

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 3:54:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223444259

Documents (100)

1. [*Hamas's dilemma*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

2. [*Hamas battles with legitimate power*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

3. [*Hamas' road to politics*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

4. [*Hamas fury over killings*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

5. [*Hamas ripe to challenge ruling party: Palestinian electionWednesday will make Hamas powerful player*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

6. [*Hamas hints at practicality over ideology*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

7. [*Israeli threat unites Hamas, Fatah*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

8. [*Hamas takes legal control*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

9. [*Hamas condemns arrest of government ministers*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

10. [*Appeasing Hamas is pure folly*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

11. [Hamas changes tactics to fight Palestinian poll](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

12. [Leader: Defusing the Hamas time bomb](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

13. [Israel attacks Hamas office](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

14. [Israel attacks Hamas office](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

15. [Why Hamas is gaining in Palestinian polls](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

16. [*Hamas may lessen hostility to Israel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

17. [*Strength of Hamas catches Palestinians off guard*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

18. [*Hamas's Philosophy on Raising Martyrs*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

19. [*Guns or politics? Now Hamas must choose*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

20. [*Fear amid jubilation as Hamas prepares to govern*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

21. [*Hamas signs deal on Israel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

22. [*The revolutionary matriarch of Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

23. [*Hamas, Fatah set aside differences*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

24. [*Guns or politics? Now Hamas must choose*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

25. [*Hamas special brew -it's very dry*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

26. [*Hamas taunts Israel as campaign closes*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

27. [*HAMAS DECLARES IT WILL RESUME ATTACKING ISRAEL*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

28. [*Hamas Presses Fatah in Palestinian Vote, Surveys Say*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

29. [*HAMAS AND ABBAS CLASH OVER PATH FOR PALESTINIANS*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

30. [*Hamas says Israel wants to topple it*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

31. [*Hamas, Fatah reach deal on Israel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

32. [Vote boost for Hamas](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

33. [Hamas election victory](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

34. [CIDA reviewing aid pledged to Palestinians: Hamas victory fallout](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

35. [Palestinians may be on outer if Hamas star rises](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

36. [Women, Secret Hamas Strength, Win Votes at Polls and New Role](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

37. [*Passing the hat in show of support for Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

38. [*How Hamas Greeted 9/11*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

39. [*Israel votes sanctions as Hamas sworn into office*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

40. [*Poll leaves Hamas close to breaking Fatah's monopoly*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

41. [*US presses Palestinian moderates to stay out of Hamas government*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

42. [*Debating terror in Hamas's backyard*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

43. [Israel rejects Hamas death deadline for soldier](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

44. [Senior Hamas figure looks forward to governing with Fatah](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

45. [Choice between guns or politics Hamas tipped to secure power](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

46. [Canada cuts ties, stops aid to Hamas](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

47. [Now Hamas must drop guns and bombs and start talking](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

48. [HAMAS VICTORY: Arabs don't vote based on Islam alone](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

49. [Airstrike by Israelis kills Hamas member](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

50. [Can Hamas be transformed?: Hamas, which embraces violence as a political weapon and demands the destruction of Israel, must now choose its path](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

51. [ISRAELIS BATTER GAZA AND SEIZE HAMAS OFFICIALS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

52. [Hamas moves in and puts fate of pacts with Israel in doubt](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

53. [CIDA reviews assistance to Palestinians: Hamas victory fallout: Martin government pledged \\$62M](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

54. [Hamas strives for political legitimacy: Palestinian elections: Voter discontent with corrupt Fatah party fuels support](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

55. [Rise of Hamas concerns brewers Government's beliefs could affect business](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

56. [In a Stronghold, Fatah Fights To Beat Back a Rising Hamas](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

57. [Big trouble for Fatah Even in Nablus, Hamas is surging](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

58. [Where does Hamas stand?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

59. [Hamas political power emerges Militant group affiliates run for parliament](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

60. [Israel Rejects Hamas Terms For Exchange Of Prisoners](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

61. [Warm and Fuzzy TV, Brought to You by Hamas](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

62. [TO SERVE THE NATIONAL CITY AND THROUGH IT THE NATION Hamas has staked legitimate claim](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

63. [*Hamas PM rules out swapping soldier for Gaza politicians*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

64. [*Hamas stands its ground as West demands change*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

65. [*On the new Hamas agenda: 'learn to queue like the British'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

66. [*Palestinian Premier Calls Israeli Action Part of a Pre-Existing Plan to Oust Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

67. [*Hamas Cabinet Is Sworn In, Widening Break With the Israelis*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

68. [*Letters - The West must not allow Hamas terror to win;*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

69. [Redirecting its zeal: Hamas must make transition from terror: Victory will force group to be clear on issues](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

70. [Israel readies troops: Hints at targeting Hamas leaders if abducted soldier is not released](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

71. [Faction fights make mockery of peace as Hamas goes political](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

72. [Hamas leaps up polls in Palestinian vote: Chaos plagues election that threatens crisis in relations with Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

73. [Hamas victory rocks Mideast: Stunning election sweep by militant anti- Israeli party brings warning from U.S. president](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

74. [*The founding beliefs of Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

75. [*Israel says it will not deal with Hamas for soldier*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

76. [*Fatah, Hamas already talking coalition: On final day of campaign, polls say outcome is too close to call*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

77. [*Hamas rejects Blair's Mideast plan: PM wants group to recognize Israel. Olmert, Abbas to meet 'without condition'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

78. [*Suicide bomb worsens tension between Israelis and Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

79. [*Palestinians' vote a choice between Fatah, Hamas: Pollsters predict a cliffhanger, with peace or confrontation in the balance*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

80. [*Parliament dominated by Hamas sworn in Abbas urges group to respect all existing pacts*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

81. [*TV for kids: Militancy and games in Gaza Hamas to broadcast show for children*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

82. [*Militants to fill new security force: Israel, U.S. condemn move by Hamas-led gov't*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

83. [*Hamas era begins with swearing-in of parliament: 74 members to take oaths of office, as Israel plans drastic sanctions*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

84. [No U.S. aid for Hamas-led regime: Tens of millions at risk if radical party won't renounce terrorism](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

85. [Hamas triumphs over Fatah Bush calls victory 'a wake-up call'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

86. [TV recipe: Militance and egg races Hamas seeks a new image with programming for children](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

87. [HAMAS POINT-BLANK Russia will need to prove that maintaining contacts with extremists is productive](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

88. [Israel takes key Hamas figures into custody 8 cabinet ministers are held as operation in Gaza intensifies](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

89. [*Hamas agrees to share power with Fatah The deal is based on a proposal that many believe implies recognition of Israel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-**Search Terms:** Hamas**Search Type:** Natural Language**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

90. [*Palestinians strike over pay owed: Unrest marks first public sign of discontent with Hamas-led cabinet over financial crisis*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-**Search Terms:** Hamas**Search Type:** Natural Language**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

91. [*Hamas and Israel hint at deal to free captured corpora*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-**Search Terms:** Hamas**Search Type:** Natural Language**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

92. [*Israel strikes Palestinian PM's office: Military intensifies pressure on Hamas; official says captured Israeli soldier alive*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-**Search Terms:** Hamas**Search Type:** Natural Language**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

93. [*Hamas to renew its attacks on Israel Vow is a response to shelling that killed 7 on a Gaza beach*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-**Search Terms:** Hamas**Search Type:** Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

94. [*The brains at the helm of Hamas Khaled Mashaal is seen as mastermind of a group steeped in violence and challenged to be political.*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

95. [*Women MPs vow to change face of Hamas: Sexual discrimination is tradition not Islam, say new Palestinian leaders*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

96. [*Israeli air strike kills 5 Palestinians: MIDDLE EAST | Attack that targets training camp inflames tensions between Israel and the Hamas-led government*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

97. [*Israel ready to cut a deal: official: But messages are mixed: Minister proposes freeing some Palestinians if Hamas releases soldier and halts attacks*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to Sep 30, 2006

98. [*Crisis in Gaza: Hamas says Israel is out to destroy its administration: Palestinian ministers and MPs seized in night raid after kidnapping of soldier*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to
Sep 30, 2006

99. [West Bank crisis grows as Israelis arrest Hamas leaders in revenge](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to
Sep 30, 2006

100. [Cornell U., Qatar and Hamas](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to
Sep 30, 2006

Hamas's dilemma

Ottawa Citizen

June 27, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 277 words

Byline: The Ottawa Citizen

Body

Hamas cannot be both a terrorist gang and a governing party. Its election gave it a tiny thread of legitimacy, but that will snap if it does not renounce violence.

It's hard to tell just how implicated the political leadership of **Hamas** is in the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier on the weekend. There isn't much question, though, that **Hamas** militants were among the Palestinians who tunnelled under the Gaza border to an Israeli army outpost, killed two soldiers and abducted 19-year-old Gilad Shalit.

Two Palestinian fighters died in the raid. The kidnappers demanded the release of **women** and children from Israeli custody in return for information about the captured soldier.

President Mahmoud Abbas, who favours peaceful negotiation with Israel, has called for the release of the corporal. The official reaction of **Hamas** has been mixed. Although the deputy prime minister did echo Mr. Abbas's call for the soldier's release, the political wing did not denounce the actions of the military wing. In taking credit for the raid, the military wing justified it as revenge for recent Israeli attacks. Skeptics have noted that it takes time to dig a 640-metre tunnel and plan an attack.

In any case, these are not the words or the actions of a government that wants peace for its people. The **Hamas** leadership should have denounced the raid and cut itself off from the militants.

This crisis will not help the Palestinian Authority in its negotiations with Israel. Nor will it convince the international community to deal with the **Hamas** government. As long as that government refuses to recognize Israel and to cut itself off from its military wing, it is in a posture of war.

Load-Date: June 27, 2006

Hamas battles with legitimate power

GOLD COAST BULLETIN

January 28, 2006 Saturday

Main Edition

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Section: FOCUS; Pg. 49

Length: 611 words

Body

THE political earthquake that swept Hamas to power in parliamentary elections this week has been rumbling below the surface of Palestinian life for nearly two decades.

It was founded in the crowded Gaza Strip in 1987 as an outgrowth of the Egyptian fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood.

Hamas means 'zeal' and is an Arabic acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement.

Its birth coincided with the start of the first Palestinian uprising against Israel and its covenant, published a year later, called for the destruction of Israel.

Holy war, the document declared, was a duty binding on all Muslims whenever 'enemies usurp Islamic lands'.

Now Hamas faces the demands and responsibilities of governing.

But is it the same organisation it was at birth or will the desire to participate in politics mean that its leaders will steer a more moderate course?

"Hamas faces the difficult task of adjusting from a resistance movement to a political party in the system," said Ziad Abu Amr, an independent lawmaker who ran for office with Hamas's backing.

"What is it going to do with militants who made resistance a career? How is it going to deal with issues that matter to its voters: corruption, internal order, the peace process? It is much easier to be in the opposition and criticise mistakes."

Hamas 'has translated those mistakes into power,' he said. "Now it has to translate power into change."

Palestinian political analyst Khaled Duzdar said he thought Hamas would dance delicately.

"Hamas is not going to make concessions on their bedrock beliefs," he said. "But at the same time they want to prove to the world that they are not the devils they are perceived to be."

From its earliest days, the group's fundamentalist ideology - put forward by its founder, the paraplegic Sheik Ahmed Yassin, whom an Israeli missile killed in 2004 - spoke to a growing segment of disenfranchised Palestinians.

Hamas battles with legitimate power

It spread its ideology through mosques and social service programs. Hamas provided medical care and free food programs, but it also pressured women to dress modestly, attacked stores that sold liquor and killed those who were suspected of collaborating with 'the Zionist entity'.

Hamas took responsibility for six attacks on Israelis in 1989, including kidnappings, stabbings, and shootings, while its efforts to delegitimise Yasser Arafat's dominant Palestine Liberation Organisation grew bolder.

Hamas militants went on to kill hundreds of Israelis in scores of suicide attacks.

At the outset, Israel didn't deal death blows to Hamas because the group seemed to be undermining Arafat. But Israel eventually outlawed Hamas because of its relentless anti-Israel campaign.

In a string of air strikes in recent years, the Israeli air force killed many in Hamas's top echelon, including Yassin, all while keeping Arafat pinned down in his headquarters in Ramallah, West Bank.

Some analysts think the targeted killings fuelled the growing popularity of Hamas.

So did Hamas's calls to reform the decades-old ruling Fatah party, which many Palestinians had come to see as corrupt and ineffective.

Many analysts think that voters' hopes of better services played a major role in Hamas's national election victory.

During the campaign, Hamas leaders had hinted they would be content to be a strong force in the opposition rather than enter the government, a stance that allowed them to dodge questions about whether they would recognise Israel if bilateral negotiations ever were revived.

But the group's landslide victory may force it to take clearer positions on key issues, including whether to renounce violence or revise its charter. For the moment, that seems unlikely.

* Editorial, Page 52

Load-Date: January 29, 2006

Hamas' road to politics

The Toronto Star

January 23, 2006 Monday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A04

Length: 1099 words

Body

"We need three generations for our plans - one to listen, one to fight and one to win."

- Hassan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood

"In the history of people and nations, suffering hits everyone," said Khalid Mesha'al, political leader of the militant Palestinian group Hamas. "But those who respond to that suffering and translate it into action are usually few in number."

Mesha'al is one of a handful of Palestinians who helped build the Hamas movement, transforming it from a cadre of religious dissidents to one of the most feared and powerful Islamic forces in the Middle East.

As Wednesday's Palestinian election approaches, with Hamas' closest rival, the Fatah party, in disarray, Israelis are forced to think the unthinkable: the group that launched hundreds of suicide bombers to kill more than 350 of their countrymen and wound more than 2,000 others, may be the principal partner in negotiations for the future of Middle East peace, and eventually form the government of a new Palestinian state.

After the election, pollsters predict, Mesha'al and his organization are likely to be a significant political force. If so, their success will be built on patience as well as violence, assembling an organization that has, in less than two decades, put down deep roots in the Palestinian community.

"Hamas represents, in the minds of people here, the resistance, the faithful Muslims, the good and incorruptible - and they also have a great social network of services for women, children and youth," says Gaza psychiatrist Eyad al Sarraj. "When people vote overwhelmingly for Hamas, it's because they trust them more than any others."

And, he points out, "Hamas is the main framework of security here. When children become teenagers, they have seen how powerless their fathers are, unable to protect their families. But Hamas takes on the role of the father, and identifies itself with the ultimate father, God. God cannot be defeated as your father was."

The first tentative roots of Hamas were in Egypt, and in the sandy soil of Kuwait, where Mesha'al and thousands of other Palestinians migrated as Israel won progressive victories against Arab neighbours who had formed an alliance to destroy the Jewish state.

In Mesha'al's farm village of Silwad alone, two-thirds of the 19,000 inhabitants fled after the Six Day War in 1967. They were among 1 million Arabs displaced as Israel took control of the West Bank, Gaza, Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights, a stunning victory that shocked and demoralized the Arab world. The bitterness of exile became one of the pillars of the Hamas movement.

Hamas' road to politics

"I left Palestine when I was two, but I was born on its soil," says Umm Mohamad, a 65-year-old woman who lives in a dirt-floored room in a Lebanese refugee camp. "The next generations remember nothing, so they ask visitors from Palestine to bring them bottles filled with the earth of our homeland.

"**Hamas** understands our longing, and they are the only ones who can help us to return, with the grace of God."

Religion is the foundation of **Hamas**, separating it from the late Yasser Arafat's more secular Fatah movement.

"**Hamas** is the Islamic Resistance Movement," says Azzam Tamimi, director of the London-based Institute of Islamic Political Thought. "It was set up officially in 1987, but it did not happen in a void. Its tradition goes all the way back to 1928 and the Muslim Brotherhood formed by Hassan al-Banna."

Under al-Banna, a Egyptian scholar, the Brotherhood seized on issues that had plagued Muslims for decades - their economic and political backwardness, their losses under colonialism, their declining faith in a materialistic age. It fiercely opposed the creation of Israel.

In Kuwait, Mesha'al followed the Brotherhood's radical teachings and looked for ways to strike against the Israeli occupation. But they found themselves shut out of the tightly-controlled Palestine Liberation Organization that formed the core of Palestinian resistance.

"They decided to set up an independent student movement which branched out in the U.S., Britain, European, Arab and other Muslim countries," says Tamimi. "It helped to pave the way for building all the Palestinian institutions that made them so successful: welfare, charities, the university in Gaza, schools, orphanages."

In the 1970s, the Kuwaiti-based students had religion, ideology and organization. But they were unprepared for the explosive birth of **Hamas** in Gaza in 1987 at the hands of the Egyptian-educated Sheik Ahmed Yassin.

Within a year, **Hamas** had instigated strikes, imposed strict discipline on its rapidly increasing followers and rejected the legitimacy of the PLO to speak for all Palestinians. It published a covenant that ruled out any compromise with Israel, declared all of Palestine a Muslim state and announced a holy war against the Jewish state.

Initially, the Israelis allowed Yassin to continue building educational and charitable institutions in the Palestinian territories, aware that **Hamas**' growing influence was weakening Israel's chief enemy, Arafat.

When **Hamas** adopted suicide bombing as its primary military tactic and dozens of Israelis died, its appeal continued to strengthen among angry and despairing Palestinians.

The Israeli authorities realized they were too late to eliminate what had now become their Number 1 enemy, displacing what many Palestinians saw as a corrupt, incompetent and self-serving PLO. While Arafat and his cronies took from the community, many believed, **Hamas** gave blood and treasure.

Israel's targeted assassinations of **Hamas** leaders also increased the group's popularity. The killing of Yassin and other high-ranking **Hamas** officials created a pool of new recruits.

The mounting death toll of Israelis and Palestinians led some Israeli officials to urge a different approach to dealing with **Hamas**. Some put their hopes on a political transformation.

"We see it as a terror organization, but not only that," says Ami Ayalon, former admiral and former director of the Israeli security service Shin Bet. "It's a movement and a fundamental way of life. They have charities, they have municipal leadership, they have an education system - and they have the al Qassam, the terror wing."

Now, with a Palestinian election imminent, **Hamas** may be ready to reap what it has spent so many years sowing, a new kind of political power.

"**Hamas** wants the success of the Palestinian democratic experiment because it is our strong weapon, along with the resistance," says Mesha'al. "It will liberate our land and regain our rights."

This is last in a series on [Hamas](#) ahead of this week's Palestinian vote.

Graphic

AHMED JADALLAH Reuters An elderly Palestinian man chants anti-Israeli slogans during a [Hamas](#) rally yesterday in the Khan Younis refugee camp, Gaza Strip.JAAFAR ASHTIYEH AFP-Getty Images A supporter of the ruling Fatah movement whistles during a campaign rally in the northern West Bank city of Nablus yesterday. Palestinians go the polls on Wednesday.JAAFAR ASHTIYEH AFP-Getty Images A supporter of the ruling Fatah movement whistles during a campaign rally in the northern West Bank city of Nablus yesterday. Palestinians go the polls on Wednesday.

Load-Date: January 23, 2006

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Hamas fury over killings

Sunday Mail (South Australia)

June 11, 2006 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: FOREIGN; Pg. 38

Length: 363 words

Byline: Sarah el Deeb in Jerusalem

Body

THE ruling **Hamas** group fired a barrage of homemade rockets at Israel on Saturday, hours after calling off a truce with Israel in anger over an artillery attack that killed seven civilians in Gaza.

The **Hamas** militants' announcement to call off the ceasefire, reached in February, 2005, raised the prospect of a renewed campaign of suicide bombings and a wave of bloodshed.

Hamas claimed responsibility for launching at least 15 of the rockets fired after midnight, as well as a barrage of mortar bombs. There were no casualties, and the Israeli army said nearly all the rounds appeared to have landed inside Gaza.

"The earthquake in the Zionist towns will start again and the aggressors will have no choice but to prepare their coffins or their luggage," the **Hamas** militants said in a leaflet.

Israel's artillery attack on Friday was part of a wider aerial and artillery bombardment of suspected Palestinian rocket-launching sites that killed 10 people, three of them militants.

The violence fuelled tensions already high over an Israeli airstrike on Thursday that killed the **Hamas** government's top militant commander, Jamal Abu Samhadana.

Friday's artillery attack tore into a beachside picnic in Gaza, killing seven civilians and leading Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to condemn the attack as a "genocidal crime". He called for international intervention and declared a three-day period of mourning.

His rival, **Hamas** Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh said the shelling was a "war crime" and urged an end to recent fighting between **Hamas** and Abbas' moderate Fatah movement.

In Beit Lahiya, thousands of Palestinians gathered to attend the funeral procession of the seven civilians killed by Israel on Friday.

Chanting "revenge, revenge" and "destroy Israel, destroy America", the mourners made their way through the town's narrow streets to the families' homes, where weeping **women** tried to touch the bodies of the dead.

Israel's attacks raised speculation as to whether President Abbas would go ahead with a referendum on establishing a Palestinian state alongside Israel despite pleas from **Hamas** to hold off.

Hamas fury over killings

President Abbas is eager to restart stalled peace talks with Israel.

Load-Date: June 11, 2006

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**Hamas ripe to challenge ruling party: Palestinian election Wednesday will
make Hamas powerful player**

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

January 23, 2006 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. D7

Length: 929 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: RAFAH, Gaza Strip

Body

RAFAH, Gaza Strip -- Violence and abductions have become so common in this tiny strip of desert by the Mediterranean Sea recently that few international observers will be on hand to witness Palestinians voting for a new legislative council on Wednesday.

What they will miss is the meteoric rise of **Hamas** from a small municipal party, widely acknowledged to have provided good social services, into a powerful new player in Palestinian politics that's ready to vie with the long-ruling Fatah party for power.

Thousands of the **Hamas** faithful turned out at dusk on Saturday a few metres from the Rafah crossing into Egypt to wave green Islamic banners and roar their approval as Ismail Hanieh -- number one on **Hamas** list of candidates for the elections -- demanded a crackdown on government corruption, including what he termed "blood files" and urged "the resistance to keep your weapons and continue the fight against Israel."

Hanieh's tough words made it sound unlikely that **Hamas**, which has never run candidates for the council before, could work with Fatah in a future coalition government or that it intended to renounce its longstanding call for Israel's destruction. This would, in turn, make it difficult if not impossible for Israel or the West to discuss anything with **Hamas**, which is already considered to be a terrorist organization because it has sent suicide bombers into Israel and kidnapped Israelis.

But nothing is ever clear in Palestinian politics. Hanieh and others in the **Hamas** leadership have sent contradictory messages recently regarding co-operation with Fatah and their willingness to open a dialogue with Israel.

"The results of the election will determine our future," Sami Abu Zhor, the senior **Hamas** spokesperson, said coyly. "We leave all our options open."

"The Palestinian Authority tried to negotiate and failed. With this kind of failure it is difficult for us to continue negotiations. We cling to the resistance as long as there is occupation. But we do not reject solving the conflict gradually because it has a complicated history."

Hamas ripe to challenge ruling party: Palestinian election Wednesday will make Hamas powerful player

Softening even further, Abu Zhor added: "Having talks with the West is at the top of our list of priorities. We only resist here, nowhere else. We do not escalate the conflict."

The reason voters preferred Hamas to Fatah was because "we have no record of corruption," Abu Zhor said. "We do not live in fancy hotels. We live with the people. We are modest."

Until very recently Fatah had run a bizarre campaign centred largely around the memory of Arafat who remains a cherished figure to Palestinians. Even now Fatah campaign literature invariably features many photographs of the Palestinian icon, who died 14 months ago, and its posters features Arafat prominently, too.

As if that was not enough, Fatah campaign workers wear kafiya's on their heads or around their shoulders, just as Arafat did.

Fatah has drummed home the message in recent days that Hamas was wrong to claim that it had a right to rule simply because it had had long ties to the Egypt-based Muslim Brotherhood, which recently did well in elections there.

"What they have found in Palestine is that Fatah has been leading the people and they hate us and our martyrs for this although we started the Intifada not them," Mohammad Dahlan, Fatah's hugely popular leader in Gaza, told several hundred supporters at a campaign rally two days ago.

Dahlan warned his audience that Hamas interpreted Islam "as it sees it and gives Islamic rulings as it likes."

Recent polls have shown that Hamas, which began the campaign well behind Fatah, may be in a statistical dead heat with the movement founded by Arafat.

"Hamas says we accomplished zero and that makes us angry," said Mahmoud Al-Najar, who runs Fatah's campaign in the Hamas stronghold of Khan Younis. "But their attacks have unified us"

Raji Al Sourani, a Palestinian human rights activist and one of the few independent observers in Gaza, agreed that Fatah had recovered some of its popularity after belatedly awakening to the fact that it was doing very poorly.

Al-Najar, the Fatah activist, had been angered by how Hamas had wrapped itself in Islamic green and adopted "Islam is the solution" as its campaign slogan.

"They are trying to tell people that if you don't vote for them you are not a good Muslim," he said.

Hamas's Islamic ideology also troubled a group of young women studying at Al Azar University in Gaza City.

"If Hamas wins we are afraid that they will make us change the way we think," said Halima Venasco, who studies English literature. "I don't want less freedom. I want more."

Al Sourani, the human rights investigator, questioned Hamas's awkward response to European and American threats to cut off aid to the Palestinian Authority if Hamas did not moderate its ferocious opposition to Israel's existence.

"they have basically said, 'We don't care about money?' But what can they mean by that when there is 63 per cent unemployment here already?" Al Sourani asked.

On the other hand, "What can Europe say if Hamas is elected? They cannot really reject the democratic will of the Palestinian people."

With Hamas talking about continued resistance to a people who polls consistently say want peace with Israel, and Fatah widely reviled for squandering billions of dollars and giving most government jobs to party loyalists, some Palestinians were fed up.

Hamas ripe to challenge ruling party: Palestinian electionWednesday will make Hamas powerful player

"Everyone wants a seat at the table, but only to take the benefits for themselves," said journalism student Rahaifa El Rawagh. "I don't trust any of them. We have heard too many of their speeches already. I'm not voting for any of them."

Graphic

Photo: Associated Press; **Hamas** election posters hang outside a polling station in the West Bank city of Nablus, Sunday

Load-Date: January 23, 2006

End of Document

Hamas hints at practicality over ideology

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

January 29, 2006 Sunday

Home Edition

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1B

Length: 1218 words

Byline: MARGARET COKER, CRAIG NELSON

Body

Beit Hanoun, Gaza Strip --- From Mohammed Kafarna's point of view, all you need to know about how his militant group **Hamas** might rule over the 3.8 million Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip sits on his desk, just beyond the reach of his right hand.

It is a gold-filigreed, leather-bound copy of the Quran, the Islamic holy book.

To outsiders, "Islam is the solution" --- the credo of Kafarna, **Hamas** and other Islamist groups across the Middle East --- is a vague, if not sinister, principle for running government.

Nevertheless, it is that piety that sums up the potential promise and pitfalls posed by the stunning electoral success of **Hamas** in last week's parliamentary elections in the Palestinian territories.

When Kafarna, 40, can grab a spare moment from his duties as mayor of this town of 10,000 people that sits hard on Gaza's border with Israel, he turns to the Quran to make sure his priorities are in order.

"It's a reminder to me that God created humanity, and it is our obligation to serve humanity," the professorial, soft-spoken Kafarna said, as the enormity of **Hamas**' landslide victory became clear.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has asked **Hamas** to form a government.

