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## PALESTINE: REUNIFICATION BY OTHER MEANS

Maj D.E. Turner

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***Exercise Solo Flight***

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EXERCISE *SOLO FLIGHT* – EXERCICE *SOLO FLIGHT*

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Maj D.E. Turner

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## **PALESTINE: REUNIFICATION BY OTHER MEANS**

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century scheme to create a Jewish homeland in Palestine has been continually assaulted by anti-Zionism. The greater Arab community has used all available means to reverse the epic decision made by the United Nations (UN) in 1948. The decision separated the land of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states. The magnitude of this decision caused inter-state security challenges between the Arabs and the Jews, and significant intra-state violence between the local Middle Eastern Arabs themselves. The resulting effort to reunify Palestine has been complex and violent.

The level of inter-state violence between Israel and the Arab states has for the large part remained at a constant. There have been periodic military engagements between the two throughout the period of 1948 and the late 1980s. There were, however, times when the intra-state violence between Arabs had or has peaked dramatically. The rise in intra-state violence in the Middle East in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been caused predominantly by the Palestinians. The back drop to explain this will be an investigation into the complex origins of the lands of the Middle East: the influences of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and events surrounding the civil wars in Jordan and Lebanon. The effort to reunify Palestine has exposed disunity in the greater Arab community over Israel, and a psychosis that surrounds the Palestinian ideology of autonomy.

At the end of the First World War with the removal of the Ottoman Turks from Syria, Britain and France were positioned to divide the Arab lands into new states. The very construction of this new structure would unknowingly set the conditions for future dissention in the greater Arab community. The newly formed League of Nations

authorized the partition of the Arab lands. France was granted control of a continuous stretch of territory extending from the Euphrates River, to the Mediterranean Coast (including parts of Lebanon and Syria).<sup>1</sup> Britain, in addition to keeping the whole of Mesopotamia, was granted control over all the southern parts Damascus and Beirut – a territory which they had first called the Palestine east and the west of the Jordan.<sup>2</sup> Later, these two areas would simply be known as the Transjordan and Palestine (severed in 1923). With the Arab lands divided, Britain began to also uphold its wartime promises which it had made to allied Arab partners. For example, King Faisal, for his support in the fight with Britain against the Ottoman Turks in Syria, was removed from Syria where he was unanimously supported (elected in 1921), and given the newly formed kingdom of Iraq.<sup>3</sup> To add to the confusion and future disunity, King Faisal's brother Abdullah, who was well supported in Iraq, was given the three districts that were collectively known as the Transjordan (including the lands of Palestine).<sup>4</sup> These new Arab states lacked some historical links and knowledge of their new lands, but they had enough to seed and develop their own opinions on Israel as a state, as well as their own views regarding who should represent the Palestinian people. The transformation to new lands and leaders would later entangle the collective unity of the Arabs. The new and imposed divisions would also explain why later the Arab states could, and in one case would not coordinate their collective diplomatic and military strategies in the future battles for Palestine.<sup>5</sup>

During the same period, another of Britain's former commitments surfaced, which was the creation of a homeland for the Jews. This was formalized and delivered in a

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<sup>1</sup> Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Jordan, *The Heshemite Kingdom*, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Avi Shlaim, *The Middle East, The Origins of Arab-Israeli Wars*, p. 5.

special mandate which was registered with the League of Nations in 1920.<sup>6</sup> This task, however, became surprisingly difficult for Britain. As such, Britain passed the issue of a Jewish state to the UN for their consideration and action in 1947. The reason for Britain's difficulty was the growing and conflicting nationalism, demonstrated by both the Jews and the Palestinians in the Middle Eastern region. The two were, and had been, in violent grid lock since the beginning of the 1930s (the Arab Revolt). The UN subsequently formed the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), and through Resolution 181 formed two states within Palestine. The Resolution implemented an independent state to be known as Israel, a separate Arab state, and it put the city of Jerusalem under an international trustee system.<sup>7</sup> Immediately after the Resolution was signed, the greater Arab community became outraged. Britain finalized the deal with the annexation of the Arab state from the Transjordan in 1948.<sup>8</sup> In response to the Resolution, the United States and the Soviet Union recognized Israel as an independent state. This was certainly not the case for the Egyptians, Jordanians, Syrians, the Lebanese, and of course the Palestinians. The Resolution effectively brought to light two issues that would test the unity of the greater Arab community. The first was the removal of a local Palestinian national identity, and the second was the creation of the state of Israel. The outrage shared by the greater Arab community would turn out to be more self-serving, than unified.

The response by the greater Arab community to Resolution 181 was to start a full-scale war against the new state of Israel. The war that ensued in late 1948 between the Arabs and the Israelis was a critical moment in Palestinian-Arab history. The war

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<sup>6</sup> Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions*, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, 20 April 1949.

