

Conflict Studies Research Centre

Middle East Series

06/51



**The Battle for the Palestinian
Security Services**

Gordon Bennett

October 2006

Defence Academy of the United Kingdom

The Battle for the Palestinian Security Services

Gordon Bennett

Key Points

- * The death of Yasir Arafat ended a controversial era for the divided and bankrupt Palestinian community.
- * Hamas' electoral victory of January 2006 was predictable, as was its violent conflict with Fatah.
- * Any serious attempt to modernise and streamline the Palestinian administration provokes internal, bloody struggle. This trend is going to continue.
- * The most recent reforms of the Palestinian special services resulted in a particularly violent struggle without visible end.
- * The solution is a peace accord between the largest Palestinian factions and their willingness to control the militants, a task almost impossible as too many radicals hate Israel more than they love Palestine.

Contents

Introduction - after Arafat	1
A brief history of the Palestinian special services	1
The reforms	3
The Hamas challenge	7
Educating and training	10
The undeclared war	11
Hezbollah	13
Conclusion	13
Appendix 1 - Assassinations and wounding of Palestinian security personnel by rival Palestinian groups	17
Appendix 2 - Security meetings between Egyptian and Palestinian officials July 2002 – July 2006	20

Acronyms

BBC MS	BBC Monitoring Service
GI(D)(S)	General Intelligence (Department)(Service)
GSS	General Security Service
IDF	Israeli Defence Force
NS(F)(A)(S)	National Security (Force)(Agency)(Service)
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council.
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
(P)PS(S)(F)	(Palestinian) Preventive Security (Service)(Force)
SSWG	Security Sector Working Group

The Battle for the Palestinian Security Services

Gordon Bennett

Introduction - after Arafat

The death of Yasir Arafat, President of Palestinian Authority, on 11 November 2004 heralded many radical changes in the Palestinian movement. Arafat was elected as the head of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, a group recognized by the Arab countries as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in 1969, and remained the undisputed leader of the Palestinian movement until his death. His bravery and perseverance were matched only by his reluctance to modernise the movement and the fledgling Palestinian state, with its huge and undisciplined security and intelligence bodies, or to offer the Palestinian people something more than a continuous struggle against enemies in Israel and Palestine.

His administration survived mainly thanks to international financial assistance, a large part of which was squandered on an overgrown, fragmented, brutal and chaotic security apparatus, accustomed to use methods associated usually with the world's most dictatorial regimes. The destruction of the Palestinian security apparatus by the Israelis in April 2002, administrative mismanagement, new responsibilities in the Gaza Strip and the shortage of money in the Palestinian treasury, forced Arafat to accept the need to reform his security apparatus. The Palestinian territories with their 2.5m inhabitants have probably the world's highest ratio of police and security personnel to civilian population. Divided by traditionally strongly polarized political, often violent, factions the size of the Palestinian special services is at first glance understandable. Palestine had no army. Its special services operated against one of the most efficient armies and special services in the world. It was, and to some degree still is based on occupied territories, and had to fight against militant groups supported often by rich foreign states conducting their war with Israel by proxy. And yet, even a rich state would have difficulties in keeping a security structure of this size. The Palestinian security apparatus served Yasir Arafat and individual political factions but not the Palestinian people. At the end of the century, almost 75% of the total security force were not assigned to law enforcement tasks.¹ Their victories against their main enemy, Israel, were insignificant but on occasions they were even used to intimidate their own journalists.²

Yasir Arafat never stopped fighting against Israel, in spite of his professed readiness to engage in negotiations. The final, messy stage of his funeral in Palestine was a perfect reflection of the chaos he left behind. When Yasir Arafat was gone and the Palestinian voters were allowed to choose, they voted for his more militant, better organized and less corrupt Palestinian opponents.

A brief history of Palestinian special services

In 1959, Farouk Qaddumi formed the first Palestinian intelligence organisation (Ras-al-Amman) within the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. In 1967 Yasir

Arafat replaced Qaddumi with Salah Khalaf and ordered the creation of a new security organ, expected to combat infiltrations of Israeli intelligence organisations and its own insubordinate members. The organisation, named Jihaz al-Razd (the Surveillance System) quickly became notorious for its brutal methods when combating dissidents within the Fatah movement. They had a little success operating against Israel. Yasir Arafat and his supporters were targeted as much by some of the more radical Palestinian movements as by the Israeli special services. That conflict between the radicals and the more pragmatic elements within the Palestinian community never ceased because it was driven by the fundamental convictions of those who believed that Israel should be destroyed and those who were ready to accept its existence, if only for tactical reasons. Chased out of Jordan and later Lebanon, by the mid 1980s the mismanaged and corrupt PLO was slowly losing its clout.

A new Palestinian security/intelligence apparatus was approved in the Oslo agreement in August 1993, aiming at ending decades of confrontation and conflict, recognizing Israelis' and Palestinians' mutual legitimate and political rights, and the Cairo agreement of 1994 setting up Gaza and Jericho enclaves.³ The Oslo agreement in 1994 made the Palestinian leadership establish the General Security Service, known originally as the Palestinian Directorate of Police Force.

The General Security Service (GSS) was set up in May 1994. In accordance with this agreement the GSS was to be the only security organization in the area and it was to be controlled by the Palestinian National Authority. Its supreme commander was to be the President. Slowly, the Palestinian security apparatus grew beyond the limits stipulated by original agreements.

The GSS coordinated ten services operationally.

1. National Security Force (Quwat al-Amn al Watani) had 14,000 employees. They were responsible for internal security. The service took part in joint Israeli-Palestinian patrols, which provoked violent criticism from more radical Palestinian organizations.
2. Civil Police (al-Shurta Madaniyya). The force employed about 10,000 officers in West bank and Gaza. It had a 700 strong special purpose force.
3. Preventive Security Service (Al-Amn al-Wiqai), a 5,000 strong plainclothes force was officially included in the GSS. It was originally headed by Jibril al-Rajoub in the West Bank and Col Muhammad Dahlan in Gaza.
4. General Intelligence [Service] (GIS) (Mukhabarat Al-Amma) employed about 3,000 officers. The GIS was empowered to conduct its operations inside and outside Palestinian territories and liaise with other intelligence organizations.
5. Military Intelligence (Istkhabbarat al-Askariya) had been busy mainly with combating the radical Palestinian opposition. It seems also to have served as a counterintelligence organ inside other security structures. The unit was not recognized by the Oslo accords. One of the most unusual of its outposts was located in the 1980s in Algeria, where the Palestinian former prisoners of Israeli jails were investigated by the organisation for their possible collaboration with the Israelis.⁴
6. Military Police (Shurta al-Askariya) was responsible for protection of Palestinian VIPs and important installations, also controlled prisons and enforced Military Intelligence wishes in other security services.
7. Coast Guard (Shurta Bahaiyya), deployed in the Gaza Strip, had about 1,000 officers.
8. Aerial Police (Shurta al-Jawiya) was responsible for operation and maintenance of the PNA's helicopters, which transported Palestinian officials.

The Battle for the Palestinian Security Services

9. Search and rescue services (al-Daifa al-Madani) - included a fire department.
10. County Guard (al-Amn al-Muhafza – a small force supporting individual governors and their staff.

Yasir Arafat also established two additional organizations answerable only to him personally.

11. Special Security Force (Al-Amn al-Khas) was established in January 1995. Numerically small, the force was a special security organ inside other security organizations, especially those close to Arafat.
12. Presidential Security (al-Amn al-Riasah) by the time of Arafat's death employed approximately 3,000 officers, many of whom once belonged to Force 17, the presidential guard unit. Officially Force 17 was disbanded when Arafat returned from exile as the result of the Oslo agreement. The insiders, however, still refer to it as Force 17.⁵

The Cairo agreement limited the number of Palestinian security personnel to 9,000. This number increased to 30,000 in accordance with the September 1995 Oslo II Interim Agreement. By the end of the century the total number of Palestinian security personnel exceeded the agreed limit by 5,000 to 20,000 officers.⁶

Almost from the beginning, Yasir Arafat's security apparatus was big, badly paid, badly organized, badly disciplined, not always reliable politically and penetrated by the Israeli and Arab intelligence services. There were frictions within the security apparatus between those who came back with Arafat from exile and those who lived in the occupied territories and fought the powerful Israeli security and defence machinery.

The reforms

The Israelis practically destroyed the Palestinian security apparatus in the West Bank campaign in early April 2002, when the Israeli Army took over the Palestinian Preventive Security Service HQ in Batuniya, near Ramallah. They took about 200 prisoners, including Abu-Awwad, the commander of the elite Force 17 in Ramallah and several other security officials. It seems that most of the prisoners taken by the IDF were Hamas and other militants detained by the PSS.⁷ The Israelis were happy not to advertise their success, as was the US, which organized the ceasefire, saving the lives of many Palestinian security officials and sparing Yasir Arafat humiliation. The Palestinians were keen to downplay the scale of the destruction of their security apparatus.