However, his long-governing Fatah movement has refused **Hamas**' invitation to form a ruling coalition.

That is only the first of many daunting challenges for an organization that has been known mainly outside the Palestinian territories for the scores of suicide bombings that it has carried out against Israel since 1994.

Between 2000 and 2004, **Hamas** was responsible for a large number of the 1,000 Israelis killed by Palestinian violence.

About 3,500 Palestinians also died in the fighting.

Hamas hints at practicality over ideology

To rule, **Hamas** must wrest control of the patronage-riddled bureaucracy away from Fatah loyalists, who have controlled it for a decade.

Before, that, however, it needs to find a way for its elected representatives to get to the West Bank.

Hamas leaders are barred by Israel from traveling from Gaza to the Palestinian governing seat in Ramallah in the West Bank. **Hamas** must do all this without any experience in national politics.

Still, **Hamas** is not completely untested in government.

In December 2004, a month after the death of Yasser Arafat, Fatah's founder, **Hamas** ended its boycott of electoral politics and participated in Palestinian municipal elections for the first time, winning key mayoral races and city town council seats across the territories.

"We're not talking about people who are mindless and dumb and don't know what it means to be in government," said Ziad Abu Amr, a former Cabinet minister who has negotiated frequently with senior **Hamas** officials on behalf of the Palestinian Authority president in the past 18 months.

Social services provider

Hamas, an acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement, has many faces --- a militant organization to be sure, but also a social service organization that since its founding has built and operates schools, hospitals and religious institutions and raises funds abroad for both its political and militant operations.

Recently, as newcomers to local government, **Hamas** has proved effective at addressing bread-and-butter issues that Fatah is widely seen by Palestinians to have neglected during its 10 years in power while at the same time earning a reputation for unchecked corruption.

In Beit Hanoun, Kafarna, when he took over a year ago, took a leaf from the political handbook of former New York City Mayor Rudolf Giuliani: He launched his four-year term by cleaning the streets, planting trees and flowers and taking other steps to beautify the town.

Kafarna then raised \$200,000 from a private donor to build a badly needed clinic and reduced the town's \$660,000 budget deficit by one-third, according to his aide, Ziad Ashr.

Strolling the town's notably clean main street, 58-year-old retired civil engineer Islam Wajeh said Kafarna's accomplishments are widely appreciated by Beit Hanoun's residents.

"He's an honest man and trusted by his people, in contrast to his predecessor, who was inefficient and unqualified," Wajeh said.

The key to his success, Kafarna said, is simple: "We have dealt with people regardless of tribal and factional affiliations. Political partnership is the answer."

Not the Taliban

That **Hamas** emphasis on compromise, skilled administration and fair treatment is echoed in the West Bank.

With **Hamas**' endorsement, political independent Janet Michael, a 62-year-old Palestinian woman and member of the Greek Orthodox Church, was elected mayor of the West Bank city of Nablus last month.

Michael said last week she was happy to work with **Hamas**, regardless of the activities of its militant wing, because they share the common goal of improving roads, schools and the standard of living of the residents of Nablus.

"**Hamas** people are good citizens. They aren't the Taliban," Michael said, referring to the austere, extremist and suffocating Islamist movement that ruled Afghanistan and hosted al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden until it was ousted by the U.S.-led invasion in late 2001.

Hamas hints at practicality over ideology

"They [Hamas] respect our multicultural society. They adhere to a multiparty political system. They work with all of us," she said.

In Qalqilya, the Hamas-dominated town council made good its campaign promise to root out corruption, instituting a computerized accounting system and competitive bidding on municipal contracts.

Meanwhile, the Hamas-run council in Beit Ummar, near Hebron, successfully waged a campaign to prevent Israel from turning off electricity to residents who could not pay their utility bills. It established an installment payment plan for residents that, in accordance with Islamic law, does not charge interest.

"All of us are one. We deal with all Palestinians on a daily basis and on the equal basis. We are not like other parties. We help all people," said Bader Abu Ayyaish, a 38-year-old city council member who dyes his beard red with henna to signify his religious devotion.

Kafarna, Beit Hanoun's mayor, and other Hamas officials acknowledge that running a town is different than ruling over all of the Palestinian territories, with its necessity for day-to-day contacts with Israel over issues such as water, electricity, transport and Israeli troop movements.

"Hamas has entered this battle knowing that somebody will be negotiating with Israel. We've formed alliances with Christians and independents to fill this role," said Kafarna, a former professor of Arabic at Gaza City's Islamic University.

But he and other Hamas officials concede that reconciling their views about the role of their Islamic faith in politics with the practical problems of overseeing a government will not be easy.

They also know that many Palestinians do not agree with Hamas' views on the role of women in society, on sexuality and on the proper social conduct.

Yet among these different-minded Palestinians, there were few worries last week that Hamas would try to create a theocracy --- let alone what Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of Israel's right-wing Likud party, has called an Iranian-inspired "Hamastan." Nor are they anxious that Hamas' victorious candidates are mullahs in the making.

"Hamas has absolutely transformed itself into politics," said Eyad Saraj, a human rights activist and director of the Gaza Community Mental Health Center.

Graphic

Photo: EMILIO MORENATTI / Associated Press Supporters of Hamas hold party flags as they arrive to celebrate their victory in the Palestinian parliamentary elections during a rally at the Khan Younis refugee camp, southern Gaza Strip, Friday. Hamas' big win surprised ruling party Fatah.

Photo: ADEL HANA / Associated Press Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh is a relative moderate who was elected last week to a seat in the new Palestinian parliament. Haniyeh also is the most public of all Hamas leaders.

Photo: Mahmoud Zahar

Graphic: A NEW LEADERSHIP The leaders of the military wing of Hamas, responsible for suicide bombings and other attacks against Israelis, stay underground and out of sight. The group's overall leadership is in Syria. But Hamas' local political figures will be prominent in the new Palestinian parliament. The Hamas leaders are:* Khaled Mashaal: Recognized as the leader of Hamas, based in Damascus, Syria. Mashaal makes the decisions about Hamas policy in consultation with West Bank and Gaza leaders. Mashaal maintains an uncompromising line against Israel. He survived an abortive Israeli assassination attempt in Jordan in 1997.* Mahmoud Zahar: The local

Hamas hints at practicality over ideology

political leader of Hamas and a founder of the group, he is based in Gaza and was elected to the new parliament. He was the personal physician for Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual force behind Hamas, who was assassinated by Israel in 2004. Zahar adopts a stern, harsh policy toward Israel, promoting the Hamas ideology that rejects the existence of a Jewish state in an Islamic Middle East.* Ismail Haniyeh: The top candidate on the Hamas electoral list and known as a relative moderate in the group, he was elected to the new parliament. Haniyeh is one of the most public of the Hamas figures, remaining available for comments even when most of the other leaders drop out of sight for fear of Israeli attacks.* Sheik Hassan Yousef: The top Hamas figure in the West Bank, he was released from an Israeli prison in 2004. Yousef is the most moderate of the Hamas leaders, refusing to rule out talks with Israel under strict conditions. He was elected to the new parliament.--- Associated Press

Load-Date: January 29, 2006

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Israeli threat unites Hamas, Fatah

Christian Science Monitor

June 28, 2006, Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 1

Length: 1144 words

Byline: Joshua MitnickCorrespondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: TEL AVIV

Highlight: With Israeli troops on Gaza border, militant Hamas sided with Fatah on an implicit two-state solution.

Body

Under mounting international pressure to free a kidnapped Israeli soldier, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh closed ranks Tuesday by concluding a power-sharing agreement aimed at ending months of violent Hamas-Fatah fighting and laying down principles for talks with Israel.

The pact between Mr. Abbas and Mr. Haniyeh serves to prop up the political rivals at a time when a hostage standoff threatens an Israeli army retaliatory invasion of Gaza.

"Now it seems they're in the same boat because they have a serious threat to their political existence," says Shaul Mishal, a Tel Aviv University political science professor who has authored a book on Hamas. "They need badly to maintain their status within the Palestinian public. [Sunday's kidnapping of an Israeli soldier] shows their weakness, and they have no real control. People do what they want, or they listen to someone else - not the government."

Osama Hamdan, a Hamas official in Lebanon close to the organization's hard-line leadership in Damascus, criticized Abbas Tuesday for helping Israel search for the kidnapped Israeli soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, who is believed to be held in southern Gaza, the Associated Press reported. Instead, the official continued, Palestinians should kidnap more Israelis to use as bargaining chips.

Meanwhile, Israel's military is becoming increasingly convinced that an Israeli settler also missing since Sunday has been kidnapped, the Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported Tuesday.

In Gaza City, one Palestinian was killed Tuesday and several others were injured from a missile fired on a car traveling near Abbas's office, Israel Radio reported. Israel's military denied involvement in the attack.

The Abbas-Haniyeh agreement is based on a document drafted by a coalition of jailed Palestinian militant leaders that calls for Hamas's integration into the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Because the PLO is the signatory to peace accords with Israel, the bargain is seen as a major departure for Hamas, which has opposed peace negotiations and the idea of Israeli and Palestinian states coexisting alongside one another.

The document also calls for a unity government with Fatah, another concession by the Islamic militants who would be admitting they are unable to govern without the help of their bitter adversaries.

Israeli threat unites Hamas, Fatah

A commitment limiting Palestinian attacks to territories conquered by the Jewish state in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war has been seen as yet another Hamas concession, but in tolerating attacks by Palestinian militia groups it marks a compromise on Abbas's vocal criticism of the militarized uprising.

And new language in the document seems to give Hamas leeway on which to oppose a two-state solution in the future, said Reuters.

Haniyeh and Abbas were reported to have been on the verge of concluding the agreement Saturday night just hours before a detachment of Palestinian militants raided Israeli military positions near Gaza by tunneling under the border. Two Israeli soldiers and two Palestinian militants were killed in an attack seen by many as an attempt by Hamas's hard-line leadership to undermine the accord.

Fatah leaders have said that this accord with Hamas isn't far reaching enough to form the foundation for peace talks with Israel, but that it is instead aimed to end weeks of infighting that have claimed the lives of 20 Palestinians and spurred new anarchy in the West Bank and Gaza.

"It is a national program. Palestinians will not negotiate with Israel on this basis," says Jamal Nazzal, a Fatah spokesman. "The advantage of it is that Palestinians will not block the way of each other anymore."

But it remains to be seen whether Hamas and Fatah field commanders will honor the commitment. One commander from the Fatah-affiliated Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade described the agreement as more of a temporary cease-fire postponing an inevitable civil war.

Palestinians from Fatah have complained of a "two-headed" government pulling in opposite directions. While President Abbas has called on the newly elected Hamas politicians to join peace talks with Israel, the Islamic militants have remained steadfast in their opposition to recognize the Jewish state or forswear military attacks on Israel.

The US and the European Union both consider Hamas a terrorist group for its endorsement of suicide bombings against Israel, and have led an international aid boycott of the Palestinian Authority (PA). That has emptied government coffers and compounded economic hardship.

For Hamas's Haniyeh, the agreement with Abbas could potentially bolster his credentials abroad after most governments shunned Hamas. It also props him up amid tension with Hamas hard-liner Khaled Meshal in Damascus.

"People usually unify at the times of crisis," says Ghassan Khatib, a former Labor Minister under Abbas. "I think the prime minister particularly is in need of the president nowadays, especially given that there seems to be difficulties inside of Hamas."

The concessions won by Abbas, on the other hand, gives him ammunition to counter critics who have described him as a lame duck after Hamas's electoral victory, analysts say.

Mr. Khatib continues, "The president has always been interested in such an agreement, because this will make him stronger internally and externally." Fatah officials told Reuters that a signing ceremony was planned for Tuesday evening on the accord.

Many have criticized the agreement for language so vague as to allow radically divergent interpretations. While saying he supported the agreement, Hamas legislator Wael Hussein insisted that the accord doesn't mark a departure from Hamas's traditional opposition to Israel's existence.

"We will never recognize the legitimacy of Israel inside the 1948 borders," he says, referring to the dimensions of the Jewish state accepted by most of the international community. "That doesn't mean we don't recognize the existence of the Israelis. We recognize the existence of Israel but not on our land. We don't give Israel anything in return for withdrawal."

Israeli threat unites Hamas, Fatah

Meanwhile, the militants holding Corporal Shalit issued their first demands Monday. The groups, which included **Hamas**'s military wing and two offshoots of the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC), said Israel should release all jailed Palestinian **women** and children under 18 in return for information about Shalit. Officials estimate there are 500 such prisoners.

"The soldier is in a secure place that the Zionists cannot reach," PRC spokesman Mohammed Abdel Al said. It was the first acknowledgment by militants that Shalit was still alive.

About 3,000 Israeli troops, along with tanks and armored vehicles, have massed along Israel's border with Gaza. Commanders said they were awaiting orders.

* Wire material contributed to this report.

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Load-Date: June 27, 2006

End of Document

Hamas takes legal control

The Toronto Star

February 19, 2006 Sunday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A03

Length: 556 words

Dateline: RAMALLAH, West Bank

Body

Behind the clean-shaven men and fashionably dressed women from the former ruling Fatah Party sat rows of men with traditional Muslim beards and women in headscarves, the vanguard of the new top party, Hamas.

As roll was called, some held portraits of jailed lawmakers.

A quick scan of seats in the first session of the first Hamas-dominated parliament yesterday made it very clear a new Palestinian regime was in charge.

"Now we see a major shift, an unprecedented shift, in Palestinian life," lawmaker Hanan Ashrawi said.

It was clear the session would be unorthodox before it began.

Israel, angry at the victory of a group that calls for its destruction, refused to allow Hamas lawmakers to travel from Gaza to Ramallah for the West Bank swearing-in ceremony. In response, about 30 lawmakers held a concurrent session in Gaza City linked to the Ramallah hall via videoconference.

About a dozen newly elected lawmakers are imprisoned in Israeli jails and one is in a Palestinian prison. Two others could not attend as they are fugitives from Israel.

Lawmakers from Fatah and several smaller parties packed the front rows. Among them, former finance minister Salam Fayyad wore a finely tailored suit and a bright blue tie.

Behind them Hamas forces assembled. Mohammed Abu Teir had his trademark bushy beard dyed red with henna for the occasion. Others sported closer trimmed beards. The party's female legislators appeared in scarves and bulky coats. About 100 veiled women from Hamas Women's Union attended the Gaza satellite session.

Khalida Jarrar, of the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, propped a portrait of Ahmed Saadat on the seat beside hers. PFLP leader Saadat is in a Palestinian jail under foreign supervision in Jericho for ordering an Israeli cabinet minister assassinated.

From his West Bank cell, Saadat said he has held court for Hamas visitors since the Jan. 25 vote to discuss forming a coalition with his three-member faction and with Fatah officials who urged him not to join the government.

Saadat said, if he's not released, the Palestinians should provide him with video conferencing equipment so he can participate in future sessions from his cell.

Hamas takes legal control

Abdel Aziz Duaik, a geography professor from the West Bank, was elected Speaker yesterday. That puts the **Hamas** legislator next in line should Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas die or be incapacitated while in office.

Cairo-born Duaik, 57, considered a relative moderate, would as Speaker assume leadership for 60 days if the head of the Palestinian Authority can no longer fulfill his responsibilities.

Hamas won 74 seats, ousting Abbas' Fatah party, which has dominated Palestinian politics for decades. Abbas wants it to recognize past Israeli-Palestinian agreements and negotiate peace with the Jewish state.

Arrested four times by Israel, Duaik spent two years in prison and was deported to Lebanon in 1992. There, he was a spokesman for hundreds of militants deported along with him.

A fluent English speaker, his doctoral degree is from the U.S. Duaik said parliament's first mission would be to review quickly the legality of "all decisions and decrees" from the transition period. He did not elaborate but the outgoing Fatah-controlled parliament last week approved creation of a constitutional court to give Abbas more power over a **Hamas**-led government.

Graphic

NASSER ISHTAYEH Palestinians hold pictures of jailed relatives outside Mahmoud Abbas' offices as new **Hamas**-led parliament opened yesterday

Load-Date: February 19, 2006

Hamas condemns arrest of government ministers

The Irish Times
June 30, 2006 Friday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 10

Length: 417 words

Body

MIDDLE EAST: Prime Minister Ismail Haniya has accused the US of giving Israel 'the green light', writes Michael Jansen

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas, whose headquarters are in the West Bank city of Ramallah, remained confined to Gaza yesterday following Tuesday's agreement with Hamas on a document for achieving Palestinian statehood while implicitly recognising Israel.

Prime Minister Ismail Haniya of Hamas accused the US of giving "the green light" to Israel's operations in Gaza and the West Bank and urged the UN and the Arab League to take steps to end the Israeli offensive "before the situation gets complicated and the crisis gets worse".

Hamas legislator Mushir al-Masri condemned the arrest of seven of its ministers, 20 of its parliamentarians and a number of officials as "a pre-planned plot to destroy the [Palestinian] Authority, the government and the parliament and to bring the Palestinian people to their knees".

Hamas ministers expected the detentions - Israel admitted the list had been drawn up several weeks ago and approved by its attorney general on Wednesday.

The Palestinian Authority's chief negotiator, Dr Saeb Erekat, said: "We have no government, we have nothing. They have all been taken.

"This is absolutely unacceptable and we demand their release immediately." Dr Erekat is a confidant of President Mahmoud Abbas.

Abu Ubaida, a spokesman for Hamas's armed wing, said the detentions constituted an attempt to blackmail the group to gain information about the Israeli soldier seized on Sunday.

Hamas is asking for the release of 408 women and minor prisoners in exchange for information about him.

A Hamas member in Gaza called the demand for the release of prisoners "natural". He observed: "Women and children have special significance for us", and insisted that Hamas would not back down on its demand.

Dr Mahdi Abdel Hadi, head of a Palestinian think tank in Jerusalem, asserted: "Israel is executing a well-prepared plan to eliminate Hamas. Its military action is a repeat of Ariel Sharon's 1982 invasion of Lebanon and 2002 reoccupation of the West Bank, which were designed to eliminate Yasser Arafat."

Hamas condemns arrest of government ministers

Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert "is another Sharon", Dr Abdel Hadi said. "Israel cannot afford to see **Hamas** emerge as a model in the region. Israel does not want to see **Hamas** become another Hizbullah" - the Lebanese Shia fundamentalist group which, after forcing Israel to pull out of Lebanon, has become a powerful mainstream political party in that country.

Load-Date: June 30, 2006

End of Document

Appeasing Hamas is pure folly

The Gazette (Montreal)
February 25, 2006 Saturday
Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL / OP-ED; Pg. B6

Length: 242 words

Byline: The Gazette

Body

Hamas had its beginnings in the late 1970s as an arm of the Islamic Association, an Israeli-endorsed attempt to encourage the rise of a religious alternative to the PLO. The association was devoted to benevolence (with Israeli funding). It adopted a slow approach to Islamicization through rhetoric and indoctrination. The association graduated from benevolence to terror with a new branch, named **Hamas**, devoted to undermining the peace process with suicide bombings of civilian targets.

S.A. Hyder suggests talking to **Hamas** (Letters, Feb. 21). That would be negotiating with enemies who are intractable in their determination to destroy Israel. In charge of most Palestinian educational and social-aid institutions, **Hamas** spoon-fed ideas of hatred and destruction along with Pablum to children in the nurseries and grade schools.

They have created an avidly anti-Western society. They are adherents of sharia law. In the short time since election, they have eliminated some women's rights. They have released over 50 prisoners from an international prison in Jericho, many of them incarcerated for murder.

A combination of their indoctrination and the swindling ways of the Fatah government meant **Hamas** was easily elected. Hitler also achieved democratic election in the 1930s with the same type of popular appeal.

Let us hope that the UN and the European Union will not again fall for such propaganda and become emasculated appeasers.

Harry Grunstein

Hampstead

Load-Date: February 25, 2006

Hamas changes tactics to fight Palestinian poll

The Times (London)

January 25, 2006, Wednesday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 38

Length: 864 words

Byline: Stephen Farrell in Gaza City

Body

EVEN in the Chairman Arafat Shop in Gaza City, sales of Hamas caps were matching those of Fatah on the eve of today's historic Palestinian election. It was a poor omen for a ruling party that enjoyed decades of near-total power under the late Yassir Arafat.

Hamas, contesting parliamentary elections for the first time, has transformed itself from a deadly Islamist militant group into a potent political force. Fatah has rallied in the past few days, but Hamas has for weeks run a slick and well-organised campaign under the platform "Change and Reform". No one doubts it will slash Fatah's majority today.

The only question is whether voters will give Fatah one last chance or punish it amid universal disgust over corruption, inefficiency and an inability to control its own armed factions.

Whoever wins, the old order will be swept away. Hamas has pledged to put the Palestinian house in order and Fatah has sought to exploit Hamas's image as international pariahs. It is deemed a terrorist organisation by Israel, the US and the European Union and, despite softening its campaign rhetoric, the Hamas charter still calls for the destruction of Israel.

On Monday Condoleezza Rice, the US Secretary of State, cautioned Palestinian voters that the US would not change its policies toward Hamas if it refused to renounce violence. "It is not possible to have, and I am paraphrasing here, one foot in terrorism and the other foot in politics. It simply does not work," she said. But Hamas has turned US and Israeli opposition into a campaign issue, protesting that it is the victim of Western interference.

Mahmoud Zahar, its leader in Gaza, portrays his party as a clean, new Islamist broom. Central to its campaign is its record of fighting Israel: huge pictures of its assassinated founder, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, look down on public rallies. A museum has been set up in his home, featuring the bloodstained wheelchair in which he was killed by Israeli helicopter rockets in March 2004.

Dr Zahar insists that there will be no direct negotiations with Israel but he leaves room for third-party contacts. The thrust of Hamas's position is clear: Palestinians should not be dictated to by Israel or the West. "We have to separate our relationship on all levels with Israel for our national interest," Dr Zahar told The Times. "We have to open the door to the Arab and Muslim world."

He was confident that Europe would deal with Hamas, but saw little chance of dealing with the US, which he accused of "big crimes" against the Arab world. "The F16 which destroyed my house is American. Apache

Hamas changes tactics to fight Palestinian poll

helicopters are American. The international decisions in the Security Council are American. So, in order to satisfy the Americans, we have to close our eyes and put our minds in our pockets? It's nonsense."

Fatah leaders argue that such hostility would damage the Palestinian cause. Nabil Shaath, the Deputy Prime Minister, said that **Hamas** could not be trusted with the most important issue: the peace process. "**Hamas** thought it could get away with muddled double-talk: 'Yes we will negotiate, no we will never negotiate, yes we may negotiate'. That's rubbish. If we are going to have a government who will try to last the next five years by ignoring the presence of Israel, it is a disaster."

Mr Shaath was sure Fatah would win today, but conceded: "Whatever success we make will give us a thin margin of majority...So we have to become very responsible, very united, enforce party discipline and be as transparent as possible."

www.timesonline.co.uk/mideast Palestinian elections: latest news POLL LINE-UP

Voters 1,332,449

Candidates 714

Polling stations West Bank and Gaza 2,721

Seats 132

Party lists 11

Main parties Fatah National list, 44 candidates, including 12 **women**; **Hamas** National list, 59 candidates, 13 of them **women**

Voters in east Jerusalem 48,443 (5,349 will cast postal ballots)

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE:WHAT THE VOTERS THINK

Nael Mossalam, 27, schwarma cook at Palmeirah restaurant in Gaza City, Fatah: "We want to prove to all the world that we are not a terrorist country."

His colleague Munir Ahmed, 38, **Hamas**: "I tried Fatah for 12 years and they did nothing."

Sabrine Izzaq, 21, student, Gaza, **Hamas**: "When **Hamas** take control of the Palestinian Legislative Council there will be equality in issuing decisions that are for the benefit of all."

Ehtimad Izzaq, 21, Gaza, Fatah: "Israel will refuse to talk to **Hamas**. It is seen by the outside world as a terrorist organisation."

Khulood Izzaq, 19, her cousin, **Hamas**: "We tried Fatah for 13 years and they were a fiasco."

Dahani Tawfiq, 21, Gaza, Fatah: "**Hamas** is only interested in the issues of security, the prisoners and resisting occupation. But it doesn't deal with improving the economy."

Majid al-Khatib, 23, a lawyer studying at Ramallah's Bir Zeit University: "It would be preferable if **Hamas** ended the armed struggle. Once they're in the Palestinian legislative council they'll become more liberal."

Saed Kanel, civil servant, Ramallah, **Hamas**: "There are no jobs...because of Fatah's corruption. **Hamas** has principles, honesty and religiously-based vision."

Taysir Barakat, 46, artist and restaurateur, Ramallah, Fatah: "Everyone is desperate for change."

Hamas changes tactics to fight Palestinian poll

Load-Date: January 26, 2006

End of Document

Leader: Defusing the Hamas time bomb

The Scotsman

January 28, 2006, Saturday

1 Edition

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Section: Pg. 25

Length: 1055 words

Body

THE Hamas victory has created a dilemma neatly summed up by Amr Moussa, the head of the Arab League. He points out what most of the Arab world is thinking: the west "can't promote democracy but then reject the results". Not that Hamas ("The Islamic Resistance Movement") does not face problems of its own. A terrorist organisation which for years has rejected a two-state solution to the Palestine question, Hamas finds itself running one of those two states. How it copes with that contradiction will in large measure determine the scope for peace or war in the Holy Land. Either Hamas evolves, in fits and starts, towards a grudging, de facto acceptance of Israel, as did Yasser Arafat's Fatah, or it splits apart under the pressures inherent in running an entity it opposes.

Yet if Hamas has problems with the fickle outcome of democracy, the situation is worse for the United States and Europe. The Bush administration, in particular, has made exporting democracy to the Middle East the bedrock of its foreign policy in the region, thereby hoping to stop Islamic extremists from exploiting popular grievances while encouraging a new middle class to take over from the old oligarchs.

In pursuit of this goal, President George Bush has strong-armed his two closest Arab allies - Egypt and Saudi Arabia - into taking their first tentative steps towards electoral politics, despite pleas from their ruling elites that such a move was naive and more than likely to give an opening to the very same fundamentalist extremism as represented by Hamas. Last year's limited elections to the Egyptian parliament seemed to lend credence to these fears when the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood (of which Hamas is an offshoot) made spectacular gains at the expense of the secular opposition parties.

But the success of the Islamic parties in successive elections in Palestine, Egypt, Iraq and (in the 1990s) Algeria should not surprise anyone. The ruling Arab nationalist parties (be they Nasserite, Baathist or followers of Arafat) have long since become bywords for dictatorship and corruption. The secular opposition parties are tiny, fissiparous and frequently Marxist. By a process of elimination, only the religious parties can command popular support. The problem for the US and Europe, especially in Palestine, is how to respond to this reality.

What the west should not do is to write off Hamas instantly. That appears to be the reaction inside Israel. Even Haaretz, the most liberal Israel daily newspaper, was moved to say: "Palestine under Hamas rule puts an end not only to the road map and the Oslo process, but also to the formula embodied by UN Resolution 242, 'land for peace', and an accompanying end to the conflict. Not only does it perpetuate the conflict, but also it reshapes it - from an Israeli-Palestinian conflict to a Jewish-Arab one, and even a western-Muslim one. Such a conflict, backed by the global jihad movement and Khomeinist Iran, has neither a solution nor an end."

