

Behind the Human Bombs:

Understanding Palestinian Suicide Terrorism

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Introduction

When most people think of suicide bombers, they think of evil and insanity. The vast majority of the world is horrified by the concept of terrorism or a suicide bomber, including most Muslims. Despite popular misperceptions in the U.S., Gallup asserts emphatically from data culled from “more than 90% of the global Muslim population...that despite widespread anti-American sentiment, only a small minority saw the 9/11 attacks as morally justified,”¹ and “[n]ot only are those who sympathize with terrorist acts a relatively small minority, but the most frequently cited aspect of the Muslim world that Muslims themselves say they admire least is ‘narrow-minded fanaticism and violent extremism.’”² Recent polling data shows consistent majorities of the Muslims around the world that increasingly reject terrorism and suicide bombing, yet there is varying support in its many different parts.³ As the Pew Global Attitudes Project notes, “[a]mong the Muslim populations surveyed, support for suicide terrorism is limited, but with one key exception: the Palestinian territories, where a solid majority endorses such attacks.”⁴

The purpose of this paper is to explain why this is the case. Something must be unique about the Palestinian experience if Palestinians stand apart from their ethnic and religious brethren in their views on such a distinct issue. A series of scholars’ views on this subject will be examined, and from the beginning the author of this paper determined that examining the phenomenon of suicide bombing would best be approached by looking the three levels on which these Palestinian attacks occur: individual, organizational, and societal. This approach is also the one taken by Hafez,⁵ and is similar to Pape’s.⁶ It is individuals who carry these attacks out, but, as will be shown these are rarely spontaneous and are almost always carried out under the direction of one of several Palestinian formal organizations, and Palestinian society is fairly unique in its support, even glorification, of those suicide attackers they call “martyrs” and of the organizations that encourage such attacks. At the end, this paper’s author will present his own analysis of the views presented and the overall situation with regard to suicide bombing carried out by Palestinians.

Suicide Bombing and the Individual Palestinian

Yasser Arafat, the leader of the Palestinians for so many decades until his death in 2004, defiantly asserted at the 1974 UN General Assembly that

The difference between the revolutionary and the terrorist lies in the reason for which each fights. For whoever stands by a just cause and fights for the freedom and liberation of his land from the invaders, the settlers and the colonialists cannot possibly be called terrorist, otherwise the American people in their struggle for liberation from the British colonialists would have been terrorists; the European resistance against the Nazis would be terrorism, the struggle of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples would also be terrorism, and many of you who are in this Assembly hall were considered terrorists.⁷

Though this speech was given long before the first Palestinian suicide bomber detonated himself, the romantic sentiment surrounding those labeled as freedom fighters has hardly receded in the minds of Palestinians, and the honoring of those dying in such efforts as martyrs is hardly unique to Palestinians. From Arlington National Cemetery to Yasakuni-jinja in Tokyo, from *La Chanson de Roland* to the film “Braveheart,” cultures all around the world celebrate those who have died fighting on behalf of their people, and this is hardly new, for it was the Roman poet Horace who, 2,000 years ago, wrote “*dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*” (sweet and fitting it is to die for one’s country). Dabbagh takes care to point out both Islam and the Palestinians view normal suicide (*al-intihar*) as a major sin and “with horror and even repulsion,” while martyrdom (*ash-shehadeh*) in Islam and in Palestinian society, when someone “kill[s] himself not out of despair, but for the sake of others, to protect his community or particularly his religion in a holy war or jihad...[is] by all accounts an exalted act with special rewards in paradise.”⁸ This view is confirmed in conversations Pulitzer-Prize winner Joseph Lelyveld had with Gazans, and he further observed that “[t]he death of a martyr is routinely announced in the Palestinian press not as an obituary but as a wedding” of that martyr to one of the virgins he will encounter in heaven and is regarded as a joyous occasion.⁹ He also acknowledges how these bombers are viewed as selfless heroes, that by “[g]oing ‘all the way,’ they proved themselves to be selfless and brave. ‘His life is not cheap because he’s a Muslim,’” [Lelyveld quotes one student]... ‘He offers the most precious thing he has.’”¹⁰ Pape notes, too, that they are “honored.”¹¹ Where in many countries pop, sports, and movie stars’ posters will be omnipresent, for Dabbagh it was “[t]he image of the martyr (*shaheed*) [that] was everywhere in the West