The biggest political victim of the siege of Batuniya was Arafat's closest security ally, Brig Gen Jibril al-Rujub, the commander of the PSS who negotiated the surrender of his subordinates but was not arrested by the Israelis. Hamas blamed him for handing over to the Israelis 200 people imprisoned by the PSS in its HQ and of being responsible for torturing their fighters and for passing their files to the Israeli special services.⁸ He was allegedly suspended by Arafat in May 2002 and arrived in Cairo without bodyguards and apparently without any specific mission. Other Palestinian sources pointed out that Al-Rujub was sent by Yasir Arafat on a mediating mission and met during this tour the heads of the Intelligence Services of Jordan and Egypt, Said Khayr and Umar Sulayman and Arab League Secretary-General Amr Musa.⁹ Hamas continued blaming him for the betrayal in Batuniya, adding that in 1997 he handed over a cell of the Al-Qassam Brigade, their own armed wing, to the Israelis.¹⁰ Al-Rujub's trip to Egypt was probably to help him to

escape an assassination attempt, but his career as the head of the PSS was over. In July, Arafat replaced him with Brig Gen Zuhayr Manasirah. Rujub's former underlings petitioned Arafat to reinstate him. Senior Commanders of the PSS had a three hour meeting with Arafat asking him to reconsider his decision. They refused to serve under the new boss.¹¹ Al-Rujub later became Arafat's security adviser.

In July 2002, the Preventive Security Service, the police and the civil defence were incorporated into the Interior Ministry. The PSS was to change its name to Internal Security and the services in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were to be merged.¹² Chief of Palestinian General Intelligence in the West Bank, Brig Gen Tawfiq al-Tirawi, described in August 2002 the main elements of the Palestinian security apparatus.

The Interior Ministry supervised:

- The Preventive Security agency responsible for internal security only
- The Civilian Police
- The Traffic Police
- Civil Defence.

The National Security Service controlled Military Intelligence.¹³ General Intelligence – basically a security and counterintelligence organization, included external counterintelligence (under direct presidential jurisdiction). Presidential Guards were also under direct presidential jurisdiction.¹⁴

The much underestimated Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmad Quray was the first Palestinian official to declare publicly that some security organizations should be merged. In November 2003, Quray presented his plan to unify the security forces, within one month, under the national security council.¹⁵ His plan met with little enthusiasm in the presidential administration.

In January 2004, the Palestinian government and the National Security Council accepted the plan to reform the security apparatus. The reforms included the establishment of two security operations coordinating rooms.¹⁶ Arafat could not ignore for too long the need to reform the security services as he was about to become responsible for the Gaza Strip. In February 2004, Arafat held a reconciliation meeting with the former head of Gaza security and former minister of state Muhammad Dahlan.¹⁷ Ruthless but effective, Dahlan could be especially useful in the area, which he knew well, and which the Israelis were expected to abandon in 2005.¹⁸

In March 2004, Maj Gen Abd-al-Raziq, director of Public Security in the Gaza strip, confirmed the formation of two operations centres to counter security problems in the area. The first of the centres was to deal with internal security problems and include the police, the Preventive Security Service and the General Intelligence Service. The second centre was to be "in charge of stopping violations that harm the homeland's security" and was to be manned by the staff of the National Security Service and elements of Military and Navy intelligence.¹⁹

Pushed by the US and the main negotiator, the head of the Egyptian Intelligence Service Gen Umar Sulayman,²⁰ President Arafat decided on 17 July 2004 to unify security services into three agencies; namely, Police, Public Security and General Intelligence.²¹ The final debate and arguments concerning the reforms of the special services must have been very heated because the day before the final decision was taken, the head of Preventive Security in Gaza Rashid Abu-Shibak and the Director of Palestinian General Intelligence Service Amin al-Hindi handed in their resignation.²² If the two generals submitted their resignations as they claimed, in

protest against the chaos and the Palestinian Authority's passive stance towards it, their timing was unusual²³ as they were certainly partly to blame for the chaos. Their resignations, rejected by Yasir Arafat, would suggest that they felt they had been pushed too far. The real reason for this office-revolt may have been a list of 70 prominent Palestinian officials allegedly involved in large corruption cases presented to President Arafat by the head of the Egyptian Intelligence Service, during their meeting at the end of June 2004. The list was accompanied by the demand of the EU, the USA and Israel that the officials on the list should be dismissed. The donor states especially were concerned that the named people looted the funds allocated for the Palestinian people to line their own pockets.²⁴ At a time when the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip was being discussed and the PNA depended more than ever on foreign aid, Yasir Arafat could not ignore the accusation, although he must have known that some of his closest assistants either tolerated large scale corruption or were involved in it. Many officials around Arafat, especially those whose misused foreign aid, regarded the demand to “pension” the 70 officials as a conspiracy of Israel and the USA, an argument always popular in the region.

The fragmentation and ineffective administration of the special services had many supporters inside the system. The heads of services were a law unto themselves and Yasir Arafat, and he needed them because there were 13 semi-independent armed groups in Gaza frequently opposing the PNA.²⁵ Arafat tolerated mismanagement as long as his own position was not threatened. Many lower ranking officials drew their salaries without having specific work to accomplish.²⁶ Their principal tasks were to protect Fatah's leadership and implement its often contradictory policies towards more militant groups, which they did, usually with little conviction but sometimes with unnecessary brutality. Low-ranking operatives would disappear for days on end, arguing that as potential targets for the Israeli intelligence and security services they had to remain invisible, and so they were, without accomplishing any work.

The biggest obstacle to reform of the special services was the lack of political will among the Palestinian leaders. The second most important problem was money. Majda al-Khalidi, a senior PNA Foreign Ministry official, announced at the end of 2004 that the PNA would be asking for US \$400m to reform its security organs but that they would expect to receive only US \$200m in 2005.²⁷ Real security reforms were therefore successfully stalled well into 2005, although on 27 November 2004, Col Rashid Abu-Shibak, head of the PSS in Gaza announced that the Security and Protection Department of the PSS, called by some the death squad, was to be dissolved and its employees were to be transferred to other departments.²⁸

Ill and under virtual house-arrest, Yasir Arafat was not able to reform the special services. When he died on 11 November 2004, the international pressure on the new Palestinian leadership to reform the security apparatus increased.

On 17 January 2005, President Abu Abbas ordered the Palestinian security service to stop armed attacks on Israel. At the same time Abbas asked the security services to incorporate into the service members of al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade.²⁹ In this way the radical pro-Fatah group was “bought” by the president, strengthening his security power base.

Abbas thus succeeded in implementing the old plan introduced in June 2004 by Yasir Arafat, who had attempted to assimilate 450 al-Aqsa brigade militants.³⁰ Arafat's plans were thwarted by the radical elements in the brigade, who either opposed the “buy out” scheme by Arafat or objected to the drastic methods used to

verify their reliability. On 31 July 2004 fighters from Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade had broken into the HQ of the General Intelligence Service in Jenin and burned it down. The group was led by the commander of the Brigade, Zakaiya al-Zubaydi, who accused the Palestinian political leaders of putting under close observation a number of his subordinates and members of other movements. Masked Palestinian gunmen also burned the HQ of the Jenin governor Qaddurah Musa.³¹ The assimilation of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade was followed two weeks later by the Palestinian cabinet decision to pension 1076 security staff from an unspecified part of the security system.³²

President Mahmud Abbas decided to reform the security agencies on 13 April 2005, after holding a series of meetings with Prime Minister Ahmad Quray, Interior Minister Maj-Gen Nasr Yusuf, and heads of the security agencies at the presidential headquarters.

1. The security agencies were to be unified into three agencies attached to a reformed Interior and National Security Ministry. The Ministry was therefore in charge of:

- The National Security [Service] with its various branches
- The Police
- The Preventive Security Service
- The General Intelligence Service (GIS) was to be linked to the Ministry, for the time being.

2. The National Security and Preventive Security agencies were to present detailed lists of names of on-duty and on-leave members, in order to keep an accurate record of their numbers and assess any need for recruitment.

3. Contacts with any foreign party should be held only by the interior minister or through the National Security Service. Commanders and members of the security agencies were prohibited from having any contacts with any foreign party without prior authorisation. This new law was introduced to stop the heads of individual security organisations and their substructures pursuing individual deals with foreign politicians, officials and contractors always happy to provide training and equipment for money. All these tasks were to be centralised in the hands of the Interior Minister in conjunction with the presidential administration.