<sup>8</sup> Wiki, *Civil War*, p. 22.

exposed a collective Arab weakness that would eventually send the Palestinians on their own path to autonomy. The Palestinians recognized that even though the greater Arab community had formed a large military coalition to destroy the Israelis outright, the coalition was ultimately weak. The Arab coalition lost the war in a decisive manner with the Palestinians no further ahead than they had been prior to the Resolution. The Palestinians blamed poor Arab leadership for the loss - especially on the part of King Abdullah of Jordan.<sup>9</sup> Also, the Palestinians attributed the loss to the numerous and distrustful relationships that had been lingering in the greater Arab community resultant of the partition of Syria, including the rightful ownership of the historical lands to the south (Palestine).<sup>10</sup> The lands of Palestine were in dispute by the Arabs. The distrust between the Arabs went as far east as Lebanon (north of Israel). The loss of the Arab coalition to the Israelis in 1948 contributed greatly to the creation of a unique Palestinian solution that sought to regain Palestinian authority on their own terms.

There was another and special case of unrest within the Arab community that was specifically evident between the Palestinians and the Jordanians. This situation had also lingered since the early 1920s and would be a factor in the upcoming Jordanian civil war. King Abdullah of Jordan had tried to bring Palestine in and under his own leadership; he had offered Palestine his sole representation in the region; as well, he wanted to allow some form of autonomy for the Jews in Palestine.<sup>11</sup> His dealings with the Zionists and his offer to represent the Palestinian people further eroded the Palestinians' confidence in any sort of collective, Arab opinion on Israel, or the reunification of a Palestinian state (a Palestinian homeland). To make matters worse, King Abdullah's dealings with the

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<sup>9</sup> Hussein Sirriyeh, *Jordan and the Legacies of the Civil War of 1970-71*, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

Jewish Agency that would have partitioned Palestine at the expense of Palestine was done in secrecy.<sup>12</sup> This also helped explain why King Abdullah was so reluctant to play his part during the invasion of Israel in 1948 and their subsequent loss to the Israeli military.<sup>13</sup> After the defeat of the greater Arab community in 1948, it was clear to the Palestinians that the collective, Arab rhetoric concerning the eviction of Israel and an autonomous Palestine state was in fact hollow. At the end of the war, the Palestinians found themselves leaderless (in a greater Arab sense), and homeless. There were 720,000 Palestinian refugees, according to the UN, displaced due to the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. The refugees moved to a number of places including neighboring Jordan and Lebanon. It would be in Jordan, where in the 1950s Palestinian leaders would emerge to organize the fight to liberate Palestine.

The Palestinian psychosis for autonomy can be proven by the three *intifadas* (uprising) that started with the Arab Revolt in the 1930s. According to Jonathan Schanzer (2002), the latest of three *intifadas*, “Fits a recurring Palestinian pattern of miscalculation, fratricide, religious radicalism, economic despair, and self-destruction.”<sup>14</sup> The first *intifada* was in response to the extensive Jewish immigration into the region, and to Britain’s control over Palestine (1930s). During this uprising, the Palestinians were quickly divided amongst themselves on the way forward. On the one side there was the leader Amin al-Husayni who believed that violence was the only means to the end, and on the other there was the moderate Nashibi family who professed that diplomacy was the way to solve the immigration and colonialist problems.<sup>15</sup> What resulted was an

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<sup>12</sup> Avi Shlaim, *The Middle East, The Origins of Arab Israeli Wars*, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Johnathan Schanzer, *Palestinian Uprising Compared*, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

intra-Palestinian conflict that would continue well into the future and subsequent uprisings. Both sides commenced a trend of assassinations, collaborator killings, and retributions that reached deep into Palestinian society. For example, collaborator killings by intra-Palestinian fighting accounted for 10 percent of all Palestinians killed during the first intifada.<sup>16</sup> It is difficult to ascertain the exact number of collaborator killings alone, but by some accounts the total death toll during this particular period was roughly 5,000 Palestinians.<sup>17</sup>

A more grotesque and morbid trend that emerged in the 1930s was the Palestinian willingness to use children to fight for the liberation of Palestine and the removal of the Jews. Authors Kimmerling and Migdal (1993) pointed out, “Palestinians had the young, brown- and black-shirted fascists to emulate.”<sup>18</sup> The youth units were called *shabab*, which were formed by Amin al-Husayni to enforce his policies and to prevent the moderates from collaborating with the enemy.<sup>19</sup> Kimmerling and Migdal also described that Amin al-Husayni modelled these “youth troops” after the “Hitler Youth in Germany.”<sup>20</sup>