Bank and Gaza: on street walls, shop doors, and hospital walls, and in people's living rooms and family albums,"¹² with Hafez and Pape corroborating their ubiquitous physical and cultural presence as well.¹³ For Gill, the act of suicide bombing today "places...[those who carry it out] on a pedestal with the martyrs and heroes of the past."¹⁴ Where Putnam describes traditional civil society organizations as creators of "social capital,"¹⁵ here Dabbagh notes that the "social respect and credibility" that family or others tied to a martyr gain through the act of the martyr become a form of "social capital," that though the martyr is dead, his deed lives on and elevates the status of those in his former family, social, and organizational circles.¹⁶ Hafez notes the appeal for Palestinians to "take the leap toward a 'heroic' end:"

Suicide bombers are not significantly different from other rebels or soldiers around the world who are willing to engage in high risk activism out of a sense of duty and obligation to their families, comrades, communities, and God. The leap from high-risk activism to self-sacrificing violence is not a gigantic one. Militant groups frame suicide attacks as unparalleled acts of heroism, as a means to religious and national salvation, and as opportunities for empowerment and vengeance, and in doing so they foster the myth of the "heroic martyr," which inspires future volunteers for suicide attacks.¹⁷

Azam expands, in particular, on the idea that the current suicide bomber performs his act with an eye to the future, "that suicide bombing can be viewed as a form of intergenerational investment."¹⁸ He discusses the economics of how a generation's current consumption is balanced "against the consumption of its descendants to morrow [sic]," that "reducing current consumption to zero in order to have the maximum potential impact by committing a suicide bombing can be viewed as an extreme form of saving, whose benefit will entirely accrue to the next generation."¹⁹ He mentions that Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq increased its payment to Palestinian suicide bombers' families from \$10,000 USD to \$25,000 USD in March of 2002, and notes that "coincidentally or not," the number of attacks increased significantly over the next few months.²⁰ Azam further describes the attackers' mentality by suggesting "[t]he cause of terrorist attack is that the probability of the next generation benefiting from this public good is positively affected by the amount of bombing performed to day [sic]...This allows for the possibility that the terrorist might rationally choose to engage in suicide bombing."²¹ Dabbagh also points

out that the often powerless Palestinians would use a martyrdom operation as a way to “speak out” and empower themselves.²²

A personal, altruistic, or vengeful rationality in choosing to become a suicide bomber is a theme that many scholars cited in this paper discuss. Lelyveld notes, too, the significant status and financial benefits accrued by families of the bombers, but also that the Palestinians he talked to viewed the bombings as both a “justified retaliation for the killing of Muslim civilians or for the theft of their land” and a chance to advance the cause of Palestinian statehood. Describing his conversation with a group of Gazan university students, he remarks that “[t]rue martyrs, all agreed, were not people with psychological problems. They were not desperate people.”²³ Telhami writes that “[t]hose who have tried to explain suicide terror by religious doctrines have been proved wrong. Increasingly, secular Palestinians are adopting this method because they think it is effective in making occupation unbearable to Israel,” and Hafez and Pape dismiss religion as the primary focus for motivation as well.

Though Hafez acknowledges “religious redemption” can “create psychological and cultural inducements” to carry out a suicide bombing, he says that “we must go beyond simple notions of ‘brainwashing’ or religious indoctrination” and understand why individual Palestinians view these bombings as a “legitimate and necessary means to achieving liberation.”²⁴ For Hafez, the “religious redemption” is rooted in five layers: 1.) jihad is articulated as an individual duty; 2.) quotations about jihad and martyrdom from historical and traditional Islamic texts are extensively employed; 3.) there is ample usage of the narrative of the Prophet Muhammad’s life in terms of the persecution, opposition, and enemies he overcame; 4.) the use of any reference to suicide is avoided in favor of martyrdom; and 5.) there is heavy use of “ritual and ceremony” to “amplify the value” of these operations and engender strong emotions and senses of honor regarding them.²⁵ Yet it is important to note that jihad in the case of Palestinians, though a religious duty, is specifically a political one and concerns national liberation of their homeland, thus a major component of the religious aspect is not just for religion’s sake, but for a political and real-world movement about freedom and self-determination. The bombers’ own last wills espouse three common themes for Hafez: 1.) the necessity of these operations to perform one’s Islamic

