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Arafat: Did he or didn't he accept ADC's invitation to its convention?

PLO Chairman gets caught in rivalry between Arab American groups just when he didn't need it

By Mark Bruzonsky
Special to Sada Alwatan

WASHINGTON, D.C. — I won't keep you in suspense. He didn't, just as he and his spokesmen have been saying. But he did leave things sufficiently ambiguous after a meeting with many Arab American representatives in Tunis so that at least some were confused, and a lot of phones and faxes around the world worked overtime before he finally said no clearly and finally just a few days ago.

What's this all about? PLO Chairman Arafat's aborted visit to the U.S. in April to address the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee's annual meeting of course.

The fault this time, though, lies not

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with the Chairman or his staff. Yassir Arafat, even more than in previous months, has been a very busy man of late and he's getting advice and requests from far and wide. He's indeed trying to run a fledgling state apparatus and needs all the help he can muster. And there's no way he can be responsive to everyone or make all his friends and supporters happy. This isn't to say there aren't a lot of problems with the administration of the PLO or the PLO's operations in America — but those are subjects for another time. Right now, it's enough to say that the Chairman has enough very difficult and troubling problems so that his real friends should be very careful not to cause him more.

This time the Chairman got caught up in inter-American, actually inter-Arab American, rivalries and didn't see it coming when he humbly smiled and in very general terms accepted invitations from at least four U.S. organizations during a general meeting in Tunis the week of January 16th. It was more an "acceptance" that the invitations were appreciated, maybe a general acceptance in spirit, at best an acceptance that needed serious follow-up in view of the important implications involved.

Americans have really changed toward the PLO, toward the issue of Palestinian nationalism, or whether what they are about is more cosmetic than that. Granting Arafat a visa to come to the U.S. in April would be another sign of seriousness, turning him away, another argument for those who think a different strategy than Arafat's is called for.

Behind the ADC announcement is a multi-year pattern of competition and rivalry among Arab American organizations, especially former Senator Jim Abourezk's ADC and Jim Zogby's Arab American Institute [AAI]. For no sooner was ADC finished announcing Arafat's impending American visit to their convention than Zogby's AAI was undermining rival ADC.

There was a time, not that long ago, when Zogby was ADC. After running the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, Zogby worked closely with Abourezk as ADC's Executive Director. But that relationship quite literally blew up in the early 80's and Zogby was out on the street. With the help of the other ADC rival, NAAA, the National Association of Arab Americans, Zogby then built AAI, an organization whose primary mission has been involvement of

Security Council — two of Henry Kissinger's most trusted confidants — are playing decisive roles, especially relating to Middle East issues].

This meeting was not planned very well, and indeed some of the participants, including Jim Zogby, didn't know that others thought there was a specific agenda. Anyway, after meetings with some important PLO officials a meeting for everyone with the Chairman was arranged. And it was at this meeting that four organizations, including ADC and AAI, invited the Chairman to the U.S. in future months to speak at upcoming events.

Only ADC it now appears rushed to announce that the Chairman was coming to their convention. Clearly this was done in a competitive way, thinking that any of the other organizations might take this step and wanting to be first. But within days, hours in some cases, reporters were receiving phone calls — no one will specifically identify from whom but I have learned at least some of the calls were made by Zogby — telling them that the Chairman hadn't accepted the invitation, wasn't going to apply for a visit, and that ADC had jumped the gun.

According to ADC spokesman Faris Bouhafa, "The story broke on Tuesday (January 17th), and by Wednesday morning I was being told



PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat met this week in Madrid with King Juan Carlos I and with Foreign Ministers of Spain, Greece and France.

Hussein to arrange Arab, frontline states' support of international conference

By Lamis K. Andoni
Special to Sada Alwatan

AMMAN — The PLO has sought King Hussein's help in organizing a meeting of representatives from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the PLO to

might clear the atmosphere between the organization and Syria and between Syria and Egypt, which is expected to be readmitted to the Arab League.

But even if an Arab summit fails to produce Palestinian-Syrian reconciliation or Syrian-Egyptian

Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the PLO to coordinate efforts and form an Arab preparatory committee for an international peace conference on the Middle East, according to well-placed Palestinian sources.

