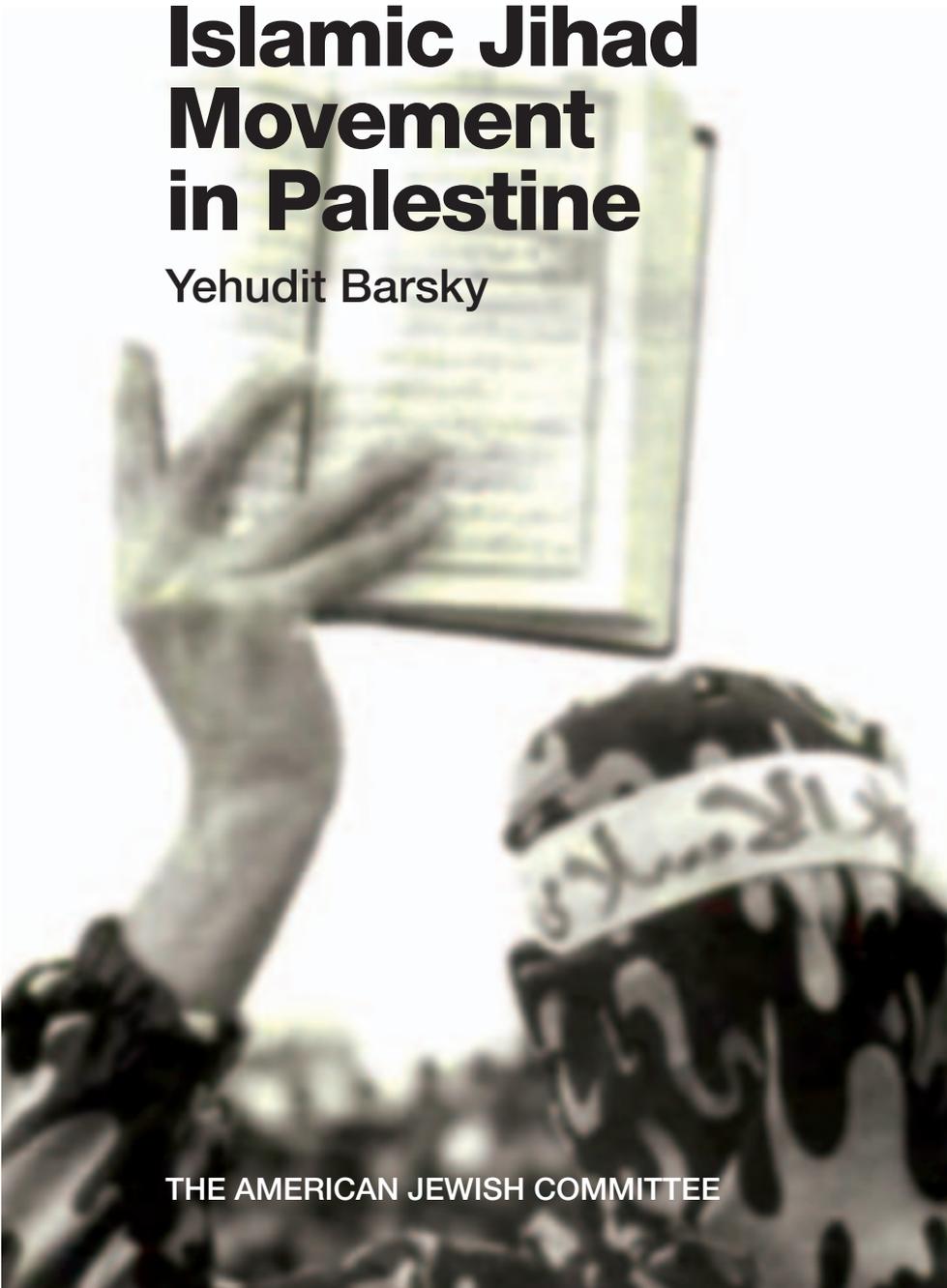


Terrorism Briefing

Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine

Yehudit Barsky

A person wearing a camouflage uniform and a headscarf with a white band featuring Arabic script is holding up a document. The document is slightly out of focus but appears to contain text. The background is a blurred crowd of people.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

The American Jewish Committee protects the rights and freedoms of Jews the world over; combats bigotry and anti-Semitism and promotes human rights for all; works for the security of Israel and deepened understanding between Americans and Israelis; advocates public policy positions rooted in American democratic values and the perspectives of the Jewish heritage; and enhances the creative vitality of the Jewish people. Founded in 1906, it is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States.

Terrorism Briefing

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Yehudit Barsky

Director, Division on Middle East and International Terrorism

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Foreword

In a world endangered by terrorism and suicide bombers, it is incumbent upon all of us to familiarize ourselves in depth with the various organizations that threaten our life and liberties. The American Jewish Committee's Division on Middle East and International Terrorism has been providing insightful intelligence about those destructive elements within the Islamic world and the broader international community for several years now.

Established in 1999, the DMEIT is the only department of its kind within the Jewish organizational world, focused entirely on gathering, interpreting, and disseminating "open source intelligence." Monitoring both Arabic and English-language newspapers, Web sites, and other sources, the director, Yehudit Barsky, digests and interprets the vast amount of information available to help formulate initiatives to respond to terrorism.