duties, that if they “do not defend” their religion, people, and land, and others shy away from this task, “liberation” cannot be achieved; 2.) that these acts are redemptive in nature, not just for the bombers, but for “society” for “its failure to act righteously” and achieve independence, and also to redeem others by inspiring them to “follow in their example;” 3.) and a theme “of reward in the afterlife.”²⁶ Just as strong as religious inspirations are nationalist ones, then, and on one level, there is a desire to spur fellow Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims, and Arab and Muslim governments to provide material and political support to the Palestinian efforts to achieve independence and form a state, so that through his/her act the bomber hopes “future generations” and “his[her] nation” “may live.”²⁷ On another level, there is the inspiration of being able to fight back against extremely repressive and harmful Israeli tactics and policies, thus the individual sufferings, injustices, and deaths suffered by friends and loved ones as a result of Israel’s policies in the West Bank, Gaza, and the region over a period of many years create countless cases of people with understandable desires for revenge.²⁸ Religion and nationalism unite to motivate, and religious organizations and secular ones use both and sometimes cooperate with, complement, or supplement each other to achieve similar goals.²⁹

Pape succinctly mirrors much of Hafez’s thought, as well as some of Dabbagh’s, writing that “numerous suicide attackers are integrated into society, espouse collective goals for their missions in highly public ceremonies, and raise their social status and their families’ by executing the act.”³⁰ In his view, along with Hafez’s, “there is little connection between suicide terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism,” and though often carried out by groups that use religion as a partial frame or motivation, they are almost all parts of “organized campaigns” “directed toward a strategic objective” and “are seen as pursuing legitimate nationalist goals, especially liberation.”³¹ He notes that “[m]any suicide terrorists are acting out of altruistic motives, not the egoistic motives that are typical of almost all other suicides...[and] are acting at least partly to serve their community’s interest in fighting the national enemy.” Summing up earlier arguments of others, he describes such acts as more of a choice, “like [that of] a soldier who accepts a ‘suicide mission’ in an ordinary war” rather than a result of “brainwashing,” and also notes that they are more likely to carry out an attack because they generally operate in societies

that support such acts, as is certainly the case in Gaza and the West Bank, thus reinforcing the observation that Palestinian suicide bombers are not isolated but are generally connected to their society.³²

Bond comes to the same conclusions, remarking that “[t]hey are no less rational or sane, no worse educated, no poorer and no more religious than anyone else... What this amounts to is in many ways more alarming than the ubiquitous misperception of the suicide bomber as fanatical. It means that, in the right circumstances, anyone could be one.”³³ In fact, he cites a study which shows that Hamas and Islamic Jihad suicide bombers operating in Israel and the Palestinian territories are wealthier and more educated than the average Palestinian, and another study he mentions concludes that only rarely do these bombers exhibit characteristics similar to those prone to commit suicide. Sprinzak cites this same study as demonstrating “that there is no single psychological or demographic profile of suicide terrorists... [the] findings suggest that intense struggles produce several types of people with the potential willingness to sacrifice themselves for a cause.”³⁴ For Sprinzak, “in this light, suicide terrorism loses its demonic uniqueness. It is merely one type of martyrdom venerated by certain cultures or religious traditions but rejected by others who favor different modes of supreme sacrifice.”³⁵ Hronick, too, echoes these findings in a U.S. Department of Justice report on a conference on suicide terrorism and states that such terrorists “may possess weaker personalities, but they are almost exclusively sane and even logical.”³⁶ For Krueger and Malečkova, it is not education or poverty that are root causes so much as specific political grievances and “long-standing feelings of indignity and frustration,” i.e., it is not that Israel does not give them enough economic or education opportunities, per se, it is that they do not want Israel to control their land or be controlled politically by Israel, nor do they want the feelings that come along with decades of occupation.³⁷

