

How Hamas became 'kosher'

By Caroline B. Glick JewishWorldReview.com March 17, 2009

Today Hamas stands on the cusp of international acceptance. It may take a week or a month or a year, but today Hamas stands where Fatah and the PLO stood in the late 1980s. The genocidal jihadist terror group is but a step away from an invitation to the Oval Office. Two events in the past week show this to be the case.

First, last Saturday, the Boston Globe reported that Paul Volker, who serves as US President Barack Obama's economic recovery advisor and several former senior US officials have written a letter to Obama calling for the US to recognize Hamas. As one of the signatories, Brent Scowcroft, former national security advisor under president George H.W. Bush explained, "I see no reason not to talk to Hamas."

Scowcroft further argued, "The main gist is that you need to push hard on the Palestinian peace process. Don't move it to end of your agenda and say you have too much to do. And the US needs to have a position, not just hold their coats while they sit down."

Congressional sources claim that Obama has selected Scowcroft to replace Chas Freeman as Chairman of the National Intelligence Council.

The second reason that it is becoming apparent that the Obama administration is poised to recognize Hamas is because on Thursday Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman held talks at the State Department with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton enjoining the administration to support the reestablishment of a Hamas-Fatah unity government to control and reunify the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and Judea and Samaria.

This is significant because it is becoming apparent that top administration officials only meet with people who tell them what they want to hear. Case in point is IDF Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi's trip this week to Washington. Ashkenazi went to the US to brief top administration officials on Iran's progress towards a nuclear bomb. Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Ashkenazi's counterpart Admiral Michael Mullen both managed to be out of town. Defense Ministry sources say that Ashkenazi only met with National Security Advisor James Jones, who reportedly wished to speak exclusively about the Palestinians, and with Clinton's Iran advisor Dennis Ross, whose role in shaping US policy towards Iran remains unclear.

Hamas for its part prefers the unconditional recognition recommended by Scowcroft and Volker and their colleagues (who include unofficial Obama advisors Zbigniew Brzezinski and Lee Hamilton), over the option of forming a government with Fatah. After all, why should Hamas agree to share power with Fatah to gain international acceptance if Washington power brokers close to the administration endorse unconditional recognition of the terror group?

Scowcroft's statement that recognition of Hamas is necessary because "you need to push hard on the Palestinian peace process," is indicative of how Obama's milieu views the peace process. For them, pushing hard on the peace process is more important than ensuring or even caring if the Palestinians involved in the said process are genocidal terror groups or not, or ensuring or even caring whether the said peace process has any chance whatsoever of leading to peace.

And the Obama view is not particularly new. After Hamas won the 2006 Palestinian elections, in the interest of the peace process, the US and the EU placed certain conditions on Hamas which they claimed it would have to meet before the West would recognize it.

The US and Europe said they would recognize Hamas if it announced that it foreswore terror, accepted Israel's right to exist, and committed itself to carrying out previous agreements signed between the PLO and Israel. The Americans and the Europeans undoubtedly viewed these conditions as a low bar to cross. After all, the PLO crossed it.

The West's conditions were given with a wink and a nod. Everyone understood that the only thing it wanted was for Hamas to say the magic words. They didn't have to be true. If Khaled Mashaal and Ismail Haniyeh would just tell the US and Europe what they wanted to hear, all would be forgiven. Hamas — like the PLO before it — would be removed from the US and European terror lists. Billions would pour into the bank accounts of Hamas leaders in Gaza and Damascus. The CIA might even agree to train its terror forces.

It is obvious that all that the West wanted was for Hamas to lie to it, because that is all it ever required from the PLO. After Arafat said the magic words, the Americans and the Europeans were only too happy to ignore the fact that he was lying.

When immediately after signing the initial peace accord with Israel on the White House lawn on Sept. 13, 1993 Arafat flew to South Africa and gave a speech calling for jihad against Israel, no one cared.

When Arafat destroyed the free press in Judea, Samaria and Gaza and transformed the Palestinian media into propaganda organs calling for the eradication of Israel and the Jewish people, the world yawned.

When he launched his terror war against Israel and his US-trained forces began plotting and carrying out bombings of Israeli civilians, the US announced its chief goal in the Middle East was to establish a Palestinian state.

And when Arafat's successor Mahmoud Abbas announced that Fatah didn't accept Israel's right to exist and considered terrorism against Israel legitimate, he was declared the indispensable and sole legitimate Palestinian leader. Indeed, when his US-trained forces surrendered to Hamas in Gaza without a fight, the US showered an additional \$80 million on Fatah forces.

On Tuesday, Fatah strongman and the West's favorite son of Palestine Muhammad Dahlan tried to explain the facts of life to Hamas. In an interview on PA television, Dahlan became the first senior Fatah official to openly admit that Fatah has never accepted Israel's right to exist. Dahlan denied reports that in the negotiations towards a Hamas-Fatah government, Fatah representatives are pressuring Hamas to recognize Israel. In his words, "I want to say in my own name and in the name of all my fellow members of the Fatah movement, we are not asking Hamas to recognize Israel's right to exist. Rather, we are asking Hamas not to do so because Fatah never recognized Israel's right to exist."

