



THE CENTER FOR
NEAR EAST POLICY
RESEARCH LTD.

WWW.ISRAELBEHINDTHENEWS.COM



Palestinian Authority forces conduct exercise in Hebron in 2008

Study:

Will US, Canadian & EU Trained Palestinian Forces Turn on Israel?

*David Bedein, CEO,
Center for Near East Policy Research,
Beit Agron Press Center, 37 Hillel Street, Jerusalem, Israel.*



Publication Made Possible by Research Grant From "The Middle East Forum"

Executive Summary

On the surface, the Palestinian Authority has scored a major achievement over the last five years with the development of its own security force.

Crime in the West Bank is at their lowest point in years.

Feudal chiefs who led the Palestine Authority security agencies are quietly being replaced by those mentored by the United States, Canada and the European Union.

Yet beneath the surface, the Palestine Authority security forces represent a loaded weapon that could explode in the near future.

Former Palestine Authority security Chief Mohammed Dahlan himself has warned that Palestinian security forces could splinter into rival militias and attack Palestinian and Israeli civilians alike.

One reason for this concern is that there is little civilian guidance over the Palestine Authority security forces.

This has encouraged them to become a separate power base in the West Bank and could result in either the collapse of the Palestine Authority or the erosion of the legitimacy of Palestine Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, whose term of office formally expired in January 2010.

Factions have already been formed within Palestine Authority security services that have resulted in friction as well as the prospect of being taken over by Hamas.

With speculation that the Palestine Authority may be heading towards some kind of confrontation with Israel over the next year, cooperation with the Jewish state has declined and became purely tactical – with neither party trusting the other.

Meanwhile, although the United States, Canada and the European Union have been financing and training Palestine Authority security forces, they have failed to implement significant reforms that would ensure that troops would not join in a coup or break up into mercenary forces.

Indeed, senior U.S. Congressional sources warn that the State Department has overseen the Palestine Authority training program without any firm goals of what they are to be. The question remains: Will Palestinian security services evolve into some kind of paramilitary force, contrary to the 1993 Oslo agreement, or become a police department?

After five years of intensive training by the United States, Canada and the European Union, basic questions remain of the Palestine Authority security forces: What is their number; how are recruits chosen; what is the level of supervision; where are their loyalties? How far has Hamas and Iran infiltrated the security forces loyal to Abbas? Washington has been of little help.



Prime Minister Netanyahu: The solo player. Al Ayyam.

Both the Obama and Bush administrations have been glad to finance Palestine Authority security training, but have done little to provide basic transparency or even define goals of the Palestinian security forces.

The key question is what happens if an independent Palestinian state is not established over the next year as President Obama has repeatedly promised? Does the United States have enough influence to prevent the Palestine Authority from transforming its well-equipped and trained forces into a militia that will launch low intensity attacks against Israel or even against neighboring Jordan? The rapid breakdown in Egypt and Tunisia in January 2011 has shown the potential for insurrection in even the most advanced Arab states. Despite the best intentions of Brussels, Ottawa and Washington, Israel and Jordan will bear the brunt of any mistaken assessment of the intentions of the Palestine Authority and its security forces.

Three Long Years

On paper, the Palestine Authority security forces have undergone rapid growth and development over the last three years. The U.S. training program has saved the Palestine Authority's National Security Forces from oblivion and made them into the strongest of the Palestinian paramilitary forces. The Palestinian police force has been revived and now operates with modern vehicles, communications and software for a range of missions. The Palestine Authority's intelligence services have been vastly improved from the bare rooms used for interrogation.

Until now, the Palestine Authority has not discarded the norms of a totalitarian regime and despite Western efforts the security forces and particularly the intelligence services act little differently from those in Egypt, Lebanon and Syria.

