



RESTORING ORDER IN THE WEST BANK, 2007–2009

Jennifer Widner, Tristan Dreisbach, and Gordon LaForge drafted this case study based on interviews conducted in Ramallah, Nablus, and Jericho in June and July 2019 and in Princeton, New Jersey, and other locations during 2019 and 2020. The case is part of a series on state building in Palestine, 2002–05 and 2007–11. Case published June 2022.

SYNOPSIS

“Security was the toughest part of the job,” Salam Fayyad said, reflecting on his first two years as prime minister of the Palestinian Authority. The second intifada, a five-year uprising against Israeli occupation, had just wound down, leaving in its wake an epidemic of crime and lawlessness in the West Bank. To restore order and to demonstrate that authority could fulfill this most primary function of a state, Fayyad worked with security chiefs to revive the mission of the Palestinian Security Services and enhance their professionalism, to deploy the civil police, and to get gunmen off the streets. Those steps required strategies for both introducing reform in opaque systems and persuading people that better policing was not tantamount to supporting an occupying state. By the end of 2007, six months after he assumed office, crime rates were down and public perceptions of safety had started to improve. Still, continued Israeli interference in the West Bank’s internal security plus other persistent challenges undermined efforts to maintain a functional and sovereign security apparatus.

INTRODUCTION

When Salam Fayyad became prime minister of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in June 2007, the West Bank was in chaos. The conflict between rival political factions Hamas and Fatah that had left hundreds dead and culminated in Hamas's takeover of Gaza had created an environment of lawlessness and violence.¹ Hooded gunmen ransacked government buildings, extorted businesses, and menaced civilians. Petty crimes such as vandalism and looting surged. In one survey, 70% of respondents said they felt unsafe even in their own homes; a quarter said they wished to emigrate to other countries, a 12-fold increase from the previous year.²

"It was absolute mayhem. A total breakdown of law and order," Fayyad recalled.

Text Box 1. The Oslo Accords and Security in the West Bank

Deploying Palestinian security services in the West Bank presented unique challenges in part because of stipulations established under the Oslo Declaration of 1993 and the 1995 Oslo Accords (both of which would become collectively known as the Oslo Accords). These agreements, which began with secret talks between representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, set in motion a peace process and enabled the creation of a Palestinian Authority, with the ambition, similar to that agreed to by Egypt and Israel in the 1978 Camp David Accords, of establishing Palestinian self-government. However, the Oslo Accords left unresolved the matter of a Palestinian state, the status of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and other issues, including the status of Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees.

The Oslo Accords divided the West Bank into three areas. Palestinian cities were designated Area A, where the Palestinian Authority exercised exclusive control. Palestinian villages became Area B, where the Palestinian Authority was responsible for administration and shared with Israel purview over security. Area C comprised all other territory—about 60% of the total area of the West Bank, including the fertile agricultural land in the Jordan Valley. Israel asserted control over planning and construction, movement, and security in this area. The 1995 Oslo Accords stipulated that the three-part classification would end by July 1997, with gradual Israeli redeployment from the areas it controlled.

"Originally, the idea was that Area C would gradually become part of the Palestinian Authority, then eventually part of Palestine when there would be a permanent agreement," Yossi Beilin, one of the Israeli negotiators of the Oslo Accords, told Agence France-Presse. But Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin contradicted Beilin's understanding during a 1995 speech to the Knesset in which he said that portions of the West Bank with large Jewish populations together with the Jordan Valley would be incorporated into Israel, and indicated that Palestinian autonomy in the remaining territory would take the form of "an entity which is less than a state."

Sources:

Beilin quoted in "Area C, the chunk of the West Bank the Israeli right has long coveted," France24, April 7, 2020. Accessed at <https://www.france24.com/en/20200704-area-c-the-chunk-of-the-west-bank-the-israeli-right-has-long-coveted>.

Rabin's 1995 speech appears in full at <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/pm-rabin-speech-to-knesset-on-ratification-of-oslo-peace-accords>.

Amid that chaos, the Palestinian police were nowhere to be seen. Under the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority had sole responsibility for providing security in the urban areas of the Palestinian territories, so-called Area A (text box 1 and figure 1). But during the 2000–2005 uprising known as the second intifada, Israel had ignored that provision and treated the PA’s Security Services as enemy combatants. Israeli security forces conducted raids in Area A; destroyed Civil Police facilities, equipment, and communications infrastructure; and forbade uniformed PA security personnel from appearing on the streets. As a result, the morale, discipline, and capacity of the services deteriorated. Angry and idle, many of the gunmen terrorizing the West Bank came from their ranks.

Fayyad knew that restoring public order was the most important priority for the new government. Palestinians of all backgrounds were increasingly at risk. On his first day in office, Fayyad saw the trouble firsthand, when gunmen tried to intimidate Ramallah Mayor Janet Mikhail and city council members by firing multiple machine gun rounds at the municipal building. He worried that continued anarchy in the streets could lead to a violent takeover of power in the West Bank as had happened in Gaza, sparking all-out civil war. Moreover, Fayyad’s mission of building a state depended on demonstrating that the PA could keep its population safe—the core function of a state. As he would later say, “What is government good for if it can’t protect its citizens?”

Figure 1: Areas A, B, C



THE CHALLENGE

To an outside observer, the Palestinian Authority in 2007 looked capable of providing public safety. That was because on paper, its eight separate statutory security agencies comprised an estimated 90,000 personnel,³ more police per 100,000 residents than almost any other country in the world⁴ (text box 2, figure 2a). Those numbers were inaccurate, however. For example, they included Hamas’s executive force and about 18,000 people added to the payroll in the run-up to the 2006 election—after Fayyad had resigned as finance minister. They also included many people who did not report for duty.

Text Box 2: Palestinian Security Services

The Palestinian Security Services embraced several organizations. The Civil Police handled traffic, ordinary crime, crowd control, and prisons. Civil Defence dealt with emergencies and rescue. The Naval Police had a small coast guard capability. The National Security Forces managed armylike responsibilities in Gaza until June 2007 and in West Bank Area A (the part of the West Bank solely under Palestinian control) and related functions. And Military Intelligence had shifted in and out of its ambit over the years. Preventive Security, a gendarmerie responsible mainly for counterterrorism; the Presidential Guard; and the General Intelligence Service rounded out the list.¹ From the late 1990s until 2006, that structure shifted almost annually. Before Gaza split off, most of the eight regular security services had assumed separate and autonomous forms in each territory, raising the total number to 14 (there was only one Presidential Guard and only one Naval Police). In addition, within the services were district branches that occasionally operated as separate commands. Some of the lower-level units served clans, camps, families, or neighborhoods. And operating largely outside those groups were pop-up unofficial militias that lacked clear organization, such as the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, a loose, secular, Fatah-aligned network that supported violent resistance to Israeli occupation, and the Tanzim, an armed Fatah offshoot. Many of the gunmen who menaced Palestinian public safety were putatively affiliated with these groups.²

Each of the security services also had its own set of external partners to finance training or other projects, which worsened fragmentation. The United States moved most of its assistance programs under the umbrella of a US State Department–based Security Coordinator, whose office supervised training of the National Security Forces and the Presidential Guard and acted as an interlocutor, or trust builder, between the PA and Israel on security matters. However, US intelligence agencies separately supported Preventive Security, the General Intelligence Service, and Military Intelligence. The UK, Canada, and Spain sponsored police reform, sometimes working with the United States on projects. The EU assumed primary responsibility for Civil Police training programs. Other countries also assisted.