This portrait of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine is the second in a series of important terrorism briefings that she has provided, following an earlier report on Hamas. Educating the public about the nature and magnitude of the threat we face is incumbent if we are to prevail over the terrorist groups that threaten the United States, Israel, and the West.

David A. Harris
Executive Director
The American Jewish Committee
July 2002

The Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine

*“True peace means Israel does not exist.”*¹

Fat’hi Al-Shiqaqi, founder and secretary-general
of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine, 1995

*“America wants to run everything, because America rules the world. But unfortunately, nobody in the world can speak against America because they are afraid of America. But by God’s will hopefully America will collapse and will not last long. Hopefully soon, because it is an unjust rule in America and because America stands with the oppressor against the oppressed. They are the terrorists, we are not the terrorists. We’re not terrorists....”*²

‘Ali Safuri, Islamic Jihad leader in Jenin, March 27, 2002

*“It is necessary to strike terror and fear into the heart of every Zionist in Palestine so that the Zionists know that Palestine is not a safe home for any Jew in the world. This is the start of dismantling the Zionist scheme and destroying the entity. Therefore, action in the 1948 areas must continue and must be painful.”*³

Ramadan ‘Abdallah Shallah, current secretary-general
of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine, October 25, 2001

On June 5, 2002, the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (also known as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad) carried out a devastating suicide car bombing on the Wadi Ara road at the Megiddo junction in the north of Israel. At 7:20 A.M. a sui-

cide bomber drove a van packed with over 100 kilograms of explosives⁴ (approximately 220 pounds) alongside an Israel commuter bus and detonated himself, causing a massive fireball that burned 17 people alive and wounded 38 others.⁵ Later that day, the Al-Quds Brigades, the military wing of the Islamic Jihad contacted Hizballah's Al-Manar television in Lebanon to claim responsibility for the attack.⁶ Ramadan `Abdallah Shallah, the secretary-general of Islamic Jihad, also claimed responsibility for the bombing,⁷ asserting that it was carried out to commemorate the anniversary of the 1967 Six-Day War.⁸

Responding to the news of the bombing, Sheikh `Abdallah Al-Shami, the leader of the movement in the Gaza Strip, declared, "Our aim is to resist occupation and to respond to its crimes."⁹ He justified the bombing as "part of our resistance, a response to the crimes of the Israeli aggression," and was carried out "in the context of our people's resistance against this criminal occupation and its continuous crimes against our people in the town, cities, camps, the killing of the women and children, and the destruction of the homes and the arrests of thousands of our people."¹⁰

Twenty-four hours later, Islamic Jihad officially announced that the name of the suicide bomber was Ramzi Sabir Ahmad Samudi, who was from the town of Al-Yamun in Jenin and a resident of the city of Jenin. According to the Palestine Information Center, an official Hamas Web site, "great joy prevails in Jenin"¹¹ over the attack. In Lebanon, representatives of Islamic Jihad, Hizballah, Hamas, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command issued a statement supporting the suicide bombing, stating: "We support these operations like the one that took place Wednesday in the heart of Israel."¹²

This latest attack demonstrates a new effort by Islamic Jihad to gain prominence among Palestinian Islamic radical

organizations. While in recent years Hamas has gained prominence over Islamic Jihad, and the Palestinian Authority has produced its own brand of suicide bombers, the ideology and methodology of the Islamic Jihad was the original template upon which Hamas and now the Palestinian Authority's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades have been fashioned.



The Emblem of Islamic Jihad

The symbol of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine¹³ features a full map of Palestine in red to signify the movement's desire to violently uproot Israel in order to replace it with a radical Islamic Palestinian state. Above the map is a depiction of the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. As an expression of the movement's embrace of violent action, two fists emerge from behind the map and a pair of crossed rifles are placed over the depiction of the Al-Aqsa mosque. Between the rifles is the slogan "*Allahu Akbar*"—"Allah is the Greatest." Framing the symbol in the lower half of the circle is the name of the movement, the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine, *Harakat Al-Jihad Al-Islami fi Filistin*.

Origins of the Movement: Fatah and Islamic Jihad

*"Kill so many Jews that they will eventually abandon Palestine."*¹⁴

Ibrahim Sarbal, leader of Islamic Jihad Movement
in Palestine, Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades

Paralleling the rise of the Shi'i Islamic revolution in Iran during the late 1970s, militant Islamic radical movements emerged among Sunni ideologues who were followers of the

Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. One of the movements that was established was the Jihad organization, the group that claimed responsibility for the assassination of Egyptian president Anwar Al-Sadat in 1981. The ideologies and political movements of that era influenced Palestinians who were studying in Egypt, and in many cases they adopted those causes and reinterpreted them as their own.

