

## **Can the Palestinian Authority's Fatah Forces Retake Gaza? Obstacles and Opportunities**

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- Israel's recent military operation in Gaza has raised the issue of the possible return of Fatah to Gaza. However, a previous U.S.-funded and armed Fatah security regime in Gaza had entirely failed. In fact, the PA in the West Bank has offered safe haven to terror groups, and the PA Interior Ministry pays monthly salaries to Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades terrorists.
- Today, some PA forces are far more professional, having been equipped and trained by U.S. security officials in Jordan. However, these forces are still in their infancy. They have less than one year's experience, number fewer than 1,500 men, and lack a central command structure.
- It is widely believed that the PA in Ramallah only pays the salaries of civil service employees in Gaza to encourage them to stay at home to avoid working with Hamas. However, PA Prime Minister Fayyad also pays the monthly salaries of between 6,000 and 12,000 Hamas Executive Force operatives in Gaza, in line with the 2007 Mecca national unity agreement.
- Former PA Civil Affairs Minister Mohammed Dahlan, whose forces were routed by Hamas in June 2007, has re-emerged as a leading candidate to command Fatah's security forces, particularly to secure the Gaza crossing points into Egypt and Israel. Palestinian documents captured in 2002 revealed Dahlan's involvement in major racketeering, including revenues from cigarettes, cement, and the collection of illegal crossing fees. Dahlan's personal wealth has been estimated at well over \$120 million.
- The U.S. must avoid the temptation of once again blindly relying on Fatah as the sole security and reconstruction subcontractor for Gaza. The Obama administration must implement tough and verifiable directives to facilitate internal Palestinian housecleaning: no militias, good governance, complete accountability, full transparency, effectiveness, and zero tolerance for corruption, gangsterism, and terror within PA ranks.

### **Overview**

Israel's three-week military operation in Gaza in December-January has raised the issue of the possible return of Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas and his Fatah party to Gaza to replace the Hamas regime. The Israelis, Americans, the major European powers, and especially the Egyptians favor Abbas' forces regaining control not only over Gaza's border

crossings, but also over the entire Strip. However, international demands for Fatah's return to Gaza face seemingly intractable obstacles.

A previous U.S.-funded and armed Fatah security regime in Gaza had entirely failed. Years of massive corruption and gangsterism by Fatah security forces resulted in an Iranian-financed, armed and trained Islamic emirate ruled by Hamas. Abbas had had the full backing of the international community to turn Gaza into the Hong Kong of the Middle East. Instead, Fatah collapsed under a Hamas assault in summer 2007.

Currently, the U.S.-sponsored Fatah forces in the West Bank are still ill-prepared for the task of taking control in Gaza. Two modest paramilitary forces have been trained to police crime and enforce public order, but not to uproot terror groups. In fact, the PA has increasingly offered safe haven to terror groups. Brig.-Gen. Radhi Assida, the PA National Security Forces (NSF) commander in Jenin, revealed to the Palestinian website Maan on January 24, 2009, that PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad's NSF had agreed to provide protection to four senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorists wanted by Israel. Assida also confirmed that PIJ operatives continue to receive monthly salaries from the PA Interior Ministry, just like their colleagues in the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, thousands of Fatah security operatives in Gaza and the West Bank have realigned their loyalties away from Abbas and Fayyad. Other armed militias are currently less active or dormant but remain armed and intact. Some local militia commanders continue mafia-like criminal enterprises while simultaneously working as local commanders in PA security forces, thereby continuing to undermine public trust.

In post-war Gaza, Fatah forces would face a wall of opposition from Hamas and many other Jihadi groups. Hamas' military leadership remains intact, as do most of its terror capabilities. Hamas continues to enjoy popular support from a majority of Palestinians, particularly those living in Gaza, despite public anger over the war. Fatah will be hard-pressed to re-take the Gaza Strip because the party has lost credibility among Palestinians, largely because of its failure to reform itself and get rid of icons of corruption among the top brass.<sup>2</sup>

### **International Calls for Fatah's Return to Gaza**

Israel's military campaign to destroy the Hamas army and terror infrastructure in Gaza triggered broad international efforts to implement a cease-fire that would include the return of Palestinian Authority forces to Gaza. The international community appears determined to help stop weapons smuggling into Gaza and reopen the Gaza border crossings to Egypt and Israel and restore a Gaza-West Bank link.<sup>3</sup>

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak is backing the return of Abbas' forces to the crossings in line with the U.S.-brokered 2005 border crossing agreements.<sup>4</sup> He hosted the major European powers at Sharm al-Sheik on January 18, 2009, immediately following the Gaza cease-fire, to discuss new security measures to stop Hamas weapons smuggling beneath the Egyptian-Gaza border and to secure the flow of humanitarian aid via the crossings.

The UN Security Council approved Resolution 1860 that explicitly called for restoring the 2005 Gaza crossing agreement between the PA and Israel and affirming Gaza as an integral part of PA-controlled territory.<sup>5</sup> Abbas traveled to the UN in New York to support the resolution.<sup>6</sup> PA officials in the West Bank also indicated a readiness to send forces to Gaza, but noted, “It depends on whether Israel manages to get rid of the Hamas regime.”<sup>7</sup> U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told the UN Security Council that stabilizing Gaza will “require a principled resolution of the political challenges in Gaza that reestablishes ultimately the Palestinian Authority’s legitimate control and facilitates the normal operation of all crossings.”<sup>8</sup> President Barak Obama has called for the reopening of the Gaza border crossings, while making his first overseas phone call to a foreign leader to PA Chairman Abbas to express support.<sup>9</sup>

### **Which “Fatah Forces” are Jerusalem, Washington, and Cairo Counting On?**

The convergence of opposition to Hamas in Washington, Cairo, Riyadh, Jerusalem, and Ramallah could serve as a pretext for regime change in Gaza. However, international hopes for such a change may be premature since the PA’s security forces do not constitute a single, professional, experienced and disciplined military organization under a centralized chain of command. Rather, Fatah security forces are divided into several paramilitary groups in the West Bank and Gaza, some more reformed and effective than others.