4. Force 17 was to continue carrying out the duties assigned to it by the Palestinian Presidency. The units attached to the National Security Forces in Gaza were excluded from the presidential guard duties.³³

Brig-Gen Jibril al-Rujub, the national security adviser to the Palestinian president confirmed the following day that “this is a new, yet old decision” and that President Abbas “renewed” Arafat’s decision from 17 July 2004.³⁴ The Interior Minister was empowered to unify the security agencies, a decision President Abbas and his supporters must have regretted bitterly when Hamas took over the government after democratic elections several months later. Gen al-Rujub said in April 2005 that the National Security Service was to be the core for the future Palestinian army.³⁵ The GIS and the Interior Ministry were to be in charge of maintaining the rule of law and public order. The unusual decision to include the Intelligence Service in maintaining law and order was to give the president a powerful security tool which he could use against Palestinian militants dispersed around the world. Gen Al-Rujub admitted that a draft law, allowing the president to control the Intelligence Service, was debated at the Palestinian Legislative Council.³⁶ The need for the president to control the Intelligence Service was especially urgent because the new regulations made it more difficult for him to control the security organs.³⁷

In spring 2005, the Minister of Interior and National Security Maj Gen Nasr Yusuf went to Cairo. On 12 May 2005 he was received by Maj Gen Umar Sulayman and other Egyptian officials. He was promised help in reforming the Palestinian security organs and the training of the Palestinian security personnel in Egypt.³⁸ Gen Yusuf returned from Cairo two days later and unnamed Palestinian sources announced that security reforms were to resume “in the next few weeks”.³⁹

On 2 June 2005, dozens of Military Intelligence members staged a protest in Gaza City, firing their firearms in the air. They protested at the integration of the Military Police into the Security Service, and not into Military Intelligence.⁴⁰ They ceased their protest on 5 June, after receiving promises that the members of Intelligence and Military Police would be able to choose the intelligence organization to which they belonged.⁴¹

President Abbas encountered difficulties from some unexpected quarters. Faruq al-Qaddumi, the Tunis based “father” of the Palestinian security services, suspended in August 2005 all 2,500 Preventive Security Service personnel when his chief of staff Sulayman al-Farrah was arrested on the explicit orders of the Palestinian leadership. Rashid Abu-Shibak, chief of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service in the Gaza Strip, said al-Qaddumi had no legal power to make such a decision.⁴²

Musa Arafat, a relative of the late Yasir Arafat, and a security adviser to President Abbas and former head of PNA Military Intelligence, was killed on 7 September 2005 by around 100 armed men. His son Nimr was kidnapped. Musa Arafat had many enemies in all factions of the Palestinian movement. Hamas blamed Musa Arafat for killing a Hamas official in a shootout on 17 March 2004, when a group of his subordinates attempted to disarm Hamas fighters.⁴³ The killing of Musa Arafat demonstrated the complete ineffectiveness of the Palestinian authorities. In November 2005, Col Mahir Faris, the head of Military Intelligence in Nablus, was dismissed on orders of President Mahmud Abbas. He had publicly blamed Palestinian Interior Minister Nasir Yusuf for the death of Musa Arafat.⁴⁴

The Hamas Challenge

The January 2006 election gave the radical Islamic movement Hamas a large majority in the Palestinian parliament. Hamas, a party at war with Israel, gained 74 seats in the 132 seat Palestinian Legislative Council, with Fatah winning only 45 seats. Established on 14 December 1987, five days after the beginning of the intifada Hamas (Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya – The Islamic Resistance movement) had benefited from Yasir Arafat’s lowered prestige on the international arena. Hamas’ charter of 18 August 1988 stipulates its principal aims:

1. Liberation of Palestine and creation of the Islamic state,
2. Rejection of western presence in Moslem countries,
3. Opposition to secularisation and westernisation of Arab society,
4. A single representation of the Palestinian people.

In 1988, Hamas accepted the role of the Palestinian National Council but has never stopped working against Fatah. The violent confrontations with Hamas were particularly violent and numerous in Nablus in June 1991 and Gaza in July 1992. By the beginning of the century Hamas had a political and military branch. The military branch had two parts:

1. Izz al-Din al-Qassam⁴⁵ set up in 1991 by Zachari Walid Akel, responsible for Hamas' military operations in the Gaza Strip. The organisation had at the beginning of the century approximately 3000 militants.⁴⁶
2. Jihaz Aman, responsible for the internal security of the organisation. The organisation also serves as a religious police within Hamas and has been gradually taken over by Izz al-Din al-Qassam.

Funded by several Islamic states and private individuals, Hamas is credited with at least 38 bomb attacks in Israel, most of them carried out by suicide bombers.⁴⁷

The Oslo agreement had given Yasir Arafat an important place on the Middle Eastern stage, but uncompromising in their aims, better organised and less corrupt, Hamas gained popularity. To many Hamas supporters Arafat looked like a corrupt loser, willing to collaborate with Israel, the main enemy. Hamas questioned the efficiency of security services that operated in Palestinian territory, accused the Palestinian security organs of not resisting Israel and betraying an active Palestinian resistance cell. Hamas became Fatah's second most formidable enemy. In mid January 2002, the Palestinian security services began a campaign against Hamas, arresting a number of Hamas and Islamic Jihad members in the Gaza Strip.⁴⁸

Hamas always refused to cooperate with Egypt and Jordan, arguing that they represented American and therefore Israeli interest. In September 2002, Hamas had rejected a proposal to send an Arab intelligence team, including Jordanian, Egyptian and Saudi experts, under American leadership to reform Palestinian security organizations.⁴⁹ The involvement of the US in reforming the Fatah-controlled security organs and the nomination of Gen William (Kip) Ward at the beginning of 2005 as the head of the international team called the Security Sector Working Group (SSWG), which included British, Canadian and Australian specialists working on Palestinian security sector reforms must have confirmed Hamas' worst suspicions.⁵⁰

Hamas were implacable in their refusal to recognize Israel and equally determined to change the Palestinian Administration, especially the security sector. During the 12 years of Fatah rule Hamas was not given any important positions in the Palestinian security organs and had not offered to help. Immediately after the election Hamas leader Ismail Haniyah challenged the interior and security minister and the police commander who announced that all security bodies were answerable to the president. When asked whether the commanders of the Martyr Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas military wing, would be appointed to lead the special services, he avoided answering the question.⁵¹ President Abbas held two meetings with Hamas, in Gaza and another in Damascus, just before they assumed their new governmental responsibilities.⁵² The subsequent conflict between the two factions suggests that not much had been achieved.

On 20 January 2006, Abbas nominated Col Rashid Abu-Shibak director of the National Security Agency, in charge of the police, the Preventive Security and Civil Defence. His previous position was director-general of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service.⁵³

The Hamas leaders were ready to reverse the political imbalance in special services. Even before the electoral victory Ismail Haniyah, then the political leader of Hamas movement in Gaza, said that "enrolling resistance fighters in security services was a premature decision".⁵⁴ His real worry must have been the number of Fatah members recruited by the Palestinian security services before the election. According to the salary list issued by the Palestinian Ministry of Finance and the

Military Control Department, between 1 March 2005 to 12 February 2006 their number increased by 19,000 people.⁵⁵ A Palestinian legislator, Dr Mustafa al-Barghuti said that “the number of employees in the security services has increased over the past year by 40%” as a result of uncontrolled factional appointments, from 57,000 in 2005 to 81,000 in 2006.⁵⁶

Hamas assumed power on 25 January 2006. Israel withheld tax revenues and the donor countries their financial aid and 165,000 PNA employees, including security personnel, lost their income.⁵⁷ The EU had been giving about \$600m annually to the Palestinian Authority. Hamas inherited an empty treasury and \$1.7bn debt. The PNA needs \$150 - 170m a month, of which about \$115m is set aside for salaries.⁵⁸

The Fatah-dominated security services and armed units had good reason to be afraid of the Hamas take-over. Hamas accused Fatah of killing and torturing their fighters, on top of other accusations which included corruption and collaboration with Israel. There was no love lost on either side. In March 2006 Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade issued a statement threatening three Hamas leaders with execution “so those filthy people can be made an example”.⁵⁹ Palestinian Interior Minister-designate Shaykh Said Siyam said that he intended to restore discipline and effectiveness in the security forces. He announced that Hamas would not pursue a revenge policy to punish the Palestinian security staff for their past anti-Hamas operations. Siyam said that the intelligence service was to remain under the jurisdiction of President Abbas. The National Security Service, police and Preventive Security Service was to be under the jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry and Prime Minister. President Abbas, however, still claimed control over the National Security Service.⁶⁰

On 20 April 2006 the Hamas government appointed Jamal Abu Samhadanah, overall commander of the Popular Resistance Committees, as general inspector in the ministry, which enraged Abbas and Fatah. Claiming that he had not been consulted about the appointment, Abbas the next day issued an order rescinding the appointment. Abu Samhadanah, the head of the Popular Resistance Committee, is accused by the Israelis of organising several attacks on Israel and has escaped two assassination attempts.⁶¹ Clearly, Hamas was not ready to compromise either with Israel or with the Fatah movement: Abu Samhadanah stayed in his new job.