Dahlan went on to explain how the fiction worked. Arafat was the head of the PLO but also the head of Fatah. While as chairman of the PLO he recognized Israel and pledged to end terrorism and live at peace with the Jewish state, as head of Fatah he continued his war against Israel. Dahlan even bragged that to date, Fatah has killed ten times more Palestinians suspected of cooperating with Israel's counter terror operations, (the same operations the PLO committed to assisting), than Hamas has.

Dahlan explained that all Hamas needs to do is to follow in Fatah's footsteps. It should say that the PA government accepts the West's terms but in the meantime, those terms will remain inapplicable to Hamas as a "resistance group." In that way, Dahlan explained, Hamas will be able to receive all the West's billions in financial assistance.

As he put it, "Do you imagine that Gaza's reconstruction is possible under the shadow of this bickering between us and the international community? [Gaza reconstruction] can only be dealt with by a government? that is acceptable to the

international community so that we can benefit from the international community."

Not surprisingly, Dahlan's statement went almost completely unnoted. Only the Jerusalem Post and one or two other Jewish publications and a few anti-jihadist blogs made note of it. The US, European and pro-peace process Israeli media all ignored it. No government spokesman anywhere in the world commented on it.

Unfortunately though for the likes of Dahlan and his admirers in the West, Hamas isn't interested in joining Fatah's fiction. It refuses to say those magic words. So now the West looks for ways to lower its bar still further.

The West's non-response to Dahlan's statements, like its growing eagerness to treat with Hamas despite Hamas's unabashed refusal to even lie about its intentions tells us something important about what the West is actually doing when it says that its paramount interest is to advance the so-called peace process. It tells us the same thing that the West's attempted courtship of Damascus and Teheran tells us about what the West means when it speaks of peace processes.

Syrian President Bashar Assad this week told Italy's La Repubblica newspaper that he and outgoing Prime Minister Ehud Olmert were just a stone's throw away from a peace deal last year. Last week Assad participated in what was supposed to be an anti-Iranian conference in Saudi Arabia.

Both of Assad's gestures were meant to make the Americans feel comfortable as they renew their diplomatic relations with Syria, cast aside their backing for the UN tribunal set up to investigate Syria's assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri, begin pressuring Israel to surrender the Golan Heights, and recognize Hamas.

And just as Arafat understood that after he said the magic words the West would ignore his bad behavior, so Assad knew that Washington and Paris would pay no attention when upon returning from Riyadh he announced that Syria's relations with Iran will never be weakened. He knew they will never question his false account of his indirect negotiations with Israel. He and Olmert couldn't have been a stone's throw away from a peace accord because Assad refused to have any direct contact with Israel.

If Damascus is the state equivalent of the PLO then Teheran is the state equivalent of Hamas. Today, as the mullahs sprint towards the nuclear finish line, the Obama administration is pretending that the jury is still out on whether or not the Islamic Republic wants a nuclear arsenal. As with Hamas, so with Teheran, the Americans have dropped even the pretense of requiring a change in Iran's rhetorical positions as a precondition for diplomatic recognition. The US now pursues its diplomatic reconciliation with Iran with the sure knowledge that

this peace process will lead to Iran's emergence as a nuclear power.

So the question is, if the American and European pursuits of peace with Fatah, Hamas, Syria and Iran have not caused them to change their behavior one iota, what are the Western powers talking about when they say that it is imperative to push the peace process or engage the Syrians and the Iranians? After all, Western leaders must know that these processes are complete farces.

The Role of Radical Islamic Groups in Israel

By Lt.-Col. (res.) Dr. Mordechai Kedar

Implications for Israeli-Arab Coexistence Many in the Arab world felt deep humiliation due to George W. Bush. The Islamic view is that Islam came to the world to replace Judaism and Christianity, and all of a sudden comes a religious Christian president and occupies Iraq, the capital of the Islamic Abbasid Caliphate and the beating heart of Arab history. So when Bush left office, this was viewed as a victory for Allah over the modern Crusaders.

The core question is to whom does this country belong? According to the Arab narrative, this has been an Arab Islamic state since the days of Omar, the caliph who conquered the country in the seventh century. According to Islamic tradition, he declared that the country between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River is *waqf* land, meaning it belongs forever to Muslims all over the world, and no one else could ever have it.

According to Islam, land can only go one way, to become Islamic, and it can never go the other way, just like Spain, Sicily, and parts of the Balkans, which at different stages of history were lands of Islam. This is why Hamas and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood cannot even begin to consider recognizing the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state on the land of Palestine.

At the same time, Jews feel that this country belongs to them. From the Jewish perspective, this country was populated by Jews and two Jewish kingdoms were here until 1900 years ago. We Jews were expelled with no justification and we came back to our country. This is what gives justification to the Jews having our state here and not in Uganda, Argentina or Birobijan. It even appears in the Koran that this country had been given to the Jews.

In 2006 a document approved by the Committee of Arab Local Authorities in Israel - entitled: "The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel and their Relations with the State" - opened with the statement: "Israel is the outcome of a colonialist action which was initiated by the Jewish-Zionist elites in Europe and in the West."