The PLO has also asked Jordan to rally support for the convening of an Arab summit that will endorse the Palestinian peace initiative. According to the same Palestinian sources, Jordanian officials' response to the request made by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat during his recent visit to Amman was "very positive".

Such a meeting of the main confrontation states, who are supposed to participate in the suggested international peace conference, still seems far-fetched, due to prevailing inter-Arab differences. The PLO, however, hopes that Hussein will use his good offices with Damascus and Egypt to at least secure coordination of Arab stands.

The PLO believes that such coordination is essential since the five states should maintain a unified negotiating position concerning the basis of any future peace talks with Israel. The ideal goal the PLO hopes to achieve is an Arab preparatory committee which would jointly launch an Arab and international campaign for convening the international conference and for a settlement which safeguards Arab and Palestinian rights. The PLO's campaign for such a meeting among the five parties concerned is paralleled by an equally active effort to hold an Arab summit. The convening of an Arab summit could actually solve many problems for the PLO since it

normalization of relations, it would help the formulation of a joint Arab negotiating position to step up pressure on the U.S. and Israel to accept a United Nations sponsored peace conference with effective powers.

Meanwhile, the PLO seems to be successful on the European front. By *Sada Alwatan* press time PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat had arrived in Madrid to meet with the European troika comprising the Foreign Ministers of France, Spain, and Greece, which was designated by the European Community earlier this month to pursue efforts to prepare for an international peace conference. Both the Spanish and the French Foreign Ministers have just concluded separate visits to Tel Aviv to check Israeli leaders' views on the issue. Moreover, French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas told a group of Palestinian personalities in Arab Jerusalem earlier this week that French President Francois Mitterand might meet with Arafat. Talks between Arafat and British Foreign Affairs Minister William Waldegrave, last week in Tunis, could prove to be a major breakthrough with long term consequences, especially since Britain is the closest, and therefore most influential, European ally of the U.S.

Despite the significance of the PLO's successes in Europe, the organization's campaign will still need strong, effective support from the Arab world, including especially a unified negotiating position among the five front line Arab partners.

But the phones and faxes started just minutes afterwards and only ended in recent days with a short fax to ADC from the Chairman himself saying very simply, "I will not be able to come to your convention" and not even mentioning the issue of whether or not a meeting with Bush or Baker was relevant to this decision.

After the great George Shultz "don't come to the U.N." visa fiasco, it was natural of course that the world's press would again focus on the idea of Chairman Arafat arriving some day on U.S. shores. So when ADC President Abdeen Jabara told his Washington office that the Chairman was coming and that office rushed to spread the news, world headlines understandably ensued.

Behind it all of course lies the grander, historically important question of whether or not the

Arab Americans in American politics. With the coming of the intifadeh AAI also swung into gear promoting the Palestinian cause.

So the stage was set for the past few weeks' confusion over whether or not Chairman Arafat did or did not accept ADC's invitation.

After checking with usually reliable sources in Tunis, Cairo, and Washington, here's what apparently did take place in a bit more detail.

Arab Americans as a group were invited to Tunis to help the Chairman and the PLO Executive Committee strategize about what to do in the USA now that the Bush-Baker-Eagleburger troika is in power. [I refer to the new U.S. Administration in this way, as noted in a previous column, because when it comes to foreign affairs Larry Eagleburger, along with Brent Scowcroft as head of the National

Wednesday morning I was being told by a friend of mine at a wire service that he had gotten an unsolicited call from someone else at the meeting to let him know that in fact Arafat had never accepted the invitation." But this reporter checked further, according to Bouhafaf, and found that others at the meeting said the Chairman had accepted the invitation.

Meanwhile, among the Arab diplomatic community in Washington, rumors were circulating about what the Chairman had done or hadn't done and that there was a lot of competition and jealousy among Arab American groups. Furthermore, a quick consensus seemed to be growing, possibly stimulated by ADC's competitors and detractors, that the Chairman should only come to the U.S. at a time when he would be received by American officials, not just to talk to an Arab American group. Clovis Maksoud, Arab League Ambassador in the U.S., apparently took it upon himself to let

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NEEDED: AN ARAB AMERICAN AGENDA PART II PAGE 2 INSIDE

What's behind the German-Libyan chemical affair?