Members of Yasir Arafat's Fatah organization were also attracted to the new ideological developments. Within the Fatah organization, two factions of Islamic Jihad were established in the mid-1980s. Sheikh Asad Bayud Al-Tamimi, who served as a liaison between the Fatah organization and Hizballah in Lebanon, headed Islamic Jihad—Jerusalem, or, *Al-Jihad Al-Islami-Bayt Al-Maqdis*.¹⁵ The Islamic Jihad Squads, or *Sarayat Al-Jihad Al-Islami*, were controlled by two aides to Fatah's Khalil Al-Wazir, Bassam Sultan and Ghazi Al-Husseini.¹⁶

Ibrahim Sarbal and Ahmad Muhanna, two other leaders in the Fatah movement, established their own factions of Islamic Jihad, named, respectively, Islamic Jihad-Al-Aqsa Brigades and Islamic Jihad-Ahmad Muhanna Faction. Sarbal had been a member of Al-Tamimi's Bayt Al-Maqdis faction, but broke away to form his own faction in 1990.¹⁷ Muhanna was a member of the PLO's Palestine Liberation Army who joined the Islamic Jihad Movement in the 1970s. After he was exiled from Israel in 1988, he initially worked with Fat'hi Al-Shiqaqi Abd Al-'Aziz Al-'Awda. He subsequently moved to Jordan, where he formed his own faction.¹⁸

With the advent of the Middle East peace process and Fatah's renunciation of terrorism in 1993, these organizations became defunct. The Palestinian Authority, however, has revived the concept of an Islamic militant faction within Fatah and reversed itself with the creation of its Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in 2001.

Ideology: The Immediacy of Jihad

*“Israel must perish from the face of the earth.”*¹⁹

Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini

The Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine, or *Harakat Al-Jihad Al-Islami fi Filistin*, was established in Gaza in 1980 by Dr. Ahmad Fat’hi Al-Shiqaqi and Sheikh Abd Al-`Aziz Al-`Awda, both of whom had been Palestinian activists in the Muslim Brotherhood movement at Zaqaziq University in Egypt in the 1970s.²⁰ It is the only faction of the movement that exists today.

The IJMP was the earliest of the radical Islamic movements to make its mark on the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. Inspired by the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, it is also an anomaly among similar Islamic militant movements in that its leadership bridges the divide between radical Sunnis and Shi’is in the Muslim world. Instead of taking its cues from the ideological path of the Muslim Brotherhood, a Sunni extremist movement, the Palestinian Sunni leadership of the Islamic Jihad reveres and emulates the Shi’i radical ideology of the late Ayatollah Khomeini. In this regard, it has placed itself outside the mainstream of Palestinian Islamic radical ideology. As a result of the movement’s pro-Khomeini ideological line, at the present time Islamic Jihad is estimated to have a relatively small base of support. The movement is estimated to have 200-300 members of the movement and between 2,000 and 3,000 supporters and sympathizers throughout the Palestinian-controlled areas.²¹

The IJMP leadership is composed of Sunni Palestinian ideologues who took inspiration for their movement’s call to violent action from the Islamist revolutionary theology of Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini. The IJMP’s leadership diverged

from the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood movement by focusing on a Palestinian Islamist political line rather than a pan-Islamist one. Reflecting this sentiment, the movement adopted as its slogan, “The Palestinian problem is the central issue of the Islamic movement.”²²

As the result of its early adherence and adoption of the ideology of Khomeini’s Islamic Revolution, the IJMP views itself as a revolutionary vanguard of “believers” who have taken upon themselves the responsibility of purifying the Islamic world by driving Western influence from its territory. Since Israel is considered the primary outpost for the dissemination of Western influence in the Middle East, Islamic Jihad’s primary goal is the destruction of Israel. Islamic Jihad expresses a Khomeini-oriented view toward the United States. It views the United States as the embodiment of evil in the world and perceives Israel to be its agent of influence in the Middle East. As an expression of this concept, the late Ayatollah Khomeini described the United States as “the Great Satan”²³ and Israel as “the little Satan.”²⁴

The central core of the IJMP’s terrorist activities is its military wing, the Al-Quds Brigades, which are responsible for carrying out the movement’s acts of jihad, or holy war. In the past, members of the Brigades have been recruited through the network of mosques in the Palestinian Authority-controlled areas. The recruits to the movement are referred to as *mujahideen*, or “holy warriors,” and are told that they are preparing to carry out an act of *istishadiya*, or “self-martyrdom,” not suicide. However, due to the increased Islamization of Palestinian society over the past eight years, an increasing number of young Palestinian men and, more recently, young women, have volunteered to carry out suicide attacks.²⁵ Zaydan Zaydan, a recently failed Islamic Jihad suicide bomber from the May 8, 2002, attack in Megiddo, explained that his motivation to carry out the attack was “the love of martyr-

dom.” He asserted: “I didn’t want revenge for anything. I just wanted to be a martyr.”²⁶

The initial stages of the movement’s jihad campaign began in the early 1980s, when the IJMP carried out a series of spectacular attacks on Israeli soldiers in Gaza that advertised its activist interpretation of Islamic radical theology among Palestinians. During the early 1990s, Islamic Jihad carried out drive-by shootings against Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza. From the mid-1990s through the present, the movement has sought to escalate its terror campaign by bringing its attacks from the West Bank and Gaza into the cities of Israel. It augmented the impact of its attacks, beginning on September 12, 1993, by staging its first suicide car bombing in Gaza, a tactic that the IJMP imported from Hizballah in Lebanon. On January 22, 1995, Islamic Jihad took its war into central Israel for the first time by carrying out a double suicide bombing at the Beit Lid junction. Since then, the movement has continued to initiate a variety of attacks, the majority of which have occurred within Israel. They include drive-by shootings, kidnappings, bombings, car bombings, and suicide bombing attacks.²⁷

Essentially, Islamic Jihad argues, deeds are more important than indoctrination. By raising the banner of jihad through acts of violence, others within Palestinian society would be inspired and mobilized to follow in the footsteps of the movement and, in this way, the destruction of evil as embodied by Israel would be achieved.