To call Israel a colonialist state means a total denial of Jewish history, and echoes the Islamic approach to Jewish history. According to this

Sadly, the answer is clear. Western leaders are not pursuing peace in these processes. They are pursuing appeasement. They call this appeasement process a peace process for two reasons. First, they know their countrymen don't like the sound of appeasement. And second, by claiming to be championing the noble goal of peace in our time, they feel free to attack anyone who points out the folly of their actions as a warmongering member of the Israel Lobby.

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approach, since Islam came to the world in the year 622 CE with the *hijra* of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina, all of history before that time lost any meaning or significance.

The End of the Bush Administration - A Victory for Allah Some in the Arab world were very satisfied with the American election because to them it meant the end of the Bush administration. Many in the Arab world felt deep humiliation due to George W. Bush, above all else. The Islamic view of the world is that Islam came to the world to replace Judaism and Christianity, not to live side-by-side with them. Then, all of a sudden, comes a religious Christian president and occupies Iraq, the beating heart of Arab history, the capital of the Abbasid dynasty, which for 500 years ruled the Islamic empire. After a few days of fighting in Baghdad, this city came under American infidel rule.

Bush said right after September 11, 2001, that the Americans were on a "crusade." Immediately, his advisors told him not to use that word because it reminds Muslims of the Crusader Kingdom of 800 years ago, which the hero Saladin wiped out. But his statement was recorded and *Al-Jazeera* kept showing it. Muslims look at this from a religious point of view and many see what is going on in the region as some kind of test of whose god is more powerful: Allah or the Christian God. This is how too many people in the Middle East are viewing this now. So when Bush left office, this was viewed as some kind of victory for Allah.

One of the major differences between the Middle East and Western societies is the role of religion. We were brought up on the notion of a division between church and state, that the state is for everybody and religion is within your heart. This may be correct in the West, but it is not correct in the Arab world. In the Middle East, almost everything is connected to religion.

The Arab Minorities in Israel Inside Israel, there are a number of different Arab minorities. There are Muslims, Druze, and Christians, from the religious point of view. There are Bedouins who live in the desert, which is one culture; rural peasants, which is another culture; and those who dwell in cities, either in Arab cities or in mixed cities, which is

yet another kind of culture. So you cannot look at the Arab minorities in Israel as one package. You have to relate to them in different ways because they are different and they don't consider themselves as one group of people.

You can see this in the percentage of those who vote. The percentage of Arabs who vote for Arab parties in the Knesset is only 50 percent. The Arab sector in Israel altogether is about 20 percent of the population, which means in theory that Arab parties could have 24 members, or a fifth of the 120 Knesset members. However, the actual number of Arab Knesset members is around 10, and has been like this for years. Many Arabs do not even vote; they do not see the Knesset as a body that can represent them. In addition, the radical part of the Islamic movement is constantly calling on their people not to vote for the Knesset because that gives some kind of seal of approval to the Israeli state, which has no legitimacy to exist in their eyes.

The Acre Riots of October 2008: Why Didn't They Spread? In the mixed city of Acre in October 2008, a car driven by an Arab went into a Jewish neighborhood on the night of Yom Kippur. This triggered five days of violence, demonstrations, breaking into shops, and burning apartments and houses.

At the time of the riots, Islamic Jihad and Hamas called on the Arabs in Israel to do the same thing in all the other mixed cities like Jaffa, Ramla and Lod. They tried to inflame the whole situation, but it didn't work. The calls to spread the riots to other places in Israel were not answered. Why didn't the riots spread to other cities? Because at the end of the day, both Jews and Arabs realize that coexistence is better than fighting.

To Whom Does the Country Belong? In Jaffa, right next to Tel Aviv, there are processes that the Arabs don't like. Property is being taken by the state and given to contractors who are building new luxury housing near the sea, mainly for Jews, and this creates much resentment among the Arabs living there. This illustrates the key, bottom line question: To whom does this country belong? Every other question is derived from this.

According to the Arab narrative, this has been an Arab Islamic state since the days of Omar, the caliph who conquered the country in the second quarter of the seventh century. According to Islamic oral tradition, he declared that the country between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River was *wagf* land, meaning it belonged to Muslims all over the world, and no one else could ever have it. So how could the Jews come in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries and buy land there and establish an independent Jewish state, one that has no legitimacy to exist on Islamic soil? It was just like Spain, Sicily, and parts of the Balkans, which at different stages of history were lands of Islam. According to Islam, land

can only go one way, to become Islamic, and it can never go the other way.

The wings of the Muslim Brotherhood believe that the Israeli state or the Jewish state has no right to exist to begin with. This is why Hamas and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood cannot even begin to consider recognizing the right of Israel to exist. A temporary peace of ten or twenty years can be given to infidels when Muslims are not powerful enough to conquer their lands, until Allah gives the Muslims the ability to do so.

The Muslim Brotherhood looks at the Jewish state in Israel as if the Jews occupied the country and removed it from the bosom of Islam in which it existed until 1948. When you ask to whom the country belongs, this is the basis of the Islamic perspective.