Leader: Defusing the Hamas time bomb

It is not as bad as that - yet. The US and Britain have found they can live with the election of Islamic parties in Iraq (which are hardly pro-Israel) so they should draw on that experience in Palestine. Where the Israelis are correct is that the election of Hamas changes the ground rules - there is now a government in Palestine that can deliver on any promises it makes, and which has a huge popular mandate. The best way - the only way - of exploiting this is if the west is prepared to re-engage in the Middle East peace process in a major way. The time has passed for commentating from the sidelines, otherwise the election of Hamas could be the detonator for conflict on a scale scarcely imaginable.

The west should not begin by denouncing the election results. Certainly, there must be stick as well as carrot, but the new situation is too complex for crude, knee-jerk diplomatic reactions. This does not mean we should have any illusions regarding Hamas, which has pursued a criminal campaign of random terror against Israeli civilians, men, women and especially children, Jew as well as Arab. This means we should seek to defuse Hamas as we would defuse an unexploded bomb, warily but with finesse.

Publicly, Hamas must be told the facts of life: the Palestinian Authority will be held responsible for ensuring there are no terrorist outrages in Israel. Privately, the implications of not responding to this basic fact of life should be made plain: no western money. The Palestinians receive dollars 900 million a year in foreign aid, one third of it from Europe. The European Union should be in unison with the Bush administration on this point and not let Hamas play it off against the US.

ISRAEL will not negotiate with Hamas, but then Hamas will not talk to Israel. "There is no point in negotiations" with Israel, says Farhat Assad, the Hamas election campaign chief on the West Bank. "There have been negotiations for 50 years, and they have not brought us or the Israelis or anyone in the world quiet, security or stability."

The best short-term scenario is that Israel pulls out of the West Bank unilaterally, abandoning settlements deep in the Territories but keeping those contiguous with the old border before the Seven Days' War of 1967. The west should be prepared to encourage this by giving Israel sufficient guarantees of its safety. That would still leave festering issues such as Jerusalem, the right of Arab return and the final shape of the borders, but it would be progress of a sort, perhaps enough to persuade the war-weary on both sides eventually to come back to the negotiating table.

Ultimately, faced with half a loaf, Hamas will either split or return to violent form. But Hamas in government will find itself under criticism from a revitalised Fatah. Already there are those on the secular West Bank suddenly fearful that Hamas will impose Sharia law. Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president (and Fatah leader), has vowed to stay in office to pursue the peace platform on which he was elected after Arafat's death. A civil war between Hamas and Fatah is not out of the question.

Democracy in Palestine has thrown up new challenges. But compared with the political impasse of the last decades, it has thrown up opportunities as well as threats. The west should grasp those opportunities while it still can.

Load-Date: January 28, 2006

Israel attacks Hamas office

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

July 2, 2006 Sunday

FIRST EDITION

Copyright 2006 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 364 words

Byline: By Ravi Nessman THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP

Body

Israeli aircraft fired missiles at the Palestinian prime minister's office early Sunday, just hours after a Palestinian official said the soldier whose abduction sent Israeli troops into the Gaza Strip is alive and in stable condition.

Witnesses said two missiles hit the Gaza City office of Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of **Hamas** early Sunday, leaving one bystander slightly injured and setting the empty building on fire. The Israeli army confirmed it attacked Haniyeh's office.

Inspecting his burning office, Haniyeh called the Israeli attack senseless.

"They have targeted a symbol for the Palestinian people," he said.

Israeli aircraft also hit a school in Gaza City early Sunday, setting a building on fire, witnesses and rescue workers said. No one was hurt. Other targets were **Hamas** facilities in northern Gaza.

Palestinian security officials said two militants were wounded. One later died of his wounds, hospital officials said. He was the second militant killed in the five-day Israeli operation to force the release of Cpl. Gilad Shalit, the 19-year-old soldier abducted by Palestinian militants last Sunday.

Meanwhile, Ziad Abu Aen, a Palestinian deputy minister and **Hamas** official, said Saturday that the kidnapped Israeli was wounded but in stable condition.

Another **Hamas** official, however, cast doubt on the credibility of the statement. Osama Muzami said only the military wing of the Islamic militant group knows the condition of the soldier.

There had been no sign of Shalit since he was abducted during a militant raid on an Israeli army post just outside the Gaza Strip.

Israeli soldiers and Palestinian militants exchanged fire for several hours Saturday afternoon when Israeli tanks and bulldozers crossed into Gaza and began razing farmland east of Khan Younis. No serious injuries were reported on either side.

Israel attacks Hamas office

The **Hamas**-affiliated militants holding Shalit initially had said they would trade information about him for all Palestinian **women** and underage prisoners in Israeli jails. The militants raised their demands Saturday, calling for an end to the Israeli offensive and the release of 1,000 other prisoners in Israel, including non-Palestinian Muslims and Arabs.

Load-Date: July 2, 2006

End of Document

Israel attacks Hamas office

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

July 2, 2006 Sunday

FOURTH EDITION

Copyright 2006 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 363 words

Byline: By Ravi Nessman THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP

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Notes

World

Load-Date: July 7, 2006

End of Document

Why Hamas is gaining in Palestinian polls

Christian Science Monitor

January 25, 2006, Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 1

Length: 1054 words

Byline: Ilene R. Prusher Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: NABLUS, WEST BANK

Highlight: The militant party is in a close race in Wednesday's parliamentary vote.

Body

Speaking easy English and shaking the hand of male and female visitors alike, Adli Yaish is hardly the typical face of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement.

Rather, the new mayor of Nablus embodies a cadre of Hamas "spinoffs." Gone are the full beards and fiery religious rhetoric. Absent are assertions that all Israel is a "Zionist entity" that Muslims must destroy.

Saying they are inspired by - though not in lock step with - Hamas's militant core, politicians like Mr. Yaish have come to the fore in the group's first campaign for national representation. And when Palestinians vote in Wednesday's legislative elections, analysts say, it's Hamas's more moderate tone, as well as disillusionment with the ruling Fatah Party, that will yield the group significant gains.

At the same time, its mix of moderate and hard-line messages may complicate Israeli and US stands against dealing with Hamas, which both countries consider a terrorist organization.

Campaigning was barred Tuesday, while thousands of Palestinian security officers took up positions in the West Bank and Gaza to protect polling stations. Armed groups pledged to maintain calm during the election, but gunmen linked to Fatah killed a party leader, spurring about 1,000 supporters and activists to march in Nablus in protest of the lawlessness.

According to the latest figures from the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, based in Ramallah, 42 percent of Palestinians will vote for Fatah, while 35 percent will vote for the Hamas-backed Change and Reform Party.

But it is unclear how Hamas's popularity will translate into policy. The group, which is responsible for the greatest number of suicide bombings targeting Israeli civilians, only recently became involved in municipal, let alone national, governance.

Some Palestinians say that Hamas is hoping it doesn't get a majority, preparing instead to be an opposition or second-largest power. In recent interviews, leaders have said that they will not change their charter calling for Israel's destruction. But Tuesday, Hamas leader and candidate Mahmoud Zahar said in Gaza that "negotiation is not a taboo," adding at the same time that "we do not consider the Israeli enemy as a partner or a neighbor."

Why Hamas is gaining in Palestinian polls

Hamas takes a pragmatic turn

To some observers, appearance of figures like Yaish suggest that Hamas may be placing itself in a more pragmatic spot on the Palestinian spectrum. Others say that Hamas has widened its umbrella by appealing to people who abide by Muslim values but are not extreme. And amid disarray within the Palestinian Authority (PA), run since 1994 by the secular Fatah faction, Hamas is gleaned much of what might be called a protest vote.

At the Arafat Sweets Shop - no relation to the late Palestinian leader - there is a popular sentiment: Throw the Bums Out, Middle Eastern-style.

"We want change. We want our leaders to be people who fear God," says Abdullah Kassem. "We were Fatah supporters," he says of his friends, "but we are demanding new faces. The PA is full of criminals and there is unbelievable lawlessness."

As the men chat, Amal Khreishe, a candidate for one of the most liberal of the 11 lists running for office, approaches to ask for support.

"If we only have Fatah and Hamas, and if there is conflict because of that, the people will pay the price," she says. She is a member of the list headed by Mustafa Barghouti, a physician with a small following among academics and moderates.

The men are friendly but appear unswayed in their intent to vote for Hamas. A nearby wall is carpeted with posters, almost all of them for Hamas. On the street, there is malaise and a desire for quick solutions. Anger at Israel mixes with feelings that the Palestinian leadership is corrupt and weak. Violence within Fatah, particularly in Gaza, seems to bolster the image of a Hamas that is tightly run.

"Fatah has had 10 years to negotiate, and just look at this," says Suleiman Kawarik, a driver, as he points to long lines at the checkpoint south of the city. "It's like trying to leave the country, just trying to leave your city. The PA can't help anybody - they just give out small services...."

Hamas provides social services

Hamas was founded in the Gaza Strip in late 1987, at the start of the first intifada, as the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. Its secretive military wing, as Hamas describes it, carried out attacks on Israelis. But while its political wing rejected the Oslo Accords, it opened a dialogue with the Palestinian authors of the peace process in Fatah.

Meanwhile, Hamas runs preschools, youth clubs, and health clinics. It provides needy people with assistance, and even holds free weddings. It is that face of Hamas that many Palestinians see first.

"People think of Hamas as only killing people, but no, this is only one side of the picture. We are also doing a lot of social work," says Yaish, who studied at Liverpool University in England and is a father of six. He believes that Hamas will come to be accepted internationally as an interlocutor. "I think the Americans and the Israelis have to deal with anyone the people choose," he says.

The city's deputy mayor, also from the Reform and Change Party, says the world should see their party as one might view Christian Democrats in Europe.

"Religious people here are the elite," says Nihad Masri, an obstetrician. "You can't find an unemployed man among us. I condemn suicide bombings, but are they justified or not? We don't have anything else to defend ourselves with," he says, pointing to Israel's controversial barrier and military incursions.

But some Palestinians say the only way out of conflict is to return to talks with Israel, and support Fatah as the best route. "[O]nly Fatah can negotiate with Israel," says Hussam Bakeer, who runs an appliance store here. "Fatah is internationally accepted at the negotiating table."

Why Hamas is gaining in Palestinian polls

Indeed, while **Hamas** says a temporary truce - even a long-term one - could be on the table, it continues to strike a combative tone. In one campaign ad, rebroadcast by CNN, the group shows footage of militants as it states: "We will not rest as long as one inch of our holy land is in the hands of the Jews. Our flags will fly over the minarets of Jerusalem."

* Wire material was used in this report.

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Load-Date: January 24, 2006

End of Document

Hamas may lessen hostility to Israel

THE AUSTRALIAN

January 25, 2006 Wednesday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 9

Length: 495 words

Byline: Martin Chulov Middle East correspondent,, in Gaza

Body

MATP

ISLAMIC militant group **Hamas** is finalising plans for a power-sharing role in government after today's landmark Palestinian elections and has further hinted it may soften its hostility towards Israel.

On the eve of the poll, **Hamas**, which is dedicated to Israel's destruction, again ruled out directly negotiating with the Jewish state, but said it would consider talks brokered by third parties to achieve specific aims, such as the release of prisoners.

The **Hamas** leader in the restive Gaza Strip, Mahmoud Zahar, said yesterday the group would not seek senior cabinet positions in the Palestinian Authority, thereby avoiding any need to deal directly with Israel.

In an interview with The Australian, Mr Zahar said the future of the Palestinian people would be best served by strong economic engagement with the Arab world and an end to restrictive demands that they deal through Israel for essentials such as fuel, power and water.

"In 2004, we paid Israel \$US186million (\$248million) for electricity," he said. "If we took it from Egypt it would have cost \$20 million. We are not talking about political relationships, we are talking about commercial relationships."

After five years of intifada, in which **Hamas** suicide bombers carried out more than 60 attacks against Israelis, Mr Zahar said he wanted to focus on service delivery issues and weeding out corruption.

"On the day after the election, we are going to meet with (Palestinian President) Mr (Mahmoud) Abbas and we are going to tell him we have to solve the problems in health and domestic security," he said. "We are going to need a rapid development of our administration."

Polls conducted earlier this week show **Hamas** will dominate voting in areas such as Nablus, Hebron and parts of Gaza and will go close to rolling the ruling Fatah party in the overall ballot.

The emergence of **Hamas** as a political entity also brings a radical Islamic bent that sits uncomfortably with the US and Europe. Mr Zahar has confirmed that Islamic Sharia law is a key aspect of its platform, but insisted that **Hamas** would not attempt to replicate the Taliban's restrictive decrees.

Hamas may lessen hostility to Israel

"My wife was a teacher until the Israelis attacked my house with an F-16 and broke her back," he said, distancing **Hamas** from the Taliban policy of banning **women** from working.

"My first daughter is an engineer and my second daughter is a teacher."

Israel is still unsure of how to deal with the emergent electoral legitimacy of its mortal enemy and the unprecedented popularity it appears to have won on the eastern side of its security barrier.

It sees **Hamas**'s non-corrupt and disciplined track record as one upside. For more than 30 years, rampant nepotism and corruption have blighted the performance of the Fatah-ruled Palestinian administration.

Until now, the US and Europe have opted to ignore **Hamas**, but British Prime Minister Tony Blair and European leaders have flagged withdrawing funding to the Palestinians unless **Hamas** renounces terror.

Load-Date: January 24, 2006

Strength of Hamas catches Palestinians off guard

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

January 27, 2006 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. C7

Length: 437 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: RAMALLAH, West Bank

Body

RAMALLAH, West Bank -- Chanting "**Hamas** is shaking the land," young men wearing the green colours of Islam swarmed Thursday into the centre of the provisional Palestinian capital to celebrate their victory as those who had voted for decades for the late Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement looked on in silent disbelief.

"We got clobbered. We are in a daze. Even the **Hamas** people are startled by what has happened," said Abdullah Erekat, a member of one of Fatah's leading families in the West Bank.

"Should we have seen this coming? Why weren't we prepared to head this off? That is something that we will study for a long time."

What happened during voting in Ramallah, which had been regarded as a Fatah stronghold until Wednesday, was typical. **Hamas** had no political presence in the city until recent municipal elections, yet it won the city in a landslide. **Hamas** would have swept all five of the Ramallah seats if the fifth seat had not been reserved by law for a Christian candidate.

"Arafat sleeps. Fatah sleeps. **Hamas** is with God. Israel is in trouble," shopkeeper Walid Norman said in broken English, before launching into a popular song about **Hamas**'s strong attachment to Islam.

"Nobody predicted this," said his neighbour, Yosef Abdullah Tawafsha, "but it is the natural result of a decade of corruption and bad government. It doesn't really have that much to do with Israel."

Issam Issis shook his head as he watched hundreds of **Hamas** supporters stream by his travel agency.

"I am not angry or sad. It is too early for that," said Issis, who described himself as an independent.

"We have to give **Hamas** time to see how they will use their power. Israel must give them a chance, too. The bottom line for everyone inside and outside of Palestine is that this is what the people have chosen. Everyone has to wake up."

Some of the issues that lie ahead are specific to the Palestinian situation. For example, it is unlikely Israel will allow **Hamas** deputies from Gaza to travel to the provisional capital of Ramallah or for **Hamas** deputies in the West Bank

Strength of Hamas catches Palestinians off guard

to go to Gaza. The likely solution is that the legislative council will meet in both places at the same time via video conference, as it sometimes has in the past.

There were already dark jokes in Ramallah on Thursday about the last drinks being hastily consumed and women retreating behind the veil and the walls of their homes.

The joke arose from fears that Hamas, which is the Arabic acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement, would impose its conservative ideas about women and alcohol in the West Bank, as it has done in much of Gaza since winning municipal elections there.

Load-Date: January 27, 2006

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Hamas's Philosophy on Raising Martyrs

New York Sun (Archive)

March 15, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: FOREIGN; Pg. 7

Length: 742 words

Byline: BY STEVEN STALINSKY

Body

A mother of five martyrs, Umm Nidal, says that when a child blows him or herself up, "he is not throwing himself to death or to perdition ... it is called martyrdom." Ms. Nidal has become a darling of the Arab press and a member of Palestinian Authority Legislative Council - during public appearances, she calls on other Muslim mothers to "sacrifice" their children for "jihad." In a December 21 interview aired by Dream TV, Ms. Nidal said the Koran supports her children's quest for martyrdom, and said she would gladly "sacrifice" her five remaining sons.

Ms. Nidal's views are shared by many who voted her and her party, **Hamas**, into the Palestinian government, and should be taken seriously.

Tomorrow on Capitol Hill, the Middle East Media Research Institute will hold a briefing titled, "**Hamas**: Its Ideology and Strategy For the Future," sponsored by the House of Representatives International Relations Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation.

Translated remarks by **Hamas** leaders broadcasted on Arab TV, will be viewed and the terror organization's publications including its covenant will be examined.

Hamas's strategy to advance its culture of violence, which relies heavily on imposing its ideology on future generations through education and child-rearing, will also be examined. The following translations are examples of how **Hamas** leaders express the importance of including **women** and children in jihad:

* "Jihad becomes a personal duty of every Muslim ... This requires the propagation of Islamic consciousness among the masses ... The indoctrination campaign must involve ulama, educators, teachers ... It is [also] necessary to introduce essential changes in the curricula, in order to eliminate the influences of the intellectual invasion which were inflicted upon them by the Orientalists and the missionaries."

- Article 15 of the **Hamas** covenant

* "It is necessary to educate the next Islamic generations in our region in an Islamic way ..." and all Muslims must participate in Jihad.

- Article 16 of the **Hamas** covenant

* "Our education system will not represent Palestine as a coastal strip stretching from Rafah to Beit Hanoun ... Our ministry of culture will teach them how the martyr is turned into prose, literature, and poetry ... Palestine means Palestine in its entirety - from the [Mediterranean] Sea to the [Jordan] River..."

Hamass's Philosophy on Raising Martyrs

- **Hamass** leader Mahmoud Al-Zahar; from comments broadcast January 25 on Al-Manar

* "**Hamass** has tens of martyrs who are willing to carry out attacks ... An operation of such martyrs exceeds that of Arab armies ... The importance of the weapon of such martyrs is no less than the importance of nuclear weapons."

- **Hamass** leader Khaled Mash'al; extracted from his speech to a Palestinian Arab high school students in June 2001

* "I thank Allah ... for His support in the Jihad ... and I ask him to help us to liberate Jerusalem ... Acre, Haifa, Jaffa, Safed, Nazareth, Ashkelon, and all of Palestine ... We remember the martyrs ... Who will forget ... the children that you sacrificed? ... We saw our expectations [realized] ... until [even] **women** urged their sons to commit martyrdom ... and the fathers received the message of the sons' martyrdom in praise and cries of 'Allah Akbar."

- **Hamass** military commander Muhammd Deif; from an audio cassette released August 27

* Palestinian Arab parents who encourage their children to become suicide bombers are "people [who] compete with one another for martyrdom, people who encourage their sons to die ... A mother readies her son, and then receives the news of his martyrdom with cries of joy. A father receives the news of his son's martyrdom with pride and honor. Our **women** push our children [towards martyrdom]..."

- Extracted from a September 16 **Hamass** sermon covered by Al-Jazeera

* "The role of the Muslim woman in the war of liberation is no less important than that of the man, for she is the maker of men. Her role in guiding and educating the next generation is very important..."

- Article 17 of the **Hamass** covenant, on **women**'s role in preparing children for Jihad

The event will also look at the prospects for peace between Israel and the Palestinian Arabs. As Umm Nidal told Dream TV on December 21: "Peace means the liberation of all of Palestine, from the [Jordan] to the [Mediterranean] Sea. When this is accomplished - if they want peace, we will be ready."

Mr. Stalinsky is the executive director of the Middle East Media Research Institute.

Load-Date: March 15, 2006

Guns or politics? Now Hamas must choose

The Independent (London)

January 23, 2006 Monday

First Edition

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The INDEPENDENT

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1171 words

Byline: By Donald Macintyre in Gaza

Body

With 48 hours to go before polling in the first Palestinian parliamentary elections in a decade, **Hamas** is on a roll. The armed faction long committed to destroying Israel is virtually certain to send shock waves through the Middle East by securing a major influence in the very institutions it has opposed for nearly a decade.

The prospect has triggered an urgent appraisal in Western capitals and Israel over handling the political power that the organisation they have long proscribed as "terrorist" is likely to wield in Palestinian politics from the end of this week.

The dilemma is partly over whether **Hamas**'s probable success is a menacing new threat in an already unstable region, or the first stage of a conversion to the ballot box by the faction which was responsible for the largest proportion of Israeli deaths in suicide bombings in the past five years.

Hamas's electoral momentum has been evident way beyond its natural stronghold of Gaza. It was tangible for example, from the moment its members and supporters swept to victory in the West Bank city of Nablus on an anti-corruption ticket in the town council elections on 15 December. Everybody who was anybody in the town turned out to congratulate the new mayor, Adli Yaish, a local car-parts dealer. He is prominent in several of the Islamic charities which go a long way to making up for the lack of an effective Palestinian welfare state and on which **Hamas** has built much of its popular reputation for fair dealing.

True, outside the trade union theatre where his victory reception was held, they were selling DVDs portraying the **Hamas** "martyrs" to the conflict with Israel to the accompaniment of martial music. But inside, as local community leaders from headmasters to a posse of Christian clergy queued up to embrace Mr Yaish, the green campaign buttons and banners had not a vestige of this. Party organisers handed out bakla-va to those arriving, as Yasser Man-sour, the number seven candidate on the faction's national list, expertly worked the room to exploit the victory.

"In the name of God, the results are not strange," Mr Man-sour told visitors. "We can attribute them to two things - corruption [in the Palestinian Authority] and the security chaos that the Palestinian people have been suffering for 10 years."

Guns or politics? Now Hamas must choose

To the untutored, it may seem odd to hear Hamas condemning "security chaos". But nowhere is the deeply unpopular internal violence to which Mr Mansour was referring more evident than here in Gaza. The Fatah-dominated PA has failed to prevent kidnappings, lethal tribal feuds, and political gun battles - mainly within Fatah itself.

Yesterday, in Gaza City's Shifa Hospital, Suleiman Ashabia winced with pain as he explained how he took seven bullets in his legs and hand on Friday evening. Mr Ashabia, 22, the local deputy campaign manager for the independent Third Way party is "90 per cent sure" the masked gunman who shot him at close range with an AK-47 was political. "We are doing a great job in Maghazi. Whoever it was wanted to stop the hard work. After what happened, people in the Third Way will be afraid."

Posing as a party supporter, one of the gang who targeted him had lured him to a bogus meeting in the market of the Maghazi refugee camp and used a mobile phone call to check what he was wearing. He opened fire as Mr Ashabia returned to within 150m of his home and then continued shooting him on the ground after he was felled by the first bullet.

The faction least likely to have attacked him, on the face of it, is Hamas. The polls suggest it has next to nothing to fear from Third Way. But it has also fought this campaign with a professionalism and discipline that has eluded most other parties.

You could see it in the horn-honking, banner-waving, 30-ve-hicle loudspeaker motorcade that drove through the streets of Gaza City yesterday, and in the women's rally which Hamas slickly organised in Nablus last week. That was opened by Hamas's distant equivalent of drum majorettes, with long-skirted, white-scarfed, banner-bearing young women processing into Balur hall to chants of: "The Koran is [Hamas's] constitution and Jihad for the sake of God is its way."

The most prominent local female candidate, Muna Mansour, did not seek to disguise her desire to see sharia embodied in Palestinian law - feared by secular Palestinians. In talks with reporters she even told - approvingly - a chilling story about the Prophet authorising the stoning to death of a self-confessed unmarried mother - only after her child had grown up.

But Mrs Mansour also presented a more pragmatic side, declaring several times: "Hamas is not the Taliban." Distancing herself from Hamas's reputation for fierce social conservatism, she said she was in favour of shelters for battered wives, for an end to "honour killing" and of better education for women. And she suggested that a long-term truce with Israel was possible while believing that an interim phase of two states side by side would not deflect Hamas from its goal of "liberating Palestine from the river to the sea".

This goes to the heart of Israel's and the West's dilemma. Awakening to the new reality - including perhaps the realisation that Israel's effort to disrupt Hamas's campaign by arresting candidates has, if anything, strengthened it

politically - some senior figures, from President MosheKatsav to Shimon Peres, have suggested Israel could talk with Hamas if it abandoned its militancy and ended its commitment to destroy Israel. Difficult as it is, the first condition may be easier to fulfil than the second.

Skilfully Hamas, having largely adhered to the truce it made last year with Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian President, has given little away on its post-election plans. But Mr Abbas has always believed that Hamas's assumption of influence will lead it to abandon its weapons again against Israel and has warned it will not join any coalition with Fatah unless it does so. But Hamas has so far made it clear that it has no intention of recognising the state of Israel, as the PLO eventually did under Yasser Arafat.

Mohammed Abu Teir, Hamas's number two candidate, declined to comment on the issue of talks though he acknowledged that Hamas councils like Qal-qilya's had had "no problem" discussing "technical matters" with Israel. But his message to Israel had been: "You have negotiated with the PLO for 30 years - and what you have given to the PLO?"

Guns or politics? Now Hamas must choose

On Hamas's notable decision not to include its long-held commitment to the destruction of Israel in its election manifesto, Sheikh Abu Teir said guardedly: "We know how to conduct politics - we are passing through a new stage of politics and we are part of it. We raise the appropriate slogans and there is no need to raise an inappropriate slogan [destroying Israel]. We have a programme that deals with internal issues."

Interpreting that enigmatic statement will be only one of many vexed questions exercising the world's capitals if Hamas fulfils the poll predictions on Wednesday.

LEADING ARTICLE, PAGE 30

Graphic

A Hamas supporter waves a green Islamic flag at a rally for the militant group' A Palestinian family watching the Hamas television channel at their home in Gaza City in the run-up to the elections KHALIL HAMRA/AP

Load-Date: January 23, 2006

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Fear amid jubilation as Hamas prepares to govern

The Times (London)

January 27, 2006, Friday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 35

Length: 993 words

Byline: Ian MacKinnon in Ramallah, Stephen Farrell in Gaza City and Richard Beeston

Body

JUBILANT Hamas supporters descended in their thousands on al-Manara Square in Ramallah yesterday, overwhelming the stunned police force as the new order imposed itself on the old. With the flags of the radical Islamist movement they planted a forest of bright green.

"It's a great day," Mahmoud Ibrahim, 40, said as he emerged from midday prayers.

"Now it's up to the other factions and parties to respect the will of the people who elected Hamas."

On every corner men huddled and furtively contemplated the stunning turnaround.

Stalwarts of the once-dominant Fatah movement, who returned from exile a decade ago with the late Yassir Arafat and were the chief beneficiaries of his largesse, consoled each other as if there had been a death in the family.

They joked that police would no longer stop cars to check driving licences but to ensure that motorists had performed wudaa, the ritual washing before Muslim prayer.

There was also bitterness in Fatah ranks. Last night hundreds of its armed supporters, firing their guns in the air, marched in Gaza City. They blamed Mahmoud Abbas, the party's leader and Palestinian President, for the debacle and demanded his resignation.

Many Palestinians feared that the Islamists would stamp their religious code on life by banning alcohol and forcing women to wear the hijab.

The only bar in Gaza City selling alcohol was bombed three weeks ago. At Gaza FM, an independent radio station, one presenter, Jayyab Abu Safia, 22, said that he would leave the country because he feared an escalation of the death threats that he and the station's six other staff have already received from Islamic extremists.