The popularity of the IJMP’s attacks among Palestinians challenged the philosophical stance of the Muslim Brotherhood, which had sought first to fully indoctrinate its followers and then to implement its holy war. Eight years after the establishment of the IJMP, the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood would respond by forming its own organization, known as the Islamic Resistance Movement of Palestine—*Harakat Al-*

Muqawama Al-Islamiya fi Filistin, known by its Arabic acronym, Hamas—that would carry out terrorist acts against Israelis, based on its own interpretation of Islamist ideology.

From its perspective, Islamic Jihad preaches that the execution of acts of violence against Israelis is its own form of indoctrination. The acts themselves will prepare Palestinian society and the Muslim world for a cataclysmic holy war, or jihad, between Islam, which is portrayed as the force of truth, *al-haq*, and the West and Israel, which are portrayed as the forces of apostasy, *al-batil*.²⁸ The war will herald the destruction of Israel and the establishment of a radical Islamic state in its stead, and ultimately, the victory of Islam in Palestine will lead to the fall of the West and the establishment of a new pan-Islamic empire that will mirror the seventh-century Muslim state of the Prophet Muhammad. The IJMP's activist approach rejected the long-term course of action preached by the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood that sought first to indoctrinate Palestinian society for the eventual purpose of initiating a holy war against Israel in order to pursue its destruction. The Islamic Jihad's focus on jihad took the reverse approach and translated the Brotherhood's long-term goals into being achievable in the here and now.

Funding and Logistical Support

*“First we had only knives, then we got guns, then bombs, now car bombs.”*²⁹

Sheikh `Abdallah Al-Shami, Islamic Jihad leader in Gaza

From its earliest days as a movement, the IJMP has closely linked itself with Iran. Iran's association with Islamic Jihad has ranged from providing ideological inspiration and moral support to logistical and financial assistance throughout the

movement's existence. In 1988, Al-Shiqaqi and Al-`Awda established the headquarters of the IJMP in Beirut, Lebanon, with the assistance of the Iranian embassy and leaders of Hizballah, the Shi'i terror movement of Lebanon.³⁰ The headquarters of the movement is presently located in Damascus, Syria,³¹ and the IJMP has continued to receive training and funding from Iran via Hizballah up to the present.³²

In April 1993, Fat'hi Al-Shiqaqi, Islamic Jihad's secretary-general, openly admitted in an interview with *Newsday* that the IJMP is funded by Iran, but did not provide an exact figure. "Iran gives us money and supports us," Al-Shiqaqi said. "Then we supply the money and arms to the occupied territories and support the families of our people. Just about all of it goes there because that's where most of our organization is."³³

In 1996, Stephen Flatow, the father of an American Jewish exchange student who was murdered in an Islamic Jihad suicide attack in Israel on April 9, 1995, filed a suit against Iran for its financial support of Islamic Jihad in the U.S. District Court of Washington, D.C.* In testimony that was presented during the trial, Philip Wilcox, the coordinator for counterterrorism of the U.S. State Department, stated that Iran "provided approximately \$2 million to Palestine Islamic Jihad annually in support of its terrorist activities."³⁴ On March 11, 1998, U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth ordered the Iranian government to pay punitive damages of \$247.5 million to the Flatow family. The judgment was denounced by the Iranian government, which stated, "The allegations raised in the hurried proceedings of the court are without a shred of substantiation, have no basis in fact, and fail any standard of evidence."³⁵

*The suit was filed under the provisions of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA), Public Law No. 104-132, which was enacted on April 24, 1996.

Iran has continued to fund Islamic Jihad and encourage its suicide attacks. In 1997, the IJMP was reported to have arrived at an agreement with Iran in which it began to receive “bonus” payments for each successful suicide bombing attack against Israel.³⁶

Most recently, on June 2, 2002, Iran held the “International Conference on Imam Khomeini and Support for Palestine.”³⁷ Participants in the conference included representatives of the Iranian government, such as the speaker of the Iranian Majlis, or parliament, Mehdi Karrubi,³⁸ and the Supreme Leader Ayatollah ‘Ali Khamene’i, who called upon Muslims throughout the world to “mobilize all material and spiritual resources to boost the morale of the Palestinian people in their holy jihad against the occupiers.”³⁹ The participants also called for a boycott of American goods.⁴⁰

Delegates at the conference included representatives of the Islamic Jihad, led by its secretary-general, Ramadan ‘Abdallah Shallah, who was reported by official Iranian television to have stated “that America had declared war on Islam and the freedom-loving people of the world.” Shallah continued, “Contrary to popular perceptions, America is trying to annihilate the ideal, as well as the land, of Palestine.” He stressed that “martyrdom operations would continue in Palestine,” adding, “We have the right to sacrifice our own lives and America does not have the right [to] oppose this.”⁴¹

