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Spring 4-1-2007

Hamas: From "Terrorist" Organization to Governing Party The Implications of Hamas's 2006 Electoral Victory

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Introduction

For forty years now, conflict and tensions in the occupied territories of Palestine have made for a lifestyle filled with hardships and uncertainty for the Palestinian people. Despite facing the daily reality and humiliation of occupation, they continue to struggle and to hope that the world will recognize the rights of the Palestinians to have their own state and to live in peace, free from occupation. Unfortunately, despite the tremendous perseverance and fortitude demonstrated by the Palestinians, no real progress has been made in years of conflict, and numerous attempts at peace agreements and negotiations have failed.

The failings and corruption of the government dominated by Fatah have become notorious and have plagued the progress of Palestinians for decades. As Fatah became increasingly ineffective, an alternative movement, Hamas, became stronger, providing social welfare to the people and proving themselves to be legitimate in their concern for the Palestinians. With the death of Fatah's leader, Yasser Arafat, in 2004, his successor, Mahmud Abbas, called for elections to create more legitimacy within the Palestinian government. Despite being an opposition movement, Hamas decided to participate in the elections with an outcome that shocked the world – they won.

On January 25, 2006, the Palestinians voted Hamas into power. While Hamas had hoped to do well, most within the group never believed they would actually take control of the government. Some members of the international community, namely Western countries, did not believe it either, and promptly responded with economic boycotts of the "terrorist"-led government. At the same

time, Fatah refused to join Hamas in a coalition government, foreshadowing what would manifest into incredible tensions, leading to fears about civil war. Amidst international discontent and domestic tension, Hamas took over the government and tried to focus on domestic issues, such as building institutions and restoring security and order. However, the economic boycott violently shoved Hamas into dealing with the international discontent as well as domestic impoverishment that was being exacerbated by the lack of funding. Even in the US, presidents who have tried to pursue "guns and butter" have failed. Thus, it is easy to see how the cards were quickly being stacked against Hamas.

Currently, more than a year after Hamas was elected, they still have refused to give into the demands of the West, which keeps the economic boycott in place. However, Hamas leaders have made statements that are promising and demonstrate a willingness to compromise. They have also essentially agreed to the conditions put forth by the boycotting nations, in variation. Furthermore, Hamas has just recently signed an agreement to create a unity government with Fatah. With multiple challenges both at home and abroad staring Hamas in the face, they have showed unity and strength. The rhetoric being used by leaders is much different than from years past, and it seems quite obvious that Hamas has been making changes. However, this may not be good enough for the West.

Consequently, it is difficult to know for sure how effective the Hamas leadership could be because of the remarkable constraints the government is facing due to the economic boycott. Nevertheless, there is evidence that leads one to believe that Hamas could have a positive impact on the lives of Palestinians,

given a fair chance to govern their people. Additionally, if the United States and Israel could get past labels of terrorist and would negotiate fairly with Hamas, the results could be monumental.

This thesis will discuss the impact of the 2006 elections for Palestinians specifically, and the Israel-Palestine conflict more broadly. However, before considering the ramifications of the elections, a discussion of Hamas's origins, beliefs, and support base will be presented in order to understand who Hamas is, why the movement has come to power, and what they could be capable of achieving. After analyzing this background information, in conjunction with what has happened thus far as a result of the elections, I will discuss how Hamas is not the real barrier to peace. Furthermore, I propose that the election of Hamas, despite its being a terrorist group, could be a positive development given the right international support. Finally, I will suggest changes in policy that should be made by all parties involved.

The Palestinian Situation

The Land of Palestine: A Brief Historical Overview

The historical land that was Palestine consists of present-day Israel, the West Bank, Gaza, parts of Jordan and southern Lebanon. After WWI and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, Britain took control of Palestine in what is known as the British Mandate. Through various agreements and declarations, the British government respected the desire of the Jewish people to create their own nation in Palestine. As more and more Jewish settlers moved into the region, the

Arab population started to become more apprehensive. Once Britain gave up its mandate in 1948, the Jewish population immediately declared the state of Israel. Armed conflict broke out and other Arab nations intervened, resulting in Egypt's control of Gaza and Jordan's control of the West Bank. Then, in 1967 tensions arose again, this time regarding diverting water supplies. Eventually, another war started in June, resulting in a devastating defeat for Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. Since then, the West Bank and Gaza have been occupied by Israel (*The Middle East 2005*).

Living Under Occupation

As will be explored in a future section of the paper, the social programs that Hamas operates have helped them garner support for the movement because of the extreme poverty in the occupied territories. Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine the living conditions in the occupied territories to understand how the situation shapes the views and actions of the Palestinians.

Humanitarian concerns have been an issue almost as long as the conflict between Israel and Palestine has existed; however, since the election of Hamas, the problem has become markedly worse. The UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) announced in a report that humanitarian conditions have witnessed a "sharp deterioration" since the elections because of Israel's security measures (*Humanitarian…2006*). The report elaborates on and discusses the adverse affects of the checkpoints and barrier. Among other concerns, the report cites denying people access to their land, seizing land as "State Land" after

it is not farmed or occupied for three years, granting less travel permits, and closing more access gates (*Humanitarian…2006*). Even without the economic boycott, which obviously has exacerbated all of the other economic problems facing the Palestinians, the situation in the territories has been one of the most dismal in the world due to measures such as the separation barrier and endless checkpoints.

The checkpoints and travel restrictions have been part of Israel's defense plan since the start of the 2000 *intifada*; however, both have become stricter and more prevalent in recent years. Currently, 542 obstacles have effectively carved the West Bank into three regions (Myre 2006). Travel between these regions has become extremely limited and time-consuming. Beyond these 542 official checkpoints and barriers, hundreds of other obstacles such as earth mounds, concrete blocks, and trenches cut off roads and cause obstructions that add to travel time and woes (Myre 2006). Furthermore, the diversions and obstacles were strategically placed and have basically created a system of separate Palestinian roads and Israeli roads (*Humanitarian…2006*).

At the checkpoints, Palestinians wait outside of checkpoints for hours to pass through turnstiles, metal detectors and interrogation from Israeli soldiers, in hopes of being allowed to continue towards their destination. Almost all of the people who are denied passage are dismissed for arbitrary reasons. Some days all men under a specific age are turned away, other days students are targeted, and on occasion nobody is let through. Even Israeli soldiers manning the checkpoints find the situation hard to cope with. Staff Sgt. Sergey Zamensky, who worked at

the checkpoints, discusses the emotional pains that the soldiers endure when they must turn away students who will miss their finals, grandmothers trying to visit their grandchildren, and even a young bride who would miss her own wedding (Moore 2004). "Every day, the regulations were different," Zamensky said. "One day, you can let everyone pass; on another, no one is able to come in. It's very difficult to explain" (Ibid). Adding to the frustration, most of the Israeli soldiers only know a few words of Arabic (Ibid). Unfortunately, according to Israeli Sgt. Nadav Efrati, "the main words they taught us were: 'Stop. If not, I will shoot you'" (Ibid). Thus, communication between the Palestinians and Israelis is strained and limited, adding to the tensions and hostilities on both sides.

The checkpoints affect more than just personal relations and study. Many people are unable to go to their jobs or arrive late even if they are allowed to pass through the checkpoints. As a result of the restricted movement of both employees and consumers, the economy of the occupied territories has been adversely affected. Estimates from the World Bank state that the potential size of the Palestinian economy has been reduced by five percent because of the restrictions placed on the movement of people and goods (Myre 2006). The checkpoints seem to serve no actual purpose other than to further humiliate and inconvenience the Palestinians. The Israeli government claims that the checkpoints are for security measures; however, the Palestinians are not trying to travel into Israel, but within the Palestinian territories themselves. Even though Jewish settlers live in the West Bank, in accordance with UN Resolution 242, the Israelis should have withdrawn from the area already. Therefore, if Israel would

withdraw its settlements then the checkpoints would not be necessary. Nevertheless, the current situation of limited movement and barricaded enclaves of Palestinian areas and Israeli areas is becoming increasingly similar to the apartheid government of South Africa.

The second strategy that the Israeli government has utilized for alleged security reasons is the building of the separation barrier. The idea of building a barrier first emerged in 1967 when the Israelis thought it would be beneficial to build something along their borders to separate the Palestinian territories and Israel. Initially, the barrier was to follow the "green line," which had been staked out by the United Nations in order to separate Palestine and Israel (*The Wall…2003*). However, building of the separation barrier did not start until June 2002 (Graham 2002). The barrier consists of reinforced concrete, barbed wires, and electronic security among other materials. Once construction on the barrier started, claims were instantly made about the legality of the barrier (*The Wall…2003*). The route of the wall did not follow the 1967 borders and in some places actually split towns in two. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that the barrier was illegal and that Israel should stop construction, take down what they had built, and provide reparations to the Palestinians whose property they had destroyed in the process of building the wall (*Legal…2004*). The ruling also stated that the wall did serve as a *de facto* annexation of territory (Ibid). In regards to humanitarian concerns, the ICJ addressed the ramifications of the barrier and stated that it would create problems for agriculture, health services, access to education, and access to water among many other concerns (Ibid). Even

the Israeli Supreme Court, the High Court of Justice (HCJ), ruled that the route of the barrier should be changed to take humanitarian concerns into account (Judgment…2004). Still, the barrier remains under construction and the Israeli government continues to ignore the rulings of the ICJ, mainly because the United States opposes any action that the UN tries to take in order to enforce this ruling.

The excruciating experience of living under occupation and the ramifications of such a life could never be fully conveyed through words. However, besides dealing with physical barriers and checkpoints, the Palestinians must bear countless burdens, among them: not having their own state, living in immense poverty and humiliating circumstances, and abandonment by the international community which seems to be indifferent or unwilling to help them or to address their plight. The poverty rates in the territories are astounding. In the West Bank 55% of Palestinians live below the poverty line of two dollars a day, while 70% in Gaza live below the same line (Poverty…2007). Furthermore, the number of unemployed Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza has reached 63.3% and 50% respectively (Ibid). Under such harsh circumstances and relative inaction by their own government, it is not that difficult to see why Palestinians would vote for change, hope, and an organization that offered real help through social programs-Hamas.

The History of Hamas

The Origins and Founding of Hamas

Although Hamas was not established until 1987, the roots of Hamas date back further to the spread of the Muslim Brotherhood from Egypt to Palestine. The Muslim Brotherhood (MB), founded in Egypt in 1945, was started by Islamic fundamentalist Hasan al-Banna and called for the development of an Islamic government (Andersen 63: 2004). Fundamentalism, historically, has been applied to many religions and generally means a strict adherence to a literal interpretation of a set of basic principles (Merriam-Webster 2007). As applied to Islam, Islamic fundamentalists seek the "Islamization of the political order" (Tibi 1998). However, various fundamentalists have their own interpretations of the Quran as well as differing views on how the Islamization would best be achieved. Nevertheless, as the MB grew in popularity, its following branched outside of Egypt into other nations, among them Palestine. The first branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine was established in 1945 in Jerusalem (Mishal 16: 2000). Throughout the next twenty years, branches of the movement proliferated among many Palestinian towns. However, while the Gaza Strip was under Egyptian control in the late 1960s, the Muslim Brotherhood suffered from times of repression due to the MB's acts against the Egyptian government (Mishal 17: 2000). The strict conditions in which the MB operated in Gaza eventually forced the movement underground (Ibid). Consequently, the members in Gaza became much more militant compared to their counterparts in the West Bank, who were

under Jordanian control and relatively free to operate in the open (Mishal 18: 2000).

The MB's popularity and message caught the attention of many Palestinians, including the future founder of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin. Yassin became the MB's leader in Gaza in 1968 and steered the movement towards becoming more stable and institutionalized (Mishal 19: 2000). In 1973, the Islamic Center (*al-Mujamma al-islami*) was founded in Gaza to coordinate and develop religious and educational institutions in the area (Ibid). The activities and structure of the *Mujamma* would become significant later as the framework for Hamas. One aspect that Hamas carried on from the *Mujamma* was the application of the Islamic principle of charity (*zakat*). The *Mujamma* utilized this principle as the justification and compelling reason to start social programs focusing on creating clinics, schools, youth programs, and the like (Mishal 20:2000).

Another component of the *Mujamma*'s strategy that Hamas also duplicated was the use of mosques to spread its message and influence. The number of mosques was significant enough to allow the message of the MB to be heard by a vast proportion of society. Furthermore, mosques were viewed as the perfect place to disseminate the MB's message due to the fact that they were free from intrusion by the Israelis (Mishal 21: 2000). Hamas also depends on the mosques as one venue for spreading their message for these same reasons.

Beyond principles and strategies, the leadership structure of Hamas has also been modeled upon the MB and the *Mujamma*. The *Mujamma* used ties to

MB branches in other nations to raise funds for their programs (Mishal 22:2000). Eventually, this would lead to the Hamas leadership being scattered across countries, which will be discussed later.

Hamas was established in 1987 by Sheikh Yassin at the beginning of the first *intifada* as the combatant arm of the MB. Hamas was supposed to be independent from the MB and in 1988 took its first step towards truly becoming its own organization by adopting the name Hamas (Mishal 35: 2000). Hamas, an acronym for *Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya* (The Islamic Resistance Movement), also means "strength," "bravery," and "zeal" in Arabic (Herzog 2006). In August of 1988, the group created its charter and proclaimed itself a "wing" of the MB in the first chapter (Mishal 35, 177: 2000). As a short term goal, Hamas worked to drive the Israeli forces out of Palestine. However, in the long run, Hamas seeks to establish an Islamic state which would include all of historic Palestine, "from [Mediterranean] Sea to [Jordan] River" (Hamas leaflet no.28 as quoted in Mishal 51:2000). Nevertheless, Hamas leaders appear to be willing to modify this goal to achieve peace.

One of the main shifts evident in the establishment of Hamas was that the focus moved from strictly reformist and community based to having a political nature as well (Mishal 37: 2000). Furthermore, the movement also took on a nationalist sentiment of fighting for Palestine, rather than an individual level as was the case with the MB. Naturally, these ideological shifts became extremely relevant as Hamas started to challenge Fatah, participate in local elections, and eventually go on to win the national elections.

The Structure and Organization of Hamas

Although Hamas has different types of operations, it does not have a direct separation of its various wings. Both political and military operations are organized under the same authority (Herzog 2006). However, there is a functional division between the internal organization and the military units. Since Hamas, along with Islamic Jihad, was labeled as a terrorist organization in June 1989 by the Israeli government, the group had to take more precautions to prevent the arrest or assassination of its leaders (Mishal 56: 2000). Thus, Hamas horizontally separated its members so that the leadership would be more fragmented and harder to trace (Ibid). Therefore, the group organized itself based on a vertical hierarchy, meaning that each group of local activists reported to headquarters abroad but had nothing to do with other groups of activists. As a result, the links between the political, religious and military divisions became almost non-existent except at the highest levels of authority. Consequently, the hierarchy of lower level leaders across groups and the political/religious-military divide became confused and difficult to decipher (Mishal 57:2000).

Another security measure that Hamas took was to recruit solely based upon personal acquaintance (Mishal 56: 2000). This way, each new member had somebody who vouched for them, making them a more credible candidate. Furthermore, all communication was done indirectly through messages and leaflets and supplies were left in safe places for someone else to pick up (Mishal 56: 2000). Usually, this sort of activity took place in or around the mosques, again

because of the safety from Israeli intrusion or intelligence. Finally, the nature of the group also helped it to stay afloat despite Israeli oppression. Hamas is deeply rooted in its social institutions; therefore, more activists continuously express desire to join the group and the network of social programs and mosques provided a venue for information swapping as discussed above.

As was alluded to earlier, the leadership structure of Hamas is split into two groups: the "inside" leadership and the "outside" leadership. This division refers to the leaders who live and operate from inside the occupied territories and those that reside in other nations, such as Jordan or the US. To be clear, these outside leaders are still Palestinian, but have either been forced to leave Palestine, have moved voluntarily, or were raised in other countries by their Palestinian parents. While the "inside" leadership, headed by Yassin, was originally more influential in the movement, this changed in 1989 when most of the inside leaders, including Yassin, were arrested (Mishal 58: 2000). The members of the outside leadership consulted with each other and decided to send a group of the outside leaders from the US, headed by Musa Abu Marzuq, to Gaza in order to take over and reorganize the movement (Mishal 58: 2000). Once in Gaza, Marzuq divided the West Bank into seven sub-districts and Gaza into five (Ibid). Each of the sub-districts was then divided into separate headquarters based upon four branches: security, religious indoctrination, political activity and coordination (Ibid). Additionally, the leaders of each of the four branches constituted the command for the sub-district (Ibid). Finally, the West Bank and Gaza were tied together through a coordinating group made up of the higher leadership and

partitioned into three committees: political, military, and indoctrination (Ibid).

This new restructuring marked the first time that the outside leadership gained

control of Hamas, which diminished the authority of inside leaders such as

Yassin. The control was now based upon Marzuq in the US and other leaders in

Jordan. However, the leadership shifted again once the United States labeled

Hamas a terrorist organization in 1993 causing the leadership to move to Jordan,

where it could operate relatively freely (Mishal 58: 2000).

  Even after this reorganization, Hamas continued to face crackdowns on

the movement by Israeli forces. Therefore, the "battalions of 'Izz al-Din al-

Qassam" was started in 1991 by Walid 'Aql (Mishal 64:2000). 'Aql, a senior

member of Hamas, became the first commander of the battalion (Ibid). The group

soon became associated with assassinations and the use of car bombs (Mishal

65:2000). Part of the group's success is owed to the man whose name the

organization bears. Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam was a predecessor to the Hamas

leaders and encouraged the masses to act without the direction of the elite (Nusse

95:1998). He also advocated that resistance was a "religious, and therefore a

moral and ethical duty (Ibid)." These ideals essentially became a main part of

Hamas's ideology and helped Hamas establish themselves as a social, grass-roots

movement. Therefore, compared to the PLOs reputation as being out of touch

with the people, Hamas had tremendous appeal. Thus, by using Sheikh Qassam's

name, the organization evoked feelings of the masses working together in the face

of abandonment by the elites and as a religious duty.

The Ideology of Hamas

As a result of Hamas's roots in the Muslim Brotherhood, the movement is an Islamist movement. Hamas's charter states under its ideological origins that "From Islam it derives its ideas and its fundamental precepts and view of life, the universe, and humanity; and it judges all its actions according to Islam and is inspired by Islam to correct its errors (Mishal 177: 2000)." While Hamas's religious foundation and its move towards violent means has lead many governments to label it as a terrorist organization, Hamas is more flexible and reasonable than its reputation would imply. Initially, Hamas was essentially a social movement providing services and responding to the immediate needs of the community (Mishal preface: 2000). Gradually, Hamas has incorporated political aspects and goals into its agenda. Still, throughout its existence it has adapted to and manipulated situations to remain true to its religious framework while simultaneously making decisions and changes that allow the movement to stay relevant.