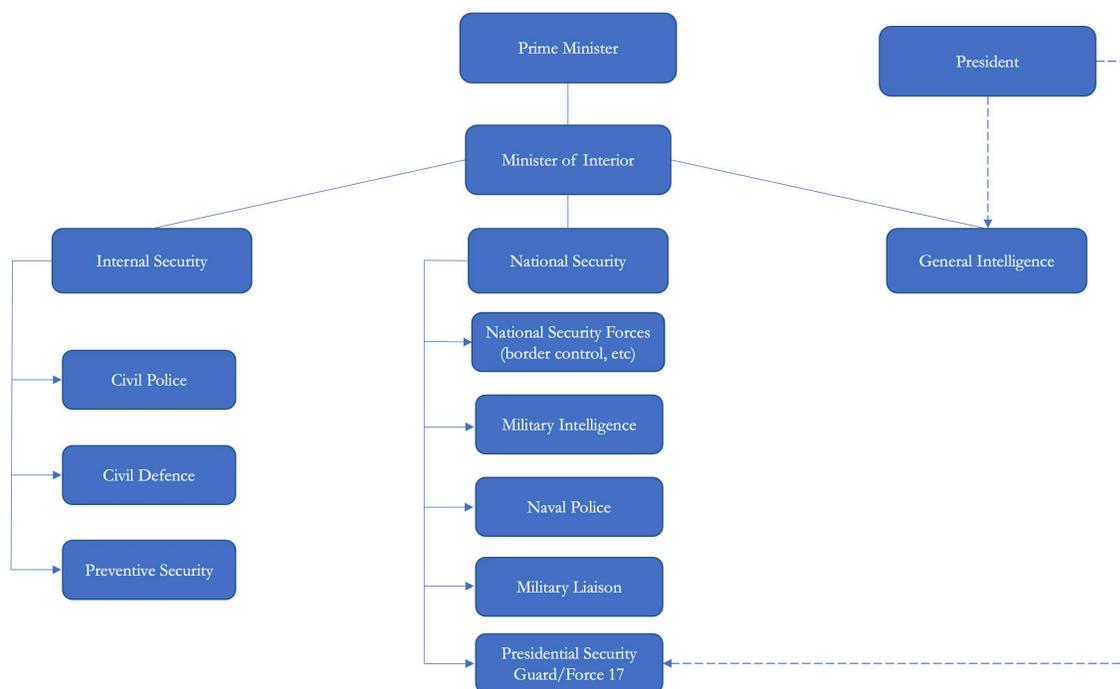
¹Zanotti plus U.S. Department of State Country Reports on Terrorism 2008, “West Bank and Gaza,” April 30, 2009, accessed at <https://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122433.htm>. See also Neri Zilber and Ghaith Al-Omari, *State with No Army, Army with No State: Evolution of the Palestinian Authority Security Forces, 1994–2018*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 27, 2018, and Ahmad Hussein (pseudonym), “Reconstituting the Palestinian National Authority Security Organisations,” in *Entry Points for Palestinian Security Reform*, Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2007, p. 45.

²Neri Zilber and Ghaith Al-Omari, *State with No Army, Army with No State: Evolution of the Palestinian Authority Security Forces, 1994–2018*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 27, 2018, p. 39. Accessed at <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus154-ZilberOmari.pdf>

Moreover, the PA lacked sovereignty and the corresponding authority to govern its own internal security affairs. Even with the end of the second intifada, Israel had continued to forbid uniformed Palestinian police from patrolling the streets, and the Israeli security forces regularly conducted nighttime raids, arrests, and carried out targeted assassinations in Area A—territory that under the Oslo Accords should have been the sole responsibility of the PA. The ongoing incursions drove local insecurity; it was hard to persuade gunmen to surrender their arms to the Palestinian Authority when they could argue that they needed them to defend themselves against Israeli attacks.

Figure 2a: 2005 Security Sector Organization Chart*

(Reflects 2005 agreement to merge autonomous agencies under one of three umbrella organizations.)



*This reform also aimed to unify the two branches of Preventive Security (Gaza and West Bank) and dismantled the Special Services, a supervisory body.

Even if in practice the PA were to have sovereignty over its security, many Palestinians likely would view the Security Services as pawns of the occupiers. “To Israel, the Oslo Accords were about controlling violence in the Palestinian territories and keeping it from spilling over into Israel, so the impression the Palestinian Security Services got was that their job was to help keep Israel safe,” Fayyad explained. “These were revolutionary fighters, many of them. And now they were in a position in which they felt that their mission was to provide security for the occupying power. That made them feel a bit like traitors.”⁵

There were challenges within the services as well. Deeply rooted mismanagement and partisanship in a context dominated by factional rivalries and discord—mainly between Fatah and Hamas but also within Fatah itself—had eroded the PA’s international standing, undermined the peace process, and diminished public safety.

There was no tradition of accountability to civilian-led institutional authority. Yasser Arafat, the revolutionary leader and first president, who died in 2004, had formed the Security Services out of a patchwork of resistance groups—some of them with competing allegiances, though all of them loyal to him.⁶ The security chiefs, many of whom had spent time with the rank-and-file

in Israeli jails, derived authority more from personal relationships than from institutional chain of command. Patronage—the ability to dispense jobs—was a source of political power. The Fatah-led PA government, in an attempt to secure votes in the 2006 election, had added 18,000 more security personnel to the government payroll. As of mid-June 2007, when Fayyad became prime minister, not one of the new recruits had gone through basic training or reported for a day of duty.

Another challenge was the chain of command. The prime minister did not have authority over all of the branches. Under the 2002 Basic Law, the prime minister, via the interior minister, was in charge of most services, including the largest: the Civil Police. But the president, who under the law was commander in chief, had authority over the second-largest branch—the National Security Forces—as well as the intelligence service.⁷

This division confounded accountability, and it made coordination among the services difficult. Fayyad recalled that the chiefs of the different branches would meet individually on an ad hoc basis with the president or prime minister—often providing contradictory information and in some cases seeking to undermine other branches for the benefit of their own. The power to hold regular, joint meetings was limited; if the prime minister called a security meeting, some of the service chiefs might choose to not show up. “If I wasn’t able to have control over all the services, especially the National Security Forces, then I wouldn’t be able to have control over the West Bank’s security,” Fayyad recalled.

The prime minister’s power over security affairs diminished further when Hamas won an electoral majority and became the governing party in 2006. Because the United States and other nations designated Hamas as a group that sponsored terrorism, the PA’s donors could no longer provide general assistance.⁸ But from March 2006 to March 2007, they continued to support specific units and functions of the PA’s Security Services, which were handled by the office of President Mahmoud Abbas (also known as Abu Mazen), a member of the Fatah party.

The clashes with Israel had also taken a toll on supplies, equipment, and facilities. A 2004–05 review found there were four police officers to each firearm—usually a version of Soviet-era small arms—the rest having been destroyed in Israeli raids or used for spare parts.⁹ Israeli forces had eliminated almost all of the services’ West Bank offices, vehicles, supplies, and information systems. And service personnel had no uniforms. Historically, the Palestinian Authority had not enforced standard codes of dress, but during the intifada years, the only security personnel the Israelis permitted to wear uniforms were those in the immediate vicinity of the presidential compound, the Mukataa. Under those circumstances, it was difficult even for the most cohesive public safety service to be effective.

The challenges all came together in June 2007. Almost all members of the senior officer corps were affiliated with Fatah, which had just been routed in the

Gaza Strip and which feared a similar takeover in the West Bank. People within the ranks of the units they commanded had stepped up attacks against politicians and civil servants who leaned toward Hamas or who did not do their bidding or who were associated with other rivals.¹⁰

Fayyad estimated as many as 450 Security Services personnel were among the gunmen contributing to chaos on the streets. Others were not reporting to their units. And with no clear mission and little capability to operate, the services were adrift.

FRAMING A RESPONSE

Almost immediately upon taking office as prime minister in June 2007, Fayyad sought to consolidate authority over the services by asking Abbas to delegate authority over the National Security Forces and the General Intelligence Directorate to the minister of interior, who reported to Fayyad.

There was precedent for the request: The Road Map for Peace was a plan for resolving the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, as proposed by the Middle East Diplomatic Quartet—the United Nations, the United States, the European Union (EU), and Russia—in 2002. The Quartet had outlined a plan to reduce the number of Palestinian security services from eight to three—the National Security Forces, the Civil Police, and the intelligence service—and place them under the control of a strengthened interior ministry. Abbas had supported that proposal, and he also agreed to Fayyad’s request to put all the branches under the control of the interior minister and thus, the prime minister. (In practice, Abbas would retain some authority over intelligence and his own guard, though in practice, Fayyad recalled, he was uninvolved in operational matters.)¹¹

Fayyad then asked Abbas to convene a meeting of all security chiefs. “I knew the issues they were facing, but I wanted to listen and hear it from them,” Fayyad said. Speaking for the group, a senior officer unleashed a battery of complaints: the services lacked uniforms, guns, and boots. Their headquarters had been destroyed by Israel, as had their vehicles. They had nothing.