Palestine Authority security and intelligence forces continue to employ torture on a wide and systematic basis despite Western funding and training. [1] Torture techniques in Palestine Authority prisons have included beatings, hangings, suspending from the ceiling, electric shocks, sleep deprivation, sexual harassment, and the threat of rape. The result is that at least six Palestinians have died under torture in Palestine Authority prisons and many former detainees have been scarred with permanent physical disabilities. Arbitrary arrests have been common, with the Palestine Authority detention of almost 8,640 Palestinians from October 2007 to October 2010, or a rate of eight arrests per day. None of these detainees were released immediately, regardless of the circumstances. Instead, the minimum prison stay was more than 10 days, with 95 percent of the detainees – from workers to university professors, most of whom had been imprisoned by Israel, were charged with terrorism, sedition and conspiring against the Palestine Authority. Many were subjected to severe torture, often in front of close relatives to force a confession. [2] Despite Western pressure, the Palestine Authority has done little against officers who consistently abuse detainees. As in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia, Palestine Authority torture policies plant the seeds for violent unrest in the West Bank.

The Major Palestine Authority Forces

There are six major security and intelligence units in the Palestine Authority. Their missions frequently overlap and the rivalry between some of the units has reached the point where there is little to no cooperation. The Interior Ministry, even under Abbas's orders, has failed to oversee coordination between these agencies, many of which have also opposed reform and restructuring. The main reason for this rivalry is that the units reflect different parts of Palestinian society, with the most intransigent coming from Palestinian military forces in such countries as Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia.

Despite his formal powers, Abbas has spent little time overseeing the security forces, leaving that job to his military secretary, Brig. Gen. Jihad Al Jayousi, as well as to Palestine Authority Prime Minister Fayad and to Interior Minister Said Al Ali.

Civil Police

The Civil Police remain the largest and most modern of the Palestine Authority security forces. This police force numbers about 8,000 officers who have been assigned to anti-crime operations, including traffic, patrols as well as reinforcement for other security units.

The European Union has been responsible for police development and over the last three years has relayed nearly \$100 million in aid for training and equipment. Much of the money has been poured into security infrastructure, such as the reconstruction of police headquarters in Hebron and Nablus.

The European Union has also supported Palestine Authority plans to reopen 37 police stations throughout the West Bank. The police have established new units to protect the judiciary and tourists and conduct special operations. The civil police have been commanded by Maj. Gen. Hamza Atallah, regarded as the most pro-Western security chief in the PA.

National Security Forces

The National Security Forces has been deemed the core of the future Palestinian Army. [3]

Even the United States envisions the National Security Forces as resembling that of the U.S. National Guard, in other words a unit more powerful than a Gendarmerie and slightly below that of a fully-fledged military. The United States has focused its training effort on the National Security Forces, with about 7,000 officers and envisions the force turning into a European-style Gendarmerie. The National Security Forces, commanded by Maj. Gen. Diab Al Ali, has been instructed in military tactics and provides strategic support for other security forces, particularly to quell massive demonstrations by the Islamic opposition.

The United States has trained six National Security Force battalions at the Jordan International Police Training Center outside Amman as part of a plan to increase the force to up to 40,000. The 19-week course, heavily criticized by Palestinian Authority security commanders as ineffective, has been given by Australian, Jordanian and U.S. instructors; many of them employed by the U.S. company, DynCorps International. The training was meant to deploy a National Security Forces battalion in nine out of the 10 PA provinces in the West Bank. [4]

The provinces of Jenin and Tubas have been regarded as one security unit. Despite criticism of the Jordanian training, many Palestinian Authority officials assert that the battalions that completed the course were the most professional in the security forces.

Presidential Guard

The Presidential Guard is actually an attempt to refurbish the old Force 17 of the late Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Since 2005, the Presidential Guard, led by Brig. Gen. Munir Zabi, has been under the direct control of Abbas and protects both the Chairman as well as senior officials. The Presidential Guard, however, has often been used in counter-insurgency operations, particularly against Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The force, with 2,500 members, has also been assigned to quell demonstrations. The Presidential Guard has established the 3rd Battalion, meant to focus on counter-insurgency and support other agencies in the campaign against Hamas and other opposition forces.

The U.S. State Department has been training the Presidential Guard in a low-profile program that focused on such skills as bomb-detection, rapid response, surveillance, weapons, investigations and administration; Washington has supplied computers, surveillance equipment, vehicles and uniforms while Egypt and Jordan have provided weapons.