At the same time, Jews feel that this country belongs to them. From the Jewish perspective, this country was populated by Jews and two Jewish kingdoms were here until 1900 years ago. We Jews were expelled with no justification and we came back to our country. This is what gives justification to the Jews having our state here and not in Uganda or Argentina or Birobijan. It even appears in the Koran that this country had been given to the Jews.

We say today that the two narratives are fighting. The Islamic narrative says that this country is Islamic, and the Jewish narrative states that this country in its entirety belongs to the Jews. However, while we want to keep the Jewish nature of our state, most of us are not willing to kick out the Arabs who live here.

The struggle of narratives is a problem that we all have to live with. There are problems in life which cannot be solved, and the contradiction between those two narratives cannot be solved.

The Future Vision of Palestinian Arabs in Israel In 2006 a group of forty modern Arab intellectuals, politicians, and university lecturers published a very interesting document in both Hebrew and Arabic. The document, which was approved by the Committee of Arab Local Authorities in Israel - the most significant organ of Arabs in Israel - was entitled: "The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel and their Relations with the State."

Its opening statement reads: "Israel is the outcome of a colonialist action which was initiated by the Jewish-Zionist elites in Europe and in the West, was established with the help of colonialist states, Britain and France, and was strengthened by the influx of Jews into Palestine, especially in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust." At least they recognize the fact that there was a Holocaust. In many other places Arab deny even that.

In addition, Sheikh Ibrahim Sarsour, chairman of the United Arab List, the largest Arab party in the

Feb. 10, 2009, elections for the Israeli Knesset, said in a speech: "Participating in the elections to the Knesset does not abolish our ideology according to which the rule on earth, or at least on Arab and Islamic land, should be Islamic and headed by the Caliph."¹ The party won 113,954 votes and 4 seats.

In the Muslim Narrative, History Only Begins in 622 CE To call Israel a colonialist state is to undermine Israel's legitimacy as the state of the Jewish people who see themselves as the owners of this country. It means a total denial of Jewish history, and echoes the Islamic approach to Jewish history. According to this approach, since Islam came to the world in the year 622 CE with the *hijra* of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina, all of history before that time lost any meaning or significance. Even the prophets - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon, Jesus - all became Muslims, according to the Islamic narrative. So since Islam denies what happened before Islam, they can say that Israel is an outcome of a colonialist action because the fact that Jews were here 1900 years ago, before Islam, has no meaning anymore since that was before Islam came into the world.

This leads us back to the way Islam as a religion looks at the State of Israel and its existence in this *naqf* land. The document of the Arabs in Israel, which we mentioned before, is replete with expressions of how Israel is an illegitimate entity and how the Arabs are the natives. This is the way they look at the state where they live.

What other states have to contend with the fact that a significant minority is challenging the very legitimacy of the state? Even Arabs and Muslims in Britain or France are not yet challenging the legitimacy of those states, but here, in Israel, they feel free to do it.

Are the Palestinians Really the Natives? But are the Palestinians really the natives? Many Palestinians, even in Israel, bear names like al-Masri (referring to Egypt) or al-Iraqi or al-Tarabulsi (referring to Tripoli in northern Lebanon). The minister of refugees in the Palestinian Authority was Abdallah al-Horani, meaning that either he or his parents came from al-Horan in southern Syria. They are not originally from this place. They immigrated here and their family names reflect the name of the place they came from. Since when are they Palestinians?

What about the Palestinians who live today in Lebanon and the West Bank and are still in refugee camps sixty years after 1948? Where else in the world do you see refugee camps for sixty years? But where do they have the right to return to, those who came from Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria? To Haifa, where they worked for a few years for the British who brought them from Syria to work in the

harbor, or to Syria and the other Arab countries where they originally came from? The world has bought this slogan of Palestinian refugees without checking where they came from originally.

The Only Arabs Who Live in a Democracy Live in Israel Most Arabs today live either in Arab dictatorships or in democracies but in exile. No Arab state is a real democracy. The only significant group of Arabs who live in a democracy are the Arabs in Israel. Yet I would say the vast majority do not want to turn this state into an Arab state. Very few of them want to live in an Arab state. Everyone in Israel is free to emigrate, but there are no Arabs lining up to emigrate to other countries. They know exactly what the situation is because they see what goes on everywhere in the Arab world on *Al-Jazeera*, day and night: In Egypt, half of the population lives in unplanned neighborhoods with no running water, electricity, sewage, infrastructure, paved roads, or health care. Hardly anyone in the Arab sector in Israel lives in such conditions, except for some of the Bedouin in the Negev who willingly choose the culture of the desert.

The Arab sector in Israel does not want to change where they live into an Arab state. Maybe some in the Islamic movement would like to have an Islamic state here just like they want to have an Islamic state everywhere, to kick out the Arab regimes and establish a caliphate instead. But the majority of Arabs in Israel still prefer the current situation since, despite whatever discrimination they may experience, living in Israel is still far better than living in any Arab country in the Middle East.