Since Oslo, Fatah’s multiple security forces constitute several militias that were originally established and commanded by Yasser Arafat, who employed Palestinian “graduates” of Israeli prisons and others who lacked any formal police or security training.<sup>10</sup> Today, however, some of the PA forces are far more professional, having been equipped and trained by U.S. security officials in Jordan.<sup>11</sup> PA National Security Forces report to Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, while Mahmoud Abbas controls the Presidential Guard, a smaller force that protects the Abbas regime and functions as a police force. However, these forces are still in their infancy. They have less than one year’s experience, number fewer than 1,500 men, and lack a chief of staff and an overall “top-down” central command structure. Fayyad’s NSF has not yet demonstrated the ability or will to uproot both active and dormant terror groups and militias.<sup>12</sup>

In Gaza, Fatah retains a residual, yet completely decentralized, force infrastructure of competing security militias that are not loyal to Abbas but to local leaders, militia commanders, and crime families.<sup>13</sup>

One of the problems in creating a robust PA military force large enough to reassert control in Gaza is that Palestinian commanders do not automatically enjoy the loyalty of their soldiers. Palestinian allegiances are invariably influenced by Arab cultural affiliations to clan, family, town, neighborhood, and political group. Many Palestinian NSF officers have family members and close relatives that are employed by competing security organizations or armed militias, which makes all-out armed confrontation highly unlikely. That explains in part the Fatah collapse in June 2007, as its forces were unable to confront their brothers, cousins, and uncles in Hamas.

## **Fatah Forces in Gaza**

In Gaza, tens of thousands of former Fatah security personnel and activists maintain loyalties to various former PA security forces and commanders, such as the deposed former strongman Mohammed Dahlan. Some former Fatah security personnel have found employment with the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, as well as Hamas and local crime families such as the Dughmush and al-Samhadana clans, and local al-Qaeda-inspired Salafist groups such as *Jaish al-Islam*, *Fatah al-Islam*, and *Jaish al-Umma*. The Fatah umbrella in Gaza also includes a number of smaller militias such as the Abu Rish Brigades, which had broken away from Fatah's Preventive Security forces.

Some of the fourteen competing security organizations Arafat had established after the signing of the Oslo agreements were disbanded in 2005 under the direction of the U.S. Special Security Coordinator General Keith Dayton, who moved to enforce Quartet Roadmap reforms. However, the unofficial militias have never been uprooted or disbanded. Instead, militia members froze their activities by agreement with the PA in exchange for compensation from the PA and clemency from Israel. Some local militia group commanders were even integrated into the "reformed" security forces under U.S. supervision, as ranking officers, while they continued to extort and threaten local businessmen.<sup>14</sup>

In 2009, thousands of "unemployed" Fatah militiamen, such as members of the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades, still hold weapons that they conceal in their homes. In their current dormant status, they also continue to receive monthly salaries from the Palestinian Authority on the instructions of Abbas and Fayyad,<sup>15</sup> who are eager to avoid conflict with these groups and to protect themselves from the death threats made by the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades and Hamas against them.<sup>16</sup>

## **Hamas Threatens, Fatah Pays**

The enmity between Fatah and Hamas is far greater than Palestinian hatred of Israel.<sup>17</sup> Nasser Juma'a, a Palestinian Legislative Council member from Nablus, described Hamas as "insects" in the final week of Israel's offensive in Gaza.<sup>18</sup> Hamas legislator Salah Bardaweel countered that PA Chairman Abbas "played a major role" in the Israeli killing of Hamas Interior Minister Said Siam "through his men in the Gaza Strip, who have been pointing out the homes of Hamas members."<sup>19</sup> However, what is remarkable and ignored in Western diplomatic circles is that Fayyad has continued to pay the monthly salaries of between 6,000 and 12,000 Hamas Executive Force operatives in Gaza, in line with the 2007 Mecca national unity agreement that brought Hamas under the umbrella of the Palestinian Authority for budgetary purposes.<sup>20</sup>

It is widely believed in Western diplomatic circles that the PA in Ramallah was only paying the salaries of civil service employees in Gaza to encourage them to stay at home to avoid working with Hamas, especially after Hamas' expulsion of Fatah in June 2007. This is incorrect. The PA, and indirectly the U.S., and international donor countries have continued to pay monthly salaries to Hamas security operatives (Read: terrorists) and their commanders from the PA's \$120 million monthly budget allocation to the Gaza Strip.<sup>21</sup> The height of irony in this regard may

have been seen during the Gaza war when Hamas fighters received their salaries from the PA at Gaza City's Shifa Hospital which was immune from IDF fire.<sup>22</sup>

### **Understanding the Hidden Complexities of the Fatah Security Forces**

The prospective return of any Fatah security forces to Gaza must take into account the complexities of the many competing centers of Fatah power, as well their implications within the context of Palestinian political culture. For the past 16 years, U.S., European, and Israeli policy-makers have lavished billions of dollars on "strong" leaders like Arafat, or actively sought to strengthen "weak" leaders like Abbas, without assessing the effect of these policies on the internal Palestinian political discussion.<sup>23</sup> For example, the PA received \$3 billion in 2008, according to French estimates,<sup>24</sup> while the December 2007 Paris donor's conference committed to transfer over \$7 billion in aid to the PA over the years 2008-2010.<sup>25</sup> Yet the Palestinian public still sees U.S.-led international assistance as a virtual "payoff" to a corrupt government and security forces in exchange for PA cooperation.

After years of unsuccessful Western-backed PA security regimes, since the signing of the Oslo agreement in 1993, and through the Annapolis agreement in 2008, the Palestinian street is largely convinced that U.S. backing of the PA has sanctified brutality, state-approved "gangsterism," and corruption in the name of stopping radicals and advancing the peace process. Palestinian public cynicism translated into Hamas' landslide parliamentary victory in 2006 and its subsequent takeover of Gaza in 2007. This analysis, then, may serve as a basis for careful reconsideration of past misassumptions about Fatah's security capabilities and help clarify current security realities in Gaza.

### **Back to Square One? The Return of Mohammed Dahlan**

Former PA Civil Affairs Minister Mohammed Dahlan, who had headed the U.S.-backed Fatah Preventive Security force in Gaza until Hamas routed his forces in June 2007, has re-emerged as a leading candidate to command Fatah's security forces, particularly to secure the Gaza crossing points into Egypt and Israel. Despite Hamas' bloody thrashing of Dahlan's forces, his prospective return to Gaza reportedly aroused the interest of former Secretary of State Rice.<sup>26</sup> Palestinian and Egyptian leaders have also been interested in Dahlan's reassertion of control.<sup>27</sup> While Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak reportedly told PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad that, "For me, Dahlan does not exist,"<sup>28</sup> current circumstances would point to his involvement in any new PA security force in Gaza.

