The Question of Israel and Palestine

Chapter 10

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO): From the Six-Day War to the First Invasion of Lebanon

- The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was a <u>secular</u> organization attempting to establish a government for displaced Palestinians
- Yasser Arafat was the first leader of the PLO
  - Born in Egypt
    - Father from Gaza; mother from Jerusalem
  - Educated in Egypt as a civil engineer
  - Fought alongside the Muslim Brotherhood during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War

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PLO: From the Six-Day War to the First Invasion of Lebanon (cont.)

- In 1957, Arafat gathered groups of disgruntled Palestinians in Jordan
- Arafat formed Fatah in 1959
  - Purpose was to create a guerrilla organization that could wage an Algerian-style campaign against the Israelis
  - Advocated use of small unit tactics and terrorist actions
- Proposed terrorizing unfortified civilian targets after Six Day War defeat

PLO: From the Six-Day War to the First Invasion of Lebanon (cont.)

- In 1964 Arafat formed the PLO
  - His purpose was to create a political organization to help form a multinational alliance against Israel
  - Looked to Arab governments to jointly launch a war against Israel
  - Merged Fatah into PLO
  - Arafat's master-stroke was to adopt the name "Palestinian"
    - Sharpened and legitimized the struggle of his cause

Fatah and the Six Day War

- After the Six-Day War in June 1967, Arafat and Kahil Wazir began to attack Israel using a group of Fatah warriors known as *fedayeen*
  - Operated from bases in Jordan despite protests from Jordanian King Hussein
- Fatah had only a few hundred fedayeen, but their numbers slowly increased
  - This allowed Arafat to launch more raids into Israel

Fatah and Karamah

- Israel, angered by lack of action by the Jordanians, decided to take matters into its own hands
- On 21 March 1968, the IDF attacked the village of Karamah
- Karamah, a tiny refugee center, housed a large number fedayeen
- The purpose of the raid was to punish the fedayeen
  - The Israelis had no intention of holding the town or maintaining operations in Jordan

Fatah After Karamah

- The fedayeen fought back, assisted by Jordanian troops
  - The Israelis withdrew that same day
- Both sides claimed victory
- Media coverage of the battle caused the PLO's status to rise in the Arab world
  - Made Arafat a hero in Palestinian eyes
  - Brought international attention to the Palestinian situation

Fatah After Karamah (cont.)

- Karamah was a strategic propaganda victory for the PLO
- The legend of Karamah told of fedayeen fighters standing at Karamah and defeating the Israelis
- The result was that millions of dollars flowed into Arafat's coffers
- Recruitment to Fatah soared
  - By late March there were ~20,000 fedeyeen in Jordan
- The PLO became the most powerful Palestinian group

PLO Expelled

- PLO forces in Jordan expanded to such an extent that they eventually created a state w/in a state
- As it grew, the PLO identified more closely with militant Arab states
- Concerned with the growing influence of foreign nationals in his country, Jordanian King Hussein ordered the PLO to stop attacking Israel
  - Goal was to reduce or eliminate rival influences in Jordan

PLO Expelled (cont.)

- Arafat defied Hussein's order
  - Stepped up operations against Israel
  - Invited revolutionaries from around the Middle East
  - Hijacked planes to Jordan and destroyed them
- In Sept. 1970, Hussein attacked the PLO
- Syria invaded Jordan to help the PLO
  - Syria withdrew after intervention by Israel
- Arafat and the PLO fled to southern Lebanon in June 1971
- Jordanian attack became known as Black September

Black September and Munich

- Black September was a splinter group of the PLO
  - Formed after King Hussein's September attack
- Began planning a strike against Israel
  - With German terrorist help, attacked Olympic Village
  - Took most of the Israeli Olympic team hostage
  - Killed those who attempted escape
  - Botched rescue attempt by Germans ended when terrorists gunned down their hostages

Lebanese Civil War

- After fleeing Jordan, the PLO became a potent force in southern Lebanon
  - Created another state within a state
  - Began attacking Israel from bases in southern Lebanon
  - Arafat still headed the PLO, but was unable to control its various factions
    - Resulted in instability in Lebanon
    - Instability caused various Lebanese factions to form militias for protection
- Civil war broke out in 1975