The Arabs in Israel are much more clever than their brothers in the Palestinian Authority. The Muslims in Israel look at what happens in Gaza and do not envy those who live there. They don't envy the people of Iran under the regime of the ayatollahs either, where 95 percent of the Iranians are secular. And they don't want to live like the Shi'ites in Lebanon. Arab Israeli citizens are much wiser than that. They know exactly what the alternative is.

Note1. See <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3216531,00.html> and <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3217055,00.html>. The issue of a caliphate is not mentioned in the party's formal platform.

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If there were no Israel

By Edward Glick The Oregonian March 15, 2009

While Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is busy seeking a solution to the Israel-Palestine problem, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran's president, is spending almost all his waking moments calling for Israel's destruction.

The world's other Jew-haters spend nearly all their time hiding their politically incorrect anti-Semitism behind politically correct anti-Israelism.

So let's imagine that a genie makes Israel disappear and also makes all of us lose our memory of the "Zionist entity" and of the modern Jewish state.

What would an Israel-free Middle East be like? For starters, the only democracy in the region will have vanished.

And since there would still be Arab hostility, dictatorship, cronyism, corruption, overpopulation and socioeconomic dislocation, Hamas, Hezbollah and the other Arab leaders would have to find a new scapegoat toward which to deflect the anger and despair of their people.

Palestine would still be as underdeveloped as are most of the Arab states, whose combined gross domestic product is less than that of Spain.

Their people saddled with one of the highest birthrates in the world, most Palestinians would still be unemployed and unemployable, partly because of the inability or unwillingness of their rulers to create viable institutions and infrastructures, and partly because there would no longer be an Israel for the Palestinians to work in.

East Jerusalem and the West Bank would be still ruled from Amman, the Gaza Strip would still be ruled from Cairo and the Golan Heights would still be ruled from Damascus. Syria would still be the de facto ruler of Lebanon and its Christian minority, and it would still be a threat to both Palestine and Jordan, which it considers to be part of southern Syria.

The Arab states without oil would still resent the Arab states that have oil -- and the wealth and power that flow from it. And water, always in short supply

in the Middle East, would eventually become the most precious liquid in the region.

The animosity between the 85 percent of Muslims who are Sunnis and the 15 percent who are Shiites would not abate.

Egypt would still be persecuting its Coptic Christian minority. And Cairo, the capital of the only real nation-state in the Arab world, would still be vying with Baghdad, Damascus and Riyadh for the leadership of that world. The Kurds would still be pressing Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Iran for a state of their own, and the latter would still be refusing to give them one.

Iraq would still covet Kuwait, which it considers a renegade province. Iraq and Iran -- like their Babylonian and Persian forebears -- would still despise and occasionally go to war with each other. Both would still be seeking weapons of mass destruction, and Iran would probably have them.

Iran would still be run by the ayatollahs. And the United States, even under President Barack Obama, would still be facing the specter of an atomic, biological or chemical version of 9/11.

Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida, funded in no small amount by Saudi money, would still be trying to punish us for, among other transgressions, stationing our infidel soldiers -- especially our women soldiers -- in the land which contains Islam's sacred cities of Mecca and Medina.

Finally, even without a Jewish polity and without either a one-state or a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine problem, there would still be at least 1.3 billion Muslims living on this planet. If only 1 percent of them are Islamists and jihadists, that means 13 million people who are hellbent on terrorizing infidels back to earlier centuries of real and imagined Islamic glory.

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The Obama administration, Durban and America's Jews

By Isi Liebler The Jerusalem Post March 23, 2009

A feeling of disquiet and angst prevails among American Jews. Many share a gnawing concern that ambiguous signals from the Obama administration herald an erosion of the US-Israeli partnership.

The withdrawal of Charles Freeman as candidate for the chairmanship of the National Intelligence Council had a traumatic impact on many American Jews, already nervous about the potential fallout from a demonized new right-wing Israeli government as well as new allegations of war crimes

related to the Gaza conflict. Although the icon of pro-Israel Jewish activists, Alan Dershowitz, proclaimed that it was the patriotic duty of American Jews to object to Freeman's appointment, other than the ZOA, most Jewish organizations - including AIPAC - remained silent.

When Freeman, whose organization was actually sponsored by the Saudi government, began shrieking that he was forced to step down because of conspiratorial machinations by the all-powerful

Jewish lobby, his tirade was widely publicized. American Jews, who over the past half century took pride in their democratic right to lobby and promote their interests, were stunned by the ferocity of the attacks, especially as Freeman's eligibility was flawed on far broader grounds than his anti-Israeli venom. The attacks clearly emanated from powerful forces exploiting the opportunity to create a climate of hysteria about sinister Jewish power and control.

Equally disturbing were pronouncements by "dovish" Jewish fringe groups which also attracted considerable media coverage. The most scandalous outburst emanated from the Israel Policy Forum, representing itself as a Zionist body. Its press releases actively supported Freeman's candidacy, alleging that AIPAC and other Jewish bodies were determined to control US foreign policy. Its pronouncements were so outlandish that its chairman, Seymour Reich, finally saw the light and resigned.

In this strained atmosphere, intensified by the Obama administration's disconcerting policy of "engaging" jihadist groups, there are legitimate fears that pressures may be exerted on Israel to assume the role of the sacrificial lamb to assuage Muslim sensitivities.