Dahlan appears to have emerged from retirement to his Cairo villa where he had kept a low profile since the Hamas takeover. However, he has of late given many interviews on Egyptian and Saudi media outlets, blasting Hamas' deep connection to Iran while making thinly veiled suggestions as to his potential role in rebuilding Gaza.<sup>29</sup> It is no coincidence that the Egyptians and Saudis are providing Dahlan a platform to condemn Hamas. Cairo and Riyadh quietly backed the Israeli operation in Gaza and had backed Dahlan's forces with some \$20 million

before the 2007 coup.<sup>30</sup>

Although Dahlan lost many men and even his home to Hamas, he continues to enjoy the backing of several thousand armed Fatah activists who have remained in Gaza under Hamas rule. A major motivating factor behind Dahlan's possible return is the billions of dollars in international aid that have been promised to finance reconstruction efforts. Dahlan had built his personal fortune by being Fatah's key man in Gaza between 1996 and 2007.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps most significantly, Dahlan may be the only Palestinian leader unfazed by threats of revenge by other Palestinian groups.<sup>32</sup>

Reports of U.S. interest in Dahlan's re-involvement in Gaza follow nearly twelve years of close coordination with the United States. He had been a long-time favorite of the Clinton and Bush administrations and was praised as a reformer during the Oslo years for publicly criticizing Arafat's dictatorship and calling for Palestinian security reforms.<sup>33</sup> Starting in 1996, President Clinton approved intensive CIA and FBI backing of Dahlan's Preventive Security forces and other PA security organs.<sup>34</sup>

Dahlan's relationships with Washington were top-tier.<sup>35</sup> He referred to Bill Clinton as "a friend." Dahlan was also embraced by lawmakers and senior security officials alike.<sup>36</sup> A senior member of the U.S. House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence told the authors in 2005 that Dahlan was "charming." Dahlan too understood the importance of his U.S. partners. In early 2008 Dahlan said of CIA Director George Tenet, "He is simply a great and fair man."<sup>37</sup> President George W. Bush also met with Dahlan on several occasions. After talks at the White House in July 2003, Bush publicly praised Dahlan as "a good, solid leader" and reportedly called him "our guy" to advisors behind closed doors.<sup>38</sup>

### **Reviving a Failed Security Paradigm?**

A key question is whether Dahlan's possible return essentially revives a failed strategy. Until Dahlan's forces collapsed before Hamas, the U.S. had placed its full weight behind him, investing at least \$56 million in the PA security infrastructure at the Karni crossing<sup>39</sup> where General Dayton had invested much of his time before the Hamas coup.<sup>40</sup> The U.S. had also backed a high-risk, covert State Department plan code-named "Plan B,"<sup>41</sup> that was drafted jointly by U.S., Jordanian, and PA officials, that called for Dahlan's Fatah forces to overthrow Hamas in Gaza and reassert control.<sup>42</sup> While the White House vigorously denied any such designs, the plan was widely known among senior Fatah officials.<sup>43</sup>

Dayton, though listed as a key figure in the Dahlan project, would later deny any material involvement with the plan.<sup>44</sup> However, he testified before Congress on May 23, 2007, just weeks before the Fatah collapse in Gaza, saying, "the \$3 million assistance package to the (Palestinian) Office of National Security ensures that the U.S. Security Coordinator has a strong and capable partner as we proceed with Palestinian security sector transformation and our focus on a smaller but more capable Palestinian security force, operating under the rule of law and with respect for human rights."<sup>45</sup> Yet Dayton's security program was roundly criticized by senior Israeli defense officials as "a complete failure."<sup>46</sup>

It is widely recognized in Palestinian circles that at the time of the Hamas coup, Dahlan's Fatah force simply refused to fight. Fewer than 10,000 armed Hamas men managed to defeat 70,000 U.S.-backed Fatah loyalists. It is also no secret among Palestinians that Dahlan was shuttling between Cairo and Germany for "medical treatment" for bad knees during the fighting, despite having been paid handsomely for his security efforts.<sup>47</sup> Hamas did not have to work hard to repel a Fatah takeover attempt. Hamas operatives recruited Fatah family members to convince their relatives in uniform to surrender without fighting.

The Gaza debacle was a setback for Dahlan. The extent of his personal fortune – amassed during the time when he cooperated closely with Washington on the peace process – may not be well known by the incoming U.S. administration. Palestinian documents captured in the IDF's 2002 Defensive Shield operation revealed Dahlan's involvement in major racketeering, including revenues from cigarettes, cement, and the collection of illegal crossing fees.<sup>48</sup> He was also known as a partner in the smuggling networks involving the Rafah border tunnels, together with the al-Samhadana crime family.

Ironically, even prior to 2007, U.S. security officials had not been deterred by Dahlan's actions and reputation on the Palestinian street. He had been a key architect of the 2005 border crossing agreements that he designed with U.S. Secretary of State Rice, but which fell apart after Hamas violence drove European monitors to abandon their posts. Glenn Kessler noted in his 2007 biography of Rice that in the 2005 Gaza crossing agreements, "Rice focused especially on Mohammed Dahlan, the Palestinian Authority's civil affairs minister, but in effect Fatah's boss in Gaza, because Abbas would never agree to a deal unless Dahlan gave his approval."<sup>49</sup> Dahlan had controlled the security and economic aspects of the Karni and Rafah crossing points, where at least 750 truckloads of goods and 1,000 Palestinians passed daily including many Hamas leaders that were on Israel's "wanted" list.<sup>50</sup> Costly import licenses and crossing permits were all in the hands of Dahlan's people and are widely believed to have generated millions of dollars in profits.

A former senior World Bank official had estimated Dahlan's personal wealth at well over \$120 million as of mid-2005, just before Israel's disengagement from Gaza.<sup>51</sup> Dahlan's personal fortune is a notable achievement, since most of his life has been spent in and around Gaza refugee camps, Israeli prisons, and Fatah security installations.