Hamas also decided to form its own security service on 20 April 2006. Interior Minister Said Siyam set up a special executive security service, an organization instantly annulled by President Abbas’ decree.⁶² Khalid Abu-Hilal, spokesman of the Palestinian Interior and National Security Ministry controlled by Hamas, claimed the following day that the ministry had not received the president’s decision annulling the new force. The letter from President Abbas was received by the Prime Minister who failed to send it to the Ministry of Interior.⁶³

The new executive force was officially launched and declared operational by Said Siyam on 17 May 2006, in Gaza. The force consists mainly of the Al-Qassam and Al-Nasir Salah-al-Din Brigades and has been assessed at 3,000 troops.⁶⁴ The new force incorporated some 530 from the Popular Resistance Committee, one of the more violent groups in the Gaza Strip. The organization has been accused of murdering General Musa Arafat.⁶⁵

The presidential office condemned the new security body.⁶⁶ Palestinian government spokesman Ghazi Hamad defended the creation of the new security forces, accusing President Abbas of violating the constitution.⁶⁷ Tawfiq Abu-Khawsah, Fatah spokesman in the Gaza strip, also condemned the Ministry of Interior’s new force,

saying that it was formed in spite of President Abbas' veto. The new unit had the emblem of the Izz-al-Qassam Brigades.⁶⁸ Between the election and mid-May 2006, the Hamas forces expanded dramatically, rivalling in some areas the official Palestinian forces, still controlled by Fatah. The much larger Fatah forces lacked leadership, determination and money. In the Gaza Strip, Hamas moved in after the Israeli withdrawal and took over for their training camps some areas abandoned by the Israelis. Hamas did not seem to have any financial problems when it came to equipping the new executive force. An unnamed source claims that Hamas bought large quantities of ammunition in the Gaza Strip, outbidding Fatah and paying \$250,000.⁶⁹

President Abbas who in June 2005, in an interview with Dubai based Al-Arabya TV, said that striking at Hamas would lead to civil war, was quickly running out of options.⁷⁰ Worried by the new security organization, Israel allowed Abbas to strengthen his own security force.⁷¹ The presidential security force planned to increase the number of its staff from 2,500 to 3,500.⁷²

Palestinian Foreign Minister Mahmud al-Zahar said that Hamas does not engage in violence but in self-defence, and that Hamas planned to take over the security service but that the present personnel should not be afraid of Hamas revenge.⁷³ For the time being, the balance of terror between Fatah and Hamas guarantees an uncomfortable stability but as it does not include other radical groups affiliated to the main protagonists, this stability could be ruined by a small cell in one of the factions.

Hamas leaders' quest to "liberate" Israel was one such potential trigger. In July 2006, Interior Minister Said Siyam instructed Palestinian security services to take part in the resistance against "the Israeli occupiers", which considering Hamas' consistent refusal to recognize the existence of Israel, amounted almost to a declaration of war. According to an Interior Ministry spokesman, President Abbas was not briefed "about these details".⁷⁴ In this context however, Palestinian Prime Minister Haniyah's statement in January 2006 that Hamas will limit its resistance to "inside the borders of Palestine" begs the question where in his views the borders are, especially given that he then added that "Jews lived their golden age under the Islamic civilization".⁷⁵ Haniyah was quoted by the Palestinian Information Agency on 8 September 2006 as saying that "the Palestinian people are still in the stage of national liberation..." and that they should "give top priority to liberation, rather than to fighting the democratic experience".⁷⁶

Education and training

Training of the Palestinian security organs was always a problem. Short of money, displaced, with the patronage system dominating appointments and promotions, the security organs are fragmented and chaotic. The states supporting the PLO had been happy to use the organization in their proxy war against Israel, but were rarely ready to offer long-term training in their military schools and civilian establishments of higher education. The Palestinian leadership expected their security personnel to protect them, conduct or supervise guerilla operations against their enemies and keep their own militants and power-hungry officials under control. Long educational "sabbaticals" were therefore not acceptable and only members of the elite subunits had been offered short, intensive courses abroad, usually in Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Warsaw Pact member states.⁷⁷

Having had no preparation at all for government business, especially in the security sphere, none of the Palestinian security bodies or personnel were ready, in the 1990s or a decade later to operate as part of a state machinery. In July 2005,

Tawfiq al-Tirawi, the deputy chief of the General Intelligence Service said that 70% of security services personnel needed political and security education and that the Palestinian political leadership was aware of the unsatisfactory situation and wanted to address it. Al-Tarawi said that the Palestinian authorities planned to open a security academy able to absorb 300 officers within the next 6 months.⁷⁸

The PNA organized citizenship courses for “national cadres and officials” in the General Intelligence HQ in Gaza City.⁷⁹ But expertise from non-Arab countries which could be applied by the Palestinian security services is difficult to find. The only remotely comparable recent experience could be found in the Balkans. A Palestinian delegation of intelligence and security personnel visited Bosnia and Herzegovina at the beginning of March 2006, to learn how its Investigations and Protection Agency works.⁸⁰

The Palestinian security personnel need as much education as they need training. Their leaders are only now beginning to acknowledge the need for both.

The undeclared war

The war between the Palestinian groups began long before Hamas came to power and the length of the list of its victims is surpassed only by the one listing those who fell in the Israeli – Palestinian conflict. The list of the security officials killed in the inter-Palestinian struggle is also long and contains some of the highest ranks.⁸¹ Hamas always regarded many Fatah security officials as corrupt stooges of Israel and the USA, arresting, imprisoning and sometimes even killing Hamas fighters. More politically experienced Fatah leaders, who accepted the existence of Israel, saw Hamas and other radical groups as fundamentalists bent on glorious self-destruction, only provoking Israeli retributions. When Hamas won the election and took over the Interior Ministry the conflict between the two factions worsened. The killings were accompanied by claims and counterclaims of officials on both sides of the growing divide. In February 2006, Hamas accused the General Intelligence Service of preparing to assassinate Khalid Mishal, the Damascus based director of Hamas’ Political Bureau. Deputy Director of the General Intelligence Service Maj Gen Tawfiq al-Tirawi denied the accusation.⁸² In September 2006, Palestinian Deputy Shami al-Shami, representing Fatah in the Palestinian Legislative Council, said that since the formation in the Gaza Strip of the “support executive force” of the Ministry of Interior in May 2006, more than 50 militants from the Fatah Movement and security services had been killed.⁸³ Palestinian anti-PNA rioters broke into the building of the Palestinian Council of Ministers on 12 May, and burned offices and rooms of the Palestinian Legislative Council in Ramallah.⁸⁴ On 20 May, Tariq Abu-Rajab, head of the GIS in Gaza was crippled in an explosion in his HQ and the next day the PNA announced that a 70kg roadside bomb was discovered on the road to work of the director general of Internal Security and head of the PSS, Brig Gen Rashid Abu-Shibak.⁸⁵ The same day, Tawfiq al-Tirawi, head of the GIS in the West Bank, said that a plot to kill President Abbas and security services and political officials had been uncovered.⁸⁶ The Palestinian General Intelligence Service openly accused Hamas of trying to kill Gen Abu-Rajab. Hamas returned the compliment by accusing Fatah of trying to kill him.⁸⁷ In the past Hamas blamed him for arresting and torturing Hamas activists. By the end of September 2006 the investigation of the assassination of Abu-Rajab was closed, without any conclusion or decision made.⁸⁸

At a meeting sponsored by Egypt, Hamas and Fatah agreed to form a joint fact finding commission, to work out a solution reducing conflicts between the two organizations.⁸⁹ However, the security organizations would not work together if the

politicians controlling them were not willing to compromise. In May 2006, the Palestinian foreign affairs minister, a member of Hamas, walked out in protest from the Non-Aligned Movement talks in Malaysia over the arrival of Faruq Qaddumi, the head of the PLO, who claimed, wrongly, that he outranked representatives of the Palestinian government.⁹⁰

On 10 June Gen Abu-Shibak's convoy was fired at in the centre of Gaza City. Three members of his convoy were wounded. The Ministry of Interior denied that it organized the ambush. Gen Abu-Shibak was taking part in a funeral procession of Basim Qutub, a PSS officer killed that very morning.⁹¹ In response, a pro-Fatah group calling itself the Death Squads' Rapid Response Unit threatened Hamas with extreme violence in a highly emotional and aggressive statement.⁹²

In the increasingly violent atmosphere, the Palestinian Legislative Council and Interior and Security Committee held a meeting on 17 June 2006, to discuss the executive powers and frictions in Palestinian controlled areas. The Hamas PLC members wanted to abolish the requirement for a clearance certificate procedure for appointments because they were delivered by Fatah controlled organs. The problems of lawlessness were discussed only on the second day. A PLC member Ashraf Jumah stated that during the "recent" period there were 64 attacks on government establishments and that between 1 and 31 May, 10 people were killed and 72 wounded. It appears that the meeting confirmed President Abbas' readiness to accept the Interior Ministry jurisdiction over all security services, after appropriate but unspecified arrangements with National Security Service. The new executive force of the Interior Ministry was to be withdrawn from the streets, after President Abbas agreed to fund it and absorb it into the PNA security forces, in theory at least controlled by him.⁹³

Several security officers, their relatives and friends were killed or injured during the following months. But the Security Services remained unable to perform their primary security tasks; see Appendix I for details.