Although Hamas does have religious and even fundamentalist inclinations, it should not necessarily be viewed as an extremist group that is unwilling to compromise. In many respects, Hamas has already moved away from traditional fundamentalist thinkers. One example of this shift is Hamas's use of nationalist sentiment. Hamas often promotes its views and struggles in light of all Palestinians fighting against the occupier, Israel. In order for these arguments to be more palatable, the movement evokes feelings of nationalism to get all Palestinians to unite. Even its relations with Fatah and the PLO have been shaped

by Hamas's unwillingness to enter conflict with fellow Palestinians and its desire to preserve national unity. This sense of nationalism is in stark contrast to fundamentalist thinkers such as Sayyid Qutb, who states that "Patriotism should consist in bonds to the Faith, not to a piece of land" (Sivan 32: 1985). Clearly, Hamas has deviated from the traditional view of nationalism held by fundamentalist thinkers. Not only does this represent a willingness to adapt its ideology, it also shows that Hamas does follow a strategic thought pattern as nationalism is a logical way for Hamas to gain support.

When confronted with discussions about Hamas and other Islam-based terrorist organizations, the notion of *jihad* will undoubtedly emerge. Some groups, such as Al Qaeda, have interpreted *jihad* as an offensive movement. An offensive *jihad* dictates that the "land of the infidels" should be attacked (Sageman 2: 2004). Conversely, Hamas advocates a defensive *jihad*. The ideology of Hamas states that "it does not take action against anybody because of his thought or religious convictions, as long as these are not transformed into perceptible hostility towards and destruction of the rights of the Islamic *Umma* [community]" (Nusse 37: 1998). However, in the case of Israel, the Israeli occupiers infringe upon the rights of the Palestinians and are therefore considered by Hamas to be "war enemies" (Ibid). Thus, while groups such as Al Qaeda will continue to target whichever nations it views as hostile towards the creation of Islamic society or as conspirators with such nations, Hamas only targets Israel with the immediate goal of stopping the occupation.

One of the ideological points that has caused Hamas to be at odds with the PLO is the idea that the land of Palestine is a *waqf*, or Islamic endowment, which is the property of "former, present and future generations" and, therefore, no person or organization has the authority to give away or make compromises regarding the land (Nusse 47: 1998). Obviously, as Hamas members believe in the idea of Palestine as a *waqf*, they would be in conflict with the PLO who have made concessions with the Israeli government and have adopted a strategy of a two-state solution. While this difference has been significant in the relations between the two organizations as well as for the ideology of Hamas, Hamas seems more willing to compromise on this principle in recent years, which will be addressed in more detail later.

Violence and Hamas

Hamas, while viewed as a terrorist organization in opposition to the PLO, actually adopted the same stance towards armed struggle as the National Charter of the PLO did in 1968, which stated that armed struggle is a "strategy and not a tactic" (Mishal 50: 2000). During the first *intifada*, Hamas turned to violence as its strategy in part because Islamic Jihad had already done so (Mishal 57:2000). Hamas was worried that the group would lose support and legitimacy if it continued to preach *jihad* but did not act. Thus, by invoking an armed struggle, the movement gave real meaning to carrying out a *jihad*. While the violent means employed by Hamas got progressively more severe, culminating in the use of suicide bombers, it is important to note that the movement still considers violence

to be a tactic. This distinction is important in that a tactic can change and will generally be adapted to the current situation. Furthermore, Hamas leaders have made promising statements regarding their violent tactics. Prominent Hamas leader, Mahmur al-Zahar, stated that "If we can fulfill our goals without violence, we will do so. Violence is a means, not a goal" (Mishal 71:2000). Thus, it is not impossible that Hamas would at some point be willing to lessen or completely refrain from the use of violence as their main strategy.

Furthermore, Hamas has also proven in the past that they are willing to change their policies and to react to the reality that confronts them. During the first *intifada*, Hamas originally advocated a policy of economic boycott of Israel. However, many merchants and workers were either unable or unwilling to participate in such a boycott due to economic considerations. Reacting to the strife the boycott placed on Palestinians, Hamas re-evaluated their position and adjusted their policy. Instead, they urged the boycotting of products from Israel that had readily available substitutes and strikes for workers who were employed only in sectors in direct competition with the territories (Mishal 63:2000). This strategy not only garnered more support, but also showed the sensitivity of the organization to the Palestinian people, something not always obvious with the policies of the PLO.

The Popularity of Hamas

Initially, Hamas focused on *da'wa*, or religious preaching and education (Mishal 19: 2000). Thus, from the onset, Hamas found receptive ears in the Gaza

Strip especially. The conditions in Gaza were dismal, with the world's highest population density, half of which live in refugee camps (Mishal 19:2000). Obviously, this group of people would be willing to listen to Hamas, who offered an alternative and hope. The movement's continued work with creating social institutions and providing charity, such as providing financial and technical support to rebuild a community after a severe storm, added to its popularity and legitimacy as a group that fights for the people (Mishal 20:2000).

The movement's support base was given a significant boost following political developments outside of Hamas's control. A culmination of frustration at abandonment by other Arab nations, military defeats, and the PLOs shift to becoming an international player lead many Palestinians to consider Hamas as an alternative to the status quo. The PLO, Hamas's main competition, had started with an ideology similar to Hamas in respect to Israel and the creation of a Palestinian state; however, as time wore on and as international pressure for peace mounted, the PLO accepted a two-state solution with Israel (Mishal 14: 2000). This reality disturbed some Palestinians who then turned to Hamas as representative of their desire to fight for all of Palestine.

Internationally, the peace agreement reached between Egypt and Israel in 1978 had a large impact on regional politics and the formation of Hamas. Egypt agreed to recognize Israel in return for the Israelis withdrawing their troops from the Sinai Peninsula (Andersen 2004). Additionally, the second phase of the accords was supposed to grant the Palestinians in the West Bank autonomy (Ibid). However, nothing came of this second portion, leading to frustration for the

Palestinians. Furthermore, the rest of the Arab nations joined with the Palestinians

in criticizing Egypt who, unsurprisingly, lost the respect of the Arab countries and

its position as a regional leader. For the Palestinians, this translated into another

strong party that was taken away from their struggle (Alkoni 2007). As it relates

to Hamas, this event added to a string of many more that would lead a desperate

population to support Hamas.

Another event that shifted the attention of the Arab world away from the

Palestinian cause was the Iran-Iraq War in 1981. As both Iran and Iraq supported

revolutionary fervor amidst the other's minority populations, tensions between the

two nations escalated into a war that lasted seven years (Andersen 2004). The rest

of the Arab world watched intently and nervously, fearing that revolutionary

attitudes would reach their way to the minorities in their own nations (Ibid). Even

once the war ended, fears remained about an Islamic revolution in Iran and the

consequences it would have for other nations. Thus, the Arab world had little time

to contemplate the plight and fate of the Palestinians (Alkoni 2007).

Enhancing the perceived weakness of the PLO and the despair of the

Palestinians, in 1982 the PLO lost its base in Lebanon due to an Israeli invasion

(Mishal 14:2000). For many Palestinians this signaled the weakness of the PLO

and a sign that the PLO could not possibly be strong enough to push the Israeli

occupiers out of the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinians were ripe for a new

movement that could bring them hope. This event also spurred Sheikh Yassin to

start organizing for an armed struggle against Israel (Mishal 34: 2000).

Furthermore, the MB saw the PLO as losing its military and political clout and

thought that this weakness might present the movement with an opportunity to step in as an alternative. Eventually this shift culminated in the creation of Hamas.

Throughout the *intifada*, Hamas continued to increase the number and scope of its social institutions, garnering more support along the way. Also, as the PLO continued to be conciliatory in regards to the peace process, they began to lose legitimacy which coupled with the well-known corrupt policies of the organization (Mishal 89:2000). Conversely, Hamas remained credible as a legitimate resistance movement of the people that was free of corruption. Obviously, as the PLO lost support, Hamas gained support.

Exacerbating the situation for the PLO, the effects of the Gulf War took a toll on the economy of the West Bank and Gaza (Mishal 89:2000). Consequently, the PLO was not able to pay for welfare or salaries for many Palestinians (Ibid). During this time, Hamas continued their social programs and stepped in to provide the Palestinians with support and aid when the government could not do so (Ibid). Naturally, this would make some Palestinians start to doubt the efficiency of their government while simultaneously gaining more respect for Hamas.

Another event out of Hamas's control that worked in their favor was the deportation of 415 Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists. In 1992, the Israeli government, reacting to the murder of an Israeli border patrol, deported 415 activists to Lebanon (Mishal 96: 2000). Among those expelled was a prominent Hamas leader, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Ranitisi (Ibid). Internationally and within

Palestine, the deportation was considered to be in violation of human rights and instantly pushed people to rally behind Hamas.

Four main current events have also bolstered the strength of Hamas. First, the Oslo Accords had an initially negative effect on Hamas, but then turned out to function in their advantage. The Accords promised many things, including the end of the occupation, and many Palestinians supported the process, hoping that it would bring peace. However, it was an open-ended agreement which never reached fruition. In fact, instead of ending the occupation, the size of the settlements actually doubled in seven years after the Oslo process began (Shikaki 2007b). Consequently, the Palestinians became disillusioned and started to view the Oslo Accords as another humiliating failure and more broken promises. Additionally, the Palestinians started to view the PA, which was created by the Oslo process, as corrupt (Shikaki 2007b).

Another important event for Hamas was the start of the second *intifada* in 2000. Just two months after the peace talks at Camp David failed, the *intifada* began (Shikaki 2007b). In response, the Israelis began their own campaign against the Palestinian population, leading to mass suffering (Shikaki 2007b). In turn, reacting to their suffering and frustration, the Palestinians advocated violence against Israelis (Ibid). Of course, this lead to more support for Hamas, who was willing to carry out an armed struggle with Israel, in contrast to the non-violent PLO. The situation in the territories continued to get worse, with the level of poverty eventually exceeding 50% (Shikaki 2007b). However, Fatah faced mounting unity problems within their own group and the PA was unable to

deliver any social services (Ibid). Again, Hamas was provided the lacking services, proving their resilience in fighting the Israelis as well as their dedication to helping their fellow Palestinians.

Finally, Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza was credited to Hamas and their violent struggle against Israel (Shikaki 2007b). When Israel wanted to pull out of Gaza, the US supported the Israeli government (Shikaki 2006). Consequently, this action did little to show that Fatah was working towards a peace agreement. If the US had encouraged Israel to work with Fatah, then some credit and recognition would have fallen upon the Abbas government. This would have been beneficial for Israel as well since, ostensibly, Israel would rather see Fatah in power than Hamas. Instead, Israel acted independently and 75% of Palestinians see the unilateral withdrawal as a victory and direct response to the armed struggle waged by Hamas (Palestinian Center…2006).

Hamas and Politics

Hamas and the PLO: Cooperation for Palestinian Unity

Although Hamas and the PLO have always been at odds, the two have maintained a relatively peaceful relationship due to both organizations' desire to avoid fighting and preserve unity amongst Palestinians. While this relationship is maintained even today, other factors have supplemented the reasons for cooperation between the two groups. From Hamas's inception, the PLO has criticized the group for breaking unity and not joining the organization (Mishal 84:2000). However, initially, Hamas was willing to cooperate or at least not

aggravate the PLO because of Hamas's relative political weakness (Mishal 83: 2000). Still, Hamas criticized the PLO and refused to join the organization because of its secular nature and its willingness to "recognize the Jewish enemy and to abandon the greater part of Palestine" (Mishal 84:2000). Nonetheless, Hamas rationalized its cooperation with the secular PLO by citing the need to prevent fighting among Palestinians. Hamas leaders made it perfectly clear, however, that cooperating with the PLO did not mean that the movement was accepting the peace process or the PLO's role within the process (Mishal 85:2000). In other words, Hamas had an understanding with the PLO to avoid civil conflict but wanted to ensure that abstaining from fighting was not misconstrued or misunderstood to be tacit support of the PLO or its policies.

Despite a mutual agreement that the preservation of Palestinian unity was more important than the differences between the groups, tensions did erupt into violence on occasion. In 1992, clashes between Fatah and Hamas became too much for the fragile cooperation agreement to withstand. Fatah was angry over the execution of some of its members by Hamas, and in retaliation started to disrupt prayers, attack clergy members and vandalize mosques (Mishal 95: 2000). Eventually, the conflict moved into murders on both sides and violence in the streets. However, on June 7, 1992 a "document of honor" was released which ended the violence and restated the need for Palestinian unity (Ibid). Nevertheless, this was just one of many periods of tension between the two groups. Recent conflicts between the two groups will be discussed later.

Relations with other Nations/Groups: Prior to 2006 Elections

Even though Israel, the US, and the EU have all labeled Hamas as a terrorist organization, other nations and groups have a history with Hamas and some continue relations with Hamas. One nation which has had a history with Hamas is Iran. In 1992, the two reached an agreement that stipulated that Iran would support Hamas "politically and materially" (Mishal 97:2000). Following this agreement, Hamas opened an office in Tehran headed by Ibrahim Ghawsha (Ibid). Ghawsha then negotiated an agreement with Iran that called for military and financial assistance, political facilities and a radio station (Ibid). Outside leaders solicited other nations as well and were able to gain influence due to their fundraising abilities.

While these new relationships and subsequent funding offers seem as though they are beneficial, many members of the "inside" leadership of Hamas did not appreciate the new alliances. These members wanted the movement to focus more on keeping Hamas within Palestine so that the control would remain with the "inside" leadership (Mishal 97:2000). Furthermore, some members of the inside wanted to advocate a more peaceful approach in order to avoid repression after the mass deportation in 1992 (Ibid). Nonetheless, the agreement with Iran stood and other fundraising efforts continued as they were deemed necessary in order to receive enough funding for Hamas's programs.

Besides funding, Hamas also had relations with other groups for strategic purposes. One group is Hizbollah, a terrorist group based in Lebanon. Hamas's relations with Hizbollah increased as a result of the deportation of Hamas activists

in 1992. While spending almost a full year in the south of Lebanon, Hamas

activists were able to learn about Hizbollah and their experience with fighting

Israel in the early 80s (Mishal 66:2000). Hizbollah had been able to drive Israel

out of Lebanon in 1985 in part due to its attacks against Israelis (Ibid). Therefore,

it is not surprising that Hamas's first suicide bombing took place after the

deportees had returned (Ibid).

Hamas and Elections Prior to 2006

Even though the 2006 elections proved to be an unparalleled success for

Hamas, the organization has a history of participating in local elections for school

board, professional groups and the like. Nonetheless, Hamas had always refrained

from running in national elections for a couple of reasons. In 1992, Hamas

circulated a document amongst its leadership in order to determine whether or not

the movement should participate in the upcoming elections (Mishal 121:2000).

The paper lays out the pros and cons of four different options: participating in the

elections, boycotting the elections, boycotting and disrupting the elections, or

participating under a different name (Mishal 124: 2000).

The advantages of participating were quite obvious in that if Hamas won

they would prevent the movement from being isolated politically, prove the

popularity of the movement, and gain more control in the political process (Ibid).

On the other hand, both forms of boycotting did not seem appealing as they could

lead to isolation or military confrontation with Fatah (Mishal 125:2000). Finally,

participating under a different name might not garner enough support and could

confuse the public (Ibid). Simply by looking at the options, without considering outside factors, participation appeared to be the best option.

Nevertheless, in the end, the leaders of Hamas decided not to participate in the elections because of the ramifications that would lend tacit support to the Oslo Accords (Mishal 133:2000). However, Hamas did "unofficially" participate by advocating the election of candidates that the group deemed closest to the movement's ideology and vision (Mishal 136:2000). Even though the document does not seem to have effected Hamas's decision towards elections, the nature of the text disseminated to the Hamas leaders, and the discussion that took place within the text, proves the political realism of Hamas and its use of rational thought. The entire paper is free of religious rhetoric or symbols and merely examines the alternatives. This is an important point to make because it demonstrates that Hamas is not a group of religious zealots who refuse to analyze problems outside of a religious lens. Furthermore, keeping in mind that Hamas did not want to participate in the 1994 elections because of its connection to the Oslo Accords, since Hamas participated in the 2006 elections, the movement is obviously more receptive to accepting previous agreements with Israel.

Establishing a Separate Political Party

Since Hamas had participated in local elections, as early as 1992, the movement started to consider establishing a political party that would be separate from Hamas (Mishal 140:2000). Advocates of creating a new party argued that by having a political party representing the interests of Hamas, the movement would

be able to better preserve its interests and achievements while at the same time preventing the likelihood of repression against the movement (Ibid). Furthermore, this would solve the dilemma that Hamas faced in deciding whether or not to participate in elections. Hamas would not have to implicitly recognize the Oslo Accords by participating, but would still have representation in the political realm (Mishal 142: 2000). Opponents stressed that the creation of a party could lead to Hamas being identified solely with politics which would deter some of its militant members (Ibid).

Although the leadership eventually decided against forming a party, they did outline what the party would do had there been one. Essentially, the party would have four central tasks. First, the party would be a representative of all who shared Hamas's Islamic vision but would need to ensure Hamas's right to armed struggle with Israel (Mishal 142:2000). Secondly, the party would promote Islamist values. Third, it would work politically for the goals of Hamas. Finally, it would serve as a framework for participating in other elections (Ibid).

One inference that could be made from Hamas's decision not to form a separate political party is that the group is willing to accept a truce. Hamas has voiced that they would agree to a *hudna*. Furthermore, Hamas knows that they must moderate because they joined the political system. Conversely, if the movement wanted to circumvent the issue of violence, forming a separate party would have been beneficial. The new party could maintain that it had no connection or power over Hamas, leaving Hamas free to continue its armed

resistance. However, Hamas chose to run as Hamas and consequently, will be subject to more conventional rules and practices.

Cases of Islamist Groups' Political Inclusion

Historically, other nations have also faced the task of moderating Islamist groups and have met varying degrees of success. One such example is Turkey. The Islamist movement headed by the Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) was successfully drawn into the political realm as demonstrated by the leader of the group, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has been serving as the Prime Minister of Turkey for four years (Herzog 2006). While this example shows some promise for Hamas, it is also important to note that Turkey is often a political exception in the Middle East as it has maintained a secular state. Furthermore, the moderate stance of the AKP could potentially be partially a result of strict state intervention in Turkey (Herzog 2006).

Jordan is another Middle Eastern nation that has been able to incorporate an Islamist group, the Muslim Brotherhood, into its political sphere. Beyond participating in Jordan's government, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan actually has sided with the ruling Hashemite family in times of political turmoil such as the al Qaeda bombings (Herzog 2006). The Muslim Brotherhood is also prevalent in Egypt, where the group was founded; however, in Egypt the group has been less successful in becoming a major player in national politics. After a series of violent events, peaking with the assassination of Prime Minister Mahmud Fahmi Nokrashi, the Muslim Brotherhood was outlawed in 1954 (Herzog 2006). Clearly,

as a result, the group became disconnected with the political realm. Currently, the more moderate members of the Muslim Brotherhood have been able to run as independents and have focused on social and religious aspects, gradually gaining strength and becoming the leading opposition group (Herzog 2006).