### **Palestinian Impatience with Dahlan**

Gazans and West Bankers have been less forgiving than the U.S. of Dahlan's record. The former Gaza strongman's reputation for brutality, extortion, and corruption precedes him. Torture of Hamas and other opponents in Gaza by Dahlan loyalists have even been documented on "YouTube."<sup>52</sup> Fatah websites implicated him, together with the Gaza-based Dughmush clan, in the 2005 murder of General Musa Arafat, Fatah's former head of Military Intelligence and National Security forces in Gaza.<sup>53</sup> The Palestinian street had branded Dahlan "the CIA" for years, ever since the U.S. agency had provided him a black bullet-proof SUV.

No less troubling for Israel is the fact that years of CIA and Israeli Security Agency coordination did not prevent Dahlan's alleged complicity in ordering a deadly terror attack against an Israeli school bus in Gaza on November 18, 2000, that killed two adults and severely wounded three children from the Cohen family who were former Gush Katif residents.<sup>54</sup>

### **Mahmoud Abbas' PA Presidential Guard**

While the United States, Egypt, and Western countries have mentioned the possible return to Gaza of PA forces loyal to Mahmoud Abbas, his direct authority and influence has been limited to the Ramallah-based Presidential Guard – a modest 1,500-man armed force. The Presidential Guard is tasked with protecting the PA Chairman and the Fatah regime but not foiling terror attacks, or uprooting militias in the West Bank. Even with dedicated security forces that continue to undergo U.S.-sponsored training at bases near Jericho in line with the Roadmap security reform program, Abbas rarely ventures out of Ramallah.

The dangers to Abbas posed by various terror groups, militias, warlords, and gangs have prevented him from visiting most Palestinian cities and towns in the West Bank, let alone refugee camps, earning him the reputation on the Palestinian street of being “the Mayor of Ramallah.” The Presidential Guard's record in Gaza is mixed. They were among the first to surrender to Hamas in June 2007, and subsequently were not officially disbanded but became dormant, as opposed to their West Bank counterparts that were retrained and resupplied by U.S. military advisors under General Dayton.<sup>55</sup>

### **Salam Fayyad's Palestinian National Security Forces**

The Palestinian National Security Forces that are funded by and report to the office of PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad are the most likely security command that could be deployed to Gaza in the framework of a cease-fire agreement. The NSF was restructured following the 2007 defeat by Hamas. Secretary of State Rice worked closely with General Dayton and Fayyad to retrofit a verifiably reformed Palestinian force in line with the Annapolis peace process framework of a shelf agreement between Israel and the PA that would come to fruition if and when the PA would be capable of fulfilling its security requirements under the first stage of the Quartet Roadmap. The U.S. provided \$86 million in July 2007 to train 1,100 recruits, while another \$75 million was earmarked for a national security installation under construction near Jericho.<sup>56</sup>

The NSF's motivation to succeed stems from the Fatah leadership's fear of a Hamas takeover in the West Bank. The NSF's initial successes in several West Bank cities, including Jenin, Nablus, Hebron and Bethlehem, have restored a certain sense of public security to local residents, as well as attracting thousands of Israeli Arabs to shop in Jenin and Nablus which has helped jumpstart the West Bank economy.

Since its first deployment in May 2008, the NSF – which Hamas has branded “the Dayton forces” – has forcefully confronted Hamas supporters in the West Bank. The NSF has also closed down some Hamas charities in public displays of force, while redirecting Hamas charity money



to PA coffers. PA security forces have also arrested Hamas activists and have reduced threatening activity in Hamas-controlled mosques. The readiness of the NSF to confront Hamas publicly is unprecedented; Arafat had avoided confronting Hamas, while Fayyad is doing so.

Despite intensive U.S. and Palestinian efforts to maximize performance, there still remains a large question mark over whether these forces possess the ability and will to take more aggressive action against terror groups and armed gangs in the West Bank, and whether they stand a chance of successfully redeploying to Gaza. General Dayton admitted in a December 2008 interview that the NSF “is not the Israel Defense Forces. They are orienting their efforts totally on the lawless elements within Palestinian society...so that Palestinian families can walk down the streets at night and not be intimidated or threatened by either criminals or men with guns.”<sup>57</sup>

Some Israel Defense Forces senior commanders agree with Dayton. In fact, IDF Central Command has been highly critical of the U.S.-backed PA forces, insisting that PA forces in the West Bank cities are not combating terrorists, while warning that “terrorist organizations in Nablus, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, were cooperating in their attempts to perpetrate terror attacks against Israel, and building an underground tunnel system in Nablus.”<sup>58</sup> According to a senior IDF official, “There is no doubt that the moment the IDF leaves this territory, the Palestinians will have a rocket capability in the West Bank.”<sup>59</sup>

### **Fatah’s Rejection of Fayyad: A Roadblock to Gaza**

The PA’s NSF is funded by and reports to the office of Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. His office and the PA Interior Ministry vet candidates and pay salaries, while Mahmoud Abbas is not directly involved with the NSF. This is significant because U.S. and European efforts to implement a Gaza cease-fire have included discussion of the return of PA security forces to Gaza that are “loyal to Abbas.” Yet the U.S.-backed post-Gaza security reform concept was to create a non-Fatah professional army. However, other than an initial round of recruited commanders who were not from Fatah, subsequent officer recruits were mostly affiliated with Fatah. This reflects Fayyad’s own problematic political status in the PA areas. He is not a Fatah member and receives no political backing from the Fatah power structure.

Moreover, Fayyad’s lack of grassroots support handicaps his ability to maintain control and loyalty of commanders and forces in the field, which would only be exacerbated should Fatah seek a return to Gaza. This is significant because Fayyad’s close cooperation with the United States, the West, and Israel must also translate to implementation on the ground. While Fayyad is probably the most impressive professional Palestinian statesman the U.S. and the West have ever worked with, Palestinian elites and the public essentially view Fayyad as a *de facto* American agent. While Abbas has also cooperated closely with Israel, the U.S., and the West, and has also received death threats on Hamas and Fatah terror group websites, his status as Fatah royalty protects him from opponents and maintains his political base.