“I expected those complaints,” Fayyad recalled. “In part, they were those of a defeated army rationalizing their failures.” But then the officer said something that Fayyad recalled struck him: “I don’t know what our mission is.”

Fayyad recalled that the room fell silent. He then removed his suit jacket and held it in the air. “I said, ‘I promise I will get you all the supplies you need, even if I have to sell my own jacket to pay for them. But the bigger issue we have is the mission. What is your mission? I am here to define it.’”

That mission, Fayyad recalled telling the chiefs, had two parts. The first part was to make citizens feel safe and secure. The second part was to help Palestinians secure sovereignty by supporting their efforts to build government capacity. The plan was to act like a full-fledged state in order “to safeguard *our* national project: a fully sovereign state of Palestine, in which our people can live as free people—with dignity—in a country of their own,” Fayyad said. The Security Services had to defend that project from the inside by showing they

could maintain the order essential for a political community to function. “Israel does not need your help to secure itself,” he said. “It’s a superpower. We are the ones who are really threatened. We’re not doing this on Israel’s behalf. We’re doing this on behalf of our own possibility to become a state.”

He recalled telling the chiefs in the room, “People are being terrorized by members of your services, who are doing everything but security and are instead engaging in ganglike behaviors.” He told the chiefs they were responsible for bringing them under control.¹² He concluded, “A gun that is not under your control is a gun in the hands of a gunman—and that person is an outlaw as of this minute.”

Fayyad recalled that the chiefs were receptive. The next question, then, was what strategy to pursue in order to end the lawlessness and foster public confidence. Fayyad had two theories in that regard. The first was that because the social fabric had frayed, a visible, calm, and citizen-oriented display of authority—something like the US use of the country’s army reserves in the aftermaths of hurricanes or other disasters—was crucial. People needed to know someone was in charge, and that meant getting Palestinian police back out on patrol. Fayyad said citizens would greet a visible official presence favorably—especially if the patrols were freshly trained and disciplined.

The second theory was that gunmen would end their predatory behaviors if presented with a mission and with a deal that kept them safe. In exchange for keeping their guns off the streets and advancing the cause of state building, which Fayyad portrayed as an alternative form of resistance, the government would secure agreement from Israeli forces to refrain from targeting them. He had to hope that his theory was right, because his government could not reintegrate the gunmen directly into the service ranks, as governments usually did under a traditional demobilization-disarmament-reintegration policy, without running afoul of international antiterrorism conventions. Gunmen would have to go through a probationary period.

Fayyad worked with the interior minister and the chiefs to assemble a plan. “You really wanted to get the policy right, and you wanted commitment by the chiefs,” he said.¹³ He met with district security leaders as well as their bosses and honed a four-part proposal: (1) There would be no effort to collect weapons, as in a typical demobilization-disarmament-reintegration strategy. Instead, gunmen would face a choice: join us and leave the guns behind or risk arrest. Weapons buybacks were rarely successful, and fear of weakness in the face of incursions or attacks would likely lead some to resist anyway. (2) The PA would establish a retrained, uniformed civilian police service to restore basic safety functions—like traffic management—and have the power to take into custody people who chose to wield guns in public. (3) The government would recruit and train younger people in order to remake the culture of the Security Services and to encourage some of the old guard to retire by offering better pension benefits. (4) The government would clarify reporting lines and improve accountability to civilian authority.

Fayyad set up a regular, twice-weekly meeting with a new security cabinet. “We needed the agencies to act in concert as part of an overall security strategy,” Fayyad recalled. “So we needed a system akin to that of the US joint chiefs of staff, wherein all branches come together regularly at the same table to coordinate.”

Fayyad chaired the meetings for about a year before turning that role over to the interior minister he appointed, Abdel Razzak El-Yehya, a retired lieutenant general and political independent. During the late 1960s, El-Yehya had served as chief of staff of the Palestine Liberation Army and had a brief stint as commander in chief until Arafat assumed that role. He was later a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) executive committee and led the PLO’s security committees in negotiations with Israel. He also served briefly as interior minister in the cabinet with Fayyad in 2002. His political and military experience would enable him to manage civil–military relations effectively, Fayyad said, but during the first year, the prime minister’s presence and chairmanship would help establish his authority with the chiefs, who were powerful and did not like to take orders. “I would deliberately ask him to speak first and also would ask him for input on what the chiefs had to say,” Fayyad said.

Later, when El-Yehya led the meetings, Fayyad occasionally dropped in or asked that discussions of nonroutine matters take place at the prime minister’s office. “I owe El-Yehya a great debt,” Fayyad said. “I learned a lot from him, and he was a tremendous professional.”

GETTING DOWN TO WORK

Working with the security chiefs, Fayyad and the government moved quickly to implement the plan for restoring public safety in the West Bank. “Everything was happening at the same time, and nothing was completely under control,” Fayyad said. “We didn’t have the gunmen under control, we didn’t have Israel under control, we didn’t have the streets under control. All of them were moving parts.”¹⁴

To stabilize and improve the situation, the government deployed the Civil Police to the streets, took steps to reform and professionalize the Security Services, and engaged with the gunmen to get them off the streets,

But before any of that was possible, Fayyad had to cut a deal with Israel.

Securing Israeli cooperation

Two weeks after he was sworn in as prime minister, Fayyad began quiet negotiations with the Israeli government. His ultimate goal was to end incursions into Area A, but in the short term he sought more-modest assurances—that the PA’s Security Services be allowed to patrol the West Bank’s cities in uniform and that Israel’s targeted assassinations of Palestinians whom Israel regarded as fugitives would end. “I knew I had to have a deal with the

Israelis, because I could not preside over a system in which every day they targeted somebody or someone was killed,” he said.

Fayyad asked the United States for help in securing a meeting with Israel’s Ehud Barak, who was Israel’s minister of defense. The most highly decorated soldier in Israel, Barak was a formidable character. The Israeli Civil Administration in the West Bank and most of Israel’s military units active in the territory reported to him.

When they met, Fayyad said, he had the impression Barak did not want to be there and that his mind was on other things. Fayyad recalled coming to the point immediately: “I want to be able to deploy our security services in the cities of the West Bank. We are in a state of emergency. I think it’s a point of logic that it would be important for us to deploy our security services so people can see them, so the people can begin to derive some sense of assurance that things are OK.”

Barak rejected the request, saying there would be no return to the pre-second intifada status quo, when Israeli forces did not enter Area A, where the Palestinians were in charge of security. Though Fayyad had not explicitly asked for a return to that status quo, he recalled thinking that Barak must have concluded that that was the endgame Fayyad sought.

Fayyad repeated the request, emphasizing that until the status quo ante was restored, lawlessness was certain to continue because lawlessness per se was not the target of Israel’s security operations, which largely took the form of nighttime incursions. He asked: Why not allow PA security personnel to patrol the streets during daytime hours? Barak retorted that security in the West Bank was Israel’s responsibility and that, as Fayyad remembered, “It is this way today, and it will forever be that way.” The meeting was over.

As he got up to leave, Fayyad remembered saying: “All right, I guess we have a resolution. You just said that security in the West Bank is your responsibility. And to tell you the truth, that’s a load off my shoulders. I can’t tell you how happy I am, because that’s not something I am cut out for. So be my guest.” He turned toward the door.

Barak told him to hold on a moment and explain what he meant. At the time, Israel’s method of policing the West Bank had little to do with the safety of ordinary Palestinians. At night, it sent troops to hunt gunmen who had attacked Israeli positions in the past, but by dawn those troops were gone, leaving a security vacuum. Fayyad recalled telling Barak that either Israel stepped up and did the whole job—patrolling day and night, handling traffic problems, policing petty crime—or it had to let the Palestinians handle their own public safety functions. The first phase of that was to allow Palestinians to patrol in uniform during daylight hours 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Israel would stay out of the territory during that time.