Children were not the only victims in the intra-Palestinian conflict. Christian women and the local Druze in Palestine were made to wear the *hijab* (a Muslim head scarf), and Christians of all genders would be subject to regular and organized attacks by al-Husayni’s gangs.<sup>21</sup> To make matters worse, in 1935 Islamic radicalism was added to the intra-Palestinian conflict. The Palestinian cleric Izz ad-Din al-Qassam organized

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 3.



guerrilla units to conduct attacks in the region.<sup>22</sup> Although the British killed al-Qassam quickly,” he would still be highly regarded in the future and responsible for a new trend in Palestinian violence.”<sup>23</sup> He introduced organized terror and guerrilla tactics.<sup>24</sup> Author Jonathan Schanzer has argued that al-Qassam’s guerrilla fighters “set the precedent for the PLO.”<sup>25</sup>

The second and third intifadas in 1987 and 2000 respectively were not just replays of the first in the 1930s. Although the attacks against the Israel gained frequency during these periods, the level of ambition for intra-Palestinian and Arab violence was now at an all-time high. During these two uprisings, the Palestinians offered incentives to families as form of compensation for their children’s sacrifice. The rate was \$2,000.00 for a child killed, and \$1,000.00 for every wounded one.<sup>26</sup> In addition, radical Palestinian fundamentalism had grown to a disturbing new level. Author Jonathan Schanzer (1993) described the shift as, “The way to mobilize popular discontent against Israel.”<sup>27</sup> A case to reinforce the radicalization of the Palestinian movement against Israel, and the scope of the intra-Palestinian fighting is the terror group Hamas. Syria’s Hamas terror group have always believed that they were the “heir to Palestinian nationalism”, which caused additional violence against the Israelis, and increased the violence within the Palestinian-Arab community.<sup>28</sup> Further, the Hamas military wing, much like the PLO, modelled their

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Napolitano Valentina, Hamas and the Syrian Uprising, p. 74.

organization after al-Qassam and his fighters, having called them the “Din al-Qassam Brigades.”<sup>29</sup>

The disturbing and psychotic component of the Palestinian-Arab ideology can finally be seen in the PLO’s Charter. Article 9, of the Charter, states: “Doctrines whether political, social, or economic, shall not occupy the people of Palestine from the primary duty of liberating their homeland.”<sup>30</sup> The disturbing psychoses of the Palestinian movement would soon be extended to Jordan and Lebanon, where it would create intra-state conflict and regional failure.

According to Dr. Khalil Barhoum, Stanford University, the rise of the PLO was premised on the fact that “Arab unity should not be considered the main vehicle, let alone prerequisite, for the liberation of Palestine.”<sup>31</sup> Therefore, the PLO, which was formally founded in 1964, would take control of Palestinian matters from the local and greater Arab communities. To accomplish this, the Palestinians had either good luck, or significant political skills. The predecessor to the PLO was the militant group Fatah, emerging in the 1950s and led in large part by Yasir Arafat. The Fatah, similar to al-Husayni and al-Qassam before them declared that ‘revolutionary armed struggle’ was the best method to liberate Palestine.<sup>32</sup> Because the Fatah group lacked social and political ideology, preferring instead violence, the greater Arab community saw the requirement for a more formal and recognized movement to represent them and the dispersed Palestinians.<sup>33</sup> As such, the PLO was established by the Palestine National Council on behalf the greater Arab community. Dr. Khalil Barhoum supports this thesis in that the

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<sup>29</sup> Johnathan Schanzer, *Palestinian Uprising Compared*, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> Portions of the Original Palestine National Charter, 1964.

<sup>31</sup> Dr. Khalil Barhoum, *The Origin and History of the PLO*, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

origins of the PLO, “Was to maintain their (the greater Arab community) hold over a rather restive Palestinian population.”<sup>34</sup> Whatever the true reason was, luck or otherwise, Yasir Arafat later became the elected chairman of the PLO. He would later bring other hardline Palestinian groups into the PLO. Two equally brutal groups were the Palestinian Resistance Movement (PRM) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

Subsequently, the PLO broke free from non-Palestinian Arab control in 1969 and resorted back to the reminiscent ways of the Fatah – violence. Dr. Barhoum stated it perfectly in his review of the time period, “The Palestinians first and foremost spearhead the struggle for Palestine, while Arab involvement...must be strictly supportive.”<sup>35</sup> At the end of 1969, the PLO was now recognized in a global sense, militarized, and they (the PLO) would see local Arab ‘support’ as an unbridled relationship to further the Palestinian cause.