Senior Fatah advisors and former ministers close to Abbas have been critical of the U.S. decision to place the PA’s major security force in the hands of Fayyad. The Fatah central committee even

voted in Ramallah in November 2008 to compel Abbas to remove Fayyad from being in charge of the NSF and to replace with him with a Fatah member. In late January 2009, Fayyad offered to resign his post following accusations by Fatah that Fayyad was an obstacle to reconciliation with Hamas.<sup>60</sup>

### **Dormant Terror Groups: The Hidden Threat to the West Bank and Gaza**

Hamas is not the only major threat to Fayyad's forces in the West Bank. There are multiple armed terror groups and militias that have temporarily kept a low profile. However, they are capable of undermining the entire PA security regime. Despite reports in early 2008 by Fayyad's office that militias such as the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades and Islamic Jihad in the West Bank had been dismantled, it turned out that Fayyad had essentially agreed to a mutually advantageous *modus vivendi* with these groups. Gunmen have agreed to hide their weapons, and Fayyad has agreed to "hide" operatives on Israel's target list in PA jails under a "revolving door" policy allowing freedom of entry and exit, which had created serious concern among senior IDF commanders.<sup>61</sup> Fayyad also reached agreement with Israel on a general clemency program for some militia members in exchange for their commitment to cease all terror activity against Israel.<sup>62</sup> However, senior IDF commanders have also expressed related concerns that since the NSF deployment, "weapons provided by the U.S. to the PA are finding their way to Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists in Jenin as well as in Nablus."<sup>63</sup> Abbas also had expended great efforts to incorporate the Islamic terrorist organizations into the Palestinian government.<sup>64</sup>

Another major concern of the IDF senior command has been that local terror militias, such as the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the West Bank, have also been integrated into local NSF units. Such militia leaders include Abu Jaber, an infamous local gang leader in Nablus who is also a NSF commander, who regularly extorts Nablus business owners for protection money.<sup>65</sup>

### **Gaza: From "Hamastan" to "Fatahland"**

While the West sees the PA's Abbas and Fayyad as the only legitimate Palestinian address, the issue is far more complex within the Palestinian political discussion. Abbas is seen by the Palestinian street as "done," incapable of delivering peace or anything of value to the Palestinians.<sup>66</sup> Despite Palestinian anger at Hamas for causing the recent IDF incursion, many Palestinians, including elites and even traditional Fatah allies, still see Hamas as democratically legitimate since it won the 2006 parliamentary elections. Hamas appears to be more popular than ever among the Palestinians residents of Gaza. In mid-December 2008, some 250,000 Palestinians took to the streets to celebrate Hamas' 21st anniversary.<sup>67</sup>

Abbas is likely to face substantial roadblocks to reestablishing Fatah control or coming to a *modus vivendi* with Hamas. Fatah-Hamas tensions are at a high point. Hamas and much of the Gazan public are convinced that Abbas supplied Israel with intelligence and other operational information to use to destroy the Hamas terror infrastructure. As Palestinian analyst Mohammed Yaghi noted, "Hamas even accused Nimir Hamad, Abbas' political adviser, of calling Israeli

defense official Amos Gilad and advising him to target Hamas operators and installations only.”<sup>68</sup> In fact, since the outset of Israel’s military operation in Gaza, Fatah members there have been rounded up and brutally tortured by Hamas operatives, who have turned school buildings and hospitals into make-shift interrogation centers.<sup>69</sup> Hamas also renewed house arrest orders against Fatah officials and activists in Gaza shortly after the military operation started. Since the cease-fire, Hamas has stolen international relief shipments, even hijacking international aid trucks to prevent Fatah from taking any credit in the eyes of the Palestinians.

Hamas no longer recognizes the presidential authority of Mahmoud Abbas after his four-year term ended on January 9, 2009, although Abbas has decided to remain in office, based on his reading of Palestinian law.<sup>70</sup> More importantly, the Hamas leadership is still intact. The IDF estimates that 400 to 700 Hamas operatives were killed in the Gaza operation.<sup>71</sup> That leaves most of Hamas’ 15,000-man army and 10,000-man police force in place, including Izaddine al-Kassam, the Hamas Executive Force, and internal security forces. A significant quantity of Hamas weapons and ammunition remains hidden. Furthermore, during and after the IDF operation, Hamas continued to smuggle weapons and contraband via underground tunnels from Sinai to Gaza.

Hamas is not concerned about a tactical reconciliation with Fatah. Several scenarios can serve Hamas interests. Hamas may agree to a Fatah-Hamas national “reconciliation” government for tactical reasons, as it did in 2007, to gain international recognition, benefit from the billions of dollars of international aid, and rebuild their offensive capabilities against Israel using the Fatah-led PA as a fig leaf. At the same time, Hamas will again subvert Fatah control on the ground.

Alternatively, Hamas may return to its more natural role as the agent of *muqawama* (Islamic armed resistance) while reengaging Fatah forces in another round of civil war, which has killed hundreds of Palestinians since Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza in September 2005. The armed strife intensified after the Palestinian national unity government was brokered in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in February 2007 and lasted until the Hamas takeover in June of that year.

Hamas is not the only opposition force that Abbas will face. Fatah’s armed wing, the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, announced on January 19, 2009, that its men in Gaza fought against Israel alongside Hamas, together with Islamic Jihad’s Al-Quds Battalions. The Al Aksa Brigades said they fired 102 rockets and 35 mortars, and detonated explosive devices that wounded a number of IDF soldiers.<sup>72</sup>

### **The U.S. and European Role in Securing and Rebuilding Gaza**

Frenetic Western diplomatic efforts have been focused on rebuilding Gaza under the control of the PA’s West Bank leadership as a prelude to a final settlement. Washington and European powers have already committed several billion dollars to Gaza’s reconstruction. They are anxious for a final settlement, and European leaders led by French President Nicholas Sarkozy are reportedly even willing to recognize Hamas in the context of a Fatah-Hamas unity government.<sup>73</sup> Special UN envoy Tony Blair has also expressed his support for the idea.<sup>74</sup> However, the current realities in Gaza may frustrate Western diplomatic plans.

