

MEMORANDUM

February 5, 1982

THE PLO IN EL SALVADOR

*"It was disgraceful of Reagan to call us terrorists. We are a great revolution that can never be intimidated. We have connections with all revolutionary movements throughout the world, in Salvador, in Nicaragua--and I reiterate Salvador--and elsewhere in the world."*

Yasser Arafat  
Associated Press  
April 14, 1981

With heightened attention on the tragic state of conflict in El Salvador, it is important that the connection between the PLO and the Salvadoran insurgents, as well as the PLO connection with insurgents throughout Latin America, be highlighted.

It should come as no surprise that the pro-Soviet PLO--ringleader and coordinator of the international terrorist network--should be involved in aiding Salvadoran insurgents by providing military and political support.

The United States government is well aware of this unholy alliance. On February 21, 1981, Vice President Bush acknowledged to Israeli Foreign Minister Shamir that "the PLO is aiding leftist guerrillas in El Salvador." (U.P.I. 2/21/81) There is ample evidence that the PLO, foes of all democratic systems, especially the United States, is linked to insurgents in El Salvador.

PLO-EL SALVADOR TIES ARE DEEPLY ROOTED. Contacts between Salvadoran guerrilla leaders and Arafat, as well as members of the PFLP, are frequent.

PALESTINIAN ARMS AND TRAINING HAVE BEEN SUPPLIED TO SALVADORAN GUERRILLAS. This fact has been confirmed both by Arafat and in testimony before Congress.

THE PLO-SALVADORAN CONNECTION THREATENS U.S. SECURITY by increasing instability in the Americas and hostility to U.S. interests.

(over)

PLO-SALVADORAN TIES ARE DEEPLY ROOTED:

State Department  
Letter

April 6, 1981

"The leader of the El Salvador Communist Party is Shafik Handal. Handal's parents are Palestinian emigres to El Salvador. Handal identifies himself as a Palestinian. Beginning March 18, 1981, Handal has been visiting Beirut where he quickly met with Yasir Arafat and Nayif Hawatmah, Secretary-General of the DFLP, Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the official host for Handal's visit. He also met with members of the PFLP, George Habbash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. On public occasions, Handal has stressed the close relations between "liberation movements" in Latin America and the Palestinians. In interviews, he has noted his family's Palestinian origin and has claimed that others in El Salvador's 2,000-member Palestinian community were also in the guerrilla forces."

"Unholy Alliance"  
The Jerusalem Post  
August 14, 1981

"The leader of the El Salvadoran guerrillas, Shafik Handel, is also the head of the country's communist party (PECS) and the son of Palestinian immigrants. He has visited the Middle East many times and is in close contact with Qaddafi and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine."

Wall Street Journal  
January 14, 1982

"Palestinian sources said that the PLO relations with the rebels in El Salvador are 'relatively deep rooted' because the leader of the Communist Party there, Shafik Handal, is of Palestinian origin. His father is said to have emigrated to El Salvador in 1921 from Bethlehem, in the West Bank area currently occupied by Israel. Mr. Handal's Salvadoran Communist Party is one of five organizations forming Farabundo Marti rebel coalition that has been battling government forces there."

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U.S. News and World  
Report  
Sept. 1, 1980

"American analysts view the growing penetration of Latin America by Arab radicals as a dangerous catalyst for increased instability in the region and eventual emergence there of national policies hostile to U.S. interests."

Associated Press  
April 14, 1981

"Palestinian guerrilla chief Yasser Arafat in a bitter attack Tuesday on President Reagan vowed to support anti-American 'revolutionary movements' around the world."

Washington Post  
January 13, 1982

"Arafat also stressed a mobilization by all Palestinians saying, we will soon have to face a strategic alliance between the U.S. and Israel." The PLO called on Palestinian youths several months ago to join special training programs."

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Associated Press  
Foreign Briefs  
December 13, 1979

"Leftist guerrillas set off a bomb in the Israeli embassy in San Salvador, causing damage but no injuries. The People's Revolutionary Army claimed responsibility for the attack Tuesday night. It said the bombing was in 'solidarity with the Palestinian people.'

The PRA also supports other leftist guerrillas which kidnapped South African Ambassador Archibald Gardner Dunn, and are demanding that El-Salvador's military junta establish diplomatic relations with the PLO."

PALESTINIAN ARMS & TRAINING:

Congressional Testimony  
February 25, 1981

"There has been a massive influx of arms from Soviet and other Communist sources. Radical Arab states, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the terrorist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine have furnished funds, arms and training."

- John Bushnell, Acting Assistant  
Secretary of State for Inter-  
American Affairs

"Communist Interference  
in El Salvador"  
U.S. Department of State  
February 23, 1981

"The DRU (Unified Revolutionary Directorate of the Salvadorean guerrillas) representatives met with visiting PLO leader Yasser Arafat in Managua on July 22, 1980. Arafat promises military equipment, including arms and aircraft.

A Salvadoran guerrilla leader met with FATAH leaders in Beirut in August and November, and the PLO has trained Salvadorans in the Near East and in Nicaragua."

U.S. News and World  
Report  
September 1, 1980

"Now the PLO has offered weapons and training to leftist forces in civilian-torn El Salvador, where a U.S.-backed junta is battling guerrillas of both left and right."

United Press Inter-  
national  
January 21, 1982

"A report from Beirut last week quoted PLO leader Yasser Arafat as saying that Palestinian soldiers were actively supporting the Salvadorian insurgency. The report triggered a furor among some Latin American U.N. delegations, diplomatic sources say."

Wall Street Journal  
January 14, 1982

"While in Beirut last March, Mr. Handal said about 2,000 residents of El Salvador were of Palestinian origin. 'I wouldn't be revealing a secret if I say that there are some in our revolutionary cadre who are Arabs.'"

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