

Middle East Report by Nancy Coker

'No better than dogs'

That is the way one leading U.S. political figure described Yasser Arafat's enemies inside the PLO.

At the beginning of May, the Soviet KGB activated a clique of pro-Soviet radicals from inside Fatah, the moderate core of the PLO, to rebel against Arafat. Fatah favors a negotiated settlement to the Arab-Israeli crisis and improved PLO relations with the United States.

A mutiny subsequently took place among Palestinian troops stationed in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. The operation was crafted to terrorize PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat into cooperating with Moscow's strategic designs on the region, or, failing that, to eliminate him.

It may be concluded that it is not only the Israelis who would like to see Arafat dead. The Soviet Union, along with its allies in Libya and Syria, would as well.

The neutralization or liquidation of Arafat would put the PLO squarely into the hands of the radicals, who would begin to carry out terrorist hits against U.S. installations and U.S. allies in the region, propelling the Middle East toward war.

The last weekend in May, the "rebels" seized, by armed force, PLO supply depots in Syria, and reportedly attempted to kill Arafat on May 30. According to informed Middle East sources, certain leaders of these "rebels" are trying to transform the PLO into a terrorist structure modeled on the Abu Nidal gang, which has murdered leading PLO moderates over the years.

Rebel spokesmen have already promised to step up terrorist raids into Israel, countermanding Arafat's orders for restraint and pushing the crisis between Israel and Syria closer to the edge.

One well-briefed Washington source with ties to the Israeli Mossad had the following to say: "The real war in the Middle East is the war between Syria and the PLO. Arafat is finished. It is just a question of time when he will be killed. The semi-moderates will disappear, and there will be one united PLO left, led by people like George Habash [leader of the terrorist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine]."

"These people within the PLO who are attacking Arafat are, willingly or not, playing into the hands of those forces trying to destroy the Palestinian movement and to sabotage negotiations for the creation of an independent Palestinian state," Democrat Lyndon LaRouche charged in a May 31 news release. "There are only two possible explanations for this: Either they are actually traitors within the PLO's ranks, or they are being manipulated by forces committed to the PLO's destruction."

"Those elements in the Moscow leadership who are attempting to use those 'rebels' for wider Soviet strategic purposes," LaRouche continued, "are also responsible for this crisis. The 'rebels' are the same type of creatures who murdered PLO peace spokesman Issam Sartawi in Lisbon,

Portugal, on April 11. Such individuals are no better than dogs."

The Saudis are clearly worried by the insurrection against Arafat. On May 20, the Saudi newspaper *Al-Medina* accused the Soviet Union of masterminding the rift inside the PLO.

Al-Medina also linked the Soviets to an ongoing plot to partition Lebanon. "It is not difficult to trace the Soviets' fingerprints in Lebanon to disintegrate the country's national unity and divide it into small states."

A statement issued by the central committee of Fatah on May 21 attacked the British Broadcasting Corporation for throwing its weight on the side of the rebels by deliberately beaming "hostile propaganda . . . whose primary aim is to create confusion among our Palestinian people." As Arafat well knows, the BBC conducted a similar service for the Khomeinians prior to their takeover in Iran.

Islamic fundamentalist and radical assets within the PLO are currently being activated for new terrorist strikes against American interests in the Middle East, which would bury Arafat's efforts to open channels to the United States for peace negotiations.

The London magazine *Arabia and the Islamic World Review*, a mouthpiece of the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood, in its latest issue called on the PLO to attack American embassies in the Middle East. The magazine noted that the "blow to America was severe" when the U.S. embassy in Beirut was destroyed on April 18, and that "the Americans are finding themselves lonelier than ever in the Middle Eastern desert."

The article concluded: "If it takes a blast in an American embassy to alert the people in Washington to the mess they are causing, then the PLO had better get to business unless someone else does."