In August, for example, Premier Ismail Haniyah accused the Israeli special services of trying to poison him with a letter sent as registered mail from Tel Aviv. The letter, he said, poisoned seven members of his entourage.⁹⁴ Also in August, after a meeting of Said Siyam, Minister of Interior and National Security and the chief of Palestinian Internal Security, Brig Gen Rashid Abu-Shibak, a decision was taken to reestablish law and order on the Palestinian territories and to reactivate a joint security operations room.⁹⁵ This has so far not resulted in significant improvement.

On 15 September 2006, an organization calling itself "Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad Fi Falastin" (Al-Qaeda Organization in Palestine) killed Brig Gen Jihad al-Tayah, responsible for international relations in the General Intelligence Service, and his four bodyguards. They were killed in broad daylight, 180m from the home of the Palestinian Prime Minister. The attackers took weapons and a briefcase from their victims. The killing was presented as a criminal act rather than as part of the struggle between Fatah and Hamas.⁹⁶ The fact that the alleged criminals knew so much about one of the most important commanders in the Palestinian intelligence system, however, could at best mean that the Palestinian security apparatus has been dangerously and permanently compromised. As none of the attackers were apprehended or killed, it is likely that the attack was indeed a continuation of the struggle between Fatah and Hamas. Al-Tayah's wounded bodyguards were killed with "finishing-off shots". The killers accused him of being "the director of external, Zionist-American plots", of being an infidel and of trying to recruit Palestinian students abroad.⁹⁷ Maj Gen Tawfiq al-Tirawi, the head of the GIS in the West Bank,

accused the Interior Minister of the assassination and of the lack of security in Gaza.⁹⁸

Members of the Hamas-dominated executive force and Fatah-dominated security services openly fought each other in the Gaza Strip on 30 September 2006. There were killed and wounded on both sides and among innocent bystanders.⁹⁹ The spokesman of the Palestinian Interior Ministry tried to minimize the problem by denying that there was a conflict between political factions. He described the problem as clashes between the government and “some rioters”.¹⁰⁰

Hezbollah

Hezbollah’s partial success in resisting IDF in Lebanon in 2006 inspired Hamas. Fatah was also highly impressed by the way Hezbollah fought.¹⁰¹ Hezbollah had established links with the Fatah dominated Palestinian groups at the beginning of the second intifada in September 2000. The contacts were maintained through the Palestinian representatives in Lebanon. Hezbollah support included monthly payments ranging from \$2000 to 2700 for every militant group supported. The support went mainly to groups affiliated with Fatah. Hezbollah expected Fatah to fight on but its financial support dwindled when financial irregularities in the supported groups were discovered. The cooperation between some of the Fatah affiliated groups and Hezbollah was stopped, however, soon afterwards, after the kidnapping of a retired Israeli colonel. The Israelis had penetrated the Fatah movement and there was pressure within the organization to stop the cooperation with Hezbollah.¹⁰²

The factor unifying Hezbollah and the Palestinians was the struggle against Israel and their aim to make the Middle East infidel-free. The dividing factor was religion – Hezbollah were Shiites, Hamas were Sunnis – and their outside supporters. Hezbollah has been supported by Iran and Syria and Hamas mainly by the Sunni Gulf states. A brief cooperation between the two movements may have resulted in the sporadic penetration of the Palestinian movement by Iran.¹⁰³ There is no doubt however that both Hamas and Fatah have learned from Hezbollah experience. The head of the Israeli counterintelligence service Chief Yuval Diskin said in August 2006 that Palestinians, emulating Hezbollah, were arming themselves trying to establish “a balance of deterrence”.¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

The divisions between Fatah and Hamas are as unbridgeable as ever. At the moment, Hamas is seen as the biggest obstacle to peace on the territories controlled by Palestinians. Hamas and some Fatah radicals hate Israel more than they love Palestine but that is their only unifying force. Even if the most militant Hamas leaders were to accept a temporary ceasefire, there is no guarantee that they would be willing to pursue the more militant members of their own and other movements, determined to damage Israel and to settle old scores with Fatah. The problem of Israeli retributions and the constant destabilizing flare-ups would not therefore be solved. Ismail Radwan, the Hamas leader in Gaza, criticized Muhammad Dahlan, President Abbas’ most powerful security adviser and a likely future presidential contender for making accusations against “resistance men”.¹⁰⁵

Its present policies make Hamas very few friends outside the radical Islamic community. The battle for the Palestinian special services continues and Fatah, still an unattractive and unreliable partner, in this struggle may again find very

powerful, if temporary, allies. Israel, the US and several other industrialized countries may provide help to selected Fatah leaders, but this time with strings attached, emphasizing the need to increase competence and effectiveness, at the same time looking the other way in case of human rights infringements. Their position is made easier by Hamas fighting for an Islamic Palestinian state, an idea not terribly popular in Europe and the USA. Hamas leaders' unwillingness to pursue small terrorist groups like Islamic Jihad will also militate against them.¹⁰⁶ The EU demands that the Palestinian Authority commits itself to peace will be severely tested as it will require from the PNA and the government firm action against all peace violators.¹⁰⁷ The hardliners within Hamas can count on Middle Eastern benefactors determined to fight Israel to the last Palestinian.

Hamas' attempts to control the state administration have been successful but their efforts to dominate the Palestinian security and intelligence organs have only partly been successful. The battle for control will go on, claiming many victims on both sides. Israel, in the meantime, will not be too unhappy if the Palestinian security bodies spend most of their working hours and overtime shooting at each other.

Endnotes

¹ Meria Vol 3. No2, June1999.

² Attacks on Palestinian journalists by the Palestinian security forces were described by Jordan Times, 14 March 2004.

³ The Estimate, Volume XII Number, 21 October 2000.

⁴ Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye, 9 August 2002.

⁵ <http://www.ict.org.il> 03/ October 2006 and Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye, 9 August 2002. Force 17 was set up in the early 1970s, after the PLO was expelled from Jordan. Its name comes either from the last two digits of the unit's first commander's telephone number, or its office location in Beirut: 17 Faqahani Street. The group was originally intended as a personal bodyguard force of Yasir Arafat but it quickly became his personal combat, sabotage and intelligence unit in Beirut. In August 1982 when the Israelis attacked his HQ in Beirut, Force 17 and other PLO forces moved to Tunis, from which they conducted many terrorist operations. (<http://www.ict.org.il>) Force 17 consisted of three principal units: The Protection Service, responsible for guarding PLO leadership and vital facilities; The Special Operation Section mainly responsible for intelligence work; and General Security responsible for Yasir Arafat's security and relevant intelligence work. At the beginning of the century the unit had about 50 officers, most of whom were trained in the USSR.

⁶ Meria Vol 3. No2, June1999; The Estimate, Volume XII Number 21 October 2000. Other sources claim that the strength of the Palestinian security apparatus reached approximately 41,000 people. The Estimate, Volume XII Number 21 October 2000.

⁷ Voice of Israel, in Hebrew, 2 April 2002, BBC MS, and J-W Wire Services, Wednesday, April 3, 2002.

⁸ Palestinian Information Centre, 25 April 2002, BBC MS.

⁹ Al-Sharq al-Awsat, in Arabic 21 May 2002.

¹⁰ Palestinian Information Centre, 20 May 2002, Al-Hayat, BBC MS.

¹¹ Al-Jazeera, 6 July 2002, BBC MS

¹² Col Rashid Abu-Shibak, the head of the Preventive Security Service in the Gaza Strip, interviewed by Al-Khalij, in Arabic, 29 May 2003, FBIS.

¹³ Military intelligence "belongs" to Fatah. It includes intelligence, counterintelligence and analytical elements. Its members are also assigned to PLO missions abroad.

¹⁴ Al-Sharq, Al-Aswat, London, in Arabic 14 August 2002, BBC MS.

¹⁵ Al-Ayyam, in Arabic, 13 November 2003, BBC MS.

¹⁶ Voice of Palestine, in Arabic, 26 January 2004, BBC MS. The Palestinian Prime Minister did not stipulate whether the Gaza Strip and West Bank would have an operation centre each, or each would have two centres with different duties to perform.

¹⁷ Palestinian Information Centre, in Arabic, 19 February, 2004, BBC MS.