It is far from clear that under current conditions any constellation of Fatah forces could successfully restore stability in Gaza, hope for Gazans, and long-term security for Israel. Despite the important yet limited security and economic reforms PA Prime Minister Fayyad has undertaken in the West Bank, the Palestinian public, both in Gaza and the West Bank, are far from confident that Fatah is anything but an incorrigibly corrupt and brutal regime that continues to be rewarded with billions of dollars from the U.S., Europe, and Israel. Since the cease-fire, some senior Fatah leaders have allegedly moved quickly to set up “straw” construction and contracting firms in the hope that the estimated \$2.5 billion earmarked for rebuilding Gaza will be funneled through the PA and its privileged elites in Ramallah.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, the Fatah-led P.A. will need to do much confidence-building to earn the trust of the Palestinian public.

The United States and the West must avoid the temptation of once again blindly relying on Fatah as the sole security and reconstruction subcontractor for Gaza. The Obama administration must implement tough and verifiable directives to facilitate internal Palestinian housecleaning: no militias, good governance, complete accountability, full transparency, effectiveness, and zero tolerance for corruption, gangsterism, and terror within PA ranks in Gaza and the West Bank. These steps are critical for the future of the Palestinian project and take immediate precedence over current negotiations with Israel.<sup>76</sup>

At the same time, U.S.-backed security efforts in the West Bank will need to be upgraded to ensure the complete cessation of all direct and indirect militia involvement on the ground or as part of the current NSF security regime. Only a decision to uproot the active and dormant militias and armed groups will ensure stability and enable the socioeconomic, “bottom-up” infrastructure-building that special envoy Tony Blair has worked diligently to develop in advance of renewed diplomacy.<sup>77</sup>

Any new Fatah-related security regime and government in Gaza that receives U.S. and Western financial support must also be required to submit to unprecedented oversight of rebuilding efforts, in order to implement missing financial controls and adopt “best-practice” standards. Corrupt and brutal warlords, gangs, and militias must no longer be allowed to undermine the Palestinian national project while they remain protected, privileged and empowered by the U.S.-backed Palestinian Authority.

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### Notes

1. <http://www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=139862>.
2. Fatah officials in the West Bank are also demoralized. Nasser Juma'a, a Palestinian Legislative Council member from Nablus, told a British reporter that the “ Hamas are insects” and noted that the Palestinians would likely not see a Palestinian state in his lifetime. Qadura Fares, a senior Fatah official, said that the PA would not succeed either in the West Bank or Gaza without “tackling the privileges of the Fatah elite, who, he said, “have become like princes” with regard to personal wealth, referring to rampant Fatah corruption. David Rose, “In the Smart West Bank Health Club, Between Jogging and Swimming Laps, People Were Screaming ‘Death to Israel’,” *Mail on Sunday*, January 17, 2009.

3. French President Nicholas Sarkozy said: "We have pledged to help Israel and Egypt with all the technical, military, naval and diplomatic ways to help end the smuggling of weapons into Gaza," <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1056208.html>. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown also offered to send British naval vessels to battle smuggling, <http://www.wtop.com/?nid=105&sid=1577726>.
4. Mona Salem, "Egypt Rejects Calls to Open Border with War-Battered Gaza," AFP, December 30, 2008, [http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20081230/wl\\_mideast\\_afp/mideastconflictgazaegyptborder\\_081230191014](http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20081230/wl_mideast_afp/mideastconflictgazaegyptborder_081230191014).
5. For the full text of UNSC Resolution 1860, see <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/sc9567.doc.htm>.
6. Barak Ravid, "Egypt's Truce Plan: Cease-fire Followed by Border Security Talks," *Ha'aretz*, January 7, 2009.
7. Khaled Abu Toameh, "PA Ready to Take Gaza if Hamas Ousted," *Jerusalem Post*, December 28, 2008.
8. <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009/01/113629.htm>. President Bush also called for international monitors in a radio speech on January 2, 2009, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2009/01/20090102-3.html>.
9. Natasha Mozgovaya, "Obama: We will Aggressively Seek Middle East Peace," *Ha'aretz*, January 23, 2009. See also Roni Sofer, "Obama Calls Abbas, Olmert on First Day," Ynet, January 21, 2009, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3659961,00.html>.
10. Khaled Abu Toameh and Dan Diker, "What Happened to Reform of the Palestinian Authority?," *Jerusalem Issue Brief*, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, March 3, 2004, <http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=254&PID=0&IID=701>.
11. David Horowitz, "This Time It Will Be Different," Interview with U.S. Security Coordinator General Keith Dayton, *Jerusalem Post*, December 11, 2008, <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1228728164523&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>.
12. Senior officials close to PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas confirmed the lack of a Palestinian chief of staff and a disciplined, centralized command structure in several meetings with author Dan Diker in 2008, most recently in Tel Aviv, December 8, 2008. Also, the authors draw a distinction between the Palestinian National Security Forces' success in confronting Hamas activists in Ramallah and closing down Hamas charities, and the PA security forces' lack of will to uproot Hamas and other terror groups. This has been common to PA control in Gaza and the West Bank and had characterized PA security force failures in the 1990s. Other less active, yet competing, Fatah militias include PA Preventative Security under the command of Ziad Hab al-Rih, a Fatah operative and former colleague of former West Bank Fatah strongman Jibril Rajoub. There are also other smaller Fatah-affiliated armed groups.
13. Pinchas Inbari and Dan Diker, "The Murder of Musa Arafat and the Battle for the Spoils of Gaza," *Jerusalem Issue Brief*, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, October 10, 2005, <http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=254&PID=0&IID=542>
14. Patrick Devenny, "Training Our Enemies," *Front Page Magazine*, October 18, 2005. In a more recent example, local Nablus warlord Abu Jabber was integrated in Fayyad's National Security Forces in 2008 as a mid-level commander, but this did not stop his local militia from continuing to extort local business owners for protection money. One local real estate developer

related to the authors that Abu Jabber had demanded an apartment for free in exchange for his militias' forced protection services. This same phenomenon – national security by day and mafia member by night – has characterized the PA Fatah forces in the West Bank from Arafat's entry into the territories in 1994 until today under the Dayton reform plan outlined at Annapolis.

American security programs under the Clinton administration had ended up training numerous PA terror operatives such as Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades terrorist Khaled Abu Nijmeh, who had used his CIA training to supervise multiple suicide bombings in Bethlehem in 2001 and 2002. A July 2005 report compiled by the security consulting firm Strategic Assessments Initiative (SAI) on behalf of the U.S. government found that, "even with millions of American dollars and years of CIA training, the PA police were wholly ineffective, wracked with divided loyalties and inferior equipment." SAI charged that "many of the PA officers were active or complicit in terrorist attacks or organized crime rings." See Devenny, "Training Our Enemies."