A concern by some is that the Palestinian Authority has failed to clarify the role of the Presidential Guard.

Preventive Security Apparatus

The Preventive Security Apparatus has been regarded as the most powerful security force in the Palestinian Authority. While it does not have the numbers of the police or National Security Forces, the Preventive Security Apparatus has been a highly-disciplined unit that was assigned the campaign to stop Hamas operations in the West Bank. The Preventive Security Apparatus has been trained by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and has also received instruction from British and French intelligence.

With 4,000 members, the Preventive Security Apparatus, commanded by Ziad Hab Al Rih, has developed a huge network of paid informants who monitor all opposition activity.

The agency, which operates 17 detention centers, has been deemed the worst violator of human rights within the Palestinian Authority security apparatus.

General Intelligence Service

The General Intelligence Services has been the chief rival to the Preventive Security Apparatus. While the Preventive Security Apparatus was founded and developed by Fatah fighters in the West Bank, the General Intelligence Service has been commanded by Palestinian exiles from Tunisia. The difference in approach is stark as the Tunis faction operates very much like any other Arab regime and sees itself as the privileged class in the West Bank. The General Intelligence Service has been authorized to focus on intelligence gathering outside the West Bank and work with the friendly Arab states. Both the CIA and Britain's MI6 have been helping the General Intelligence Service as well as the Preventive Security Apparatus, including the transfer of Western cash to Palestinian commanders. [5]

However, the General Intelligence Service has evolved into a rival to the Preventive Security Apparatus and conducts separate counter-insurgency operations, particularly against Hamas. Over the last three years, the force has grown from about 2,500 to 4,000, largely due to the influx of Palestinian Authority security officers who fled the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007.

The General Intelligence Service also runs 17 detention centers and has been regarded as a major violator of human rights. Unlike the Preventive Security Apparatus, the General Intelligence Service has sought to reform its image and promised Palestinian human rights groups to raise standards, including ending the use of security courts for the prosecution of civilians.

Both the General Intelligence Service as well as Palestinian Security Intelligence have been commanded by Brig. Gen. Majid Faraj, envisioned by some Palestinian Authority leaders to be the next overall Palestinian security chief.

A major improvement within the General Intelligence Service has been that of its collection and intelligence capacities. The General Intelligence Service plans to train 1,200 officers in such disciplines as surveillance and data analysis. Already 800 of them have completed training.

Military Intelligence

For years, Military Intelligence was operated by Arafat's nephew, Mussa, who used his position to amass great wealth and torture his opponents.

In wake of Mussa's assassination in 2007, Military Intelligence has come under closer supervision by Abbas and was assigned to investigate the security forces and prosecute wrong-doers. Military Intelligence, with nearly 2,000 officers, participates in Counter Intelligence operations, usually in tandem with General Intelligence Service. Military Intelligence also manages its own detention network and has been responsible for 11 prisons. [6] Many Military Intelligence officers have been trained abroad, including in Algeria and Pakistan.

Civil Defense

Another major force, but not in the area of law enforcement, has been Civil Defense. Civil Defense has been under the authority of the Interior Ministry and focuses on fire prevention and response to major accidents, including traffic.

The force, with about 2,000 members, also has been responsible for planning of and response to natural disasters and pandemics.

The Palestinian Authority also retains a huge inactive force that operated in the Gaza Strip until the Hamas took over Gaza in 2007.

About 36,500 Palestinian Authority security officers who had operated in the Gaza Strip no longer report to work yet continue to receive salaries. Some of these officers have moved to other countries such as Egypt and Jordan while others managed to resettle in the West Bank.

Reforms

The Palestinian Authority has resisted reforms urged by Western donors, mostly because of the opposition by the security agencies as well as senior figures in the ruling Fatah movement. The only real reforms that have taken place since 2005 were the transfer of fiscal responsibility from Abbas to Prime Minister Salam Fayad. [7]

This has significantly reduced the authority of individual the Palestinian Authority security chiefs, who until 2008 would directly pay their troops, often after removing fees from their salaries. Another area of reform was the retirement of thousands of elderly Palestinian Authority officers who had served in the Palestine Liberation Army around the Arab world. About 90 percent of officers above the age of 60 have been retired over the last five years and provided with substantial pensions.