Referring to President Bush’s January 2002 State of the Union address that singled out Iran as a member of an “axis of evil” for its support for terrorism, Shallah declared, “If America is the one to divide the world into the ‘camp of the good’ and the ‘camp of the evil,’ and if it puts the Palestinian people and all of its jihad fighters on the evil side, claiming that the martyrs are evil, then we say: ‘Allah make us all evil, [make us

all] anger America and blow up in the heart of this cursed Zionist entity.”⁴²

Included among the attendees at the conference were the secretary-general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, General Command, Ahmad Jibril; Na'im Qasim, the deputy secretary-general of the Hizballah movement of Lebanon; and Hilarion Capucci, who was described as the “Archbishop of Quds–Jerusalem-in exile.”⁴³

Conference participants called for the continuation of the “armed struggle” against Israel and the rejection of peace talks. The Iranian organizer of the conference, `Ali Akbar Mohtashemi-Pur, declared, “Israel is a cancerous tumor in the heart of the Muslim world which should be removed,”⁴⁴ and lauded the attacks carried out by Palestinian suicide bombers. The speaker of the Iranian Majlis, Mehdi Karrubi, called upon Muslim nations throughout the world to engage in an oil embargo against allies of Israel.⁴⁵

During his visit to Tehran, the Islamic Jihad's secretary-general was told by Iran's supreme leader, `Ali Akbar Khamene`i, that Iran would increase its funding of his movement by 70 percent.⁴⁶ According to the London-based Saudi newspaper *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, “A source close to the [Iranian] Revolutionary Guards revealed that Shallah met twice during this visit with the regime's guide `Ali Khamene`i and received promises that his organization's budget would be separated from that of Hizballah and increased by 70 percent to cover the expenses of mobilizing Palestinian youths for suicidal operations.” *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* further reported that Khamene`i “ordered the immediate transfer of a very large sum of money to Jihad's financial office. The promised aid to some Palestinian figures who recently visited Tehran will be transferred during the coming few weeks.”⁴⁷

U.S. Activities

“Now Allah is bringing the Jews back to Palestine in large groups from all over the world to their big graveyard, where the promise will be realized upon them.”⁴⁸

Sheikh Abd Al- Aziz Al- Awda, spiritual leader of the IJMP, speaking at a conference in Chicago, 1990

In January 1995, the United States initiated an effort to curb fund-raising for terrorist organizations on American soil. As a part of that effort, assets that were designated by the U.S. Treasury as those belonging to foreign terrorist organizations and their leaders were frozen. Included in that effort were the assets of Islamic Jihad and its leaders worldwide.⁴⁹ As of September 10, 2001, the United States had frozen \$17,000 of assets belonging to the IJMP.⁵⁰

Fat’hi Al-Shiqaqi, the movement’s leader at that time, denied that the IJMP had any assets in the United States: “To begin with, we emphasize that we have no assets in any American or foreign bank. If the American President [Clinton] finds any assets, we will make a gift of them to him so that he can solve his economic problems and his personal court problems.” Al-Shiqaqi continued, “They can be sure that we are fighting from below the poverty and starvation line. If we had the alleged assets, we would have dealt with Israel differently.”⁵¹

Al-Shiqaqi went on to denounce the U.S. action against his organization. “I consider this decision tantamount to a war on Islam, a new Crusade against the Arab and Islamic nation.” He continued, “America gives Israel billions at the expense of the American taxpayer and is now the biggest theater for the collection of donations for the Jewish organizations and for the building of settlements in the [West] Bank and Gaza [Strip]. This latest position by President [Bill] Clinton indi-

cates that America itself is trying to impose its terms and hegemony—and not a just peace—on the region.” Al-Shiqaqi concluded, “Finally, I would advise the American president to freeze the accounts of the Mafia and drug dealers who are rotting American society and leading it to the grave.”⁵²

On October 26, 1995, Fat’hi Al-Shiqaqi was shot to death while traveling on the island of Malta.⁵³ Three days later, on October 29, 1995, the IJMP officially announced that Ramadan `Abdallah Shallah, whom it identified as being from Damascus, Syria, was designated as the movement’s new secretary-general. Shallah made his first appearance as the new leader of the movement on November 1, 1995, as he led Al-Shiqaqi’s funeral procession through the streets of Damascus to the Yarmuk refugee camp.⁵⁴ Blaming Israel for Al-Shiqaqi’s death, Shallah threatened, “You will pay a high price.” The participants in Al-Shiqaqi’s funeral entourage chanted, “Death, death, to Israel!”⁵⁵

Until May 1995,⁵⁶ Shallah, who was then known as Ramadan `Abdallah,⁵⁷ had served as an adjunct professor of Middle East studies at the University of South Florida in Tampa.⁵⁸ An increased focus on Islamic Jihad activities in the United States by law enforcement agencies occurred as the result of Shallah’s emergence as the new leader of the movement.

