



"The propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained."

—George Washington

12-Nov-04

Exalting the Base

The news story of the day focuses on the funeral (in Cairo, Egypt, his city of birth) and burial (in Ramallah, West Bank, "Palestine") of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, 75, who died of an unmentioned disease on Thursday in a Paris hospital. The military funeral in Cairo was a solemn and stately affair in contrast to the chaotic, intensely emotional burial proceedings in Ramallah, where Arafat had run the PLO and the erstwhile "Palestinian state" for the past several years. Gunfire frequently split the air, while young Palestinian men jostled for a chance to touch the flag-draped coffin, chanting slogans and laudatory tributes in unison.

With all this happening, one would think Arafat had been a great man.

A person without a grounding in recent history—who received his knowledge through the mainstream media—might be convinced that Arafat stood as a colossus on [the world](#) stage and was, as some have tried to paint him, "the George Washington of his people" (many heartfelt apologies to George Washington for the comparison). Though sincerely beloved by the Palestinian people, in certain areas Arafat compares better to Napoleon than the American Cincinnatus. Whereas Washington is generally acclaimed to have nobly put his country before his personal interests, Napoleon—and Arafat—though they may have had grand ideas, did nothing that was not self-aggrandizing.

Like Napoleon, Arafat was not a native of the "country" he later came to control dictatorially. As mentioned earlier, he was a native Egyptian (with some Palestinian ancestry from both parents, however), trained under Egypt's socialist strongman Jamal Abdul Nasser, who overthrew his nation's Arab monarch in a coup. With Nasser's blessing—in order to spread socialist pan-Arabism—Arafat adopted the Palestinian people and effectively co-opted their "cause" to further his own political and personal ends. The means he decided to use to achieve those ends is what was then called guerilla warfare, now called terrorism.

In 1959, Arafat, along with about twenty Palestinians, co-founded Fatah, the Movement for the National Liberation of Palestine, and the group soon began to recruit young men to be trained in terrorist tactics. With the support of Egyptian intelligence, Arafat led *fedayeen* ("men of sacrifice" or "suicide fighters") raids into Israeli territory. His "success" led him to form the PLO in 1964 as an umbrella organization for several Palestinian terrorist organizations, among which was Black September, the group that took and killed Israeli hostages at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich. Black September was merely a front for Fatah and Arafat, who called the shots.

Munich was only the biggest of many terrorist acts done under the command of Yasser Arafat. The PLO, Fatah, the Al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigade, and other groups committed hundreds, if not thousands, of them—mostly against Israelis and Israeli interests—in the forty-five years of Arafat's tenure as Palestinian chief. Raids, hijackings, school bombings, suicide bombings, training children to be martyrs—nothing was beyond the pale in advancing the Palestinian cause (which was always the extermination of Israel as a state and the Jews as a people) and catapulting Arafat himself into the international limelight. (Please read "Arafat the Monster" by Jeff Jacoby for a taste of the real Arafat legacy.)

Another of Arafat's similarities to Napoleon is the state in which he left his countrymen when his rule was over. After Napoleon, France was exhausted, poor, beaten, and vilified internationally, and after Arafat, all but the latter could describe Palestine. Arafat, like Napoleon, had no real affection for his adopted people; they were nothing more than cannon-fodder for his own purposes. Ironically, Hamas, the rival terror group to Fatah, has done more real, practical good for Palestinians than Arafat ever did, setting up and administering social services, hospitals, and employment assistance offices far more effectively. Conversely, in secret Swiss bank accounts, Arafat and his cronies squirreled away billions of dollars and euros given for humanitarian aid.

Yet, after all these verifiable facts, the media holds up Yasser Arafat as a great man, worthy of adulation and the politically motivated Nobel [Peace](#) Prize he once received.

This is sheer propaganda, the product of a political misinformation blitz, to sway the masses into believing a big lie. Instead of swallowing it, it should make us wonder, "If they are telling us that hyenas are teddy bears, what else are they lying to us about?"

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Preventing Deception](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

In this companion piece to his "Willingness to Believe" message, Richard Ritenbaugh provides an effective antidote to gullibility and simple-minded credulity. Both tendencies emerge from time to time in the greater church of God. Like advertising—which relies heavily on deception, hiding the down-side or defects and exaggerating the efficacy or desirability of a product—religious hucksters use deceptive tactics, using the bait or temptation of self-gratification, selling non-essential, twiggly or downright heretical positions. Like highly trained U.S. Treasury agents, the elect keep themselves undeceived by knowing the real article inside-out. If one knows the real article, the counterfeit will become readily apparent. Like a lamp rolling back the darkness (Psalm 119:105), the truth, revealed by God's Word, provides the best defense or antidote against deception and error.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Is All Fair in Love and War?](#)

by David F. Maas

God gives us a great deal of freedom under His law, but do we have the authority to bend or break the rules under extenuating circumstances? David Maas shows that the law applies at all times to everyone.

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