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## INTRODUCTION

On 13 November 1974, Yasir Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations during the debate on Palestine. While Arab support undeniably played a crucial role in placing Arafat on the rostrum in the General Assembly, the PLO's utilization of transnational and international terrorism and the publicity garnered by this activity was of no small consequence in the decision to grant an international forum to express Palestinian grievances. In the space of a decade, the PLO went from being a pawn of the Arab states to quasi-official body that was granted observer status in the General Assembly--an unprecedented occurrence.

Arafat's and the PLO's ostensible diplomatic triumph at the U.N. masked deep divisions within the PLO and the Palestine Resistance Movement (PRM).<sup>1</sup> Bitterly divided over the concept of co-existence with the state of Israel, tension emanated within the PRM outwardly manifesting themselves with acts of terrorism. For enemies of the PLO, all terrorism arising out the PRM is PLO inspired or controlled, an outgrowth of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. Another school of thought points the organizational dynamics within the factions of the PLO and PRM as a major catalyst for terrorism. In both scenarios it is generally accepted that terrorism is a violent form of political communication. Terrorists' acts are statements of political philosophy; although at times the content can seem nebulous and far-fetched, there is always a rationale behind such an act that is being transmitted.

This essay is an attempt to understand Palestinian terrorism and ascertain its subtleties

from the PLO's inception in 1964 to Arafat's appearance before the U.N. Both the PRM and the PLO are heterogeneous entities making examination difficult. This is compounded by the politicized nature of terrorism, which is conspicuously evident in the problem of defining exactly what constitutes terrorism. Initially the essay will examine the question of Armed Struggle, the rubric many Palestinians place acts considered terrorist under, compared to academic formulations of terrorism. From this analysis, a working definition of terrorism will be applied as it pertains to the parameters of the essay. Starting at this definition, two schools of theoretical terroristic analysis, instrumental and organizational, undergo dissection, highlighting their prominent characteristics in the process applying these attributes as they relate to Palestinian terrorism. Combined they form the basis for heuristic typology of terrorism. Prior to this, existing typologies of terrorism are scrutinized for their advantages and/or deficiencies.

Palestinian terrorism in essence represents a double helix in which the instrumental and organizational outlooks of terrorism intertwine in the formation of a terrorist act. Of the two strands the organizational is ascendant, as traditional Arab cultural development is a dominate factor in the manufacturing of terrorism. This is not to say there is a propensity in Arab culture towards the utilization of the terrorism; rather the cultural mores developed over time are intrinsic to Arab social behavior and thus become incorporated in political expression. Because of this, they are present in application of terrorism especially in its relation to organizational dynamics. Of central importance here is the concept of a clique as catalyst for group formation and terrorism. John Amos, one of the foremost scholars on the Palestinian

resistance defines a clique: "as a group of individuals tied together by a variety of shared attributes: personal friendship, descent, and/or reciprocal political, economic or social interests. It is characterized by a rough equality among its members and by a lack of any formal organizational relationship. The term clique is synonymous with faction or cadre."<sup>2</sup>

Clique politics dominate the PRM, and are directly responsible for its fragmented and fluid nature. Concomitantly, an ongoing struggle exists for primacy within the PLO that seriously hampers any coherent long-term strategic plan of action. Complicating the situation further, is the active involvement of Arab states in the internal affairs of the PRM. On numerous occasions the internal machinations of the PRM parallel external Arab politics. The typology applied to this essay incorporates these factors explaining terrorism in an event/trend format. By analyzing the instrumental and organizational strands on the basis of significant events or trends the typology presents a more complete analysis of Palestinian terrorism based upon a linear (time) continuum rather than an ad hoc assessment of a particular terrorist action. Attempting to add clarity to the typology is two inputs, internal and external. Internally, the input deals with issues organizational in nature; conversely the external is primarily concerned with outside issues, in which the majority are instrumental in essence. While this is helpful, under inspection a significant overlapping of inputs is present. In spite of this, the typology holds promise of a thorough examination of Palestinian terrorism and the potential to be applied to other terrorist organizations whose compositions are nowhere near as complex as the PRM.

The next two chapters deal with Palestinian terrorism. Chapter 2 deals with the

formation of the PLO from 1964 through 1967. Included in this section is the rise of al-Fatah, the major organization within the PRM. Led by Yasir Arafat, Fatah is considered the crux of the PLO and the voice of moderation within the PLO. Emphasis on the role of Arafat and Fatah constitutes a major part of the essay. The roles of various Arab states are assessed with particular attention paid to the pivotal roles of Egypt and Syria. Syrian sponsorship of the nascent PRM, principally Fatah, is documented in detail. A summary of the time period as it relates to the typology ends the chapter.

Chapter 3 deals with the rise of Fatah and the PLO in the aftermath of the 1967 war. The years 1968-1974, experienced a significant rise in transnational and international terrorism. Failure to incite a protracted guerrilla campaign in the territories occupied after the 1967, presented the PLO with the dilemma of sanctuary in bordering Arab states. Problems in host countries, often as a result of terrorism, created significant political crises in both Lebanon and Jordan. In the case of Jordan, large-scale hostilities broke out between the PLO and the Jordanian armed forces. Driven out of Jordan, Palestinian terrorism entered a new phase in which repercussions are still felt today. Intra-organizational tension within the factions themselves and between other PLO groups became a catalyst for terrorism, while organizational dissent entered a new phase with the development of radical terrorist organizations outside the PLO umbrella. These groupings, moreover, had the active support of radical Arab states whose agendas were inimical to that of the PLO. A summary of this section according to the tenets of the typology proves to be very revealing, confirming the premise of the PLO as monolithic entity is flawed and essentially inaccurate.

The conclusion deals with validity of the typology in explaining the terrorism of the PRM. Its attributes and defects will be accessed and commented upon. Included in the conclusion is an overview of the time period based upon the parameters of the typology. Upon inspection of this time frame a central question emerges: Is the terrorism of the PLO and PRM revolutionary, in that it constitutes a strategic component of a long-term Palestinian Plan for the eradication of the state of Israel, or is Palestinian terrorism reactionary, a knee-jerk reaction to the vagaries of intra-Arab politics, contingencies at hand, or whims of a sponsor state? Answering, these questions will go a long way in placing the terrorism of the PRM in its proper context and scope. If the typology can provide answers to these questions and a host of others that arise out of Palestinian terrorism, its utility as tool for terroristic analysis and topic for further development and refinement is merited.

#### **NOTES**

1. Throughout the essay the acronyms PLO and PRM will, at times, be utilized interchangeably. The two are not, however, the same. The PLO refers only to organizations under the PLO's rubric, whereas the PRM encompasses all Palestinian factions, many of which, are dissident and openly hostile to the policies of the PLO.
2. John W. Amos II , Palestinian Resistance: Organization of a Nationalist Movement (New York: Peragamon Press , 1980) , p. 361, note# 20.