1978 Invasion of Lebanon: Operation Litani

- After a Fatah terrorist attack into Israel in 1978, Israel invaded southern Lebanon
  - Israel later withdrew
  - Created a 12-mile wide "security zone"
  - Created and armed the Southern Lebanese Army (SLA) to control the zone
- Iran joined the fighting in Lebanon after the Islamic revolution of 1979
  - Established a new terrorist organization called Islamic Jihad

1982 Invasion of Lebanon: Operation Peace for Galilee

- 6 June 1982, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) invaded Lebanon to clear out the PLO
  - IDF moved rapidly towards Beirut
- Syrians, minus Christians, rallied local militias to fight the IDF
  - Syrian troops later entered the fight
- Lacking support, Arafat was out of options
  - In August 1982, Arafat and ~14,000 fighters left Beirut for Tunis, Tunisia
  - Remaining guerrillas (~20K) joined the Syrians

1982 Invasion of Lebanon: Operation Peace for Galilee

- With the PLO's retreat from Lebanon, Israel's fight with the PLO shifted to the occupied Palestinian areas in Israel
- As the fedeyeen retreated in Lebanon, new terrorists came to take their place
  - The fighting in Lebanon continued with a new type of group, Hezbollah, an umbrella-style network

Factionalism in Palestinian Terrorism

- The October 1973 Yom Kippur War caused a shift in the structure of Middle Eastern terrorism
- From 1967 to 1973, the PLO was characterized by internal splintering
- Some of the groups included:
  - The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
  - The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
  - The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, General Command
  - Sabri al Banna, who would later form an international terrorist group that operated in the 1980s

Factionalism in Palestinian Terrorism (cont.)

- Arafat hinted that he would recognize Israel if the world would recognize a Palestinian state
- This infuriated Arab nationalists and socialists alike
  - Several groups split from Arafat
  - One of these groups became the **Abu Nidal Organization**

Abu Nidal Organization (ANO)

- Sabri al Banna (whose code name was Abu Nidal or "Father of the Struggle") and Yasser Arafat were once comrades-in-arms in the struggle for Palestine
- Abu Nidal joined Fatah for the purpose of regaining a Palestinian homeland
  - Soon became disillusioned with Fatah and Arafat
- Nidal broke away from Fatah and formed the rebel organization **Black June**

ANO (cont.)

- In 1973 he authorized the murder of Palestinian moderates and went to Baghdad
  - With Iraqi assistance he built an infrastructure to support his terrorist organization
- In 1974 Arafat expelled Nidal from the PLO
  - Nidal then became the sworn enemy of the PLO
- In 1983, Abu Nidal moved his operations to Damascus
  - While in Syria and with the help of Libyan intelligence, Nidal carried out his most spectacular attack
  - It was also the one that was the most damaging to the PLO

ANO (cont.)

- 27 December 1985
  - Four gunmen opened fire and threw grenades at Israel's El Al ticket counter in the international airport in Rome
    - 16 killed, 99 wounded
  - In the Vienna International Airport, three men threw grenades at passengers waiting to check-in to a flight to Tel Aviv
    - 2 killed, 39 wounded
- Goal was to force Austria and Italy to sever ties with the Palestinians
  - Both governments were actively involved in trying to bring the Palestinians and the Israelis together for peace talks
- Damage to the PLO was enormous as most people could not distinguish between the PLO and ANO

ANO (cont.)

- Began to claim responsibility for operations he had nothing to do with
- Rogue actions led to his leaving Syria for Libya in 1986
  - Became friends with Muammar al Gaddafi
  - Alleged to have been involved in the Pam Am 103 bombing
- International pressure against Gaddafi for the bombing forced him to expel Nidal, who returned to Iraq
- In 2001, Nidal was found dead from multiple gunshot wounds in his apartment in Baghdad

Abu Nidal

- Operated on the international level
  - Particularly ruthless
  - ANO terrorists became noted for the brutality of their attacks
- Changed the face of Middle Eastern terrorism
  - Increased activities in Europe
    - Attacks in Rome and Vienna
  - Created a large terrorist group
    - Maintaining a ruthless internal enforcement mechanism
  - Immersed himself in the Lebanese Civil War
    - Maintained militias, and established training centers and support camps in southern Lebanon
  - Began working as a mercenary for foreign governments

Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

- Secular group arising after Yom Kippur War
  - Several other smaller groups operating in other countries also use the same name
- PIJ emerged from Egypt
  - Founders disillusioned with Muslim Brotherhood, who espoused peaceful change; wanted to create an Islamic state
- Moved into the Gaza Strip in late 1970s
  - Eventually went to southern Lebanon

Palestinian Islamic Jihad – Fathi Shekaki

- First leader of PIJ
- Championed Islamicist theories in 1978
  - Supported the Iranian Revolution
- PIJ grew, espousing revolution as a means of action
  - Believed group should be devoted to military action
- Shekaki and the PIJ went into Lebanon following the 1982 invasion by Israel

Palestinian Islamic Jihad – Fathi Shekaki (cont.)

- While in Lebanon, Shekaki recruited terrorists and formed relations with local Shiites
  - Brought him in contact with Iran
- Impressed with Hezbollah
  - Copied their umbrella-styled organization and suicide bomber tactics
  - May have operated under Hezbollah's umbrella
- Created his own umbrella-style organization for PIJ

Palestinian Islamic Jihad – Fathi Shekaki (cont.)

- PIJ terrorists gained power through group's hidden structure
  - No infrastructure or visible means of support
    - Invisibility partially due to growing number of groups claiming the name Islamic Jihad
  - Impossible to fight a non-organization
  - Not concerned with claiming credit for operations
  - Was concerned about killing
    - Shekaki's terrorists lived and died to kill their enemies
- Shekaki assassinated in Malta in 1995

Palestinian Islamic Jihad – Ramadan Abdullah Sallah

- Succeeded Shekaki as leader of PIJ
- Continued campaign against Israel
- Formed a loose alliance with Hamas
  - Conducted joint PIJ-Hamas operations
- Following al-Asqa Intifada, PIJ launched a suicide bombing campaign
  - Sought deeper ties to Hezbollah and Hamas
- Actions included:
  - Deadly strikes on civilian targets designed to kill and maim ordinary Israeli citizens
  - Endorsed the use of women & children as suicide bombers

Palestinian Islamic Jihad

- Department of Justice (DOJ) believes PIJ has an organized network of financial supporters to include the U.S.
  - U.S. government claims to have uncovered a PIJ financial and administrative network at a Florida University
- Believes some funding still comes through Iran and possibly Syria

Hamas and the Rise of Religious Organizations

- Hamas formed in 1987 (during 1st Intifada) out of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood
- Co-founded by Ahmed Yassin
  - Wanted to steer the resistance movement along a religious course
- Hamas Charter published in 1988, declaring Palestine was God-given land
  - Israel could not be allowed to exist

Hamas and the Rise of Religious Organizations (cont.)

- Hamas would be a Muslim government
  - Forerunner of a Palestinian Muslim state
- Popular with Palestinians because of their social service organizations in Gaza
  - Charities
  - Schools
  - Hospitals
- Izz el Din al Qassam Brigades – Hamas military wing
- Relationship with PLO and PNA has been shaky

Struggles for Leadership

- After the 1st Intifada, Hamas faced an internal power struggle
  - Yassin was jailed from 1989 to 1997
  - **Musa Abu Marzuq** took over Hamas
    - Strategy more violent than Yassin's
    - Sought funding from Iran/Syria
    - Assembled new leadership core and based it in Jordan
    - Launched savage suicide bombings in Israel

Struggles for Leadership (cont.)

- Marzuq's leadership caused a struggle w/in PNA
  - Hamas launched a brutal suicide campaign in Israel at the same time as PIJ
  - Israel pressured Arafat to crack down
  - PNA arrested a number of Hamas leaders
- Yassin gradually reasserted control over Hamas after his release from prison
  - Violence continued to 2000, slowly deceased

Struggles for Leadership (cont.)