Prior to his arrival in the United States, Shallah had spent five years at Durham University in northern England, where he reportedly coordinated the activities of the Islamic Jihad movement by sending orders to cells of the organization in Gaza and the West Bank and receiving field reports from the cells about the activities of the organization.⁵⁹ One of the cells was headed by his brother, `Umar Shallah, who was convicted of terrorist crimes and sentenced to twenty-five years in prison by a Palestinian Authority court in Gaza in 1995 for inciting teenagers to become suicide bombers.⁶⁰ At his brother

Ramadan's direction, `Umar Shallah was entrusted with distributing Islamic Jihad leaflets which "call[ed] upon Palestinians to join Islamic Jihad and take up arms against Israelis."⁶¹ According to `Umar, the Islamic Jihad leaflets were written by his brother Ramadan in London and were faxed to Gaza. Upon their arrival in Gaza, they were printed and distributed by local Islamic Jihad activists.⁶²

From 1990 to 1995, Shallah lived in the United States, where he allegedly continued activities similar to those that he had engaged in while he was in the United Kingdom. Operating from an organization officially named the Islamic Concern Project, or ICP, which was also known as the Islamic Committee for Palestine,⁶³ the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine distributed its official literature via a post office box in Tampa, Florida. The literature included the two official organs of the IJMP, *Al-Mujahid* and *Al-Islam wa al-Filistin*, both of which are used to indoctrinate movement followers by glorifying the suicide bombers of Islamic Jihad as *shuhada* or "martyrs." The publications are currently distributed through the IJMP's official website.⁶⁴

Shallah also headed a think tank called the World Islam and Studies Enterprise, or WISE,⁶⁵ affiliated with the University of South Florida, that sponsored the visits of Islamist radicals and terrorist leaders to the United States.⁶⁶ The most prominent figure sponsored by WISE was Sheikh `Umar Abd Al-Rahman, who served as the "spiritual leader" of the 1993 World Trade Center bombers and was convicted in 1995 of being involved in a plot to blow up New York area landmarks.⁶⁷ He spoke at the ICP's 1991 conference.⁶⁸ WISE also sponsored the 1991 visit of Sheikh Abd Al-`Aziz Al-`Awda,⁶⁹ the spiritual leader of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine to the United States. Al-`Awda was named as an unindicted coconspirator in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing,⁷⁰

and is classified by the United States as a “specially designated terrorist.”⁷¹

From 1988-92, the Islamic Committee for Palestine organized conferences and rallies in the United States that featured the leading lights of Islamic extremist movements throughout the world. One example of such a conference took place in Chicago from December 22-25, 1989. Its theme was “Palestine, Intifada, and Horizons of Islamic Renaissance.” The speakers included Abd Al-`Aziz Al-`Awda, “spiritual leader” of the Islamic Jihad; Sheikh Rashid Ghanushi, leader of Al-Nahda, the Islamic Revival Movement of Tunisia; Muhammad `Umar of Hizb Al-Tahrir, the Islamic Liberation Party; Adel Hussein, an Egyptian Islamist writer; and Fahmi Huwaidi, an Egyptian Islamist journalist.⁷²

Muslim American speakers at the conference included Taha Jabir Al-`Alwani, who was then president of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT); Mahmud Rashdan, the former secretary-general of the Muslim Students' Association in the United States and Canada, and head of the educational department of the IIIT; Ahmad Zaki Hammad, president of the Islamic Society of North America; Maher Hathout, president of the Islamic Center of Southern California; and Imam Warith Deen Muhammad of the Muslim American Society.⁷³

A similar conference occurred in Chicago three weeks before the 1991 Gulf War on December 28-31, 1990. At that time, the Islamic Committee for Palestine organized its third convention of Islamic extremists from around the world. The theme of the conference was “Islam: The Road to Victory.”⁷⁴

The featured speakers included internationally prominent figures from Islamist radical movements. Among the dignitaries were Sheikh Abd Al-`Aziz Al-`Awda, “spiritual leader” of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine; Hassan Al-Tura-

bi, leader of the National Islamic Front of Sudan; Sheikh Rashid Ghanushi, leader of Al-Nahda, the Islamic Revival Movement of Tunisia; Layth Shbilat, a militant member of the Muslim Brotherhood and then a member of the Jordanian Parliament; the late Sheikh Sa'id Sha'aban, of Harakat Al-Tawheed, the Islamic Unity Movement of Lebanon.⁷⁵ Also included among the speakers was Khalil Al-Shiqaqi,* a founder of WISE⁷⁶ and the younger brother of the IJMP's founder, from Al-Najah University in Nablus.⁷⁷

Two representatives from the African-American Muslim community also participated in the conference. They were Imam Warith Deen Muhammad, leader of the Muslim American Society, and Imam Jamil al-Amin of Atlanta (the former H. "Rap" Brown).⁷⁸

The tone for the conference was set by the participants' unanimous rejection of a territorial compromise with Israel by declaring their goal to be the "liberation of Palestine." They also asserted that Islamic theological texts supported their position: "One suggestion that was not disputed among participants was the source of the solution to the present plight of Muslims all over the world. This was agreed to be reliance on the solution given by the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* [Islamic traditions]. Since land cannot be compromised in *Al-Islam* [the Muslim religion], it means that the intifada must be rejuvenated and encouraged. This is the only way the liberation of Palestine could be achieved."⁷⁹

In his remarks to the conference participants, Islamic Jihad "spiritual leader" Abd Al-'Aziz Al-'Awda lauded the intifada as "the turning point in the struggle between good and evil."⁸⁰ According to the *Palestine Monitor*, a pro-Hamas

* Despite his familial relationship with the founder of Islamic Jihad, Khalil Al-Shiqaqi has not been known to share his brother's extremist views. At the same time, however, Khalil Al-Shiqaqi was also a founder of the World Islam and Studies Enterprise.

