

The palestine
liberation
organization history
essay



For the purpose of this assignment I have chosen Yasser Arafat the chairman of the Palestine liberation organization, a leader of Palestine for more than last three decades of the twentieth century. He pushed the country into a long war with Israel in the name of self determination. Although being a brutal dictator he possessed many leadership features which brought him to the president's office of Palestine. It's an attempt to bring out and analyze the leadership capabilities of this person who is known as an autocratic and cruel dictator for last decades of the 20th century.

Background of Yasser Arafat

Yasser Arafat alias Mohammed Abdel Raouf Arafat, alias Qudwa Al Hussaini was born on August 4th 1929 in Cairo, Egypt. He was the fifth child of a Palestinian textile merchant Abdel Raouf Al Qudwa Al Husseni. His mother zahwa died when he was just five years old. She was from an eminent family in Jerusalem. After the death of his mother he was sent to live with his uncle in Jerusalem. Palestine was the British colony at that time, one day British soldiers broke open his uncles house and beat everybody and smashed the furniture in the house. After the four years of his stay in Jerusalem he was brought back to Cairo where he was taken care of by his elder sister. In 1949 he began to study at the King Fa ud University. He formed the Palestinian student's league there. For the first time he fought the Arab Israel war as a volunteer. Then he fought against the British in the Suez Canal war. He was chosen the president of the students union in 1952. There he got associated to the Muslim brotherhood. He was sent to jail for being associated to them. He completed his graduation in July 1956 and attended the International students Congress in Prague, Czechoslovakia where he secured membership

for Palestine. He wore the famous headgear or kaffiyeh there which became his trademark. He was then commissioned in the Egyptian army in Oct 1956.

On January 1st 1965 he forms FATAH a guerilla movement. Just after 2 days of its formation it makes the first of the many attacks on Israel. Fatah then forms the part of Palestinian liberation organization. Arafat gathered all the Palestinians working in the gulf countries to donate money to PLO. They donated generously. He did not want to take any help from the Arab kings as he did not want to change the cause of PLO.

On March 21st 1968 Israeli army attacked PLO base at Karameh, Jordan and inflicted heavy losses. Mr Arafat and his group took it as a win as thousands of Palestinians started joining PLO. Yasser was made the chairman of PLO on Feb 4th 1969. He transformed the group into the force which later made the Palestinian cause known worldwide. (1) He changed the style of terrorism. In fact he can be called the father of the modern day terrorism. PLO hijacked four aircrafts on Sep 6th 1970 and three other aircrafts after three days. He ordered assassination of the thousands of Israeli men, women and children. PLO was behind the murder of 11 athletes at the 1972 Olympics held at Munich. On March 2nd 1973 PLO commanders executed three western hostages. All these styles of terrorism are nowadays used by the Al-Qaida.

Yasser Arafat addressed the UN General Assembly on November 13th 1974, New York as the representative of the solo government of the people of Palestine. United States and Israel recognized PLO as the terrorist organization. But many countries started political contacts with PLO.

Israel made several attacks on PLO. On June 6th 1982 Israel invaded Lebanon to crush PLO and forced Arafat to flee Beirut for Tunisia North Africa. His sense of intuition was very high. He had a narrow escape from attacks many times. Arafat had a narrow escape on April 7th 1992 when a plane carrying him crashed landed in the Libyan Desert, in the crash both the pilots and the engineer on board died.

PLO recognized the resolution 181 of the UN General Assembly and the resolutions 242 and 338 of the Security Council in November 1988 under the leadership of Arafat. He announced the existence of the state of Palestine and nominated himself as the president. In a few days more than 25 countries including Soviet Union and Egypt recognized it as the government in exile. Arafat accepted Israel's right to exist and to give up terrorism on December 12th 1988. Arafat supported Saddam Hussein in the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2nd 1990.

