

Our World: Olmert's international coalitions

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Today Hamas consolidates its power in Gaza and plans its next moves in Judea and Samaria. Fatah - its main competitor - has collapsed.

Fatah was plunged into a state of organizational shock last month after its US-trained militias surrendered control of Gaza to Hamas and its US-benighted commanders fled the area.

Although with sufficient bribes for its angry followers courtesy of Israel and the US, Fatah may be able to temporarily resuscitate itself (at least until its leaders feel secure enough with the size of their Swiss bank accounts to decamp to Borneo), Hamas's consolidation of its control over Gaza has nonetheless sealed Fatah's death warrant.

In the course of its jihadist putsch in Gaza, Hamas took control not only of Fatah's US- and European-financed military arsenal and the CIA and MI-6 intelligence gathering equipment Fatah was lavished with. It also took control of Fatah's intelligence files and the personal files of Fatah leaders. This means that Hamas now has complete documentary evidence of Fatah's corruption; its involvement in terrorism; and its double dealing with the West, with rogue regimes like Iran, and with terror groups like Hizbullah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and al-Qaida.

THERE CAN be no doubt that under the tutelage of the Iranian and Syrian intelligence directorates, Hamas will use its treasure trove of information in a manner that will block any move by Fatah to renew its support bases in Palestinian society.

Hamas's intelligence windfall will similarly prevent Fatah from significantly resisting Hamas's consolidation of control over Gaza and the expansion of Hamas's rule to Judea and Samaria.

Two examples of Hamas's use of information to date suffice to make this point clear. First there is Israel and the US's favorite Palestinian "straight-shooter" Salam Fayad. Fayad - a former senior official from the terror-linked Arab Bank and the current prime minister of Fatah Chairman Mahmoud Abbas's Judea and Samaria government - served willingly as finance minister in Hamas's government before the Gaza takeover.

Claiming that Fayad was a personal friend of hers, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice ignored her own government's boycott of the Hamas government to meet with Fayad when he visited Washington in the spring.

Sunday Gaza-based Hamas terrorist and parliamentarian Yahya Musa accused Fayad of corruption. Referring to him as "the head of the thieves," Musa claimed that Fayad is "suspected of embezzling \$36 million from the Agricultural Development Company."

Musa also hinted that Fayad has personally overseen the finance of terrorism by stating that he "used to channel public funds to Fatah."

THE SECOND example is Hamas's use of information on Fatah commander Muhammad Dahlan. On June 15, Hamas took control of Dahlan's palatial residence in Gaza. Hamas claimed it found a suitcase filled with gold, forged Pakistani and US passports and the identification card of murdered IDF border guard Nissim Toledano. The last find is particularly revealing.

Since 1994 both the US and Israel ignored mountains of evidence of Dahlan's involvement with terrorism. Both governments have clung to their support for Dahlan despite his close relationships with senior Hamas terrorists like Muhammad Deif and his own forces' direct involvement in the murder of Israelis. The fact that Dahlan had possession of Toledano's ID card shows just how ill-advised this support for Dahlan has been.

Toledano was kidnapped on his way to his border guard base in 1992. His mutilated body was found near the Dead Sea some days later. Toledano's abduction and murder became a pivotal event for all that would follow in the region.

Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack. In response, the Rabin government deported 417 Hamas terrorists to Lebanon where they were quickly taken under the wing of Hizbullah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. In 1994, in the wake of the Oslo peace process with Fatah, Rabin allowed the 417 to return to Gaza, Judea and Samaria. Once back, they immediately fomented a terror onslaught against Israel the likes of which had never been seen before. It was the returnees who organized the first suicide bombing beginning in April 1994.

The fact that Dahlan was in possession of Toledano's ID raises the question of Fatah's involvement in his kidnap and murder and casts a pall over the entire attempt by Israel and the West to make a distinction between Hamas and Fatah terrorists.

There can be no doubt that more information about Fatah leaders (and their business and other connections with Israeli political leaders and others) will follow - as suits the operational interests of Hamas and its Iranian bosses.

In light of this it is clear that Fatah can be of no use to anyone any longer. Indeed, those who work to strengthen Fatah may well be opening themselves to blackmail and public humiliation at a time and place of Hamas's choosing. So not only is Fatah a dead horse, it is a dead horse rigged to a land mine.

YET FOR all that, supporting Fatah and Abbas remains the central goal of Israel's government. This week Israel handed some \$120 million over to Abbas and Fayad. Next week it will release 250 Fatah terrorists from prison. Last week Prime Minister Ehud Olmert embraced Abbas at Sharm e-Sheikh after expounding on Abbas's greatness with US President George W. Bush at the White House the week before.