A final example and comparison to Hamas is Hizbollah in Lebanon. Just in 2005, Hizbollah was able to join the government for the first time (Herzog 2006). Unfortunately, Hizbollah does not provide a promising history lesson. After gaining political power, Hizbollah did not feel the need to succumb to pressures to disarm (Herzog 2006). Conversely, Hizbollah has carried out attacks on Israel since gaining power, as demonstrated by mounting political tensions between Israel and Lebanon which escalated into chaos just last summer.

So, what do these examples mean in regards to Hamas? After analyzing the above examples, Michael Herzog of Foreign Affairs lists three factors for assimilating Islamist groups into more mainstream political systems: "a strong, healthy, relatively free political system…, a balance of power tilted against the Islamists…, and sufficient time…" (Herzog 2006). The first factor works in two ways. In the case of Palestine, the government system was strong, healthy, and free enough to allow Hamas to participate. If Hamas had been unable to participate in legitimate elections, then there would not have been any reason for Hamas to try to win the support of more moderate voters. Instead, the group would continue to heed the wishes of its extremist base (Herzog 2006). However, since Hamas was allowed to participate in elections, the group wanted to win votes and thus took other voters' ideas into consideration. Additionally, now that

Hamas is in power, they will presumably wish to stay in power. Therefore, Hamas will likely start to moderate its views in order to appeal to the broader public. As discussed before, polling shows that most Palestinians favor a peace agreement with Israel, so if Hamas is forced to face the issue of peace it would be in the group's interest to make some compromises and adjust its hostile view towards Israel outlined in its covenant.

Although the "state," actually the Palestinian Authority, was strong enough to allow for Hamas's participation in the recent elections, it is not strong enough to provide a check against Hamas or to push the organization to disarm. The state should have powerful institutions to carry out its will as well as a monopoly on force so that order is maintained (Herzog 2006). The institutions in the Palestinian territories are weak due to years of corruption and order is severely lacking, allowing the stronger Hamas to pursue whatever course it desires. As the state is not strong enough to push Hamas into disarmament, it is natural that no single entity or combination of institutions has been able to act as a counterbalance to Hamas. In Jordan the monarchy held power over the Muslim Brotherhood and in Turkey the military served that role against its Islamist group; however, in the Palestinian territories there is an absence of a countervailing institutional power. However, once Fatah re-organizes and improves its image, it will be able to counter Hamas more strongly. Even now, Fatah and Hamas have an almost equal share of the Palestinians support.

Finally, time also seems as though it is not on Hamas's side. As with many political changes, moving towards a non-violent stance takes time. In Egypt it

took decades before the Muslim Brotherhood denounced the use of violence (Herzog 2006). Even a Western democracy, Ireland, needed seven years for the IRA to give up its arms (Herzog 2006). Therefore, it is not realistic to believe that Hamas will disarm itself immediately because they won elections and are being pressured to do so. Further complicating the issue is the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Nations such as Egypt and Ireland only faced internal conflicts and therefore it was easier to get the support of the people behind a non-violent motion; however, Palestinians are dealing with international conflict as well. Thus, Hamas can unite Palestinians and evoke nationalistic sentiment in order to justify and continue their armed struggle.

While it appears that the odds of Hamas completely moderating their position are not overwhelming to say the least, this does not mean that Hamas can not become an important and beneficial part of the Palestinian leadership and government. As will be discussed later, Hamas has moderated to a degree. Furthermore, Hamas has proven extremely affective in delivering services generally supplied by the government such as education, health services, and social programs. Therefore, given the right incentives and degree of international cooperation, Hamas could easily become a great asset to the Palestinian people and a beacon of hope for the development of a more legitimate government.

2006 Elections

Greater Democratization for Palestine?

Allowing Hamas to participate in the elections was a controversial action; however not doing so could have resulted in a worse situation for the Palestinians. Before looking at the alternative to the elections, an examination of how the situation arose is pertinent. After Yassir Arafat's death in November 2004, the political system of Palestine became more open because of President Abbas' desire to integrate all groups in an attempt to avoid fighting amongst Palestinians (Shikaki 2007b). Consequently, this provided the opportunity for Hamas to become integrated into the system starting with local elections in December (Ibid). Then, in March 2005, the Cairo Declaration was established between nationalists and Islamists which provided for parliamentary elections including Hamas candidates, a new electoral system, and an invite extended to Hamas to join the PLO (Shikaki 2007b). For Hamas's end of the bargain, the movement was to agree to a cease-fire (Ibid). In this light, it is clear that the elections had to be held in order to prevent the outbreak of violence and perhaps civil war. Additionally, Fatah saw the elections as a way to enhance the legitimacy of the PLO (Shikaki 2007b).

The elections themselves were amazingly democratic, despite some nations' negative reaction towards the outcome. International and domestic election monitors alike categorized the elections as "free, fair and honest" (Usher 2006). Furthermore, with 77% participation, the elections in Palestine had a larger turnout than the US has ever experienced since statistics have been recorded

(Usher 2006). The largest voter turnout for a presidential election in the US was 63.1% in 1960 (National…2007). Clearly, the Palestinians are eager for democracy and for the chance to participate in their government (See Appendix C and D for detailed election results).

As for its effects on Hamas, participating in the democratic process and increased political activity could moderate Hamas and help lead to peace. Ziad Abu Amr, an independent member of Parliament, voiced that Hamas has already taken the first step towards a more moderate stance and that the "fact that Hamas is part of the Palestinian Authority is already a sign that they are prepared to compromise" (Robinson 2006). Still, concern has been expressed that Hamas is only trying to grab power and will revert to old policies once it gains power.

Now that Hamas has been incorporated into the government, it is possible that they will shift into a mode of political survival rather than violence and terror (Malka 2005). Violence will increasingly become a less acceptable method for voicing discontent or effecting change since Hamas now has a political avenue for influencing policy. Still, militant supporters of Hamas must also accept this anti-violent strategy in order for any real progress to be made. However, President Abbas believes that the people will agree that this is the most desirable way for Hamas to operate (Malka 2005). Additionally, Hamas's supporters now have representation of their views in government, and therefore, should start to feel as if they have a stake in the government. Hamas itself will also have new responsibilities as a participant in government, rather than its former role as the opposition and outsiders. Marina Ottaway from the Carnegie Endowment states

that, "There is ample evidence that participation in an electoral process forces any party, regardless of ideology, to moderate its position if it wants to attract voters in large numbers" (Herzog 2006). Therefore, if Hamas can remain in power, there will be very real incentives for them to adjust or manipulate their ideology in order to provide an effective government and to keep the confidence and support of the voters. Both voters and Hamas are stakeholders in the government now; therefore, it is no longer solely a playground for Fatah.

Despite the wins for democracy in Palestine, the US is undoubtedly uneasy about the outcome. The whole mission of the quest to bring democracy to the Middle East was to uphold American ideals and to bring order to the region. Nevertheless, Palestinians have chosen a "terrorist" group as their leaders, diminishing the US's hope that extreme groups would lose power under a democracy. In this sense, the United States comes off as slightly hypocritical. The US government touts the ideals and importance of democracy but when one of the finest examples of democracy in the Middle East produces an unpalatable result, the US immediately turns its back and refuses to work with the fledgling, democratically-elected government. Thus, the lesson seems to be that if a nation wants to be in the US's good graces, it must not only be a democracy, but should elect only US backed parties and candidates.

A Reflection of Discontent with Fatah

Hamas not only participated in the elections in 2006, but won 58% of the seats (Shikaki 2006). These results were worrisome for many people who fear that

Hamas will use its newly found power to continue building its arms or to create a

conservative, Islamic state. However, it is important to look at what its supporters

want. In fact, many of Hamas's "supporters" actually were voting *against* Fatah

more so than they were voting *for* Hamas (Shikaki 2006). After the election of

Mahmoud Abbas, many Palestinians had hoped for better governance, economic

progress, and some headway in the peace process; however, as more and more

time elapsed without any glimpse of advancement, people slowly started to lose

hope. This disillusionment along with a conception that Fatah had "failed to

deliver results in every sphere" manifested itself in the form of a 55% increase in

support for Hamas between December 2004 and 2005 (Shikaki 2007b). As a

young Palestinian, Samer Bafrawi, stated, "It's not that we love Hamas, but we

didn't want Fatah anymore" (Robinson 2006). He even said that he voted for

Hamas despite the fact that he is "not really religious at all." Even Hamas leaders

recognize the favorable conditions that surrounded the elections. Ghazi Hamad, a

Hamas spokesman, was quoted saying, "Hamas presented an alternative" (Usher

2006). Further polling done by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey

Research showed that the main issues for voters were the corruption which they

believed to be running rampant within the Fatah party and the lacking

enforcement of order (Shikaki 2006). In light of these statements and the

undeniable fact that Fatah has made no tangible progress in forty plus years, it is

easy to understand why Palestinians would be looking for change.

Despite the Palestinians' loss of faith in Fatah, the election of Hamas does

not signal that the Palestinian population has resigned itself to become an Islamic

society with a goal of eliminating Israel. In fact, 77% of Palestinians supported a cease-fire with Israel (Palestinian…2006). The Palestinian people are not war-mongering, religious zealots, but a desperate population hoping that change will bring them peace.

Fatah's Disorganization Fuels Support for Hamas and Splits Fatah

After the results of the 2006 elections, many people within the international community, Fatah, and even within Hamas started to wonder how Hamas had won. It was undeniable that Hamas was gaining popularity; however, it came as a shock to many, including Hamas members, that the movement was able to win. Upon examination, it seems that Hamas owes its victory, in part, to the problems that Fatah was having within its own organization. As 'Abd al-Hakim Awad, the president of Fatah's youth movement, stated, "Hamas did not win the elections – Fatah lost them" (Usher 2006).

Undoubtedly, one of the causes of the divisions within Fatah was losing Yassir Arafat as a leader in 2004. The death of Arafat not only had national consequences in bringing about a change in the mindset of the leadership, but also had repercussions within Fatah itself. Though Abbas emerged as the virtually undisputed successor to Arafat, he has been unable to evoke the same sense of loyalty, either because of personality traits or a less authoritative stance. Thus, conflicts among Fatah members are not controlled by Abbas as they were under Arafat's reign (Skikaki 2007).

Furthermore, the calling of elections by Abbas, which presumably would not have happened in the same fashion under Arafat, sparked the beginning of a process that would undermine the cohesion of the Fatah party and eventually lead to its electoral loss to Hamas. Abbas wanted to address corruption in Fatah by making the organization more democratic. Therefore in January 2005, to prepare for the elections, Abbas called for the convening of the Fatah General Conference (FGC) (Usher 2006). This move had the support of most of the young members and some of the old members because they saw this as a way to strengthen Fatah by recreating its image and putting new leaders in place (Usher 2006). The FGC is the body responsible for electing members of Fatah's two bodies that execute policy for the organization (Ibid). However, since its meeting in 1989, it had never convened again (Ibid). Naturally, this allowed for the same people to remain in power and for Arafat to rule without being held accountable to the other bodies. Unfortunately, due to delays in passing election laws and compromises that had to be made, Abbas finally agreed not to convene the FGC until after the parliamentary elections were held (Usher 2006). Fatah officials believed that this was the best strategy so that it would look like Fatah was united and could work through any internal problems (Ibid). In hindsight, convening the FGC may have been enough for Fatah to avoid leadership problems.

The main rivalry now confronting Fatah is a division between the "old guard" and "young guard" (Shikaki 2007b). The old guard is comprised of the founders of the movement who have lived most of their lives in exile, while the young guard is led by Marwan Barghouti and consisted of younger, newer

members (Shikaki 2007b). The two groups fight over two main questions: leadership and Hamas, but for now just the leadership question will be discussed.

In regards to leadership, both branches of Fatah believe that they should be in control. The younger members blame the older members for the corrupt image of Fatah and for losing the elections to Hamas (Shikaki 2007b). On the other hand, the older members who are in charge now do not think that the "young guard" will be able to lead Fatah and that they would be unsuccessful in the international realm, especially with Israel (Shikaki 2007b). In part, this apprehension from the "old guard" stems from the disunity and lack of solid leadership amongst the younger members. The only widely respected leader is Barghouti with the rest of the "young guard" vying for power and split on the basis of geography and sociopolitical lines (Shikaki 2007b).

In light of the division and struggle for power between the "young" and "old" guard, not convening the FGC turned out to be more problematic than anticipated. Once Fatah started to hold its first primaries, Barghouti (the leader of the "young guard") won by overwhelmingly large margins in the West Bank (Usher 2006). Not surprisingly, this worried the "old guard" who wanted to maintain power and ensure that a repeat of the West Bank primaries was not witnessed in Gaza. Thus, polls were rigged and militias showed up at polling places, causing Abbas to cancel the rest of the primaries and to nullify all the ones that had already taken place (Usher 2006). Consequently, other militias retaliated by making their force known at the presidential compound in protest of the suspension of the primaries (Ibid). The conflict was "resolved" by combining

candidates into a "unified" list (Ibid). Due to the discontent brought on by the primaries and the combination of old and young onto one list, only a week before elections, 120 independent candidates emerged to challenge 130 Fatah candidates and the rest (Ibid). By protesting the way the list selection was made, the "independent" candidates that were really disgruntled Fatah members, essentially divided the Fatah ticket and helped Hamas to win the elections.

Hamas's Constituency: Who Supports Hamas?

After Hamas won the elections, concern was expressed about what their win meant. Since the Palestinian people voted for a Hamas government, does that mean that they support the creation of an Islamist state or the destruction of Israel? Perhaps the Palestinians are a violent people, either by nature or by creation. However, contrary to what some may believe, it is very clear that this is not the case. Thus, it is important to analyze who supports Hamas.

By region, the Gaza Strip has traditionally been more supportive of Hamas than the West Bank (Hilal 2006). In 2005, for example, support for Hamas in Gaza was at 33.9% compared to 23.6% in the West Bank (Ibid). This could be explained by the economic conditions in the West Bank, which are better than what those living in Gaza experience. Therefore, the residents of Gaza may be more prone to need and benefit from the social services provided by Hamas.

Another interesting factor to examine is support for Hamas by gender. While most of the members of Hamas are male, support for Hamas is exceptionally high among females. Females not only support Hamas over Fatah

30.5% to 21%, but in comparison to males, the number for female supporters of Hamas is almost double that of males (Hilal 2006). Again, Hamas's system of social programs likely accounts for these statistics.

One constituency that Fatah should have paid more attention to is the Palestinian youth. Generally, losing support among the younger portions of the population indicates that the party is losing its popular approval (Hilal 2006). Across all age groups Fatah lost support, while Hamas gained support (Hilal 2006). However, the more significant numbers were amongst the younger groups. For both the 18-30 and the 31-44 age brackets, support for Fatah has decreased by almost half (Hilal 2006). Simultaneously, support for Hamas in these same brackets has almost doubled (Ibid). Younger generations are the future of any people and if large portions of the youngest people are moving towards supporting a new group, it is fair to believe that the attitudes of people are also shifting.

Another important factor to consider is income level. A common misconception is that terrorists capitalize on the desperate situation of the poor. While it is likely that some people have come to support Hamas because of the social programs that it offers, Hamas is not a movement just of the poor. Across income brackets ranging from under 300 Jordanian dinar to over 1201 dinar per month, Hamas maintains approximately the same support level hovering around 24% of the population (Hilal 2006). Even though the social programs are a factor in Hamas's popularity, other events such as the second *intifada* and the general

loss of faith in Fatah also account for their popularity and appeal to people in other income brackets.

Overall, while the statistical evidence provided by Hilal is useful in counteracting myths about who supports "terrorists" and examining trends, the data does not help to predict who will support Hamas. Part of the reason that the data was inconclusive in this sense is that support for Hamas hinges upon multiple factors. The supporters are not homogeneous and have different reasons for their support and probably represent varying degrees of support.

Of course, some areas were not addressed by the data and could account for some of Hamas's support. There are undoubtedly some Palestinians who voted for Hamas because of their Islamic ideals, while others may have voted for them because they believe in armed struggle against their oppressor. Even though this is what governments such as the US fear, these reasons do not represent the sentiment of most voters.

Challenges Facing Hamas

Group Cohesion

Beyond the splits between inside and outside leadership, which was discussed previously in the section about the structure of Hamas, Hamas also faces divisions between hard and soft-liners. More moderate leaders, the soft-liners, which include Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, saw Hamas's victory as a chance to reform and build institutions as well as to finally take steps towards eradicating government corruption (Shikaki 2007b). In order to better achieve

these goals, the soft-liners do want to be seen as legitimate in the Arab and international community (Ibid). Consequently, moderate leaders are more willing to moderate Hamas's position by accepting an invitation to the PLO, restricting violence, etc. (Shikaki 2007b).

Hard-liners, including the head of the Political Bureau, Khalid Mishaal, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mahmud al-Zahaar, believe that the Prisoner's Document, which outlines some of the above mentioned compromises, is a betrayal to the constituency and the movement (Shikaki 2007b). Instead, hard-liners believe that the policy of violence has been successful thus far and that the movement should continue to use the same means (Ibid). Even though tensions between Hamas leaders have always been resolved through collective leadership in the past, these divisions will be a challenge for the movement's cohesion, especially when lumped in with all of the other problems facing Hamas. Therefore, it will be important for Hamas to remain unified and to present a coherent strategy.

Infighting

One of Hamas's challenges upon entering into government after the elections was to establish and maintain order and security. However, a huge obstacle to this is the infighting between Fatah and Hamas. Although the two groups have been in opposition for decades, the current situation is further complicated by a fragmentation within the two groups themselves and the upset of traditional power balances.

After taking control of the legislature, Hamas turned to Fatah with the ambition of forming a coalition government (Robinson 2006). Hamas's hope was that they would be able to handle social aspects and leave the issue of Israel to Fatah (Robinson 2006). Unfortunately, Fatah was not to be won over by Hamas so easily. Even within Fatah, one of the group's main divisions is regarding what Fatah's relationship with Hamas should be. Again, the opposing sides are basically divided between the "young guard" and the "old guard;" however, the names applied to both sides are changed. The "inclusionists," made up of the younger members and again led by Barghouti, believe that Fatah should accept Hamas's victory and should join a coalition government with them (Shikaki 2007b). The inclusionists cite reasons such as the legitimacy of Hamas in the eyes of the people, which could easily help to strengthen state institutions by giving them a new reputation as free from corruption (Ibid). Conversely, the older members, or "exclusionists," want Hamas to fail and are not willing to stand by idly and wait for them to do so on their own. Instead, the "exclusionists" are trying to isolate Hamas and to make them loose credibility among the Palestinians (Shikaki 2007b).