"Since the result we have switched off the songs and we are going to change all the programmes because they have been condemned by Hamas and Islamic Jihad," he said.

The power shift in Palestinian politics was being closely watched beyond the West Bank and Gaza. The Hamas victory has implications for Israel and the West, where governments wondered out loud yesterday whether they could do business with a regime headed by a group banned as a terrorist organisation.

Fear amid jubilation as Hamas prepares to govern

America and the European Union are heavily involved in day-to-day Palestinian affairs, providing the bulk of the \$1 billion (£ 560 million) given annually in aid to support education, health and other Palestinian development projects. Western diplomats are closely engaged daily in promoting the search for Middle East peace, a foreign policy objective for successive Western governments.

But, as President Bush and Tony Blair made clear yesterday, no negotiations will be possible with a Hamas government until the organisation recognises Israel's right to exist and abandons the use of force.

For Israel, the Hamas victory is an even more immediate problem. Because the Palestinians do not live in a recognised state, they rely heavily on Israel for water, electricity, transport and other basic services. Negotiating with ministries run by Hamas could pose legal and ethical problems if the movement still calls for Israel's destruction.

The result could also play into the hands of the Israeli Right in the general election in March. Kadima, the new centrist party founded by Ariel Sharon, may look less attractive, while Binyamin Netanyahu, Likud's leader, will exploit fears prompted by the victory.

"Today Hamastan was formed," he said yesterday.

But others believe that the Hamas victory could yet mark a turning point in trans- forming the group. "Hamas is an extremely pragmatic organisation," Nomi Bar-Yaacov, a Middle East expert, said. "America, Britain and the EU should study very carefully how to deal with them. This result could provide a real opportunity, if it is handled correctly."

Certainly Hamas leaders were making every effort to reassure the world that they were ready for responsible government. Mahmoud al-Zahar, a Hamas leader in Gaza, said that the movement was ready to extend its year-old ceasefire if Israel reciprocated.

"Don't be afraid," Ismail Haniya, the top Hamas figure in the Palestinian territories, said. "Hamas is a Palestinian movement, one which is politically open in the Palestinian arena and to its Arab and Islamic hinterland, and similarly open to the international arena."

HAMAS BY NUMBERS

500 approximate number of people killed in Hamas attacks

350 approximate number of Hamas attacks since 1993

1,000 active members of Hamas military wing

40,000 people who rallied in Gaza City in December 2002 to mark Hamas's 15th anniversary.

\$150 average cost per suicide bombing

1987 date Hamas was formed

WORLD REACTION

'Recognising Israel is not on the agenda' Mushir al-Masri, Hamas spokesman.

'The United States does not support a political party that wants to destroy our ally Israel...It means you're not a partner in peace and we're interested in peace' George W. Bush.

'People have to be clear that you can only do business with those who have renounced terrorism'. Tony Blair.

'On one hand, we will maintain the agenda of resistance. On the other hand we seek to make change and reform in the Palestinian arena'. Sami Abu Zuhri, Hamas spokesman.

Fear amid jubilation as Hamas prepares to govern

'You cannot have one foot in politics and another in terror. Our position on Hamas has therefore not changed'. Condoleezza Rice, US Secretary of State.

'Today Hamastan has been formed: a proxy of Iran in the image of the Taleban' Binyamin Netanyahu, former Israeli Prime Minister.

'Our lives will never be the same. Today we woke up and the sky was a different colour. We have entered a new era'. Saeb Erekat, chief Palestinian negotiator.

'The Palestinians gave their vote to the party that gave of its blood'. Ayoub Muhanna, 29-year-old Lebanese Iranian.

'Hamas did not win because people loved Hamas, but because people were taking revenge against the past years of Fatah rule'. Adel al-Helo, a Gaza shopkeeper.

'The results are waking us to realise that the Palestinian people don't really want peace'. Yitzhak Maoz, Israeli whose child was killed by Hamas suicide bombing.

Load-Date: January 27, 2006

Hamas signs deal on Israel

The Times (London)

June 28, 2006, Wednesday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 29

Length: 674 words

Byline: Stephen Farrell in Gaza and Ian MacKinnon

Body

* HOPES RISE FOR NEW COALITION

* ATTACK THREAT TO FREE SOLDIER

AS ISRAELI tanks massed on Gaza's borders last night, Hamas executed a dramatic shift in policy to reach an agreement that implicitly recognises Israel.

The militant Palestinian group's surprise move could see the Hamas-led Government - anathema to Israel and the West - replaced within weeks by a national unity coalition.

Details of the agreement remained unclear, but Palestinians hoped that the prospect of the secular Fatah party and other factions joining the Government might end international sanctions, and make it possible for the moderate President, Mahmoud Abbas, to restart negotiations with Israel.

But those hopes depend on the immediate military crisis being resolved. Ehud Olmert, the Israeli Prime Minister, promised a "comprehensive and protracted" military operation unless Gilad Shalit, the 19-year-old tank soldier captured on Sunday, was freed.

Israel closed Gaza's border crossings, and refused to let Mr Abbas return to the West Bank. While convoys of Israeli tanks took up position just north of Gaza and armoured bulldozers throwing up sand berms along the border, Palestinians hastily built defences against attack.

In northern Gaza, from where Palestinian militants have regularly fired rockets into Israeli towns, fighters put up barricades in Jabalya refugee camp, while Islamic Jihad fighters further south posed with rocket-propelled grenades, mortars, AK47s, bomb belts made of ball bearings and explosives packed into disinfectant bottles. The men conceded that they had nothing to match Israel's F16 fighters and Merkava tanks. But, one said: "We have exploding bodies."

Condoleezza Rice, the US Secretary of State, pleaded for restraint. Egypt moved 2,500 troops to Gaza's southern border to prevent a mass exodus of Palestinians, and urged Hamas to release Corporal Shalit.

The Popular Resistance Committees, a militant group with close ties to Hamas, said the soldier was being held "in a safe place that the Zionists cannot reach". The PCC was one of the three groups who seized Corporal Shalit in a daring tunnel raid on Kerem Shalom military base, and are now demanding the release of Palestinian women and child prisoners.

Hamas signs deal on Israel

As Hamas's military wing took joint responsibility for the Kerem Shalom attack, its political wing was ending its power struggle with Mr Abbas by apparently accepting a national unity plan that the President had threatened to put to a referendum next month.

Hamas has long called for the destruction of Israel, but the plan calls for a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza territories captured by Israel in 1967 -implicitly recognising Israel's existence in the rest of historic Palestine.

"It means there will be a new Government in the next few weeks," Walid Awad, a spokesman for Mr Abbas, said. But he added that Mr Abbas would insist on any new Government accepting the three international demands that have been made of Hamas: recognising Israel, renouncing violence and abiding by previous agreements. "This is the basic point on which the President and Fatah have concentrated -that its programme has to be acceptable to the international community."

The exact shape and timing of any future Government is still unclear: Fatah officials say it will be mainly technocrats while one Hamas MP said his group expected to remain an important part.

Mushir al-Masri, a rising star in Hamas, made clear that while his group acknowledged the reality of Israel's existence it did not recognise the Jewish state's legitimacy.

Israel meanwhile dismissed the agreement as an irrelevance as long as an Israeli soldier remained captive. Mark Regev, an Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman, said: "It's a tragedy that the responsible Palestinian leadership was not giving its full attention to the release of our soldier. We really are at the edge of a cliff. If he is not released we will be forced to take action to bring about his release. If Mahmoud Abbas orchestrated his release, that would give impetus to the political dialogue."

Load-Date: June 30, 2006

The revolutionary matriarch of Hamas

Christian Science Monitor

March 14, 2006, Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 6

Length: 1024 words

Byline: Ilene R. Prusher Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Highlight: Mariam Farhat, a newly elected Palestinian legislator, advocates an Islamist vision.

Body

Although a political newcomer, Mariam Farhat has credentials Palestinian voters couldn't deny: The mother of three militant sons who died in the conflict, she is seen as the mother of all martyrs - and heard as the matronly voice of **Hamas**.

Now, with **Hamas** set to take over the Palestinian Authority (PA) following its election landslide in January, Mrs. Farhat won a seat here in Gaza City and has emerged as one of the leading **women** in the Islamic Resistance Movement - as **Hamas** is formally known - and could become a force for change that is bound to be welcoming to some and worrying to others.

As a member of the Palestinian legislative council - and someone who could be tapped as a cabinet minister - Farhat says she would rewrite Palestinian school curriculum to remove "infidel" influences. Farhat, in an interview at her home, also says that she will call on Palestinian **women**, the overwhelming majority of whom are Muslim, to wear hijab, or covering, as instructed by Islam. She also says that armed resistance is the only way for Palestinians to face off with Israel.

"We know nothing about our own country. We teach the students infidel materials, so why not make changes so we can teach them according to Islamic principles?" asks Farhat, the widow of a police officer and mother of 10, who wears a tightly pinned white head scarf.

"In our schools, religion is totally ignored, so we will encourage studying the Koran and teach Islamic culture in our classrooms," she says while one of her sons kneels in prayer in the adjacent room.

Striving for an idealized Islamic state and looking askance at Western influences, Farhat expresses sentiments characteristic of **Hamas**'s roots in the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1929. But not everyone who voted for **Hamas** - nor its lawmakers-to-be - shares her view.

Even amid the top echelons of **Hamas**, many observers see a developing divergence between those who want to encourage moderate Muslim values and those who would make Islamic Revolution-style changes.

Soon after elections, Farhat sent out shockwaves when she said she would call on **women** to wear head scarves, hinting at the possibility that covering up could become law, as it is in Iran and Saudi Arabia. But Farhat has since

The revolutionary matriarch of Hamas

been trying to clarify her position: She would "call" rather than "legislate," because in effect wearing hijab is already an Islamic "rule," she says.

"There are two aspects of being committed to Islam," she explains. "One is increasing your faith inside your heart, and the other is the external aspect of being committed: to invite people to do their prayers in the mosque, to love each other, to teach good manners. We will call on women to put on hijab because it is one of the most important external aspects of the Islamic faith.

"There are already so many people in the young generation who will not respect a woman if she doesn't put it on," says Farhat.

It is difficult to tell how actively Farhat and others pushing for a more Islamist agenda will work in the face of the stalemate with Israel and the potential for worsening economic conditions. Some Palestinian analysts warn that Hamas must be mindful of the core issues that got them elected.

"People voted for Hamas not for their beliefs and not for their attitudes toward peace and Israel. They voted for Hamas because they are tired of Fatah and their corruption," says Nabil Kukali, the head of the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion, in Beit Sahour in the West Bank.

"No one said they voted in order to have an Islamic curriculum or to change Palestinian society to make it based on Islamic principles," he says. "Most Palestinians are waiting to see what Hamas will do on our economic issues, what they will do over recognition with Israel, so I don't know how they could raise these other kinds of issues at this time."

With external issues at a standstill, it is the internal issues that Farhat is most willing to talk about. Hamas's prime minister-elect, Ismail Haniya, and PA President Mahmoud Abbas have been meeting in Gaza in recent days in an effort to come to some agreement on a political agenda, but Hamas's viewpoint has remained steadfast. It wants a continuation of the armed struggle and the possibility of reaching a tactical truce - but never peace - with Israel.

Privately, some Palestinians view Farhat, also known as Umm Nidal (mother of Nidal, her oldest son) warily. Giving one son "to the cause" is considered exemplary; some might say giving three borders on extreme. Two, active in the military wing of Hamas, were killed by the Israelis. Nidal burst into a Jewish settlement in 2003 and shot dead five people before being shot himself.

Farhat kissed him goodbye and endorsed his martyrdom-to-be in a Hamas video he made before the suicidal mission. She was later quoted saying that she wished she had "100 sons to sacrifice."

Farhat stands by her statements, but says that she cries for her children every day. She decided to go into politics for their sake.

"I cannot deny that as a mother I am suffering from the loss of my children, but there are priorities," she explains, as one of her surviving sons sets out tea and baklava on a lace-covered table. "We are occupied, so who should fight the occupiers? If there were other ways of regaining our rights, we would follow them. What we learned from the Zionist enemy is that the only way is resistance."

To be sure, not everybody here is equally convinced.

Eyad Serraj, the head of the Gaza Community Mental Health Center and an expert in children's health here, says that an abundance of religion is already taught in schools; he learned the Koran from the age of 6. But with a Palestinian pedigree such as hers, he says, Farhat is somewhat unassailable: For a Palestinian to criticize her would be like attacking Mom and apple pie.

"She is a symbol because her sons were martyred and martyrs are so glorified here," says Dr. Serraj.

"People are so willing to die for this, and then these people become untouchable and much like a taboo. I think we can bring her down to earth by having her in parliament," he says.

The revolutionary matriarch of Hamas

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Load-Date: March 13, 2006

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Hamas, Fatah set aside differences

Ottawa Citizen

February 4, 2006 Saturday

EARLY Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A3

Length: 318 words

Byline: Stephen Farrell, The Times, London

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza - Tens of thousands of Palestinians across the West Bank and the Gaza Strip protested against cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, putting aside their religious, political and factional differences.

The demonstrations were largely peaceful, but varied in mood. **Hamas** preachers urged calm, but others issued dire threats against the offending countries. "We will not accept less than severing the heads of those responsible," a preacher told 9,000 worshippers at al-Omari Mosque in Gaza.

Thousands of men, **women** and children converged on the parliament building in Gaza, waving green **Hamas** and yellow Fatah banners from the roof as the crowd burned Danish flags and chanted the credo, "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet."

Yet the mood was relatively quiet after days of threats against European Union buildings and churches.

Mushir al-Masri, a **Hamas** spokesman, told the crowd that no matter how great their anger, Muslims should not disgrace their religion while the eyes of the world were upon it.

"What freedom of speech are they talking about when they insult the Prophet Muhammad?" he said. "But we will deal with these people with tolerance. The prophet's message was merciful, and we will not return abuse with an abuse."

Khaled Mashaal, the Damascus-based head of **Hamas**, sounded a less conciliatory tone toward Europe itself. "Hurry up and apologize to our (Muslim) nation, because you will regret not doing so," he said. "Today, you are fighting with the soldiers of God."

The restraint was in contrast to the threats 24 hours before by masked Islamic Jihad and Fatah gunmen that they would attack churches and EU headquarters.

On Thursday, Mahmoud Zahar, **Hamas**'s senior leader in Gaza, visited a priest to assure him that its 3,000 Christians would be safe. Father Manuel Musallam said yesterday he was satisfied, disclosing that al-Aqsa Brigade leaders had offered assurances.

Hamas, Fatah set aside differences

Load-Date: February 4, 2006

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Guns or politics? Now Hamas must choose

Belfast Telegraph

January 23, 2006

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Length: 1166 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre in Gaza

Body

With 48 hours to go before polling in the first Palestinian parliamentary elections in a decade, **Hamas** is on a roll. The armed faction long committed to destroying Israel is virtually certain to send shock waves through the Middle East by securing a major influence in the very institutions it has opposed for nearly a decade.

The prospect has triggered an urgent appraisal in Western capitals and Israel over handling the political power that the organisation they have long proscribed as "terrorist" is likely to wield in Palestinian politics from the end of this week.

The dilemma is partly over whether **Hamas**'s probable success is a menacing new threat in an already unstable region, or the first stage of a conversion to the ballot box by the Islamic faction which has been responsible for the largest proportion of Israeli deaths in suicide bombings in the past five years.

Hamas's electoral momentum has been evident way beyond its natural stronghold of Gaza. It was tangible for example, from the moment its members and supporters swept to victory in the West Bank city of Nablus on an anti - corruption ticket in the town council elections on 15 December. Everybody who was anybody in the town turned out to congratulate the new mayor, Adli Yaish, a local car-parts dealer. He is prominent in several of the Islamic charities which go a long way to making up for the lack of an effective Palestinian welfare state and on which **Hamas** has built much of its popular reputation for fair dealing.

True, outside the trade union theatre where his victory reception was held, they were selling DVDs portraying the **Hamas** "martyrs" to the conflict with Israel to the accompaniment of martial music. But inside, as local community leaders from headmasters to a posse of Christian clergy queued up to embrace Mr Yaish, the green campaign buttons and banners had not a vestige of this. Party organisers handed out baklava to those arriving, as Yasser Mansour, the number seven candidate on the faction's national list, expertly worked the room to exploit the victory.

"In the name of God, the results are not strange," Mr Mansour told visitors. "We can attribute them to two things - corruption [in the Palestinian Authority] and the security chaos that the Palestinian people have been suffering for 10 years."

To the untutored, it may seem odd to hear **Hamas** condemning "security chaos". But nowhere is the deeply unpopular internal violence to which Mr Mansour was referring more evident than here in Gaza. The Fatah-dominated PA has failed to prevent kidnappings, lethal tribal feuds, and political gun battles - mainly within Fatah itself.

Yesterday, in Gaza City's Shifa Hospital, Suleiman Ashabia winced with pain as he explained how he took seven bullets in his legs and hand on Friday evening. Mr Ashabia, 22, the local deputy campaign manager for the

Guns or politics? Now Hamas must choose

independent Third Way party is "90 per cent sure" the masked gunman who shot him at close range with an AK-47 was political. "We are doing a great job in Maghazi. Whoever it was wanted to stop the hard work. After what happened, people in the Third Way will be afraid."

Posing as a party supporter, one of the gang who targeted him had lured him to a bogus meeting in the market of the Maghazi refugee camp and used a mobile phone call to check what he was wearing. He opened fire as Mr Ashabia returned to his home and then continued shooting him on the ground after he was felled by the first bullet.

The faction least likely to have attacked him, on the face of it, is Hamas. The polls suggest it has next to nothing to fear from Third Way. But it has also fought this campaign with a professionalism and discipline that has eluded most other parties.

You could see it in the horn-honking, banner-waving, 30-vehicle loudspeaker motorcade that drove through the streets of Gaza City yesterday, and in the women's rally which Hamas slickly organised in Nablus last week. That was opened by Hamas's distant equivalent of drum majorettes, with long-skirted, white-scarfed, banner-bearing young women processing into Balur hall to chants of: "The Koran is [Hamas's] constitution and Jihad for the sake of God is its way."

The most prominent local female candidate, Muna Mansour, did not seek to disguise her desire to see sharia embodied in Palestinian law - something feared by secular Palestinians. In talks with reporters she even told - approvingly - a chilling story about the Prophet Mohamed authorising the stoning to death of a self-confessed unmarried mother, though only after the woman's child had grown up.

But Mrs Mansour also presented a more pragmatic side, declaring several times: "Hamas is not the Taliban." Distancing herself from Hamas's reputation for fierce social conservatism, she insisted she was in favour of shelters for battered wives, for an end to "honour killing" and of better education for women. And she suggested that a long-term truce with Israel was possible while believing that an interim phase of two states side by side would not deflect Hamas from its goal of "liberating Palestine from the river to the sea".

This goes to the heart of Israel's and the West's dilemma. Awakening to the new reality - including perhaps the realisation that Israel's effort to disrupt Hamas's campaign by arresting candidates has, if anything, strengthened it politically - some senior figures, from President Moshe Katsav to Shimon Peres, have hinted that Israel could talk to Hamas if it abandoned its militancy and ended its commitment to destroy Israel. Difficult as it is, the first condition may be easier to fulfil than the second.

Skilfully Hamas, having largely adhered to the truce it made last year with Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian President, has given little away on post-election plans. But Mr Abbas has always believed that Hamas's assumption of influence will lead it to abandon weapons against Israel and has warned it will not join any coalition with Fatah unless it does so. But Hamas has so far made it clear it has no intention of recognising Israel, as the PLO eventually did under Yasser Arafat.

Mohammed Abu Teir, Hamas's number two candidate, declined to comment on talks though he acknowledged that Hamas councils like Qalqilya's had had "no problem" discussing "technical matters" with Israel. But his message to Israel had been: "You have negotiated with the PLO for 30 years - and what you have given to the PLO?"

On Hamas's notable decision not to include its long-held commitment to the destruction of Israel in its election manifesto, Sheikh Abu Teir said guardedly: "We know how to conduct politics - we are passing through a new stage of politics and we are part of it. We raise the appropriate slogans and there is no need to raise an inappropriate slogan [destroying Israel]. We have a programme that deals with internal issues."

Interpreting that enigmatic statement will be only one of many questions exercising the world's capitals if Hamas fulfils poll predictions on Wednesday.

Guns or politics? Now Hamas must choose

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Hamas special brew -it's very dry

The Times (London)

February 1, 2006, Wednesday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 38

Length: 662 words

Byline: Ian MacKinnon

Body

The future looks bleak for brewers in Palestinian territories as hardline Islamists shut down bars, Ian MacKinnon reports

At the only brewery in the Palestinian territories they believe they can see the future. And under the government of the Islamic movement, Hamas, it is alcohol-free and green.

The Taybeh brewery in the West Bank is alarmed that the administration could impose its strict vision of Islam, banning alcohol and ending the unique decade-old business.

But the bosses had already seen the winds change and four months ago began developing a non-alcoholic beer to be ready for the summer. For good measure they gave the bottle a green label, the colour of Hamas.

"We're definitely considering this non-alcoholic version of our beer. It'll have a green label, since the sky's green now," said Nadim Khoury, general director of Taybeh, in a wry reference to the ubiquitous Hamas flags. "Everybody's concerned about what might happen." Fear for what the future might hold is not confined to those whose businesses conflict with the tenets of Islam.

Taybeh's 1,300 souls are Christians, who make up 2 per cent of the Palestinian population, and many fear that cultural change may be forced upon them. "For the Christian minority the overwhelming feeling is apprehension," said Sam Fakir, 65, a retired car mechanic. "Christian women tend not to cover up so much, but we fear Hamas may force them to wear hijab (headscarves). Or even impose Sharia (Islamic law)."

But Hamas is not the Taleban. Its leaders are fiercely proud that their daughters are highly educated and emphasise that there are no plans to impose sweeping social change or the religious ideology of Hamas -despite its long-term commitment to Islamic law -through parliament.

The West Bank spokesman for Hamas, Mahmoud Ramahi, who has just been elected, said that the movement's policy was not to force any social change on an unwilling population.

"We'll not interfere with Palestinians' liberty or freedoms," Dr Ramahi said.

"Girls won't be separated from boys in schools. Women won't be forced to wear hijab. We won't close restaurants that serve alcohol."

Hamis special brew -it's very dry

But the anaesthetist at Ramallah hospital conceded that Hamis's preferred goal was that the Palestinian state should be Islamic, if people could be convinced. "With regard to Sharia, we can't impose that because we don't have a state," he said.

"First let us liberate our land, then we'll hold a referendum to see if the people want an Islamic or secular state."

Despite the caution, many believe that change will be gradual and cultural - through Hamis's influential allies in mosques -not legislative.

Alcohol retailers cite the Gaza experience. Since the intifada began and Hamis grew in power, every outlet has shut.

A Gaza wholesaler, George Christo Tarazi, was burnt from his home when he resisted entreaties to close his doors. The United Nations' Beach Club, the last bar in Gaza, was bombed on New Year's Day. The story was repeated in the north of the West Bank.

Rami Jubran's family has run its beer, wine and spirit wholesalers from Ramallah for 40 years. Another branch makes the most famous arak in the West Bank. But Mr Jubran is certain that the days are numbered for the businesses. "We were concerned even before Hamis's election," said Mr Jubran, 28. "Look what happened in Gaza. Now they're elected, they'll be able to close it down by law. We see no future in alcohol. It began with the intifada. People became more religious as their economic situation grew worse."

Taybeh brewery, established in 1995 with the blessing of the late Yassir Arafat, is hedging its bets with its nonalcoholic beer, though Mr Khoury is sceptical that it can sustain the business.

"We wouldn't like to see all our beer non-alcoholic," Mr Khoury said. "But it would be another alternative if things got difficult. I think it's a real risk Hamis will impose its Islamic vision."

Daniel Finkelstein, page 19 www.timesonline.co.uk/ mideast Latest news on Hamis

Load-Date: February 1, 2006

Hamas taunts Israel as campaign closes

South China Morning Post
January 25, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 12

Length: 264 words

Byline: Ben Lynfield in Ramallah

Body

A confident Hamas closed its campaign for today's Palestinian elections by taunting Israel with chants in Hebrew during a rally that drew several thousand in the heart of Ramallah.

Women marched behind their men for modesty's sake. A teenager held up a Palestinian flag topped off with a wooden crescent.

A loudspeaker played bursts of automatic gunfire during the march on Monday, and mocked unsuccessful efforts by the ruling Fatah movement and president Mahmoud Abbas to reopen negotiations with Israel.

"Negotiate with the enemy? Yes, but negotiate using weapons. He understands only one thing," the voice from the loudspeaker said, followed by bursts of gunfire.

The harsh rhetoric was at odds with recent efforts by Hamas to soften its stance towards Israel. "What is our constitution?" the crowd was asked. "The Koran," it roared back. "What is our path?" "Jihad," the crowd responded.

A chant in Hebrew followed, addressed to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who lies in a coma in a Jerusalem hospital but is still regarded as the personification of the enemy.

The chant was an expression of pride in the fact that Israel has been unable to crush Hamas, which has continued firing rockets at Israeli targets in the aftermath of last September's Gaza withdrawal.

"Listen, listen, oh Sharon. There is no security," young marchers shouted.

One speaker, a diminutive, elderly woman in Palestinian traditional dress, proclaimed: "Hamas is the mother of the message. Hamas is the mother of the people." Once again the recorded machine-gun bursts came on to sign off her message.

Load-Date: January 25, 2006

HAMAS DECLARES IT WILL RESUME ATTACKING ISRAEL

The New York Times

June 10, 2006 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 6; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1156 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER

Dateline: JERUSALEM, June 9

Body

Hamas, the ruling Palestinian political movement, declared Friday that it would renew its attacks on Israel after the deaths of at least seven Palestinian civilians on a crowded Gaza beach from an apparently errant Israeli artillery shell.

Hamas had officially been abiding by an intermittent 16-month-old cease-fire, but Friday's killing of five members of a family and two **women** at a beach picnic led to the shift announced in a leaflet and confirmed by the Palestinian government spokesman.

Israeli military officials expressed regret for any "strike on innocents," saying that it was accidental and that the shells were aimed at a target 400 yards away, which had been the launching ground for dozens of crude rockets fired by Palestinians at southern Israeli towns. The officials ordered a halt to shelling in the area and offered help to some 30 other Palestinians who had been wounded.

The Palestinian reaction was one of fury, with the deaths putting the ruling **Hamas** faction in an awkward political position, apparently unable either to protect ordinary Palestinians or pay them, given the halt in financing to the **Hamas**-run Palestinian Authority by Israel and the West.

"The Israeli massacres represent a direct opening battle, and that means the earthquake in the Zionist cities will resume," the **Hamas** statement said. "We will respond at the appropriate place and time."

Ghazi Hamad, the spokesman of the **Hamas** government, confirmed the statement. "They killed innocent civilians who were enjoying their time on the beach and have nothing to do with military affairs," he said in a telephone interview. "So I believe that we the Palestinians, including **Hamas**, have the right to respond and defend ourselves."

The timing and extent of the attacks remained unclear, but the reaction is likely to be an attack on Israeli civilians, presumably through suicide bombings. Asked if the declaration meant a renewal of open warfare with Israel, Mr. Hamad said, "What kind of war can we declare against Israel and its army?"

