

An Assessment of Arafat

Will his death open the way for peace?

Yasser Arafat dominated the scene of the Arab/Israeli conflict for over fifty years. Now that he has died, many believe that new leadership will emerge and that peace will finally come to the Holy Land. Is that a valid assumption?

What are the facts?

Review of an Evil Life: Review of an Evil Life: In order to analyze the situation, it is necessary to assess Yasser Arafat and what he has wrought. A Latin proverb admonishes us to say nothing but good about the dead. The Bible, on the other hand, in Proverbs (11:10) states that “when the wicked perish, there is shouting.” Following that admonition, one can say without hesitation that Yasser Arafat was certainly one of the most wicked men of this and the last century. While he was not able to work on as vast a plane as Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin, he was certainly in the same evil league.

Here are just a few “highlights” of this monster’s career. He was personally responsible for the murder of eleven Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics; he directed the execution of two

American diplomats in Sudan; he masterminded the cold-blooded murder of 25 people – 21 of them children – in Ma’alot, a city in northern Israel; he authorized the takeover of the Italian cruise ship ACHILLE LAURO, and the murder of a wheelchair-bound American citizen. He was the originator of the infamous crime of suicide bombings and brought it to a horrified world. He was the inventor of the hijacking and bombing of airplanes that killed thousands. And that is just the tip of the evil iceberg.

As a result of the disastrous Oslo Accord, Arafat was allowed to return to Israel from his exile in Tunis. In the last year of his presidency, President Clinton convened a Camp David summit with Arafat and Ehud Barak, then the prime minister of Israel. Arafat got virtually everything he ever demanded, except the “right of return” of the descendants of the Palestinian “refugees,” which would have been the end of the Jewish state.

Little Hope in the New Man: Arafat rejected this more than generous offer and decided instead to start his bloody “intifada,” which by now has cost over 1,000 Jewish lives – and three times as many Arab lives and untold thousands wounded on both sides. The Palestinian economy is in

Arafat is dead and has gone to his “reward,” wherever that might be. He left his people and the territory that the Israelis had generously yielded to him in a shambles. He refused to create any institutions that could possibly become precursors to a government. He looted the treasury that foreign countries – mostly, of course, the United States – had generously provided for the welfare of his constituents. He implanted hate and poisoned the minds of his people. His main interest never seems to have been the creation of a Palestinian state; his primary goal, ceaselessly pursued, was the destruction of Israel. With that heritage, it will take a very long time, if it can ever happen at all, that peace between Arabs and Jews can come about.

ruins. More than one-half of its population is without work; famine would be rampant were it not for the constant infusion of cash by the U.S. and other western countries (most of it pilfered by Arafat and his cohorts and stashed in secret accounts all over the world).

But the greatest harm, the greatest crime that Arafat committed was to poison the minds of two generations of Palestinian Arabs against Israel and against the Jews. Evil propaganda permeates all Palestinian media. Palestinian children, beginning with pre-school, learn to hate Jews and Israel, and to become “*shahids*” – martyrs and suicide

bombers. The State of Israel does not appear in Arab textbooks; the area is described as “Occupied Palestine.” Even with the best effort, it may take at least two generations to change that mind set.

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In retrospect, it seems almost incredible and a cruel joke that such a man, such a fiend, would have received the Nobel Peace Prize and that presidents, prime ministers and secretaries of state of major countries would have attended this man’s funeral in Cairo. Our president at least had the good taste to send only a lower-level state department functionary.

Much hope is pinned on Mahmoud Abbas, who appears likely to emerge from the inevitable power struggle as the new leader of the Palestinians. But it is most likely that this hope is misplaced. Sure, Abbas obviously has a better tailor and a better barber than Arafat had, and that might make him appear more congenial to Western audiences. But he was Arafat’s second-in-command for decades and shares his late master’s views in all respects. He got his doctorate in political science from a Soviet university and wrote his thesis on the Holocaust never having taken place. He has already put himself on record that in any negotiation with the Israelis to which he might agree, he will never waver on his insistence on the right of return of the Palestinian “refugees.” Since that is obviously a non-starter, it appears that no peace, no settlement can be reached with this man.

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