Barak signaled he was receptive to that proposal. A series of conversations followed in order to establish the details of the arrangement. In particular, Fayyad requested assurances that Israel would stop assassinating gunmen who

were wanted for past offenses. The gunmen preyed upon their fellow Palestinians, but as long as the Israeli government threatened them, getting them to lay down arms would be impossible. Fayyad said he explained to Barak: “If I get them to lay down their guns and then they get killed, their blood is on my hands, and I really cannot be a party to that or any kind of violence against Palestinians, no matter who they are, no matter what they might have done.” Barak replied that the operations in question were not under his control, Fayyad said, and that they were carried out by Shabak, a security agency that reported to the prime minister and had a reputation among Palestinians for brutality as well as efficiency.

Fayyad met with the Shabak director and worked out a deal. The agreement stipulated that uniformed PA security personnel would operate in Area A during the day, and although Israel could still conduct raids at night, it would stop pursuing those on its list of fugitives so long as the PA could guarantee those people would give up their weapons and accept a typically three-month confinement at a Palestinian district security headquarters. After that confinement period, they would then have freedom of movement within their home districts and then, eventually, within the entire West Bank. The National Security Forces’ Palestinian District Coordinating Offices, which handled communications with Israel with regard to minor security issues such as stolen cars, would arrange the details of how the agreement would work in practice, coordinating with the Palestinian Preventive Security Service.

Deploying the Civil Police

The agreement with the Israelis authorized the PA to deploy the roughly 7,200-member Civil Police—as well as National Security Forces personnel—to restore order on the streets. The Civil Police were trusted by members of the public, and Fayyad was convinced that their mere presence would deter crime and reassure citizens. (At the time, a Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research survey suggested that 58% of Palestinians had confidence in the Civil Police. By contrast, only a third had confidence in the Preventive Security.)¹⁵

The head of the police, Major General Hazem Atallah, assembled the first 300 Civil Police members near Jericho, where in 2006 the EU had established a police training center and already had some capacity to help prepare units, building on previous missions. The EU had paused its assistance during the period of Hamas government but agreed to restart the program in August 2007.¹⁶ The focus was on such issues as proportionate response to force, crowd control, crisis management, communication skills, defensive techniques, first aid, community service, and human rights.¹⁷ Within months, the interior ministry opened a security sciences academy on the site, and the United States supported additional courses in basic officer training, leadership development, and civil defense preparation—moving most of its programs, except those involving live-fire exercises, from its training program in Jordan, said Ghaith al-Omari, a

presidential adviser who left in 2006 to work with a nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C.

The government also began reequipping the Civil Police, whose equipment and facilities had been decimated by Israel during the second intifada. Of the 78 police stations in the West Bank, 31 had no vehicles; there were only about 30 computers; and communications gear was so limited that it was difficult for patrols to radio important information.¹⁸ The government began procuring new equipment and supplies, albeit gradually. It also placed orders for uniforms—in a color that had earlier earned the Civil Police the moniker “Blue Police.”

Meanwhile, the security cabinet had to decide where to deploy the police first. “We obviously could not do this in all places at once,” said Fayyad.¹⁹ “Most of the cabinet said the same thing, the obvious: go to the smallest, least-challenging places and then build on that.” Fayyad proposed instead to take on a tougher challenge: Nablus, a northern commercial center with a population of about 126,000 at the time, which had suffered heavy damage in the second intifada. Nablus hosted three refugee camps and had a long tradition of activism and resistance.²⁰ During previous months, Israeli security services had driven 50 armored vehicles into the city’s streets and carried out house-to-house searches for militants, put residents under lockdown, killed or arrested suspects, and destroyed weapons caches, all of which generated additional ire.²¹ Large parts of Nablus had become no-go zones for public officials.

Fayyad argued that if the Security Services could stabilize Nablus, then Palestinians would see the success as a sign the new government could bring order everywhere. Failure, on the other hand, would not necessarily mean a similar effort would founder elsewhere; people would just chalk up continued trouble to the fact that Nablus was a difficult place. The chiefs objected to this reasoning, suggesting instead the calmer municipality of Jericho or Bethlehem for the initial deployment. Fayyad asked them to mull it over.

To send Palestinian security personnel to Nablus required Israel’s permission, because the personnel would travel through territories under joint Israeli–Palestinian security or under sole Israeli control—called Areas B and C, respectively. The PA informed Israel of the plan in late October, and Israeli informed others, some of whom did not favor the idea. Lieutenant General Keith Dayton, who headed US security coordination for the region, said it was not a good move, Fayyad said, though Dayton nonetheless went ahead to scope out possibilities.²² Middle East Diplomatic Quartet envoy Tony Blair communicated reservations as well.

Nevertheless, Fayyad persisted. The security cabinet agreed, and a phased deployment began.

On November 1, a 2,000-strong security force, including the 300 Civil Police members, traveled from the training area to the old headquarters in Nablus. (Weeks later, 200 more joined them.) Without letting others know, Fayyad prepared to be in Nablus when the first police arrived. He said the interior minister had agreed to come along. And although the minister was not

in favor of making Nablus the point of entry for the effort to establish law and order in the West Bank, he oversaw preparation of the deployment plan and wholeheartedly supported its implementation once the final decision was made, Fayyad said.

The two men left Ramallah at 6 a.m., notifying no one, and reached Nablus a little after 7 to meet the patrol units that were to deploy. Fayyad recalled feeling apprehension. What if the police officers were met with violence? What if they were driven from the streets? Never having commanded a police service before, he addressed the officers: “I said, ‘Your job is to bring Nablus back to its people. It’s been taken away from them. I count on you to do this in a good way, not to rough up anyone. These people are your family, not a bunch of outlaws. Your challenge will be to deal with whatever happens. Carry yourself with grace and dignity and pride.’” He later reflected, “I had never really said things like that before, and I was probably echoing phrases I had read in school textbooks, but nevertheless the words fit.”²³

Fayyad and the interior minister went to the governor’s office and waited. The police were supposed to break up into groups of 5 to 10 and then patrol the neighborhood streets, back and forth, just to be seen. They were to avoid the refugee camps and the old town.

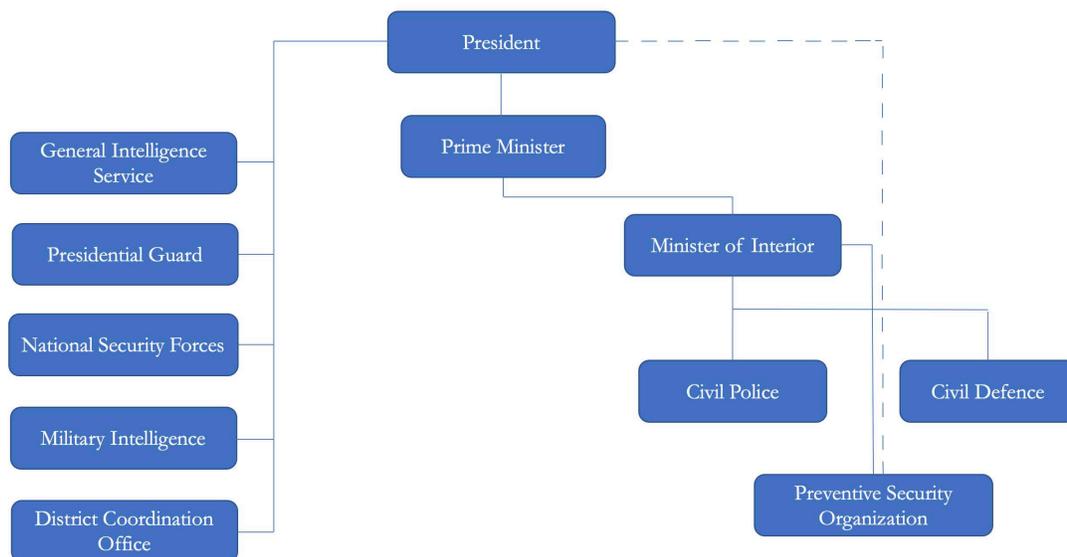
But as the day progressed, Fayyad amended his plans. He announced that he himself would go to the old town and seek out a bakery where he could pause to sample some *knafeh*, a traditional dessert, driven by his conviction that a personal touch was essential for rebuilding trust. He said although he knew the people with him were wondering about his sanity, the others agreed to go with him. The next day, the front pages of newspapers featured photos of the PA’s prime minister in Nablus’s old city, surrounded by residents (and a few security people) with no suggestion of enmity. The message was clear: the PA was back.