Palestine, Israel and the Arab countries opened talks with each other on 30th October 1991 under the presidencies of US and Soviet Union. Israel refused to deal with Palestine but latter joined the talks with the joint delegation from Jordan and people of Palestine from the occupied counties, but the summit failed to bring good negotiations. Since then efforts were being made secretly in Oslo between PLO and Israeli to bring some negotiations which latter came to be known as Oslo Accord. Latter in September 1991 Yasser Arafat and Israeli PM Rabin exchanged letters in Washington, Arafat as the leader of PLO recognized Israel to live in peace and Rabin recognized PLO as the sole representative of the people of Palestine. Rabin, Arafat and

US president Bill Clinton then signed a declaration on the principals of Palestine self rule on September 13th 1991.

Arafat married to his secretary Suha Tawil in Tunis in Nov 1991 and she gave birth to a daughter on the July 24th 1995 in Paris.

He signed the Oslo Peace accord on September 13th 1993 with Israel on the Autonomy of PLO. It stated the control of the Gaza strip and 27% of the West Bank. It was the historical movement. Both the leaders Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin and Arafat shook hands on the Lawns of the White house for the first time. Palestine was given a five year time for the formation of a new government. Arafat put his feet on the land of Gaza for the first time in the period of 26 years on his return from exile to Palestine on July 1st 1994.(2) Times magazine named Yasser Arafat as the man of the year for role in making peace in the Middle East. On 10th December 1994 Arafat, Rabin and Shimon Peres Israeli foreign minister were awarded Noble price for peace.

A Jew Right wing assassinated Mr Rabin in Tel-Aviv while addressing a peace rally on Nov 4th 1995. Arafat visited his wife secretly after 5 days of the incident to pay his condolences. He was elected as the president of the Palestinian Authority in the first election held in 1996. On the October 23rd 1998 PLO and Israel agreed on the land for peace deal on the West Bank issue in a meeting in America. Another peace deal organized by the US President Bill Clinton known as the Camp David II held on July 11, 2000 failed.

Ariel Sharon the Israeli leader of the opposition, provoked clashes between Muslims and Jews in her visit to the Jerusalem shrine holy to both the

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communities, giving rise to Palestine unrest again. On the 3rd December 2001 Arafat was confined to the west bank city of Ramallah in a suicide attack by the Israeli bombers in the city of Gaza. Almost all the buildings in his compound were torn down except his three storey office by Jan 18th 2002 in the military sieges. Two tanks and several military personnel armed carriers were parked outside the premises. On March 27th Suicide bombers of the PLO killed 29 people, which again prompted Israeli army to invade the West bank. Arafat was declared enemy by the Israeli cabinet on the 29th march and the military troops sieges most of the areas of the Ramallah including the area in his compound. On the 2nd of April Arafat refused to the offer of the Israeli PM to go exile. He added that he would better choose death than leaving the West Bank. American president Bush called the Palestinian assembly to replace him as a leader. Thus the Deputy Prime Minister of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas was nominated as the president of the Palestine on 29th April 2003. On 4th June 2003 Israel and Palestine had its first major summit without Arafat in the US. In this summit Israel made a road map for the formation of Palestine by the year 2005, to end the fight and bring peace. On 21st October Arafat was diagnosed for gallstones and after a few days of his diagnose he collapsed and fell unconscious. He died on 11th November 2004.

Key leadership capabilities

Yasser Arafat possessed certain key features that made him an effective leader in the Middle East for more than three decades. (3)These different leadership features are divided into three different groups of leadership styles in order to define them. These are transformational leadership,

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transactional leadership, and corrective avoidant leadership. (4) Kouzes and Posner analyzed the practices used by the leaders to transform the values into actions, visions into realities, obstacles into innovations, separateness into solidarity and risks into rewards and mobilizing people to do extraordinary things. These can be grouped into different leadership styles autocratic, participative and laissez faire.

In order to find the leadership capabilities of Arafat his leadership strengths and weaknesses has been discussed below.

Leadership strengths of Yasser Arafat

Yasser Arafat was an autocratic type of leader. He was charismatic having an ability to anticipate and convince people to get their support. In order to critically analyze and review the leadership capabilities of the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, we must first point out his the key capabilities that make him a leader.