Despite the efforts of the exclusionists, President Abbas sides more with the inclusionists and their inclination to enter into a coalition with Hamas; therefore, Fatah announced that they would join a unity government with Hamas under the conditions that Hamas would join the PLO and would accept PLO agreements with Israel (Shikaki 2007b). However, Hamas was not able to agree with these conditions. Therefore, in the end, Fatah initially opted to become the

opposition party instead of joining Hamas (Robinson 2006). Although Hamas had some self-serving desires underlying their proposition to Fatah, it does show that they were willing to cooperate with Fatah, a secular group, to work together to run Palestine. This is important in rebuffing the idea that Hamas will try to grab power and eliminate other voices so that it can create an Islamist state.

Beyond simply not wanting to join a coalition with Hamas, some Fatah members were completely unwilling to cooperate during normal government functions and have tried to hinder Hamas's government in any way possible. One tactic that Fatah has employed is changing the government structure so that it favors Fatah over Hamas. President Abbas created a new government position of general-secretary, which would run the PA's personnel, salaries, and comptroller bodies (Usher 2006). Effectively, this new position would have control of hiring and would report directly to Abbas (Ibid). As one may have guessed, the new members were all supporters of Fatah (Ibid). The old parliament also tried to create a new nine member constitutional court that would hold the power to "cancel any law approved by parliament on the grounds that it is unconstitutional" (Usher 2006). Both of these efforts were an attempt by Fatah to put more power into the presidency in order to counter actions that may be taken by the new Hamas-led government.

Exacerbating divisions between the two groups, President Abbas announced in December 2006 that if a unity government could not be formed, then he would call for early elections (Shikaki 2007b). This statement fueled the armed disputes that were already taking place. On December 17, 2006 Egypt

helped the two groups reach a truce (Hamas…2007). Nevertheless, Hamas and

Fatah continued to antagonize each other. Besides armed disputes and some

resulting deaths, kidnapping was also prevalent during the skirmishes between the

two groups. Hamas kidnapped two Fatah members and Fatah kidnapped several

Hamas members (Hamas…2007). While it appears that the men from both

factions have been released, the kidnappings were the latest in a string of events

that intensified Palestinians fears and chipped away at their hope that Hamas

would usher in a new area of progress. Eventually, a unity government was

formed in February, which will be discussed later; however, tensions between the

two groups still remain.

Control of Arms

Another challenge facing Hamas is to gain arms control. Awad, a Fatah

official, points to this problem when he says that, "Hamas is a general without an

army" (Usher 2006). While Hamas does have military operations, the PA has

70,000 men who according to Awad, "will not be subordinate to a Hamas interior

minister (Ibid)."

Upon being elected as the ruling government, Hamas placed emphasis on

restoring security as one of their main goals. Sheikh Al-Bitawi stated that some

personnel would be dismissed and the remaining members of the security forces

would be consolidated into one or two forces (Robinson 2006). Eventually,

Hamas had hoped to put the money saved by the more efficient security force

towards social programs such as schools and health care facilities (Robinson

2006). Unfortunately, what ended up happening was that Hamas established a new security force called the Executive Force which is under control of the minister of the interior (Shikaki 2007b). The clashes between the new and old force has lead to immense conflict and infighting, diminishing the hopes of many Palestinians that the Hamas government can deliver on their promises. From late December to early this February, more than 90 Palestinians have died due to the fighting between gunmen (Palestinian PM…2007).

Beyond security force clashes, Hamas also must try to rein in paramilitary and militia groups that have been set up by Fatah, but are not necessarily even under Abbas's control anymore (Robinson 2006). Some Fatah supporters have called for Abbas to resign and militias have appeared outside of the president's compound. Additionally, other groups such as Islamic Jihad must also be controlled (Zabriskie 2006b). If Hamas concedes too much or is seen to be ineffectual, Islamic Jihad might become the new "Hamas." Furthermore, for any negotiations or a truce with Israel to work, it would require Hamas to be able to control the actions of Islamic Jihad and other militant groups who could disrupt the peace process.

The Formation of a Unity Government

On February 8, 2007, President Abbas of Fatah and Khaled Mishaal, the head of Hamas's political bureau, signed the Mecca Declaration at a ceremony with King Abdullah in Saudi Arabia which outlines the formation of a unity government between the two rivals (Palestinian Rivals…2007). Celebrations

broke out in the streets of Gaza, as Palestinians hope that this will mark the end of the infighting.

As part of the agreement between Hamas and Fatah, the cabinet positions are to be divided between the two groups (Palestinian PM…2007). Hamas is going to fill nine of the positions, Fatah will be granted six, and one each will go to four other parties (Palestinian Rivals…2007). One of the main points of contention was regarding who would hold control over the interior, a crucial position that oversees the security forces. According to reports, the controversial positions of finance, foreign affairs, and interior will all be going to independents (Palestinian Rivals…2007). Again, this compromise demonstrates the strong desire, on the part of both groups, to prevent infighting amongst Palestinians. Furthermore, Prime Minister Haniyeh will keep his position (Ibid). In November, he had offered to resign if that was necessary to bring an end to the boycott and to make progress for the people of Palestine. "If we have to choose between the siege and myself, we must lift the siege and end the suffering" (Palestinian PM…2006), Haniyeh said. Fortunately for Hamas, it did not come to this.

After the agreement between Hamas and Fatah to form a new unity government, Palestinian leaders have been urging the international community to end its boycott. Even the location of the agreement was important in this respect. Saudi Arabia was a strategic choice because of its close relationship to the US (Shikaki 2007a). The involved parties hope that the US will not be as hostile towards the agreement and will be more willing to give it a fair consideration because of the role the Saudis played, especially in comparison to what may have

happened if it had been another nation such as Iran instead of Saudi Arabia (Ibid).

Prime Minister Haniyeh made his plea, "I say to the Quartet and to the European

Union that this is the will of the Palestinian people….They should respect it and

they should work to end the status of siege" (Palestinian PM…2007).

EU foreign ministers said that they will wait until the government is

formed before they pass judgment one way or the other (Ibid). They also issued a

statement that they will not work with the government if it does not agree to the

same three conditions that were put to Hamas (Ibid). However, the Mecca

Declaration does not make any reference to the formal recognition of Israel, one

of the conditions that the West has been adamant about (Palestinian

Rivals…2007). While this could become a major setback in the peace process,

perhaps the Palestinian government can agree to the conditions without Hamas

having to explicitly do so. If this were the case, Hamas would be able to retain its

ideology and constituency support. If not, Hamas has tried to appease the Quartet

by agreeing to respect past Palestinian agreements that have recognized Israel

(Palestinian PM…2007). Previously when Hamas has agreed to respect past

agreements, it was always contingent upon if the agreements corresponded with

Palestinian rights and interests (Shikaki 2007a). However, with the Mecca

Declaration, Hamas has dropped this last condition (Ibid). Nonetheless, this is

likely to fall short of the Quartet's expectations (Palestinian PM…2007).

Still, the West should reconsider their position and help strengthen the

agreement between Fatah and Hamas. The agreement seems to be the best way to

get Hamas on board with the two-state solution and to start the peace process

rolling again. Also, the Mecca Declaration will help Abbas to be a much stronger leader. His leadership will be necessary for reforming Fatah, but more importantly for the strength of the unity government and the fate of Palestine. Domestically, Abbas has been designated as the person who will mediate any disputes amongst cabinets (Shikaki 2007a). This will be extremely important for matters concerning security, but will also affect other important departments such as finance and foreign affairs (Ibid). Furthermore, Abbas has proven to be acceptable to the West.

Complementing his domestic prowess will be Abbas's new legitimacy as a negotiator. Since Hamas is united with Fatah, any agreement that Abbas makes with Israel cannot be deemed as treason or against the will of Palestinians by Hamas because the movement is part of the government that is formulating the agreements (Shikaki 2007a). With the two groups working together they should be able to quell problems within the Palestinian territories and to control other groups such as Islamic Jihad. Furthermore, any international negotiations and peace agreements will be made stronger due to their inclusive nature. Thus, this unity government is a significant development for the Palestinian government and one that the West should take seriously. If the West gives this new government a chance, it seems as though the Hamas-Fatah coalition could provide hope for real advances in the peace process that were unthinkable under Arafat.

International Response to Hamas's Electoral Victory

With Hamas taking control of the government, many Western nations faced the problem of deciding what to do about the results. Many of the countries, such as the US, Israel, and the EU as a whole, had previously labeled Hamas as a terrorist group. Thus, the question became whether or not funds should be withheld so that the Western governments are not funding "terrorists."

Even though many nations expressed concern about continuing to fund the PA, Israel and the Quartet were able to agree upon the conditions in which they would maintain their current contributions. The three conditions laid out by acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert were: (1) the Hamas charter is changed to recognize Israel; (2) Total disarmament and the end to all terrorist activity; and (3) acceptance of all previous agreements between Israel and the PA (Usher 2006). While these conditions may appear to be reasonable, they rely upon small distinctions that made them impossible for Hamas to accept.

The first condition of recognizing Israel has been a sticking point for years. However, Hamas has recognized the reality that Israel does exist, they just refuse to recognize the *legitimacy* or the *right* of Israel to exist (Usher 2006). Furthermore, one reason Hamas cited in the past for not participating in elections was that the PA was established through illegitimate means of recognizing and negotiating with Israel. Consequently, Hamas's willingness to participate now demonstrates their resignation that Israel exists and that they must have some sort of relations with Israel. To ask them to change the wording of the charter is excessive. For one, even Fatah did not change the wording of its constitution. A Fatah leader, Taysir Nasrallah, stated that the FGC technically still states that the

group is committed to "armed struggle, people's war, and the liberation of

Palestine from the river to the sea" (Usher 2006). Obviously this statement is a far

cry from recognizing Israel's right to exist; nevertheless, Israel has been allowing

for the transfer of funds to the PA under Fatah's control for years.

While the first condition seems to be founded in semantics, the second

condition of disarmament and the end to terrorist activity appears to be more

straight-forward. Under the circumstances, it would not be in Hamas's interest to

disarm; especially in light of the tension between itself and Fatah. If they were to

completely disarm, Fatah would have an edge on the group if tensions were to

erupt into something more. Additionally, many Palestinians viewed Hamas's

armed struggle against Israel as a cause for the disengagement from Gaza

(Shikaki 2007b). Thus, it would be crucial for Hamas to maintain its arms and to

leave the option of armed struggle open in case their experiment with trying

conventional means to achieve their goals does not pay off. Furthermore, the

notion of relinquishing violent tactics is one of the few bargaining chips that

Hamas can use in negotiations. Therefore, Hamas could give up violence, as part

of a negotiation, if Hamas and the Palestinians will get something in return.

Finally, the third condition has been addressed by some members of

Hamas. Statements have been made to the effect that previous agreements would

be honored if they were not in direct conflict with Palestinian national interests

(Usher 2006). Clearly, Hamas is not going to reverse or avoid all agreements from

the past. The PA itself was a product of one such agreement and Hamas is

working within it. Instead of focusing on explicit acceptance of every agreement

from the past, Israel and its supporters should be more concerned with commencing new talks and striving towards new agreements. Nevertheless, the conditions held and Hamas did not comply, the result of which lead to Hamas's isolation.

The above-mentioned cessation of funding put forth by the Quartet was not to be carried out immediately though. Five days after the elections, the Quartet comprised of the EU, UN, US, and Russia met in London to discuss funding (Usher 2006). The consensus was that funds would continue to be sent to the PA until the new government was formed (Ibid). According to US Secretary of State, Condoleeza Rice, three reasons led the group to this decision: (1) to strengthen Abbas's presidency; (2) to prevent retaliation that could help extreme parties in the upcoming Israeli elections come to power; and (3) to prevent Iran from furthering its influence by becoming the substitute for funding (Usher 2006).

Although the Quartet agreed with the conditions upon which Hamas had to comply in order to continue proper relations, some nations did not agree with completely severing ties with Hamas while others actually sought to aid Hamas. One, perhaps surprising detractor was Russia, a member of the Quartet. President Putin thought it would be "counterproductive" to completely cut all relations with the fledgling government (Usher 2006). Putin made his opinion known, and even invited Hamas to send a delegation to Moscow (Usher 2006). Clearly, Putin was willing to act upon his convictions rather than succumb to the wishes of the Quartet. He also had the support of France (Usher 2006). Furthermore, both Turkey and South Africa have also extended their hands to Hamas (Ibid). While

these few countries do not constitute a majority, the support of a few nations does provide hope for Palestinians and Hamas that other countries will follow.

In addition to the withholding of Palestinian revenues, Israel has also banned the movement of all Hamas officials, including MPs (Usher 2006). This does not seem to have any justification other than the desire to prevent the Hamas government from functioning properly and undermining the ability of its officials to carry out their duties. The Defense Minister of Israel, Shaul Mofaz, took the Israeli policy of undermining Hamas even further when he stated that Israel would be willing to pursue harsher policies if Hamas did not meet its conditions. These measures could possibly include acts such as banning all Gaza workers from entering Israel, eliminating its customs union with the PA, and even cutting off water and electricity supplies to the territories (Usher 2006). Outrageously, Mofaz also stated that if Hamas is shown to be involved in violence, Israel will start to assassinate its leaders, including the Prime Minister Haniyeh (Ibid). These threats seem particularly cruel and in violation of human rights. Furthermore, if it could be conceded that Israel is right or justified in assassinating Hamas leaders, the Israeli government should perhaps use a bit more discretion in who they target. Murdering moderates such as Haniyeh will only incite outrage and leave the more extreme members to capitalize on the Palestinians rage in order to promote their more radical proposals.

Although the US tried to stir support for their stance towards Hamas, Secretary Rice fell short. In February, after the elections, Secretary Rice traveled to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates in order to try to convince

them to adopt the US line (Usher 2006). Each country turned her down, in part because they had already witnessed that Hamas was not to be persuaded by threats (Ibid).

In order to counter the sanctions that Hamas was going to be faced with from the West, Khalid Mishal (head of Hamas's political department) visited Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran to stir up support for Hamas (Usher 2006). Hamas has a long history with Saudi Arabia, who was their main sponsor for years (Ibid). This relationship did not falter any after the elections, and Saudi Arabia pledged to give Hamas more money (Ibid). The Turkish government offered to help mediate between Palestine and Israel when the time came and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt agreed to start a world-wide fundraising drive for Hamas (Ibid). Finally, The Secretary-General of the Arab League, Amr Musa, agreed to put a motion to the Arab League at the next summit that would call for monthly contributions to the PA in order to account for the money being withheld by Israel (Ibid). While this seems as though Hamas did well for itself in its tour for aid, Arab unity has proven to be shaky at best. Egypt often sides with the West as far as the terms being put forth to Hamas (Ibid). Furthermore, the relationship between Jordan and Hamas has been rocky since the "outside" leaders of Hamas were expelled from Jordan in 1999 (Usher 2006). There is also the influence of the West to think about as well as the nations' own problems. Nations such as Syria, Lebanon, and the organization of Hizbollah might wish to help Hamas, but have a lot on their plate already (Usher 2006).

One nation that has been steadfast in their support and has followed through thus far is Iran. In February 2006, Mishal asked Iran for more money, even though Iran already gives Hamas $10 million a month (Usher 2006). Still, Iran pledged to give Hamas a financial package that has been rumored to be in the sum of $250 million (Ibid). Despite Iran's obvious willingness to continue to give to Hamas whatever it can, some Hamas leaders are weary of becoming too dependent on Iran. One reason for this apprehension is the reaction of the US. The US has been at odds with Iran and their President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and would take Hamas's close relationship with Iran as another reason why the West should not work with Hamas's government (Usher 2006). As far as their own internal politics, Hamas is fearful that if ties to Iran become too great, they will no longer be in control of their own government. "We don't want to be a tool of anyone's policy," explains Atef Udwan, a new representative of Northern Gaza (Usher 2006).

More recently, Hamas has secured the help of the government of Qatar. In December 2006, the government of Qatar agreed to pay the wages of 40,000 teachers who had been on strike due to unpaid wages (Qatar…2006). The generous aid package will total more than $22 million a month (Ibid). Furthermore, the teachers had just gone back to work with promises of being paid, which will now be fulfilled with the money from Qatar. Additionally, the Qatari government is considering granting another $7 million per month that would go to the health sector (Qatar…2006). This aid would be extremely helpful to the Palestinians who are facing some of the worse poverty rates they have seen since

the occupation began. It will also greatly reduce the internal pressure on Hamas to alleviate incredibly harsh economic conditions and to pay their workers' wages.

One country that seems to be having second thoughts about the Western nations' boycott of Hamas is the United Kingdom. The Commons International Development Committee, comprised of British MPs, has started to voice its discontent with the boycott (UK warning…2007). The committee is worried that the boycotts will hinder the peace process, lead to violence, and push Hamas closer to Iran (Ibid). The boycott clearly hinders the peace process because Israelis and Palestinians are not negotiating or talking to each other. Thus far, Hamas has also been looking to Iran for aid, so the assumption that the boycott will lead to a closer relationship between Iran and Hamas is not unreasonable or unfounded. Furthermore, the boycott is significantly affecting the situation in the territories and the lives of the Palestinians. As a result of these factors, the committee recommended that pressure on Hamas to moderate its policies should be pursued by entering into a dialogue with them and including them in the process, rather than isolating them with boycotts (UK Warning…2007). Isolation only seems to solidify a movement in its fight against the isolators and to justify radical means by those being isolated.

Although Hamas has recruited aid from some countries, the funds have not been enough to suppress the plummeting economic situation in the Palestinian territories. However, as discussed above, many countries and officials are reconsidering their positions towards Hamas, especially now that the unity government has been formed. Therefore, it is important for Hamas to continue to

present itself as a viable, legitimate partner for peace and to persist in engaging other countries in dialogue.

Lack of Funding

Eventually, the sanctions and boycotts against the Hamas-led government were put into effect. The US and the EU stopped hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to Palestine (Palestinian 2006). This adds an extreme burden on the government which is already facing a $900 million deficit (Usher 2006).

Additionally, the money for payment for taxes and customs collected on Palestinian goods, amounting to approximately $50 million a month, which usually goes to pay Palestinian government workers, is being withheld by Israel (Zabriskie 2006b). While losing $50 million seems as though it would be damaging enough on its own, for the PA, it hit the economy hard because the sum amounted to 60% of its domestic revenues (Shikaki 2007b). As a result, the government was unable to pay the $116 million (Usher 2006) in wages to 165,000 government workers, causing a ripple of protests and civil unrest (Palestinian 2006). Beyond protests, the economy is being severely damaged. Since people are not being paid, they can not afford to buy anything (Zabriskie 2006b). It is estimated that the industrial sector for Gaza alone has lost $35 million (Palestinian 2006). Furthermore, children have been kept away from school as teachers cancel class due to lack of payment of wages (Palestinian 2006).