In most cases, these officers had been paid for either sporadic or non-existence work. Still, the actual size of Palestinian Authority security forces remains unclear. As late as 2007, the PA provided salaries to 86,000 active and retired personnel. [8]



Israel as Venus Fly Trap waiting to swallow Uncle Sam. Al Hayat

The reform effort, drafted by Britain and the United States, has failed in regard to plans to streamline the Palestinian Authority security forces. Since 2002, the Palestinian Authority has resisted efforts to merge what could be as many as 13 security agencies into three branches. The reform plan called for an internal security force, comprised of Police, Preventive Security Apparatus, and Civil Defense, under Interior Ministry control. The last branch would be that of a national force that consisted of The National Security Forces, Military Intelligence, Naval Police and the Presidential Guard under the post of the Palestinian Authority Chairman, with the General Intelligence Service operating as an external intelligence agency. Indeed, Military Intelligence and the Presidential Guard have already been integrated into the National Security Forces, but in practice they continue to operate as separate agencies. [9]

The most acceptable step toward streamlining was taken in late 2009 when Brig. Gen. Majid Faraj was appointed head of both the General Intelligence Service and Military Intelligence. Faraj, regarded as one of the most professional officers in the Palestinian Authority, has managed to achieve cooperation between the General Intelligence Service and Military Intelligence and was working to coordinate better with Preventive Security Apparatus.

A key reason for the lack of reform in the Palestinian Authority security services stems from intent of the Western donors, particularly the United States. The administrations of Presidents George Bush and Barack Obama have regarded Palestinian Authority security forces more as a tool for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank rather than as a means of law enforcement and regime protection.

For a long time, the State Department conducted virtually no supervision over U.S. security efforts with the Palestinian Authority, including the effectiveness of training and equipping programs. Indeed, former members of the U.S. Security Coordinator Office regarded the entire effort as a contradiction. On the one hand, Washington has sought security reform while on the other hand it attempts to constantly expand Palestinian Authority security forces.

The expansion is meant to develop a military that would defeat its enemies, which the Palestinian Authority sees as Israel.

Security reform focuses on requirements that include coordination and civilian control. [10] In this case, equipment is the last element, but Washington has made this the priority.

At the same time, the prospect of security reform appears so hopeless that many of the Western donors have quietly withdrawn from the effort and instead focus on the need for a clear command structure. [11]

Indeed, neither the State Department nor the U.S. Security Coordinator's Office has established clear and measurable outcome-based performance indicators to assess progress.

As a result, after more than three years of intense efforts, neither the Congress nor the American people have a clue as to the real effectiveness and performance of the Palestinian Authority security forces. The only measurements used by the State Department have been the size of the Palestinian Authority security forces or that of their training programs. There has been little or no mention of what are the security needs of the Palestinian Authority.



Pres. Obama: "Palestine-Israel is impossible." Al Quds

Indeed, some in the US Security Coordinator's Office have asserted that the State Department made few requirements, including requesting the blueprint or performance indicators. For a year, until November 2009, the department did not ask the office to even hand in monthly reports. When the reports were finally sent to Washington, they lacked such data as the Palestinian crime rate and incidents of insurgency. [12]

The Palestinian Authority regarded Lt. General Dayton, who oversaw the spending of \$392 million from 2007 to 2010, as being too close to the Israelis. Despite General Dayton's public positions of encouraging Israel to withdraw from areas of the West Bank, the General remained highly skeptical of the Palestinian Authority security capabilities and intentions, even by those trained in Jordan.