The first threat to the new strategy came not from Nablus residents but from Israel. Five days after the initial Civil Police deployment and 24 hours after the newly trained police mounted their first operation against an armed gang, Israeli forces resumed raids in a refugee camp that lay within the city’s boundaries, imperiling Fayyad’s gamble. There was outrage in the West Bank and in Washington.²⁴

As a measure of reassurance, Fayyad returned to Nablus on November 14 for a public event. US consul general Jacob Walles, who spoke at the event, announced US\$1.3 million to clean up schools and support other projects. He told the media that the Palestinians had made progress and that the US position was “that both sides need to meet their obligations.”²⁵

Deployments to other areas followed, as the PA trained and equipped more and more personnel. Nearly six months after its Nablus campaign, on May 5, 2008, the PA launched a similar effort in Jenin that also involved bringing in security personnel from outside that region. Between those two campaigns—and shortly after the successful initial deployment in Jenin—smaller-scale efforts commenced in all other districts in the West Bank, with only limited personnel

Figure 2b: Security Service Organization 2010



deployment from outside the regions themselves. As the campaigns proceeded, newly formed and trained battalions of young recruits were phased in and deployed in the various districts. By mid-2009, four such battalions, each consisting of about 500 recruits, had become fully integrated into the Security Services. (See figure 2b organization of the Security Services in late 2009-2010.)

Professionalizing the services

While deploying the police, Fayyad’s government also sought to improve the culture and professionalism of the Security Services. The vagaries of the second intifada and the conflict between Fatah and Hamas that led to the separation of Gaza from the West Bank had damaged discipline and the sense of mission. Partisanship was rampant.

During his early meetings with the security chiefs, Fayyad instructed the chiefs to prioritize the discipline and the appearance of their forces. “I thought the little things mattered a great deal,” said Fayyad. “Clean uniforms, shined boots, things that conveyed a culture of professionalism and order. Appearance mattered. The security personnel had to look the part.”

Fayyad also made personnel changes. Though he did not investigate past allegations of malfeasance, he asked for and received the resignations of two chiefs who had abused their power under his watch. In one instance, a security chief had threatened the mayor of Ramallah over a land dispute. In another, Fayyad demanded the head of the intelligence service quit after the service had covered up the circumstances surrounding the death of a detainee in custody.

There were also members of the Security Services who had committed crimes, settled partisan scores, or otherwise abused their positions. There were more officers than enlisted personnel at the time—a kind of inverted pyramid. Retirements represented an opportunity not only to create a more-sensible staffing system but also to introduce new, young professionals and reduce partisanship.

Because of personal loyalties and fear of backlash, the security chiefs were reluctant to dismiss the bad apples in their ranks. Fayyad authorized the chiefs to push bad apples into early retirement at an age younger than 60, the age of mandatory retirement under the law. Retirees would draw pensions equal to their full salaries but without cost-of-living adjustments until their pension payments aligned with those of earlier retirees. However, they would not retain their guns or serve in the police service. “It was risky, because the message we were sending was, ‘You do bad things, and you get to stay at home and get paid for doing nothing,’” Fayyad recalled. “But it was more important to improve the performance and image of police services in the eyes of the public.” The chiefs convinced 4,000 personnel, many of them officers, to accept the offer and leave the Security Services.

Attention then turned to the many people added to Security Services payrolls during the run-up to the 2006 election. Amid the rupture between Fatah and Hamas, both sides had hired new members into the security forces to either secure votes or entrench their cadres in government positions. In late 2005, Fatah-aligned leaders added 18,000 recruits to the payroll—none of whom ever reported for duty—and Hamas-aligned leaders made similar appointments.

Immediately following the violent takeover of power by Hamas in Gaza and the formation of the Fayyad-led emergency government, the pressure was on to nullify the appointments made by Hamas. But Fayyad insisted that party affiliation not be the basis for nullification; rather, the government decided that all of the appointments that had been made without following the proper administrative process would be nullified. On that basis, it cancelled appointments made by both factions in late 2005 and up to June 2007. Altogether, about 22,000 personnel—18,000 of whom were affiliated with Fatah and 4,000 with Hamas—were dismissed from the services.

With a slimmed-down roster, Fayyad and the interior minister sought to bring a new generation of professional recruits into the ranks. They turned to the National Security Forces, the second-largest service, with the intent of developing a strategic reserve to buttress the Civil Police when needed. The National Security Forces had a military-style command structure but no power to make arrests.²⁶

With the EU committed to assisting the Civil Police, the US security coordinator agreed to help prepare a younger generation of National Security Forces members. Initially, the training took place at the Jordan International Police Training Center near Amman and aimed to shape the National Security Forces into a gendarmerie-style unit with some of the skills and capacities

ordinarily associated with the military or with drug enforcement. The training was available only to new, carefully vetted recruits drawn from all of the West Bank's governorates.

The program could handle two or three groups of about 500 each year. From January 2008 to September 2012, nine battalions were formed and trained, comprising 4,715 new recruits.²⁷ Four of the nine battalions, a total of 2,260 recruits, were ready for deployment by June 2009, and they took part in the security campaigns in various governorates. A few hundred members of the Presidential Guard also trained under the program, which eventually moved to Jericho to boost a sense of national ownership and save money.²⁸

Fayyad considered the program important. "They started recruiting younger people who had no taint from the past," he said.

Engaging with the gunmen

In addition to strengthening capacity within the security services, the other major component of restoring public safety was getting gunmen off the streets in line with the deal Fayyad had struck with Israel. A presidential decree issued by Abbas on June 26, 2007, declared all militias and armed groups illegal. The government had to find and disband such groups. The Security Services commanders knew who those people were because many were their employees, moonlighting with very loosely organized unofficial militias such as the Fatah-linked Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. The commanders had lost direct control over them during the second intifada, when the Israeli government took over policing, imposed curfews, and destroyed Security Services materiel, leaving many without real jobs to do.

The government began getting the word out through friends and relatives of the gunmen, said al-Omari, the former adviser to the president. The approach varied from place to place depending on the networks that prevailed in each, and it was supposed to be informal and friendly.

A firm believer in the power of personal connections, Fayyad announced he wanted to meet with some of those in the militias and armed groups himself, a request the chiefs greeted with concern.

One of the first encounters took place in Jenin, the second-largest city in the northern part of the West Bank, the home of a camp of about 16,000 registered refugees, and the site of one of the second intifada's bloodiest clashes with Israeli soldiers, in 2002. Jenin was considered a no-go zone for officials. The government had started to put the word out that it would not tolerate weapons in the streets, and Fayyad asked to meet with the gunmen known to live in the camp and elsewhere in the Jenin governorate.

All of those who showed up were carrying firearms. Fayyad was direct with them: "You say you really want to see a state, but our national project is on the ropes. We have pitted ourselves against each other, as in Gaza." Meanwhile, he pointed out, Israel had started building a separation wall and expanding its settlements in the West Bank. Then he moved to the deal. "If you want to carry

guns, then you have to wear uniforms and you have to report to headquarters in your regions. If you want to remain outside official security services, then you have to hand in your guns, and we will take care of you to make sure the Israelis don't arrest you or kill you."

Fayyad used humor to smooth these encounters. On the occasion of his visit to Jenin, he met with Zakariah Zubeidi, known as Zakariah, the boss of the Jenin camp. "He was kind of a tough guy, notorious in many ways," he recalled. Although the conversation got off to a rocky start, mutual jesting defused the situation, Fayyad said, and the exchange ended on a positive note. Weeks later, Zakariah joined Fayyad in opening a day care center in the camp and soon switched tactics, focusing on cultural resistance to the occupation—through theater instead of through armed attacks.

Jenin was also where new trainees saw their first action when the National Security Forces and the Palestinian Presidential Guard deployed to back up the Civil Police, in May and June 2008. A chief aim of the Jenin campaign was to begin enforcing the deal with gunmen. People still wielding weapons in the street and not part of a uniformed service at the time were placed under arrest.²⁹ A US Congressional Research Service report based on a number of confidential interviews concluded: "Most observers agree that the Jenin operation was considerably successful in establishing law and order, and that the PG 3rd made a significant contribution to its success as a quick reaction force and as backup during high-risk arrests. The streets have reportedly been mostly cleared of illegal weapons and cars, and armed gangs can no longer roam the streets openly."³⁰

Once the security chiefs had a few people on board with Fayyad's deal, it was possible to use the networks the gunmen themselves had forged in order to draw others into the arrangement. Palestinian Preventive Security officers met regularly with their Israeli counterparts to review the status of the effort and provide the names of people who had joined and should therefore be taken off the list of Israeli targets. And they met regularly with the security cabinet.