Initially, most Palestinians blamed the West for refusing to continue giving aid and Israel for withholding money rightfully owed to the Palestinians; however, as the situation worsens and people need to worry about feeding their

families, anger is slowly being turned towards the Palestinian government

(Palestinian 2006). During protests, a religious leader, Sheikh Majid Dwikat,

voiced his frustration by stating that "if this government can't function, it has to

think carefully about its people and change its political way of thinking"

(Palestinian 2006). More and more Palestinians are starting to share Dwikat's

opinion, which could help Hamas to moderate or could push Hamas out of power

and back towards more violent means. Also, if Hamas fails as a government it

may become harder for the more moderate leaders to remain in power as the more

extreme leaders will point to Hamas's political failure as a sign that it was a

mistake to try to pursue a political course and that the goals of the organization

would be better accomplished through terrorist means.

While rescinding aid is clearly not a good idea, some have suggested that

aid should be given discriminately. It has been proposed that the aid should be

shaped to strengthen the Palestinian government by helping to reorganize the

Fatah party or to give money to programs designed by more moderate parties and

members (Herzog 2006). However, part of the problem is that under Israeli law,

it's illegal to give money to terrorists (Robinson 2006). The U.S. also has a

similar law that is blocking aid (Robinson 2006).

Implications of the 2006 Elections

Financial Boycott Will Force Hamas to Moderate

The members of the international community who are participating in the

boycott of the Hamas-led government hope to achieve one of two aims: either

Hamas will moderate its position or the Palestinian people will be plunged into a situation so dire that they will turn against Hamas (Shikaki 2007b). Thus far, neither of these scenarios has materialized as the boycotters would have hoped. Hamas has made statements declaring its willingness to compromise, but all have fallen short of the requests that the West has made. Secondly, the Palestinian people have yet to lose complete faith in Hamas. There have been instances of strike and discontent, which have been represented in opinion polls. In September 2006, 69% of the public did not approve of Hamas economic performance and 54% were dissatisfied overall (Shikaki 2007b). Nevertheless, the overall level of support for Hamas has remained relatively unchanged (Ibid). Therefore, I do not think that the boycott is a fair tactic, nor will it likely evoke much change besides enhancing the suffering of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, the Palestinians are likely to link their misery to the Western boycott and not the Hamas government.

Hamas is willing to Compromise: Cease-Fire

Even though the boycott is unlikely to change Hamas's positions, the organization has shown signs of moderation. Hamas has on a few occasions agreed to a cease-fire with Israel. These cease-fires could be viewed as a demonstration that Hamas is willing to end violence and work towards peace with Israel. Unfortunately, cease fires tend to get broken when it comes to Israel and Palestine. Recently, after sixteen months of a cease-fire, in June 2006, the head of the security force in Gaza, Jamal Abu Samhadana, was assassinated by an Israeli

missile strike, infuriating Hamas members (Zabriskie 2006). This act was closely followed by another attack that would incite Hamas to turn back to violence. A Gaza beach was shelled by Israel and seven people were killed (Zabriskie 2006). This strike worked to unite Palestinians who were all upset by the indifference to Palestinian life demonstrated by the attack. Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh went so far as to call the attack on the beach a "war crime" (Zabriskie 2006). A situation such as this only exacerbates the peace process. Even Palestinians who do not support Hamas became angered and will generally direct this anger towards Israel (Zabriskie 2006). Any previous annoyance with their own government and the economic problems that came hand in hand with the election of Hamas will be overpowered by anger towards Israel and a unified nationalistic feeling. Also, Hamas's response of fifteen or so rockets launched into Israel seem justified, even if immoral, to many Palestinians.

If Israel truly wanted Hamas out of power, assassinating its leaders and attacking Gaza definitely was a miscalculation. In the absence of attacks, the Palestinian people would be left to focus and dwell on their poor state of affairs since Hamas has taken over government leadership. Eventually, their dissatisfaction could have lead to a turn for the worse for Hamas; however, Israel has given Hamas new life and has re-directed the Palestinians attention towards international affairs instead of their domestic woes. Nevertheless, Hamas has repeatedly stated that a cease-fire would be acceptable to them.

Hamas's Strategy: Moderation?

The international community is pushing Hamas to make decisions about Israeli and Western matters; however, Hamas wants to take time to focus on Palestine. A political scientist at An-Najah National University in Nablus explains, "They want to build a new Palestinian society. They're not going to talk about the road map. They're going to talk about the rights of Palestinian refugees. They're not going to talk about the security of Israel. They're going to talk about Palestinian security" (Robinson 2006). A new MP, Shaykh Ahmad Haj Ali outlines Hamas's strategy in the following manner:

> Our aim is governance, and one can only govern through the institutions of government. But in all cases our priority now is to address the internal Palestinian situation rather than the confrontations with Israel. We would negotiate with Israel, since that is the power that usurped our rights. If negotiations fail, we will call on the world to intervene. If this fails, we will go back to resistance. But if Israel were to agree with our internationally recognized rights – including the refugees' right of return- we would seriously consider recognizing Israel in the interests of world peace. If it does not, we would seriously consider issuing a fatwa calling on all Muslims – and not just Palestinians – to wage a jihad against the usurper.
>
> -Usher 2006

As Ali articulates, Palestinians and Hamas in particular are looking for progress that will improve their daily life, not just empty promises and agreements that

make Israel more comfortable. The Western community should remember that while they are asking for concessions from Hamas before negotiations even start, they are not offering anything in return that will help the Hamas government achieve its goals of making real progress. Nevertheless, even though Hamas originally wanted to pursue a domestic agenda, it appears that reality is making the group focus on international issues early on.

In response to the funding shortages, Hamas has diligently pursued other options and has used diplomatic means to obtain aid from other nations. Prime Minister Haniyeh demonstrates Hamas's resilience, "We will not give in, and attempts to isolate the government will fail" (Zabriskie 2006b). While Hamas has been showing great strength and conviction, they also work hard to alleviate the effects of their choices which are harming the populace. Still, it is difficult to know how long the Palestinians can continue under the boycott without something happening, such as riots or government overthrow.

As far as the conditions set forth by the Quartet and Israel are concerned, Hamas has continued to play the semantics game. Instead of fully recognizing Israel's right to exist, Hamas accepts the reality that Israel does exist (Shikaki 2007b). Forcing Hamas to accept the *right* of Israel seems ridiculous since the Palestinians would say that they have just as much, if not more, right to exist and Israel has not recognized their rights. Furthermore, the land that Israel has a "right" to was the land that the Palestinians lived on prior to the Jewish influx in the 1940s. Consequently, by recognizing the political reality that Israel does exist, even if Palestinians do not think it is ethical or right, Hamas is acting incredibly

rational. For a Palestinian to say that Israel has a right to exist implicitly means that Israel had a right to expel the Palestinians and has been justified in their actions (the occupation and subsequent security measures) to protect their right. Any Palestinian would have a hard time saying that Israel had a right to inflict the immense pain and suffering that Palestinians have endured. However, admitting that Israel exists is an entirely different notion. Therefore, Hamas has come to terms with the fact that Israel is an internationally recognized nation and that it would be impossible to reverse that fact. Whereas Israel, the more powerful player, is being overly demanding, especially for an occupier. Israel wants the charter of Hamas to reflect their recognition of Israel before negotiations can take place; however, Israel is not recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to return to their land. That right must wait for negotiations. Thus, it is a double standard that Hamas must grant concessions before even reaching the negotiating table.

While Hamas is unwilling to commit to disarmament, it has consistently cited its willingness to agree to a *hudna*, or a truce (Shikaki 2007b). This is definitely a good start and will at least temporarily end the violence and ease the tensions and stress that could hinder the peace process. Also, if Hamas is not provoked by Israel, it will have no legitimate reason to break the *hudna*, which could remain in place for years, eventually paving the way for a peace agreement. It seems that if Israel was dedicated to finding a peaceful solution to the conflict, then they would be willing to accept the *hudna* to stop the violence.

Even though Hamas has won the elections and seems to have the support of roughly half of the Palestinian population, it is imperative that the group remembers that they do not have a mandate to pursue whatever policies they wish without heeding the will of the people. Many governments, including some American presidents, have mistaken victory as a sign of unconditional support. Generally, this leads to a president or government paying too little attention to its populace. Therefore, it will be important for Hamas to heed the wishes of the Palestinians. That being said, it is equally significant to look at what it is Palestinians are saying. In September, a poll showed that two-thirds of Palestinians, which included 51% of Hamas supporters, favored a two-state solution with Israel (Shikaki 2007b). These polls and the wishes of Palestinians might have something to do with Hamas's resignation that the two-state solution could be a feasible option.

Another telling statistic is that 67% of the Palestinian population does not believe that Hamas should cave in to donor pressure and recognize Israel (Palestinian Center…2006). While this may seem startling at first, there is more to the numbers than meets the eye. Most of the same people polled said that they would support recognition of Israel as a part of a peace agreement or negotiation that would also create a Palestinian state (Palestinian Center…2006). It seems only natural that the Palestinians would want their own nation to be recognized as well. Furthermore, Palestinians have already seen that even when the PLO and Fatah modified their policies to fit Western desires, the creation of a Palestinian nation did not follow. Therefore, they do not want to be jumping through

whatever hoops the West puts up in hopes that one day they will get their own state in return for playing nice. Realistically, the Palestinians need leverage at the negotiations and will not have any if they make all of their concessions now.

Overall, it is important to point out that "Hamas has made significant strides to evolve, which have so far not been internationally acknowledged" (Nicole Pelham, International Crisis Group, as quoted in Zabriskie 2006b). Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that if Hamas were to drastically change its ideology or moderate its position too swiftly, it would alienate some of its constituency and undermine the solidarity of the movement (Shikaki 2007b).

Change for Fatah

The elections exposed many of Fatah's weaknesses, thus one outcome of Hamas's win that seems almost unavoidable is that Fatah will look to make changes within its organization. When confronted with what to do during its period of opposition, one Fatah official, Usama al-Farra, stated that the group should "complete what we should have done before the elections. And that is to turn Fatah into a modern political party with a leadership trusted by and accountable to its members" (Usher 2006). Already, some Fatah officials have begun to propose reforms. Stating that "the priority now is to rebuild Fatah," Former PA security chief, Muhammad Dahlan, has already unveiled his vision for reform based on three points: (1) the resignation of the FCC and FRC (the two main bodies in charge of implementing Fatah's policies); (2) the creation of an interim leadership; and (3) the convening of the Fatah General Conference (FGC)

to elect new leaders (Usher 2006). Most Fatah members will be on board with working to make Fatah stronger and more united; however, the challenge will, as always, be to reach some sort of compromise between the "old" and "young" guard.

Israeli Unilateralism

Mariana Ottaway from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace explains that "What is going to force them [Hamas] to change their stance is the fact that if they don't participate in the negotiation process, the Israelis are going to make all the decisions…" (Robinson 2006). Evidence of Israel acting unilaterally existed before the elections, but now that Hamas is in power, it is likely that Israel will pursue unilateralism more forcefully. In the Israeli government's view, Hamas is not a viable peace partner, forcing Israel to act on its own. Prime Minister Olmert has stated that Israel will make the final determination of its borders by 2010 (Usher 2006). Clearly, this statement indicates that Israel is not only prepared to act of its own accord and to make decisions on its own, but would actually prefer to do so. In the past, the Israeli government has used the same method in its relations with President Abbas. Even as the Israeli government talks about the road map or other negotiations, it still pursues whatever actions it deems necessary.

Still, Hamas should not give Israel an excuse for acting unilaterally. The Israeli barrier continues to be constructed despite international and national court decisions striking it down. While unilateralism is generally seen as a bad foreign

policy option, it is particularly worrisome in the conflict between Israel and Palestine. If the Hamas government is not included and viewed as failing to make progress, Hamas may revert back to its violent tactics. However, assuming that Hamas does not move to violence again, another group such as Islamic Jihad might take up arms just as Hamas did when it viewed Fatah as doing nothing (Usher 2006). Again, it seems counterproductive and against the interest of peace to work towards the policies that Israel is currently pursuing.

Prospects for Peace

Once Hamas was elected, questions regarding how the election of a "terrorist" group would affect the peace process were immediately raised. However, before delving into that question, a brief, recent history of the process will be given for reference.

One of the major, recent peace agreements was the Oslo Accords signed in 1993 by Yitzhak Rabin and Yassir Arafat. National, regional, and international changes and the ramifications of these shifts culminated in the agreement by both leaders to initiate negotiations. Nationally, for Israel, Hamas continued to gain support and Israel was becoming nervous about the possibility of fighting a religious battle against Islam (Alkoni 2007). Therefore, Israel was more willing to negotiate with the secular PLO. Facilitating Arafat's decision were changes present within the PLO itself. One of these changes was the second most powerful member of the PLO, Abu Jehad's, assassination (Alkoni 2007). Jehad was a more

conservative leader, and as a result, his assassination strengthened the moderate position amongst the PLO who promoted negotiations with Israel.

Regionally, the Arab nations started to push for peace again. The boycott against Egypt ended in the late 1980s, prompting Egypt to prove itself as a leader in the region once again (Alkoni 2007). Consequently, Egypt started to urge the two sides to enter into peace talks. Additionally, other Arab nations that had close ties to the United States also started to promote peace (Alkoni 2007).

Finally, on a global scale, the power balance changed significantly. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States was left as the world's sole superpower (Alkoni 2007). Since the Soviets had generally supported the PLO, the collapse hurt the PLO's standing and also left the only superpower in support of the other side, Israel (Ibid).

The combination of internal forces and the regional and global pressures persuaded the leaders of the PLO and Israel to come together in negotiations. Finally, the idea of "land for peace" was reached, meaning that Israel would withdraw from the occupied territories while Palestinians would abandon the use of violence against Israel (Alkoni 2007). As history has shown, the hope emanating from the Oslo Accords quickly faded into frustration and failure.

The next major peace attempt was made in 2000 at Camp David. This time, the PLO came into the talks with a set of five goals that they wanted to reach. The first, naturally, was the creation of an independent state of Palestine within the 1967 borders (Alkoni 2007). The next goal extended from the idea of having a state and called for the Palestinians to be in full control of its borders and

relevant air and sea space (Ibid). Taking East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine was the third goal put forth by the Palestinians (Ibid). The fourth goal concerned the rights of Palestinian refugees. Every refugee was to either be given the chance to return or should be compensated for the property lost, in accordance with UN Resolution 194 (Alkoni 2007). Lastly, the PLO called for the release of Palestinian war prisoners currently being held in Israeli jails (Ibid). Unfortunately, Camp David failed, and helped to spur the second *intifada*.

After the second *intifada* broke out in 2000, little hope for peace remained. In 2003, the Quartet released the Roadmap to Peace. The Roadmap called for a three phased peace solution. Phase one would involve ending violence and normalizing life for the Palestinians, including the removal of settlements (Performance…2003). The second phase is a transition phase that would create a Palestinian state, but with provisional borders and the third phase would be negotiations regarding the status of refugees and permanent borders among other contentious issues (Ibid). The problem with this plan is that the Palestinians must give up the only leverage they have in the negotiations, force, and in return are granted nothing right away. Only if they prove themselves, and do not allow any "terrorist" attacks to take place, would phase two be initiated. Even in phase two, the new borders of the Palestinian state are provisional, not guaranteed, and the contentious issue of right of return for the refugees remains unaddressed until further negotiations. This plan again was not palatable to the Palestinians because it did not address the major concerns of borders or refugees. Still, the Quartet wonders why the Palestinians did not accept the plan. Most of the blame was

placed on Arafat who was labeled as a warmonger, unwilling to compromise. However, had Arafat accepted this peace agreement or the one at Camp David in 2000 he would have been viewed by the Palestinian people as completely illegitimate and a disgrace to his people for not having secured anything of value for Palestinian national interests.

The second peace proposal that has been put forth recently is the Arab Peace Initiative. In March 2002, the Arab summit met in Beirut and passed the initiative calling for the 22 members of the Arab League to "normalize" relations with Israel (Usher 2006). In return, Israel would agree to completely withdrawing form the occupied territories and would come to a "just" solution addressing the Palestinian refugees' right of return (Ibid). However, Israel rejected the initiative. The Hamas government, though not in power at the time the initiative was first proposed, has seemed open to the initiative. Khaled Mishaal, the head of Hamas's political department, said that "We do not oppose the Arab position. The recognition of Israel is perhaps possible in the future were Israel to recognize the [national] rights of the Palestinian people…" (Usher 2006). While most of the West, the Quartet, and Israel support the Roadmap, it is clear that the Arab nations and Palestinians favor the Arab Initiative. Again, the process has been stalled.

With the death of Yassir Arafat in 2004, some hoped that peace talks might resume. Arafat was often portrayed in a less than complimentary light, and took most of the blame for the stalled peace process. Thus, with his death and the

election of Muhmoud Abbas, a leader that the West seemed to like, hope was restored. And then came Hamas.

As was discussed in an earlier section examining the election results, the Palestinians voted Hamas into power because they were voting for change and with the hope that new leaders would bring long-awaited results and peace. Unfortunately, the international community did not see it the same way. Labeled as "terrorists," the newly-formed government was immediately boycotted. While Hamas continues to moderate their position, Israel and the international community continues to be un-impressed. The ironic aspect of the whole event is that the PLO started with a similar platform as Hamas and has taken decades to achieve a position in which the West and Israel considered them to be a legitimate negotiating partner. Therefore, it seems that the election of Hamas could not come at a better time for Israel. Previously faced with plans to withdraw from Gaza and with unrest among its citizens, the election of Hamas allows Israel to start the negotiations all over again from square one: denying negotiations. Furthermore, Israel has benefited from a time of relative peace and a break in suicide bombings as Hamas tries to reform its image.

Even with Hamas in power, the Arab nations have been looking to restart the peace process. In March 2007, a summit of the Arab League was held in Saudi Arabia and has brought the Arab Initiative into the policy dialogue once again (Arab…2007). Thus far, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert is said to be giving the plan a "guarded welcome" (Arab…2007). The summit is also expected to form working groups that would promote the Arab peace plan (Ibid).

Further compounding the issue of peace is the complexity of the conflict and the number of aspects that are being disputed. First, the immediate problem for Palestinians is eliminating the violations and inconveniences of the checkpoints. Another priority for the Palestinians is lifting the economic boycott. Even though the resolution of these two problems would be a great relief for the Palestinians, as well as a huge boost in the quality of their lives, many other points of contention need to be addressed. However, a large concern is that Israel will use these more immediate points in order to side-step the underlying, long-term problems.