[On Saturday morning, **Hamas** said it had fired rockets at Israel from the Gaza Strip, Reuters reported. There were no immediate reports in Israel that any of the rockets had landed in Israeli territory.]

HAMAS DECLARES IT WILL RESUME ATTACKING ISRAEL

On Friday, Israel fired missiles at two cars belonging to Palestinians who it said had fired rockets at Israel, killing another three Palestinians, two brothers and a cousin who were members of the Popular Resistance Committees, and wounding another three, who were members of Islamic Jihad, in the second car.

Ali Ghaliya; his wife, Raisa; and three children, ages 1, 3 and 10; were having a picnic on the northern Gazan beach. They were all killed in the shelling. Israel has killed 14 Palestinians, half of them militants, in Gaza in the last 24 hours.

At least five Qassam rockets were fired into Israel by Palestinians on Friday, but no Israelis were hurt. Some 30 Qassams were fired this week, the Israeli Army said. Some were said to be in response to the Israeli Air Force bombing of a Palestinian training camp around midnight on Thursday that killed a senior Palestinian commander and Hamas Interior Ministry official, Jamal Abu Samhadana, and three others.

The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, condemned Israel for what he called "a bloody massacre." The Israeli commander for the south, Gen. Aviv Kochavi, said in a telephone interview that his troops had fired four shells toward an area 400 yards inland from the beach "often used to shoot Qassam rockets toward Ashkelon," in the early morning, and another six shells in the late afternoon. Three of the six fell north of the target, he said, and "the accident was south of the target, so we're trying to discover whether one of our shells fell wrong or whether a dud shell," fired previously, exploded.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians attended the funerals of Mr. Samhadana and his colleagues on Friday in Rafah. They called for revenge against Israel in the continuing violence, which is taking place against the backdrop of a political confrontation between the militant Hamas, which runs the Palestinian Authority, and Mr. Abbas of Fatah, who is expected on Saturday to announce a July 31 referendum on a political program and two-state solution with Israel that Hamas opposes. Hamas made another appeal on Friday to Mr. Abbas to cancel the referendum, as a senior figure of Al Qaeda called on Palestinians to vote against Mr. Abbas in any such referendum.

The Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniya of Hamas, asked Mr. Abbas to back down for the sake of Palestinian unity and continue dialogue instead on the basis of a document produced by prisoners calling for a national-unity government.

The Qaeda leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's deputy, urged Palestinians to reject a platform that implicitly recognized Israel alongside a Palestinian state within pre-1967 borders. "I call on them to refuse any Palestinian referendum because Palestine belongs to the Muslim world," Mr. Zawahiri said in the videotape broadcast Friday on Al Jazeera.

Mr. Zawahiri also criticized the 2002 Arab proposal that offered Israel peace if it pulled back to pre-1967 borders, which Israel has rejected. He called it the "Arab capitulation initiative." And he lambasted Arab governments for not defying the United States to support Hamas and the Palestinians in the face of an economic siege, imposed on Hamas because it would not recognize Israel, reject violence and accept previous agreements. "They did not have the courage to even meet the Palestinians' needs for one month," said Mr. Zawahiri, who insisted that "the orders" came from the United States "to their agents to starve the Palestinians and to isolate them."

Mr. Haniya told Mr. Abbas in a letter: "The idea of the referendum now on the table carries many dangers. I'm afraid it will cause a historic rift that will hurt the Palestinian cause for decades to come." He repeated Hamas's assertion that the president had no authority to call a referendum. He said the killing of Mr. Samhadana, 43, who ran the Popular Resistance Committees and had been appointed security chief by Hamas, had created a dangerous atmosphere that required Palestinian unity. But Mr. Abbas seemed determined to set a date for the vote, though his aides said that discussions with Hamas would continue, and that could mean that no vote would take place.

Mr. Abbas is eager to reassert the primacy of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which he leads, and to commit Hamas to a two-state solution, which implicitly recognizes Israel, in the hope that the West will resume aid to the Palestinians.

HAMAS DECLARES IT WILL RESUME ATTACKING ISRAEL

In his video, Mr. Zawahiri, an Egyptian, praised Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, as "a hero of Islam," but made no reference to his killing Wednesday by American forces, indicating that the tape was made before his death.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: A girl wept yesterday on a Gaza beach after an apparently errant Israeli shell killed seven people, five of them members of the same family. (Photo by TV image from Ramatan News Agency, via Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images)(pg. A1)

Ayman al-Zawahiri, a leader of Al Qaeda, spoke on a videotape shown by Al Jazeera, urging Palestinians to reject any compromise with Israel. (Photo by Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images)(pg. A5)

Load-Date: June 10, 2006

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Hamas Presses Fatah in Palestinian Vote, Surveys Say

The New York Times

January 26, 2006 Thursday

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Length: 1848 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER and GREG MYRE; Steven Erlanger reported from Ramallah for this article, and Greg Myre from Jerusalem.

Dateline: RAMALLAH, West Bank, Jan. 25

Body

Hamas, the militant Islamic party sworn to the destruction of Israel, won a large share of votes in the first Palestinian legislative elections in a decade, depriving the more secular Fatah party of its longstanding monopoly on power, surveys of voters leaving the polls indicated Wednesday.

While those surveys showed Fatah with a narrow lead, the vote marked the first entry of **Hamas** into representative Palestinian politics, a fundamental change, and its strong showing raised questions about the near-term future of any peace talks with Israel.

The acting prime minister of Israel, Ehud Olmert, said his country could not accept a situation in which **Hamas** would be part of the Palestinian Authority if the group remained armed with unchanged goals.

Detailed results for the parliament's 132 seats are not expected until Thursday. Numerous Fatah candidates are competing against one another, which could allow **Hamas** candidates to win in some constituencies with a minority of the votes.

But judging from the polls, Fatah, though battered, should be able to form a working majority in coalition with other independent or secular parties like that of Salam Fayyad, the former finance minister who is considered a likely choice for prime minister. But Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, who will choose a prime minister, is thought to favor the inclusion of at least a few **Hamas** ministers to draw the party into the duties and responsibilities of government.

As voter surveys indicated that Fatah may have fended off the **Hamas** challenge, celebratory gunfire echoed through Ramallah's streets. The election itself went off remarkably smoothly, with little trouble at any of the more than 1,000 polling stations or in East Jerusalem, where Israel allowed Palestinians to cast "absentee ballots" in post offices. About 900 foreign observers, including former President Jimmy Carter and the former Swedish prime minister, Carl Bildt, monitored the voting. In a preliminary assessment, an official from a United States delegation called the voting "generally smooth, with sporadic violence and a robust turnout."

Hamas Presses Fatah in Palestinian Vote, Surveys Say

An exit poll from the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, headed by Khalil Shikaki, showed Fatah winning 42 percent of the national vote and Hamas 35 percent, with a margin of sampling error of 2 percentage points.

Another such survey from Birzeit University indicated that Fatah would get 46 percent of the vote to Hamas's 39 percent. That would mean Fatah would be short of a majority of the legislature's 132 seats. The leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine could get several seats, Mr. Fayyad's list would get a couple, as would another independent one and the leftist Badil list. The director, Nader Said, cautioned that the poll should be treated as indicative, not final.

Palestinian voters, candidates and analysts said they expected Hamas to take some cabinet positions in service or welfare ministries, thus joining the government, but in jobs that would not necessarily require contact with Israel. But Hamas could stay out of the government and remain a parliamentary opposition, telling its voters that its job is to keep Fatah honest and to protect those who fight against Israeli occupation.

Ahmed Mubarak, a Hamas candidate in Ramallah and an Islamic jurist, said that "I personally see no problem with being in the government if we were confident it will be for the sake of the people."

The Palestinian Authority is committed, under the internationally backed peace plan known as the road map, to dismantling armed militias and "terrorist capabilities and infrastructure."

Inside the government or out, then, Hamas is considered likely to keep the Palestinian president, Mr. Abbas -- known as Abu Mazen -- and the new government from pursuing serious negotiations with Israel on any basis that Israel is likely to accept.

In a meeting with Sen. Joseph R. Biden, Democrat of Delaware, Israel's acting prime minister, Mr. Olmert, said: "I will not negotiate with a government that does not meet its most basic obligations -- to fight terrorism. We are prepared to assist the Palestinians and Abu Mazen very much but they must meet their commitments."

Israel, the United States and Europe all label Hamas a terrorist organization, and while American and European officials say they will not meet or deal with any Hamas officials, they will continue to have close relations with Mr. Abbas and a new Palestinian prime minister, much as they do in Lebanon, where Hezbollah, a radical Islamic party, has cabinet representation.

Mr. Abbas pressed for these elections against considerable opposition from inside Fatah, convinced that the only way to tame Hamas and turn it from an armed militia to a political party was through representative democracy. A normally stiff and shy man, Mr. Abbas looked positively happy on Wednesday morning as he voted with his wife and then posed for the television cameras.

"We are so happy with this election festival," he said. Palestinians were festive, too, coming out in large numbers to vote in an election they understood to be a vital moment for their own history. Turnout was estimated by officials at nearly 78 percent of the 1.3 million eligible voters.

Mr. Abbas also had words of calm for Israel. "The Israelis should have no reason to be fearful but rather pleased as we are building a democracy which can serve as a base for peace between us," he said. "I am always ready for negotiations with the Israelis although they must want them on their side."

Israel is engaged in its own election campaign and with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon still comatose after a massive stroke, it is not likely any time soon to talk to any government containing Hamas representatives. The Hamas showing and what should now be done will be a major issue in the Israeli campaign, which ends March 28.

Although Mr. Abbas has promised Washington that he will move to disarm Hamas after these elections, there is considerable skepticism that he will be able to do so.

Hamas Presses Fatah in Palestinian Vote, Surveys Say

Voting himself on Wednesday, the head of Hamas's candidate list, Ismail Haniya, said: "The Americans and the Europeans say to Hamas: either you have weapons or you enter the legislative council. We say weapons and the legislative council. There is no contradiction between the two."

The comments point up the awkwardness of any Fatah-Hamas coalition. Fatah, a secular, nationalist movement, wants to restart negotiations with Israel based on the road map, the dormant peace plan that was introduced in 2003, and Mr. Abbas has often suggested parallel secret talks with Israel on a final agreement.

Hamas has waged a suicide bombing campaign and always rejected negotiations with Israel. During the campaign, some Hamas leaders toned down their rhetoric, and the group has largely abided by a truce announced early last year, and is expected to continue to do so, focusing on an internal agenda and keeping its promise to voters of "change and reform." Still, Hamas leaders say the group will not lay down its weapons.

The polling stations here in Ramallah were vivid with the yellow flags of Fatah and the green of Hamas and the colorful posters of individual candidates and others of the 11 party lists running, as candidates and party workers handed out election material and lobbied voters up until the entrance of the stations.

Voters were anxious but talkative, pleased with the process of democracy but worried about the results.

Mai Alami, a mother of three girls and one boy, said the election was vital and would bring some needed "fresh faces" to a stagnant politics in the wake of the death of Yasir Arafat more than a year ago. "But we're afraid of the Islamic party," she said, "not because we are against them, but because of their prejudice and their policies."

Fatah was being punished by voters for the misrule and corruption of the last 12 years, Ms. Alami said outside the busy polling station at the elegant stone Friends Boys School.

Her husband, Ali Khashen, a constitutional lawyer, said the election also gave legitimacy to independent candidates like Mr. Fayyad and Mustafa Barghouti. "But now with Hamas we may have more obstacles for the peace process just as Israel was becoming more receptive," he said. "We all formed our agenda around Fatah, and now we need a new strategy."

In East Jerusalem, Fida Abdellatif, an architect, said: "This election is different because there is a full spectrum of parties, which wasn't the case before. We hope this will produce a strong leadership that everyone can support."

Mr. Abbas hopes so, too. He met on Wednesday with Senator Biden, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and suggested that he was considering ways to press Hamas to disarm, the senator said. "He said they'd have to choose in the end, that they can't be part of a government and have a militia," Senator Biden said. Mr. Abbas also asked the United States not to react too quickly to the Hamas vote and to continue to help him improve, reform and equip the Palestinian security services.

But the election also marked a fundamental change in Palestinian politics and a political earthquake rare in Arab countries.

"Fatah has decided to share power, that's the point," said Nader Said of Birzeit University here. "It's not easy for them, but in no Arab country I can think of has any ruling party wittingly shared power in a democratic process."

Mr. Said says that the transition will be difficult, and Fatah's own divisions will resurface. "But things will never be the same," he said. "Hamas has accepted to be a part of the political game, and it will never be able to be as militant or hard-line as it used to be, no matter its rhetoric."

Fatah, though its campaign finally came to life in the last 10 days, suffered from "tremendous disappointment in Fatah and the Palestinian Authority and Abu Mazen," said the pollster Khalil Shikaki. "There was anger about corruption, chaos, lack of law and order and a lot of disillusionment." Despite Hamas's participation and support, he said, the election "was not really about the peace process -- in fact three-quarters of Palestinians support the peace process and negotiations" and are more moderate on final-status issues like Jerusalem and refugees than ever before.

Hamis Presses Fatah in Palestinian Vote, Surveys Say

"Fatah will get more votes than Hamis today," Mr. Shikaki said. "But this is the last opportunity Fatah will have to get its act together." And if Mr. Abbas does not choose a candidate for prime minister that can get the support of Fatah's younger generation, Mr. Shikaki said, "you could see Fatah split."

Mr. Shikaki said he believed that Hamis wanted to join the cabinet in some role, and that Mr. Abbas also wanted it to do so, but would not predicate participation on disarmament.

"Abu Mazen wants to disarm Hamis, but through consensus, not confrontation," he said. "Hamis won't agree to disarm as a precondition, but could agree to hand over weapons voluntarily."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: At one polling place in Gaza City, Hamis, No. 6 on the board, vied yesterday for a lead as an electoral worker tallied a vote for the Fatah party. (Photo by Emilio Morenatti/Associated Press)(pg. A1)

Palestinian women and men waited in separate lines to vote in legislative elections yesterday at a polling station in Gaza City. Hamis, the militant group sworn to Israel's destruction, won a large number of votes. (Photo by Patrick Baz/Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images)

Members of Fatah watched vote counting in a Ramallah refugee camp. (Photo by Rina Castelnovo for The New York Times)(pg. A12)

Load-Date: January 26, 2006

End of Document

HAMAS AND ABBAS CLASH OVER PATH FOR PALESTINIANS

The New York Times

February 19, 2006 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section 1; Column 6; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 2043 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER and GREG MYRE; Steven Erlanger reported from Ramallah for this article, and Greg Myre from Gaza City.

Dateline: RAMALLAH, West Bank, Feb. 18

Body

A new Palestinian parliament dominated by the militant group **Hamas** was installed here Saturday, and immediately President Mahmoud Abbas and **Hamas** lawmakers set out on a collision course over the need to honor existing agreements with Israel and conduct negotiations with it to achieve Palestinian statehood.

In a speech to new lawmakers at his headquarters in Ramallah, Mr. Abbas congratulated **Hamas** on its victory but warned the legislature that it could not disavow agreements and commitments by the Palestinian leadership dating back to the late 1980's. Those include United Nations resolutions and the 1993 Oslo accords, ratified by the umbrella Palestine Liberation Organization, that commit the Palestinians to a peace solution based on an independent state side by side with Israel.

"We have accepted and respected the right of every individual, group or political faction to voice its complaints about the Oslo accords, but we have not and will not accept any questioning of the accords' legitimacy," Mr. Abbas said. "Indeed, from the hour the accords were endorsed, they became a part of reality to which we remain committed."

As he spoke, screens in the room carried the images of **Hamas** legislators taking part in the ceremony through a videoconference link in Gaza; they were barred from traveling to the West Bank because of Israeli restrictions.

"To reach a peaceful and just solution, we must resume negotiations according to the international and Arab initiatives," Mr. Abbas said. "The presidency and the government," he added, with emphasis, "will continue to respect our commitment to the negotiations as a strategic, pragmatic political choice."

But in Gaza City, **Hamas** leaders promptly made their opposition clear.

"There were many points of disagreement," said Ismail Haniya, a senior **Hamas** leader who is expected to become the group's candidate for prime minister. Mr. Abbas "was elected according to his program, and we were elected according to a different program," he said.

HAMAS AND ABBAS CLASH OVER PATH FOR PALESTINIANS

Mushir al-Masri, a **Hamas** spokesman and legislator, said negotiations with Israel "are not on our agenda." Like many **Hamas** leaders, Mr. Haniya and Mr. Masri consider the Oslo accords a dead letter and often cite Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel as having said the same thing.

Still, on Saturday, Mr. Haniya, like Mr. Abbas, promised to deal with their differences "through dialogue and understanding, to preserve the national unity of the Palestinian people and promote their higher interests."

In warning the legislators not to reinvent the wheel of Israeli-Palestinian relations, Mr. Abbas seemed intent on showing a strong hand: in effect, reminding the group that even though it had won 74 of 132 parliamentary seats, he remains in the top Palestinian post and still has a range of powers, including his role as commander in chief of Palestinian security forces.

That message was underscored later Saturday by a statement from his spokesman, Saeb Erekat, who said that if **Hamas** did not cooperate, Mr. Abbas would consider replacing the group's chosen prime minister or, in the event of complete stalemate, even calling new elections.

Even the site for Mr. Abbas's speech -- his headquarters, the Muqata, and not in the legislature's building in Ramallah -- was a clear effort to assert symbolic control, with almost all of the legislators coming to him in person or by a videoconference transmission for the swearing-in. Fourteen new legislators were elected from inside Israeli jails and were not allowed to attend.

Fatah members entered the hall in Ramallah in suits and ties, with **women** in dress suits, their hair uncovered. They greeted each other warmly, with handshakes and kisses, and many members went to speak to Muhammad Dahlan, a Gazan who is considered a crucial figure in a future, younger Fatah.

The **Hamas** delegation in Ramallah, those elected in the West Bank, came in together and sat in a block at the back of the room; the **women** wore head scarves and sat together.

When Mr. Abbas finished his speech, many Fatah members stood and clapped. Many **Hamas** members kept their seats, and few applauded. After the speech, before they voted to elect a new parliamentary speaker, Aziz Dweik, a **Hamas** member and a professor of geography, many **Hamas** members used a corner of the hall to pray.

Mr. Dweik asked Muslim countries to step up their assistance to the Palestinians, and he said that in the next legislative session, on Feb. 27, there would be a review of laws, including a new constitutional court appointed by the president, that were passed quickly on the last day of the old legislature.

Senior Fatah legislators said Mr. Abbas had laid down clear lines to **Hamas**. Mr. Erekat, who was re-elected to the legislature, said Mr. Abbas had given "a firm, clear, specific speech" that set out his program, "telling **Hamas** what you may do in my program," which calls for a two-state solution, negotiations with Israel and the renunciation of violence in favor of "peaceful forms of resistance to the Israeli occupation."

Rawhi Fattouh, the departing Fatah speaker of the parliament, said the battle lines were clear. "This is the most critical point now in our relations," Mr. Fattouh said in an interview. "The crisis has already started on the political level."

The vision of the P.L.O. and Mr. Abbas and Fatah was now on the table, he said. "What is needed is for **Hamas** to move in the direction of this vision. If **Hamas** contradicts it, we will have two contradictory paths."

Nasser Abdaljawad, a new **Hamas** legislator from Salfit, said **Hamas** would concentrate on domestic reform and the fight against corruption and lawlessness. "We'll leave the political level for now to the P.L.O.," he said, but another **Hamas** legislator, Ahmad Mubarak, said, "We will go into the P.L.O. to work and to rebuild it."

Mr. Abdaljawad warned the United States and Israel against trying to undermine the new **Hamas** government by cutting financial assistance. "They should deal with the new reality," he said. "It's not for them to obstruct the democratic choice of the Palestinian people."

HAMAS AND ABBAS CLASH OVER PATH FOR PALESTINIANS

Hamas has said that the years of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority were futile, and it insists that only armed resistance, including suicide bombings, drove Israel out of the Gaza Strip. The Islamic faction, which is listed by Israel, the United States and the European Union as a terrorist organization, has generally abided by a truce for the past year but says it will not lay down its weapons.

Israel and the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations have said that a new Palestinian government must recognize Israel's right to exist in perpetuity, forswear violence and respect previous Palestinian-Israeli agreements or face international isolation and the loss of much of its financial aid.

After the ceremony in the West Bank, Mouna Mansour, a new **Hamas** legislator from Nablus, said that she was happy but that she also felt "the responsibility to the nation and the people that put their trust in us." She said that the next few months would "an interesting challenge" and that she hoped other Palestinian factions would work with **Hamas**. But then she added, "The winner is the one who can hold on to the end." When asked whether **Hamas** means to win, she smiled and said, "Inshallah, God willing."

Hanan Ashrawi, who won re-election as an independent, said that Mr. Abbas's speech was an effort "to tell **Hamas** what is expected" and that much would depend on the response. "It wasn't a warning so much as a guide for them to succeed," she said. "If they are serious they will take it to heart." She noted that Mr. Abbas did not call for an explicit recognition of Israel's right to exist. "They don't have to become Christians," she said.

Indeed, Mr. Abbas had harsh criticism for Israel, which he accused of trying to ignore a Palestinian partner ready to negotiate peace. "The continuation of occupation and settlement expansion, recent measures targeting the Jordan Valley to isolate it from the remainder of Palestinian lands in the West Bank, the checkpoints, arbitrary killings, the separation wall and arrests will only lead to hatred, despair and continued conflict," he said.

He also appealed to Israel, saying, "We are sure there is no military solution to this conflict," and adding, "There is a Palestinian partner ready to sit with Israel at the negotiating table."

Mr. Abbas was elected in January 2005, and despite his persistent calls to resume negotiations, there has been no progress. Israel has said that the Palestinian Authority must live up to its commitment to end terrorism and dismantle armed factions as specified in the dormant peace plan, known as the road map. Instead, Israel says, the Palestinians have elected one of those factions, **Hamas**, turning the Palestinian Authority, according to Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, into "a terrorist authority."

The Israeli cabinet will meet as usual on Sunday and will debate a list of sanctions drawn up by the security services and the Defense Ministry, although the Foreign Ministry is reportedly arguing that sanctions should be phased in and, except for cutting off money transfers, should wait until **Hamas** forms a government, as the United States and the European Union favor.

But Israel is in the midst of an election campaign. If it takes its measures now, the cabinet will not have to approve the payment of February's customs duties and taxes that Israel collects for the Palestinian Authority, about \$50 million a month.

The recommendations are aimed at an effective severing of the **Hamas**-dominated Gaza Strip from Israel and the West Bank and include:

Separation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with the banning of workers from Gaza entering Israel and the movement of Palestinians between the West Bank and Gaza except in emergencies.

Restriction of the Karni crossing between Gaza and Israel to basic goods, fuel, water and relief aid.

Cancellation of permission to build a Gaza seaport.

Cancellation of V.I.P. permits for Palestinian legislators, who have been able to use them to pass easily from the West Bank to Gaza.

HAMAS AND ABBAS CLASH OVER PATH FOR PALESTINIANS

Israel will not cut off water, fuel or electricity supplies to the Palestinian Authority, but it will continue to deduct the costs from the tax receipts held in escrow. Nor is Israel expected to immediately turn the Erez and Karni crossings from Gaza into international borders, but it is expected to study how it might be done.

Israel is ordering a review of private groups that work with the Palestinians, not including United Nations or government agencies, to see if their work can be said to benefit a **Hamas**-run Palestinian Authority. Israel also is looking into its ability to cut off transfers of funds from abroad, in particular from the Arab world, that **Hamas** may want to use to make up for the loss of tax and customs revenues.

Ramallah. (Photo by Khalil Hamra/Associated Press)(pg. 14); Ismail Haniya (pg. 1)

Chart/Photos: "**Hamas** Leaders to Watch"

Several leaders who may influence or have roles in the new government.

Khaled Meshal

The top **Hamas** leader, and considered a hard-liner. He is in exile, based in Damascus, Syria, and will not have any position in the new government, though he will still exert much influence.

Ismail Haniya

The apparent choice for prime minister, and considered less radical than others. He was at the top of the list of **Hamas** parliamentary candidates, and has held held a number of top

administrative positions at the Islamic University in Gaza City.

Dr. Mahmoud Zahar

A prominent **Hamas** leader in Gaza, and considered a hard-liner, Dr. Zahar is a surgeon and an English speaker who often deals with the foreign media. Israel bombed his home in 2003, killing one of his sons and wounding Dr. Zahar and his wife.

Aziz Dweik

A geography professor from the West Bank town of Hebron, was elected speaker of parliament. Viewed as a pragmatist, he was among some 400 **Hamas** members that Israel deported to Lebanon in 1992.

Mushir al-Masri

The **Hamas** spokesman, he is just 28 and was the youngest group member elected to parliament. Considered a rapidly rising figure in **Hamas**.

(pg. 14)

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

HAMAS AND ABBAS CLASH OVER PATH FOR PALESTINIANS

Photos: Palestinian lawmakers in Gaza City for the opening of the parliament yesterday. They were linked by video transmissions to others in

Load-Date: February 19, 2006

End of Document

Hamas says Israel wants to topple it

The International Herald Tribune

July 1, 2006 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 776 words

Byline: Greg Myre

Dateline: GAZA

Body

The Palestinian prime minister asserted Friday that Israel's military operations in the Gaza Strip were part of a larger attempt to oust the Hamas government, and he demanded that Israel pull back if it wanted the release of its abducted soldier.

In his first public remarks since the latest crisis began Sunday, Prime Minister Ismail Haniya told worshipers who spilled into the streets outside a Gaza City mosque that his government was in contact with Egypt and other countries in search of a formula that would lead to the return of the Israeli soldier.

But, he added, "this Israeli military escalation complicates matters and makes it more difficult." Haniya was jostled by the large crowd of cheering supporters as he entered and left Al Mahata Mosque for midday prayers Friday, the Muslim Sabbath.

In violence Friday, Israel carried out more than 20 airstrikes in Gaza overnight and during the day, with the Interior Ministry hit before dawn in Gaza City and set ablaze. The building sustained extensive damage, but no one was reported hurt.

Most of the other attacks targeted empty buildings, as well as roads and areas used by Palestinians to fire rockets. Two Palestinian militants were killed, one in southern Gaza and one in a shootout in the West Bank, according to the Israeli Army and Palestinian security officials.

Despite the heightened tensions of recent days, the deaths Friday marked the first Palestinian fatalities in fighting since the abduction of Corporal Gilad Shalit six days earlier. Israel says it will not negotiate for the release of its soldier and has moved troops into southern Gaza, while another large contingent is just outside the northeast boundary of the territory.

Haniya did not specify any conditions for the freeing of Shalit, a 19-year-old tank gunner. He was seized by Palestinian gunmen who tunneled out of Gaza, attacked an Israeli military post, then slipped back into the coastal territory.

The military wing of Hamas was one of three groups that claimed collective responsibility. Some Hamas leaders have said that they want the release of the hundreds of Palestinian women and youths held by Israel in exchange for Shalit.

Hamas says Israel wants to topple it

On Thursday, Israel arrested more than 60 Hamas members in the West Bank, including 8 who serve in the Palestinian cabinet and more than 20 who are in the legislature.

On Friday, Israel revoked the Jerusalem residency of four Hamas lawmakers. As a result, the men will have to find new homes, most likely in the West Bank.

