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Radical Palestinian Terrorism Likely to Resume

██████████ radical Palestinian groups are anxious to begin a new terrorist campaign against Israeli and U.S. targets and the pressure is mounting on Arafat to condone, at least unofficially, such attacks. The Israeli attack on the Tuwaitha Nuclear Facility in Iraq and the recent Israeli bombing of Palestinian offices in Beirut have given the radicals added ammunition in their opposition to Arafat and his moderate policies. These groups are likely to attempt terrorist attacks against U.S. and Israeli targets even if they do not get Arafat's acquiescence.

Arafat ██████████ has been considering allowing some international terrorist attacks. The incidence of such attacks by Palestinians has fallen in the past few years because of Arafat's orders to cease international terrorist attacks in order to give the Palestinian cause a more legitimate and moderate image. Arafat has been under increasing pressure, however, by radical elements to resume terrorist attacks against Israeli and U.S. targets abroad because his diplomatic efforts have been unsuccessful.

Arafat made a strong showing at the Palestine National Council meeting in April and thwarted moves by more radical elements to weaken his position. Nevertheless, there were reports even at that time that Arafat, in order to stave off radical criticism, had given the green light to planning for the resumption of international terrorist attacks in the event that no progress was made this year on a Palestinian solution.

Recent events may force Arafat to concede to radical demands soon, even if it is only to privately permit selected attacks against Israeli targets abroad. U.S. targets, already included in operational planning by the radicals, could also be included. It would be hard for Arafat to defuse the momentum that has been gathering. Arafat may be persuaded to agree in the hope that such attacks would goad the West into speeding up their attempts to find a solution to the Palestinian question. He may also hope that by allowing attacks, he can retain some control over the radical groups and thwart attempts by several Arab states to gain more control of radical elements. Syria and Libya have been trying to buy influence with the more radical Palestinian groups and have been encouraging these groups to carry out more international terrorist attacks, especially against Israeli targets, in the hope that such attacks would embarrass Arafat and discredit the moderate Palestinian position.

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Even if Arafat does not condone terrorist attacks by the radicals, he may not intervene if these attacks occur on a limited basis. There [REDACTED] is support even among certain leftist elements within Fatah, the moderate Palestinian organization headed by Arafat, for attacks against U.S. targets. [REDACTED]

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