The government gradually became able to induce more gunmen to accept the terms by negotiating with Israeli counterparts to secure a slight expansion of mobility. Usually, after a probationary confinement of three months or so, gunmen could move about within their home areas—and then, later, the entire West Bank—without suddenly coming into the crosshairs of Shabak's snipers. Sometimes strategic expenditures on community infrastructure or amenities helped secure cooperation,³¹ and within three years, 469 gunmen had laid down arms and been pardoned by Israel.³²

The plan worked, Fayyad said, in the sense that it helped improve security in the West Bank. Civil institutions could resume services without fear of robbery or armed shakedowns, and judges could rule on criminal cases without intimidation. Israel, however, continued its military incursions into the urban areas of the West Bank.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Of the three moving parts of the security situation that Fayyad sought to bring under control—the streets, the gunmen, and the Israelis—his government had made progress on the first two. A reinvigorated Palestinian security corps had made its presence known on the streets, and many gunmen were coming into the fold. “There really was a complete turnaround,” Fayyad recalled. “We curbed the lawlessness, and the West Bank became a safe, peaceful place where people were comfortable being out on the streets at night.”

But the PA government was unable to control the third moving part: the Israelis. Despite the improved security situation, Israeli forces continued conducting incursions into the urban areas of the West Bank (Area A) both at night and in the daytime. In contravention of the arrangement Fayyad had struck to contain the gunmen, Israel continued going after militants in various West Bank cities—with the exception of those it had specifically agreed not to target—saying publicly that the Palestinians had not done enough to control militancy.³³ “Each incursion, each arrest, and especially each killing was a major setback for us,” Fayyad recalled.

Israeli forces regularly staged operations under other pretexts as well. For instance, in early 2008, Israeli security agents raided 14 money changers in cities throughout the West Bank, arresting five and confiscating more than US\$800,000 in cash. The Israelis said the money changers had been funneling funds to militant organizations—a claim the money changers denied.³⁴ Fayyad recalled that “sometimes Israel would send troops into West Bank cities just as a show of power.”

In Fayyad’s mind, if internal security improved in the West Bank, then there would eventually be a return to the terms of the Oslo Accords, whereby Palestine had sole responsibility for security affairs in Area A. “I thought if we improved security conditions enough, we could return to the status quo,” said Fayyad. “And the Israelis kept saying, ‘If you do more, we do less.’ But in reality, it didn’t matter what we did or did not do. I realized they would continue coming into Area A at will.”

In the larger context—that is, in terms of the quest for Palestinian statehood—the Cairo Agreement of 1995, which was part of the Oslo accords, had made Israel’s completion of the steps it was supposed to take to help arrive at what was later termed a two-state solution contingent on the Palestinian Authority’s ability to maintain internal security.³⁵ As long as Israel asserted that the West Bank was insecure, Israel had no obligation to facilitate the creation of an autonomous Palestinian state.

Fayyad said he repeatedly but to no avail stressed with Barak and other Israeli officials the need for restoration of the status quo ante, a return to the arrangements in place before the second intifada began in September 2000. That means the Israeli army would not enter Area A. He also pressed his American counterparts to raise the issue in high-level negotiations with Israel but said that

in his estimation, the United States did not prioritize it to a meaningful degree. “I think the US could have done more to press Israel,” he said.

As Fayyad saw it, the ongoing Israeli operations weakened the PA government politically and undermined the notion that it was improving security on behalf of Palestinians rather than Israelis. The West Bank still did not have sovereignty over its own security affairs, and at the same time, some Israelis were publicly praising the measures the PA had taken, which were giving the appearance of acting on behalf of Israel. “I remember being in the West Bank and listening to a segment on Radio Israel in which the announcer gave credit to our government for the fact that the level of violence against Israelis had dropped to virtually zero,” Fayyad recalled. “And so, if you’re Palestinian what you’re hearing is that the security turnaround is good for Israel.”

He continued: “Stopping the incursions would have been the single most important thing for giving political legitimacy to our government and to the vision of building a state. And it’s impossible that the Israelis did not know how important the issue was to us. It’s my opinion that they acted the way they did precisely to stymie our quest for statehood,” he said.

“What happened was that we succeeded in improving public safety. But we didn’t reap any political benefit from doing so.”

ASSESSING RESULTS

By all available evidence, public safety in the West Bank did improve after Fayyad’s government began addressing security in mid-2007.

For one, surveys of West Bank residents indicated that people were feeling safer. A June 2007 poll of West Bank residents conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research had found that less than 30% of respondents said they felt safe in their own homes. When the same poll was conducted again in December 2007, the proportion rose to 44%.³⁶ In December 2009, it was 63%.³⁷ Arab Barometer’s 2010 survey showed similar perceptions, finding that more than 61% of West Bank residents said they felt safe in their homes, 67% said it was possible to trust Security Services to a medium or great extent, and 58% said police assistance was relatively easy to obtain.³⁸

Solid information on actual levels of crime and violence was much harder to come by. The government did not collect data crime data in 2006 and 2007, the years that saw the Hamas election victory, the Gaza split, and a reportedly sharp increase in lawlessness. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics indicated that compared with 2005—the last full year of the second intifada—2008 saw fewer homicides and attempted murders, and fewer assaults, but theft persisted at about the same level. (figure 3) Assuming 2006 and 2007 saw surges in violence and lawlessness, the real magnitude of those changes would have been greater. The numbers very soon crept upwards again, but this pattern may have reflected an increase in reporting rates rather than actual crime. The perceptions recorded in the survey data were likely more dispositive of actual conditions than official reports.

Figure 3: West Bank Crime Trends

Main Indicators Related to Crime and Victimization in the West Bank 1999-2016																		
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Reported Criminal Offenses	12,212	9,761	8,257	5,055	8,202	11,127	13,705			16,220	16,402	17,779	16,790	18,330	25,225	26,356	27,522	29,960
Reported Murder\ Attempt	148	169	155	164	231	238	308			229	206	82	144	157	162	208	331	258
Reported Theft	1,932	1,583	1,368	1,234	1,870	2,709	2,934			2,938	3,003	2,542	2,534	2,418	4,265	3,990	4,053	4,544
Reported Assault	3,331	3,525	2,901	1,420	2,269	3,126	3,963			2,425	6,268	8,146	8,066	8,860	8,586	8,223	7,669	8,228
Persons in Custody	5,677	3,784	2,774	1,006	1,230	1,081	4,241	2,529	3,378	5,830	7,313	7,818	7,232	7,750	6,704	6,904	5,297	4,408
Convicted Offenders	987	902	639	203	312	347	823	671	877	1,766	3,332	4,702	5,442	7,060	5,902	5,683	4,309	3,747
Palestine Statistical Bureau																		

Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

Villages, towns, and cities began hosting public events again, resuming traditions that had lain dormant for several years. Bethlehem, Ramallah, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour, and other towns began putting up lights and decorations in December to celebrate Christmas with live music and other activities that brought people together. In July 2009, Nablus, once a city ridden with violence, decided to try entering *Guinness World Records* by baking the largest dish of *knafeh* on record. The pastry, 75 meters long and 1 meter wide, took 150 local bakers many days of preparation. US consul general Walles and other diplomats attended the event, as did Fayyad, who recalled unveiling the pastry and then melting into the crowd without a security detail.

Though public safety generally improved, the success of particular measures was mixed. The government had gotten gunmen off the streets and became able to disarm and secure Israeli pardons for hundreds of them. However, as time went on, not all accepted the deal, and some who joined up to serve under the new rules continued causing trouble. Israel continued to kill or arrest several. In 2011, it placed Zakariah Zubeidi, a onetime Jenin gunman, back on a wanted list, and he was arrested in May 2019.

When it came to professionalizing and strengthening Security Services, the government made progress. According to a 2009 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace report, in one year the government reduced the “hugely bloated” Palestinian security services payroll by around 30,000.³⁹ The government was also able to “curtail the predominance of Fatah members among recruits in several [Security Services] branches and improve internal coordination and information flows.”