publication, the presenters at the conference also discussed the “rise of Europe and the deliberate effort designed to split the Muslims all over the world through colonization and Westernization.”⁸¹

On December 11, 1991, Shallah, then the administrative director for WISE, wrote a letter to the director of the University of South Florida’s International Affairs Center in which he indicated that the International Institute of Islamic Thought, or IIIT, a think tank based in Herndon, Virginia, was the main financial backer of WISE. He wrote: “Our largest contributor is the Washington-based International Institute for Islamic Thought. A brochure describing IIIT and its activities is enclosed.”⁸²

Subsequent to the announcement of Shallah’s rise to the leadership of IJMP, federal agents carried out a search of WISE’s offices on November 20, 1995. The affidavit that was used to procure the search warrants described WISE and ICP as front organizations for Islamic Jihad.⁸³ In April 1998, an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) investigator’s affidavit characterized WISE as a “front organization used to raise money and provide support for terrorism against Israel.”⁸⁴

Other representatives of the founding leadership of Islamic Jihad also found a safe haven in the United States during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. They include Sami Al-`Arian,⁸⁵ currently a professor of engineering at the University of South Florida,⁸⁶ who is presently under investigation for his ties to Islamic Jihad.⁸⁷ The investigation is focused on determining whether funds that were raised by Al-`Arian in the United States were used to carry out Islamic Jihad terrorist attacks in Israel, especially the April 9, 1995, IJMP suicide bombing in which an American college student, Alisa Flatow, was murdered.⁸⁸

In addition to being one of the founders of the move-

ments, Al-`Arian is reported to be the organizer and a member of Islamic Jihad's *Majlis Al-Shura*, or Consultative Council, the organization's governing body.⁸⁹ Al-`Arian also incorporated the Islamic Concern Project, the umbrella organization for the Islamic Committee for Palestine in 1988, as well as the World Islam and Studies Enterprise, which was incorporated in 1991.⁹⁰ On November 20, 1995, Al-`Arian's home and office at the University of South Florida were searched by Federal agents who were investigating WISE and the ICP as front organizations for Islamic Jihad.⁹¹ After September 11, Al-Arian was suspended from his teaching position at USF.⁹²

At one of the Islamic Committee for Palestine rallies from the early 1990s that was recorded on videotape, Al-`Arian declared, "Death to Israel," and referred to the "sons of Israel," i.e., Jews, as "monkeys and pigs."⁹³ According to an FBI affidavit, in another videotape Al-`Arian was introduced at another conference by Fawaz Al-Damra, the imam of the Islamic Center of Cleveland, as the head of the International Committee for Palestine, which he described as an "active arm of the Islamic Jihad Movement of Palestine." According to the transcript, Al-Damra told a crowd of supporters as he introduced Al-`Arian, "We like to call it the Islamic Committee for Palestine here for security reasons."⁹⁴

At still another conference Al-`Arian called for God to have mercy on the souls of Islamic Jihad operatives, whom he referred to as "the martyrs." At another event, Al-`Arian stood by as Al-Damra engaged in a fund-raising effort on behalf of Islamic Jihad. Al-Damra appealed to the audience invoking the name of an Islamic Jihad terrorist who had murdered four Israelis: "Donate to the Islamic Jihad. Nidal Zalum from the Islamic Jihad held a dagger and stabbed four of the Jews in the courtyard of Al-Haram Al-Qudsi."⁹⁵ According to the transcript, Damra later added, "One of them would leave his house with a knife to stab the Jews—twelve Jews—after the

events of the Gulf War. Brothers, the intifada calls you. Five hundred dollars! Who would add to five hundred dollars?"⁹⁶

On February 1, 1995, Al-`Arian wrote a letter to an individual as a representative of the ICP requesting funds on behalf of the families of two Islamic Jihad suicide bombers. The two had carried out a double suicide bombing at Beit Lid in central Israel on January 22, 1995.

In the letter, Al-`Arian lauded the attack, saying, "The latest operation carried out by the two *mujahideen* [holy warriors], who were martyred for the sake of God, is the best evidence of what the believing few can do in the face of Arab and Islamic collapse before the Zionist enemy and of the still-burning firebrand of faith, steadfastness, and challenge." He went on to make an appeal for funds to assist "the jihad effort in Palestine," and specifically mentioned the Islamic Jihad Movement and Hamas as representing that effort. The letter described the families of the *mujahideen* as having left behind large families in need of financial assistance, and went on to describe Islamic Jihad as being "in a state of great misfortune and has nothing." Al-`Arian further explained that as a consequence of the situation, the IJMP "cannot fulfill its responsibilities toward the martyrs and prisoners." He concluded, "I call upon you to try to extend true support to the jihad effort in Palestine so that operations such as these can continue."⁹⁷

Another of the founding leaders of the movement, Bashir Al-Nafi`,⁹⁸ worked for WISE⁹⁹ and was a researcher at the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Virginia. In 1996, Al-Nafi` was named in an INS investigator's affidavit as being linked to Islamic Jihad. The affidavit stated that an unidentified "confidential informant" had identified Al-Nafi` as a "significant leading member" of the Islamic Jihad and quoted a Jordanian newspaper as listing him among those considered to succeed the founding leader of the movement, Fat'hi Al-Shiqaqi.¹⁰⁰ Al-Nafi` was denied political asylum and

deported from the United States to the United Kingdom for visa violations in 1996, where he resides today.¹⁰¹