By Robert J. Devine
Special to *Sada Alwatan*

The civilian body count in Palestine grows longer day by day. The ranks of the homeless and dispossessed swell accordingly. Deportations and imprisonment without due process of law follow the inevitable systematic course of Israeli "justice." It is business as usual in the Arab lands occupied by Israel.

While the calculated slaughter of innocents has persisted unabated, well-placed friends of Israel in Washington were examining new ways to promote the Zionist agenda and to derail PLO Chairman Arafat's acquiescence to U.S. demands at his historic U.N. speech in Geneva.

Israel's co-conspirators in the U.S. Administration were concerned that Israel's leader and infamous terror boss, Yitzhak Shamir, had been caught off-guard by the PLO's diplomatic initiative. Also, the heads of Israel's dreaded and ruthless covey of intelligence services (Shin Beth and Mossad) were stunned by the resounding moral strength and persistent unity manifested in the young children of the intifadeh. This position was obviously untenable for the Zionist leaders.

by operating disinformation and covert action campaigns on several levels simultaneously.

This entailed a seven-pronged plan of operation designed to: 1) resurrect the old bogeyman of America's neoconservative psychopathic obsession with Colonel Qaddafi's Libya to set loose anti-Arab feelings in America; 2) unleash the spectre of the Nazi past by using the holocaust syndrome to bolster American guilt-motivated support for Israel; 3) create concern with chemical and biological weapons proliferation elsewhere to detract attention from Israel's own chemical and biological arsenals and its alarming advances in offensive nuclear weapon and delivery capabilities; 4) focus on an intensified Capitol Hill campaign to smear Pakistan over its alleged "Islamic bomb"; 5) undermine a recent European Community Middle East peace initiative; 6) prevent weapons sales to all Arab and Islamic states; 7) commit clandestine acts of terror using cut-outs against the European Community's pro-Arab "Mediterranean

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coalition" of France, Greece and Spain and against American targets to implicate Palestinians with terrorism.

"Auschwitz in the sand" article was sanctioned by Administration policy-makers with ties to Israeli Embassy officials. This followed an earlier high-placed

call to Washington by hard-line Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens urging America to turn up the heat on the West Germans.

Meanwhile, within Israel's fortress-like embassy in Bonn's Bad-Godesberg suburb, operatives at Mossad's German base (Simrockallee 2) were mobilizing their German media accessories and feeding them with meticulously collected information on The Federal Republic's business connections in the Arab world.



Kohl

Subsequently, new allegations broke out almost daily in the German media, further embarrassing Chancellor Kohl and rallying his Social Democratic Party opposition against him in a bid to defeat Kohl's moderate coalition in the 1990 federal election. In the process, the Chancellor's decision to provide European manufactured Tornado fighter aircraft to Jordan was blown.

With one well-placed and perfectly timed move, Israeli

between America and one of its most important European NATO allies. This, however, did not come as a complete surprise.

In a 1986 meeting in Bonn, Chancellor Kohl told me that he believed American Jewish groups had the power to destroy his government if they so desired. Some observers would agree that the current Israeli campaign was a most convenient opportunity for those who had been waiting to exercise retribution for the Chancellor's Bitburg meeting with President Reagan.

The most shocking aspect of the campaign to extricate Israel at the expense of undermining Chancellor Kohl's government is not only that Israel continues its time-tested policies of murder, kidnapping, extortion, theft and intimidation to secure its self-serving objectives, but that our own government, or individuals within it, might well be in collusion with the assiduous Zionist merchants of mayhem.

Our biggest mistake now would be to grow complacent since, as an old saying goes, where apathy is master, all men are slaves. The cost of securing our freedom is high — it is paid for in Palestine with the blood of its young martyrs. But freedom is indivisible. To deny it to Palestine is to beckon its demise within our own realm. To allow the suppression of truth in America is to prolong the yoke of bondage in Palestine and to reintroduce it here at home.

Let us look up to the children of the intifadeh. Their courage is like stone, their faith as hard as rock. Let us too, remember the words of Henry Edward, Cardinal Manning: "Whoso shall fall upon that stone shall be