As late as 2010, General Dayton argued that the Palestinian Authority was not ready to control the entire West Bank. He also objected to Palestinian Authority security campaigns in both Hebron and Nablus. General Dayton was joined by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who became the Chairman of the Quartet and helped garner funds for Palestinian Authority programs. Both Blair and Dayton were concerned that the powerful clans in Hebron would effectively resist Palestinian Authority operations in the Hebron area. Instead, they advised the Palestinian Authority leadership to remain focused on gaining control of the

northern West Bank. But Prime Minister Fayad insisted that the Palestinian Authority undertake these missions, particularly in Hebron, and they were later regarded as successful. At that point, General Dayton and State Department officials claimed credit. By 2010, General Dayton's presence had become intolerable to many Palestinian Authority officers. Some of the resentment stemmed from U.S. hyperactivity in which General Dayton supervised 24 security courses from 2008 to 2010. Palestinian Authority governors in the West Bank complained that General Dayton visited local security commanders without the approval of the governors. Others resented General Dayton's intervention in security policy rather than being limited to training and equipment. General Dayton was also said to have played a major role in the dismissal of then-General Intelligence Service commander Brig. Gen. Tawfik Tirawi in 2009. [13]

General Dayton also remained influential on the deployment of the National Security Forces and Presidential Guard forces trained in Jordan. Indeed by the end of his tenure in September 2010, General Dayton was seen more as a diplomat than as a security adviser. His successor, Lt. Gen. Michael Moeller, has maintained a very low profile and, unlike General Dayton, refuses to speak in public or give interviews to the media.

Rivalries

Despite the efforts of the Palestinian Authority, the leading security agencies have refused to consider meaningful coordination and accountability. Palestinian Authority Interior Minister Al Ali failed in efforts to introduce an Inspector General who would oversee all security agencies. At one point, the civil police agreed but the General Intelligence Service and National Security Forces objected. The Preventive Security Apparatus said it would agree only if it could appoint its own internal inspector. [14] The agencies have also fought Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Fayad's policies of fiscal accountability, with the General Intelligence Service and the Preventive Security Apparatus still receiving significant support from Arab and Western intelligence services. The agencies have also disagreed over their basic assignments, leading to constant arguments over authority and operations. A huge argument has been which agency should lead the Palestinian Authority offensive against Hamas, with both the General Intelligence Service and the Preventive Security Apparatus claiming to be in charge. In a survey by the Interior Ministry in 2010, the General Intelligence Service and the Preventive Security Apparatus argued over responsibility for 60 percent of all security assignments.

The police have also been engaged with a rivalry with the National Security Forces. The United States has been unhappy with the pace of EU programs to expand and equip police forces. As a result, Washington has seen National Security Forces as a backup to the civilian police and in 2008 approved the doubling of National Security Forces battalions from five to ten. [15]

The National Security Forces has been patrolling several West Bank cities, particularly Ramallah, operations which have increased tension with police commanders.

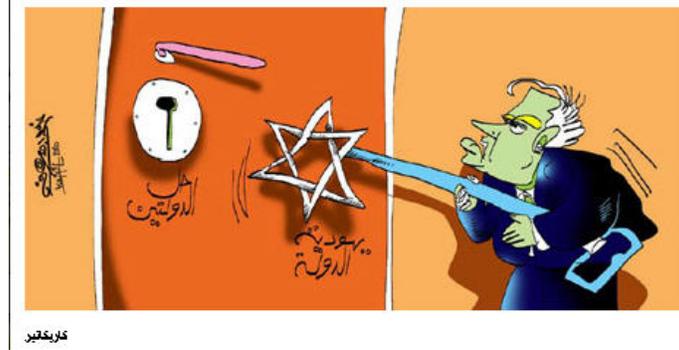
Prime Minister Netanyahu to EU: I am excellent. Al Ayyam.