Olmert and his colleagues portray Abbas as a central member of a camp of "moderates" which includes the Saudis, the Egyptians and the Jordanians. All these so-called moderates are supposed to form a coalition with Israel, the US and the EU against the "extremists" in Hamas, Iran, Hizbullah and Syria. Unfortunately the camp of moderates is a fiction. Jordan is so frightened of a jihadist coup that its government statements are barely distinguishable from Muslim Brotherhood press releases.

Over the weekend, at Egypt's invitation, Hamas terror forces deployed along the Gaza border with Egypt. For its part, Saudi Arabia oversaw the formation of the Hamas-Fatah "unity" government last March which subordinated Abbas and Fatah to Khaled Mashaal and Hamas. The Saudis have embraced Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In his maiden visit to the Sunni Islamist capital, the genocidal, messianic Shi'ite Ahmadinejad was kissed, and hugged, and held hands with King Abdullah.

For her part, rather than condition any further US support for Fatah on credible steps to fight Hamas and its own terror networks, Rice is redoubling her pressure on Israel. Rice is planning to use \$86 million in US-taxpayer funds to have Lt. Gen Keith Dayton train Fatah forces in Judea and Samaria. That's the same Gen. Dayton who trained and armed the Fatah forces in Gaza who cut and run rather than fight Hamas last month and so surrendered their US-supplied weapons to Iran's proxy without a fight.

Additionally, Rice is aggressively pushing her plan to force Israel to negotiate and conclude a treaty with Abbas that would involve an Israeli pledge to surrender Judea and Samaria and Jerusalem to Fatah. This is the same Fatah whose membership is revolting and bolting and the same Abbas who Fatah members are revolting against.

AS FOR the Europeans, newly appointed Quartet envoy Tony Blair is set to begin negotiating with Hamas in his planned visit to Gaza next week.

While like Rice, Blair has repeatedly claimed that the absence of a Palestinian state is the cause of all the troubles in the Muslim world today, a week ago a Blair adviser went a step further. According to media reports, the official advised the Israeli government that as far as Blair is concerned, Israel is responsible for the global jihad because of its refusal to surrender to Palestinian terrorism.

The only reasonable explanation of the Olmert government's behavior in regards to the Palestinians is that the government hopes that by appeasing the US and the rest of the gang on the Palestinian issue, Israel will receive their cooperation in preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Unfortunately, here too, all evidence points to the conclusion that Israel has not received anything on the Iran front from any of the relevant actors in exchange for its willingness to let Hamas take over Gaza and continue to finance and arm Fatah terrorists.

Over the weekend Saudi Arabia's Deputy Foreign Minister met with Iran's ambassador to the Kingdom and reasserted Saudi Arabian support for Iran's pursuit of "peaceful nuclear technologies." The Saudis and the Iranians also agreed on the need for Islamic solidarity against the "enemies of Islam."

As for the Egyptians, not only are they, like the Saudis now openly moving to get nuclear capabilities of their own, the Egyptians are responsible for enabling Hamas to take control of Gaza. In spite of repeated Israeli entreaties, Egypt has never lifted a finger to prevent the flow of arms and terror personnel across its border. To the contrary, it facilitated Gaza's transformation into a jihadist hub. Since last summer's war, Egypt has moved towards reestablishing full diplomatic relations with the Iranians.

Today both the US and the Europeans are poised to set aside the option of escalating sanctions against Iran for its refusal to end its uranium enrichment activities. Over the weekend, their representatives to the International Atomic Energy Agency debated a plan to take a break from escalating sanctions if Iran agrees to stop expanding its uranium enrichment. That is, the US is presently considering a plan that would allow Iran to continue to enrich uranium without facing effective international sanctions as a result.

The tragedy of this situation is that a coalition could be brought together that would be capable of meeting both the Palestinian and Iranian threats to Israeli and global security. Friends of Israel in Congress, the Bush Administration and the US policy community would be happy to work with Israel to counteract Rice's failed policies.

Unfortunately, Israeli leaders capable of appreciating and acting on this fact are nowhere to be found in the

Olmert government.

A horizontal banner for Sportingbet. On the left, there is a brown American football with white laces, set against a blue background with white diagonal stripes. To the right of the football, the text "Free \$50 Bet for new Canadian customers" is written in white on a dark blue background. Further right, the "Sportingbet" logo is visible, with "Sports • Casino • Poker • Games" written below it. On the far right, there is a red button with the text "Bet Now" in white.

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