Israel captured East Jerusalem in the 1967 Israeli-Arab war and considers all of the city as its capital, a position not recognized internationally. The Palestinians seek a future capital in East Jerusalem.

"Before the capture of the soldier, Israeli military officers already had plans on their desks to undermine the government and humiliate the Palestinian people," Haniya said. "Now they are acting on these plans. They want us to kneel and raise our hands."

Israeli officials have sent somewhat mixed signals about the ultimate aim of their Gaza operation. Defense Minister Amir Peretz said this past week that if the soldier was released, then Israel would be prepared to pull back.

But Israeli officials also say that Hamas has resumed its involvement in violence against Israel, and a senior Israel security official was quoted in the Israeli press as saying that Israel should try to remove Hamas from power.

Israeli political analysts said they believed that the Israeli government wanted to use the current military operation to win the soldier's release and also to suppress the persistent Palestinian rocket fire coming out of Gaza.

But they said it was not yet clear whether Israel was prepared for a concerted effort to undermine or oust the Hamas government.

"Israel is setting down a marker that Hamas will be held responsible for what happens in the Palestinian territories," said Gerald Steinberg, a political science professor at Bar-Ilan University. "But if the level of violence declines, then I think Israel will back off."

Mark Heller, of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, said he believed that many in the Israeli government would be hesitant to oust Hamas, for at least two reasons.

The alternative could be even greater chaos in the Palestinian areas, he said. In addition, Heller said, he thought that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's government had little interest in negotiating with the Palestinians, despite international pressure to do so.

"The presence of a Hamas government makes it easier to resist this pressure to negotiate," Heller said. "All in all, I don't see a strong push against Hamas right now."

Load-Date: July 2, 2006

Hamas, Fatah reach deal on Israel

The Australian (Australia)

June 28, 2006 Wednesday

All-round First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 671 words

Byline: Martin Chulov, Middle East correspondent

Body

MATP

ALL Palestinian factions except Islamic Jihad reached an agreement last night on a statehood initiative that implicitly recognises Israel's right to exist.

Sources in Fatah and Hamas said agreement had been reached at an emergency meeting on the initiative, only hours after Israel rejected Palestinian demands to swap prisoners for a captured soldier.

The initiative, drawn up by Palestinian faction leaders jailed in the Jewish state, implicitly recognises Israel's right to exist by calling for a Palestinian state on land conquered during the 1967 Six Day War.

"We agreed on all the points of the prisoners initiative," Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said.

Fatah parliamentary bloc chief Azzam al-Ahmed said the agreement would be handed today to the Palestinian Authority President, Fatah's Mahmoud Abbas, and Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, of Hamas.

Mr Ahmed said Hamas's rival, Islamic Jihad, had not been party to the agreement. Hamas's refusal to recognise Israel, renounce violence and abide by past agreements has seen its government boycotted and its finances go into free fall after the European Union, once its largest donor, and US suspended direct aid.

Israel warned early yesterday of an imminent, full-scale invasion of Gaza if 19-year-old tank corporal Gilad Shalit were not released.

As tanks, troops and naval ships enforced a blockade of the restive strip, a second Israeli was kidnapped -- this time a West Bank settler. His fate remained unknown last night.

Last night, the US and EU were urging a diplomatic resolution to the Gaza crisis, which threatens to cripple the current round of Palestinian factional talks aimed at soothing escalating militancy.

Egyptian diplomats are also heavily involved in negotiations.

Mr Haniyeh received a call on Monday night from the Pope, who urged a quick resolution.

Hamas, Fatah reach deal on Israel

Mr Abbas and Mr Haniyeh were locked in discussions yesterday with Gaza-based militant leaders of the Popular Resistance Committees and **Hamas**'s military wing, the Izzedin al-Qassam Brigades, to win the release of Corporal Shalit, who was seized near a tank on the Israeli side of the border at daybreak on Sunday. The attack killed two soldiers.

He is the first Israeli soldier to have been seized by Palestinian militants in 12 years and is regarded by Palestinian militants as a valuable bargaining chip in the steadily building conflict.

Corporal Shalit's captors have offered his freedom in return for the release of all **female** and juvenile prisoners held in Israeli jails -- about 410 people.

Hamas, the Popular Resistance Committees and the Army of Islam, the three groups who claimed responsibility for Sunday's abduction, made the offer in a joint statement.

"The Israeli occupation will receive no information about the soldier unless it promises to immediately release all **female** prisoners," the statement said.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert quickly ruled out the demand and insisted on an unconditional release.

Mr Olmert warned: "The violence and difficult antagonism which took place obligates us to respond. I am saying now that we will retaliate, and we will respond to every terrorist, to every terror organisation, in every location.

"They know we can reach them even when they think they are protected.

"We are operating under pressure, and therefore we weighed our next moves carefully. But very soon we will launch an inclusive, severe and difficult operation.

"We won't wait forever. We won't turn ourselves into an object of extortion for **Hamas**."

Mr Olmert is directly blaming the **Hamas** leadership of Mr Haniyeh and Damascus-based political chief Khalid Meshaal, who Palestinian mediators last night said was opposing moves to free Corporal Shalit.

Reports in the Arabic press said Mr Abbas had warned Mr Haniyeh that Israel would harm him if the soldier were not safely released

Israeli officials could shed no light last night on claims by the Popular Resistance Committees in the West Bank that it had abducted an Israeli settler.

The group said it would release more information soon.

Load-Date: June 27, 2006

Vote boost for Hamas

EVENING CHRONICLE (Newcastle, UK)

January 26, 2006, Thursday

Edition 1

Copyright 2006 Newcastle Chronicle & Journal Ltd

Section: NEWS,

Length: 277 words

Byline: By The Evening Chronicle

Body

Palestinians woke up to a new political reality today after they voted **Hamas** into a strong position in a new parliament.

Hamas' success has forced the ruling Fatah to consider bringing the Islamic militants into the government, jeopardising future Middle East peace moves. Yesterday's election was the Palestinians' first truly competitive vote, with **Hamas** contesting a parliamentary vote for the first time and winning considerable influence.

Pinochet plea

The elder daughter of former Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet has requested asylum in the US. Lucia Pinochet was taken into custody by customs officials at Dulles International Airport, Washington, because of outstanding arrest warrants in Chile, officials said.

Pair murdered

Detectives believe a couple in their seventies, Terence and Vera Martin, found murdered at their terrace home in Faversham, Kent, were the victims of a bungled robbery.

Freeing five

The US military today said it would release five Iraqi **female** detainees, a move demanded by the kidnappers of an American reporter to spare her life. The **women** will be freed today and tomorrow as part of a group of about 420 Iraqis.

ETA blamed

Two small devices exploded early today outside a court and a post office in towns in the Basque region in northern Spain. No group claimed responsibility, but the Basque regional government blamed the armed group ETA, which regularly targets political party offices and businesses as part of its campaign for an independent Basque state.

Move backed

China today said it supported a Russian proposal to allow Iran to enrich its uranium in Russia as "it could be helpful to break the current stalemate".

Vote boost for Hamas

Load-Date: January 26, 2006

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Hamas election victory

The Irish Times

January 31, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 17

Length: 349 words

Body

Madam, - The people of Palestine have democratically chosen **Hamas**, a party whose policy includes the destruction of Israel as an end, and violence as a legitimate means. The Western reaction is to insist that **Hamas** abandon policies it placed before the electorate and was mandated to pursue.

A wiser and more democratic response might evolve by addressing some questions, including: Why did the Palestinian electorate vote as they did? Have policies or political failures in my country contributed to that vote? Can the political will of the Palestinian people be changed? How can my country contribute towards that end? - Yours, etc,

MICHAEL WILLIAMS,

Grosvenor Square,

Dublin 6.

Madam, - Who are the Israelis to say that they will not deal with terrorists, as the present Israeli regime is the lineal descendant in politics of the Zionist terrorism which forced into being the Israeli state in the first place? Terrorism is the military expression of fanatical nationalism - in the case of Israel and Palestine, religiously fuelled fundamentalism. If such terrorism had been resisted in Palestine in the late 1940s, we would not now be in this awful mess. It is time, and beyond time, that democrats everywhere started taking the long view where terrorism is concerned. When will people learn this lesson - that the present situation is the kind of cul-de-sac into which religiously fuelled nationalism brings people?

Meanwhile, it was heart-rending to hear Hanan Ashrawi on BBC Radio 4 last Friday evening trying to draw attention to where the victory of **Hamas** leaves the **women** of Palestine and all peacefully inclined folk there, whose voices will now be drowned out by the blood-curdling screams of the fanatics.

Who will speak now for those thus marginalised, yet again, by the violence? Who will remember them in another 60 years, in the shadow of the statues raised to successful settlers on one side of a wall surmounted by barbed wire, and to the suicide bombers on the other side of it? This is what the victory of the "strong" actually means. - Yours, etc,

PETER THOMPSON,

Hamas election victory

Arklow,
Co Wicklow.

Load-Date: January 31, 2006

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CIDA reviewing aid pledged to Palestinians: Hamas victory fallout

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

February 1, 2006 Wednesday

National Edition

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Section: CANADA; Pg. A8

Length: 731 words

Byline: Stewart Bell, National Post

Dateline: TORONTO

Body

TORONTO - Canada's foreign development agency said yesterday it was reviewing its aid programs in the West Bank and Gaza after Hamas won an upset victory in Palestinian elections.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) said its \$25-million in annual assistance to Palestinians, and last year's pledge of an additional \$37-million, were being re-examined.

Some of Canada's contributions go directly to the Palestinian Authority, which will soon be controlled by the hardline Hamas, considered by Ottawa to be a terrorist group because of its campaign of suicide bombings.

"In light of the Palestinian election result, Canadian assistance programs in the West Bank and Gaza are currently being reviewed," CIDA spokeswoman Eleonora Karabatic said in a written statement to the National Post.

Asked to elaborate, she said: "Canadian assistance programs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories are being reviewed in light of the election result. We cannot provide any further information at this time."

The Hamas victory has created a conundrum for CIDA. The federal Cabinet designated Hamas a terrorist organization in November, 2002. Anyone financing Hamas could therefore be charged with violating the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Canada provides less than 3% of the \$900-million in international aid upon which Palestinians are heavily dependent, but other donors are also questioning whether to continue bankrolling a Hamas-led government.

The Mideast Quartet -- the United States, United Nations, European Union and Russia -- said on Monday they would review their aid unless Hamas renounced violence, recognized Israel and committed itself to the peace roadmap.

Israel added to the Palestinian Authorities' financial woes yesterday when it froze \$55-million in monthly transfer payments to the PA. The money consists mostly of taxes and customs duties collected from Palestinian merchants.

A Hamas official, Osama Hamdan, said his government would not be "blackmailed" and was already in touch with Arab and Muslim nations about replacing any shortfalls in aid.

CIDA reviewing aid pledged to Palestinians: Hamas victory fallout

After years of living under Yasser Arafat's Fatah, Palestinians shocked the world by electing a **Hamas** government opposed to any peace agreement with Israelis. **Hamas** says in its founding charter that the only solution to Palestinian grievances is to destroy Israel through jihad.

According to Canada's Public Safety Ministry, **Hamas**'s aim is "to kill Jews" and that it is "one of the primary groups involved in suicide bombings aimed at Israelis."

The election of a **Hamas** government is one of the first foreign policy challenges to face prime minister-designate Stephen Harper's new Conservative minority government.

At his first news conference since defeating the Liberals, Mr. Harper said he supported a secure Israel and a democratic Palestine but added that "for a nation to be truly democratic that nation must renounce any use of terrorism."

B'nai Brith spokesman Frank Dimant said he was pleased that it was not "business as usual" at CIDA but added that once Mr. Harper had appointed a new foreign minister, a more thorough review of Canadian policies toward the Palestinian Authority was needed.

CIDA funding to Palestinians has totalled about \$25-million annually since 2000. Ten million of that goes to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine.

The rest goes to non-governmental organizations such as Oxfam, international agencies such as UNICEF and the World Bank, and federal agencies, to finance programs in the West Bank and Gaza.

These include: a \$4-million vocational training program for Palestinian **women**; a \$3.5-million teacher training program; and \$3.2-million to help Palestinian municipalities.

Last year, Prime Minister Paul Martin promised another \$36.7-million to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority, including a \$6.3-million housing rehabilitation project in partnership with the PA. Ministry of Public Works and Housing and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. Some of this financing flows through the PA. Ministry of Finance.

Amnesty International yesterday urged **Hamas** to stop targeting civilians, calling its campaign of suicide bombings and shelling homes crimes against humanity. "**Hamas** should publicly renounce this policy, commit to ending such attacks and cooperate in bringing to justice those who plan and take part in them," the human rights group said in a statement.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Abbas Momani, AFP, Getty Images; **Hamas** supporters wave the Palestinian and **Hamas** flags during a festival organized by the Islamic movement in Ramallah this week.

Load-Date: February 1, 2006

Palestinians may be on outer if Hamas star rises

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

January 25, 2006 Wednesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 13

Length: 475 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin Herald Correspondent in Jerusalem

Body

AFTER a flurry of last-minute rallies, Palestinian voters go to the polls today hoping that a new and more democratic parliament can revitalise their waning struggle for an end to Israeli occupation and settlement.

But Israel and the US and European governments are warning they might have to cut ties with the Palestinian Authority if a collapse in support for the ruling Fatah party brings to power the Islamic fundamentalist movement **Hamas**, which was until last year the main sponsor of terrorist attacks against Israel.

Today's ballot in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza is in effect the first true democratic competition in the short history of the Palestinian Authority, with **Hamas** (the Islamic Resistance Movement) contesting the ruling Fatah party's dominance of parliament for the first time.

Early and unreliable polls suggest that **Hamas** radicals could take a third of the vote, not far behind Fatah. Combined with Fatah's lack of party discipline and the vagaries of a new and untested electoral system, some analysts believe that this tally could be enough to make **Hamas** the dominant power in the new parliament.

Having boycotted earlier polls because of the Palestinian Authority's recognition of Israel, **Hamas** seems poised to benefit from a slump in support for Fatah, which until now has monopolised power.

Since the death of its founder, Yasser Arafat, in November 2004 Fatah has split into rival armed factions headed by competing strongmen, at times openly defying the moderate but weak leader Mahmoud Abbas.

Many ordinary Palestinians contrast Fatah's rampant corruption and anarchic behaviour with the perceived discipline and clean hands of **Hamas**, which also operates its own networks of schools, clinics and charities.

But Israel has ruled out any resumption of peace talks with a Palestinian Authority government that includes **Hamas**, whose terrorist attacks have killed hundreds of Israelis and which still rejects the existence of the Jewish state.

Several foreign governments - notably those of the US and European Union - have also said that they could not work with representatives of a body they officially brand as a terrorist movement.

Palestinians may be on outer if Hamas star rises

In recent weeks **Hamas** leaders have sent mixed signals about their post-election intentions. Some hint at the possibility of joining talks with Israel, while others reject any talk of compromise on the movement's stated goal of destroying the Jewish state.

Some **Hamas** leaders intimate that their preferred result would be to take some degree of control of parliament while leaving the government - and hence the job of engaging with Israel - in the hands President Abbas.

Officials in Israel have said the country will only accept **Hamas** as a partner for talks if it first disarms its private militia and recognises Israel's existence as a Jewish state - an unlikely scenario in the near future.

Graphic

PHOTO: Confident ... Palestinian **women** wave flags during a **Hamas** election rally in Hebron on the final day of official campaigning. Photo: Reuters/Damir Sagolj

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

End of Document

Women, Secret Hamas Strength, Win Votes at Polls and New Role

The New York Times

February 3, 2006 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 3; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1335 words

Byline: By IAN FISHER; Steven Erlanger contributed reporting from Nablus, West Bank, for this article.

Dateline: GAZA, Feb. 2

Body

Hamas has been known and feared for its men, armed or strapped with suicide bombs. But in its parliamentary election triumph here last week, one secret weapon was its women.

To a degree specialists said was new in the conservative Muslim society of the Gaza Strip, **Hamas** used its women to win, sending them door to door with voter lists and to polling places for last-minute campaigning.

Now in surprise control of Palestinians politics, **Hamas** can boast that women hold 6 of the party's 74 seats in parliament -- giving the women of the radical group, guided in all ways by their understanding of Islam, a new and unaccustomed public role.

"We are going to lead factories, we are going to lead farmers," said Jamila al-Shanty, 48, a professor at the Islamic University here who won a seat in parliament. "We are going to spread out through society. We are going to show the people of the world that the practice of Islam in regards to women is not well known."

If Ms. Shanty's prediction is true, the role of women will certainly not be along the secular Western lines followed largely, and with real strides for women, under decades of leadership by Yasir Arafat's now defeated Fatah faction. The model will be Islam: women in **Hamas** wear head scarves and follow strict rules for social segregation from men.

And one of their role models -- one of the few women in **Hamas** well known before the election -- has a pedigree particularly troubling to many in Israel and the outside world.

She is Mariam Farhat, the mother of three **Hamas** supporters killed by Israelis. She bade one son goodbye in a homemade videotape before he stormed an Israeli settlement, killing five people, then being shot dead. She said later, in a much-publicized quotation, that she wished she had 100 sons to sacrifice that way. Known as the "mother of martyrs," she was seen in a campaign video toting a gun.

Now she is one of the six women who are **Hamas** legislators, elected on the party list. The election rules had quotas for women for all parties. She was swamped this week at a **Hamas** victory rally at the women's campus at the Islamic University by young, outspoken, educated women who see no contradiction between religious militancy and modernity.

Women, Secret Hamas Strength, Win Votes at Polls and New Role

"She is a mother to every house, every person," said one of the students, Reem el-Nabris, 20, who kissed and hugged Ms. Farhat.

Ms. Farhat, 56, who had not been active in politics, said she hoped she deserved their praise as a role model. But she said her role should not be the only one for Hamas's women.

"It is not only sacrificing sons," she said after the rally. "There are different kinds of sacrifice, by money, by education. Everybody, according to their ability, should sacrifice."

The Islamic University, an oasis of order in the grit and chaos of Gaza, shows as well as any place the conflicting images of Hamas in relation to the women who strongly support it. A stronghold for Hamas, though not exclusively for its supporters, the university is split in two by sex, and it can be jarring to cross the corridor from crowds without a woman's face to another of only women, all with their heads covered, some wearing the full veil, the nikab. And on the day of the rally, some also plopped a green Hamas baseball cap on top.

Yet Hamas encourages, and in some cases pays for, the education of these women. Sabrin al-Barawi, 21, a chemistry student, said she had grown up with Hamas programs for women: social groups, leadership courses, Koran classes.

"It's not only religious," said Ahlan Shameli, 21, who is studying computers. "It's the Internet, computers."

"Before Hamas, women were not aware of the political situation," she said. "But Hamas showed and clarified what was going on. Women have become much more aware."

In nearly two decades, the top tier of Hamas's leadership has seemed very much reserved for men. But supporters of Hamas, as well as those of Fatah and other specialists, agreed with Ms. Shameli that Hamas had earned strong support among women. In fact, studies and results from municipal elections show women support the group in higher numbers than men.

If the men's most visible role has been fighting Israel, Hamas's social programs have attracted the loyalty of women. Hamas offers assistance programs for widows of suicide bombers and for poor people, health clinics, day care, kindergartens and preschools, in addition to beauty parlors and women-only gyms.

Women "are the ones who take kids to clinics," said Mkhaimar Abusada, professor of political science at Al Azhar University here. "They are the ones who take children to schools."

And during the elections, he said, Hamas mobilized these same women as if it had been "building up for this occasion for 30 years," using them as grass-roots campaign workers.

"It's something noticeable in the Gaza Strip," he said. "In Palestinian society, our values do not accept women to go out and campaign in the street. It's really a new phenomenon, especially for Hamas."

Reem Abu Athra, who directs women's affairs in the Fatah youth wing, said that her party did not seem to understand how mobilized Hamas's women were generally -- and that it did not match the grass-roots work by Hamas women during the elections. She said that Fatah seemed to think it would naturally win the women's vote, as the more secular party that has been in some ways a leader in the Arab world in rights for women.

"Fatah took women for granted, and this is one reason it lost," she said.

The questions now seem to be what role Hamas's women will play, and exactly how that will be expressed in the rules of Islam.

Naima Sheikh Ali, a Fatah legislator who runs a group for women here, said that Hamas's strict interpretation of Islam would remain a bar to true participation by women. They cannot, for instance, be judges under Islam, she said, and will generally remain segregated and pushed to the side.

Women, Secret Hamas Strength, Win Votes at Polls and New Role

"Yes, they respect women, but as they conceive that respect," she said. "It is from a religiously fundamental view. For the women's movement, this will set us back several steps."

Ms. Shanty, one of the new Hamas legislators, begged to differ. She said that women, and especially the wives of top Hamas leaders, had long played a central role in Hamas's leadership, though she said that had not been publicized to protect them.

"Every decision that is taken by Hamas is passed to us, not after the decision is made but before," she said.

One measure of participation by women may be the extent that they take part in addressing the main problems facing Palestinians, not only on social issues that affect women, families or children.

In an interview before she won a legislative seat, Mouna Mansour, 44, a physics teacher and widow of Jamal Mansour, an assassinated Hamas leader, seemed very much engaged in the central issues. The peace process with Israel, she said, was dead. There should be a Palestinian state, but not at the cost of Jerusalem or the claims of Palestinian refugees, who under previous negotiations would not be permitted to move into what is today Israel.

Hamas, she said, needs to rebuild the economy, get rid of poverty and unemployment and, for now, to continue the cease-fire with Israel.

But she also defended the decision of a young Nablus man to become a suicide bomber. "Why not ask the question from another angle?" she said. "Why would he blow himself up if he was not subject to such great pressures? What leads you to do such a bitter thing? People do this from anger and injustice, to bring back life to their own people by sacrificing their lives."

But there is also unease over what Hamas might mean for women. At least one Islamic University student said Hamas represented an unknown for women like her. The student, Rula Zaanin, 19, said that Hamas had, at least, earned her trust.

"A lot of Palestinians love Hamas and wanted them," she said. "But we don't know what will happen."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: Mariam Farhat, left, beside Jamila al-Shanty at a rally in Gaza City. They were among six Hamas women elected to the Palestinian parliament. (Photo by George Azar for The New York Times)(pg. A1)

Mariam Farhat, who was elected to parliament, is called mother of martyrs because three of her sons, on poster, were killed by Israelis. (Photo by Shawn Baldwin for The New York Times)(pg. A10)

Load-Date: February 3, 2006

Passing the hat in show of support for Hamas

The Philadelphia Inquirer

May 13, 2006 Saturday

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A02

Length: 327 words

Byline: Ali Daraghmeh, Associated Press

Body

Thousands of **Hamas** followers gathered yesterday to donate money and jewelry to their cash-strapped government, while a Western boycott stirred debate inside the extremist group over whether to accept a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

The **Hamas**-led government has been under increasing economic pressure since taking office in March, with Israel halting \$55 million in monthly tax transfers to the Palestinians, and the United States and European Union freezing hundreds of millions of dollars in aid.

Without the money, the Palestinian Authority has been unable to pay its 165,000 workers for the last two months and is having trouble buying medicines and other vital supplies.

In a show of solidarity with **Hamas**, about 5,000 Palestinians gathered in the northern West Bank city of Nablus to make personal contributions to the government.

Several **women** put jewelry in a collection plate. A group of gunmen from the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, affiliated with the Fatah faction, fired rifles in the air before donating \$22.

"These donations are our way of telling the world that we can live without them, and our children are paying what the Europeans should be paying," said Bassam al-Shaqaa, a former mayor of Nablus.

A telethon, broadcast on television with **Hamas** officials fielding calls, received pledges from as far as Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

Officials did not say how much money they raised, but it was at most a fraction of the tens of millions of dollars the government needs.

Israel and the West have said they would deal with **Hamas** and restore the flow of money only if the group recognized Israel, renounced violence, and abided by prior peace agreements.

Passing the hat in show of support for Hamas

Hamas leaders have publicly rejected those conditions. But in private, they have debated whether to recognize Israel in an effort to extricate themselves from their economic crisis, according to a moderate **Hamas** official who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the secret nature of the discussions.

Load-Date: May 13, 2006

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How Hamas Greeted 9/11

New York Sun (Archive)

April 5, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: FOREIGN; Pg. 6

Length: 676 words

Byline: By STEVEN STALINSKY

Body

Hamas praised the killing of thousands of Americans in the attacks of September 11, 2001, while saying Muslims could not have been involved - a similar response to those of other groups in the Middle East. Now that **Hamas** is running the Palestinian Authority, it is worth taking a second look at the terrorist organization's official press outlets' coverage of the attacks.

* "Allah has answered our prayers," Dr. Atallah Abu Al-Subh wrote in an open letter titled "To America," which appeared September 13, 2001, in the **Hamas** mouthpiece Al-Risala. The **Hamas** publication also directed messages to high-ranking members of the Bush administration:

* "Every time Dick Cheney and his girlfriend Condoleezza Rice ... admonish us [and] gloat at our misfortune, they incite more [violence against us]! We stand in line and beg Allah to give you to drink from the cup of humiliation - and behold, heaven has answered. ... America, you planted in the hearts of all men ... the seedling of hatred of you! You never considered that the day would come when the saplings would grow and put out your eyes ... at the top of the World Trade Center ... Those saplings grew and spread and struck at the liver of the Pentagon. ... Don't you see that thorns have reached the eyes of your strong Secretary of Defense, Rumsfeld, who thought that he was too strong to be hurt by the thorns of vengeance ... Perhaps you realize, after Rumsfeld fled, that he is only an ordinary man," Al-Risala contributors wrote shortly after the attacks.

* "The Jews infiltrated the American Army, particularly the Air Force and they pressured pilots to take the planes, knowing that religion is not denoted in the identity cards of those joining the American military. Accordingly the airplanes were [controlled] by the Jews. ... Why is Bush ignoring these facts.... Don't act like you don't know who is behind the recent events..." a **Hamas** activist, Youssef Al-'Azam, wrote in a **Hamas** newspaper, Al-Sabil, on October 4, 2001.

* "Should I greet you [anthrax], or should I curse you ... I will begin by saying: Oh Anthrax ... you have sown horror in the heart of the lady of arrogance ... you have entered the most fortified of places; [you have entered] the White House and they left it like horrified mice," a November 1, 2001, editorial in Al-Risala headlined, "To Anthrax," said. The letter also belittled the American military and concluded by blessing the attacks on America:

* "The Pentagon was a monster before you entered its corridors. ... And behold, it now transpires that its men are of paper and its commanders are of cardboard. ... This horror that you have sown ... in the heart of the bloodsucker [the America] makes me think as I do. ... Our hearts ... were filled with belief that Allah is capable of defeating America by means of the weakest of his earthly soldiers, after he used you to sow horror in their hearts. ... The

How Hamas Greeted 9/11

Americans see you as an imminent attack that is about to shake the lady with the proboscises that suck the blood of ... peoples ... 'Allah bless you,'" "To Anthrax" continued.

* "How much hatred has [America] stockpiled. ... Were the eradication of its Marines in Lebanon, the destruction of its military headquarters at Khobar in Saudi Arabia, the destruction of the USS Cole in Yemen, the bombing of its embassies in Zambia [sic] and in Kenya, and the attacks on its soldiers in the Gulf ... not sufficient? The U.S. should have learned the lessons of history ... Today, the U.S. has treated the bitter harvest it sowed in the hearts of millions. Today, we ask: After this, will the U.S. [continue to] think that it is above the law?" the editor of Al-Risala, Dr. Ghazi Hamad, said in justification of the attacks days after September 11, 2001.

