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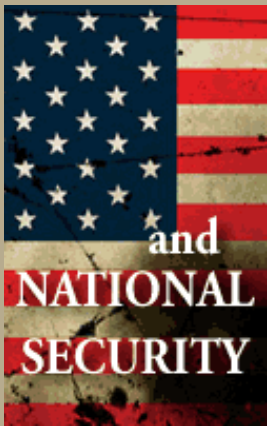
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WORLDNETDAILY EXCLUSIVE

FROM WND'S JERUSALEM BUREAU Prime Minister **Olmert** accessory to **murder**?

Politicians demand probe following WND story rifles given to Abbas used to attack Jews

Posted: June 19, 2006
1:00 a.m. Eastern

By Aaron Klein
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TEL AVIV – Prime Minister **Ehud Olmert** and other Israeli officials should be tried as **accessories** to **murder** for facilitating the transfer in recent days of a cache of American weapons to Force 17, the presidential guard units of Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas.

Abu Yousuf, a senior member of Force 17, told WND in an [exclusive interview last week](#) the weapons will be shared with the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades terror group and utilized for attacks against Jews. He hinted the weapons already were used in two shooting attacks the past few days that killed one Israeli civilian and wounded another.



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Many Force 17 gunmen are well known to also be members of the Al Aqsa Brigades, an offshoot of Abbas' Fatah party that is responsible for scores of recent suicide bombings, shooting attacks and rocket firings at Israel.

WND broke the story the weapons transfer was coordinated by the United States. Palestinian officials said Abbas quietly requested the weapons from the U.S. in talks that involved Israel, Jordan and Egypt.

The weapons cache included 3,000 American-made M-16 assault rifles and over one million rounds of ammunition, Palestinian officials involved in the transfer told WND. Media reports had stated the transfer, which was credited to Israel, consisted of 370 assault rifles and an unspecified amount of bullets.

Olmert announced last week he had approved the shipment of weapons and ammunition, explaining the transfer was meant to bolster Abbas' Fatah party in recent clashes against Hamas. The shipment reportedly originated in Jordan and needed Israel's approval for transport.

"I did this because we are running out of time and we need to help Abu Mazen," **Olmert** told reporters this past Tuesday.

Yesterday, the leadership of Manhigut Yehudit, a faction of the opposition Likud party, announced in a statement it "sees the prime minister, the defense minister, the justices of the High Court of Justice, and any officer and soldier involved in the transfer of weapons to the murderer Abu Mazen (Abbas) and his gang as **accessories** to the **murder** of Jews."

The faction called on all Israeli officials involved in the weapons transfer to be tried in court.

Officials involved in the weapons transfer told WND the cache was driven through Jordan to the Allenby Bridge, the border station between Jordan

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and Israel. The officials said a U.S. government representative was present at the Allenby Bridge and oversaw the transfer of the shipment across the border, where it was then driven by a convoy protected by the Israeli Defense Forces and delivered to Force 17 representatives in Ramallah and at the Erez Crossing, the main checkpoint between Israel and the Gaza Strip.

It was unclear as of press time if the American weapons originated from U.S. military stockpiles in Iraq, which borders Jordan.

Abbas guard: New weapons to be fired at Jews

Force 17 senior member Abu Yousuf told WND the weapons his group received will be fired at Israelis.

"These weapons will not be used in an internal war but against Israelis," he said. "Force 17 is proud that we were the first to lead the Palestinian people during tough times such as resistance operations [against the Israeli army during large-scale operations in northern Samaria in 2002]. We will also be the first to lead the Palestinians in the current struggle against Israeli occupation."

Several Force 17 members, including Yousuf, also are members of the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. Yousuf himself previously participated in anti-Israel terrorism, including recent shootings, attacks last month against Israeli forces operating in Ramallah and a shooting attack in northern Samaria in December 2000 that killed Benjamin Kahane, leader of the ultranationalist Kahane Chai organization.

After the Kahane **murder**, Yousuf was extended refuge by Yasser Arafat to live in the late PLO leader's Ramallah compound, widely known as the Muqata. Yousuf still lives in the compound.

Abbas last week appointed Mahmoud Damra to head Force 17. Damr is on Israel's most wanted list of terrorists. He was offered shelter in Arafat's

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compound in Ramallah in 2002 after Israel accused him of masterminding a string of terrorist attacks.

Israeli security officials say that since September 2000, Damra has led a terror cell based in Ramallah that has carried out deadly attacks, including shootings at Israeli vehicles, attacks against Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria and the planting of roadside bombs.

Yousuf told WorldNetDaily Israel facilitated the transfer of Israel transferred the weapons to his Force 17 unit "for its own political purposes. We are not concerned with the reasons. The weapons will not be used against our brothers, only [against] Israelis."

Sources close to the Al Aqsa Brigades told WND the assault rifles transferred to Force 17 already were used in two separate anti-Israel shooting attacks in recent days. One attack killed a 35-year-old Israeli Arab on a major West Bank highway on the outskirts of Jerusalem this past Sunday. Israeli security officials say the shooters likely mistook the victim for a Jew. The second attack, which occurred Tuesday on the same highway, lightly wounded an Israeli.

Yousuf refused to confirm whether the new weapons were used in the recent spate of highway shootings, but he hinted the information was accurate. He told WND members of Al Aqsa Brigades live with him in the Muqata and that "resistance tools" are shared regularly.

The IDF yesterday arrested a Force 17 member, Nasser Abin al-Hafez, in connection with the shootings. Al-Hafez was found in Ramallah near the Muqata.

Also yesterday Hamas condemned the U.S. for transferring the weapons to Abbas' Force 17. Hamas has been engaged the past few weeks in intense street battles with Fatah. Hamas demanded the Palestinian Legislative Council launch an investigation into the weapons transfer.

Hamas in a statement called the weapons transfer a "Zionist-American plot aimed at igniting a civil war in the Palestinian Authority by arming one side in the Palestinian conflict under the guise of arming the Presidential Guard."

The statement said the arms transfer was conducted under the IDF's full authorization.

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*[Aaron Klein](#) is WorldNetDaily's Jerusalem bureau chief, whose past interview subjects have included Yasser Arafat, **Ehud** Barak, Mahmoud al-Zahar and leaders of the Taliban.*

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