There were also setbacks in each of those areas. Reducing the size of the force carried political costs. Fayyad recalled that removing the 18,000 Fatah-affiliated recruits who had been illegally added to the payroll hardened members of the party leadership against him. Similarly, pushing officers into early retirement generated some ill will. “Many in the older generation saw their security positions as reward for fighting for the cause, whereas others saw being in command as part of their political identity,” former presidential adviser al-Omari said. At the time there were few jobs, so those who retired could not easily take up private-sector employment to supplement their pensions. Nor were the leaders completely happy with this arrangement. “If you retire my folks,

then you are weakening me,” al-Omari said, paraphrasing the remarks some security chiefs had made to him.

Though some new recruits may have been unaffiliated with a political party, partisanship in the services persisted. For instance, during the opening months of the Civil Police deployment in Nablus, more than 1,500 people affiliated with Hamas were arrested—not all of them clearly engaged in criminal activity.⁴⁰ The other services, too, continued meting out retributions against Hamas members. Human Rights Watch reported that the website of the new Jericho security service academy hailed the new cadets as “the vanguard of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas’s campaign to prevent the West Bank from falling to Hamas.”⁴¹

By late 2008, evidence of the struggle to align the services with the Fayyad government’s vision had hit the media, much of it part of a narrative Hamas promoted, but some of it also based on fact. Human rights groups and parliamentarians formed a committee to investigate whether the Security Services disproportionately arrested residents who supported Hamas or Islamist parties but had no links to militias and whether prisoners were subject to torture. Although the president said he approved of the group’s mission, Security Services declined to cooperate.⁴²

And finally, though Fayyad’s structure of a biweekly joint chiefs security cabinet meeting did improve coordination, authority over Security Services never became institutionalized and remained divided between the prime minister and the president. Under the Basic Law, which was tantamount to a constitution, the interior ministry had purview over the internal security services (mainly civil police and preventive security), whereas National Security Forces and General Intelligence reported to the president. “The workarounds we relied on could go only so far,” Fayyad said. Over time, the president began to exert more control over the General Intelligence Service and the National Security Forces. Military intelligence acted autonomously and reported to the president. Preventive Security reported to both the prime minister and the president. Those shifts in lines of authority confounded coordination and undermined the strength and effectiveness of the interior ministry.

REFLECTIONS

Overall, Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad’s efforts to overhaul security in the West Bank improved public safety and made key reforms to the Security Services, but those efforts fell short in meaningfully and sustainably resolving the systemic issues that bedeviled Palestine’s security situation: partisanship, lack of institutional chain of command, and, most consequentially, the inability to have sovereignty over its own internal security.

These limitations stemmed from circumstances beyond Fayyad’s purview. There was little Fayyad could do prevent Israeli forces from entering the West Bank’s cities, for instance.

In order to implement changes to Security Services, Fayyad had been a hands-on leader. He would later recall that he was a strong believer in the power of personal connections, and indeed, much of the progress he made—whether driving reform within the services or persuading gunmen to lay down their arms or striking a deal with Israel—came from personal interactions and connections. Some things one could not delegate.

As former presidential adviser Ghaith al-Omari and journalist Neri Zilber would note in a 2018 report for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy research group, that level of personal involvement, though “politically necessary,” may have “in practice undermined the push to institutionalize security under the Interior Ministry. For their part, the security chiefs sought to develop (or uphold) direct relations with both Fayyad and Abbas, both of whom indulged this tendency. . . . This arrangement worked while the relationship between Fayyad and Abbas remained strong, and the . . . chiefs deferred to the prime minister. But when the Abbas–Fayyad relationship frayed . . . the Interior Ministry lacked the institutional power to maintain a coordinating and supervisory role.”⁴³

The fundamental problem, Fayyad recalled, was that the purview of the interior ministry was not specified or codified in law. “So, using personal connections was not just politically necessary or expedient,” Fayyad recalled. “It was the only possible workaround to get anything done.”

Fayyad treated security as a management problem to be solved with incremental, technical reforms. “I had never fired a gun in my life and knew nothing about the caliber of a weapon or what it was like to fight in battle,” Fayyad recalled. “But I did know management, and if you can run a company and understand organizational operations, then you can run security.”

He said he opted for pragmatism, not grand strategy. “I am a fundamentalist about our rights as a people, as a nation. But I am very pragmatic when it comes to getting the job done,” he said. “My test is whether we are going to be better off if I take a particular step than if I don’t.” That meant that instead of trying to completely overhaul or impose accountability on the Security Services, which were riven with partisanship and many of whose members were part of the crime problem that plagued the West Bank, he sought to look to the future and demonstrate to the public that a uniformed police presence could lead to a better existence. Once the immediate problem was under control, then one could step back and think about the larger strategy and the entrenched problems that take longer to address.

The approach was indeed pragmatic, but it meant leaving a number of serious issues, such as accountability for human rights performance and politicization, to be dealt with later. The challenge was that these issues were central to the political dynamics that stymied the proper functioning of the security apparatus as well as Fayyad’s ability to build internal support for his vision of a Palestinian state.

Regardless of Fayyad's approach, as long as Israel denied the Palestinian Authority sovereignty over its internal security, there was little chance the state-building project would achieve its objectives. The idea that the West Bank could have a functional security apparatus that controlled the security affairs of its territory without having sovereignty first had been disproved.

In a statement that summed up the challenge, Moustafa Barghouti, head of the independent bloc in the legislature, said in 2007: "In my opinion, effective security institutions cannot be built unless three conditions are met: first, the number of security institutions and personnel within them have to be reduced; second, their redundancy and partisan nature need to be eliminated; and third, the state has to have sovereignty, meaning that there is an independent state firstly and after that a genuine security apparatus can be built. The idea that the Palestinian people under occupation can provide security for those occupying them has proved a failure. Reviving it now will only lead to more disappointment, because it is not objectively possible."⁴⁴

References

¹ Mohammed Assadi, "Factional battles kill 616 Palestinians since 2006," Reuters, June 6, 2007, retrieved April 22, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-palestinians-fighting/factional-battles-kill-616-palestinians-since-2006-idUSL0691117420070606>

² Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research. Mid-June 2007 poll conducted just before Hamas asserted control of the Gaza Strip. Accessed at <https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/231>

³ Roland Friedrich and Arnold Luethold, eds., *Entry-Points to Palestinian Security Sector Reform*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2007, say: "Massive recruitment into the PNA branches in Gaza, the incorporation of members of the Al-Aqsa Brigades and the creation of the Executive Force have brought the number of security personnel up to circa 85,000 (West Bank: 30,000; Gaza: 55,000) in May 2007, but no reliable data are available regarding the distribution of the newly-recruited personnel"; p. 159. See also Yezid Sayigh, "Fixing Broken Windows?: Security Sector Reform in Palestine, Lebanon, and Yemen," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 3, 2009, p. 3.

⁴ Roland Friedrich and Arnold Luethold, eds., *Entry-Points to Palestinian Security Sector Reform*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2007, p. 154.

⁵ Slightly reorganized quote interview 10, p. 12

⁶ Kimberly Marten, "Reformed or Deformed? Patronage Politics, International Influence, and the Palestinian Authority Security Forces," *International Peacekeeping*, 2024;21(2):181-197, doi: 10.1080/13533312.2014.910404

⁷ Descriptions of the informal division of responsibility vary, and the actual lines of influence shifted over time. US Department of State Country Reports on Terrorism 2008, "West Bank and Gaza," April 30, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122433.htm>;

International Crisis Group, *Ruling Palestine II: The West Bank Model?* Middle East Report No. 79, July 17, 2008,

http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/middle_east_north_africa/arab_israeli_conflict/79_ruling_palestine_ii_the_west_bank_model.pdf; International Crisis Group, *Palestine Divided*, Middle East Briefing No. 25, December 18, 2008,

http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/middle_east_north_africa/arab_israeli_conflict/b25_palestine_divided.pdf; Mohammed Najib, "Palestinian Security Forces Must Aspire to Serve the State," *Al Arabiya News*, May 18, 2009.

⁸ Ari Kerkkänen, Hannu Rantanen, and Jari Sundqvist, “Building Capacity for the Palestinian Civil Police,” *CMC Finland Civilian Crisis Management Studies* 2008;1(3):19.