- Leaders of Hamas' al Qassam Brigades were angry over the focus on a political solution
- Jordan shut down Hamas operations
  - Some Hamas members fled to Syria
- Peace appeared to be near
- Hopes destroyed by the al Asqa Intifada, Sept 2000

Effects of the al Asqa Intifada

- Quarreling between al Qassam leaders and political wing ended
- Arafat's PNA lost much of its power as IDF entered into the area
- Hamas grew stronger by forming alliances with Hezbollah and PIJ
  - Started largest suicide-bombing campaign ever seen in the Middle East
  - First use of female suicide bombers against Israel

The Future of Hamas

- Israelis assassinated two previous Hamas leaders
  - Ahmed Yassin
  - Abdel Aziz Rantisi
- Current leader of Hamas thought to be **Khalid Mashal**, operating from Syria
  - Some analysts believe that Hamas may develop an international orientation and present a threat to the U.S.

The Future of Hamas – Reuvan Paz

- Believes Hamas is shifting targets and focus
  - Began as a strong Sunni organization (Salafists)
  - Receives support from Saudi sympathizers
  - Focused on Israel
- Following the Aug. 2004 battle in Najaf, Iraq between US forces and Muqtada al-Sadr, Hamas issued two statements:
  - First one condemned US for fighting near Shiite holy site and told Iraqi people to band together to fight US
  - Second one called on Iraqis to support the militia of al-Sadr

The Future of Hamas – Reuvan Paz (cont.)

- Paz argues that the two communiqués point to change in direction
  - First addressed to Iraqi people expressing Sunni concern for U.S. intervention in the area and called for unification
  - Second version, corrected version according to Paz, requested support of a junior Shiite scholar in defense of a Shiite holy site
- Only a member of Hezbollah would be interested in the second, or corrected, communiqué

The Future of Hamas – Reuvan Paz (cont.)

- Paz concludes that the new Hamas leadership is abandoning "Palestine first" philosophy of Hamas
  - Aligning more closely to the revolutionary Shiite views of Hezbollah and Iran
- By voicing support for Iranian-style Shiites as opposed to Shiites in general, Hamas is falling into Hezbollah's orbit
- As such, Hamas may become an enemy of the U.S. targeting Americans and American interests

The Future of Hamas

- Hamas routinely engages in anti-American rhetoric
- Disincentives for attacking the West
  - Hamas does not want new enemies
  - Has used the U.S. and other Western countries as financial resource
    - Money raised through charities such as the Holy Land Foundation
- Hamas has an international reach
  - Recruited British citizens to engage in suicide bombings
- *However*, militant theology behind Hamas may encourage individual terrorists to take action against the West

al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades

- Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades formed to put Fatah at the center of the new Intifada
  - Began as secular group, but increasingly used of Jihadist rhetoric to gain popular support
- First secular Palestinian group to use suicide tactics
  - Suicide bombing became the most important tactic of all the Palestinian terrorist groups

al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades

- Brigades recognize Israel's right to exist
  - Purpose is to stop Israeli incursions and attacks in Palestinian areas
  - Intend to punish Israel for each attack
- Brigades have become the most potent Palestinian force in the al Aqsa Intifada

Effective Tactics

- Initially, Brigades would strike Israeli military targets only inside Palestinian territory
- Practice soon abandoned, attacks moved into Israel proper
- Primary tactics
  - Drive-by shootings
  - Snipers
  - Ambushes
  - Kidnap-murders
  - Most devastating – suicide bombings

Effective Tactics

- Brigade suicide bombers were frightening for two reasons
  1) They were secular
  2) Sought out crowded civilian targets
- Purpose is to kill and maim as many victims as possible in the most public way possible
- Brigade used the first female suicide bomber in the Middle East in conjunction with Hamas

Leadership in the Martyrs Brigades

- Leadership of the Brigades is a controversial topic
  – How or where their operations are directed is unclear
- Seem to be directly associated with Fatah
  – Israelis report that Arafat paid the expenses and set the agenda
  – Arafat denied the claim
- Other investigations point to another source of leadership – Marwan Barghouti

Leadership in the Martyrs Brigades

- Arafat's direct control of the Brigades remains debatable
- The Brigades have little centralized structure
  – Administration is pushed to the lowest operational level
  – Function almost autonomously
  – Cells exist in several Palestinian communities

Leadership in the Martyrs Brigades

- While Israel has targeted Brigades' leadership for selective assassination, the organization continues to exist
  - Martyrs Brigades have been effective without centralized leadership
  - Strength comes from the ability of small cells to operate without a strong leader
  - Effective because they operate in a network

Violent Jewish Fundamentalism

- Militant Judaism is based on the biblical notion that God has promised to restore the state of Israel
  - No other groups are permitted to control sacred territory
  - The messiah can only appear when the state of Israel has been restored

Violent Jewish Fundamentalism: Kach (Thus!)

