



Hamas: “Anti-Hamas Approach Fading” May 7, 2009

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“Since the conclusion of Zionist 22-day military offensive in January which coincided with U.S. President Barack Obama taking power in Washington, Hamas has had many more international visitors. Sources close to the Hamas leadership in once diplomatically isolated Gaza confirm that official representatives of several European governments have come calling, over and above Norway, which has long sought to breach the Zionist- U.S.-European boycott.”

“Until recently, most of the international community backed [the] Zionist entity's view that Hamas is a terrorist group, and refused to deal directly with it. That meant largely a siege of Hamas since the movement won an election back in January 2006. The hope was to marginalise Hamas while strengthening the moderation of the Palestinian Authority under Fatah leader, President Mahmoud Abbas.”

“The new Zionist government under Benjamin Netanyahu had hoped the international community would continue steadfastly not to deal officially with Hamas unless it committed to ‘non-violence’, recognised Israel, and accepted previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements. The new direction leaves the Zionist entity facing an increasingly complex diplomatic conundrum.”

“There is simply a growing international perception, especially since the war that the old ‘isolate Hamas’ approach is not working. This has raised [the] Zionist entity's anxiety that an end to the sanctions on Hamas could be nigh.”

“The signs are unmistakable. Lawmakers from the UK and EU, travelling independently, have made widely publicised visits to the recently re-elected Hamas leader, Khaled Meshal in Damascus. And, last week, Meshal delivered a speech via a teleconference uplink to a closed parliamentary session at Westminster, further undermining the boycott.”

“Expressing ‘extreme disappointment’, the speaker of the ‘Knesset’, Reuven Rivlin, sent a protest to the Speaker of the British House of Commons, Michael Martin. ‘Democracy and terrorism cannot live side by side. A democracy that allows itself to be taken advantage of by terrorism risks dire consequences. I ask that you not provide a platform that could further advance their cause,’ Rivlin wrote.”

“Hamas sources in Gaza believe the flurry of contacts is only taking place because of a tacit go-ahead from the U.S - “they are showing much more courage than during the Bush administration,” the sources say. In parallel, the international community's Middle East envoy, Tony Blair, has repeatedly cautioned about “pushing Gaza aside” from any putative peace moves. He recently told the London Times, “I do think it is important we find a way of bringing Hamas into this process.”

“And, Martin Indyk, a former U.S. ambassador to the Zionist entity close to the Obama

administration, said bluntly in his recently published book, 'Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East', that 'a peace process that excludes Hamas is bound to fail.'

"More recently, as part of its 83.4 billion dollar emergency spending bill to fund the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the Obama Administration began exploring ways to change U.S. law to allow aid to any future Palestinian unity government that might include Hamas. The emergency aid bill provides 840 million dollars for the Palestinian Authority and for rebuilding Gaza after the war."

"The Hamas refusal to make any commitment about recognising Israel or accepting past Palestinian-Israeli agreements is still considered the main stumbling block in forging a Palestinian national government. Zionist Middle East experts argue, however, that Hamas is actually being encouraged not to budge from its resolute positions because of the erosion of the diplomatic boycott."

"Alongside fiery Hamas declarations, such as that delivered last Friday in a Gaza mosque by a top Hamas man, Mahmoud Al-Zahar, in which he vowed the organisation would 'never ever' recognise Israel, there are distinct signs of Hamas pragmatism. There has been an almost total lull in rocket fire from Gaza at settlements in recent weeks."

"This pragmatism is meant to stem less from fear of Zionist retaliation and is geared more to bolstering the tentative gains in international credibility. Coupled with the uncompromising ideological stance against the Zionist entity, it seems also to serve in strengthening Hamas vis-à-vis a flagging Palestinian Authority."

"Interestingly, although the Zionist entity seems less than the PA the immediate target of this post-war Hamas strategy, the surge towards ending the Islamist movement's isolation comes just as the Zionist entity begins to feel increasingly a diplomatic freeze of its own."

"More and more European officials have been calling for a freeze in upgrading ties with the Netanyahu government over his reluctance to commit to a two-state solution. The most outspoken critic is the EU external affairs commissioner, Benita Ferrero-Waldner. She is the butt of a counter-Israeli diplomatic offensive. The Foreign Ministry is even threatening the Zionist entity will block the EU from participating in any diplomatic process with the Palestinians. Rafi Barak, deputy director of the European Desk, told several European ambassadors that unless the EU stopped such declarations, 'Europe will not be able to be part of the diplomatic process and both sides will lose.'"

"The Zionist entity, however, may well find that a strident approach will bear little fruit when Netanyahu meets President Obama at the White House in three weeks time, and discovers just how far the U.S. Administration has departed from the absolutist anti-Hamas approach of the previous Administration, and steps up its insistence that the Zionist entity lines up with the two-state solution."