Strengths of Yasser Arafat which make him a leader

He was a self styled revolutionary with only the cause of Palestine. He set up guerilla camps on the borders of the Jordon and attempted many terrorists' attacks on the Israel. A large number of people joined PLO for the jihad and fighting against the Israelis under his chairmanship.

He was a good motivator; he motivated others towards a collective goal, for the formation of the Palestine.

He was good in managing all through which that collective goal could be achieved; he had been chairman of PLO from 1969 for more than 3 decades. It was his key strength that for so long he could keep Palestinians together for the same goal.

He served as a symbol of the group identity, his headgear or the kaffeyiah the traditional Palestinian dress became his trademark.

He was renewing and adapted the organization to the changing world, after a long era of war with Israel and no outcome he took a diplomatic way which he know shall work and changed the policy of PLO from Palestine as the only state to two different states of Palestine and Israel .

He had a very good ability to convince people to get their support, he more often made statements to the west then to his own people and always talked of peace with them and on the other hand always persuaded his people for jihad for the cause of Palestine and the Arabs.

He always wore a military dress which showed him as energetic, making himself a sign and made himself as a example trade mark

Deep religiosity and fierce nationalism. This characteristic of him can be known from the fact he didn't take any donations from the rich Arab heads, because he didn't wanted any other ideology to be formed in the group, and transformed it into a Independent National Organization.

He used to work late, and a hard worker, often used to meet other political leaders and the press in the late hours.

He lived in a modest fashion, he didn't buy any stylish clothes and any other luxury for himself, it is clear from the dress, he was always seen in a military outfit.

He had very good intuition and resilience power, due to which he managed to escape many assassinations safely.

He maintained the Unity of the Palestine organization in spite of the interference from the neighbor Arab states.

He created an atmosphere of trust with his cabinet, he led them and controlled them, he let them enjoy the powers and even some times bribed them with gifts and money.

Good speaker

He had many faces, he always addressed the west with speech of peace and influenced his people for jihad for the cause of Palestine and all the Arab states.

Charismatic

Ability to anticipate

convince people to get their support

Weaknesses

Yasser Arafat accepted corruption

Didn't understand Israeli public and its fear.

Wife fights for share of Arafat's secret millions. Daily mail, The (London, England) November 6th, 2004

Arafat is world's wealthiest head of state with assets estimated between 150million-3 billion. He owned a number of hotels and holiday resorts in Spain, France, Switzerland, Italy and Austria. He had bank accounts in Switzerland, Austria, Luxembourg and The Cayman Islands. All the tax and custom collected by Israel on Palestinian salaries and goods after 1994 Oslo Peace accords were transferred to his personal account in Tel-Aviv.

(Arafat diverted nearly \$ 1 billion in public funds to insure his political survival, but a lot more is unaccounted for. Jim Prince and a team of American accountants hired by Arafat's own finance ministry are combing through Arafat's books. Given what they have already uncovered, Arafat may be rethinking the decision.) Lesley Stahi reports.

CBS News November 9th 2003, Tricia Mc Dermott.

Arafat was a serial killer not a statesman. Express, the (London, England) November 12th, 2004

Yasser Arafat is the father of the modern day terrorism; he is responsible of deaths of thousands of innocent Israeli men, women and children.

Uncertain prize given for an uneasy peace . Sunday times, The (London, England) November 20th, 1994

Yasser Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Press, awarded Nobel Peace Prize. ' His past is too violent, he has blood on his hands' said Kare Kristiansen 74, a

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former Norwegian cabinet minister who protested that Arafat was being rewarded for a life time terror.

The Arafat I knew- Profile. Sunday times, The (London, England) November 14th, 2004

A leader who became the symbol of people but lacked the vision to lead them to statehood. He was described both as a charismatic terrorist chieftain and an inspiration national leader.

Conclusions

There is a long list of key attributes of a effective leader that are possessed by the Palestinian leader, in spite of the leadership capabilities that he possessed he must not be known as a leader as the other leaders of the world

Yasser Arafat is known as a martyr in his own country and condemned all over the world for attacking the civilians in Israel.