Suicide Bombing as an Organizational Tactic

For Bond, “[t]he key, many researchers agree, lies with the organisations that recruit” these terrorists.³⁸ Two religious nationalist organizations, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and two secular nationalist organizations, al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP),

have conducted suicide bombing operations in Israel and the Palestinian territories. These acts are not some fanatical, blind campaign of religious based violence; rather, though jihad is a religious duty, Hamas, the organization which pioneered suicide bombings among the Palestinians, “was aware of the limits of its power on both the intra-Palestinian and regional levels and therefore calculated its strategy on the basis of cost-benefit considerations. *Jihad*...was subordinated to political calculations. A policy of controlled violence became a key component in Hamas’s political strategy and daily conduct.”³⁹ Spriznak quotes a leader of Islamic Jihad as saying that “[o]ur enemy possesses the most sophisticated weapons in the world and its army is trained to a very high standard....We have nothing with which to repel killing and thuggery against us except the weapon of martyrdom. It is easy and costs us only our lives...human bombs cannot be defeated, not even by nuclear bombs.”⁴⁰ Saarnivaara also mentions the “unequal” balance of power between Israel and the Palestinians as a justification used by Hamas for deploying suicide bombers.⁴¹

In Pape’s chapter entitled “A Strategy for Weak Actors,” he asserts that the “main purpose of suicide terrorism is to compel a target government to change policy, and most especially to cause democratic states to withdraw forces from land the terrorists perceive as their national homeland” in a “strategic effort” that “attempts to inflict enough pain” on the target nation that either its government will reassess the cost of continuing the disputed policies, in this case occupation, or that that its people will reassess the cost of supporting their government’s policies.⁴² For parties in such a conflict, they can either deter the enemy by “punishing” it with casualties or “denying” the enemy its territory from which to operate by conquering the battlefield, yet for the weaker terrorist groups, denial and conquest is impossible, which only leaves punishment, and this is taken to further lengths in some respects since that is the only option.⁴³ He points out that Japan did not use *kamikazes* from a position of power, but at the end of the war when it was losing badly and was faced with a potential invasion of its home islands by U.S. forces.⁴⁴ The author of this very paper would like to note the extensive use of ritual surrounding the Kamikaze, not at all that different from what the Palestinian groups do today. Lest the reader here feel that Western culture is immune, at various times of desperation during WWII, Russian and German pilots

resorted to ramming their fighter planes into enemy bombers and ground targets, with some special German squadrons even going through a ritual acknowledging they were sacrificing their lives for the cause in suicide missions during the last-ditch defense of the approaches to Berlin in 1945, during the same time period that the Japanese were launching kamikazes.⁴⁵ For Palestinian groups, suicide bombing is a “last resort” since they cannot compete militarily in a conventional war. Pape quotes founding documents and leaders of Hamas and the al-Aqsa Martyr’s Brigade that ejection of Israeli forces from the West Bank and Gaza is a principle aim, and provides a quote very similar to the one given by Spriznak of a Hamas official:

We in Hamas consider suicide bombing inside the 1948 borders”—inside Israel—“to be the card that Palestinians can play to resist the occupation... We do not own Apache helicopters ourselves, we consider the door to hell is open. Their assassination policy and bombardment—all this theatre of war inside Palestinian villages and homes—we respond to that by seeking to make Israelis feel the same, insecure inside their homes.⁴⁶

Hafez makes the same conclusion, that “suicide attacks are a strategic choice based on cost-benefit calculations by weak groups with limited resources seeking to wage war against formidable opponents.”⁴⁷ Luft confirms this when he calls the tactic the “poor man’s ‘smart bomb’ that can miraculously balance Israel’s technological prowess and conventional military dominance. Palestinians appear to have decided that, used systematically in the context of a political struggle, suicide bombings give them something no other weapon could: the ability to cause Israel devastating and unprecedented pain.”⁴⁸