- ¹⁸ The Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip was completed on 12 September 2005.
- ¹⁹ Palestinian TV, in Arabic 4 March 2004, BBC MS.
- ²⁰ President Arafat's adviser for national security, Brig-Gen Jibril al-Rujub, categorically denied the existence of any Egyptian pressure on the Palestinian leadership and President Arafat to make changes in the security services, noting that the reform of these services is a national necessity: Voice of Palestine, Ramallah, in Arabic, 23 June 2004, BBC MS
- ²¹ Palestinian Satellite TV, in Arabic, 17 July 2004. President Yasir Arafat appointed the same day his relative Maj-Gen Musa Arafat al-Qudwah Public Security director and commander of National Security in Gaza, in addition to his current post, the head of Military Intelligence.
- ²² Al-Arabiya TV, in Arabic, 16 July 2004 BBC MS.
- ²³ Al-Arabiya, in Arabic, 17 July 2004 BBC MS.
- ²⁴ Kull al-Arab, in Arabic 9 July 2004, BBC MS.
- ²⁵ Mohammad Dahlan, Corriere della Sera, Milan in Italian, 20 January 2006, BBC MS.
- ²⁶ In January 2004, Yasir Arafat fired Col Tariq al-Wahidi, the head of the Military Intelligence cell in Bethlehem. Col al-Wahidi was accused of collaborating with Israel. The real reason for that dismissal was that he fired from his service men who failed to report for work on a regular basis. The fired men argued that as they were wanted by Israel, they cannot report for work regularly. The Jerusalem Post, in English, 8 January 2004, BBC MS.
- ²⁷ The Jerusalem Post, in English, 8 December 2004, BBC MS.
- ²⁸ Palestinian Sat TV, in Arabic, 27 November 2004, BBC MS.
- ²⁹ Al-Arabiya TV, in Arabic, 17 January 2005, BBC MS.
- ³⁰ Al-Hayat al-Jadidah, in Arabic, 14 June 2004, BBC MS.
- ³¹ Al-Jazeera, 31 July 2004, BBC MS.
- ³² Wafa, in Arabic, 31 January 2005, BBC MS.
- ³³ Wafa, in Arabic, 14 April 2005, BBC MS.
- ³⁴ Al-Jazeera, 14 April 2005, BBC MS.
- ³⁵ Al-Jazeera, 14 April 2005, BBC MS.
- ³⁶ Al-Jazeera, 14 April 2005, BBC MS.
- ³⁷ The term "security services", or "agencies" as used by the Arab media usually includes intelligence structures.
- ³⁸ Voice of Palestine, in Arabic, 12 May 2005, BBC MS.
- ³⁹ Al-Quds, in Arabic, 14 May 2005, BBC MS.
- ⁴⁰ Palestinian Information Centre, in Arabic 2 June 2005, The Jerusalem Post, in English, 3 June 2005, BBC MS.
- ⁴¹ Al-Ayyam, in Arabic, 5 June 2005, BBC MS.
- ⁴² Maan, in English, 14 August 2005, Wafa, in Arabic, 12 August 2005, BBC MS.
- ⁴³ Maan, in Arabic, 5 October 2005, BBC MS. Palestinian Information Centre, in Arabic, 17 March 2004, BBC MS; <http://www.jcpa.org/brief/brief005-6.htm>.
- ⁴⁴ Maan News Agency in English, 14 November 2005.
- ⁴⁵ The organisation has also been known as Izz al-Din al Qassam, Azzedine al Qassam, or Abdullah Azzam Units.
- ⁴⁶ Encyclopedie des Terrorismes et Violences Politiques, Jacques Baud, Lavauzelle, 2003, pp 391-397
- ⁴⁷ Ibid, p 399.
- ⁴⁸ Al-Ayyam, in Arabic 13 January 2002, BBC MS.
- ⁴⁹ Palestinian Information Centre, 18 September 2002, FBIS.
- ⁵⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, 9 August 2005.
- ⁵¹ Al Hayat, in Arabic, 1 February 2006.
- ⁵² Wafa, in Arabic, 18 January 2005, BBC MS.
- ⁵³ Voice of Palestine, 6 April 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁵⁴ Ramattan News Agency, in English, 4 January 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁵⁵ Al-Risalah, in Arabic, 23 February 2006, BBC MS. The rush recruitment campaign to the security forces was confirmed by the Palestinian government spokesman on 1 May 2006, Al-Quds, 1 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁵⁶ Wafa, in Arabic, 4 September 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁵⁷ Ramattan, 4 September 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁵⁸ Al Jazeera website in English, 16 April 2006, BBC MS; Al-Quds, in Arabic, 1 May 2006, BBC MS.

-
- ⁵⁹ BBC News, 10 March 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁶⁰ Ukaz, Jedda, in Arabic, 22 March 2006, BBC MS; Al-Quds, in Arabic, 31 March 2006, BBC MS; Al-Hayat, in Arabic, 3 April 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁶¹ Jerusalem Post, 21 April 2006; Al Jazeera, website, in English 20 April 2006; Al Jazeera website in English, 21 April 2006.
- ⁶² Al-Jazeera, in Arabic, 20 April 2006, BBC MS; Wafa, in Arabic, 20 April 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁶³ Al-Arabiya, in Arabic, 21 April 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁶⁴ Al-Arabiya, in Arabic, 5 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁶⁵ NRG Maariv, in Hebrew, 19 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁶⁶ Al-Jazeera, 17 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁶⁷ Al-Quds, in Arabic, 1 May 2006, BBC MS; Palestinian Media Centre, 18 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁶⁸ Al-Quds, in Arabic, 18 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁶⁹ Al-Hayat, in Arabic, 19 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁷⁰ Al-Araniya, in Arabic, 4 June 2005, BBC MS.
- ⁷¹ Washington Post, 26 May 2006.
- ⁷² Maan News Agency, Bethlehem, in English, 27 April 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁷³ Al-Arabiya, in Arabic, 6 April 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁷⁴ Ramattan, in Arabic, 6 July 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁷⁵ Ramattan News Agency, in English, 4 January 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁷⁶ Palestinian Information Agency, in Arabic, 8 September 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁷⁷ Nasir al-Qudwah, Palestinian Foreign Minister, thanked Russia for political and material assistance, including help in training personnel of security services. RIA, 25 August 2005.
- ⁷⁸ Wafa, 13 July 2005, BBC MS.
- ⁷⁹ Al-Quds, in Arabic, 11 April 2005, BBC MS.
- ⁸⁰ FNA Sarajevo, 9 March 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁸¹ See Appendix 2.
- ⁸² Voice of Palestine, in Arabic, 27 February 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁸³ Wafa, in Arabic, 21 September 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁸⁴ Al-Quds, in Arabic, 14 June 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁸⁵ Fatah Higher Committee, in Arabic, 21 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁸⁶ Voice of Palestine, 21 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁸⁷ Al-Hayat, in Arabic, 23 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁸⁸ Al Jazeera, in Arabic, 20 September 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁸⁹ Palestine Satellite Channel, in Arabic, 22 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁹⁰ AFP, 29 May 2006.
- ⁹¹ Maan, in Arabic, 10 June 2006, Al-Jazeera, 10 June 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁹² Palestinian Information Centre in Arabic, 14 June 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁹³ Wafa, in Arabic, 18 June 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁹⁴ Palestinian Information Centre, 8 August 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁹⁵ Palestinian Information Centre, in Arabic, 19 August 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁹⁶ IHT, 16-17 September 2006 p6.
- ⁹⁷ Ramattan in Arabic, 20 September 2006, Wafa, in Arabic, 21 September 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁹⁸ Maan, in English, 21 September 2006, BBC MS.
- ⁹⁹ Palestinian Satellite TV, 1 October 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹⁰⁰ Maan, in Arabic, 1 October 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹⁰¹ Al-Hayat, in Arabic, 22 July 2006. BBC MS.
- ¹⁰² Al-Hayat, in Arabic, 22 July 2006. BBC MS.
- ¹⁰³ Al-Hayat, in Arabic, 16 May 2006, BBC MS; The Iranian president met with the Palestinian factions in Syria. Al Arabiya, in Arabic, 23 January 2006, BBC MS
- ¹⁰⁴ Voice of Israel in Hebrew, 29 August 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹⁰⁵ Al Jazeera, 20 September 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹⁰⁶ Islamic Jihad leader Ramadan Shalah is said to have close links with Teheran. Le Figaro, 19 April 2006.
- ¹⁰⁷ IHT, 16-17 Sept 2006, p1.