⁹ Ahmad Hussein (pseudonym), “Reconstituting the Palestinian National Authority Security Organisations.” In Roland Friedrich and Arnold Luethold, eds., *Entry-Points to Palestinian Security Sector Reform*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2007, p. 51.

¹⁰ Ahmad Hussein (pseudonym), “Reconstituting the Palestinian National Authority Security Organisations.” In Roland Friedrich and Arnold Luethold, eds., *Entry-Points to Palestinian Security Sector Reform*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2007, p. 60.

¹¹ The reform plan also included both replacing some senior security leaders—which Abbas had already done—and passing a security pension law.

¹² SF interview 10, p. 14. How big were the security forces overall?

¹³ SF interview 10, p. 13.

¹⁴ SF interview 10, p. 25.

¹⁵ Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research poll mid-June 2007 (includes West Bank and Gaza). Accessed at <https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/231>

¹⁶ Madeline Kristoff, “Policing in Palestine: Analyzing the EU Police Reform Mission in the West Bank,” SSR Issue Paper Number 7, Center for International Governance Innovation, Waterloo, Canada, February 2012, p. 5. See also Jim Zanotti, *U.S. Security Assistance to the Palestinian Authority*, Congressional Research Service, R40664, January 8, 2010, p. 8.

¹⁷ Madeline Kristoff, “Policing in Palestine: Analyzing the EU Police Reform Mission in the West Bank,” SSR Issue Paper Number 7, Center for International Governance Innovation, Waterloo, Canada, February 2012, Kristoff p. 8.

¹⁸ Data from police chief Hazam Attallah as reported by J. D. Crouch II, Montgomery C. Meigs, and Walter B. Slocombe, *Security First: U.S. Priorities in Israeli–Palestinian Peacemaking*, Washington Institute Strategic Report, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2008, p. 11.

¹⁹ SF interview 10, p. 26.

²⁰ Population as recorded in the 2007 census for Nablus locality within Nablus governorate. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, “Main Indicators by Locality Type—Population, Housing and Establishment Census 2007,” 2011. Accessed at <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/PCBS/Downloads/book1529.pdf>

²² “Palestinians deploy extra 300 police to Nablus,” *Tehran Times*, November 3, 2007. Accessed at <https://www.tehrantimes.com/print/156322/Palestinians-deploy-extra-300-police-to-Nablus>

²³ Lightly modified at end. Interview 10, p. 29.

²⁴ Isabel Kershner, “Volatile City Tests Palestinian Police, and Peace Hopes,” *New York Times*, November 14, 2007.

²⁵ Associated Press, “Top U.S. Diplomat: PA Security Forces Have Improved Order in Nablus,” *Haaretz*, November 14, 2007, and Wafa Amr, “Diplomat sees improved security in West Bank city,” Reuters, November 14, 2007. Accessed at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-palestinians-nablus/diplomat-sees-improved-security-in-west-bank-city-idUSL1488750720071114>

²⁶ Jim Zanotti, *U.S. Security Assistance to the Palestinian Authority*, Congressional Research Service, R40664, January 8, 2010, p. 13. Accessed at <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/R40664.pdf>

²⁷ Jim Zanotti, *U.S. Security Assistance to the Palestinian Authority*, Congressional Research Service, R40664, January 8, 2010, p. 16.

²⁸ Jim Zanotti, *U.S. Security Assistance to the Palestinian Authority*, Congressional Research Service, R40664, January 8, 2010, p. 18.

²⁹ Jim Zanotti, *U.S. Security Assistance to the Palestinian Authority*, Congressional Research Service, R40664, January 8, 2010, pp. 21-22.

³⁰ Jim Zanotti, *U.S. Security Assistance to the Palestinian Authority*, Congressional Research Service, R40664, January 8, 2010, p. 22.

³¹ For example, the German government invested in Cinema Jenin, a movie theater that opened in the Jenin refugee camp, Zubeidi's home, in 2010. Zubeidi's parents had once used theater as a form of resistance, and the Fayyad government began promoting a similar campaign in 2010.

³² Neri Zilber and Ghaith Al-Omari, *State with No Army, Army with No State: Evolution of the Palestinian Authority Security Forces, 1994–2018*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 27, 2018, p. 39.

³³ "Israel closes Gaza crossings after rocket fire," MSNBC, June 25, 2008, retrieved April 26, 2022.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20080627111738/http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/25346051/>

³⁴ "Israeli troops raid West Bank money changers," Reuters, February 12, 2008, retrieved April 26, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-palestinians-israel-cash/israeli-troops-raid-west-bank-money-changers-idUKL1281754420080212>

³⁵ Madeline Kristoff, "Policing in Palestine: Analyzing the EU Police Reform Mission in the West Bank," SSR Issue Paper Number 7, Center for International Governance Innovation, Waterloo, Canada, February 2012, p. 4.

³⁶ Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, Public Opinion Poll No. 25 2007 (September), accessed at

<https://pcpsr.org/en/node/349>

³⁷ Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, Public Opinion Poll No. 34 2009 (December), accessed at <http://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/219>

³⁸ Arab Barometer Wave 2, 2010-2011. Computed from data accessed at <https://www.arabbarometer.org/surveys/arab-barometer-wave-ii/>

³⁹ Yezid Sayigh, "Fixing Broken Windows: Security Sector Reform in Palestine, Lebanon, and Yemen," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009.

⁴⁰ Neri Zilber and Ghaith Al-Omari, *State with No Army, Army with No State: Evolution of the Palestinian Authority Security Forces, 1994–2018*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 27, 2018, p. 57.

⁴¹ Human Rights Watch. Internal Fight Palestinian Abuses in Gaza and the West Bank. July 29, 2008. Accessed at <https://www.hrw.org/report/2008/07/29/internal-fight/palestinian-abuses-gaza-and-west-bank>

⁴² Ahmad Budeiri, "Wave of 'political' West Bank arrests," BBC Arabic Service, October 22, 2008. Accessed at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7683951.stm

⁴³ Neri Zilber and Ghaith Al-Omari, *State with No Army, Army with No State: Evolution of the Palestinian Authority Security Forces, 1994–2018*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 27, 2018, p. 40.

⁴⁴ As quoted in Arab Reform Bulletin November 2007, Volume 5, Issue 9.



Innovations for Successful Societies makes its case studies and other publications available to all at no cost under the guidelines of the Terms of Use listed below. The ISS Web repository is intended to serve as an idea bank, enabling practitioners and scholars to evaluate the pros and cons of different reform strategies and weigh the effects of context. ISS welcomes readers' feedback, including suggestions of additional topics and questions to be considered, corrections, and how case studies are being used: iss@princeton.edu.

Terms of Use

Before using any materials downloaded from the Innovations for Successful Societies website, users must read and accept the terms on which we make these items available. The terms constitute a legal agreement between any person who seeks to use information available at successfulsocieties.princeton.edu and Princeton University.

In downloading or otherwise employing this information, users indicate that:

- a. They understand that the materials downloaded from the website are protected under United States Copyright Law (Title 17, United States Code). This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.
- b. They will use the material only for educational, scholarly, and other noncommercial purposes.
- c. They will not sell, transfer, assign, license, lease, or otherwise convey any portion of this information to any third party. Republication or display on a third party's website requires the express written permission of the Princeton University Innovations for Successful Societies program or the Princeton University Library.
- d. They understand that the quotations used in the case study reflect the interviewees' personal points of view. Although all efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the information collected, Princeton University does not warrant the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or other characteristics of any material available online.
- e. They acknowledge that the content and/or format of the archive and the site may be revised, updated, or otherwise modified from time to time.
- f. They accept that access to and use of the archive are at their own risk. They shall not hold Princeton University liable for any loss or damages resulting from the use of information in the archive. Princeton University assumes no liability for any errors or omissions with respect to the functioning of the archive.
- g. In all publications, presentations, or other communications that incorporate or otherwise rely on information from this archive, they will acknowledge that such information was obtained through the Innovations for Successful Societies website. Our status and that of any identified contributors as the authors of material must always be acknowledged and a full credit given as follows:

Author(s) or Editor(s) if listed, Full title, Year of publication, Innovations for Successful Societies, Princeton University, <http://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/>.