Israeli Concern

The Israeli government and military have not been consistent in their statements concerning Palestinian Authority security forces. For public consumption, the Israelis have repeatedly praised Palestinian Authority security forces as well as cooperation with the army and police. But privately and sometimes publicly, Israeli officials and commanders have expressed concern that the West was building an effective Palestinian Authority paramilitary that was preparing for low intensity armed attacks against Jewish targets. These officials asserted that Israel did not trust Palestinian Authority security forces on virtually anything. They included the Israeli refusal to renew security patrols with Palestinian Authority units and engagement in an intelligence exchange. A key concern was that the Palestinian Authority was organizing squads that would engage in sabotage and ambushes of Israeli soldiers and civilians. In May 2010, then-Central Command chief Maj. Gen. Avi Mizrahi, who later became head of the ground forces, determined that even small Palestinian Authority units could be capable of paralyzing Jewish communities in the West Bank as well as the outskirts of Jerusalem. Mizrahi went so far as to describe the Palestinian Authority security service as a "proper infantry force" and expressed the concern for Israeli casualties in any confrontation. [16]

The United States has acknowledged that a key aim in the development of the National Security Forces, for example, was to function in "small unit or company-size formations, in a military fashion. This would include the use of tactics employed by Special Weapons and Tactics teams in the United States. [17]



Prime Minister Netanyahu abandons key for two-state solution. Al Quds

Another problem is that the Palestinian Authority has failed to implement restrictions on its security forces.

Under the U.S. training program, only the National Security Forces was to have been equipped and trained for paramilitary operations. But Abbas has authorized the Presidential Guard to conduct Gendarmerie-type tasks that exceed the force's original mandate and overlap with the National Security Forces. [18] At the same time, the Presidential Guard has refused to clarify its role in the Palestinian Authority security infrastructure. The Israeli fear is that the Presidential Guard would comprise another element of an emerging Palestinian armed force by 2012.

The Israeli response has been muted. However, the Israel Security Agency was said to have penetrated every one of the Palestinian Authority security agencies in secret efforts that intensified in 2010. [19]

At the same time, Israel has delayed a range of procurement projects for Palestinian Authority security forces. These include U.S. and Russian plans to supply the Palestinian Authority with BRDM armored personnel carriers, surveillance equipment, night-vision systems and encrypted tactical communications. As of March 2010, two National Security Forces battalions received no more than 14 percent of their equipment requirements, including helmets, armored vests, and communications.

Human Rights Abuse

The expansion of and improvement in the Palestinian Authority security forces have failed to win support from Palestinians in the West Bank. The main reason is that almost all of the Palestinian Authority forces have been involved in abuse of civilians. Corruption among Palestinian Authority security officers remains rampant, with Palestinian businessmen still being threatened, whether in their stores or at checkpoints. Dissent is not tolerated to the point where attorneys for security detainees have been jailed without charges. [20] Even the Palestinian Independent Commission of Human Rights has reported an increase in the number of cases of torture of detainees. The consensus among even Hamas hardliners is that

Palestinian Authority abuse has gone beyond that practiced by the Israel Army at any time since 1967.

The Palestinian Authority has insisted that it was not ignoring human rights. The Interior Ministry was said to have dismissed or demoted nearly 50 officers found to have engaged in human rights violations. But Palestinian human rights groups have been unable to verify this. Instead, the human rights groups asserted that senior officers involved in torture escaped any censure and at most were transferred to other regions of the West Bank. [21] The most galling element in the Palestinian Authority violations was that security agencies were acting as an arm of the ruling Fatah movement. Anybody who was not a member of Fatah was regarded as a potential enemy. As a result, teachers and other civil servant applicants often had to prove their loyalty to Fatah by either joining the movement or agreeing to spy on Hamas supporters.

Indeed, the heads of all six major Palestinian Authority security services have been senior members of Fatah, particularly the Revolutionary Council, and the lion's share of Palestinian Authority cadets were also Fatah members. [22]

These commanders have resisted appeals by Fayad, who is not formally a member of Fatah, to end human rights abuses and punish violators. A Palestinian assessment concluded that 80 percent of Palestinian Authority officers were affiliated with Fatah. [23]

The United States has done nothing to address the human rights violations by Palestinian Authority security forces. Indeed, the opposite has been the case. In 2009, Washington significantly increased its budget for Palestinian Authority security forces to \$80 million amid concern by other Western donors of torture and abuse in Palestinian Authority prisons. General Dayton was ordered by U.S. special envoy George Mitchell to expand and accelerate security programs to include the police, which had been under the purview of the EU. During a meeting in June 2009, General Dayton encouraged the anti-Hamas campaign by Palestinian Authority intelligence agencies, despite admitting that donors were dismayed by the torture of Islamists in West Bank prisons. [24]