Seventy-eight percent of Jews voted for Barack Obama. Under normal circumstances that should provide sufficient comfort for them to uninhibitedly express concern about policies they feel could endanger Israel's security. But some Jews now appear hesitant to be perceived as publicly criticizing a newly elected Democrat administration headed by a popular president. Understandably, there is also a growing fear of the impact from the ever-increasing anti-Semitic agitation which is reinforced by the financial meltdown. The frightening nightmare, which few American Jews are even willing to contemplate, is that the US could follow the anti-Semitic pattern now encompassing Europe. In fact, this has already become a reality on US campuses.

In this context, Durban represents a litmus test of the ability and willingness of American Jewish leaders to stand firm. Opinion is divided as to the strategy to be employed. The powerful American Jewish Committee is inclined to avoid public confrontations, maintaining that silent diplomacy and discrete persuasion are more effective. That explains why the AJC initially opposed boycotting Durban II.

When the Obama administration decided to partake in the preparatory committee of Durban II, the AJC accepted an invitation to join the US delegation. That decision was bitterly condemned by many of those trying to persuade the US to boycott the conference. They claimed, with considerable justification, that it was a tactical blunder to encourage a perception that a body totally controlled

by the Organization of Islamic Conference and rogue states, chaired by Libya with Iran and Cuba serving as deputy chairs, could possibly be anything other than an instrument for promoting evil. To make matters worse, the US delegation sat on its hands during the proceedings of the committee while vicious demonization of Israel took place, and even remained silent when Iran objected to a resolution condemning Holocaust denial.

Ultimately however, the US government withdrew from Durban II. While the AJC insisted that its persuasion played a major role in achieving this decision, the more likely reason was the devastating media exposure and condemnation of the behavior of those controlling the proceedings. The other factor was the stubborn refusal of the preparatory committee to even pay lip service to decency by amending its disgusting draft document which demonized Israel and shamelessly promoted narrow Islamic objectives.

However, it may be premature to celebrate the US withdrawal. The decision not to participate was made with a caveat that the US would reconsider its decision if the preparatory committee amended its draft and deleted some of the most offensive sections. In fact since then, the Durban organizers have come to the realization that by accepting an abbreviated draft excluding the most offensive sections, the US could conceivably still attend and that would encourage most of the wavering European and other countries to do likewise.

The amended draft nevertheless reaffirms the flawed Durban I declaration, and will not have any impact on the nature of the conference, which remains under the control of the same villains. Clearly they are determined to create another hate fest in which, under the guise of promoting human rights and combating racism, anti-Semitism and delegitimization of Israel will again dominate the proceedings.

The ambiguity of the US stance in this matter is highlighted by the fact that simultaneously with the announcement suspending its participation in Durban II, America proclaimed that it had revoked the Bush administration's boycott and would henceforth partake in proceedings of the UN Human Rights Council and even seek election to the council. US legitimization of this bizarre body is unquestionably a retrograde step. Contrary to its Orwellian title, the council is the antithesis of human rights, and spends most of its time demonizing Israel and promoting the interests of the Islamic Council. It is totally dominated by Islamic and rogue states and will undoubtedly continue providing a platform for promoting anti-Semitism and other evil practices.

Will the American Jewish leadership publicly remonstrate against the government should it decide to partake in Durban II? If that is its intention, is

should now initiate a campaign demonstrating that a conference purportedly promoting human rights which is dominated by tyrants and anti-Semites is bogus. It should also urge the government not to participate in the UN Human Rights Council, which should be marginalized until it reforms itself and genuinely promotes human rights. The response of the Obama administration could be a preview of what Israel and the Jewish people can expect in the years to come.

We will also learn whether American Jewish leaders will be retaining their proud tradition of public action combined with diplomacy, or whether they will retreat into the more comfortable approach of relying on discrete behind-the-scenes advocacy which in isolation has invariably proved to be ineffective. Fortunately it is highly unlikely that American Jewish leaders would ever revert to the policies of their predecessors during World War II, who failed to raise their voices out of fear of anti-Semitism.

On Campus: The Pro-Palestinian's Real Agenda

By Khaled Abu Toameh The Hudson Institute (New York) March 24, 2009

During a recent visit to several university campuses in the U.S., I discovered that there is more sympathy for Hamas there than there is in Ramallah.

Listening to some students and professors on these campuses, for a moment I thought I was sitting opposite a Hamas spokesman or a would-be-suicide bomber.

I was told, for instance, that Israel has no right to exist, that Israel's "apartheid system" is worse than the one that existed in South Africa and that Operation Cast Lead was launched only because Hamas was beginning to show signs that it was interested in making peace and not because of the rockets that the Islamic movement was launching at Israeli communities.

I was also told that top Fatah operative Marwan Barghouti, who is serving five life terms in prison for masterminding terror attacks against Israeli civilians, was thrown behind bars simply because he was trying to promote peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Furthermore, I was told that all the talk about financial corruption in the Palestinian Authority was "Zionist propaganda" and that Yasser Arafat had done wonderful things for his people, including the establishment of schools, hospitals and universities.