The main long-term issues that will cause the most debate are the right of return for refugees and border disputes. The status of the refugees is a huge dilemma, because granting the right of return causes a major problem for Israel. The population of Israel is 6,352,117 with 19% of that consisting of non-Jewish populations (NationMaster). The number of Palestinian refugees, while disputed, is placed at 4,186,711 by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (Palestinian Refugees…2006). Therefore, the fear for Israel is that if the refugees are allowed to return, the Jewish population will no longer constitute a majority (Alkoni 2007). The ramifications of the shift in majority go beyond simple population make-up because of the nature of a democratic society (Ibid). If the Palestinian refugees were allowed to return, they would comprise a majority of the population and consequently, would be able to elect leaders who would represent their interests, which would likely be in contrast to what the Jewish population would consider to be in their interests. Thus, the return of the refugees

would either mean giving up some of the political sway of the Jewish state or diverging from democracy, a move that would be internationally frowned upon and would be almost politically unfeasible.

Furthermore, for Zionists and many Jewish people, Israel is supposed to be the Jewish homeland, implying that the state should be comprised of mainly Jewish people. Even Israeli Prime Minister Olmert addressed this point when he spoke at the sixth Herzilya Conference, which is considered the most important policy-making event in Israel. At the conference, he said, "…there is no doubt that the most important and dramatic step we face is the determination of permanent borders of the State of Israel, to ensure the Jewish majority in the country" (Olmert 2006). Additionally, the Prime Minister also references Zionist thinker, Zeev Jabotinsky, who states that "The term 'Jewish nation' is absolutely clear: it means a Jewish majority" (Ibid). Undeniably, the influx of Palestinian refugees would go against these principles.

Finally, border and land issues are obviously a serious point of contention. Neither Israel nor the Palestinians want to lose land. The main arguments surrounding land and borders are in regards to Jerusalem, the settlements, and what land would constitute a Palestinian nation. Palestinians want East Jerusalem as their capital and the Arab Peace Initiative also calls for East Jerusalem to be the capital of the new Palestinian nation. However, the Israeli government does not seem willing to compromise on this point. Prime Minister Olmert insisted that certain places were of national importance, "first and foremost a united

Jerusalem…" and that "There can be no Jewish state without the capital of Jerusalem at its center" (Olmert 2006).

The settlements present a unique problem because of the human rights violations that take the issue beyond a land dispute. When Israel established settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, the settlements were systematically positioned. Settlements were placed so Israeli settlers would be in control of water resources. For example, the Dead Sea is completely controlled by the settlements (Lein 2002). Furthermore, many settlements were placed along the main road, Road No. 60, in order to prevent Palestinian expansion towards the road and to prevent the Palestinian towns on one side of the road from connecting with the town on the opposite side of the road (Ibid). In continuing with the idea of separating towns, the settlements were also strategically placed so that the Palestinians did not have large, continuous areas of land under their control, but rather had a series of small, disconnected pieces of land (Ibid). Therefore, it is not only necessary to remove the settlements to establish a Palestinian nation, but also to allow the Palestinian people access to resources and the ability to unite their population.

Finally, Hamas and other Palestinians have called for the release of Palestinian prisoners being held in Israel, among the most prominent and influential of these prisoners being Marwan Barghouti. While the issue of prisoner release is significant to many Palestinians who have friends and family that would return home, Barghouti presents an especially appealing case. Some scholars, such as Shaw Dallal, have suggested that one of the main driving forces for peace

will be the rise of a Nelson Mandela-esque leader (2007). Barghouti could be this person, and many hope that he will be. As one of the "young" guard among Fatah, Barghouti has become well-respected by young and old alike. He was close to Arafat, but came to criticize the PA and the corruption within Fatah (Profile…2004). Furthermore, he is a charismatic leader who has mastered both Hebrew and English (Ibid). Therefore, if Israel is interested in peace, its officials should release Barghouti and give him the chance to help lead his people.

Can Hamas Govern?

While it is difficult to accurately judge the governing efficacy of Hamas with the economic boycott in place, the short amount of time that they have been in power, and the unique circumstances of their rule, some indicators suggest that Hamas would be an effective governing party given the opportunity. When the PA was established, education, health, and social welfare were three of the five main areas that the PA was supposed to administer. However, the effective programs, and sometimes the only programs, that address these issues are operated by Hamas. Therefore, Hamas has proven itself as a provider and has the trust of the people because of their competence in these areas. Thus, Hamas leaders have experience with working on these projects and know what needs to be done.

A second factor that shows promise for Hamas is how they have run local areas since elections in 2004 and 2005. The local administrators have been receiving praise for their work thus far and have been cooperating and talking to

the necessary Israeli officials in order to secure needs and services for their towns (Humanitarian…2006). A Palestinian economist stated that:

> The municipalities under Hamas control are well run, and the work ethic has changed dramatically. Mayors are returning to the people and addressing their needs. The appearance of towns also is changing. They are much cleaner and more organized.
>
> -Humanitarian… 2006

Adding to this, European diplomats have also praised Hamas officials saying that, "They are hardworking;…they are strict with money; they enforce the rule of law; and they are trying to provide efficient services" (Humanitarian…2006). Finally, even Israelis have agreed that the Hamas leaders seem to be doing a good job. One Israeli, who is charged with overseeing the territories, explained that, "…so far [Hamas] have been running services very well" (Ibid). Intuition and eyewitness accounts such as these seem to show that Hamas could definitely be an effective leadership. However, the two areas in which Hamas could be seen as failing, negotiating peace and creating jobs, are both highly dependent upon the international community and its willingness to help the Hamas government. Unfortunately, real aid and partnerships with Hamas are lacking severely.

Conclusion

The West and Israel seem to be reacting to Hamas's victory based upon an unfounded fear of an Islamist, "terrorist" group forcing Islamist views on the Palestinian people and waging terror against Israel. However, Hamas will focus

on the goals of the people: living free of occupation in their own nation and reducing the extreme poverty that has afflicted over half of the population. Additionally, once the election results are analyzed in the context of the socio-economic traits of Hamas's voters, the conditions that led to Hamas's election, and the dire situation that the Palestinians face, it is not hard to understand why the Palestinians would vote for Hamas, an alternative political organization representing change and hope. It has also been shown through polls that the Palestinians favor peace with Israel and a two-state solution; therefore, the fears that Hamas's victory signifies the Palestinians' desire to eliminate Israel can be laid to rest. The election results were also incredibly democratic and witnessed higher turnouts than have ever been recorded in American history. Instead of boycotting the election results, the US should be praising the democratic nature of the Palestinian people and should respect the choice made through democratic processes.

As for concerns about Hamas being an Islamist group, other nations have also dealt with Islamist groups joining the government and have experienced successful integration. Most groups, religious or otherwise, moderate their positions once in government in order to appeal to a wider spectrum of voters, subsequently increasing their influence and hopefully gaining more power within the government. Furthermore, for decades European nations have had political parties based on religion. Therefore, the issue of having a non-secular party, while perhaps unfamiliar to Americans, should not be reason to challenge or boycott the Palestinian government.

A hurdle that must be overcome in order for the peace process to continue is the compulsion to react to any terrorist with isolation. Since the 1960s, the Israeli government has been capitalizing on terrorist acts carried out by the Palestinians. Instead of dealing with the militant attacks of the PLO as acts of terrorism, the Israeli government used the attacks to characterize the entire Palestinian nationalism movement as "terrorist," de-legitimizing the movement. At the same time, international and national attention was focused on terrorism and deflected from the real concerns of the Palestinian people and the conditions that led the Palestinians to utilize such desperate tactics (Lockman 2004). Consequently, Israel relies on the idea that it does not have to address the concerns of the Palestinians because they are "terrorists" or because security must take priority. However, despite the tactics being pursued by a government, the real problems and the plight of millions of people should not be overshadowed or ignored, as the Israeli government seems to have masterfully accomplished.

The same public relations approach used in the 1960s against the PLO is now being employed against Hamas. Under this approach, Israel claims that it does not have to negotiate with the Palestinians because they have a "terrorist" government. Furthermore, after September 11th, the US is even more willing to dismiss "terrorists" than they were before. The Israeli government realized the vulnerabilities that September 11th unearthed for the US and has exploited them to avoid negotiating peace with the Palestinians. In his address to the sixth Herzliya Conference, Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz stated that one of the positive aspects of Israel's defense strategy is that, since September 11th, Israel has "the

legitimacy to fight terror that we didn't have 4-5 years ago" (Mofaz 2006). While demonizing Hamas and the Palestinians, Israelis portray themselves as the innocent victims trying to fight terrorism.

What is often overlooked or lost in the exaggerated rhetoric revolving around terrorism is that sometimes terrorist acts are just tactics, not inherent cultural differences or a manifestation of hatred. Committing a terrorist act should not permanently label an organization as unreasonable or barbaric. Sometimes, as is the case for Palestinians, the use of terrorism is a result of not having an efficient or equivalent means to fight back against a "militarily superior enemy" (Lockman 2004). Palestinians do not have the tanks or military power to fight Israel in conventional terms, and have turned to terrorism as a last resort. Terrorism for Hamas is just a tactic; it may be "morally questionable" (Lockman 2004), but it is effective. Furthermore, there seems to be a frequently overlooked double standard in using the characterization of "terrorism." Hamas is interpreted as committing a terrorist attack when a suicide bomber blows himself up at a military checkpoint; while when an Israeli F-16 bombs a village, demolishing entire apartment complexes, the strike is legitimized as a necessary means of defense. The unwillingness of many Western countries to compare the use of tactics on both sides, in terms of their relative capabilities, has been counterproductive to stabilizing relations and negotiating peace in the region. However, now that Hamas has a political outlet to fight Israel with, their tactics can be changed. Hamas has acknowledged this and has voiced that it would be receptive to a truce.

In the current "war on terror," rhetoric portrays the situation as though peace through negotiation is not an option and that terrorists are determined to destroy their enemies, usually the West and Western ideals. However, Lockman notes that many groups in the past have committed terrorist acts and have gone on to find peace. The Jewish people themselves once committed terrorist attacks against the British. Among these terrorists were two future Israeli Prime Ministers, Menahem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, both of whom were wanted by the British for their role in a paramilitary group responsible for murdering British soldiers, kidnappings, and bombings. Furthermore, the African National Congress (ANC) led by Nelson Mandela in South Africa was listed on the US government's terrorist list (Lockman 2004). Despite this listing, the white, apartheid government decided to negotiate with the ANC and peace was reached in South Africa.

Regarding Hamas, the international community, particularly the US and Israel, should not be so intent upon isolating them because they are a "terrorist" organization. The circumstances and otherwise helplessness of the Palestinian people led Hamas to engage in extreme tactics. It is crucial that more policy makers realize that Hamas, and the voters who backed Hamas, are not barbaric people lacking morals, but a frustrated and desperate people losing hope after decades of occupation and oppression. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to assume that now that Hamas has a conventional way to voice their concerns, they will abandon their terrorist tactics. Still, if Israel continues to worry about the use of violence, "the threat in that situation ought to be to halt aid if it [Hamas]

engages in violence rather than if it engages in politics" (Humanitarian…2006). Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, drawing upon historical precedents, the reaction by some members of the international community to reject Hamas as a partner for peace is unfounded and irrational. Whether Israel and the US approve or not, Hamas is the legitimate, democratically elected representation of the Palestinian people.

Also, Hamas has become too popular and influential to be ignored or circumvented (Dajani 2006). That being said, Hamas can be the only partner for peace with Israel. Therefore, a more constructive policy for the international community to adopt would be to engage Hamas in negotiations. Some nations, such as France and Russia, have voiced opinions along these lines and an official from Brussels stated that, "ultimately it is nonsensical not to engage with Hamas" (Humanitarian…2006). Once these processes are set in motion, then the issues of disarmament and the recognition of Israel can be addressed, along with the equally legitimate interests of the Palestinian people to have their own nation, among other concerns.

Another reason that should compel the international community to push for negotiations with Hamas is that the current situation exacerbated by Israel's unilateral actions is creating a system of apartheid with grave humanitarian concerns and is plaguing the peace process. Building physical barriers and further humiliating and dehumanizing the Palestinians is not going to bring about peace. As President Abbas stated, "…checkpoints, arbitrary killings, the separation wall,

and arrests will only lead to hatred, despair, and continued conflict"
(Abbas…2006).

Furthermore, Israel continues to make a mockery of international law and institutions by ignoring various rulings and resolutions to destroy the barrier and to remove all settlements. Israel even manages to disrespect and abuse its relations with the US. Former Israeli Defense Minister, Moshe Dayan, was quoted as saying, "Our American friends offer us money, arms, and advice. We take the money, we take the arms, and we decline the advice" (Shlaim 2004). As Dayan demonstrates, the Israelis are fully aware of the US's unwavering support for Israel and feel comfortable enough in the relationship with the US to snub the advice of the US government. Evidently, the US is less willing to restrict aid to Israel, even in the face of direct abuse of the relationship between the two nations.

Overall, the main obstacle to peace is not that Hamas is a "terrorist" group or even that Israel is building a barrier, but that America gives unconditional, unwavering support to Israel. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US became, and has remained, the only superpower. With that distinction, America has a unique role in world affairs and an ability to sway decisions by pressuring other countries directly, or through indirect channels, such as when other nations do not take the actions they want for fear of repercussions from the US or upsetting their relationship with the US.

Not only does the US's constant and unequivocal support for Israel undermine the peace process, but it also tarnishes the US's credibility as a peace broker. Even if the US has good intentions, some of the ideas and policies that US

officials express are ludicrous. Secretary Rice hails Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas for agreeing to hold talks every two weeks as a sign of progress towards peace (Arab…2007); however, Hamas is omitted from these talks. Negotiations without Hamas will never work, so the talks themselves seem worthless.

Additionally, Secretary Rice is pushing Arab nations to recognize Israel before talks commence as an incentive for Israel to participate (Adler…2007). Israel should not need more of an incentive to negotiate than the possibility of peace, but if Israel needs persuading, it should come in the form of pressure from the international community, not concessions from the Arab world. If the Palestinians gave up the use of force and then recognized Israel before negotiations even started, the Palestinians would have nothing left to bargain with. Furthermore, many Palestinians rightly question why there is so little pressure on Israel and so much pressure on them to reform and provide tokens of their goodwill. With the US's approach to the peace talks, one would assume that the Palestinians were the occupiers. Therefore, the attitudes of US officials alter the way people in the Middle East view American foreign policy. Thus, the US should re-think its policies and focus on re-building its reputation as an honest broker for peace, and, more importantly, as an unbiased supporter of equality and human rights.

Assuming that the US decides to pressure Israel into peace negotiations, some people may doubt if there is a viable partner for peace. I believe that given a chance, Hamas could be that partner. Hamas has shown effective leadership in

governance and in social programs. Furthermore, Hamas has the ability to organize and bring the Palestinian people together, as was witnessed by their remarkable ability to campaign for national elections. Hamas has the trust of the people and a reputation of being free from corruption and for being ideologically strong enough to defend the rights of the Palestinians without succumbing to unfair Western demands. While it is undeniable that there are hard-line members of Hamas, who wish for the destruction of Israel, there are also members of the Israeli government, including the Likud party, who wish for the same fate for Palestinians. Even so, it is imprudent to ignore the voices of more moderate leaders, including Prime Minister Haniyeh. Conversely, the international community should support the moderate leaders on both sides. Also, if the US and Israel were willing to commence well-intended peace negotiations, and are prepared to address Palestinian concerns, Hamas will have to listen to the will of the Palestinian majority, who wants peace.

Even though the US and Israel must change their stance towards Hamas and the peace process in general, Hamas could also take actions to foster an atmosphere that is conducive to peace. One effort that Hamas should make is to present a unified position on some of the issues. Hamas leaders have varying stances on the main points of contention between Israelis and Palestinians, making it easy for Israel and the US to present Hamas's hard-liners' opinions as the platform for the whole party, marginalizing, if not completely masking, the views of more moderate members of Hamas. Thus, Prime Minister Haniyeh and

the Hamas party as a whole need to have a coherent strategy. Furthermore, In order to present their strategy, Hamas must use the media more effectively.

Overall, the implications of Hamas's victory have been severe and hard-hitting for the Palestinians. Having a "terrorist"-led government has caused the Palestinians to lose aid and has given Israel another reason to stall on peace and to further their system of apartheid under the guise of security and fighting terrorism. Nevertheless, the outcome of the election could have been different if the international community had reacted more reasonably to Hamas's victory. Inclusion of Hamas is the only way for the peace process to work, because if Israeli and Palestinian leaders are not communicating, then nothing can be solved. Being engaged by the international community, I believe, would cause Hamas to moderate their policies as a reflection of the will of the Palestinian people, coupled with a genuine and real concession on the part of Israel. Furthermore, now that Hamas and Fatah are cooperating and have formed a unity government, there is even more reason to hope that the two groups will work together to improve governance and strengthen Palestinian institutions. Also, Hamas has proven extremely effective in administering social programs and could translate these skills to the creation of national programs. To expect the Hamas leadership, or any Palestinian leadership, to make countless concessions as they fight for only 10-20% of all land that used to be theirs, while the Israeli leadership takes steps in the other direction and continues their land grab through settlements and barriers, is outrageous. Unfortunately, the Israeli government has no reason to stop these policies. Although many members of the international community, the UN, and

NGOs have voiced their disapproval of Israeli policies, these nations and

organizations do not have the strength or will to confront Israel because of its ties

to the US. Therefore, it is my opinion that peace and justice will not come to the

Palestinian or Israeli people until the US government changes its attitude towards

Israel or until international outcry becomes too strong to ignore.