That goes into the next point: most authors included here admit that suicide bombing is incredibly lethal and effective both at inflicting harm and at least somewhat in achieving their groups’ agendas. Hafez argues that such groups are “using an effective and rational method of asymmetrical warfare to achieve desired goals. Under certain circumstances, groups come to value extreme violence because of its ability to coerce opponents, publicize grievances, disrupt the status quo, question the legitimacy of the ruling order, induce compromise, show determination, sabotage negotiations, and so on,⁴⁹” and this element of strategic calculation is echoed by Saarnivaara⁵⁰ For Hafez, the bombings are employed “because they are viewed as more effective than conventional methods of resistance, and the best means to achieve the strategic aims of the Palestinian people,” and are viewed in a context in which “Palestinian

insurgents would stand little chance of victory if they were to take on...[Israel's military] directly."⁵¹ Not capable of achieving battlefield parity, they aim for a "balance of terror" which "narrows the ratio of Palestinian to Israeli deaths," where before the ratio was fewer Israelis to more Palestinians.⁵² A major point articulated by these organizations is that years and years of negotiations have yielded, at best, very little progress towards independence or freedom for Palestinians, and that, historically, most liberation movements have had to resort to violent resistance to achieve their aims, that in attempting to negotiate with Israelis, Palestinians have actually lost more.⁵³ In addition, the cycle of violence has increased the severity of the Israeli responses, which in turn made Palestinian militant groups feel the need to increase the severity of their attacks "to deter Israelis from more such attacks;" as a further response, Israel adopted tactics that were so effective that they made non-suicide bombing attacks "nearly impossible," which ironically left only suicide bombing available as an effective tactic for Palestinians, and Israel's effective decapitation of militant leaders meant that these different groups needed to cooperate and share tactics (in this case, suicide bombing) even more.⁵⁴ Pape also notes the lack of progress of many years of negotiations as the Israeli settler population in the West Bank and Gaza strip grew exponentially from the 1990's onward, making Palestinian militant groups feel the need to resort to violence and more desperate measures in the face of such diplomatic failures.⁵⁵ In the end, "[t]he main reason that suicide terrorism is growing is that the terrorists have learned that it works."⁵⁶

Several other points about these organizations also need to be made. Suicide bombing's effectiveness was not missed on Hamas leaders when Hezbollah's bombings helped to bring about an eventual withdrawal of Israeli forces from most of Lebanon, and served in the minds of the leadership to provide a successful model of resistance.⁵⁷ Another important element is the strategic competition between secular and religious Palestinians groups, and between different groups within both categories. Hafez mentions that the secular Fatah leadership and its al-Aqsa Martyr's brigades began adopting suicide bombing as a tactic in part because they felt the religious organizations conducting the bombings were "outperforming" them, and that this was "healthy competition."⁵⁸ Bloom expands on this theme, noting that the organizations operating on behalf of the Palestinians use this tactic as a "way to compete...for

leadership of the community,” to gain “legitimacy” and “prestige,” and to compete for recruits; he also points out that suicide attacks were more numerous when Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was in a “weaker” state, during certain elections, and when Hamas felt it was being excluded from negotiations or political power.⁵⁹ Thus, for all parties, the bombings are a way of reminding the others that they are a force to be acknowledged.