15. <http://www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=139862>.

16. For example, Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades websites have called for the murder of Fayyad since 2003, while Hamas' Izaddine al-Kassam Brigades website called Abbas "a murderer" for his actions against Hamas operatives and "justified exercising the use of divine justice against him, relying on religious decrees that permit the killing of a Muslim who collaborates in a crime against another Muslim." See Lt.-Col. (res.) Jonathan D. Halevi, "The Hamas Regime in the Gaza Strip: An Iranian Satellite that Threatens Regional Stability," in *Iran's Race for Regional Supremacy*, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2008, p.76.

17. Reports from Gaza indicate that hundreds of Fatah members were killed and tortured by Hamas during and after Israel's military campaign in Gaza. See Khaled Abu Toameh, "Hamas Rounding Up, Torturing Fatah Members in the Gaza Strip," January 19, 2009. Fatah and Hamas websites reveal the bitter hatred and enmity between the groups that will not be solved if the groups agree for tactical reasons to enter into a national unity government. This is frequently misunderstood in the West, which believes that a Fatah-Hamas "reconciliation" – like the one brokered in Mecca in 2007 and which resulted in more deaths between Fatah and Hamas than in previous years – would be a pretext for advancing the peace process. A senior advisor to French President Nicholas Sarkozy told *Ha'aretz* that a Fatah-Hamas national unity government would trigger EU acceptance of Hamas as a governmental partner to PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas.

18. Dan Diker, "A Deterrent Restored," Powerlineblog, January 9, 2009, <http://www.powerlineblog.com/archives/2009/01/022505.php>.

19. Khaled Abu Toameh Hamas: Abbas' Spies Led Israel to Siam," *Jerusalem Post*, January 17, 2009, <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/JPArticle/ShowFull&cid=1232100169312>.

20. [http://www.janes.com/security/law\\_enforcement/news/jdw/jdw070115\\_1\\_n.shtml](http://www.janes.com/security/law_enforcement/news/jdw/jdw070115_1_n.shtml). A high-ranking official at a senior Palestinian ministry confirmed PA monthly salary payments to Hamas' Executive Force in Gaza and the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades in the West Bank, in a meeting with the authors in Jerusalem, December 7, 2008.

21. Khaled Abu Toameh, "Palestinian Straw Firms Said Aiming to 'Steal' Gaza Funds," *Jerusalem Post*, January 26, 2009.

22. Amir Mizroch, "Hamas Salaries Paid at Shifa Hospital," *Jerusalem Post*, January 12, 2009.

23. See the strategic assessment by former IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Yaalon on the error of Israeli and Western backing of "strong" and "weak" Palestinian leaders in "Israel and the Palestinians; a New Strategy," *op. cit.*

24. "French Envoy, Palestinians Given \$3B in Foreign Aid in 2008," *AP/Ha'aretz*, December 23, 2008.
25. Elaine Sciolino, "\$7.4 Billion Pledged for Palestinians," *New York Times*, December 18, 2007, as cited in Yaalon, "Israel and the Palestinians."
26. According to a conversation with a senior Israeli security official, January 13, 2009.
27. Khaled Abu Toameh, " Hamas Shuns Bid to Give Rafah to PA," *Jerusalem Post*, January 8, 2009. Dahlan's candidacy to reassert Fatah control in Gaza was confirmed by senior PA officials in a meeting with author Dan Diker on December 8, 2009. Two Arab diplomats familiar with negotiations over an Israeli-Hamas cease-fire also confirmed his candidacy in separate conversations with Diker on January 6 and January 11, 2009. Hamas leaders have also pointed to Dahlan's possible return. A Hamas official in Gaza City claimed that former Fatah security commanders who fled Gaza during the Hamas takeover in June 2007, including Mohammed Dahlan and his deputy Rashid Abu Shabak, "were holding meetings in Cairo and Ramallah to discuss returning home." See Khaled Abu Toameh, " Hamas: PA Conspiring with Israel," *Jerusalem Post*, December 31, 2008.
28. According to a senior source in the Bureau of PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, January 12, 2009.
29. Mohammed Dahlan interview, Egyptian State Television, January 21, 2009.
30. David Rose, "The Gaza Bombshell," *Vanity Fair*, April 2008.
31. Pinchas Inbari and Dan Diker, "The Murder of Musa Arafat," *op. cit.* Dahlan was believed to be a local partner in the UK Portland Trust plan to develop hundreds of low-cost housing units in post-disengagement Gaza.
32. Khaled Abu Toameh, "Analysis: A Viable Successor to Hamas Is Hard to Find," *Jerusalem Post*, December 29, 2009. Ramadan Shallah, secretary-general of Islamic Jihad, warned that any Palestinian "who dares to return to the Gaza Strip aboard an Israeli tank would be condemned as a traitor." Senior Arab diplomats told author Dan Diker on January 9, 2009, that Dahlan is not concerned with Palestinian threats against him.
33. Yaalon, "Israel and the Palestinians: A New Strategy."
34. Patrick Devenny, "Training Our Enemies."
35. David Rose, "The Gaza Bombshell."
36. A senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee told author Dan Diker that Dahlan was "very charming" at a meeting on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C., June 2005.
37. David Rose, "The Gaza Bombshell."
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.* A former State Department employee familiar with the concept and planning of what was called "Plan B" to replace Hamas with Dahlan's forces confirmed the plan to the author in an off-the-record interview, Washington, D.C., July 1, 2008. See also David Horowitz, "This Time, It Will Be Different," *op. cit.*
40. Horowitz, "This Time, It Will Be Different."
41. See a copy of the note reportedly left in a meeting in Ramallah between PA and U.S. officials, [http://www.vanityfair.com/images/politics/2008/04/gaza\\_PlanB0804.pdf](http://www.vanityfair.com/images/politics/2008/04/gaza_PlanB0804.pdf). See a copy of the pre-"Plan B" U.S. security plan from 2006 left behind at a meeting between U.S. and Palestinian officials in Ramallah, [http://www.vanityfair.com/images/politics/2008/04/gaza\\_Walles0804.pdf](http://www.vanityfair.com/images/politics/2008/04/gaza_Walles0804.pdf).
42. David Rose, "The Gaza Bombshell." See also David Horowitz, "This Time, It Will Be Different."