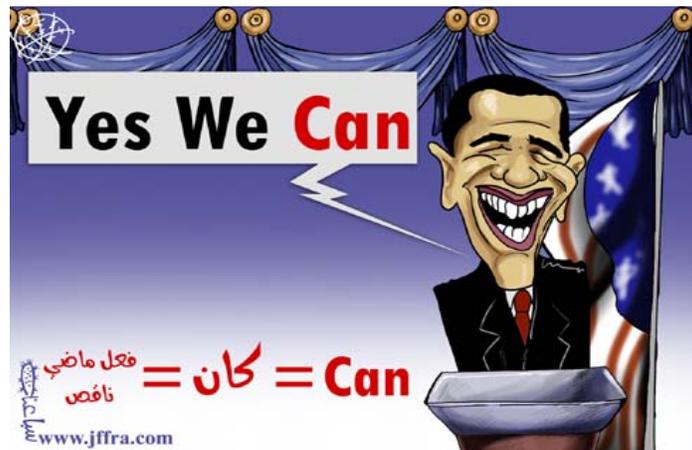
Prime Minister Fayad has sought to keep security forces under his direct control. But there are clear limits to his power. In 2010, Fayad was warned by security chiefs that the failure of Israel- Palestinian Authority talks would harm the forces and discipline. The warning was backed by the Fatah Central Committee, which contains at least four former security chiefs with significant influence over Palestinian Authority forces. As a result, the prime minister has come to understand that he is virtually powerless to enforce discipline on Fatah officers, particularly those with connections in the movement's leadership. [25] The leadership itself has been divided, particularly into pro- and anti-Abbas factions, making it impossible for the prime minister to reach any arrangement with Fatah.

Another problem has been the Palestinian Authority insistence to expand counter-insurgency programs. The U.S. Security Coordinator's Office has been considering the development of special Counter Intelligence forces to operate against Hamas's military infrastructure in the West Bank. However, Israel believes the Palestinian Authority's aim is to create a commando corps that would eventually attack Jewish targets.

The Crisis

Because of the stress by the United States that security forces remain hostage to the establishment of a Palestinian state, diplomats around the region are concerned of what will happen if that goal fails. In other words, what will happen to the Palestinian Authority, let alone its security forces, if Israel and the Palestinian Authority do not reach an agreement for the establishment of a Palestinian state throughout the West Bank and Jerusalem by 2012? At one point, Abbas himself threatened to disband the Palestinian Authority, which alarmed senior members of Fatah. In December 2010, former Palestinian Authority security chief Mohammed Dahlan, later exiled by Abbas, warned that the disbanding of the Palestinian Authority would spark chaos throughout the region and result in militias in the West Bank. Dahlan, in contrast to U.S. and EU reports, said 60,000 officers were employed in the Palestinian Authority security forces, and they could not be dismissed without serious repercussions. [26]

Pres. Obama as a "has-been". Al Hayat.



Already, there are signs of factionalism within Palestinian Authority security forces. Former Palestinian Authority Chief Mohammed Dahlan, for example, has been recruiting senior officers to support him in any effort to unseat Abbas. Other members of the Fatah Central Committee are also forming alliances, often with help from Arab and Western countries. With an aging and weak leadership, Palestinian

Authority security forces could deteriorate to the point where it will no longer be loyal to either their commanders or even Abbas. Similar scenarios have taken place in such Arab states as Iraq, Lebanon, Tunisia and Yemen. The difference is that all of the Palestinian Authority security forces, similar to that which took place in 2000, would be swept into a competition over proving their mettle in attacks against Jews.

The prospect of unrest in the West Bank could increase as the Abbas regime comes under rising criticism for what Palestinians perceive as concessions to Israel, which at least one major analyst said could bring down the entire Palestinian Authority leadership. [27]

Already, there is evidence of Palestinian Authority -organized unrest in the West Bank directed toward Israeli civilians, with demonstrators believed to include off-duty officers. [28]

At that point, U.S. training and equipment could turn Palestinian Authority units into professional terrorist squads that would impose a heavy civilian toll on Israel

With a huge American presence in several Israeli cities, including Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, the United States could face the prospect that its own weapons and equipment would be used by Palestinian forces to kill Americans and spread terror throughout the region.