Conclusion-Palestinian Society and Suicide Bombing

For Hafez, the fact that Palestinians “felt a deep sense of victimization by external enemies” and that “legitimate authorities promoted or acquiesced to extreme violence” created a unique society ready to embrace such a unique tactic as suicide bombing. Especially during the second *intifada*, both Israelis and Palestinians “saw the other as unduly aggressive and brutal.” The purpose of this paper is not to prove or advocate the degree of brutality that each side employs against the other, nor is it to claim that one side is more brutal than the other. What cannot be argued against, however, is the fact that Israel, with its superior state apparatus, organization, and overwhelmingly superior military technology, has killed and wounded far more Palestinians (and Palestinian civilians) than Palestinians have killed or wounded Israelis (and Israeli civilians); this is not lost on Palestinians. Israelis, for sure, feel their own set of legitimate insecurities, but here the analysis is on the tactic used by Palestinians, and in this case there is a deep sense of victimization by the Palestinians who have suffered grievously and more intensely, underserved or not, as a result of Israeli policies and military actions. In the context of the violence, the election by Israelis of Ariel Sharon as their Prime Minister certainly made the Palestinians feel even more desperate and threatened, given his controversial history in the region and his hard-line positions.⁶⁰ From the Palestinian perspective, the suicide bomber was a vehicle which provided “revenge in response to perceived victimization at the hands of an obstinate enemy, and empowerment in the face of overwhelming threats by a superior adversary.”⁶¹ The Palestinians’ government “failed to adequately counter the radical Ideology of Islamist militants” and “at times promot[ed]” it while linking the suicide

bombings to specific Israeli attacks; it also released Islamic militants which it had imprisoned, giving a “green light” for groups to proceed with suicide bombings.⁶²

For Pape, looking at the totality of suicide bombings by all groups in the world, nationalism is almost a definitional aspect of suicide bombings, and it is communities espousing passionate nationalism that are able to provide recruits, support, and embrace concepts of martyrdom in the unique ways needed for a sustained campaign of suicide bombing to occur.⁶³ Living under a foreign military occupation, being passionately attached to one’s homeland, lack of overall progress for a national project, and suffering at the hands of an ethnically, culturally, religiously, and linguistically different people all are major factors in creating conditions ripe for suicide bombing to take root culturally.⁶⁴ Looking at the conflict from the Palestinian perspective, each of these conditions is intensely present for the Palestinians, which is why they are very unique in their level of support for suicide bombing, as was noted in the introduction. Gill quotes a trainer of suicide bombers as saying that “much of the work is already done by the suffering these people have been subject to . . . Only 10% comes from me. The suffering and living away from their land has given the person 90% of what he needs to become a martyr. All we do is provide guidance and help strengthen his faith and help set the objectives for him.”⁶⁵ Lelyveld is clear that “[i]n Gaza . . . support for bombings staged in support of the Palestinian cause has become a cultural norm,” and that “the residents of Gaza wanted to believe that the sacrifice of the martyrs would help end the strife.”⁶⁶ Khashan posits that “[d]isposition to partaking in suicide attacks cannot take place without provocation that produces intolerable frustration.”⁶⁷

The reader of this paper has seen from the individual level up to the organizational level how Palestinian society has become clearly supportive of and both ripe for the tactic of suicide bombing to become a *modus operandi*. To better understand the societal level of why such a mentality exists, one only needs to weave a few common-knowledge threads about the Palestinian people, their society, and their history together with these findings.

For one thing, many of the Palestinians living in refugee camps in Gaza and the West Bank, a significant portion of the population, have been living there since around 1948; the rest of the Palestinian

Arabs in Gaza and the West Bank have been living under some form of Israeli military rule and occupation since 1967. That is a long time. The first major *intifada* against the Israelis began as a grassroots reaction, *not* orchestrated by any organization. If anything, the Palestinians waited decades before they resorted to general violence, and that at first ended disastrously for them. Their leadership was able to do little to move them towards their goal of an independent state, and years of negotiations with Israelis also bore little fruit. Palestinian suicide bombing only began in the early 1990's, but compared to the second *intifada*, beginning in 2000, the earlier bombings were just a trickle. The Palestinian government, in addition to being ineffective, was intolerably corrupt and was so in an obvious way known to all Palestinians.