The good news is that these remarks were made only by a minority of people on the campuses who describe themselves as "pro-Palestinian," although the overwhelming majority of them are not Palestinians or even Arabs or Muslims.

The bad news is that these groups of hard-line activists/thugs are trying to intimidate anyone who dares to say something that they don't like to hear.

When the self-designated "pro-Palestinian" lobbyists are unable to challenge the facts presented by a speaker, they resort to verbal abuse.

On one campus, for example, I was condemned as an "idiot" because I said that a majority of Palestinians voted for Hamas in the January 2006 election because they were fed up with financial corruption in the Palestinian Authority.

On another campus, I was dubbed as a "mouthpiece for the Zionists" because I said that

Israel has a free media. There was another campus where someone told me that I was a 'liar' because I said that Barghouti was sentenced to five life terms because of his role in terrorism.

And then there was the campus (in Chicago) where I was "greeted" with swastikas that were painted over posters promoting my talk. The perpetrators, of course, never showed up at my event because they would not be able to challenge someone who has been working in the field for nearly 30 years.

What struck me more than anything else was the fact that many of the people I met on the campuses supported Hamas and believed that it had the right to "resist the occupation" even if that meant blowing up children and women on a bus in downtown Jerusalem.

I never imagined that I would need police protection while speaking at a university in the U.S. I have been on many Palestinian campuses in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and I cannot recall one case where I felt intimidated or where someone shouted abuse at me.

Ironically, many of the Arabs and Muslims I met on the campuses were much more understanding and even welcomed my "even-handed analysis" of the Israeli-Arab conflict. After all, the views I voiced were not much different than those made by the leaderships both in Israel and the Palestinian Authority. These views include support for the two-state solution and the idea of coexistence between Jews and Arabs in this part of the world.

The so-called pro-Palestinian "junta" on the campuses has nothing to offer other than hatred and de-legitimization of Israel. If these folks really cared about the Palestinians, they would be campaigning for good government and for the promotion of values of democracy and freedom in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Their hatred for Israel and what it stands for has blinded them to a point where they no longer care about the real interests of the Palestinians, namely the need to end the anarchy and lawlessness, and to dismantle all the armed gangs that are responsible

for the death of hundreds of innocent Palestinians over the past few years.

The majority of these activists openly admit that they have never visited Israel or the Palestinian territories. They don't know -and don't want to know - that Jews and Arabs here are still doing business together and studying together and meeting with each other on a daily basis because they are destined to live together in this part of the world. They don't want to hear that despite all the problems life continues and that ordinary Arab and Jewish parents who wake up in the morning just want to send their children to school and go to work before returning home safely and happily.

What is happening on the U.S. campuses is not about supporting the Palestinians as much as it is about promoting hatred for the Jewish state. It is not really about ending the "occupation" as much as it is about ending the existence of Israel.

Many of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas officials I talk to in the context of my work as a journalist sound much more pragmatic than most of the anti-Israel, "pro-Palestinian" folks on the campuses.

Over the past 15 years, much has been written and said about the fact that Palestinian school textbooks don't promote peace and coexistence and that the Palestinian media often publishes anti-Israel material.

While this may be true, there is no ignoring the fact that the anti-Israel campaign on U.S. campuses is not less dangerous. What is happening on these campuses is not in the frame of freedom of speech. Instead, it is the freedom to disseminate hatred and violence. As such, we should not be surprised if the next generation of jihadists comes not from the Gaza Strip or the mountains and mosques of Pakistan and Afghanistan, but from university campuses across the U.S.

Gaza offensive may banish ghost of Sadat

By Edward Goldberg The Washington Times January 22, 2009

One of the tragedies of Mideast politics is that a moderate Arab leader needs to weigh his personal safety against making a commitment to a peace plan with Israel.

This ultimate veto on policy is not made by the leader's party, Cabinet or legislature, but by a mythical rule, a learned lesson born out of the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981. This unspeakable decree clearly states that if a leader dares to come close to any understanding with Israel, then a fatwa, a religious opinion, could be issued by a radical scholar approving execution.

It is as if the modern history of the Mideast is a Shakespearean ghost constantly whispering into the ears of Arab leadership: Remember Anwar Sadat. Remember how he went to Jerusalem and later was assassinated.

If moderate Arab leaders are preoccupied with the incendiary combination of Mr. Sadat's memory and the legitimacy of their governments, Israel's leadership is constrained by a parliamentary system of government. In a nation that probably should be governed by a presidential system, the legitimacy of Israel's leadership constantly is threatened by unruly or short-lived parliamentary coalitions.

Israeli leaders rarely have the time, political energy or political capital to educate their electorate in order to move the peace effort forward. Political survival is based on the smallest of incremental steps. But with its justified incursion into the Gaza, Israel now has the ability to partly break the Sadat curse and empower Arab leadership to act in the best long-term interest of their countries.

With the no-nonsense aggressiveness with which the Israeli centrist government has conducted

the Gaza war, it has freed itself -- for the moment -- of criticism from the political parties on its right and from implied accusations that its aspirations for peace could jeopardize the survival of Israel.

