

INTRODUCTION

Why This Book?

More often than not, there is some disparity between the way something appears and the way it really is. Sometimes that disparity is minimal, at other times considerable. As this is written, the world is focused on tensions between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. During the first half of 2003, once more, expectations were raised regarding the possibility of peace being achieved—this time via a roadmap. That possibility has already diminished considerably.

At this point in time, a clear-eyed look at the authentic nature of the PLO—which has assumed a putative role as Israel’s partner in peace negotiations—is in order. For the gap between what the Palestinians say for foreign consumption, and what they mean, between who they represent themselves as being, and who they really are, is enormous. To proceed without an understanding of this is a recipe for disaster—for Israel primarily, but also for the US and other western democracies invested in helping to secure peace in the region.

Whatever the status of the situation by the time this goes to print, there will be enormous value in what is revealed here. For the conundrum of how to make peace between Israel and the Palestinian Arabs is not going to disappear over night. Before the roadmap, there was Oslo. After the roadmap, will come other efforts; already we have seen the “Geneva Initiative,” and now “OneVoice.”

This agreement, I am not considering it more than the agreement which had been signed between our prophet Muhammad and Quraysh...

Thus spoke Yasser Arafat on 10 May 1994, in the course of a speech he gave in a mosque in Johannesburg, 10 days after signing the Gaza-Jericho First agreement that was a follow-up of the Oslo Accords. (See *In Their Words* for his full speech.) His talk, given in English, was off-the-record, but a South African radio journalist discreetly recorded and later publicized it.

What was Arafat talking about?

In 628, Muhammad, who assessed his following as not yet sufficiently strong to take Mecca in battle, made a ten-year peace treaty—the Hudaibiya Pact—with the polytheistic Quraysh tribe that controlled the city. This pact, which provided the Muslims access to Mecca for purposes of worship, stipulated that the two people “agreed to remove war from the people for ten years...”¹

Many of Muhammad’s followers, being unaware of his designs, were discontented with this arrangement; they were eager to take on the Quraysh and saw the treaty as a disadvantage. As he planned it, however, the treaty helped the Muslims to gain Mecca.

Two years after signing, when he had garnered considerably more strength, Muhammad abrogated the treaty and attacked the Quraysh with a force so overwhelming that they surrendered without a fight. He did this by first quietly preparing, while the Quraysh guard was down, and then finding a pretext for the battle he was determined to wage. Desperate entreaties by the Quraysh did nothing to dissuade Muhammad from his pre-determined course.

In Islamic law, the way in which Muhammad conducted himself is viewed as a model of proper behavior when dealing with non-Muslims.² The term for this is *hila*m—“by stratagems, you will make war.”³

When Arafat alluded to the treaty with the Quraysh in Johannesburg (and again subsequently during the course of 1995), his covert message to his Muslim followers was that they should have patience, and not

be discontented that he had signed the Accords, which might seem to put the Palestinian position at a disadvantage. He was reassuring them that when the time was right and the people were strong enough, he too would find a pretext and do battle.

At the end of September 2000, the second or Al Aqsa Intifada erupted with considerable violence. The official Palestinian claim was that this was a spontaneous street response to the offense of Ariel Sharon having entered the Temple Mount (in Arabic: *Haram esh-Sharif*) the day before. This was Arafat's pretext. We provide documented evidence that the attack had been pre-planned and carefully choreographed.

At the end of June 2003, the Palestinian Authority negotiated a *hudna* with Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The *hudna* is often referred to as a ceasefire. But it is not a genuine ceasefire. It is, quite specifically, a temporary cessation of violence intended to buy time so that strength may be garnered for renewed fighting. The *hudna* is modeled precisely after the conduct of Muhammad. When that conduct and its incorporation as a principle in Islamic law are understood, matters become much clearer.

The way it appears, and the way it really is...

This book, as well, is about the reach of the PLO, which has been far greater than many imagine. Yasser Arafat and his cronies have wrought considerable violence and human suffering in many places across the globe. (This becomes evident as the chapters *PLO Finances* and *International Connections* are read.)

Perhaps most significant of all, in this respect, is the connection of the PLO to the "worldwide Jihad" – to the radical Islamic vision to remake our modern civilization. This vision casts the United States irrevocably and unquestionably as enemy.

The PLO vs. the PA

It is the PLO—the Palestinian Liberation Organization—that requires closest scrutiny. This quasi-governmental organization is the official representative of Palestinian Arabs, wherever they reside, and the group officially empowered to conduct all negotiations with Israel.⁴

The PA—the Palestinian National Authority—was established by the Oslo Accords as an interim authority to administer areas in the West Bank and Gaza prior to the establishment of a Palestinian state. (It is worth noting here that the interim period envisioned by Oslo expired in May 1999. The terms of office of the elected president and legislative council of the PA lapsed at that time.) For all intents and purposes, the PA is the PLO in new guise, so great is the power and influence of PLO personnel within the PA.

Significance of Arafat vs. the PLO

Considerable attention is being paid now to Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO and President of the PA, and the ways in which to sideline him. There is ample reason for this, given the malign influence he has exerted over a period of years. It would be unwise, however, to assume that advancement towards a process of genuine peace (*genuine* is the operative word) would be possible simply if Arafat were removed from the picture. For the PLO, with its deceptive and hostile policies, would remain. As would the effect upon the Palestinian populace of 10 years of unremitting incitement. This is something that must not be forgotten.

ENDNOTES

¹ Daniel Pipes, "Lessons from the Prophet Muhammad's Diplomacy," *Middle East Quarterly*, September 1999.

² Yehoshua Porath, Professor Middle Eastern History, Hebrew University, *The New Republic*, July 8, 1996.

³ Guy Bechor, *Ha'aretz*, May 23, 1994.

⁴ In principle it is the PLO that has the power to negotiate, but, since the establishment of the position of prime minister in the PA, Israel and the western democracies have been working mightily to circumvent Arafat, who represents both the PLO and the PA. In order to accomplish this, they seek to deal with the prime minister, who, as it happens, represents only the PA.