Another individual reportedly linked to Islamic Jihad activities in the United States is Mazen Al-Najjār. Al-Najjār was a founding member of the ICP and the executive director of WISE after the departure of Ramadan `Abdallah Shallah. Agents of the Immigration and Naturalization Service in sworn testimony have described al-Najjār as “a mid-level operative of a terrorist front group.”¹⁰² According to an Israeli intelligence official, Al-Najjār allegedly served as a conduit for communications between IJMP terrorists in the West Bank and Gaza and the organization’s headquarters in Damascus, Syria. In 1994, a year before WISE and the ICP were closed, Islamic Jihad terrorists captured by Israel were carrying slips of paper with Al-Najjār’s telephone number written on them. They were instructed to call Al-Najjār’s telephone number to report on Islamic Jihad attacks.¹⁰³ Al-Najjār and other leaders of Islamic Jihad remain the focus of an ongoing federal investigation into the activities of Islamic Jihad and other terrorist organizations in the United States.

Following the suicide attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, additional scrutiny has been applied to terror activities that reportedly took place in the United States during the past decade. On March 21, 2002, the FBI raided sixteen offices and homes¹⁰⁴ in Northern Virginia as part of Operation Green Quest, a federal counterterrorism investigation geared toward cutting off funds to terrorist organizations. The search warrant names: “PIJ (Palestinian Islamic Jihad), Hamas, Al-Qa’ida, WISE, ICP, Sami Al-`Arian, Basheer Nafi, Mazen Al-Najar [sic], Ramallah Shallah [sic] [i.e., Ramadan `Abdallah Shallah], Khalil Skikaki [sic] [i.e., Al-Shiqaqi], Sheikh Odeh [Al-`Awda], Sheikh Rahman [i.e., `Umar Abd Al-Rahman], Usama Bin Ladin, and any other individual or entity designated as a terrorist by the Pres-

ident of the United States, the United States Department of Treasury, or the Secretary of State.”¹⁰⁵ Included among the organizations is the International Institute for Islamic Thought (IIIT) in Herndon, Virginia, one of a number of charitable organizations and businesses that were established in Virginia by the Al-Rajhi banking family of Saudi Arabia.¹⁰⁶ Several of the organizations, including the IIIT, are also linked to a financier named M. Yaqub Mirza.¹⁰⁷

Through its activities in Western countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, the Islamic Jihad demonstrated its versatility to adapt and compartmentalize itself by operating the second tier of its leadership outside of its declared theater of operations in the West Bank and Gaza. By operating in Western countries, the organization was able to protect its leadership and establish a communications system that took advantage of the freedoms that Western nations guarantee to their citizens. From the United States and the United Kingdom, the leadership of the organization was able to direct the activities of the IJMP from afar by communicating via telephone, fax machine, and computers, and allegedly was able to raise funds for the terrorist activities of the organization as well.

Conclusion

The historical significance of the Islamic Jihad was its establishment of the first Palestinian Islamist militant movement in Gaza. The movement was the first to bring pro-Khomeini Islamist militancy to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but the repercussions of its establishment and existence over the past twenty-two years have caused a ripple effect that goes far beyond the actual numbers and political power of Islamic Jihad itself.

The first effect of its presence caused the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood to create its own Islamist militant organization, Hamas, in 1989. The metamorphosis of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood into Hamas proved to be a watershed event that foreshadowed the further Islamization of Palestinian society. The subsequent radicalization of the Muslim Brotherhood's network of mosques and social welfare institutions throughout Gaza and the West Bank provided Hamas with an unprecedented opportunity to indoctrinate its followers from kindergarten age through adulthood. As a result, in recent opinion polls Hamas enjoys a level of political support nearly equal to that of Yasir Arafat's Fatah organization.¹⁰⁸

The Islamist indoctrination activities of Hamas, and, more recently, of the Palestinian Authority, have caused a far-reaching Islamization of Palestinian society, where Islamist terminology has now become part of mainstream Palestinian discourse. Responding to the Islamist challenge posed by Hamas, in 2001 Yasir Arafat's Palestinian Authority revisited its pre-peace process history and created its own militant organization patterned after its two Islamist predecessors, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. The Al-Aqsa Brigades, however, have added a new dimension to the competition between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority by introducing the use of female suicide bombers.

Islamic Jihad has also made a continuing impact on financial assistance for the Palestinian cause. Among Palestinians, Islamic Jihad is responsible for introducing the phenomenon of Iranian financial and military support for the Palestinian cause. Islamic Jihad, then Hamas, and now the Palestinian Authority are all recipients of Iran's financial support for their terrorist activities. While the phenomenon of Iranian military support for the Palestinian Authority via arms shipments would have been anathema several years ago, today

the Palestinian Authority has been co-opted to the Iranian political camp. In summation, in spite of the fact that the Islamic Jihad's Khomeinist ideology has remained a peripheral factor in Palestinian politics, its introduction of Iranian influence has and will continue to have a lasting effect on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and on Palestinian society.

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