Moreover, given the growing unrest in neighboring Jordan, Palestinian Authority mercenaries could be recruited to attack the Hashemite kingdom as well, again with U.S. weapons, equipment and training methods. Little wonder that there is widespread opposition within the Jordanian leadership for a U.S. proposal for joint security patrols along the Jordan River as part of a plan to establish a Palestinian state. [29]

Due to this Jordan has stepped up its monitoring of the activities of Palestinian Authority security forces in the West Bank and Jordan Valley in fear that these units can turn to the East as easily as West.

CANADA

Canada has been one of eight countries to participate in the U.S. security mission. Canadians comprise the largest nationality of the U.S. Security Coordinator's mission, with 18 out of a total of 45 staffers. [30] The Canadians do much of the field work for the Americans, who are severely restricted by U.S. law from operating in Judea and Samaria and much of Jerusalem because of the threat of attack. [31] While the Americans are based in Jerusalem, the Canadian contingent is located in Ramallah. [32] Until mid-2010, Canadians, who outnumber the American staffers, have worked with the PA Interior Ministry's Strategic Planning Directorate, which played a major role in development Palestinian security forces. [33] Some of the Canadians have been fluent Arabic speakers and this has helped them in their work with PA security officials and commanders.

Recommendations

- **The United States and the European Union should conduct a major review of Palestinian Authority security forces to determine whether they would be capable of maintaining order in the absence of a Palestinian state in 2012. This would require a genuine examination of Palestinian Authority law enforcement capabilities as well as civilian control.**
- **Western donors should link future aid to Palestinian Authority security forces to a significant improvement in human rights. Without this, there will be no commitment by Palestinians to law and order in the West Bank.**
- **The development of Palestinian Authority forces should be fully coordinated with Israel to ensure that they do not turn into militias that could threaten Jewish lives.**
- **Aid to the Palestinian Authority security forces should be accompanied by a political process that would establish democratic elections in the West Bank, including for the post of chairman. The Palestinian Authority has been without a legislature for more than five years, which has turned the Palestinian regime into a veritable dictatorship.**
- **The Palestinian Authority should be urged to immediately establish an independent judiciary in which judges, prosecutors and attorneys can operate freely. This must be a major goal of the civilian police as well as the intelligence services.**



*Palestinian Authority forces parade in the town of Hebron
October 2008*

Notes

1. Report by Arab Organization for Human Rights in Britain. January 2011.
2. Ibid.
3. International Crisis Group. "Squaring the Circle: Palestinian Security Reform Under Occupation." September 2010
4. [U.S.] Government Accountability Office. "U.S. Assistance is Training and Equipping Security Forces, but the Program Needs to Measure Progress and Faces Logistical Constraints." May 2010.
5. "Fixing Broken Windows: Security Sector Reform in Palestine, Lebanon and Yemen" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace report. Oct. 2009
6. Arab Organization for Human Rights in Britain. January 2011.
7. ICG report.
8. GAO report.
9. ICG report
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. GAO report.
13. ICG report.
14. Ibid.
15. GAO report.
16. Haaretz. May 17, 2010
17. GAO report.
18. Ibid.
19. ICG report.
20. Palestinian Council of Human Rights Organizations. Jan. 23, 2010
21. ICG report.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. PA transcript of Dayton-Saeb Erekat meeting. June 2009. Released by A-Jazeera on Jan. 25, 2011
25. ICG report
26. Dahlan interview to Arab media. December 2010.
27. Khaled Abu Toameh. Jerusalem Post. Jan. 25, 2011
28. Israeli military officer. Jan. 30, 2011
29. Middle East Newslite. Jan. 21, 2011
30. Congressional Research Service. June 2009.
31. ibid
32. International Crisis Group. September 2010
33. Congressional Research Service. June 2009