Appendix 1

Assassinations, woundings and kidnappings of Palestinian security personnel by rival Palestinian groups

Colonel Rashid Abu-Shibak, head of the Preventive Security Service in the Gaza Strip, denied that there was a conflict between the Palestinian National Authority and Hamas. He described the killing of police Brig Gen Rajih Abu-Lihyah in Gaza on 7 October 2002 as a “mere dispute”. Col Abu-Shibak accused Hamas of publicly justifying the murder.¹⁰⁸

Deputy chief of the Palestinian Public Intelligence Department Brigadier General Tariq Abu-Rajab (Ahmad Shanyura) was wounded and two of his companions killed on 25 August 2004.¹⁰⁹

Capt Muhammad Abu Jarad was gunned down on 19 February 2005. The following day Capt Dihad Hamdu was kidnapped from his home in Gaza and his body was dumped in the centre of the town. A third unnamed security officer was kidnapped and probably killed in a separate attack. All three were regarded as the men of the head of the Palestinian National Security Forces in Gaza Strip, Maj Gen Musa Arafat. The Israeli website DEBKAFfile accused Muhammad Dahlan of settling scores with his enemies.¹¹⁰

Jihad Abid, an officer of the Intelligence Service in Gaza, was kidnapped and subsequently released on his way back from Egypt on 28 June 2005.¹¹¹

The body of Lt Col Abdallah al-Lawh, an officer of the General Intelligence Agency was found on 6 July 2005. He was abducted the previous day.¹¹²

On 29 July 2005, Muhammad Rahal, a young intelligence officer, was killed by a group of people. Some of his attackers were later arrested.¹¹³

Gen Musa Arafat was killed on 7 September 2005. by a large group of armed men. His son Nimr was kidnapped. Hamas had blamed Musa Arafat for killing a Hamas official in a shootout on 17 March 2004, when a group of his subordinates attempted to disarm Hamas fighters.¹¹⁴

Captain Bassam Azzam, an officer in Palestinian Military Intelligence, was wounded by unknown gunmen on 5 October 2005.¹¹⁵

Sami Ajur, deputy head of the General Intelligence Department, was briefly kidnapped and wounded on 6 October 2005.¹¹⁶

On 12 January 2006, an unidentified man opened fire at “the area adjacent to the house of Maj Gen Nasr Yusuf, Minister of Interior”. The guards fired back, wounding two passengers of the car involved in the shooting. Policemen also captured three attackers who opened fire at the Council of Ministers [as received] Wafa.¹¹⁷

Two security men and two other Palestinians were shot at and wounded on 19 May 2006 in Gaza.¹¹⁸

An explosion in the General Intelligence HQ in Gaza on 20 May 2006 killed one person and injured seven others, including, Tariq Abu-Rajab, head of the PNA Intelligence Department in Gaza.¹¹⁹

The Palestinian security service announced on 21 May 2006 that they had foiled an attempt on the life of Rashid Abu-Shibak.¹²⁰ A 70kg roadside bomb was discovered on the route to work of Shibak the director general of Internal Security and head of the Preventive Security Service.¹²¹

The driver of the Jordanian ambassador was murdered in the Gaza Strip in May 2006.¹²²

On 23 May it was announced that five members of the PSS were wounded in Gaza in firefights with the new executive force established by Interior Ministry.¹²³

During the night of 4/5 June 2006, five Palestinians were killed in the Gaza Strip. Fatah and Hamas traded accusations as to who was responsible for their deaths.¹²⁴

The following day two members of the Fatah controlled Preventive Security Service and four maintenance workers were wounded by three RPG rockets fired at PSS HQ in Tall al-Hawah, west of Gaza City.¹²⁵

In the mid June, two people were killed and 15 wounded in a firefight between the PSS and the Parliamentary Auxiliary Force controlled by Hamas.¹²⁶

Ayman Abu-Hattab, a PSS officer, was wounded in an exchange of fire in Shabura region of the Gaza Strip on 12 June 2006.¹²⁷

Hammad Abu-Jazzar, a Hamas activist belonging to Izz-al-Din al-Qassam, Hamas military wing, was killed the same day in Rafah Town at the funeral of his murdered colleague Husam Abu-Anzah.¹²⁸

On 18 July 2006 unidentified gunmen attacked the house of Nabil Tammus, colonel of the PSS. One of the guards protecting the house was killed.¹²⁹

Maj Saqr Ismail Anbar of the PSS was killed by a group described by the Palestinian agency as “suspicious, driving a Subaru car”.¹³⁰

The chief of the military intelligence service in northern Gaza Strip Col Muhammad al-Musa was gravely wounded on 6 August 2006 and died the following day in a hospital.¹³¹

On 12 August 2006, masked gunmen injured a Palestinian intelligence officer Mahmud al-Ghazzawi in Gaza City.¹³²

Haytham Shaban, a National Security Service officer, was attacked by a group of people in the Gaza Strip on 21 August 2006. His two companions were wounded and his car stolen.¹³³

On 8 September 2006, unidentified gunmen killed Hasan Mahdi (75), the father of a Palestinian Intelligence Officer.¹³⁴

On 9 September 2006 a Palestinian intelligence officer escaped an ambush.¹³⁵

On 15 September 2006, Colonel Jihad al-Tayah, responsible for international relations in the General Intelligence and four people accompanying him were gunned down after a brief car chase in Gaza City by unknown assailants.¹³⁶

Endnotes

-
- ¹⁰⁸ Al-Hayat, 22 October 2002, BBC MS.
- ¹⁰⁹ Fatah, Higher Committee web site, Gaza, in Arabic, 26 August 2004, BBC MS.
- ¹¹⁰ DEBKAFfile, In English 23 February 2005.
- ¹¹¹ Voice of Palestine, in Arabic, 30 July 2005, BBC MS.
- ¹¹² Wafa, 6 July 2005, BBC MS.
- ¹¹³ Voice of Palestine, in Arabic, 30 July 2005, BBC MS.
- ¹¹⁴ Maan, in Arabic, 5 October 2005, BBC MS; Palestinian Information Centre, in Arabic, 17 March 2004, BBC MS.
- ¹¹⁵ Maan, in Arabic, 5 October 2005, BBC MS.
- ¹¹⁶ Wafa, in Arabic, 6 October 2005, BBC MS.
- ¹¹⁷ Wafa in Arabic, 12 January 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹¹⁸ Voice of Palestine in Arabic, 19 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹¹⁹ Al Jazeera, in Arabic, 20 May 2006 and Palestinian Information Centre, in English, 20 May 2006, MENA, in English, 20 May 2006, Al-Quds al-Arabi, in Arabic, 22 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹²⁰ Reuters, 21 May 2006.
- ¹²¹ Fatah Higher Committee, in Arabic, 21 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹²² Wafa, in Arabic, 22 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹²³ Voice of Palestine, 25 May 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹²⁴ Al-Jazeera, in Arabic, 5 June 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹²⁵ Wafa, in Arabic, 6 June 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹²⁶ Ramattan News Agency, 12 June 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹²⁷ Maan, in Arabic, 12 June 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹²⁸ Ramattan News Agency, 12 June 2006; Maan, in Arabic, 12 June 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹²⁹ Maan, in Arabic, 18 July 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹³⁰ Wafa, in Arabic, 2 August 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹³¹ Ramattan, in Arabic, 6 August 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹³² Maan, in Arabic, 12 August 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹³³ Maan, in Arabic, 21 August 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹³⁴ Maan, in Arabic, 8 September 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹³⁵ Maan, in Arabic, 10 September 2006, BBC MS.
- ¹³⁶ Maan, 15 September 2006, BBC MS.

Appendix 2

Security meetings between Egyptian and Palestinian officials July 2002 – July 2006

2002

7 July - The head of the Egyptian Intelligence Service, Umar Sulayman, met Yasir Arafat during a visit to Israel.

14 November - Yasir Arafat received Umar Sulayman in Ramallah. Minister Sulayman brought a personal message from President Mubarak.

21 December - Abu Abbas, Secretary of the PLO Executive Committee was expected in Cairo to hold talks on the resumption of the dialog between Fatah and Hamas.

2003

27 January - Palestinian groups meeting in Cairo agreed to continue intifada and resistance but failed to agree whether civilians were to be a target of some of their operations.

11 June - Yasir Arafat met Gen Sulayman in Egypt.

15 June - An Egyptian delegation headed by Maj Gen Mustafa al-Bahri, deputy director of the Egyptian Intelligence Service, arrived in Gaza for talks with representatives of Palestinian factions.

19 November - Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmad Quray received in Gaza an Egyptian security delegation, headed by Maj Gen Sulayman and his deputy Maj Gen Muhsin al-Numan. The Egyptian delegation visited Gaza to work out a new truce and cease-fire with Israel and invite factions for a dialogue in Cairo.

7 December - Palestinian factions meeting in Cairo failed to reach an agreement on truce with Israel

16 December - An Egyptian security delegation headed by the deputy heads of the Egyptian Intelligence Service Maj Gen Mustafa al-Buhayri and Maj Gen Muhammad Ibrahim held a meeting in Gaza with the leaders of the Palestinian security services.

19 December - Brig Gen Jibril al-Rujub, Yasir Arafat's national security adviser, held talks in Cairo with Egyptian officials.

29 December - Gen al-Rujub visited Cairo to apologize for an attack on the Egyptian Foreign Minister in Al-Aqsa Mosque two weeks before.

2004

27 January - Yasir Arafat welcomed in Ramallah Egyptian Presidential envoys, Foreign Minister Ahmad Mahir and Minister/Intelligence chief Umar Sulayman.

10 March - Egyptian General Intelligence Chief Umar Sulayman was received by Yasir Arafat in Ramallah.

The Battle for the Palestinian Security Services

24 May - Maj Gen Umar Sulayman briefed Yasir Arafat in Ramallah on his meeting with Prime Minister Sharon.

17 June - Prime Minister Ahmed Quray met the head of the Egyptian Intelligence Service in Cairo. Ahmed Quray was received the following day by President Mubarak.