What few people realize is that it is more likely that Palestinians are not being exploited by groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad. In the face of the total failure of their own leaders and government, these groups emerged as a way for ordinary Palestinians to take part in their affairs and, eventually, their government as these groups began to compete with Arafat and Fatah for power and influence. As the government of the Palestinians devolved into a series of competing civil-militant organizations, it was the Palestinian people themselves who erupted twice into rebellions against Israel, and not any top-down directive of rebellion which produced the *intifadas*. For the Palestinian, there is no longer a faith in their leaders, their government, or the Israeli as a negotiating partner. What exists is anger and humiliation, decades of it, and decades of a pent-up, unrealized dream of freedom and a Palestinian state. Using these new groups, Palestinians themselves lashed out at Israelis, sought to weaken and tear down their own leaders, and empowered themselves as suicide bombers. "Our biggest problem is the hordes of young men who beat on our doors, clamoring to be sent [on suicide missions]. It is difficult to select only a few," says one Hamas recruiter.⁶⁸ Equally frustrated with the powerlessness of their own leaders and the Israeli occupation, individual Palestinians are creating their own military force with which they can return the pain Israel has inflicted on them and expose and shame their own leaders for the corrupt, ineffectual, and incompetent leadership it is widely felt that they have provided, and also expose and shame their Arab and Muslim brethren in other states as the unproductive and unhelpful allies that they are. A young

female suicide bomber said in her final videotaped message “I am going to fight instead of the sleeping Arab armies who are watching Palestinian girls fight alone.”⁶⁹ They are ready for their state and are sick of waiting for others to get it for them. The individual Palestinian, through the culture of, organizations behind, and technology of the suicide bomb are letting the world know that they will not sit idly by while their dreams and aspirations go unfulfilled. Such martyrs are celebrated because they are seen as actually trying to do something to help their people, which is more than can be said of many of their leaders, allies, or the Israelis in the eyes of Palestinians. Unable to shape their government, they have shaped a movement like Hamas which has taken over part of the government in the hopes that Palestinians may finally begin to control their own destiny.

In a society with a perverse lack of civil and governing institutions, it is groups that produce human bombs which are left to provide healthcare, social capital, and social services that corrupt or powerless leaders will not or cannot. It is even more perverse that the leaders emulate the violent aspects of a group like Hamas, and yet not the charitable and service-oriented aspects. It is no wonder, then, that given a choice the Palestinians people elected Hamas over Fatah, but in the end, the people still suffer as the organizations fight among themselves over how to govern. Perhaps the next *intifada* will be against the Palestinians’ own leaders and groups, in an effort to get them to serve their own people in a better, less violent, more productive way, or perhaps they will take further charge over their own governing institutions, or maybe things will just get worse and more violent overall. Hopefully, the future will yield Palestinians besides martyrs who can be considered role models and objects of national pride. Right now, there are precious few alternatives, and that is perhaps the best explanation for why things are the way they are, and why a suicide bomber can be seen a logical, rational, admirable thing to be.

Endnotes

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- ⁴³ *Ibid.* 29-30.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 35-37.
- ⁴⁵ Bloom, Mia. *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*. Columbia University Press: New York, 2005. 13-14; Beevor, Antony. *The Fall of Berlin 1945*. New York: Viking, 2002. 237-238.
- ⁴⁶ Pape 32.
- ⁴⁷ Hafez 25.
- ⁴⁸ Luft, Gal. "The Palestinian H-Bomb: Terror's Winning Strategy." *Foreign Affairs* 2002 81, No. 4 July – August: 2-7. 2.
- ⁴⁹ Hafez 26.
- ⁵⁰ Saarnivaara 423.
- ⁵¹ Hafez 26.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ *Ibid.* 27-29
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 29-31.
- ⁵⁵ Pape 47-51.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 61.
- ⁵⁷ Schulze, Kristin. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*. Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2008. 84. Pape 14; Luft 2.
- ⁵⁸ Hafez, 29-30
- ⁵⁹ Bloom 19-31, 34.
- ⁶⁰ Hafez 60.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.* 61
- ⁶² *Ibid.* 61-63
- ⁶³ Pape 80-82.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 82-94
- ⁶⁵ Gill 418.
- ⁶⁶ Lelyveld.
- ⁶⁷ Khashan, Hilal. "Collective Palestinian Frustration and Suicide Bombings" *Third World Quarterly* 2003 24, No. 6 December: 1049-1067. 1064.
- ⁶⁸ Krueger and Jitka Malečková, 122
- ⁶⁹ Hafez 47.