The war politically has liberated Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's government and thus has given it a historic opportunity to significantly change the Mideast landscape -- allowing it to demonstrate to moderate Arab governments that Israel understands their political problems and will do what is necessary to enable these governments to negotiate with face.

The war has given Mr. Olmert the political space to announce that Israel immediately will dismantle the most aggressive settlements such as Maskiot, discontinue all new settlement activity and budget the \$6 billion already proposed for homes of 20,000 West Bank settlers so they can build within Israel's borders.

Of course, the Israeli right loudly will argue that such steps would amount to giving away assets without getting anything in return. But that argument is fallacious because such an announcement will begin to change the Mideastern dynamic.

First, it will demonstrate to the world that Israel truly wants a just peace settlement and that it has the political will both to make war and make the accommodations necessary for peace. As an aside, such an announcement immediately will relieve some of the pressure and problems Israel has with the European Union.

Second, a thawing of relations will give urgently needed credibility to the Egyptian, Jordanian and the other moderate Arab governments. It will help give the moderates the boost they need in their fight with

Iran for regional leadership. Israel will be the one taking the Sadat risk - turning the rules upside down and, in doing so, restoring face to the leadership of the moderate Arab countries.

Partly because of the Sadat rule, partly out of tradition and culture, these countries probably never will be the public leaders in a grand peace bargain with Israel. But they are the gatekeepers whose quiet nods have moved the process forward. Their leaders see the horrors of a radicalized Mideast, but they know that they must demonstrate to their people that their quiet nods are not a betrayal of the Palestinian people.

Third, Israel's most important and weakest ally against radicalization, Fatah and the current West Bank government, will gain strength and legitimacy. Israel needs Fatah not only because it is the nonradical Palestinian party and because it is the only logical negotiating party but because it also needs Fatah to govern Gaza after the war. But without credibility gained from receiving land on

which some of the settlements have been built, Fatah's legitimacy in a war-ravaged Gaza is questionable.

Of course, none of this is easy.

When a government is fighting a war, it is nearly impossible to concentrate on other strategies. And when a government such as Israel's is made up of non-harmonious partners, it is even more difficult.

But as a citizen of the Mideast, Israel also knows the importance of power and face. It knows that in the Mideast, of all places, politics follows perception. And politically, what better time is there to offer possible friends face than when you are demonstrating massive strengths.

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Islam Should Prove It's a Religion of Peace

By Tawfik Hamid **The Wall Street Journal** March 9, 2009

Muslims can start with better Quranic scholarship. The film "Fitna" by Dutch parliament member Geert Wilders has created an uproar around the world because it links violence committed by Islamists to Islam.

Many commentators and politicians -- including the British government, which denied him entry to the country last month -- reflexively accused Mr. Wilders of inciting hatred. The question, however, is whether the blame is with Mr. Wilders, who simply exposed Islamic radicalism, or with those who promote and engage in this religious extremism. In other words, shall we fault Mr. Wilders for raising issues like the stoning of women, or shall we fault those who actually promote and practice this crime?

Many Muslims seem to believe that it is acceptable to teach hatred and violence in the name of their religion -- while at the same time expecting the world to respect Islam as a religion of peace, love and harmony.

Scholars in the most prestigious Islamic institutes and universities continue to teach things like Jews are "pigs and monkeys," that women and men must be stoned to death for adultery, or that Muslims must fight the world to spread their religion. Isn't, then, Mr. Wilders's criticism appropriate? Instead of blaming him, we must blame the leading Islamic scholars for having failed to produce an authoritative book on Islamic jurisprudence that is accepted in the Islamic world and unambiguously rejects these violent teachings.

While many religious texts preach violence, the interpretation, modern usage and implementation of these teachings make all the difference. For example, the stoning of women exists in both the Old

Testament and in the Islamic tradition, or "Sunna" -- the recorded deeds and manners of the prophet Muhammad. The difference, though, is that leading Jewish scholars agreed to discontinue these practices centuries ago, while Muslim scholars have yet to do so. Hence we do not see the stoning of women practiced or promoted in Israel, the "Jewish" state, but we see it practiced and promoted in Iran and Saudi Arabia, the "Islamic" states.

When the British government banned Geert Wilders from entering the country to present his film in the House of Lords, it made two egregious errors. The first was to suppress free speech, a canon of the civilized Western world. The second mistake was to blame the messenger -- punishing, so to speak, the witness who exposed the crime instead of punishing the criminal. Mr. Wilders did not produce the content of the violent Islamic message he showed in his film -- the Islamic world did that. Until the Islamic clerical establishment takes concrete steps to reject violence in the name of their religion, Mr. Wilders's criticism is not only permissible as "controversial" free speech but justified.

So, Islamic scholars and clerics, it is up to you to produce a Shariah book that will be accepted in the Islamic world and that teaches that Jews are *not* pigs and monkeys, that declaring war to spread Islam is unacceptable, and that killing apostates is a crime. Such a book would prove that Islam is a religion of peace.

Mr. Hamid, a former member of an Egyptian Islamist terrorist group, is an Islamic reformer and senior fellow at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies.