vol. I, p. 405.

<sup>21</sup> Hroub, pp. 36-39.

Mishal and Sela, pp. 20-23.

<sup>22</sup> Yousef, Mosab, *Son of Hamas*, Tyndale House Publishers, USA, 2010, pp. 19-20.

Our steadfast Muslim masses:

Today, you have a date with God's powerful decree against the Jews and their helpers. Nay, you are an integral part of this decree that, God willing, ultimately shall uproot them.

Let the Jews understand that despite the chains, prisons, and detention centers, despite the suffering of our people under their criminal occupation, despite the blood and tears, our people's perseverance and steadfastness shall overcome their oppression and arrogance. Let them know that their policy of violence shall beget naught but a more powerful counter policy by our sons and youths who love the eternal life in heaven more than our enemies love this life.

It [the intifada] comes to awaken the consciences of those among us who are gasping after a sick peace, after empty international conferences, after treasonous partial settlements like Camp David [1978-79]. The intifada is here to convince them that Islam is the solution and the alternative. Let the world know that the Jews are committing Nazi crimes against our people and that they will drink from the same cup.<sup>23</sup>

From these excerpts one learns that the Jews are the enemy of Allah and that homicide-suicide attacks are on the way by "youths who love the eternal life in heaven more than our enemies love this life." The Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt in 1978-79 were rejected in their entirety. There could be no peace between Israel and another Arab country such as Egypt, nor could there be a blueprint for an initiative to grant autonomy to the Palestinians as agreed upon in the "Frameworks for Peace" section as a first step prior to "the final status of the West Bank and Gaza and other outstanding issues by the end of the transitional period."<sup>24</sup> To quote the first communique "Islam is the solution and alternative," there is no other. The Jews were equated with the Nazis and Hamas would accept no compromises to resolve the conflict.

---

<sup>23</sup> Hroub, " Hamas First Communique," pp. 265-266.

<sup>24</sup> "Camp David Accords," *Israel Ministry Foreign Affairs*, retrieved August 12, 2011, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/camp%20david%20accords.aspx>

**Hamas and the Intifada 1987-93**

In retrospect, Hamas was officially established as a result of its first communiqué at the end of 1987. Although in truth the organization existed for decades as the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood. Under intense pressure due to its conflict with both Israel and the PLO, the foundational *Hamas Covenant* was presented as Islamic holy writ in August 1988. Only after the *Covenant* was published did the Israeli leadership become fully cognizant of Hamas' unbounded hatred for both the State of Israel and the Jewish People. It was now understood that Hamas words were to be equated with actions.

Finally, following the lead of the Islamic Jihad militant terrorist splinter group, Hamas became the activist force behind the Intifada. Hamas evolved into a composite of the Fatah PLO and Islamic Jihad on the military front by mixing the previously rejected Palestinian Arab nationalist element with Jihadi extremism. Both found expression in *The Hamas Covenant (HC)* and quite possibly Israeli security concerns were only fully awakened once Hamas announced its embrace of Palestinian nationalism (see *HC* Introduction-Preamble, Articles 6, 7, 11, 13, 14 and 15). The integration of Palestinian nationalism was conditional on the Islamist interpretation of what Palestinian nationalism meant, explicitly its subjugation to the Islamic world view, values and way of life (see *HC* Articles 25, 26 and 27). Hamas made its bid to lead the resistance and to either replace the PLO and Islamic Jihad, or to absorb both of them in the long run.

In juxtaposition stood the *dawa* organizations dealing in religion, education and social welfare. Many saw redeeming value to Islamic charities, including those of Hamas. Even Israeli governments noticed the good works as a result of such activity. In particular the right wing and religious were favorably inclined, as opposed to their confrontational policies targeting Arafat and the PLO. In reality, *dawa* activities never nullified the Islamic armed struggle and instead often led to a greater commitment by the masses, enhancing violent actions against Israel. As pointed out by Matthew Levitt, donations made for *dawa* social welfare organizations are inextricably linked to funding terrorism. There is no contradiction in the Islamist mindset to use social welfare monies either for poverty relief, for the armed struggle against Israel or any other enemy. Charities for the *dawa* also funded armed resistance, operated by the same Hamas leadership playing a double role.<sup>25</sup> To quote Levitt on the blurring of lines between social welfare and terrorism:

Inside the Palestinian territories, the battery of mosques, schools, orphanages, summer camps, and sports leagues

---

<sup>25</sup> Levitt, Matthew, *Hamas: Politics, Charity and Terrorism*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2006, pp. 2-5.



sponsored by Hamas are integral parts of an overarching apparatus of terror. These Hamas entities engage in incitement and radicalize society, and undertake recruitment efforts to socialize even the youngest children to aspire to die as martyrs. They provide logistical and operational support for weapons smuggling, reconnaissance and suicide bombings. They provide day jobs for field commanders and shelter fugitive operatives.<sup>26</sup>

For instance bombers of the past two decades often began as moderates serving the community, which confused and blurred the lines between moderates and fanatics.<sup>27</sup> Both types can be construed as the *dawa* or “calling of Islam.” They are not mutually exclusive and can be understood as two sides of the same Muslim commitment of total belief, action and the spreading of the Koranic, Sharia message.<sup>28</sup> The integrated objective of Hamas was and is to achieve full control over civil society while battling and defeating Israel. There is no pandering to a “Jihad of the soul” as Jihad clearly advocates homicide-suicide bombings and terror operations.<sup>29</sup> One may add that the Islamist flock views such leadership as having Divine authority given by Allah; there is no possible contradiction between the two functions, but rather they complement each other.

Israeli policy was anti-PLO and anti-Palestinian nationalist and thereby sought to foster Islamist elements in their battle for the Palestinian street until the summer of 1988, half a year after the outbreak of the Intifada. Ludicrous as it sounds, at the outset Israeli policy makers expected the Islamic fundamentalists to balance or even defeat the supposedly more dangerous secular nationalists, believing all of this was in Israel’s interests. Yasin’s antipathy toward secularism and the PLO was no secret, he condemned them as “pork eaters and wine drinkers” while taking them to task for allowing women the right or ability to speak at all, since “a woman’s voice” was considered “indecent.”<sup>30</sup> In early 1988, people began to fear curtailment of religious freedom should Israel take overt action against Hamas. Their fear was confirmed after Israel verified information concerning arms and explosives caches from captured activists who admitted association with Hamas. After that, Israel initiated a full-scale sweep against

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> Yousef, pp. 9-12.

<sup>28</sup> “Dawah,” *Wikipedia*, retrieved July 8, 2011, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dawah.

<sup>29</sup> Levitt, p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Schiff, Ze’ev, and Ya’ari EHUD, *Intifada*, translated by Ina Friedman, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1990, pp. 224-225.

the Islamists in July.<sup>31</sup> Publication of the *Covenant* confirmed suspicions that Hamas was potentially more dangerous than the PLO.

Overall, the Intifada was seen as a turnaround of Palestinian behavior since 1948. Palestinians were taking responsibility for their own future, beginning with those territories originally captured by Egypt in Gaza, and by Jordan in the West Bank. At the outset, everyone participated despite the lack of a centrally organized command. Fatah, the left wing PFLF and DFLP all worked alongside the Islamic Jihad and Hamas. Two brothers from Ramallah, Muhammad and Majid Labadi, established a grass roots national secular command known as the United National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU). Accompanied by defensive barricades barring Israelis from Palestinian villages and East Jerusalem neighborhoods, stones, gasoline bombs and posters declaring the “revolution” were their major offensive weapons. Eventually Israeli security forces retook these areas.<sup>32</sup>

At first, the Intifada took the PLO/Fatah by surprise but with time Arafat gained control over events. Somewhere between \$120-\$300 million would be funneled annually to activists.<sup>33</sup> Hamas and the UNLU organized strikes together, with the former adding extra strike days of their own. Taking a tougher line did not work against the Islamists, but instead had the opposite effect leaving Hamas with a reputation of being more resilient than Fatah and the secular nationalists. Hamas operatives were seen as less likely to break during interrogations and outstripped Fatah in recruiting adherents from the prison populations. The secularists promised material well-being for a successful revolution while Hamas “only” promised spiritual rewards in the next world. Simultaneously, Hamas continued its social activism, working for the reopening of schools, running charitable operations and enforcing civil law after Palestinian police officers working under Israeli auspices resigned.<sup>34</sup> Arafat understood the competition he faced was over who set the ground rules for the continuing uprising. He appealed to the Muslim Brotherhood throughout the Arab world to recognize him and the PLO as the sole representative and leader of the Palestinian people and the Intifada.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 238.

<sup>32</sup> Morris. p. 575.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 576.

<sup>34</sup> Up until 1987-88 there were Palestinians working under Israeli auspices in the police in Gaza and the West Bank. They were paid by Israel. These police were mostly a continuation of the Jordanian paid force which existed prior to the 1967 Six Day War.

<sup>35</sup> Schiff and Ya'ari, pp. 234-236 and 239.

Hamas and the secular PLO nationalist adherents of Fatah, the leftist PFLP and DFLP were all battling a common enemy in Israel, but early on they were in competition with each other. The PLO called business strikes on the first day of each month, and Hamas called business strikes on the ninth day. The PLO was corrupt and power hungry while Hamas raised the banner of religion and Jihad. On both sides, personal vendettas were carried out against individuals and families under the guise of resistance and the average Palestinian often suffered from the ensuing chaos.<sup>36</sup> To quote Mosab Yousef, son of Hamas leader Hassan Yousef:

In the initial years of the first Intifada, ideological differences kept Hamas and the PLO on very separate paths. Hamas was largely animated by religious fervor and the theology of jihad, while the PLO was driven by nationalism and the ideology of power. If Hamas called a strike and threatened to burn the stores of anyone who stayed open, PLO leaders across the street threatened to burn the stores of anyone who closed.<sup>37</sup>

Both sides fought for recognition as the leader of the uprising, hoping to gain Muslim Brotherhood support throughout the Arab world. Eventually, the largest and most powerful branch in Egypt answered Arafat's call for recognition of himself and the PLO as the sole Palestinian leadership. Hamas would have to work much harder, proving their abilities, as they did within the next two decades. Arafat's move, and recognition by the Muslim Brotherhood, exposed the PLO as not being a strictly secular organization, as it claimed. In retrospect one can surmise that the upstart Hamas was not taken seriously, a major blunder to be rectified by the Egyptian Brotherhood only in later years.

Although Hamas made inroads in the West Bank, their power still emanated from the Gaza Strip. In the 1988 summer crackdown throughout the Palestinian areas, Israel apprehended 120 out of 200 members of the Hamas military wing. The following May, the Hamas commander Salah Shehadeh and spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yasin were arrested, yet Hamas continued to hold a much harder line than Fatah and the more moderate UNLU.<sup>38</sup> The UNLU was said to be the operative wing of PLO-Tunis, carrying out Arafat's orders from his headquarters in his Tunisian exile. Overall, UNLU leaflets usually called for strike days, demonstrations, non-

---

<sup>36</sup> Yousef, pp. 32-34.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 33.

<sup>38</sup> Schiff and Ya'ari, pp. 238-239.

payment of taxes or explained the usefulness of Molotov cocktails and rock throwing. On the moderate side, some leaflets expressed hope of working together with pro-peace organizations in Israel. Not everything the UNLU did was to the liking of the PLO, and Hamas in particular would hear nothing of such moderation.<sup>39</sup> Hamas carried out terror attacks usually with knives, metal rods, rocks and gasoline bombs but not live ammunition. Suspected Palestinian collaborators with Israel paid a price either through punishment or execution, and Israel's security services lost many of their informants in the Palestinian areas.<sup>40</sup>

By the summer of 1990 the Intifada was slowing down but was revitalized when the Palestinians' greatest patron, and Yasir Arafat's closest ally, Iraq's Saddam Hussein invaded the Western-backed Kuwaiti sheikhdom and shortly afterward announced his intention to obliterate Israel with chemical weapons and capture Jerusalem. Palestinians cheered as Saddam fired 39 rockets into Israel and threatened to exterminate the Jewish state.<sup>41</sup> Saddam was a constant ally illustrating a commonality of interests between Palestinians and Iraqis as concerned confronting the West, whether it was Israel and/or the US. Arafat and Saddam were the closest of allies, both seen as the flag bearers of overall Arab nationalism. The price was steep, Iraq was in ruins from US and Allied bombings in the 1991 Gulf War while over a thousand Palestinians lay dead from clashes with Israel. Israeli casualties were disproportionately lower with dozens killed. Thousands more, mostly on the Palestinian side, were injured. Both sides were tired, with exhaustion setting in on the Palestinian side.

Almost as if on key, Israel's ultra-right religious "Temple Mount Faithful" announced their intent to start building the Third Temple during Succot, or Feast of the Tabernacles, in October 1990. Police prevented Jewish activists from entering the Al-Aksa domain on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, but tensions were not relieved. A massive clash ensued between Israeli police and Arabs on the Temple Mount, leaving 19 Palestinians dead and dozens injured on both sides. Jews were forced to leave the Western Wall plaza as the Palestinians hurled stones at them from above. In the end, the police regained control on the Mount. Although the narratives differ, one point became clear: the Intifada was re-galvanized as attacks against Israelis increased.<sup>42</sup> Most believe the Intifada ended with the Madrid Conference a

---

<sup>39</sup> Morris, p. 579.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, pp. 583-584.

<sup>41</sup> Yousef, pp. 45-46.

<sup>42</sup> Morris, pp. 584-585.

full year later, and in the aftermath of Saddam Hussein's defeat by Allied forces in the 1991 Gulf War.

While Israelis argued amongst themselves over whether to engage in peace talks or not with the Palestinians, the popular uprising made clear to the world that the present situation could not continue. Although there were Palestinians who favored a two-state solution, many others sought Israel's annihilation. Unfortunately for the Palestinians, the seeds of internal conflict and possible self destruction were planted in the ensuing clash between Hamas and the PLO. In 1991 more Palestinians died by the hand of other Palestinians—approximately 150 deaths—than by Israelis—approximately 100 deaths. This was not only a matter of killing collaborators and criminals, but it was a result of violence between Fatah and Hamas. The Palestinian economy, so dependent on Israel, was in ruins. With Palestinian workers absent on strike days and during curfews, Israeli employers eventually brought in replacement foreign workers driving up Palestinian unemployment. To make matters worse, 300,000 Palestinians were banished from Kuwait after Saddam Hussein's invasion resulting in the loss of \$400 million in remittances.<sup>43</sup> Another crippling blow came with the demise of the Soviet Union by the end of 1991 leaving Arafat and the PLO without financial and diplomatic superpower support to stand up to their adversaries.

From March 1990 to July 1992, after the collapse of the second Likud-Labor national unity government (NUG), Likud Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir led the most hard line right wing-religious government in Israel's history. A major policy cornerstone was settlement activity. By the time the opposition Labor moderates won the 1992 elections and Yitzhak Rabin became premier, there were well over 100,000 Jews living in Palestinian areas. Rabin's strategic outlook was based on the "Allon Plan," meaning a territorial compromise with the Arabs to ensure security, democracy and a Jewish majority within Israel's final borders.<sup>44</sup> Originally the plan called for an

---

<sup>43</sup> Sachar, Howard, *A History of Israel From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2007, pp. 977-986.

Morris pp. 612-615.

<sup>44</sup> This is best outlined in Yigal Allon's article "The Case for Defensible Borders" in *Foreign Affairs Quarterly*, Fall, 1976, [www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/.../israel-casedefensible-borders](http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/.../israel-casedefensible-borders). Allon was commander of the Palmach in 1948, deputy prime minister and minister of education in Golda Meir's government (1969-73) and foreign minister in Yitzhak Rabin's first government (1974-77). 196 Hamas Jihad According to the plan Israel for the most part was to retain the region in and around Jerusalem, the Jordan Rift Valley along the Jordan River and the northwest coast of the Dead Sea. The remaining 60% or so of the West Bank was to be demilitarized and handed over to Jordanian civilian administration. A road through Israel's Lachish region would connect to the Gaza Strip allowing the Jordanian-Palestinian

agreement with Amman, but when Jordan relinquished all responsibility for the West Bank in the summer of 1988 and the future Oslo Accords, the Palestinians, and in particular the PLO, would replace the Hashemite Kingdom as the future peace partner.

Already in 1990 Fatah was faced with a choice between an alliance with Hamas, who demanded 40 percent representation on the Palestine National Council, or to move toward conflict resolution as the Americans demanded. Fatah opted for the latter—which was a betrayal of principles as far as Hamas was concerned.<sup>45</sup> In 1991, pro-Fatah Palestinians went to the Madrid peace talks as part of the Jordanian delegation, but besides symbolic “Palestinian” participation little was accomplished. Two years later, Israel led by Prime Minister Rabin and the PLO headed by Chairman Arafat engaged in the Oslo process ostensibly to bring about a two-state solution by the end of the decade. Much of the Israeli right objected and Hamas remained in steadfast opposition to any compromise recognizing Israel’s existence.

Despite serious losses through death, injury and incarceration, Hamas was not idle during these two years. From the start, Hamas condemned Madrid as a sellout and clashed with the PLO, often resulting in injuries and even deaths. By December 1992, Israelis felt the intensity of Hamas’ Jihadi terrorist pressures. After several attacks, and in particular the murder of border policeman Nissim Toledano, Rabin’s moderate Labor cabinet endorsed a roundup of 1,600 fundamentalists and the banishment of 413 Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists, sending them across the border to south Lebanon. This action spiked terror activities against Israel into early 1993. The exiled activists spent their time networking and building a more cohesive Islamic resistance, while establishing connections through world media and cultivating international sympathy. Their activities resulted in a UN condemnation of Israel embodied in Resolution 799 demanding the immediate return of all those expelled. The Hamas activists also forged ties with Lebanon’s Hezbollah. A year later, the exiled Islamists returned home as heroes.<sup>46</sup>

The Intifada impacted Palestinian society on a social and economic level. Although impoverished by strike days and curfews, a new social order and

---

entity development of port facilities on the Mediterranean coast. The Jordan River was Israel’s security border while the Jordanian-Palestinians were to enjoy economic development. Although unofficially discussed with the Jordanians in the early 1970s the plan was never awarded Israeli government approval and was not implemented.

<sup>45</sup> Tamimi, pp. 189-190.

<sup>46</sup> Hroub, pp. 159 and 193.

Morris, p. 618.

Yousef, pp. 49-52.

solidarity were developing. By November 1988, many Palestinians followed Arafat and Fatah in support of peaceful engagement with Israel through renunciation of terrorism and the acceptance, at least in theory, of a two-state solution. Overall, Israelis were skeptical of PLO intentions due to mixed messages; the PLO's declarations and actions were both conciliatory and hostile at the same time.<sup>47</sup> Neither the Israeli government nor the average citizen was convinced of Arafat's sincerity, yet it was a shift in course.

Still, to many Palestinians, Islamic Jihad seemed to be the answer. Coupled with *dawa* social welfare activism was the Jihadist and viciously antisemitic ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. Sheikh Yasin was always forthright in his discussions with Israeli security officials, clearly stating that Islam will be victorious and the Jews returned to their *dhimma* status.<sup>48</sup> Previously in the 1950s, Yasin took a stand against secular Palestinian nationalism and any attempt at Arab national resistance, as he believed victory would only come through Allah and Islam. Still, he would not condemn such national secular efforts outright. Yasin was a major influence in constructing the carefully worded *Hamas Covenant*, and fully emphasized the above-mentioned ideals in its final draft in August 1988.<sup>49</sup>

Hamas understood that the traditional Brotherhood demand of Islamic solidarity was too amorphous; nationalization, or specifically a "Palestinianization," of the conflict was the answer to rally the masses. The question asked was whether Palestinianization was a limiting strategy when the Hamas objective was to capture the Palestine national movement, Islamicize it, declare victory and engage in a form of endless "*hudna*" with Israel. Was Islam just a strategy to be used in the overall objective of defeating the PLO and its secular allies? This being the case, Hamas would be forced to settle for an Islamic Palestine alongside Israel, "Islamic," being only an adjective. To do so was a theological "sell-out."

Their other option was using Jihad as the strategy for the defeat of the PLO and Israel. In this scenario, the battles for Palestine were limited to one piece in an Islamic world puzzle, but the local Jihad could only be won if packaged in Palestinian national terms. Palestinian nationalism was a tool for victory to be discarded in the aftermath, while the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was reduced to one front in the Islamic reach for global hegemony. The State

---

<sup>47</sup> Laqueur, Zev and Rubin, Barry, eds., *The Israel-Arab Reader*, Penguin Books, New York, NY, 1995, "The Palestine National Council: Political Resolution and Declaration of Independence," pp. 537-546.

Morris, p. 608.

<sup>48</sup> Eldar, Shlomi, *Getting to Know Hamas*, Keter Publishers (Hebrew), Israel, 2012, p. 25.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 66-68.



and Islam would be synonymous, a breeding ground for global Jihad where Muslims were trained and garrisoned worldwide to bring about total victory. The eventual merging of the Palestinian locale with the universal Islamic state was the final objective. Here “Palestinian” was only an adjective used to indicate from what region of the world the Jihadi warrior originated.

If Islamic Palestine was the objective, then *The Hamas Covenant* would be reduced to a tool to obtain a pragmatic objective - the nation state. But if the *Covenant* is taken at face value, then capturing any part or all of Palestine (Land of Israel) is only a preliminary step leading to eventual world conquest. Would Hamas become pragmatic? If so, then was Islam betrayed in the name of secular Palestinian Arab nationalism? Or rather, was Hamas using secular Palestinian nationalism as a veneer for an Islamic victory and an eventual Islamic state or regional entity? Hamas solidified its ranks, held up well under fire despite the arrest of most of its activists, retained its turf—in particular Gaza despite PLO pressure, and expanded its influence. In retrospect, Hamas claimed victory in the Intifada.

Many believe Hamas was forced to face reality and became a pragmatic Islamic movement, abandoning its *Covenant* and enemies list. In this scenario, even the Jews were no longer to be considered hostile, only the Zionists who were defined as part of a world imperialist scheme would remain the implacable enemy. Hamas’ belligerency was to be directed at those who attacked it first.<sup>50</sup> At differing times Hamas could appear quite flexible. In 1988, during the Intifada, one Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zahar met with then Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and IDF Chief of Staff Dan Shomron. He made it plain that hostilities would end provided Israel withdrew from the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.<sup>51</sup> Such an interpretation meant Hamas was evolving into an Islamic PLO confining its struggle to the Palestinian front against Israel, but allowing no hostilities beyond. On the other side stood Arafat and the PLO appearing even more “moderate,” yet the question remained as to whether Hamas had truly given up the armed struggle or if such secular nationalism was only a facade and tactical move to hide a more Islamist perspective of never-ending struggle until victory—couched in secular terms. Israel took such PLO declarations at face value testing their intentions regarding the possibility of peace and the two-state solution. Concerning Hamas, Israel understood a halt in hostilities was not a prerequisite for a peace agreement, but for a *hudna*,

---

<sup>50</sup> Hroub, pp. 44-52.

<sup>51</sup> Eldar, pp. 26-27.

or a temporary Islamic cease-fire until the Islamists could strike back and win.

#### **Oslo Accords and the PA Mini-State 1993-2000**

The militant Hamas line was countered by a much more conciliatory PLO policy shift. Back door negotiations between the PLO and Israel through Norwegian intermediaries during the Labor party's first year in office resulted in the Oslo Accords, as embodied by the Declaration of Principles. To facilitate matters Israel recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian People. The Israeli government and the PLO signed the Oslo Declaration of Principles (DOP) in September 1993 on the White House lawn in essence with the PLO representing a state-in-the-making until elections. Hamas reviled the dealings between Israel and the PLO, and responded by striking Israel with Islamic terror just prior to and immediately after the signing of the Declaration. Still exiled to south Lebanon, the Hamas leadership took the Declaration as an affront, as did Sheikh Yasin who watched the ceremonies on TV from an Israeli prison. Everyone realized Oslo was also meant to destroy the Hamas movement. Fatah prisoners were freed from Israeli jails, while Hamas inmates remained incarcerated. Due to their uncompromising demands for Israel's destruction the Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah replaced the PLO as a more natural Jihadi ally for Hamas.<sup>52</sup> During this time, Hamas avoided any clash with the PLO. Hamas "moderates" like Sheikh Hassan Yousef who opposed Oslo and did not trust Israel or the PLO, realized the time was not ripe to challenge Arafat, so all remained calm.

The Declaration of Principles contained several main points, mostly taken from the previous "Framework for Peace in the Middle East" negotiated as an integral part of the Camp David Accords peace agreement between Israel and Egypt in 1978-79 after the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The main points used from the Camp David Accords were as follows:

- Acceptance of UN Resolution 242 and 338 calling for peace, security and recognition of all states in the region, most obviously including Israel.
- There was to be a five-year transitional period of Palestinian self-rule or autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza.
- A self-governing authority would be elected.

---

<sup>52</sup> Yousef, p. 52 and Eldar, pp. 70-71.

- There were to be Israeli withdrawals to “security locations” as the Palestinian self-governing authority exercised its control.
- Jordan and Israel were to arrive at a peace agreement.
- Israel, Jordan, Egypt and the elected local representatives were to negotiate a final status agreement for the West Bank and Gaza to ensure the “legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.”
- The elected representatives of the West Bank and Gaza were to approve the final status agreement to be implemented after the five-year transition period.

The major disagreement between Egyptian President Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Begin in the late 1970s was over the status of Jerusalem. Handing in two separate letters to President Carter, they refused to compromise. Begin declared Jerusalem “One city indivisible, the capital of the State of Israel.” Sadat insisted, “Arab [East] Jerusalem is an integral part of the West Bank.”

The DOP of 1993 was negotiated directly with the PLO and Arafat, who fourteen years prior rejected the Camp David Accords. The outstanding differences were Israeli agreement to a Palestinian police force, thereby removing Egypt and Jordan from the scene, and Israeli agreement to negotiate directly with the Palestinians over “Jerusalem” while confronting the other issues of “refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbors, and other issues of common interest.” All of these matters were to be negotiated as part of the permanent status accord. In 1993, Arafat and the PLO accepted the Camp David Accords after a few significant updates.<sup>53</sup>

On the other hand, Hamas fully rejected the American brokered 1978-79 Camp David Accords as explicitly stated in Article 32 of its *Covenant*. For the Islamists, the DOP represented a Palestinian national capitulation, and a larger Muslim capitulation to what was seen as an American-Israeli dictate. For Israelis the DOP involved a major concession whereby Israel agreed to negotiate the status of East Jerusalem which was annexed along with the Old City and its holy sites in 1967 immediately after the war. Jerusalem as Israel’s “united capital” was now in doubt. Though Israelis saw the DOP as a major

---

<sup>53</sup> “Declaration of Principles,” including the Annex and accompanying letters, *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, retrieved August 12, 2011, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20principles.aspx>.

concession to the Palestinians it held no significance for Hamas which continued to demand Israel's destruction.

Oslo I took place in early summer 1994. It was the first implementation of an Israeli withdrawal from the vast majority of Gaza and the Jericho municipal region. Arafat entered Gaza from Sinai by vehicle on July 1 and established the Palestinian Authority (PA), bringing with him thousands serving as his police and security forces. Palestinian prisoners were released from Israeli prisons, but Hamas and Islamic Jihad prisoners remained incarcerated. Israelis hoped the terror would end at this point, while many saw the change as favorable toward peace between the two adversaries. Israel and the PLO made a deal that resulted in what came to be known journalistically as "Land for Peace." The Palestinians obtained land and Israel obtained peace. It was a step-by-step process where each side tested the other during a five-year period of interim agreements. This was far from the real story, as Israel sought full security, while the PLO demanded sovereignty in its quest for an internationally recognized state. Each expected the other to help it achieve its objectives because they were deemed as mutually beneficial to both sides. Questions were continually raised as to how much sovereignty and security could be attained, and at what price?

Prior to the May 1994 signing there were terror attacks against Israelis and a major "retaliation" of personal revenge in February by Barukh Goldstein, a resident of the Jewish Quarter in Hebron, who killed 29 Palestinian worshipers at the Ibrahimi Mosque, also known as the Cave of the Machpela, a site holy to both Jews and Muslims. In April, the Islamists stepped up their attacks with bus bombings in Afula and Hadera, inside Israel proper. While Israel worked to repress its own right wing religious extremists, the PLO did not always try to contain Hamas. The PA only responded when directly threatened, as happened in November 1994 when Arafat gave the order to open fire on the Islamists during a Hamas show of strength in Gaza. The result was fourteen deaths and dozens of injuries. Thus, the PA further consolidated power.<sup>54</sup> It was unclear whether the PA was willing to clash with Hamas as part of guaranteeing Israeli security. Despite all their disagreements, both fought side-by-side during the Intifada and Fatah did not want to be seen as repressing patriotic acts of resistance against the Israeli occupier. On the other hand, the PA was obligated to cooperate on security with Israel as agreed upon by the Oslo principles.

Settlement issues were postponed until a permanent status agreement could be reached. Although Rabin refused to build in most of the Palestinian areas, there was continued construction in communities just past the 1967

---

<sup>54</sup> Hroub, p. 55.

Green Line, most notably in the Jerusalem area and in East Jerusalem itself. Palestinians saw this as a permanent encroachment on their eventual state. For the Islamists, construction was less of a problem since the existence of pre-1967 Israel was just as much of an affront as the settlements. Any Israeli actions seen as contradictions stirred the masses, worked to the Hamas advantage and against the PLO “appeasers.”

Although viewed by many as corrupt and oppressive, Arafat and the PLO still embodied Palestinian nationalism and, despite promises to the contrary, *The Palestinian National Charter* remained unchanged—still calling for Israel’s demise. This deterred neither Arafat nor the Israelis from signing Oslo II in September 1995, constituting an implementation of the DOP and continuation of Oslo I. By early 1996, Israel was to withdraw from the heavily populated West Bank Arab cities, relinquishing full civilian and military control to the PA. This region was designated as “Area A.” Outlying Palestinian villages, where Israel still retained security forces but the PA took over civil authority from the military administration, became “Area B.” All other remaining territories where full Israeli control remained intact were deemed “Area C.” As of this writing, the Oslo II arrangement is still the major determining factor in the everyday lives of Palestinians in the West Bank, as some 96-98 percent live in Areas A and B.

Hamas, fearing the possibility of conflict resolution and a two-state solution arrangement, went on the offensive with a concerted wave of attacks and suicide bombings against Israel. The best known are the bus bombings: Tel Aviv in October 1994, Beit Lid in January 1995, Ramat Gan and Ramat Eshkol in Jerusalem in the summer of 1995, the dual suicide-homicide attacks against the Jerusalem #18 bus during consecutive weeks in February-March 1996, and the Purim Dizengoff Center explosion immediately afterward. In addition, there were kidnappings and executions of Israeli soldiers and numerous shootings and attacks on civilians in urban areas and on the roads. Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who took the reins of government after Rabin’s assassination by the fanatical religious Jewish assailant Yigal Amir in November 1995, carried out all the withdrawals despite harsh right wing religious opposition. Sensing Arafat was not halting terrorism in the winter of 1996, he refused to withdraw from the Arab neighborhoods of Hebron. A few months later Peres lost the May elections to the right wing Likud. Benyamin Netanyahu became prime minister and

implemented the Hebron withdrawal in January 1997 with certain security upgrades for Israel.<sup>55</sup>

By 1995 the die was cast— Hamas became the most implacable of all enemies. According to Mosab Yousef, “The transition of Hamas into a full-blown terrorist organization was complete. Many of its members had climbed the ladder of Islam and reached the top. Moderate political leaders like my father [Hassan Yousef] would not tell the militants that what they were doing was wrong. They could not; on what basis could they declare it was wrong? The militants had the full force of the Qur’an to back them up.”<sup>56</sup> Furthermore Israel appeared clueless. “But they [Israel] never made an effort to find out who or what Hamas really was. And it would be many painful years before they would begin to understand that Hamas was not an organization as most people understood organizations, with rules and a hierarchy. It was a ghost. An idea. You can’t destroy an idea; you can only stimulate it. Hamas was like a flatworm. Cut off its head, and it just grew another.”<sup>57</sup>

The world saw the PLO-Israel conflict as political, one with possibilities for compromise. To the contrary, Hamas Islamicized the clash. It was absolutist, not just in theory but in practice. Allah was invoked in everyday actions, all the land belonged to Allah and Israel’s existence demanded termination. Those “racist leaders of Hamas” took it a step further insisting “Allah had given us the responsibility of eradicating the Jews.” Supposed moderates like Hassan Yousef accepted such a policy, even if they did not take action toward its realization.<sup>58</sup> In other words, everyone in Hamas was either active or complicit in an attempted policy of annihilating the Jews, not just the State of Israel.

Hamas strengthened its power and prestige while its leaders were in Israeli prisons. Not only were they allowed to organize prayers and Islamic study sessions, they ruled much of the prison population with an iron fist, including torturing suspected Palestinian “collaborators.” False accusations were made of sexual misconduct involving multiple women and bestiality. Confessions were extracted under excruciating pain and the “convicted,” many of them

---

<sup>55</sup> Ross, Dennis, *The Missing Peace*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, USA, 2005, Chapter 4, “From Oslo to the Palestinian Authority,” pp. 122-136, and Chapter 7, “The Interim Agreement,” pp. 188-208.

Sachar, pp. 989-1015.

Morris pp. 626-627.

<sup>56</sup> Yousef, p. 57.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, pp. 57-58.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, pp. 58-59 and 63.

former Hamas supporters, served as an example of an absolute power wielded by the incarcerated Islamic leadership.<sup>59</sup>

In January 1996 following the DOP stipulations, elections were held and Arafat was chosen president by an overwhelming majority of Palestinians with 88.2 percent of the vote, while Fatah took 55 of 88 seats in the legislative assembly. Only four declared Islamists were elected. Hamas boycotted the elections and total PLO domination ensued.<sup>60</sup> Feeling pressure from the PA, unsure of electoral support and working grass roots as an alternative to the Fatah secular regime, Hamas strove to rebuild itself on the social-political front while keeping up the armed struggle. This set them apart from the PA, who were seen as oppressive, corrupt American-Israeli lackeys betraying Islam and the Palestinian people. They were even compared to the pro-British Palestinian Arabs of the late 1930s, who were condemned as “peace gangs” because they sought to end the uprising of 1936-39.

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu did his best not to engage the PLO in further negotiations, preventing Israel from having to cede anything. When Israel opened an exit gate from the Western Wall tunnel to the Muslim Quarter in September 1996, the PA responded with “popular” and regime-coerced violence against Israel forcing Netanyahu’s government to the negotiating table. Previously in a secret arrangement the Palestinians received an enormous underground extra prayer room in the Al-Aksa domain in return for the opening of the gate, yet the PA controlled press whipped up an atmosphere of confrontation. Once again Arafat used violence effectively.<sup>61</sup> As a matter of ideological principle, Netanyahu’s right-religious administration promised not to relinquish any land west of the Jordan River—the “Greater Land of Israel.” By January 1997, the Israeli prime minister implemented the Labor-negotiated, and Likud-renegotiated, withdrawal from most of Hebron but leaving Jewish areas under Israeli control. More significantly, by October 1998 Netanyahu signed the Wye Accords, ceding another 13 percent of the West Bank (the Biblical Judea and Samaria), to the Palestinian Authority.<sup>62</sup> Ideologically and practically the Israeli secular right adopted the Laborite territorial compromise and

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, pp. 97-99.

<sup>60</sup> “Palestinian General Election 1996,” *Wikipedia*, retrieved August 14, 2011, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian\\_general\\_election,\\_1996](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_general_election,_1996).

<sup>61</sup> Rubin and Rubin, p. 177.

Ross, pp. 263-268.

The underground prayer space was known by the popular term “Solomon’s Stables” and today is called the Marwani Mosque.

<sup>62</sup> For a review see Ross, Chapters 15-17, “The 13% Solution,” “Prelude to Wye,” and “The Wye Summit,” pp. 349-459.



autonomy solutions, leading toward a two-state solution, even should their territorial concessions be more limited.

On the Palestinian side, the PA gained credibility by obtaining concessions from Israel and the eclipse of Hamas appeared in the making. Working to arrest the peace process, the Islamists executed two massive Jerusalem terror attacks in the summer of 1997, but failed to halt progress. Despite the attacks, Netanyahu's government was credited with ensuring more security for the average Israeli than the previous Labor coalition.<sup>63</sup> The PA did not implement the Wye Accords, and Israel only partially so.<sup>64</sup> Arafat promised to amend all clauses in the *PNC* calling for Israel's destruction, and even convened the PLO National Council in the presence of American President Bill Clinton in December 1998, where the vote was in favor of deleting all anti-Israel references and euphemisms. Yet *The Palestinian National Charter* was never amended.<sup>65</sup> Hamas terror attacks meant to cut short the official peace process appeared ineffective; however, the Islamist influence remained strong. Inside the Palestinian territories Fatah physically had the upper hand, but ideologically it was all Hamas. As opposed to Hamas, for whom the *Covenant* is also known as the "Charter of Allah" and cannot be amended, the PLO can revise their *Charter* by a two-thirds vote (see *PNC* Article 33), indicating it was deliberate PLO policy not to make the necessary changes.

In the 1990s Hamas already understood the need to topple the Fatah-led PA. There were clashes on several levels beyond ideological; in particular the focus was the class conflict between the wealthier Fatah power elite and the more proletarian Hamas. Within Fatah there was rising resentment against the PLO Tunis leadership, which began with the commencement of the Oslo process. The PA viewed Hamas terror activities against Israel as undermining the Oslo Accords and on the international level, as calling their own legitimacy into question as the actual representative of the Palestinian People. By 1996-97 the PA incarcerated much of the Hamas leadership, accusing them of plotting the assassination of PA officials, including Arafat himself. It appeared such plans even had Sheikh Yasin's approval. According to Gaza Preventive Security Chief Mohammed Dahlan, now that the Hamas military wing was neutralized, the question arose as to whether to cajole loyalty among their activists and absorb Hamas into the PA, or to destroy them completely. The PA and Israel could not agree on

---

<sup>63</sup> Ross, pp. 353-356.

<sup>64</sup> Rubin and Rubin, pp. 181-183.

Israel released 250 terrorists and began its first withdrawal in northern Samaria, but later reversed the decision.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, pp. 167-168 and p. 183.

In 1996 the vote to change the Charter was 504-54, but it was never amended.

either policy and in the end nothing was decided. There is speculation that Arafat did not know who to trust less, Hamas or Netanyahu, and hence paralysis set in. The survival of Hamas spelled big losses for both Israel and the PA in the future.<sup>66</sup>

In the meantime, Hamas activist Ibrahim Makadme established a doctrine that was gaining ground. He advised not to attack the Fatah-dominated PA to prevent Hamas from destruction. Rather, all attacks should be directed at Israel, who in turn would demand action by the PA to ensure security. When the PA would fail, or for whatever reason not fulfill its mission, Israel would retaliate against the Arafat regime, forcing the ultimate demise of Fatah, the PA and the Oslo Accords. Then Hamas would move to capture political power.<sup>67</sup> As we know, the doctrine succeeded in Gaza in 2007 and was on its way to victory in the West Bank. Israeli and US intervention kept Fatah and the PA in power in the West Bank (see Chapter V “Hamas Ideological Victory”).

The late 1990s saw a surge in diplomatic activity concerning Hamas. When two Israeli Mossad agents failed to assassinate Hamas leader Khalid Mashal in Jordan in 1997 and were themselves apprehended, the resulting prisoner exchange with Israel resulted in the release of Sheikh Yasin once again. He quickly traveled throughout the Arab world and Iran, preaching the dual message of an anti-PLO domestic policy and the struggle against Israel. Once Kuwait was no longer the center of Hamas activities, which occurred in 1990 as a result of the Gulf War, Jordan became the external hub. Hamas was forced from Amman in 1999 and relocated to Damascus due to increasing PA, Western and Israeli pressures to expel the Islamists. Hamas had rejected the Wye Accords, condemned Jordan's peace agreement with Israel in 1994, and moved closer to Khomeinist Iran, all in contradiction to Jordanian foreign policy objectives. Domestically, Palestinian refugees identified much more with the half-blind, half-deaf, quadriplegic Sheikh Ahmed Yasin who lived on \$600 a month in a Gaza low-income neighborhood, than they did with the bloated bureaucracy and lavish lifestyle of many Fatah operatives, or with PA Chairman Arafat, whom they suspected might not enforce their demand for Palestinian refugee return to Israel.<sup>68</sup>

A Labor government led by Prime Minister Ehud Barak succeeded Netanyahu in July 1999 and attempted not only to implement the Wye Accords, but to make peace with Syria by withdrawing from the Golan Heights, though they failed on both fronts. In May 2000, Israeli forces hastily

---

<sup>66</sup> Eldar, pp. 73-84.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. 73.

<sup>68</sup> Tamimi, pp. 99-133.

withdrew from the south Lebanon “security zone.” The Iranian sponsored Hezbollah Shiite militia moved up to Israel’s northern border demarcation as Israel’s predominantly Christian South Lebanese Army (SLA) allies collapsed, a humiliating flight in the face of Islamic pressures. The Palestinians were emboldened.

On the internal Palestinian scene, Arafat refused to hold elections as long as the Palestinians were still “at war” with Israel. Hamas continued as an underground organization without official representation. Frustration and unrest were rampant in the Palestinian areas, especially on May 15—what is known as “Nakba Day” marking the catastrophic Palestinian failure in the 1948 war. Intense violence dominated the Palestinian front for eight days with Arafat refusing to calm the situation; rather he preferred confronting Israel with an angry Palestinian populace. Instability continued into the summer and through the crucial Camp David July 2000 summit, where Barak met Arafat in an attempt to attain a final status agreement. Although Barak offered to return well over 90 percent of the West Bank, withdraw completely from Gaza, divide Jerusalem and accept a limited, but symbolic return of several thousand Palestinian refugees coupled with participation in refugee compensation, Arafat rejected all these proposals outright without making counter suggestions. In essence, Arafat remained entrenched in his original positions demanding full refugee return, including all descendants, totaling into the millions, Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders including Jerusalem, with a possible land swap, and full Israeli responsibility for the conflict. Although this was the veneer of a two-state solution, it spelled the end of Israel as a Jewish national entity and left it devoid of defensible borders. President Clinton, who brokered the talks, blamed Arafat for the impasse. Barak and Clinton were looking for an “End of Conflict” scenario and mutual recognition of two national entities, Jewish and Palestinian Arab. Arafat moved closer to the Hamas position without explicitly demanding the dismantling of the Jewish state.

There was no movement for the remainder of the summer while tensions soared in the Palestinian areas. Barak’s government collapsed just prior to the talks, leaving him vulnerable in his role as prime minister leading a minority government. Declaring he would never relinquish Judaism’s most sacred site, the Temple Mount, Likud opposition leader and former general Ariel Sharon ascended the mount with the permission of Israeli and

Palestinian security forces in late September.<sup>69</sup> This was the flash point Arafat awaited and now the Second Intifada, or what will be referred to in this analysis as the Palestinian “Low Intensity Conflict” (LIC), ensued. Beginning the next day on September 29, 2000, it took four years before Israel contained the “Al-Aksa” or Second Intifada,<sup>70</sup> which was really a Palestinian LIC and terror offensive.

Arafat knew Israel could never accept a full refugee return, since such a move constituted the destruction of the Jewish State. A two-state solution would begin alleviating Palestinian suffering and give hope, but “Yasser Arafat had grown extraordinarily wealthy as the international symbol of victimhood.” In playing up what can be called his Che Guevara guerrilla leader image to the hilt “he wasn’t about to surrender that status and take on the responsibility of actually building a functioning society.”<sup>71</sup> Catastrophe ensued as Arafat and his allies became a Robin Hood in reverse, making increasing Western media gains through the sacrifice of Palestinian blood. At the time, many thought Ariel Sharon’s jaunt to the Temple Mount triggered a “spontaneous eruption of Palestinian rage,” but, as in many media events, a later revelation of the facts proved first impressions incorrect. The day before, Sheikh Hassan Yousef had attended a meeting with Fatah Secretary General Marwan Barghouti to discuss a joint uprising in response to Sharon’s expected visit. Palestinian Security Chief Jibril Rajoub authorized the visit, fully complicit in the plot to paint Sharon as the catalyst for the planned violence. Yousef agreed to a show of unity and even watched from a distance with his son Mosab. Sharon did not enter any mosques although there was a heavy police presence. Demonstrations in response to Sharon’s visit were limited and Mosab went to Galilee on vacation. A day later, after Friday prayers, everything exploded and Arafat used Hamas as his scapegoat.

Although formally the PA was still holding back Hamas terror activity against Israel, the two now aligned themselves closer together than at any time since the 1980s. Arafat and the PLO had been far more effective in

---

<sup>69</sup> For most Muslims the Al-Aksa Mosque and Dome of the Rock represent the third holiest site and city (Jerusalem). For Jews the mount is the site of the First and Second Temples of yesteryear and where the future Third Temple will exist in the Messianic End Time.

<sup>70</sup> Sachar, Chapter 36 “Ehud Barak’s Two Years,” pp. 1024-1045.

Ross, Chapters 23-24, “From Stalemate to Camp David,” and “The Camp David Summit,” pp. 591-711.

Morris p. 659.

Rubin and Rubin, pp. 185-205.

<sup>71</sup> Yousef, p. 126.

crushing the Hamas military wing than Israel previously was, especially through mass incarceration. With their forces jointly working against the common Israeli enemy wide-ranging violence ensued, planned and led by the Palestinian Authority leadership who now shifted sides, to an alliance with Hamas.<sup>72</sup>

In the past, Arafat and the PLO tried to be everything to everyone: moderate secular nationalists to the Israelis, Americans and the West who favored a two-state solution, and non-compromising nationalists and committed Muslims to their Palestinian electorate and Arab Muslim world allies. During the Intifada in 1987-91, many West Bank activists advocated acceptance of a negotiated settlement with Israel. At the time, those activists and their ideas were suppressed and the PLO even floated the possibility of a mini-state confederation with Jordan. On the other hand, the hope was to re-ignite the conflict and bring about Israel's destruction in the name of Islam. As Arafat spoke of peace, terror activities continued. A prime example was the 1990 failed Tel Aviv beachfront attack and Arafat's continued support for Saddam Hussein.<sup>73</sup> Sensing Arafat's weakness and fears of Hamas ascendancy, Israel chose to negotiate with him over the Oslo Accords, fully expecting to find an anthropocentric partner bent on mutual recognition, peace and cooperation. At that point, Arafat supposedly faced a dilemma concerning war or peace. In retrospect, Arafat as leader of the PLO reached the fork in the road where he returned to his Islamist understanding of the conflict, with any compromise deemed unacceptable.

Under the watchful eye of Arafat's Palestinian Authority, during his sermon on that fateful Friday, Sheikh Hian Al-Adrisi addressed worshippers at the Al-Aksa Mosque on Jerusalem's Temple Mount declaring the Jews to be the "enemies of Islam." Shortly afterward, the PA-appointed Dr. Abu-Halabia of the Fatwa Council urged Muslims to murder Jews wherever they were found (see Chapter III "Jewish Nationalism"). The West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem exploded.

Although there were those who advocated a more radical approach, a review of Hamas policy reveals a fairly moderate attitude toward the PLO Fatah-administered PA during the seven-year Oslo period of engagement with Israel from 1993-2000, despite the Islamists' vehement opposition. Hamas even went out of its way to house the first PA security forces when they arrived in Gaza. At the time, the Hamas decision not to physically challenge Fatah for control was seen as proof of the organization's practical

---

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, pp. 125-134.

<sup>73</sup> Rubin and Rubin, pp. 109-123.

responsibility, despite the November 1994 killings and later assassinations.<sup>74</sup> Hamas continued to strengthen its network of educational, religious and social services while leaving the political front to the PLO/PA. The only real attempt to challenge the PLO/Fatah paradoxically took place amongst Palestinians held in Israeli prisons where there was competition for loyalties. When forced to face the question of a referendum or even elections, the Islamists vowed to respect the will of the people whether they won or lost. There was much debate surrounding the issue, but in the end they decided not to participate in the voting, because to do so would legitimize the Oslo process.<sup>75</sup> Theoretically, elections could advance the Islamic agenda through democracy regardless of the outcome. Should Hamas lose they could try again, perpetually playing the democracy card of “the people’s will.” But should Hamas win, would free and open elections take place four years into the future, or would the absolute reign of Islam bar any seemingly democratic (pagan infidel) electoral process?

Both Sheikh Yasin and his deputy Abdul Aziz Rantisi only favored temporary cease-fires or a *hudna* with Israel. Rantisi was explicit in comparing these to the Hudaybia truce of extremely short duration between Mohammed and his enemies, while Yasin spoke of a time period lasting no longer than fifteen years. Others claimed any peace treaty was similar to a *hudna* and could be signed with Israel since such agreements only reflected the balance of power at the time of signing, and would be subsequently annulled when the opportunity for victory arose. An example of such one-sided “pragmatic behavior” is the Oslo II period in the second half of 1995, when Israel agreed to fully relinquish Area A and civilian control in Area B to the Palestinian Authority with a withdrawal timetable going into late March 1996.<sup>76</sup> Whether Hamas truly restrained itself without coercion from the PA at any time is not certain, but after the Goldstein attack in Hebron in early 1994, and following Israel’s targeted removal of explosives expert Yahya Ayyash in January 1996, there are those who claim Hamas only then decided to break the *hudna* and engage in a full-scale homicide-suicide bombing campaign against Israeli civilians. This is said to be particularly true concerning the February-March 1996 terror campaign. Previously, Hamas claimed it only targeted the Israeli military and settlers.<sup>77</sup>

When Israeli and PA interests came together after the early 1996 bombings, both knew Hamas had to be contained or the Oslo Accords were

---

<sup>74</sup> Hroub, p. 108.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, pp. 211 and 220-227.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, pp. 69-84.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, pp. 242-247.

doomed. The PA cracked down, arresting 900 Hamas activists, which included a raid on the al-Najah University campus. Shifting gears, by 1997 Fatah attempted to co-opt Hamas into joining the PA regime, but failed. Realizing the grass roots nature of the movement, Arafat pressured mosque organizations and charities, scrutinizing their every move. The Islamists refused the bait and took no military action against Fatah, to prevent giving the PA a reason to annihilate them.<sup>78</sup> After a sharp internal debate, Hamas refused to take part in the 1996 presidential and legislative elections. There was the question of how much support the Islamists had for their rejection of the Oslo Accords versus the need to represent their constituents. Hamas took the middle way and tested public support by challenging Fatah in student and professional organizations throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Here, Hamas gained some 40-50 percent of the vote and claimed a similar level of support from the Palestinian population at large. The official Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki estimated the Hamas faithful at 18 percent, while political analyst Khalid Hroub argued for 30 percent.<sup>79</sup> While it is impossible to know the general level of support for Hamas in the late 1990s, the next elections held in 2006 for the parliament awarded Hamas 44.45 percent of the popular vote and an electoral landslide. Hamas took 74 seats out of 132 in the Palestinian Legislature. Fatah and the smaller secular parties had a slight popular majority, but this did not come to fruition in the tally for representation because of too many split votes among the secular and nationalist candidates.<sup>80</sup>