The Jordanian civil war was caused by the parasitic relationship between Palestinians and their hosts, the Jordanians. Author Farah Randa (2013) described the Palestinian premise as, “The Arab world was *expected* to support in a secondary position.”<sup>36</sup> The PLO was entrenched in Jordan in 1969. Their aim was to regain Palestinian authority and their national rights, lost with Resolution 181.<sup>37</sup> The PLO set up local and larger governments, press outlets, and placed armed militiamen to enforce Palestinian identity in places like Amman (the capital). In the background, the Palestinian refugee camps were used as safe havens for recruiting fighters and staging

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Farah Randa, *Palestinian Refugees, the Nation, and the Shifting Political Landscape*, p. 44.

<sup>37</sup> Dr. Khalil Barhoum, *The Origin and History of the PLO*, p. 1.

attacks against Israel. To the Israelis, it appeared that King Hussein of Jordan had lost control over his country. Author Ziv Robinovitz (2010) described the situation as, “The PLO was operating a state within a state, holding shivery *modus vivendi* with Jordan and in September 1970 it seemed that the Fedayeen (freedom fighters) were about to take over Jordan.”<sup>38</sup> The breaking point was on 6 September when three airplanes were hijacked by the PFLP. The hijackings were global in scale and an additional assault on Hussein’s sovereignty over Jordan. In the wake of the hijackings, the Jordanian military were ordered to attack Palestinian strongpoints and regain the control of the country. The Jordanian military attacked the Palestinians enforce, signalling the end of Jordan’s hospitality and the end of the relationship with the Palestinians. In the aftermath of the Jordanian civil war, two key observations were made. Jordan survived the PLO because of their strong nationalism, a new, post-1948, Jordanian identity.<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, this high level of national cohesion would not be present in Lebanon’s upcoming struggle with the PLO.<sup>40</sup> The second was birth of yet another violent Palestinian group called Black September. This group was named after what the Palestinian’s called the Jordanian civil war. The terror group would later murder the Israel athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Although Lebanon in the 1970s was coined the “Switzerland”<sup>41</sup> of the Arab world, it was a fragile state. The country had deep divides, having had a civil war in 1958. To make matters worse, the militant PLO arrived seeking a new sanctuary. Having learned lessons from its forced eviction from Jordan the previous year, the PLO

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<sup>38</sup> Ziv Rubinovitz, *Black September: Israel’s Role in the Jordan Crises of 1970*, p. 689.

<sup>39</sup> Hussein Sirriyeh, *Jordan and the Legacies of the Civil War*, pages 76-82.

<sup>40</sup> Stephan Rosiny, *Power Sharing in Syria: Lessons from Lebanon*, p. 45.

<sup>41</sup> Joseph Katz, *Israel’s Invasion of Lebanon, Operation Peace for the Galilee*, p. 1.

tried a new strategy of restraint to remain welcome in their new base of operations.<sup>42</sup> The PLO could not fulfill this new strategy; coupled with a failing government and intra-Arab pressure, Lebanon relapsed into civil war in 1975. The actions of the PLO in Lebanon were described as:

The record of the PLO in Lebanon bears striking resemblance to an earlier chapter in the history of our century: the first period of Nazi terror in Germany. In one respect it seems to have been worse: the "Open Season" for molestation and rape of any girl that took the fancy of the PLO gunman. The wantonness of the killings, of men, women, and children, the mutilation of dead bodies, the confiscation of public buildings, and private homes whose inmates were either driven away or killed, defies description.<sup>43</sup>

The PLO's method of operation in Lebanon was similar, if not worse than what they had imparted on the Jordanians. The PLO had displayed open arms, took control wherever they could, and they had completely undermined the authority of the Lebanese government. In 1982, the Israelis invaded Lebanon, effectively ousting the PLO from Lebanon. The experiences of Lebanon and Jordan describe the narcissist and parasitic tendencies of the PLO. The PLO expected unbridled Arab support, without realising the importance that the host played in the overall scheme. In retrospect, the host could be considered more valuable than the cause. The PLO, after their second forced eviction, set up operations in Tunisia.

The level of inter-state violence between Israel and the Arab states has for the large part remained constant. However, the level of intra-state violence between the Arabs has peaked dramatically. The rise in this violence has been caused predominantly by the Palestinians. The back drop was an investigation into the origins of Middle East, the PLO, and the factors leading or contributing to the intra-state failure in Jordan and

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<sup>42</sup> Rex Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival in Lebanon*, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> Joseph Katz, *Israel's Invasion of Lebanon, Operation Peace for the Galilee*, p. 3.

Lebanon. Two things can be concluded: the first is that disunity exists in the Arab community over Israel's existence and the ownership of the lands of Palestine; the second is that the psychosis of the PLO negatively affects both.

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