Some of the most vulgar responses to the attacks of September 11, 2001, were the celebrations in the Palestinian streets, including shouts of joy by women. Hamas' reaction to the attacks was equally as disturbing yet not really shocking.

Mr. Stalinsky is the executive director of the Middle East Media Research Institute.

Load-Date: April 5, 2006

End of Document

Israel votes sanctions as Hamas sworn into office

The Irish Times

February 20, 2006 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 11

Length: 825 words

Byline: Nuala Haughey in Ramallah

Body

ISRAEL / PALESTINE: Israel has imposed punitive economic sanctions on the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the wake of the inauguration of a new Hamas-led parliament at the weekend.

The Israeli cabinet voted yesterday to halt monthly payments of some EUR 37 million in monthly customs revenues owed to the cash-strapped PA, branding it "a terrorist body" ahead of Hamas's imminent formation of a new government. Israel said it will also appeal to the international community - which has cautioned against prematurely imposing punitive sanctions on the Palestinian population - to halt all financial assistance to the PA, except direct humanitarian aid.

"The swearing-in of the Palestinian legislative council means that Hamas has - in effect - taken control of the Palestinian Authority," acting Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert said at yesterday's weekly cabinet meeting. "Israel views the rise of Hamas as a dangerous milestone that turns the PA into a terrorist authority."

The Islamic militant group, Hamas, has remained defiant in face of anticipated Israeli sanctions, saying it will raise funding shortfalls from Arab nations.

The newly elected speaker of the Palestinian parliament, Prof Aziz Dweik, denounced Israel's decision as a ploy to gather public support ahead of Israel's parliamentary elections next month, saying it would prove counter-productive.

"This is a faulty decision and the Israelis must reconsider their decision," he said. "It will only increase hatred."

Although Hamas faces boycott calls from major western powers unless it softens its anti-Israeli line, the EU and the United States do not want to push the Palestinian Authority to collapse or to seek alternative funding from states such as Iran.

Israel's decision on sanctions came as the militant Islamic group swept to power in last month's elections, confirming that its senior Gaza member Ismail Haniyeh was its candidate for prime minister.

Mr Haniyeh (46), an Islamic scholar widely viewed as a charismatic, moderate and pragmatic leader, now has five weeks to form what is only the second elected Palestinian government in the West Bank and Gaza.

His nomination came a day after Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas asked Hamas to move quickly to form a new government, while challenging it to moderate its radical stance by recognising existing agreements with Israel.

Israel votes sanctions as Hamas sworn into office

At Saturday's swearing in of parliament in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Mr Abbas said "the presidency and the government will continue to respect our commitment to the negotiation process as the sole political, pragmatic and strategic choice".

However, he stopped short of making this a precondition of Hamas forming a cabinet.

While several Hamas lawmakers said the group would never agree to negotiations with Israel, both President Abbas and Mr Haniyeh struck a more conciliatory note, saying they would seek to resolve their deep differences through dialogue aimed at avoiding a crisis that could lead to the collapse of the authority.

While Hamas has largely adhered to a truce for the past year, it has defied international pressure since its startling electoral victory last month, by refusing to abandon armed resistance and its formal pledge to Israel's destruction.

The group boycotted the first parliamentary elections in 1996 and has rejected all previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements, although its participation in last month's poll was in itself a tacit recognition of prior accords as well as Israel's right to exist.

However, the radical group is reluctant to abandon its aggressive rhetoric while Israel's increasingly harsh regime of military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza continues.

Saturday's solemn inaugural parliamentary session was held in the Muqata presidential compound in Ramallah, while lawmakers in Gaza, who were prevented by Israel from travelling to the West Bank, watched via a video link.

The joint sitting began with an incantation of a Koranic verse and a roll-call of the 132 new lawmakers, about a tenth of whom are in Israeli prisons. The new Palestinian MPs took their oath of office collectively, reciting a prayer with upturned palms.

Many of the new male Hamas MPs sport traditional Muslim beards, while the women wear headscarves and modest long robes, setting them apart from other secular and unveiled female parliamentarians.

Some members held up photographs of fellow legislators sitting in Israeli jails while, outside the gates of the compound, relatives of political prisoners gathered in protest to press for their release.

Hamas controls 74 of the Palestinian legislative council's 132 seats, but Mr Abbas retains significant power as independently elected president, with considerable control over foreign affairs, security and peace negotiations.

The outgoing parliament, controlled by Mr Abbas's once-dominant Fatah movement, approved the creation of a constitutional court that would give the president more power over a Hamas-led government.

Load-Date: February 20, 2006

Poll leaves Hamas close to breaking Fatah's monopoly

The Daily Telegraph (LONDON)

January 26, 2006 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; International; Pg. 17

Length: 612 words

Byline: Tim Butcher in Ramallah

Body

PALESTINIANS turned out in huge numbers yesterday for a historic general election that broke the political stranglehold enjoyed for 40 years by Fatah, the party founded by the late Yasser Arafat.

Exit polls suggested that Hamas, the radical Islamist group taking part in elections for the first time, had come a close second.

It appeared to have won almost as many seats as Fatah, depriving the ruling faction of a parliamentary majority.

After voters crowded polling stations across Gaza and the West Bank, a survey by Bir Zeit University forecast that Fatah had won 63 seats in the 132-seat parliament against 58 for Hamas.

As Fatah activists celebrated their narrow victory with volleys of gunfire, Hamas leaders claimed exit polls were biased and that they could even beat their rivals when results are released tonight.

Turnout had surged to 78 per cent in the absence of any major violence between the armed factions of the main parties.

Normally drab Palestinian towns in the West Bank were transformed by colourful banners and bunting, while hordes of party representatives wearing party colours gathered outside polling stations.

Only in East Jerusalem was the atmosphere somewhat fraught as a few thousand Palestinian voters, less than five per cent of the electoral roll, dared to vote under close Israeli scrutiny.

Mahmoud Abbas, the moderate Palestinian leader who took over after Arafat's death last year, cast his vote for Fatah, the party he leads. He dismissed what he called Israel's threat to prejudge the result.

Israel regards Hamas as a terrorist group and refuses to negotiate with its members.

"The Israelis should have no reason to be fearful but rather pleased as we are building a democracy which can serve as a base for peace between us," he said.

"After the elections, I will form a new government and I am always ready for negotiations with the Israelis although they must want them [the negotiations] on their side.

"We are partners with the Israelis. They don't have the right to choose their partner."

Poll leaves Hamas close to breaking Fatah's monopoly

Hamas leaders, successors of several who have been killed under Israel's policy of political assassination, said their members would not give up the right to use force against Israel.

The use of suicide bombers by Hamas against Israeli civilians led America and the European Union to proscribe it as a terrorist organisation.

Ismail Haniya, a senior Hamas candidate, said the group would not give in to pressure from the West. "The Americans and the Europeans say to Hamas: either you have weapons or you enter the legislative council.

"We say [we will have] weapons and the legislative council. There is no contradiction between the two."

During the campaign, Hamas exploited its notoriety with Washington and Brussels as a badge of honour.

In Nablus, a green banner in the town centre asked voters "America and Europe say no to Hamas. What do you say?"

In Washington the White House hailed the vote as "historic" but insisted that it would not deal with Hamas.

While yesterday's vote appeared a ringing endorsement of democracy, Hamas is ideologically opposed to voting, deferring instead to the greater power of the Koran.

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There are 1*5m eligible voters.

Palestinians are voting to fill 132 seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC)

66 members of parliament will be chosen nationally from 11 party lists.

The remaining 66 will be decided by voters in the 16 electoral districts

Each list must contain at least one woman in the first three names, one in the next four, and one in each of the next five names that follow.

20 per cent of the seats in the PLC are reserved for women

Six seats will be reserved for Christians

Load-Date: January 26, 2006

US presses Palestinian moderates to stay out of Hamas government

Financial Times (London, England)

March 11, 2006 Saturday

London Edition 1

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Section: MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA; Pg. 9

Length: 519 words

Byline: By HARVEY MORRIS

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

US officials are exerting pressure on moderate Palestinian politicians not to serve in a Hamas-led government and have warned that Washington would sever existing contacts with them if they did.

According to Palestinians familiar with Hamas's current efforts to put together a national unity government following its election victory in January, Washington has targeted a number of independents the Islamist movement was considering for cabinet posts.

The Bush administration favours a situation in which Hamas would be forced to govern alone and would bear the full consequences of failures that could be exacerbated by a cut-off of western aid to the Palestinian Authority.

As well as discouraging the defeated Fatah party from joining a coalition with Hamas, US officials have privately contacted leading independents to urge them to stay out of the government.

It was not clear to what extent the administration was threatening sanctions against individuals or whether the administration would have legal grounds on which to deny them future entry to the US.

They were said to include Mustafa Barghouti, leader of the Palestine National Initiative which won two seats in January, and Ziad Abu Amr, an independent who won a seat in Gaza with Hamas backing.

Both men have strong international ties. Mr Barghouti heads the western-funded Palestine Medical Relief Committee and Mr Abu Amr, who has a doctorate from Georgetown University, is president of the Palestinian Council for Foreign Relations.

Mr Abu Amr said yesterday he had not been contacted by US officials but that he would "refuse any external pressure" on any decision he might make to join a Hamas government. Tipped as a potential foreign minister, he said he would only accept a post as part of a national unity government in which other factions also participated.

A broad-based coalition looked increasingly unlikely yesterday as Fatah held out in the face of Hamas's efforts to persuade the defeated party to join it in government.

US presses Palestinian moderates to stay out of Hamas government

Leaders of the two groups held inconclusive talks in Gaza City this week amid speculation that Ismail Haniya, **Hamas**'s prime minister-designate, would ask Mahmoud Abbas, PA president, for a further two weeks to form a government.

That would take the deadline to within a few days of Israel's March 28 general election.

In what analysts suggested was an attempt by **Hamas** to pressure other factions, a 14-member cabinet list was leaked this week indicating **Hamas** was prepared to govern virtually alone if it failed to find coalition partners.

The list included eight **Hamas** members, a handful of technocrats, an Islamic independent and only one name from another faction - Khalda Jarrar of the secular, leftwing Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, as minister of **women**'s affairs.

It did not include a nominee for the crucial post of finance minister. Palestinian officials said it was still possible **Hamas** would ask Salam Fayyad, former IMF official, to resume the position he formerly held in the Fatah government.

Mr Fayyad said after his election to parliament in January that he did not plan to join the new government.

Load-Date: March 10, 2006

Debating terror in Hamas's backyard

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

February 28, 2006 Tuesday

National Edition

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Section: ISSUES & IDEAS; Pg. A19; David Frum

Length: 785 words

Byline: David Frum, National Post

Dateline: DOHA, Qatar

Body

DOHA, Qatar - I left Iraq just hours before terrorists attacked the al-Askariya mosque in Samarra. My group flew out of the country late at night on a C-130 transport plane, filled with sleepy American soldiers all wearing full combat armour and carrying weapons.

The benches on a C-130 run up and down the sides of the plane, with another pair back-to-back down the centre. That opens two aisles each about a foot wide. So you sit knee-to-knee with the soldier opposite. If you nod off, the helmet and combat vest balance each other: The weight of the helmet pushes your head down into your body, but the bulk of the vest props your chin up: It's not too uncomfortable, so long as you remain conscious enough to prevent your head from tipping to either side.

Thirty-six hours later, I arrived in the irrigated luxury of the Gulf principality of Qatar. It would be hard to imagine any place in the region that feels more removed from the dust and violence of Iraq.

Iraq is shaken almost to destruction by the hatreds and contradictions tearing apart the Middle East and the Islamic world. Qatar cheerfully walks on both sides of the street at the same time, welcoming the American fleet and an Israeli diplomatic mission -- and simultaneously funding the Egyptian-born cleric Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who justifies suicide bombings against U.S. forces and Israeli civilians, and the al-Jazeera satellite channel.

I came to Doha to participate in the Doha debates, an amazing exercise in free speech sponsored by the outspoken wife of the ruling sheikh, Sheikha Mozah. Eight times a year, the Sheikha's foundation invites four panelists from around the world to discuss all sides of issues on which most Arab societies only allow one official view. The debates are hosted by the famously fearless British interviewer Tim Sebastian and broadcast worldwide on the BBC. (The debate in which I took part can be seen this coming weekend.) They take place in the atrium of the Qatar Foundation in Doha's Education City before a live audience of university students.

The topic set before this month's panel was: "Resolved, this House believes the international community must accept Hamas as a partner." Joining me on the negative was my friend Salim Mansur of the University of Western Ontario, a regular columnist for the Toronto Sun. On the proponent side: Stanley Cohen, a radical lawyer who has defended Hamas clients accused in U.S. courts, and Mohammed Mahmoud Mohammedou, associate director of a Harvard research program.

Debating terror in Hamas's backyard

I did not suppose there would be many anti-Hamas votes among Qatari university students, and if I had any illusions to the contrary, they were dispelled as the audience filled up with young men in white robes and head-dresses and young women in full black concealment gowns.

But the challenge before us was to speak as freely as we would at home, and accepting that challenge seemed the least repayment we could offer for the gracious hospitality of our Qatari hosts. Salim spoke eloquently of the reasons why a conscientious Muslim had to reject the terrorism and anti-Semitism of Hamas.

As for me, I had decided what I wanted to say a week before, in Baghdad. My group had been touring the American military hospital in the Green Zone when casualties began to arrive from a suicide bombing -- all Iraqis, mostly civilians. The doctors hustled us out the door: They had work to do. But you did not need to see much to take away a lifetime's image of the savage wounds that extremist Islam was carving into the flesh and lives of the people of the Middle East.

With that memory in mind, I pleaded to the Qatari students: The terrorism of Hamas is aimed at Israel. But it will rebound upon you. The ideology of Hamas is the ideology that blew up the mosque in Samarra. It is the ideology that tyrannizes Iran. It is the ideology that triggered the 1994 civil war that killed between 40,000 and 100,000 Algerians.

Hamas lacks the power to destroy Israel. But the people who believe as Hamas believes hold the power to destroy places like Qatar -- as they are now daily destroying Iraq.

The hope in Iraq is that the bombing of the Samarra mosque will jolt the Iraqis into stepping away from the apocalypse. It has always been up to them to choose reconstruction or civil war, and this now is perhaps the final moment of choice.

Iraq's neighbours profess sympathy. But the support that Iraq most desperately needs from those neighbours is the one thing that the Muslim Middle East will not give: a full and unequivocal repudiation of Islamist terrorism.

In Doha, the motion in favour of Hamas carried 89% to 11%. In Iraq, the motion in favour of Hamas-like terrorism is carrying a whole nation toward the apocalypse.

Load-Date: February 28, 2006

Israel rejects Hamas death deadline for soldier

The Australian (Australia)

July 4, 2006 Tuesday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. 1

Length: 287 words

Byline: Martin Chulov Middle East correspondent

Body

MATP

ISRAEL last night rejected an 18-hour ultimatum by Hamas militants to agree to a prisoner exchange and military withdrawal or they would kill captured soldier Gilad Shalit.

Army chief Dan Halutz rejected the ultimatum that had been issued as Israeli troops took up positions inside northern Gaza. "We will not give in to any blackmailing or to any ultimatum put forth by any terror organisation, and in this specific case, by Hamas," Lieutenant-General Halutz said after meeting the parents of Corporal Shalit.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and his security cabinet had last night been considering the ultimatum from Hamas's military wing, the Izzedin al-Qassam Brigades. The Izzedin al-Qassam statement said: "If the enemy does not agree to our humanitarian demands ... we will regard this case as closed".

Earlier, military chiefs appeared to have shifted ground from their earlier insistence they would never swap Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails to win Corporal Shalit's freedom.

They had been debating a deal that could involve the release of security prisoners without blood on their hands in return for Corporal Shalit's release and a guaranteed end to militant rocket fire. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has made several failed attempts to broker a deal involving female and juvenile inmates and prisoners who have already served more than 20 years.

The Israeli command said earlier it would not accept a deal that would release terrorists "with blood on their hands" or anyone involved in planning or carrying out terrorist attacks. But those held for offences such as membership of a terror group might be released. Such a deal could free the 32 Hamas MPs arrested by Israel last week.

More reports -- Page 8

Load-Date: July 3, 2006

Senior Hamas figure looks forward to governing with Fatah

The Irish Times

January 28, 2006 Saturday

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Section: WORLD; Palestinian Election; Pg. 9

Length: 655 words

Byline: Michael Jansen in Umm Tuba

Body

Sheikh Muhammad Abu Tir, second on the victorious **Hamas** list, dwells in his ancestral village of Umm Tuba on the edge of Jerusalem.

Its flat-roofed stone houses hug the steep hillsides, and the rough road wends its way downhill to the large modern mosque where the sheikh, a senior member of the Abu Tir clan, joins fellow clansmen in formal prayers.

Since the news that **Hamas** won 76 of the 132 seats in the new Palestinian legislature, he not only lives but also holds court in a new but modest pink stone house where the green **Hamas** banner hangs in the entrance hall.

He receives guests in a chilly salon furnished with bulky plush sofas and chairs. A visit begins with formal greetings and a lad handing round tiny cups of bitter bedouin coffee. This is followed by glasses of sweet tea and dates as relays of well-wishers come and go and the sheikh breaks away to speak on his mobile phone.

Sheikh Muhammad is a tall man, dressed in a dark overcoat, his head bare, his beard dyed bright orange with henna, a fashion adopted by men in the Indian subcontinent who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

But Sheikh Muhammad has not made the hajj. He left his Israeli prison last July, after accumulating 25 years behind bars. "Even if I wanted to perform the hajj, the Israelis and Jordanians would not let me go," he observes with a wry smile.

He expected **Hamas** to gain a majority in Wednesday's election. "**Hamas** did very well in municipal elections, so we knew we had the support of the people. The result was satisfactory.

"We were concerned that there might be fraud, an attempt to steal ballot boxes or fix the count. But there were none of these things. We thank the election commission and the president for the success of the election," he says.

"I did not plan to stand, but I was ordered to make myself a candidate," he says.

Hamas's overall leader, Khaled Mishaal, who is at present abroad but may return to Gaza shortly, is discussing the formation of a government with President Mahmoud Abbas.

"We will make a government with Fatah," Sheikh Muhammad says. Although leading Fatah figures have said that the party will not go into coalition with **Hamas**, "we want a national unity government.

Senior Hamas figure looks forward to governing with Fatah

"Now, because they are in shock, they are reacting to the result. Hamas trusts some good people in Fatah." He will not seek a ministerial portfolio but would serve if he is asked.

Sheikh Muhammad insists that Hamas will not try to impose conservative policies on either Christians or women. "We will not press people to do what they don't want to do. We are brothers with Christians.

"Many Christians in Jerusalem vote for Hamas, and Muslims who support Hamas voted for the Christian candidates in Jerusalem. Our women fight alongside us. My mother was arrested and interrogated with me . . . My youngest daughter is studying at al-Quds University."

Sheikh Muhammad, who began political life as a Fatah student activist at Beirut University, was jailed for the first time in 1974 when he had completed only two years of his course in the Arabic language. He joined the Muslim Brotherhood in 1976 and established an Islamic group which was absorbed by Hamas at the start of the first intifada in 1987.

He says Hamas will retain its arms while its members sit in parliament. "We can't just be surrounded [by armed Israelis] and give up our rights. Once our state is established our fighters will join its army.

"We will have a ministry of defence and an army. This is our right as it is the right of other peoples on this earth."

Sheikh Muhammad argues that the Palestinians must regain their rights before they can make peace with Israel.

"Everyone speaks about Israel's security, but Israel has taken our land and deported our people. The refugees must return and reclaim their homes.

"I can't talk to [the Israelis] until they get out of my house. Are they ready to leave Jerusalem for the Palestinians? Why do they ask us to leave it to the Israelis?"

Load-Date: January 28, 2006

Choice between guns or politics; Hamas tipped to secure power

Canberra Times (Australia)

January 24, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 10

Length: 1053 words

Byline: Gaza

Body

With less than 48 hours to go before polling in the first Palestinian parliamentary elections in a decade, **Hamas** is on a roll.

The armed faction long committed to destroying Israel is virtually certain to send shock waves through the Middle East by securing a major influence in the very institutions it has opposed for nearly 10 years.

It's a situation that does not sit well with Israel. The Israeli army plans, however, to steer clear of Palestinian towns in the occupied West Bank to avoid interfering in the election.

Former US president Jimmy Carter, in the region to monitor the election, said he received assurances from interim Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert that checkpoints would be "as open as possible on election day".

Before scaling back its operations, however, the Israeli army arrested 24 suspected militants in what sources said was likely to be the final raids before the Palestinian vote. Four activists with the Islamic militant group **Hamas** were arrested, including a municipal official, Palestinian officials said. A big win for **Hamas** could prompt the United States to scale back contacts with the Palestinian Authority and possibly freeze direct financial assistance, US diplomatic sources said. Mr Carter, speaking at a conference in Israel, said he hoped the election would lead to **Hamas**'s "transformation to a moderate organisation".

The prospect of a **Hamas** victory this week has triggered an urgent appraisal in Western capitals and Israel over handling the sudden political power which the organisation they have long proscribed as "terrorist" is likely to wield in Palestinian politics from the end of this week.

The dilemma is partly over whether **Hamas**'s probable success is a menacing new threat in an already unstable region, or the first stage of a conversion to the ballot box by the faction responsible for the largest number of Israeli deaths by suicide bombing in the past five years.

Hamas's electoral momentum has been evident way beyond its natural stronghold of Gaza. It was tangible for example, from the moment its members and supporters swept to victory in the West Bank city of Nablus on an anti-corruption ticket in the town council elections on December 15.

Everybody who was anybody in the town turned out to congratulate the new mayor, Adli Yaish, a local car- parts dealer.

Choice between guns or politics Hamas tipped to secure power

He is prominent in several of the Islamic charities which go a long way to making up for the lack of an effective Palestinian welfare state and on which Hamas has built much of its popular reputation for fair dealing.

True, outside the trade union theatre where his victory reception was held, they were selling DVDs portraying the Hamas "martyrs" to the conflict with Israel to the accompaniment of martial music.

But inside, as local community leaders from headmasters to a posse of Christian clergy queued up to embrace Mr Yaish, the green campaign buttons and banners had not a vestige of this.

Party organisers handed out baklava to those arriving, as Yasser Mansour, the number seven candidate on the faction's national list, expertly worked the room to exploit the victory.

"In the name of God, the results are not strange," Mr Mansour told visitors.

"We can attribute them to two things - corruption [in the Palestinian Authority] and the security chaos that the Palestinian people have been suffering for 10 years."

To the untutored, it may seem odd to hear Hamas condemning "security chaos".

But nowhere is the deeply unpopular internal violence to which Mr Mansour was referring more evident than in Gaza.

The Fatah-dominated PA has failed to prevent kidnappings, lethal tribal feuds, and political gun battles - mainly within Fatah itself.

In Gaza City's Shifa Hospital, Suleiman Ashabia winced with pain as he explained how he took seven bullets in his legs and hand on Friday evening.

Mr Ashabia, 22, the local deputy campaign manager for the independent Third Way party is "90 per cent sure" the masked gunman who shot him at close range with an AK-47 was political. Posing as a party supporter, one of the gang who targeted him had lured him to a bogus meeting in the market of the Maghazi refugee camp and used a mobile phone call to check what he was wearing. He opened fire as Mr Ashabia returned to within 150m of his home and then continued shooting him on the ground after he was felled by the first bullet.

The faction least likely to have attacked him, on the face of it, is Hamas. The polls suggest it has next to nothing to fear from Third Way.

But it has also fought this campaign with a professionalism and discipline that has eluded most other parties.

The most prominent local female candidate, Muna Mansour, distancing herself from Hamas's reputation for fierce social conservatism, said she was in favour of shelters for battered wives, for an end to "honour killing" and of better education for women.

And most significantly, she suggested that a long-term truce with Israel was possible while believing that an interim phase of two states side by side would not deflect Hamas from its goal of "liberating Palestine from the river to the sea".

This goes to the heart of Israel's and the West's dilemma. Awakening to the new reality - including perhaps the realisation that Israel's effort to disrupt Hamas's campaign by arresting candidates has, if anything, strengthened it politically - some senior figures, from President Moshe Katsav to Shimon Peres, have suggested Israel could talk with Hamas if it abandoned its militancy and ended its commitment to destroy Israel.

Difficult as it is, the first condition may be easier to fulfil than the second.

Skillfully Hamas, having largely adhered to the truce it made last year with Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian President, has given little away on its post-election plans.

Choice between guns or politics Hamas tipped to secure power

Mr Abbas has always believed that Hamas's assumption of influence will lead it to abandon its weapons again against Israel and has warned it will not join any coalition with Fatah unless it does so. But Hamas has so far made it clear that it has no intention of recognising the state of Israel, as the PLO eventually did under Yasser Arafat.

Mohammed Abu Teir, Hamas's No2 candidate, declined to comment on the issue of talks though he acknowledged that Hamas councils like Qalqilya's had had "no problem" discussing "technical matters" with Israel. - The Independent

Load-Date: January 23, 2006

End of Document

Canada cuts ties, stops aid to Hamas

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

March 31, 2006 Friday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 10

Length: 547 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin Herald Correspondent in Jerusalem

Body

CANADA has become the first state to announce a full boycott of the newly elected **Hamas** administration in the occupied Palestinian territories, declaring an end to all diplomatic contacts and a freeze on annual aid worth \$US21 million (\$29 million).

The move came hours after **Hamas**'s Ismail Haniyeh was sworn in as Prime Minister on Wednesday. It is expected to be followed by other Western nations seeking to pressure the Islamic militant group into renouncing armed resistance, accepting Israel's right to exist and honouring all previous Palestinian agreements with the occupying power.

The US has halted direct aid to the Palestinian Authority and Israel is withholding tax revenues worth more than \$US50 million a month but it has stopped short of ordering a full freeze on low-level administrative contacts. Some Israeli officials fear that the collapse of the authority would force it to take responsibility for the 3 million Palestinians living in the occupied territories.

The new **Hamas** Information Minister, Youssef Rizka, said that Canada's action showed obvious bias to Israel. "What we need from the Canadian Government is that it ask the Israeli authorities to admit that they are occupying Palestinian land," he told Associated Press.

Hamas says it will not abandon its official aim of the destruction of the state of Israel unless Israel also makes concessions, but following its election victory two months ago it has seemed to signal a more pragmatic approach.

This week Mr Haniyeh said **Hamas** did not seek a whirlpool of blood, nor did it wish to throw Jews into the sea. Israel says it suspects that **Hamas**, the sponsor of numerous suicide bombings, is merely playing for time so it can regroup for further terrorist attacks.

Mr Haniyeh also said the Palestinian Authority President and Fatah party leader, Mahmoud Abbas, would be free to pursue his own negotiations with Israel provided the results were in the interests of the Palestinian people.

But Israel has ruled out any talks with the Palestinian Authority until **Hamas** agrees to demands from the quartet of the European Union, the US, United Nations and Russia that it abandon its present position.

In Israel meanwhile, the main political parties have already started the elaborate manoeuvres needed to form the next government following Tuesday's election.