24 June - Minister Sulayman was received by Yasir Arafat and Prime Minister Quray in Ramallah. During the meeting Minister Sulayman allegedly asked Yasir Arafat to dismiss 70 high-ranking Palestinian officials suspected of corruption.

16 August - Yasir Arafat's security adviser Brig Gen Jibril al-Rujub held talks with Egyptian officials in Cairo.

31 August - President Mubarak of Egypt met Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmad Quray in Alexandria.

6 September - President Arafat met Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmad Abu-al-Ghayt and Maj Gen Umar Sulayman in Ramallah.

10 September - Palestinian Negotiations Affairs Minister Saib Urayqat arrived in Egypt for talks with the Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmad Abu-al-Ghayt. The following day a Palestinian security delegation which included Director of Intelligence Amin-al-Hindi, Police Commander Saib al-Ajiz, Director of Military Intelligence Musa Arafat and Maj Gen Abd-al-Razzaq al-Majayidah left for Cairo. The delegation was headed by Interior Minister Hakam Balawi. The talks started on 13 September.

17 September - Forty five Palestinian officers arrived in Egypt to receive special training. The training was to start on 25 September and last for 6-10 weeks.

12 November - Egyptian Foreign Minister al-Ghayt and the head of the Egyptian Intelligence Service Umar Sulayman represented Egypt at the funeral of Yasir Arafat in Ramallah after the military funeral service in Cairo.

27 November - Prime Minister Quray and PLO Executive Committee head Mahmud Abbas met Gen Sulayman and Foreign Minister al-Ghayt in Cairo. They were received by President Mubarak on 28 November.

21 December - Minister Sulayman arrived in Israel. He was also expected to meet Palestinian officials.

2005

1 January - Islamic Jihad delegation headed by Dr Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, its secretary-general, was received by the head of the Egyptian Intelligence Service Gen Sulayman in Cairo. The talks were to focus on the inter-Palestinian dialogue.

3 February - The visit of a high-level Egyptian security delegation to Gaza on 6 February was announced. The Palestinian media reported several days later that an Egyptian security delegation headed by Maj Gen Mustafa al-Buhayri, undersecretary of the Egyptian intelligence service, met in Gaza with a Palestinian delegation led by Maj Gen Musa Arafat, head of the National Security Forces in Gaza Strip. Both sides discussed the deployment of the Palestinian security forces

in the region and the significant problems facing the Palestinian forces. The Egyptians stayed several days, visiting many Palestinian security and police outposts.

3 February - The first group of Palestinian policeman arrived in Cairo. They were to be trained for their future duties in the Gaza Strip, after the Israeli withdrawal.

6 February - Mahmud Abbas, chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and president of the PNA, and the heads of the Palestinian security organs received in Gaza an Egyptian security delegation led by Gen al-Buhayri and Gen Muhammad Ibrahim. The Egyptian delegation was expected to meet the leaders of Palestinian radical groups.

11 February - President Abbas received an Egyptian security delegation led by Gen Mustafa al-Buhayri before meeting the leaders of the Islamic and nationalist groups in the Gaza Strip.

3 March - President Abbas met President Hosni Mubarak in Sharm al-Shayk. President Abbas met also Gen Sulayman to plan a Palestinian national dialogue meeting in Cairo.

15 March - An inter-Palestinian meeting was held in Cairo. The meeting was attended by representatives of Palestinian factions, President Abbas and Egyptian Minister Umar Sulayman.

17 April - Hosni Mubarak, accompanied by Umar Sulayman, received Mahmud Abbas and a group of Palestinian officials, including his security advisers Jibril al-Rujub and Nabil Abu-Rudaynah.

12 May - Palestinian Minister of Interior and National Security Maj Gen Nasr Yusuf met Egyptian Intelligence director Umar Sulayman. The meetings between Egyptian and Palestinian security officials continued for several days.

29 May - Al-Tayyib Abd-al-Rahim, PNA president's office secretary general, had a meeting with an Egyptian security delegation headed by Gen Mustafa al-Buhayri.

15 June - Ramallah: a Palestinian delegation, which included high ranking security officials, briefed the Egyptian intelligence head on their contacts with the Israelis.

29 June - Ramadan Shallah, the secretary-general of the Islamic Jihad Movement, held talks in Cairo with Gen Umar Sulayman.

17 July - An Egyptian security delegation headed by Gen Al-Buhayri met a Hamas delegation at the beginning of their visit to Gaza.

19 July - President Abbas received an Egyptian security delegation headed by Gen Al-Buhayri in Gaza.

1 August - Maj Gen Jibril al-Rujub, the national security adviser, visited Egypt to discuss the security arrangements after the Israeli withdrawal.

3 August - Twenty Egyptian officers came to Gaza to train the Palestinian security personnel.

The Battle for the Palestinian Security Services

6 August - President Abbas received Gen William Ward, US security coordinator in the Middle East and Maj Gen Mustafa al-Buhayri, head of the Egyptian security delegation. President Abbas received al-Buhayri also the following day.

24 August - President Abbas was received by President Mubarak in Cairo. One of the points on their agenda was a trip to the Palestinian territories of Maj Gen Sulayman, chief of the Egyptian Intelligence Service.

29 August - President Abbas received the Egyptian intelligence chief in Gaza.

28 September – President Abbas met the Director of the Egyptian Intelligence Service Umar Sulayman in Cairo.

4 October – The Palestinian media announced that, President Abbas’ adviser Maj Gen Jibril al-Rajub would meet Gen Sulayman in Cairo the following day

5 November – The Palestinian press said that Egyptian Deputy Intelligence Director Maj Gen Mustafa al-Buhayri would meet the leaders of the major Palestinian groups in Gaza on 7 November.

20 December - Mahmud Abbas received Director of Egyptian Intelligence Service Umar Sulayman in Ramallah.

2006

5 February - President Abbas received in Gaza Maj Gen Mustafa Al-Buhayri, deputy head of the Egyptian intelligence service.

Early February – Dr Mahmud al-Zahhar, a member of the political leadership of Hamas was received by General Sulayman, Director of the Egyptian Intelligence Service.

31 March – Deputy Muhammad Dahlan met with Maj Gen Umar Sulayman in Cairo to discuss the prospects of cooperation between Fatah and Hamas.

11 April - Palestinian Prime Minister Haniyah had a telephone conversation with General Sulayman, Director of the Egyptian Intelligence Service. Haniyah briefed Sulayman on the critical financial situation.

15 April - Gen Sulayman, Director of the Egyptian Intelligence Service received in Cairo Palestinian Foreign Minister Dr Mahmud al-Zahhar. Al-Zahhar was especially concerned about the Israeli economic blockade.

20 April - President Abbas received in Ramallah an Egyptian security delegation headed by Maj Gen Rafat Shahatah and Maj Gen Muhammad Ibrahim.

21 April – Al-Jazeera announced that Palestinian Foreign Minister Mahmud al-Zahhar had met Egyptian intelligence head Umar Sulayman.

The Islamic Jihad delegation held talks with Egyptian intelligence officials in Cairo at the beginning of May 2006.

7 June - Muhammad Dahlan, the chairman of the Palestinian Security Committee briefed in Cairo the head of the Egyptian Intelligence Service, Minister Umar

Sulayman. Dahlan visited Cairo on the way to Moscow to a conference sponsored by the UN and Russia.

16 June - in Cairo President Mubarak and the head of the Egyptian Intelligence Service Umar Sulayman tried to convince the Islamic Jihad members to cease firing missiles at the Israeli territory.

17 June - President Abbas held talks with President Mubarak in Cairo. The Egyptian hosting team included General Sulayman, Director of the Egyptian Intelligence Service.

12 July - Muhammad Nazzal, member of Hamas' Political Bureau, held talks with General Sulayman, Director of the Egyptian Intelligence Service. According to unconfirmed reports Sulayman earlier visited Damascus to discuss the release of Corporal Gilad Shalit kidnapped on 25 June 2006.

28 July - General Sulayman, Director of the Egyptian Intelligence Service received at the airport in Alexandria President Mahmud Abbas, visiting after his European tour.

Want to Know More ...?

See: Encyclopedie du renseignement et des services secretes, Jacques Baud, Lavauzelle. 2002

Encyclopedie des terrorismes et violences politiques, Jaques Baud, Lavauzelle. 2003

Man in the shadows, Efraim Halevy, Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 2006

Inside the PLO, Neil Livingstone and David Halevy, Reader's Digest. 1990

The Routledge Atlas of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, Martin Gilbert, Routledge, 2002.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this paper are entirely and solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect official thinking and policy either of Her Majesty's Government or of the Ministry of Defence

ISBN 1-905058-96-9

Published By:

**Defence Academy of the
United Kingdom**

Conflict Studies Research Centre

Defence Academy of the UK
Watchfield
Swindon
SN6 8TS
England

Telephone: (44) 1793 788856
Fax: (44) 1793 788841
Email: csrc@da.mod.uk
<http://www.defac.ac.uk/csrc>

ISBN 1-905058-96-9