On the world Islamic front, Hamas continued its ideological purity supporting Islamist parties in the Arab world and the Islamist uprisings in Algeria, Tunisia, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Bosnia and Kashmir. In sub-Saharan Africa, Hamas advocated victory for Omar al-Bashir's repressive and genocidal Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood regime over the Black African Christians and animists in the south of that country<sup>81</sup> while citing the need for world Islamic actions against supposed Zionist threats to Sudan, Ethiopia and the Bab el-Mandab region in Somalia. Khomeinist Iran rewarded Hamas with full support for its total rejectionist stance against Israel, beginning what later can be seen as a strategic relationship.<sup>82</sup> This is in line with the expressed

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, pp. 106-108.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, pp. 228-233.

<sup>80</sup> "Palestine Legislative Elections 2006," *Wikipedia*, retrieved, August 14, 2011, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian\\_legislative\\_election,\\_2006](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_legislative_election,_2006).

<sup>81</sup> An estimated 2.5 million black African Christians and animists were murdered by the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood Jihadist regime from 1983-2006.

<sup>82</sup> Hroub, pp. 166-180.



ideology of supporting Islamic movements worldwide (*HC* Articles 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 23).

#### **Decisive Crossroads: Summer 2000**

Towards the year 2000 and what is commonly called the “Second Intifada,” but in essence was a Low Intensity Conflict (LIC), Hamas policies were of a tactical pragmatism developed in the name of the overall Islamic objective of victory. Despite declarations to the contrary, Hamas would not take on the PA in a military confrontation for fear of defeat, nor did the organization participate in the first elections in 1996. They would not participate due to possible ideological constraints, as well as the need to shore up their own support and not only enter, but exit any election with a victory. Hamas did not want a coalition with Fatah or any other arrangement where they would be responsible for self-rule, construed as a compromise with Israel and an ideological sell out. Holding to an Islamic theology after winning an election meant confrontation with Israel, an eventuality demanding more preparation. Mundane matters would include sanitation, road repairs, street lighting and taking responsibility for jobs and the economy; these last two were at least in part dependent on Israel.

In contrast, Hamas allowed for the PA to rule and fail. Corruption, poor economic management and the complete lack of *dawa* organizations, or a socio-economic blueprint for development, undermined the PLO from the outset. Arafat never made the transition from “freedom fighter” to statesman and took no action to improve the everyday lives of his constituents. He continually emphasized “resistance” as an option while threatening war and martyrdom should Israel not heed his demands. Moderates criticizing him for not making peace were silenced while the hardliners urging military action were free to express themselves. Peace dividends were not to be had and massive frustration mounted.<sup>83</sup> Despite appearances to the contrary, by the end of the seven year Oslo negotiation period Arafat’s PA merged closer to Hamas than ever before. It might be more correct to say that in one way the PA resembled the Islamic Jihad—an organization committed to victory, but devoid of welfare policies. Besides religious devotion, the one great

---

<sup>83</sup> Rubin and Rubin, pp. 149-162.

It was pointed out that by the mid-1990s the Palestinian GDP was a dismal \$2.9 billion, Arab donor nations only contributed 8.6% of outside assistance (out of \$2.5 billion). Palestinians were given work permits on a more limited basis due to continued violence against Israel.

difference between the Islamic Jihad and the PLO directed PA was that the former was purist while the PA was overwhelmingly corrupt.<sup>84</sup> For Arafat, taking an uncompromising position toward Israel while derailing Oslo could only lead to a reunification of joint efforts in a PLO-Hamas alliance, embracing Arafat as the leader of a joint command. Here we have a combination of ego and a return to certain basic Muslim Brotherhood understandings.

This confused many in the West, in particular concerning ambiguities between peace-making and continuing the never-ending “armed struggle.” At the time, an “End of Conflict” two-state solution with vast financial aid was on the table under the auspices of President Clinton, who did his utmost to advance as favorable a permanent status agreement as possible for the Palestinians. Arafat engaged in “*taqiyya*” and “*kitman*,” which is lack of truthfulness in the service of the Islamic cause, a mode of behavior he used in the national secular struggle. *Taqiyya* is “lying” while *kitman* is an “omission,” thereby altering the truth.<sup>85</sup> Arafat’s behavior included both during negotiations and the subsequent four year LIC as he secularized these concepts; however, it is safe to assume he retained the same Islamic mindset. Moving toward Hamas may have only been a tactic at the outset, but what Arafat may not have counted on was the absorption and/or later defeat of the PLO by Hamas as opposed to a unifying PLO hegemony under the PA. This internal Palestinian Hamas success will be discussed and analyzed further in the next chapter alongside Arafat’s behavior and less-than-forthright negotiating tactics.

For good reasons, Hamas delayed its entrance into the official political arena. Although battered and exhausted by both Israel and the PLO, Hamas sensed the upcoming failure of the Camp David 2000 talks, as most did, and would take its chances maneuvering under the PA administrative umbrella. Should Arafat come to a permanent status agreement with Israel ensuring a two-state solution, allowing virtually no refugee return and anything less than full Islamic control over the Temple Mount/Noble Sanctuary in Jerusalem, Hamas could count on overwhelming support to challenge the PA on the

---

<sup>84</sup> For a deeper rendering of Arafat’s corruption in particular see Lew, Uzrad, *Inside Arafat’s Pocket*, 2005, in Hebrew. Lew worked closely with Arafat and in particular with Mohammed Rashid, Arafat’s financial advisor from 1997-2001 in the hope of investing Palestinian monies wisely in order to bring about a stable, economically viable Palestinian entity which would live in peace with Israel. Lew claims at least \$300 million was stolen by Arafat and in particular found its way into Swiss banks.

<sup>85</sup> “Lying (Taqiyya and Kitman),” *The Politically Incorrect Truth About Islam*, retrieved August 15, 2011, [www.thereligionofpeace.com/Quran/011-taqiyya.htm](http://www.thereligionofpeace.com/Quran/011-taqiyya.htm). “Taqiyya And Kitman: Are Muslims permitted to lie?” *Nairaland Forum*, November 23, 2011, retrieved January 5, 2016, [www.nairaland.com/809331/taqiyya-kitman-muslims-permitted-lie](http://www.nairaland.com/809331/taqiyya-kitman-muslims-permitted-lie).

grounds of betrayal, not to mention increasing corruption and oppression. Hamas was moving toward an upgrade either at the PA's expense, or Israel's. By September 2000 it appeared to be a win-win situation should the Palestinian Islamists consolidate their support in the street while battling Israel and either working with or confronting the PA when necessary. And to clinch it, one only needed patience and correct timing to implement the Makadme doctrine whereby Hamas attacked Israel to evoke a punishing Israeli retaliation against the PA for not curtailing terrorism. A weakened PA would then be overthrown by Hamas.

---

Yisrael Ne'eman teaches courses on Israel, Jewish History and the Middle East at the International Schools in the University of Haifa and the Technion.