



Who's Who in Terrorism

The following article surveys the "Islamist" terror groups PLO/al-Fatah, Hamas, and Hezbollah, and their connections to the international terror network sponsored by the Soviet/Russian KGB. For information documenting al-Qaeda's connections to the Kremlin, see the related article "[Behind Islamic Terror](#)."

PLO/al-Fatah. For nearly four decades, the PLO has been the largest, wealthiest, and most politically connected terrorist organization in the world. For most of that time, it was held in the firm grip of Yasser Arafat's iron fist. But Arafat was not the fierce, independent actor he posed as; he was completely dependent on the Soviet KGB and its surrogate Warsaw Pact intelligence services for arms, training, logistical support, funds, and direction. His KGB handlers included Vasali Samoylenko, Vladimir Buljakov, and Soviet "Ambassador" Alexander Soldatov. Arafat's closest friend and head of PLO intelligence, Hani Hassan, was actually an agent of the DIE, the Romanian subsidiary of the KGB.

Former DIE chief General Ion Pacepa reported in a 2003 *Wall Street Journal* article:

I was given the KGB's "personal file" on Arafat. He was an Egyptian bourgeois turned into a devoted Marxist by KGB foreign intelligence. The KGB had trained him at its Balashikha special-ops school east of Moscow and in the mid-1960s decided to groom him as the future PLO leader. First, the KGB destroyed the official records of Arafat's birth in Cairo, replacing them with fictitious documents saying that he had been born in Jerusalem and was therefore a Palestinian by birth.

During the 1960s and '70s, Arafat and the PLO did not hide their Marxist ideology and openly proclaimed their solidarity with the Soviet Union, Communist China, Communist Cuba, and every other Marxist dictatorship. But in recent years, as communist-backed "Islamic fundamentalist" groups like Hamas have gathered more popular support, the PLO leadership has attempted to portray itself as authentically Muslim. It has adopted more religious rhetoric and used Muslim names and symbols, even naming Islam as the official and exclusive religion of Palestine in the 2003 Palestinian constitution. Since Arafat's death in 2004, veteran PLO hand Mahmoud Abbas has tried, unsuccessfully, to fill his shoes.

Hamas swept to power in the 2006 parliamentary elections (winning 76 seats to Fatah's 43), and in June 2007 Hamas' military took control of the Gaza Strip in a series of gun battles through the streets of Gaza's cities that left 120 people dead and hundreds more wounded. Three of the four so-called Quartet of Middle East peace brokers — the United States, United Nations, and European Union — announced their backing for Abbas and the PLO and their rejection of Hamas. The remaining member of the quartet, Russia, has been playing both sides. During the last week of July, Mahmoud Abbas visited Putin in Moscow, seeking his endorsement. Putin gave it, but didn't rule out continuing negotiations and relations with Hamas. "I want to assure you that we will support you as the lawful leader of the Palestinian people," Putin told Abbas at their July 31 meeting.

Hamas. The Arabic acronym for Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya, or Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas is a Palestinian Sunni terrorist organization founded in 1987 by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. One of Hamas' claims to infamy is its popularization of suicide bombing as a terror weapon, pioneering in recruiting females and children as suicide killers. Although posing as the ultimate in Islamic fundamentalism, like al-Qaeda it has a curious relationship with Putin's KGB/FSB. According to a March 2006 report by Axis Information and Analysis, "At present, five of the seven biggest Hamas websites are functioning from the territory of the CIS member-states. Three of these sites use services of the Russian



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providers.... There are two more smaller but rather well-known websites that are functioning from Russia's territory." This is especially noteworthy since the Putin regime has clamped down on all media and Internet access by its political opposition and all unapproved parties. Hamas' Internet sites, which have been so essential in building Hamas' stature, recruiting, and propaganda prowess globally, are clearly operating with Putin's approval.

Russia does not include Hamas on its list of terrorist organizations. Not surprisingly, Hamas' political director, Khaled Mashal, has repeatedly affirmed the organization's close friendship with Moscow. Mashal presides over the Hamas "Politburo," which, in name, structure, and function, is much more in line with Marxist-Leninist than Islamist thought. Mashal has led Hamas delegations to Moscow for talks with Putin and has met with Putin and Yevgeniy Primakov, the KGB's top Middle East scholar, at other forums in Khartoum, Tehran, and Ankara. Although Hamas never provided any significant aid to its fellow Muslims who were being slaughtered by the Russians in Chechnya, it did, up until 2004, offer them rhetorical support. Since 2004, though, it has urged the Chechens to "heal the wound" and surrender in the interest of "a strong and integrated Russia."

Hezbollah. In Arabic, Hezbollah means "Party of God." But there is little that is godly about the group, which has exploded in size, power, and influence since first coming to Western attention by bombing the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, killing over 300 Marines. It is supported chiefly and directly by Iran and has adopted the revolutionary theology and ideology of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini. It also receives military aid directly and indirectly from Syria and Russia, as manifested by the weapons cases abandoned by Hezbollah after their rocket attacks on Israel last summer. The containers were clearly marked: "Customer: Ministry of Defense of Syria. Supplier: KBR Tula, Russia."

Sheikh Hasan Nasrallah, who has been General Secretary of Hezbollah since 1992, keeps in touch with Moscow through regular communications with Russia's Beirut embassy. This was confirmed in a 2006 interview with Russia's Ambassador to Israel, Mikhail Bogdanov. That is not the only channel by which Moscow and Beirut stay in touch. In a detailed 2005 report by Axis Information and Analysis, entitled *Dangerous Liaisons: Covert "Love Affair" Between Hezbollah and Russia*, author Michel Ebaz reports:

Hezbollah's special operations unit ("Muntamat al-Jihad al-Islami" — MJI or "Islamic Jihad Organization") emissaries have been active in Russia since the middle of the nineties. Residing in Moscow, Imad Hadj Hassan Salame heads this special operations unit. His men were an integral part of Hezbollah's international network for smuggling weapons to Lebanon.

Yevgeniy Primakov's appointment in 1996 as Russia's Foreign Minister was a critical step in propelling the Hezbollah-KGB relationship forward. As the KGB's most experienced hand in Middle East terrorism matters, he was the perfect choice for insuring a smooth transition when the KGB transformed into the FSB. His official meetings in the 1990s with Lebanon's political leaders also provided him (and his assistant, Viktor Pasovaluk) with opportunities to meet secretly with representatives of Hezbollah. In the 2005 elections, Hezbollah and its allies in the Resistance and Development Bloc won 35 seats (27 percent) of the Lebanese parliament.



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