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PLO'S WAR BASE MOVES TO IRAQ

By MICHAEL J. BERLIN
YASSER Arafat has shifted his PLO military operations center from Tunisia to Iraq. Western intelligence sources told The Post yesterday.

The shift was completed Nov. 1 with the transfer of the last 150 PLO members by plane from Tunis to a military camp outside the capital city of Baghdad.

The move came after Israeli warplanes raided PLO headquarters outside the Tunisian capital last month in retaliation for the murder of three Israelis by PLO agents in Cyprus.

The Tunisian government of Habib Bourguiba then gave Arafat a list of PLO fighters who were ordered out of the country.

The Tunisians, the sources said, told Arafat that only the PLO's political leadership and an administrative crew could remain at his headquarters near Tunis.

Before the Nov. 1 shift of the group that runs military operations, hundreds of armed Palestinian fighters had been shifted to Iraq from Tunisia and Jordan.

The government of Jordan's King Hussein ordered the expulsion of Abu Tayeb, the commander of the Force 17 terror squad, and other PLO members, fearing Israeli retaliation for operations they had staged, the sources said.

Arafat still maintains a military operations base in Jordan, but it is limited to actions on the Israeli-occupied West Bank, it was learned.

All other PLO terror strikes likely are to be run from the base in the Iraqi town of Mousayed, which is south of Baghdad.



Associated Press

Sidearm at the hip, Yasser Arafat fields questions at a press conference yesterday in Cairo, where he met with President Hosni Mubarak.

Iraq was also the haven for Mohammed Abbas, the Palestinian official released by Italy despite a U.S. charge that he masterminded the October hijack of the cruise ship Achille Lauro.

Abbas was on the

Egyptian plane that carried the four hijackers and was diverted to Sicily by American warplanes.

Although the Palestinians who captured the cruise ship were arrested, Abbas was allowed to ~~leave for Tunis and then Iraq.~~

ARAFAT: ONLY PLACE FOR TERROR IS ISRAEL

CAIRO — PLO chief Yasser Arafat yesterday bowed to Egyptian demands and renounced all acts of terrorism.

However, he also reaffirmed the PLO's commitment to armed struggle in Israeli-occupied Arab lands.

Ending three days of talks with President Hosni Mubarak and Egyptian officials, Arafat said:

"The PLO declares its condemnation of all acts of terrorism, whether by states, individuals or groups, against the innocent and the unarmed anywhere."

But he added: "The PLO affirms the right of the people to resist Israeli occupation of their land by all available methods, with the aim of realizing a withdrawal."

Some 45,000 Jewish settlers live on the West Bank of the Jordan River, seized by Israel from Jordan in the Six-Day War in 1967.

An Israeli foreign ministry spokesman said: "It is simply an indication that the PLO is going to continue terrorism."