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Appendix A: Map of Settlements and the Barrier in the West Bank

Israeli Separation Options for the West Bank—July 2003
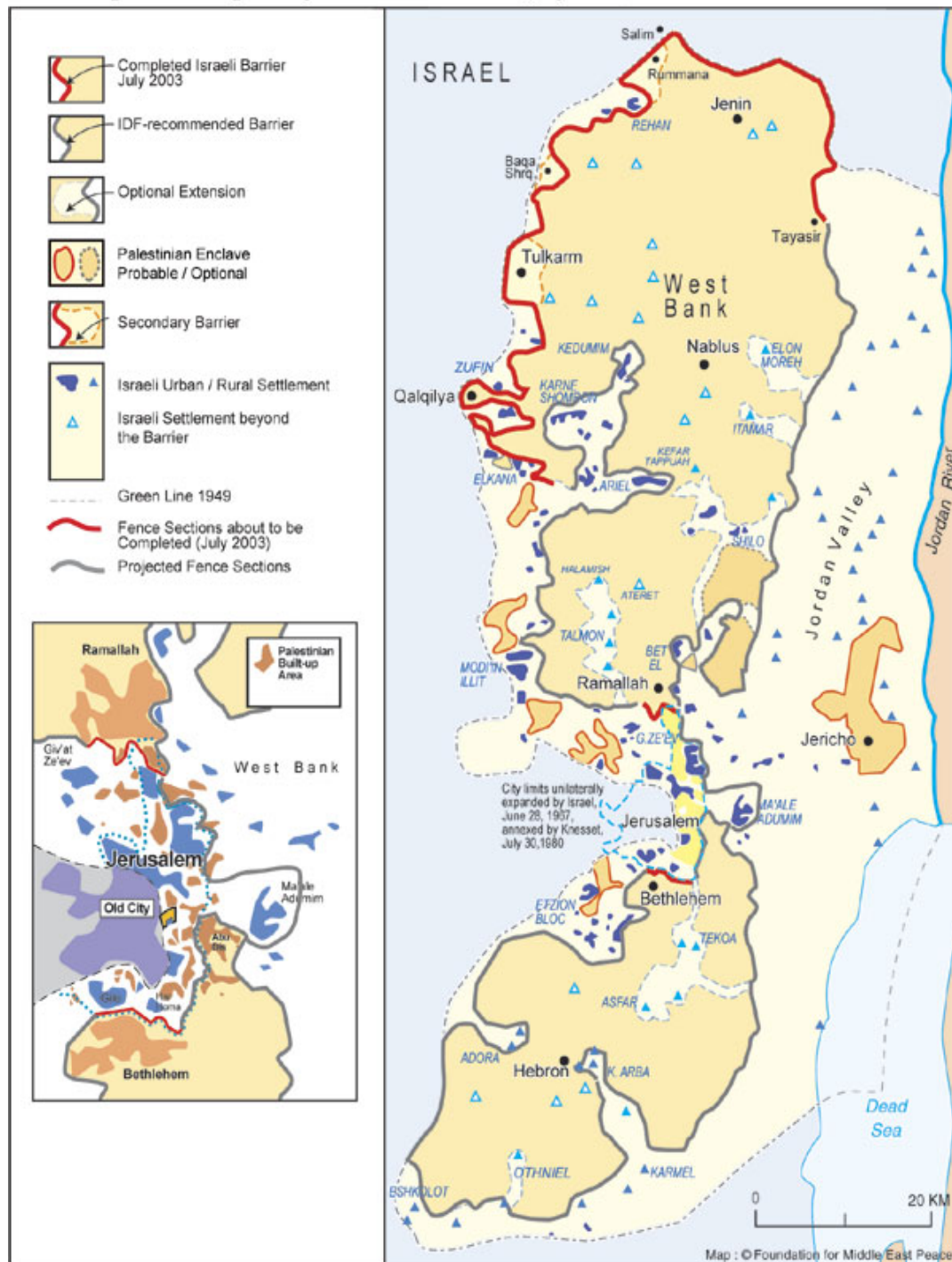
Source: Foundation for Middle East Peace

Appendix B: Chronology of Events Surrounding the Conflict between Israel and Palestine During the Span of Hamas's Existence

1987
The first *intifada* breaks out.
Hamas is founded by Sheik Yassin, as an arm of the Muslim Brotherhood.
1988
December 14: Arafat recognizes Israel (Al-Aqsa 2004).
1992
December 17: Israel deports 415 Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists, leading to Palestinian unity and support for Hamas (Mishal 96:2000).
1993
September 13: Oslo Accords, end of the first *intifada* (Usher 2006).
1994
July 1: Arafat's 27 year exile ends.
Establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) (Usher 2006).
2000
September 28: Ariel Sharon visits Temple Mount, inciting a string of violence and sparking the start of the second *intifada* (Al-Aqsa 2004).
September 30: A 12-year-old boy is shot during a gunbattle in Gaza, increasing Palestinians anger about the mounting numbers of children killed by Israeli forces (Al-Aqsa 2004).
October 17: President Clinton brokers the Sharm al-Sheikh agreement, which fails right away (Al-Aqsa 2004).
2001
February 6: Ariel Sharon is elected prime minister of Israel (Al-Aqsa 2004).
May 18: F-16 warplanes are launched against Gaza (Al-Aqsa 2004).
June 1: Islamic Jihad carries out a suicide bomb attack in a disco in Tel Aviv, killing 21 people (Al-Aqsa 2004).
August 9: Suicide bomb in a restaurant kills 15 and injures 90 (Al-Aqsa 2004).
August 27: Palestinian leader Abu Ali Mustafa is assassinated by Israel in a missile strike (Al-Aqsa 2004).
October 17: The tourism minister, Rehavam Zeevi, for Israel is assassinated (Al-Aqsa 2004).
December 2: Suicide bomber on a bus in Haifa kills 15 and injures 100 (Al-Aqsa 2004).
2002
March 8: 45 people are killed, mainly Palestinians (Al-Aqsa 2004).
March 27: Suicide bomber kills 28 at a hotel during Passover. Hamas takes responsibility for the act (Al-Aqsa 2004).
April: Fighting in Jenin and Nablus.
May 7: Suicide bomber attacks a club killing 16, also claimed by Hamas (Al-Aqsa 2004).
June 16: Israel begins construction of the "barrier (Al-Aqsa 2004)."
June 18: Suicide bomber kills 19 on a bus in Jerusalem (Al-Aqsa 2004).

July 22: Hamas's military commander Salah Shehada is killed in a bombing by Israel (Al-Aqsa 2004).

2003

January 5: Suicide bombers kill 23 in the streets of Tel Aviv (Al-Aqsa 2004).

March 19: Mahmoud Abbas becomes the first Palestinian prime minister (Al-Aqsa 2004).

April 30: The Quartet (the EU, UN, Russia, and the US) unveil the roadmap peace plan which calls for the creation of an independent Palestinian state…nobody sticks to the timetable (Al-Aqsa 2004).

June 10: Israel attempts to assassinate Hamas leader Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi in an air strike (Al-Aqsa 2004).

June 11: In retaliation, suicide bombers kill 16 on a bus in Jerusalem (Al-Aqsa 2004).

June 27: Militants agree with the Palestinian Authority to a "*hudna*" or cease-fire which will stop attacks on Israel (Al-Aqsa 2004).

August 20: Suicide bomber kills 20 on a bus in Jerusalem (Al-Aqsa 2004).

October 4: Suicide bomber kills 19 at a restaurant in Haifa (Al-Aqsa 2004).

October 13: The Geneva Accords, brokered by both Israelis and Palestinians, is revealed. It is rejected by Israel and Palestinian militants (Al-Aqsa 2004).

2004

January 29: Suicide bomber kills 10 on a bus in Jerusalem (Al-Aqsa 2004).

February 2: Sharon calls for a plan to remove Israeli settlements in Gaza (Al-Aqsa 2004).

March 22: Hamas's spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, is assassinated in an air strike by Israel (Al-Aqsa 2004).

May 13: Israel moves into the Rafah refugee camp and kills 40 Palestinians (Al-Aqsa 2004.

May 17: Hamas leader Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi is assassinated by Israel in a missile strike (Al-Aqsa 2004).

July 9: Israel's barrier is ruled illegal by the International Court of Justice (Al-Aqsa 2004).

August 31: Suicide bombers kill 16 on two buses (Al-Aqsa 2004).

October 27: A plan to withdraw Israeli settlers from Gaza is voted on in the Israeli legislature (Al-Aqsa 2004).

November 11: Yasser Arafat dies in France. Mahmoud Abbas is elected head of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) (Al-Aqsa 2004).

2005

January 15: Mahmoud Abbas is elected president of the Palestinian Authority. He pushes for a ceasefire during his inauguration speech (Al-Aqsa 2004).

January 21: Palestinian Authority police try to stop militant rockets from being launched into Israel by militants (Al-Aqsa 2004).

January: President Abbas calls for the convening of the FGC (Usher 2006).

February 8: Mahmoud Abbas and Ariel Sharon meet in Sharm al-Sheikh and agree to a truce (Al-Aqsa 2004).

February 10: Hamas fires rockets into an Israeli settlement, saying it will not be bound by the ceasefire (Al-Aqsa 2004).

March 15: Signing of the Cairo Declaration between Fatah and Hamas that will call for new elections in which Hamas will participate in (Usher 2006).

August 22: Israel completes Gaza withdrawal.

2006

January 4: Sharon goes into a coma after a stroke.

January 25: Hamas wins national elections, taking 72 of 132 seats in parliament (Usher 2006).

January 30: The Quartet (the US, EU, UN, and Russia) meets in London to discuss relations with the PA (Usher 2006).

February 18: New Palestinian parliament is sworn in in Gaza and Ramallah (Usher 2006).

February 19: Israel's policy towards the Hamas-led government of isolating and withholding funds is announced (Usher 2006).

March 31: Clashes in Gaza Strip between rival militants leave 36 wounded and after the assassination of a top commander (Hamas…2006).

September: Government workers, backed by Fatah go on strike due to Hamas's failure to pay their wages (Shikaki 2007b).

September: Israel unilaterally pulls out of Gaza (Shikaki 2007b).

December: Qatar agrees to pay the desperately needed teachers' wages (Qatar…2006).

2007

January: A Committee of British MPs releases a report voicing their opinion that the UK should enter into dialogue with Hamas (UK Warning…2007).

February 8: President Abbas and Khaled Meshaal sign the Mecca Declaration in Saudi Arabia, forming a unity government (Palestinian Rivals…2007).

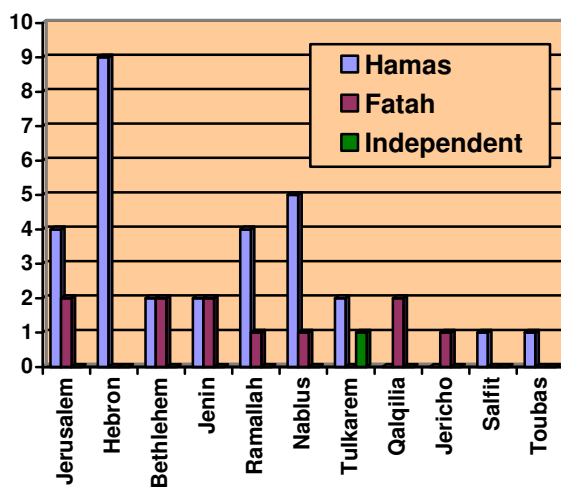*March:* Arab League relaunches Arab Peace Initiative (Arab…2007).

Appendix C: 2006 Election Results

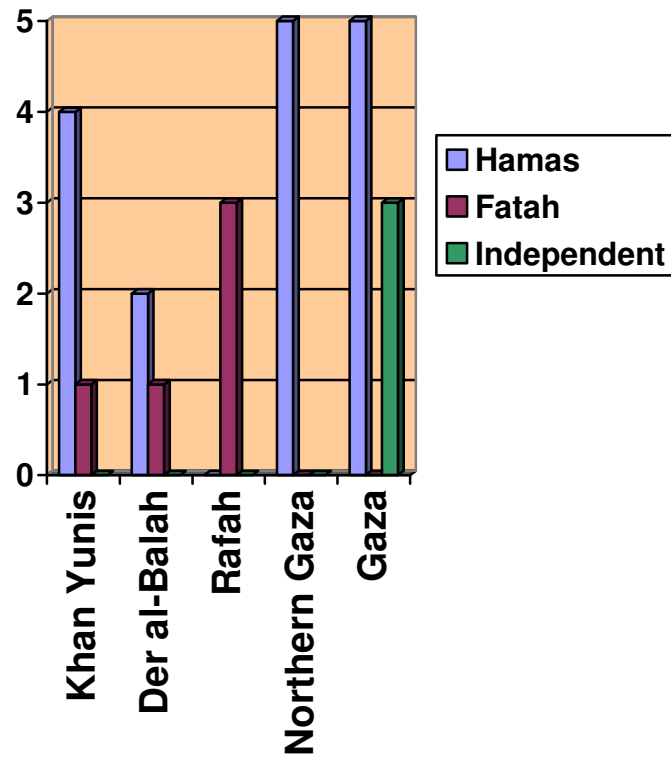**Proportional Representation List (66 Seats)**
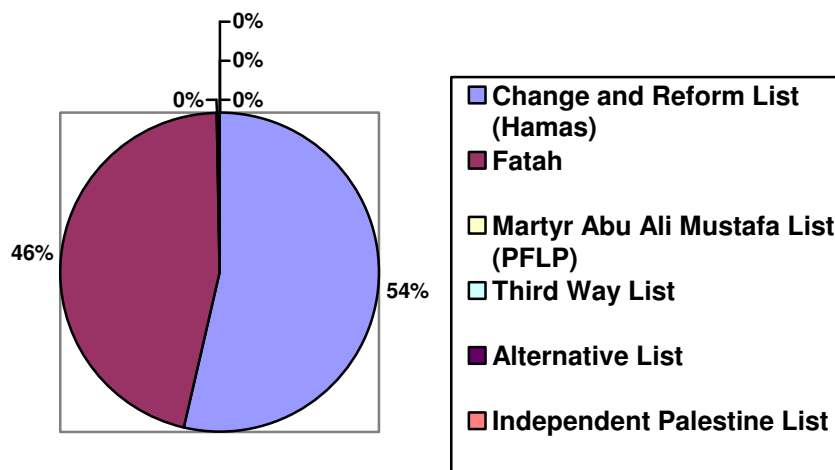
Source: Data from the Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre

Distribution of Constituent Seats in the West Bank

Source: Data from the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center

Distribution of Constituent Seats in the Gaza Strip

Source: Data from the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center

Appendix D: 2006 Election Results – The Elected Officials

Palestinian Legislative Council, according to the Central Elections Commission

The Proportional Representation List (The Homeland List) (66 seats):

The Change and Reform List (Hamas):
1- Ismail Abdul Salam Haniyye
2- Mohammed Abu Teir
3- Jamileh Abdullah al-Shanti
4- Mohammed Jamal Nu'man Alaeddin
5- Yasser Daoud Mansour
6- Khalil Musa Rabai
7- Huda Naim al-Qreinawi
8- Mahmoud Ahmad al-Ramahi
9- Mahmoud Khaled Zahhar
10- Abdul Fattah Hasan Dukhan
11- Ibrahim Mohammed Dahbour
12- Mariam Mahmoud Saleh
13- Fathi Mohammed Qar'awi
14- Anwar Mohammed Zboun
15- Imad Mahmoud Nofal
16- Omar Mahmoud Matar
17- Muna Salim Saleh Mansour
18- Yahia Abdul Aziz al-Abadsah
19- Mohammed Maher Yousef Bader
20- Ayman Hussein Daraghmeh
21- Fathi Ahmad Hammad
22- Mariam Mohammed Farhat
23- Sayyed Salem Abu Msameh
24- Marwan Mohammed Abu Ras
25- Samira Abdullah Halayqah
26- Jamal Ismail Iskeik
27- Ali Salim Roumanin
28- Ahmad Yousef Abu Halabiyye
29- Abdul Jaber Mustafa Fuqaha'
30- Younes Mohammed Abu Daqqah

Fatah List:
31- Marwan Barghouthi
32- Mohammed Abu Yatta
33- Intisar al-Wazir
34- Nabil Shaath
35- Hakam Balawi
36- Abdullah Abdullah

37- Najat Abu Baker
38- Rajai Barakeh
39- Ibrahim al-Musaddar
40- Rabihah Thiab
41- Mohammed al-Lahham
42- Jamal Abul Rob
43- Sahar al-Qawasmi
44- Majed Abu Shammaleh
45- Faisal Abu Shahla 46- Issa Qaraqe'
47- Siham Thabet
48- Naser Jumaa
49- Alaeddin Yaghi
50- Abdul Rahim Barham
51- Jamal Abdul Hamid al-Haj
52- Najat al-Astal
53- Jihad Tmeileh
54- Jihad Abu Zneid
55- Akram al-Haymouni
56- Jamal Huweil
57- Naimah al-Sheikh Ali

Martyr Abu Ali Mustafa List (PFLP)
58- Ahmad Sa'dat
59- Jamil Majdalawi
60- Khaledah Jarrar

Third Way List
61- Salam Fayyad
62- Hanan Ashrawi

Alternative List (DFLP, PPP, Fida and Independent figures)
63- Qays Abdul Karim
64- Bassam al-Salhi

Independent Palestine List
65- Mustafa Barghouthi
66- Rawia al-Shawwa

The Constituencies (66 seats):

WEST BANK:

Jerusalem
67- Ibrahim Abu Salem (Hamas)
68- Mohammed Totah (Hamas)
69- Wael Abdul Rahman (Hamas)
70- Ahmad Attoun (Hamas)
71- Bernard Sabella (Fatah)
72- Emil Jarjoui (Fatah)

Hebron
73- Nayef Rjoub (Hamas)
74- Aziz Dweik (Hamas)
75- Mohammed Abu Jheisheh (Hamas)
76- Nizar Ramadan (Hamas)
77- Samir al-Qadi (Hamas)
78- Azzam Salhab (Hamas)
79- Basem Za'arir (Hamas)
80- Hatem Qfeisheh (Hamas)
81- Mohammed al-Tal (Hamas)

Bethlehem
82- Khaled Thweib (Hamas)
83- Mahmoud al-Khatib (Hamas)
84- Fayez Saqqa (Fatah)
85- Fouad Kokali (Fatah)

Jenin
86- Khaled Abed Yahia (Hamas)
87- Khaled Abu Hasan (Hamas)
88- Shami Shami (Fatah)
89- Azzam al-Ahmad (Fatah)

Ramallah
90- Muhib Abdullah (Fatah)
91- Hasan Yousef (Hamas)
92- Ahmad Mubarak (Hamas)
93- Fadel Hamdan (Hamas)
94- Mahmoud Misleh (Hamas)

Nablus
95- Hamed al-Beitawi (Hamas)
96- Ahmad Ali Ahmad (Hamas)
97- Riyad Ali Amli (Hamas)

98- Hosni Mohammed Ahmad Yasin (Hamas)
99- Daoud Abu Seir (Hamas)
100- Mahmoud al-Aloul (Fatah)

Tulkarem
101- Abdul Rahman Fahmi Zeidan (Hamas)
102- Hasan Khreisheh (Independent)
103- Riyad Raddad (Hamas)

Qalqilia
104- Walid Assaf (Fatah)
105- Ahmad Hazza' Shreim (Fatah)

Jericho
106- Saeb Erekat (Fatah)

Salfit
107- Naser Abdul Jawad (Hamas)

Toubas
108- Khaled Abu Tos (Hamas)

GAZA STRIP

Khan Yunis
109- Younes al-Astal (Hamas)
110- Salah al-Bardawil (Hamas)
111- Khamis Najjar (Hamas)
112- Suleiman al-Farra (Hamas)
113- Mohammed Dahlan (Fatah)

Der al-Balah
114- Abdul Rahman al-Jamal (Hamas)
115- Salem Salameh (Hamas)
116- Ahmad Abu Holi (Fatah)

Rafah
117- Mohammed Hijazi (Fatah)
118- Radwan al-Akhras (Fatah)
119- Ashraf Jumaa (Fatah)

Northern Gaza
120- Yousef al-Sharafi (Hamas)
121- Atef Udwan (Hamas)
122- Ismail al-Ashqar (Hamas)

123- Mohammed Shihab (Hamas)
124- Mushir al-Habal (Hamas)

Gaza
125- Ziad Abu Amro (Independent)
126- Saeed Siam (Hamas)
127- Ahmad Bahar (Hamas)
128- Khalil al-Hayyeh (Hamas)
129- Mohammed al-Ghoul (Hamas)
130- Jamal Saleh (Hamas)
131- Hussam al-Tawil (Independent)
132- Jamal al-Khudari (Independent)

Source: Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre

Appendix E: Brief Profiles of Hamas's Leaders

Sheik Ahmad Yassin – Founder of Hamas (Mishal 37:2000) Arrested by Israel in 1989 after the kidnapping and murder of an Israeli soldier (Mishal 58:2000). Freed from jail as part of an exchange for agents responsible for the assassination attempt on Khaled Mishaal (Profile…2006). Assassinated by Israeli missile attack on March 22, 2004 (Who…2007).