43. Former PA Interior Minister and senior Abbas advisor Hanni al-Hassan shared his sharp criticism of the plan with the author in a meeting several days after the coup on June 17, 2007.
44. Aluf Benn, "Top U.S. General Lays Foundation for Palestinian State," *Ha'aretz*, August 14, 2008, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1009578.html>.
45. "Remarks by U.S. Security Coordinator, LTG Keith Dayton, Update on the Israeli-Palestinian Situation and Palestinian Assistance Programs," House Foreign Affairs, Middle East and South Asia Subcommittee, May 23, 2007, [www.internationalrelations.house.gov/110/day052307.htm](http://www.internationalrelations.house.gov/110/day052307.htm).
46. Yaakov Katz, "Israeli Official: Dayton Failed," *Jerusalem Post*, June 17, 2007.
47. According to Hanni al-Hassan, former senior advisor to Mahmoud Abbas, in a meeting with the author, June 17, 2007. Hani al-Hassan, former senior political advisor and member of Fatah's central committee, said in an *Al-Jazeera* TV interview on June 27, 2007, that what was happening in Gaza was not a Hamas defeat of Fatah but defeat of plans of American Major General Keith Dayton, Mohammed Dahlan and his Fatah followers. See <http://www.ynet.co.il/english/articles/0,7340,L-3418486,00.html>. See the *Al-Jazeera* interview at <http://uk.truveo.com/Hani-AlHassan-of-the-Fatah-Executive-Committee/id/517194181>. David Wurmser, former Middle East Advisor to Vice President Dick Cheney, would later note, "It looks to me that what happened wasn't so much a coup by Hamas but an attempted coup by Fatah that was pre-empted before it could happen." See David Rose, "Gaza Bombshell."
48. Pinchas Inbari and Dan Diker, "The Murder of Musa Arafat."
49. Glenn Kessler, *The Confidante, Condoleezza Rice and the Bush Legacy* (New York: St. Martins Press, 2007), p. 133.
50. Erica Silverman, "Two Steps Back," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, December 8-14, 2005.
51. Dan Diker meeting with former senior World Bank official, Jerusalem, July 2005.
52. David Rose, "Gaza Bombshell."
53. Pinchas Inbari and Dan Diker, "The Murder of Musa Arafat."
54. According to Haggai Huberman writing in *Hatzofe*, the former Sharon government had been provided a secret CIA tape recording of Dahlan ordering the attack.
55. For many months in 2008 Abbas and Fayyad did not speak, coordinate positions, or cooperate. More recent reports indicate that their working relationship has slightly improved. They are essentially leaders of two separate Palestinian Authorities. Fayyad is the U.S. contact, while Abbas is the leader of the Fatah establishment and has been a source of disappointment to the Bush administration. See Glenn Kessler, *The Confidante*, p. 130. This point was also reiterated at a series of meetings in 2008 with a senior advisor to PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas based in Ramallah.
56. Aluf Benn, "Top U.S. General Lays Foundation for Palestinian State."
57. David Horowitz, "This Time It Will Be Different."
58. Yaakov Katz, "IDF: Jenin Forces Not Fighting Terror," *Jerusalem Post*, June 15, 2008, <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1212659734963&pagename=JPost%2FJPostArticle%2FShowFull>
59. *Ibid.*
60. Mohammed Abu Khadair, "Dr. Fayyad Places His Government at the Disposal of the President to Pave the Way for National Reconciliation," *Al Quds*, January 23, 2009.
61. Yaakov Katz, "IDF: Jenin Forces Not Fighting Terror."



62. Isabel Kirshner, "Volatile City Tests Palestinian Police and Peace Hopes," *International Herald Tribune*, November 13, 2007, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/11/14/africa/14nablus.php>.
63. Yaakov Katz, "IDF: Jenin Forces Not Fighting Terror."
64. Moshe Yaalon, "Israel and the Palestinians: A New Strategy."
65. A Nablus businessman told author Dan Diker of the direct threats made against him by local Nablus Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades commander Abu Jabber, in a meeting in Rome, December 9, 2009.
66. Steve Erlanger, "On Palestinian Question, Tough Choices for Obama," *New York Times*, January 22, 2009.
67. Khaled Abu Toameh, " Hamas and the Palestinians," Hudson New York, January 2, 2009.
68. Mohammed Yaghi, "The Impact of the Gaza Conflict on Palestinian Politics," *Policy Watch*, No. 1446, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, December 31, 2008, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2978>.
69. Khaled Abu Toameh, " Hamas Rounding Up, Torturing Fatah Members in the Gaza Strip," *Jerusalem Post*, January 19, 2009.
70. Khaled Abu Toameh, " Hamas: Abbas No Longer Heads PA," *Jerusalem Post*, January 9, 2009.
71. Tova Lazeroff and Yaakov Katz, " Israel Disputes Gaza Death Toll," *Jerusalem Post*, January 22, 2009.
72. Khaled Abu Toameh, " Al Aksa: We Also Fought IDF in Gaza," *Jerusalem Post*, January 19, 2009.
73. Akiva Eldar, " Report: EU to Lift Sanctions on Hamas if Palestinian Unity Government Formed," *Ha'aretz*, January 19, 2009.
74. <http://tonyblairoffice.org/2009/01/gaza-ceasefire-must-be-followe.html>.
75. Khaled Abu Toameh, " Palestinian Straw Firms Said Aiming to 'Steal' Gaza Funds."
76. Robert Satloff, " In the Wake of the Hamas Coup: Rethinking America's 'Grand Strategy' for the New Palestinian Authority," *Policy Watch*, No. 1252, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 26, 2007.
77. The notion of "bottom-up" peace-making based on broad Palestinian reform was coined by former IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Yaalon, and alluded to as a point of reference by Special Quartet Envoy Tony Blair. See <http://tonyblairoffice.org/2008/05/towards-a-palestinian-state.html>. Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has also referred to "bottom-up" peace-making in concert with his program of "economic peace" for the West Bank.

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