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The PLO: Is it a force for peace in the Middle East?

The skilled p.r. apparatus of the PLO has lulled many into the belief that this organization could possibly be a force for peace in the Middle East. Some believe that there is a certain amount of "grandstanding" on the part of the PLO, mostly for internal consumption, but that essentially the PLO is searching for peace and for a "just solution" to the problems of the Middle East. And those people believe that Israel is in error in its unyielding resistance to the PLO.

What are the facts?

■ The PLO is a terror organization, created in 1964 by the Arab League—not by the people of Palestine. According to its charter, it has only one aim: the destruction and elimination of the State of Israel through force and violence. Any apparent deviation from this single-minded aim is a temporary tactical maneuver.

■ The basic charter of the PLO is the so-called "Palestinian National Covenant." It was adopted in May 1964 and has been re-confirmed ever since. Its main theme is that only the Arabs are entitled to self-government and that the State of Israel has no right whatever to exist. It states clearly that "Palestine . . . is an indivisible part of the Arab homeland," that "Palestine . . . is an indivisible territorial unit," and that "the Arab Palestinian people . . . reject all solutions that are substitutes for the total liberation of Palestine." This is the undeviating line. Those PLO and Arab leaders who have from time to time ventured to propose a less inflexible approach have invariably paid with their lives for such deviation from PLO "orthodoxy".

■ The PLO is enormously rich and is almost totally financed by the oil-producing Arab states, especially including the so-called "moderate" ones. Saudi Arabia is the main bankroller.

■ The PLO has factions and splinters that operate under several minor warlords. But there is only one central command, only one authority. Nothing happens without its approval. Nobody should be fooled by pleas of innocence when things go wrong or if world opinion is outraged, as in the Achille Lauro shipjacking, in the hijacking of the AirEgypt plane, which cost 57 lives, in the coordinated shootouts at the Rome and Vienna airports, or in the Karachi and Istanbul murderous attacks.

■ The PLO is the kingpin of international terror. It maintains a complex network of relations with all the main terror organizations throughout the world. It has written a blood-spattered record of unrelenting terror in Israel and in many other countries. Some of their more "glorious" exploits: The attack on Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics (17 dead); the attack on the Ma'alot School (62 dead, mostly children); the attack on pilgrims and passengers at Ben-Gurion International Airport (76 dead); the hijacking of a passenger bus on the Haifa-Tel Aviv Highway (82 dead). This is only a small sample. There have been many bombings, hijackings, and terrorist attacks in virtually every European country (except the Soviet Union and its satellites), leaving uncounted dead and wounded.

The PLO cannot be a force for peace in the Middle East, because it is totally committed to the destruction of Israel, because it engages in unremitting terror, and because it is not representative of the Palestinian Arab people. Though others are occasionally duped, Israel has always understood that. Israel knows that the fight against PLO terror is the fight for peace. Those that support the PLO are the greatest obstacle to peace in the Middle East, because knowingly or unknowingly they support terror. There will be no peace in the Middle East until all nations join Israel in fighting PLO terrorism. Terror and peace cannot exist together. To invite the PLO to the peace table would be a travesty.

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