- Rabbi **Meir Kahane** created the **Jewish Defense League** (JDL) in 1968
  - JDL reportedly involved in several terrorist incidents in the U.S.
- Also formed the militant group **Kach**
- Moved to Israel in 1971
- Combined politics & biblical literalism to demand all Arabs be expelled from Israel's occupied territories
- Assassinated in NYC in 1990

Violent Jewish Fundamentalism: Kahane Chai (Kahane Lives)

- Created by Kahane's son, Benjamin, after Kahane's assassination
- Kach and Kahane Chai have been involved in harassing/threatening Palestinians
- Have also threatened to attack Arabs and Israeli officials seeking peace
- Both groups are committed to stopping any peace proposal recognizing territorial rights of Palestinians
- Benjamin killed by Palestinian gunman in 2000

Violent Jewish Fundamentalism: Gush Emunin

- Gush Emunim - fundamentalist Israeli settlement in Palestinian territory
  - Same set of beliefs as violent fundamentalists
  - Rhetoric appears normative compared with violent rhetoric of other groups
    - Kach and Kahane Chai alienate most Israelis because of their violent rhetoric
  - Different approach has generated political support in Israel

Problems with Jewish Militant Extremism

- Extremists denounce the existing social order
  - Not racially pure
  - All social, political, and economic problems are blamed on the failure to adhere to Jewish biblical morality
- Extremists claim the exclusive right to determine the truth
- They advocate an ideal order
  - Gush Emunim and Kach claim the Messiah can come only when the existing order is purified

Problems with Jewish Militant Extremism (cont.)

- National identify of Israel and its political legitimacy can only be determined through religion
- All current events are defined within a narrow set of beliefs that define a limited worldview and identify only a few people as being chosen by God
- Such extremism may result in increased terrorist violence
  - Baruch Goldstein: 1994

Controversial Counterterrorist Policies

- Many Israeli police and military units have established excellent reputations in counterterrorist operations
- Tactical operations are second to none
  - Mossad – Israeli intelligence service
  - Shin Beth – Domestic Israeli security service
  - IDF – Israeli Defense Force
  - Israeli police
    - Able to handle bombs, kidnappings, snipers

Controversial Counterterrorist Policies

- When struck, Israel hits back hard
- Israel's counterterrorist policies have stirred international controversy
  - Bulldozing
    - Purpose is to destroy the family homes of suicide bombers
    - Suspected leaders in militant groups and others were targeted
    - Farms and other areas were bulldozed

Controversial Counterterrorist Policies (cont.)

- Invading Lebanon
  - First invasion, 1984, to rid south of the PLO, ended with 18 year occupation and the creation of Hezbollah
  - Backfired – attack brought the Lebanese closer to Hezbollah and strengthened Syria's hand in Lebanese affairs
  - Second invasion, 2006, response to Hamas kidnappings of Israeli soldiers in Gaza

Controversial Counterterrorist Policies (cont.)

- The Wall
  - A concrete (3%) and chain-link (97%) barrier cuts through Palestinian areas
  - Often separates Palestinians from:
    - Water sources
    - Services
    - Family
    - Jobs
    - Other resources
  - Condemned by the internal community
  - Construction has reduced suicide attacks

Israeli Security Fence

Controversial Counterterrorist Policies (cont.)

- Selective Assassination
  - Israeli commandos and IDF units have allegedly killed opposition leaders in the past
  - Expanded during the al Aqsa Intifada
  - Internationally condemned
  - Israeli deaths have dropped since implemented
- U.S. repeatedly has taken the stance that Israel cannot be condemned for harsh measures until the international community also condemns Palestinian terrorism