Palestinian Leader Yasser Arafat Essay, Research Paper

Palestinian Leader Yasser ArafatThe Middle East, once an area of severe fighting and active terrorism,is now free of violence due to the actions of one man, Yasser Arafat.Yasser Arafat has helped create a place where the Palestine and Israelipeople can live together. This peaceful environment did not come easilythough. It took years of work and controversy for Yasser to make the twoArab nations live peacefully together. Through Yasser Arafat’s successfulleadership qualities, the once warring nations of Palestine and Israel nowaccept each other and subside peacefully together. Yasser Arafat was born in the city of Jerusalem on February 17,1929. He fled Jerusalem after the establishment of the Israel nation in 1948.He attended Cairo University in Egypt, where he became president of theUnion of Palestinian students and studied engineering. While in Cairo, hetrained as a fedayeen, the Egyptian word for commando and worked with aconstruction firm. He also studied guerrilla tactic and joined the Egyptianarmy. Yasser then moved to Kuwait and founded his first rebel group offedayeen soldiers on raids deep into Israeli territory. His bold actions gainedhim respect among his Arab piers. In 1959, Arafat established another anti-Israeli guerrilla group calledal-Fatah. This was the largest of the Palestinian guerrilla units dedicated toundermining and overtaking Israel. There were many of these guerrillagroups in the Middle East so they decided to form into one unifiedorganization. This created the Palestinian Liberation Organization,commonly called the PLO. Formed in 1964, Arafat was elected chairman in1969. The PLO acted as a government to the Palestinian people but withone exception, it had no territory to govern. Arafat’s establishment andleadership of these essential beginning organizations began his success as aleader of his people. As leader of the PLO, Arafat devoted his life to gaining a permanenthomeland for his people. Throughout the 1970’s, the PLO was associated

with terrorism. Yasser and the PLO’s many affiliates used terrorism topersuade Israeli leader Yitzhak Rabin to grant land to the Palestinians. Oneof the affiliated groups, Black September as they were called, wereresponsible for the killing of Israeli athletes at the Munich summer Olympicsin 1972. Arafat’s dedication to do whatever he can do to better his peopleslives is another reason of how he is a great leader. Arab nations such as Jordan and Lebanon were used as bases for thePLO to launch attacks from against Israel. They were driven out of Jordanin 1970 and out of Lebanon in 1982. Arafat then set up headquarters inTunisia. Arafat did not abandon his leadership position even after beingfaced with relocating many times. He wisely chose his headquarterspositions. These wise decisions aided to the success of his leadership. After finding the violence and terrorism would not make the Israelislisten to their plea of getting their homeland back, Arafat had to use a newtool of persuasion. This time he chose compromise. He and the PLOdeclared Israel an independent state, renounced all of it’s terrorism, acceptedUnited Nations Resolution 242 and acknowledged Israelis right to exist.This opened the door for further negations in the future. Arafat’s willingnessto hide his pride is another example of great leadership qualities. As the PLO gained willingness to compromise, so did Israel. Arafatand the PLO agreed to negotiate with Israel in 1993. Secret meetings,moderated by Norwegian foreign minister Johan Jorgen Holst, were held inOslo, Norway throughout 1993. The result was an Israeli-Palestinianaccord, signed in Washington on September 13, 1993. For the first time,Israel recognized the PLO. Israel granted the PLO self-rule in the Gaza stripand Jericho. This accord was the beginning to a permanent agreement madein 1995. In recognition of this, Arafat shared a Nobel Peace Prize withIsraeli leader Yitzhak Rabin. Through Yasser Arafat’s efforts, both violent and peaceful, thePalestine and Israeli people can now live a life of peace together.

348