Abd al-'Aziz al-Rantisi – Most prominent leader in the occupied territories (Mishal 96: 2000). Assassinated by Israel on April 17, 2004 (Who…2007).

Ismail Haniyeh – Prime Minister. Considered to be more moderate.

Musa Abu Marzuq – Head of Hamas's political bureau (Mishal 67: 2000). Part of outside leadership, located in the US (Mishal 88:2000). Arrested in 1995 by the United States (Mishal 162: 2000).

Mahmoud Al-Zahar – Generally considered more hard-line (Shikaki 2007b). Former surgeon. Minister of foreign affairs (Shikaki 2007b). Helped found Hamas and served as its main spokesman (Robinson 2006). Many believe that he will be a crucial tie to the traditional power base in Gaza (Robinson 2006).

Khaled Mishaal – Generally considered more hard-line (Shikaki 2007b). Hamas spokesman. Exiled in Syria (Robinson 2006). Head of Hamas's political department (Usher 2006). Survived an assassination attempt by Israel due to Jordan's intervention (Profile…2006).

Walid Aql – Founder and first commander of battalions of 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, Hamas's military apparatus (Mishal 64: 2000)

Ibrahim Ghawsha- Hamas spokesman in Amman (Mshal 163: 2000).

Muhammad Nazzal – Representative in Jordan (Mushal 162: 2000)

Abdul Khaliq al-Natche – Considered to be more moderate. Signed the Prisoner's Document for Hamas (Shikaki 2007b).

Sheik Mohammed Abu Tir – Military commander. "We are not against the Jews. We are against occupation and oppression (Robinson 2006)." "There are facts on the ground that we cannot close our eyes to. We are not going to tear up all the agreements (Robinson 2006)" Shows that some leaders are willing to take more moderate approaches and would perhaps consider negotiating with Israel.

Sheik Hassan Yussef – Religious figure and political boss in the West Bank (Robinson 2006).

Mohammed Deif – Military commander. Injured in an air strike in 2002, Dief probably does not run operations anymore, but is an important symbolic figure (Robinson 2006).

Appendix F: Roadmap to Peace

Performance-Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

April 30, 2003 US Department of State

The following is a performance-based and goal-driven roadmap, with clear phases, timelines, target dates, and benchmarks aiming at progress through reciprocal steps by the two parties in the political, security, economic, humanitarian, and institution-building fields, under the auspices of the Quartet [the United States, European Union, United Nations, and Russia]. The destination is a final and comprehensive settlement of the Israel-Palestinian conflict by 2005, as presented in President Bush's speech of 24 June, and welcomed by the EU, Russia and the UN in the 16 July and 17 September Quartet Ministerial statements.

A two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will only be achieved through an end to violence and terrorism, when the Palestinian people have a leadership acting decisively against terror and willing and able to build a practicing democracy based on tolerance and liberty, and through Israel's readiness to do what is necessary for a democratic Palestinian state to be established, and a clear, unambiguous acceptance by both parties of the goal of a negotiated settlement as described below. The Quartet will assist and facilitate implementation of the plan, starting in Phase I, including direct discussions between the parties as required. The plan establishes a realistic timeline for implementation. However, as a performance-based plan, progress will require and depend upon the good faith efforts of the parties, and their compliance with each of the obligations outlined below. Should the parties perform their obligations rapidly, progress within and through the phases may come sooner than indicated in the plan. Non-compliance with obligations will impede progress.

A settlement, negotiated between the parties, will result in the emergence of an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbors. The settlement will resolve the Israel-Palestinian conflict, and end the occupation that began in 1967, based on the foundations of the Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, UNSCRs 242, 338 and 1397, agreements previously reached by the parties, and the initiative of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah – endorsed by the Beirut Arab League Summit – calling for acceptance of Israel as a neighbor living in peace and security, in the context of a comprehensive settlement. This initiative is a vital element of international efforts to promote a comprehensive peace on all tracks, including the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks.

The Quartet will meet regularly at senior levels to evaluate the parties' performance on implementation of the plan. In each phase, the parties are expected to perform their obligations in parallel, unless otherwise indicated.

Phase I: Ending Terror And Violence, Normalizing Palestinian Life, and Building Palestinian Institutions -- Present to May 2003
In Phase I, the Palestinians immediately undertake an unconditional cessation of violence according to the steps outlined below; such action should be accompanied by supportive measures undertaken by Israel. Palestinians and Israelis resume security cooperation based on the Tenet work plan to end violence, terrorism, and incitement through restructured and effective Palestinian security services. Palestinians undertake comprehensive political reform in preparation for statehood, including drafting a Palestinian constitution, and free, fair and open elections upon the basis of those measures. Israel takes all necessary steps to help normalize Palestinian life. Israel withdraws from Palestinian areas occupied from September 28, 2000 and the two sides restore the status quo that existed at that time, as security performance and cooperation progress. Israel also freezes all settlement activity, consistent with the Mitchell report.

At the outset of Phase I:

- Palestinian leadership issues unequivocal statement reiterating Israel's right to exist in peace and security and calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire to end armed activity and all acts of violence against Israelis anywhere. All official Palestinian institutions end incitement against Israel.
- Israeli leadership issues unequivocal statement affirming its commitment to the two-state vision of an independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian state living in peace and security alongside Israel, as expressed by President Bush, and calling for an immediate end to violence against Palestinians everywhere. All official Israeli institutions end incitement against Palestinians.

Security

- Palestinians declare an unequivocal end to violence and terrorism and undertake visible efforts on the ground to arrest, disrupt, and restrain individuals and groups conducting and planning violent attacks on Israelis anywhere.
- Rebuilt and refocused Palestinian Authority security apparatus begins sustained, targeted, and effective operations aimed at confronting all those engaged in terror and dismantlement of terrorist capabilities and infrastructure. This includes commencing confiscation of illegal weapons and consolidation of security authority, free of association with terror and corruption.

- GOI takes no actions undermining trust, including deportations, attacks on civilians; confiscation and/or demolition of Palestinian homes and property, as a punitive measure or to facilitate Israeli construction; destruction of Palestinian institutions and infrastructure; and other measures specified in the Tenet work plan.
- Relying on existing mechanisms and on-the-ground resources, Quartet representatives begin informal monitoring and consult with the parties on establishment of a formal monitoring mechanism and its implementation.
- Implementation, as previously agreed, of U.S. rebuilding, training and resumed security cooperation plan in collaboration with outside oversight board (U.S.–Egypt–Jordan). Quartet support for efforts to achieve a lasting, comprehensive cease-fire.
    - All Palestinian security organizations are consolidated into three services reporting to an empowered Interior Minister.
    - Restructured/retrained Palestinian security forces and IDF counterparts progressively resume security cooperation and other undertakings in implementation of the Tenet work plan, including regular senior-level meetings, with the participation of U.S. security officials.
- Arab states cut off public and private funding and all other forms of support for groups supporting and engaging in violence and terror.
- All donors providing budgetary support for the Palestinians channel these funds through the Palestinian Ministry of Finance's Single Treasury Account.
- As comprehensive security performance moves forward, IDF withdraws progressively from areas occupied since September 28, 2000 and the two sides restore the status quo that existed prior to September 28, 2000. Palestinian security forces redeploy to areas vacated by IDF.

Palestinian Institution-Building

- Immediate action on credible process to produce draft constitution for Palestinian statehood. As rapidly as possible, constitutional committee circulates draft Palestinian constitution, based on strong parliamentary democracy and cabinet with empowered prime minister, for public comment/debate. Constitutional committee proposes draft document for submission after elections for approval by appropriate Palestinian institutions.
- Appointment of interim prime minister or cabinet with empowered executive authority/decision-making body.
- GOI fully facilitates travel of Palestinian officials for PLC and Cabinet sessions, internationally supervised security retraining, electoral and other reform activity, and other supportive measures related to the reform efforts.
- Continued appointment of Palestinian ministers empowered to undertake fundamental reform. Completion of further steps to achieve genuine

separation of powers, including any necessary Palestinian legal reforms for this purpose.

- Establishment of independent Palestinian election commission. PLC reviews and revises election law.
- Palestinian performance on judicial, administrative, and economic benchmarks, as established by the International Task Force on Palestinian Reform.
- As early as possible, and based upon the above measures and in the context of open debate and transparent candidate selection/electoral campaign based on a free, multi-party process, Palestinians hold free, open, and fair elections.
- GOI facilitates Task Force election assistance, registration of voters, movement of candidates and voting officials. Support for NGOs involved in the election process.
- GOI reopens Palestinian Chamber of Commerce and other closed Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem based on a commitment that these institutions operate strictly in accordance with prior agreements between the parties.

Humanitarian Response

- Israel takes measures to improve the humanitarian situation. Israel and Palestinians implement in full all recommendations of the Bertini report to improve humanitarian conditions, lifting curfews and easing restrictions on movement of persons and goods, and allowing full, safe, and unfettered access of international and humanitarian personnel.
- AHLC reviews the humanitarian situation and prospects for economic development in the West Bank and Gaza and launches a major donor assistance effort, including to the reform effort.
- GOI and PA continue revenue clearance process and transfer of funds, including arrears, in accordance with agreed, transparent monitoring mechanism.

Civil Society

- Continued donor support, including increased funding through PVOs/NGOs, for people to people programs, private sector development and civil society initiatives.

Settlements

- GOI immediately dismantles settlement outposts erected since March 2001.
- Consistent with the Mitchell Report, GOI freezes all settlement activity (including natural growth of settlements).

Phase II: Transition -- June 2003-December 2003
In the second phase, efforts are focused on the option of creating an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders and attributes of sovereignty, based on the new constitution, as a way station to a permanent status settlement. As has been noted, this goal can be achieved when the Palestinian people have a leadership acting decisively against terror, willing and able to build a practicing democracy based on tolerance and liberty. With such a leadership, reformed civil institutions and security structures, the Palestinians will have the active support of the Quartet and the broader international community in establishing an independent, viable, state.

Progress into Phase II will be based upon the consensus judgment of the Quartet of whether conditions are appropriate to proceed, taking into account performance of both parties. Furthering and sustaining efforts to normalize Palestinian lives and build Palestinian institutions, Phase II starts after Palestinian elections and ends with possible creation of an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders in 2003. Its primary goals are continued comprehensive security performance and effective security cooperation, continued normalization of Palestinian life and institution-building, further building on and sustaining of the goals outlined in Phase I, ratification of a democratic Palestinian constitution, formal establishment of office of prime minister, consolidation of political reform, and the creation of a Palestinian state with provisional borders.

- International Conference: Convened by the Quartet, in consultation with the parties, immediately after the successful conclusion of Palestinian elections, to support Palestinian economic recovery and launch a process, leading to establishment of an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders.
  - Such a meeting would be inclusive, based on the goal of a comprehensive Middle East peace (including between Israel and Syria, and Israel and Lebanon), and based on the principles described in the preamble to this document.
  - Arab states restore pre-intifada links to Israel (trade offices, etc.).
  - Revival of multilateral engagement on issues including regional water resources, environment, economic development, refugees, and arms control issues.
- New constitution for democratic, independent Palestinian state is finalized and approved by appropriate Palestinian institutions. Further elections, if required, should follow approval of the new constitution.
- Empowered reform cabinet with office of prime minister formally established, consistent with draft constitution.
- Continued comprehensive security performance, including effective security cooperation on the bases laid out in Phase I.
- Creation of an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders through a process of Israeli-Palestinian engagement, launched by the international conference. As part of this process, implementation of prior

agreements, to enhance maximum territorial contiguity, including further action on settlements in conjunction with establishment of a Palestinian state with provisional borders.

- Enhanced international role in monitoring transition, with the active, sustained, and operational support of the Quartet.
- Quartet members promote international recognition of Palestinian state, including possible UN membership.

Phase III: Permanent Status Agreement and End of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict -- 2004 – 2005

Progress into Phase III, based on consensus judgment of Quartet, and taking into account actions of both parties and Quartet monitoring. Phase III objectives are consolidation of reform and stabilization of Palestinian institutions, sustained, effective Palestinian security performance, and Israeli-Palestinian negotiations aimed at a permanent status agreement in 2005.

- Second International Conference: Convened by Quartet, in consultation with the parties, at beginning of 2004 to endorse agreement reached on an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders and formally to launch a process with the active, sustained, and operational support of the Quartet, leading to a final, permanent status resolution in 2005, including on borders, Jerusalem, refugees, settlements; and, to support progress toward a comprehensive Middle East settlement between Israel and Lebanon and Israel and Syria, to be achieved as soon as possible.
- Continued comprehensive, effective progress on the reform agenda laid out by the Task Force in preparation for final status agreement.
- Continued sustained and effective security performance, and sustained, effective security cooperation on the bases laid out in Phase I.
- International efforts to facilitate reform and stabilize Palestinian institutions and the Palestinian economy, in preparation for final status agreement.
- Parties reach final and comprehensive permanent status agreement that ends the Israel-Palestinian conflict in 2005, through a settlement negotiated between the parties based on UNSCR 242, 338, and 1397, that ends the occupation that began in 1967, and includes an agreed, just, fair, and realistic solution to the refugee issue, and a negotiated resolution on the status of Jerusalem that takes into account the political and religious concerns of both sides, and protects the religious interests of Jews, Christians, and Muslims worldwide, and fulfills the vision of two states, Israel and sovereign, independent, democratic and viable Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security.
- Arab state acceptance of full normal relations with Israel and security for all the states of the region in the context of a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace.

Appendix G: The Arab Peace Initiative

The Council of the League of Arab States at the Summit Level, at its 14th Ordinary Session,

- Reaffirms the resolution taken in June 1996 at the Cairo extraordinary Arab summit that a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East is the strategic option of the Arab countries, to be achieved in accordance with international legality, and which would require a comparable commitment on the part of the Israeli government.
- Having listened to the statement made by his royal highness Prince Abdullah Bin Abdullaziz, the crown prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in which his highness presented his initiative, calling for full Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied since June 1967, in implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, reaffirmed by the Madrid Conference of 1991 and the land for peace principle, and Israel's acceptance of an independent Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in return for the establishment of normal relations in the context of a comprehensive peace with Israel.
- Emanating from the conviction of the Arab countries that a military solution to the conflict will not achieve peace or provide security for the parties, the council:

1. Requests Israel to reconsider its policies and declare that a just peace is its strategic option as well.

2. Further calls upon Israel to affirm:

a. Full Israeli withdrawal from all the territories occupied since 1967, including the Syrian Golan Heights to the lines of June 4, 1967 as well as the remaining occupied Lebanese territories in the south of Lebanon.

b. Achievement of a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem to be agreed upon in accordance with U.N. General Assembly Resolution 194.

c. The acceptance of the establishment of a Sovereign Independent Palestinian State on the Palestinian territories occupied since the 4th of June 1967 in the West Bank and Gaza strip, with east Jerusalem as its capital.

3. Consequently, the Arab countries affirm the following:

a. Consider the Arab-Israeli conflict ended, and enter into a peace agreement with Israel, and provide security for all the states of the region.

b. Establish normal relations with Israel in the context of this comprehensive peace.

4. Assures the rejection of all forms of Palestinian patriation which conflict with the special circumstances of the Arab host countries.

5. Calls upon the government of Israel and all Israelis to accept this initiative in order to safeguard the prospects for peace and stop the further shedding of blood, enabling the Arab Countries and Israel to live in peace and good neighborliness and provide future generations with security, stability, and prosperity.

6. Invites the international community and all countries and organizations to support this initiative.

7. Requests the chairman of the summit to form a special committee composed of some of its concerned member states and the secretary general of the League of Arab States to pursue the necessary contacts to gain support for this initiative at all levels, particularly from the United Nations, the security council, the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the Muslim States and the European Union.

Source: http://www.jordanembassyus.org/arab_initiative.htm

Appendix H: Glossary of Relevant Terms

Palestinian Authority (PA): Formed in 1994 (Usher 2006), the PA is the
government of Palestine. First created in the Oslo Accords, the PA was to
address issues such as health, social welfare, education, direct taxation and
tourism. The members of the PA are elected by the Palestinian people
(Bennett et al 2003).

Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO): Formed in 1964 during the first
Arab summit, which convened in regards to tensions about diverting water
supplies (The Middle East 2005). The PLO is a nationalist group that
became the "sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people
(Lockman 2004). The group consists of Fatah, the most prominent group
in the organization, as well as other Palestinian groups (Ibid).

Oslo Accords: Signed in Washington DC on September 13, 1993, the Oslo
Accords ended the first *intifada*. The Israeli government was to start
pulling out its settlements. The Palestinian Authority (PA) was also
created with this document (Bennett et al 2003).

Camp David Summit: 2000. Failed peace negotiations between Arafat and
Rabin. One of the impetus's for the Al Aqsa Intifada.

Road Map: A plan outlined in 2003 to reach peace between Israel in Palestine,
which was developed by the Quartet (US, EU, UN, and Russia). Focuses
on four goals: "(1) Regaining PA control of the street and asserting its
monopoly of force; (2) reforming and strengthening public institutions and
opening the political system to greater and more inclusive participation;
(3) reducing or eliminating violence directed at Israelis; and (4) returning
to negotiations with Israel, with the goal of implementing the Road Map
and entering permanent status talks (Shikaki 2007b)"

Arab Peace Initiative: Launched in Beirut by the Arab League and subsequently
relaunched in 2007. Arab nations agree to normalize relations with Israel,
in return for the immediate resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict:
permanent borders for Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital,
withdrawal from all settlements, and a just solution to the refugee
problem.

First Intifada: Started in 1987. Ended in 1993 with the signing of the Oslo
Accords.

Second Intifada (Al Aqsa Intifada): Started in 2000 due to frustration with the
failed Camp David Summit and Ariel Sharon's visit to Temple Mount.
Characterized by increased violence on both sides.