Canada cuts ties, stops aid to Hamas

The acting Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, said that no coalition could be formed without his centrist Kadima party, which has 28 seats in the 120-seat Knesset. But the neo-liberal Kadima is resisting demands from its most likely coalition partner, the 20-seat Labour party, for its leftist leader, Amir Peretz, to be handed the finance portfolio.

A senior Kadima member said yesterday that Kadima might also seek the support of the far-right Yisrael Beitenu party, which won 12 seats on the back of support from Russian immigrants and on its call for the move Arab-Israeli citizens outside the country.

Mr Peretz announced in the run-up to the poll that his party would not join any coalition with Yisrael Beitenu because of its racist views.

The big loser in the elections, former prime minister and Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, is facing a rebellion from his surviving MPs after seeing the party slump to 11 seats from the 38 it won in 2003 under Ariel Sharon.

Graphic

PHOTO: New start ... Mariam Saleh, the only **female** member of the **Hamas** Government, is sworn in at the Palestinian Authority headquarters in Ramallah. Photo: Reuters/Jerry Lampen

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

End of Document

Now Hamas must drop guns and bombs and start talking

The Evening Standard (London)

January 27, 2006 Friday

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London
**Evening
Standard**

Section: B MERGE; Pg. 11

Length: 972 words

Byline: NORMAN LEBRECHT; ISABEL OAKESHOTT

Body

DESPERATE efforts were being made today to limit the fallout from the shock victory of **Hamas** in the Palestinian elections.

The US issued an appeal to the territory's president Mahmoud Abbas not to quit office - saying Washington would continue to support him and his policies.

The assurance came in a fraught phone call in the early hours of today from American secretary of state Condoleezza Rice.

The future of the Middle East peace process could lie in Mr Abbas's hands after militant Islam triumphed in the poll.

Hamas, which has vowed to destroy Israel and is behind scores of suicide bombings, ousted the ruling Fatah Party and holds the balance of power.

Mr Abbas, elected president last year for a four-year term, will have to work with a Cabinet

and legislature dominated by **Hamas**. He has threatened to resign if he cannot pursue his agenda of forging a peace deal with Israel.

Today America renewed appeals to **Hamas** to abandon its goal of destroying Israel.

Ms Rice said: "The Palestinian people have apparently voted for change but we believe that their aspiration for peace and a peaceful life remain unchanged."

She has made it clear that America will cut off aid to the Palestinians if **Hamas** does not drop its policy on Israel.

Tony Blair today also urged the group to renounce violence. A spokesman for the Prime Minister said: "The ball is in their court. I don't think we should pretend otherwise."

Now Hamas must drop guns and bombs and start talking

COMMENTARY

ONE long day of democracy delivered a result that everyone dreaded and few had foreseen. As of this morning, the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank are represented by a terrorist organisation.

Hamas, commanding 76 of the 132 seats in the new Palestinian parliament and the right to form the next government, has declared a provisional suspension of suicide attacks, but it remains committed to armed resistance against Israel and to the ultimate destruction of the Jewish state.

Ehud Olmert, Israel's acting prime minister, said today he could not negotiate with a government that wanted his country wiped off the map.

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas, reduced to lame-duck status, said he would continue to press for a negotiated settlement with Israel.

US and European diplomats were working urgently to persuade their flimsy **Hamas** contacts to renounce violence and adopt the "Sinn Fein" route. In Iran, the extremist government of president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declared itself delighted with the success of its **Hamas** allies.

On the face of it, the Middle East has not looked a more dangerous place since the murder of Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995 destroyed the last concerted peace effort. Yet not all is as it seems.

Hamas is a leaderless enigma, its founders eliminated by Israeli "targeted assassinations" and its elected candidates answering to shadowy ideologues in Damascus, Beirut and Tehran.

Originally a social welfare movement funded by Muslim almsgivers, and encouraged by Israel as an alternative to Yasser Arafat's Fatah, **Hamas** celebrated victory by handing out cakes and shooting in the air. The threat was inextricable from the promise.

Already, in westernised Palestinian circles, there are fears **women** will be forced to wear the veil, alcohol will be banned and religious courts will exact medieval punishments under the eye of heavily-armed paramilitaries.

Many said they voted for the men in green headbands because they were fed up with Fatah graft and gun law. If **Hamas** wants to retain their support, it will have to deliver improvements to their lives - which requires a reduction of tension with Israel and a normalisation of cross-border relations.

Hamas spokesmen have rushed to denounce the Israeli defensive wall, but it was built in response to the threat from the organisation and has been largely successful. Once **Hamas** dumps its bomb belts, the wall will cease to be an issue. As confrontation can only exacerbate Palestinian misery, **Hamas** will have to find a way of living with its more powerful neighbour - and that means dialogue.

Low-level contacts exist. The question is whether pressure and enticements from the US and EU can bring out the pragmatic elements in this avowedly populist, and by no means irrational, movement.

Israel, too, will have to reconsider its position. Mr Olmert's decision to maintain the no-dialogue line was both electorally sensible and internationally supported.

Hamas must change its tune before Israel can find a counterpoint.

In the meantime, though, a hardline Palestinian regime will accelerate the Israeli desire for disengagement.

Despite frothings from Rightwingers like Benjamin Netanyahu, who claim **Hamas** had victory handed to them by Ariel Sharon's "weakness" in withdrawing from Gaza, Mr Olmert and his security chiefs will be looking to reduce points of contact with the Palestinian population.

Expect summary withdrawals from outlying West Bank settlements and a crackdown on illicit land grabs.

Now Hamas must drop guns and bombs and start talking

The Gaza pullout was accounted a success. Mr Olmert's best chance of winning Israel's March election, against blue-collar Labour and Mr Netanyahu's irredentist Likud, is to continue Mr Sharon's policy of unilateral separation until there is a trustworthy partner on the Palestinian side.

Mahmoud Abbas, the grandfatherly successor to Arafat, is an isolated figure now. But he has no reason to step down. He was elected a year ago and Hamas needs him more than his own tribe ever did if it is to achieve the transition from neighbourhood agitator to credible ruler.

Mr Abbas emerges, if anything, empowered to purge Fatah of corruption and construct a new leadership that will challenge Hamas and act as a democratic counterweight to the mullahs' writ.

Democracy doesn't always deliver the leaders you want, but it makes the ones that get elected act differently in power from the way they did before.

Hamas today is not yesterday's band of terror.

Load-Date: January 27, 2006

HAMAS VICTORY: Arabs don't vote based on Islam alone

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

February 5, 2006 Sunday

Main Edition

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: @ISSUE; Pg. 1B

Length: 1052 words

Byline: DAVID HARRIS

Body

Islamism has made impressive inroads into Middle Eastern democracies, but in some parts of the region "political Islam" may prove to be more political than Islamic.

The stunning victory of **Hamas** in Palestinian elections is a good example. To the outsider **Hamas** is all about fundamentalism in Islam and rejection of Israel. The frequent street demonstrations in Gaza do not look particularly dissimilar to those of Tehran. **Hamas** put more **women** candidates on its national list than did the more secular Fatah, but it was impossible to tell the **women** apart, as they were all fully veiled in election propaganda.

And around the region, religion-oriented parties in Iran and Iraq scored recent victories, and Muslim Brotherhood candidates had a strong showing in Egyptian parliamentary elections.

While Islam is always at the back of the minds of most people in the region, ordinary Arab voters have much in common with voters in the West. The **Hamas** vote in the Jan. 25 Palestinian elections, for example, was far more about pragmatism than religious direction.

Post-election opinion polls show Palestinians voted for **Hamas** for two main reasons: a response to the decade of corruption in a Palestinian Authority run by Yassir Arafat and his Fatah party, and **Hamas**' social-welfare mandate. In territories rife with abject poverty and rampant unemployment, **Hamas** operates mosques, schools and medical clinics. It provides vocational and leadership training for **women**.

But the leadership of **Hamas** is far more religious than the party's average supporter. Indeed there is a parallel to this in neighboring Israel, which sees itself very much a part of the Western club of democratic nations. Over the past two decades a religious party that represents Jews of Middle Eastern origin has done exceedingly well in parliamentary elections.

A large proportion of Shas voters do not define themselves as observant. Many do see themselves as traditional, favoring strong family values, but what perhaps attracts them most to Shas is the party's stated commitment to social-welfare provision. Like **Hamas**, Shas runs schools, soup kitchens and a variety of similar institutions that

HAMAS VICTORY: Arabs don't vote based on Islam alone

have gained the party widespread support and respect. But Shas has only ever managed to claim about one in six seats in Israel's parliament, as opposed to **Hamas**' stunning victory at the first attempt.

Some in the Middle East try to paint the electoral successes of parties like **Hamas** as being entirely based on religious values, with one or two even suggesting the result was the work of a divine being.

Western values embraced

The outspoken Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was among the first world leaders to congratulate **Hamas** on its win. He called the victory "God's grace," according to the official Iranian news agency.

To entirely dismiss the religious element in voting behavior in the Arab and Muslim worlds would also be incorrect. Muslims are facing an increasingly sharp dichotomy. Islamism is undoubtedly spreading through Asia and Africa, but at the same time many in the Middle East warmly embrace Western political and cultural values.

Take Afghanistan as a test case. Under the Taliban, there was only one acceptable way to live: a strict Muslim lifestyle. All outside influences were banned, with wonders of the ancient world destroyed because of a blanket ban on graven images.

The West associated the Taliban's religious edicts with extremism and subsequently with terrorism. So how would the Afghans react when faced with a relatively free and fair presidential election? Would they turn their backs on the religious parties or embrace their traditional values? The candidate backed by the United States, Hamid Karzai, gained more than 50 percent of the vote, while his closest rival garnered just 16 percent.

A year later, in 2005, the Afghan public voted a complete mix of candidates into the parliament, seemingly with Islam playing a minor role in the vote.

The fivefold increase in support for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt was not so much about a sudden swing toward Islam, but rather a protest against the incumbent government, according to members of the brotherhood themselves.

In Iraq, voters thus far have split along ethnic lines rather than embracing a more or less hard-line party. The fact that the majority of Iraqis are Shiites may eventually bring about a realignment between Baghdad and Tehran, but that could take decades, given the bad blood between them.

The Iranian electorate rejected a liberal president last year, preferring a man perceived as a radical Islamist, but many observers suggest that vote was rigged.

Little freedom of choice

In many other parts of the Middle East the notion of democratic elections, where voters can choose to move closer to or distance themselves from Islamic parties, does not exist.

It is also virtually impossible to superimpose a trend on voting behavior in the region. Each country has its own particular factors, political, socioeconomic and so on.

Perhaps the only state in the Muslim Middle East where one can detect a clear vote based on religion is in the country that would least like to admit to that being the case. Currently, Turkey is walking a tightrope between the West and Islam --- desperately seeking admission to the European Union while also to maintain its connection with the Middle East.

Geographically, it sits in both Europe and Asia. Virtually all of its citizens are Muslims, but those in the larger cities clearly like what they see in the West. In repeated parliamentary and presidential elections, the voters are faced with a clear choice: secular or religious. Here one can see significant ups and downs in the fortunes of both segments, as if pro- and anti- hard-line support moves in waves.

HAMAS VICTORY: Arabs don't vote based on Islam alone

Back in Gaza, **Hamas** leaders are promising they will not force strict religious practices on the masses, though there will be changes, and the truth is that **Hamas** has the mandate to do as it pleases.

After all, even if the electorate chose **Hamas** as a protest, or because of its social-welfare programs, voters knew well ahead of time that they would also be putting into power a party with its face truly turned toward Islam.

David Harris is the Jerusalem bureau chief of The Media Line news agency.

* The Media Line news agency is on the Web at www.themedialine.org

Graphic

Photo: MUHAMMED MUHEISEN / Associated PressA Palestinian boy wearing a green **Hamas** cap stands with his father and other **Hamas** supporters during a rally celebrating the results of the Jan. 25 Palestinian parliamentary election. The rally took place Thursday in the village of Beir Naballah, on the outskirts of Jerusalem. To outsiders, **Hamas** is all about fundamentalism in Islam. But Arab voters don't just consider religion.

Photo: ADEL HANA / Associated PressPalestinian Ismail Al Ashkar, a **Hamas** member elected to the parliament (left), and **Hamas** supporters clean a street in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza Strip, on Friday. About 3,000 **Hamas** volunteers took part in the campaign of cleaning the streets in Gaza.

Photo: LARRY DOWNING / Associated PressAfghanistan President Hamid Karzai acknowledges well-wishers during the ceremony honoring him as Afghanistan's first popularly elected leader at Salaam Khana in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Dec. 7, 2004.

Load-Date: May 16, 2006

Airstrike by Israelis kills Hamas member

The International Herald Tribune

July 8, 2006 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 690 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger and Greg Myre

Dateline: BEIT LAHIYA, Gaza Strip

Body

A member of **Hamas** was reported killed in an airstrike Friday, less than 24 hours after Israeli troops and Palestinian militants waged their most intense battles since Israel re-entered the Gaza Strip to secure the release of a captured soldier and stop rocket fire into Israel.

The death toll had risen throughout the day Thursday in sometimes fierce fighting involving everything from rifles to airborne missiles.

It was one of the bloodiest periods in Gaza since the uprising began in 2000. The death toll varied and the Palestinians provided no official figures. The Associated Press counted at least 24 dead Palestinians, and Reuters 19. One Israeli soldier was killed by a sniper.

Reuters reported Friday that the militant was killed after an Israeli plane fired at four armed men near the scene of the worst violence from the day before.

Most of the deaths were in northern Gaza, where after days of sporadic clashes Israeli forces moved south from the destroyed former Israeli settlements to the outskirts of Beit Lahiya. There, in the northwest corner of Gaza, Palestinian fighters had been preparing earthen barricades, explosive charges and positions for shooting.

Israel's defense minister, Amir Peretz, said that although Israel pulled out of Gaza last year, "no one should see that as a guarantee that we cannot reach territory in which we feel we have no choice but to operate."

Heavy fighting erupted in and around Beit Lahiya, especially in the western neighborhoods of Atatrah and Salatin near the sea, with Palestinian militants using weapons like Kalashnikovs, M-16s and antitank grenades, in running battles with Israeli troops in armored personnel carriers, modern tanks and armored bulldozers.

Palestinians were seen planting explosives in manholes, hoping to blow up vehicles as they drove by. One masked fighter rode away on a bicycle after laying such a charge, a spool of electrical wire unrolling from the back of his bike.

Israeli tanks fired shells at houses where Palestinian fighters sheltered, and Israeli soldiers fired at groups of armed Palestinians who fought in the streets, sometimes surrounded by curious and excited children. At times, Israeli soldiers fired near groups of children in what appeared to be an effort to get them to run away.

Airstrike by Israelis kills Hamas member

The Israeli incursion was triggered by the abduction of the Israeli soldier in an operation by three groups of Palestinian militants, one of which was the Hamas military wing.

The Hamas military wing appears to be beyond the control of the Hamas government, which took control of the Palestinian Authority after elections earlier this year.

Instead, the Hamas militants seem to be taking instructions from an exiled Hamas leader in Damascus, Khaled Meshal, who is also supported by Iran. Still, the Hamas government has not urged the militants to release the Israeli soldier, Corporal Galid Shalit, only to treat him well.

Israel's military has re-entered both the north and the south of Gaza for what it says is a two-pronged mission.

In the south, the troops were sent in shortly after Shalit, a tank gunner, was captured just inside Israel on June 25.

Ghazi Hamad, a spokesman for the Palestinian Authority government, said the sides should seek a diplomatic solution that would lead to Shalit's release.

"We don't want Gaza destroyed, nor do we want attacks," Hamad told Israel Radio. "And you want him to return to his family."

Israel says it will not negotiate for the release of the soldier and has rejected Palestinian demands that large numbers of Palestinian prisoners be freed.

The militants have at various times demanded that all women and youths held by Israel be released, and they have also said that 1,000 prisoners of various nationalities must be freed.

The Arabic-language newspaper Al Hayat, which is based in London, reported Thursday that militants had revised their demands, saying that Shalit could be freed if all Palestinian women are released from Israeli jails along with 30 more men who are serving long-term sentences.

There was no independent confirmation of that report.

Steven Erlanger reported from Beit Lahiya and Greg Myre from Jerusalem.

Load-Date: July 24, 2006

Can Hamas be transformed?: Hamas, which embraces violence as a political weapon and demands the destruction of Israel, must now choose its path

The Gazette (Montreal)

February 1, 2006 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL / OP-ED; Pg. A23

Length: 890 words

Byline: NICHOLAS GOLDBERG, Los Angeles Times

Body

I covered my first **Hamas** bombing in February 1996, when I was new to the Middle East and unused to violence. I remember walking in the wreckage, my shoes sticky from blood and body parts. The air still smelled of smoke and burning tires, and the corpses - 26 bodies covered with sheets - were lined up next to the burned-out skeleton of Jerusalem's No. 18 bus. Stunned survivors were sitting on curbs, heads in their hands; ambulance lights were flashing, and leftover bits of human flesh were being collected by the Orthodox for traditional Jewish burial.

It was the start of a **Hamas** terror epidemic that lasted through most of that winter. Despite the inclination of ordinary Israelis to repair the broken windows, remove the charred detritus and get back to business as usual, **Hamas** attacked another No. 18 bus the next Sunday, killing 19, and then a bomb was detonated outside a shopping mall in Tel Aviv the following day, killing 13 more. Each announcement of carnage was followed by expressions of mingled joy and rage in the Palestinian territories (from a small but highly televised segment of the population).

Suicide bombing was still a new phenomenon then. There had been hijackings in the 1970s and stone-throwing during the intifada in the 1980s. There had been the death of Leon Klinghoffer, the murder of the Olympic athletes at Munich and many other incidents. But in the 1990s, **Hamas** took the violence to a new level: When I lived in Jerusalem, you never knew which pizza parlour, bus, shopping mall or discotheque would be incinerated next.

Hamas in those days seemed utterly beyond the pale. After many years, Israeli and U.S. officials had finally overcome - or at least suppressed - their abhorrence at negotiating with Yasser Arafat, whose terrorist days were generally believed to be behind him and who had publicly renounced the use of violence to solve the conflict.

The bombs **Hamas** built and the bombers who carried them wielded, in the end, extraordinary political influence. The attacks in February and March 1996 led directly to the defeat of Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres in May and to the ascendance of Benjamin Netanyahu, who had never supported the Oslo peace process and slowed the return of West Bank cities to Palestinian control. The continuing attacks prompted the repeated closures of the Erez checkpoint in and out of Gaza (which helped devastate the Palestinian economy) and led to the stepping up of home demolitions. **Hamas**, along with the Israeli right, destroyed the Oslo peace process.

Today, however, the group stands on the verge of a new incarnation, preparing to take power as the result of a democratic election. What will it mean? Can it be, as Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas hopes, that

Can Hamas be transformed?: Hamas, which embraces violence as a political weapon and demands the destruction of Israel , must now choose its path

political realities will moderate the Islamists? That the challenge of filling potholes will drive bombings from their minds? That the desire of ordinary Palestinians for a negotiated solution will sway Hamas's politically savvy leaders?

After all, Hezbollah became a legitimate political party, up to a point. Gerry Adams tamed the Irish Republican Army. The Irgun's Menachem Begin and the Lehi's Yitzhak Shamir became prime ministers of Israel. Will Hamas also be transformed?

Or should we believe instead the disheartened Israelis who see Hamas as no more than a blood-soaked band of brigands, an untidy collection of religious fanatics who believe they have God on their side and can't, therefore, be expected to engage in the pragmatic compromises of government?

When I was a reporter in the region, my colleagues and I tried repeatedly to get to the bottom of some of these questions, but Hamas remained a cipher. I visited its mosques and schools. I went to the densely packed Gazan slums where it recruited its leaders and foot soldiers. I drank coffee with Hamas leader Abdulaziz Rantisi and tea with spokesperson Mahmoud Zahar. Twice, I went down a dusty Gaza road to the home of Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the wheelchair-bound founder and spiritual leader of Hamas. Conversations with these men, inevitably held beneath a picture of the Al Aqsa mosque or a map of Palestine, were generally civilized, polite and reasoned.

Are you unequivocally committed, we'd ask, to the destruction of Israel? Or, if there were a real, meaningful two-state solution - a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital - would you call off the violence? Sometimes the answer would be a qualified yes, sometimes an angry no. Sometimes they'd refuse to answer, or the answer would be unclear. "Why don't you ask the Israelis when they will stop their violence against our people," they'd say.

Like all parties out of power, Hamas could afford in those days to have it all ways. Its leaders didn't have to explain their tactics or ultimate goals. They weren't accountable to voters or to anyone else, so they didn't have to say whether they would ask women in the relatively secular city of Ramallah to wear the hijab, or seek to impose sharia law. They didn't have to say how they would turn the demoralized, encircled, overcrowded, economically distressed territory of Gaza into a livable place. Or how they would persuade Israel to stop enlarging West Bank settlements if they refused to negotiate.

But now they're in charge, and perhaps that will change. Perhaps now they'll have to provide some answers.

Graphic

Photo: AMMAR AWAD, REUTERS; A Palestinian boy holds a toy rifle during a rally to support the formation of a Hamas-led government.

Load-Date: February 1, 2006

ISRAELIS BATTER GAZA AND SEIZE HAMAS OFFICIALS

The New York Times

June 29, 2006 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 6; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1551 words

Byline: By IAN FISHER and STEVEN ERLANGER; Ian Fisher reported from Gaza City for this article, and Steven Erlanger from Jerusalem.

Dateline: GAZA, Thursday, June 29

Body

Israel stepped up its confrontation on Wednesday with Palestinian militants over the capture of an Israeli soldier, battering northern Gazan towns with artillery and sending warplanes over the house of the Syrian president, who is influential with the Palestinian leader believed to have ordered the kidnapping.

In the West Bank city of Ramallah early on Thursday, Israeli forces detained 8 ministers of the 24-member **Hamas**-led cabinet and 20 lawmakers, including Deputy Prime Minister Nasser Shaer and Labor Minister Mohammed Barghouti, The Associated Press reported, citing security officials.

The crisis seemed to be tipping toward escalation as Israeli tanks hunkered down inside southern Gaza at the airport on Wednesday after warplanes had knocked out half of Gaza's electricity and pounded sonic booms over houses.

The Israeli defense minister, Amir Peretz, approved an extension of the incursion into northern Gaza, where Palestinian militants have been firing crude Qassam rockets into Israel. As of early Thursday, though, Israel denied reports that it was moving tanks into northern Gaza. About 9 p.m. Wednesday, after saying they would drop leaflets urging citizens of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya to leave their homes, Israeli artillery batteries began to shell.

On Thursday, an Israeli warplane fired a missile in Gaza City that an Israel spokeswoman said hit a soccer field near the pro-**Hamas** Islamic University. Reuters reported that the missile hit inside the university.

Political leaders of **Hamas** on Wednesday joined the militants to demand the release of Palestinian **women** and minors from Israeli jails in exchange for the soldier -- a condition that the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, rejected.

The choice, Israeli officials said, was the soldier's unconditional release or an escalation that could widen the conflict regionally: Haim Ramon, Israel's justice minister, raised the possibility of a strike in Syria to kill Khaled Meshal, the exiled political leader of **Hamas**; the men who hold the Israeli soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, 19, are believed to be following his orders.

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"We won't hesitate to carry out extreme action to bring Gilad back to his family," Mr. Olmert said of the soldier, who was captured Sunday in an attack near Gaza led by Hamas.

In what the Israelis said was a message to the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, four Israeli warplanes on Wednesday flew over his residence in Latakia, in northwest Syria, where he was believed to be staying. Syrian state television said Syrian air-defense systems had fired on the planes and forced them to flee.

Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, on Wednesday condemned Israel's attacks on infrastructure in Gaza, which disabled its only power plant and knocked down three bridges. In a statement, Mr. Abbas said he considered "the aggression that targeted the civilian infrastructures as collective punishment and crimes against humanity."

The crisis also spilled over into a second -- and possibly third -- kidnapping. In Gaza, the Popular Resistance Committees, a militant group with ties to Hamas, displayed the identity card of an 18-year-old Israeli settler, Eliahu Asheri, whom it claimed to have kidnapped in the West Bank. Militants said they would kill him if Israel did not halt operations in Gaza, and early Thursday a body believed to be his was found near Ramallah. Israeli media carried unconfirmed reports that a 60-year-old Israeli missing for two days had also been abducted.

Two Palestinians, ages 2 and 17, were reported killed Wednesday while playing with an unexploded Israeli shell in the town of Khan Yunis. But there were no reports of casualties in Israeli airstrikes.

There have been no reported skirmishes between the Israeli military and Palestinian militants, though the Israelis stayed largely out of reach at the airport. The airport, Israeli military officials say, will act as a staging ground for an operation that will escalate until Corporal Shalit, reported to be wounded, is freed.

For the Israelis, the operation is aimed at deterring Hamas, which now leads the Palestinian government, from carrying out similar attacks in the future. Israeli newspapers carried articles on Wednesday speaking of the attacks on the infrastructure as a way to extract a concrete longer-term cost for the actions of the Palestinian leaders.

For many Palestinians in Gaza, the refusal to back down seemed a collective effort to highlight their own sense of grievance. The economy has broken down under an embargo of Western aid since Hamas took power in January. The Palestinians contend they remain under siege, even after the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza last year, with their borders often closed and encircled by Israeli warplanes and ships.

And there remains widespread approval for the capture of Corporal Shalit and Hamas's demand for an exchange, given that there are nearly 9,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails, among them 95 women and 313 people under age 18.

"There is support for this because I am not safe when I walk on the street," said Mustafa Raghieb, the director of Gaza's largest flour mill, forced to shut for several hours after the electricity was cut. "Give me a good life and I will not support actions like this."

The White House on Wednesday called for the release of the soldier. Mr. Bush's spokesman, Tony Snow, said that Hamas had been "complicit in perpetrating violence" and that Israel had the right to defend itself.

Mr. Snow said the Bush administration was urging Israel to ensure "that innocent civilians are not harmed" and to "avoid the unnecessary destruction of property and infrastructure." But he chose his words with precision, steering clear of questions about whether the Israeli response had been appropriate.

Israeli leaders said Wednesday that they had ordered the military forward after seeing little progress on diplomatic efforts -- including by Egypt and France -- to win Corporal Shalit's release. Amid sonic booms that shattered windows, Israeli military planes hit the three bridges, as Apache helicopters attacked all six of the transformers at the power plant -- an attack that Israeli officials said was necessary to make it harder to move the corporal around.

"Nobody understands the logic," Rafik Maliha, the plant's manager, said. "They want to keep people in the dark so kidnappers don't move? What's the relationship?"

"If there is no electricity, there is no water," he added. "It is more than collective punishment."

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The plant provided 42 percent of the power to Gaza's 1.3 million residents, and now Gaza is completely dependent on Israel for power. Mr. Maliha said it would take as long as a year to replace the transformers.

On Tuesday, Palestinian negotiators from Fatah, **Hamas** and other factions rushed to finish a draft of a unified political program, based on a document issued in May by Palestinian prisoners. It contains new language that senior Israeli officials said represented a defeat for President Abbas.

They said they hoped he would walk away from it because, one official said, "it takes him out of the game" and "further alienates him from Israel." The document now represents, the official said, "the basis for future negotiations with Israel, and for us, this is a total nonstarter."

The Israeli analysis, by the Foreign Ministry, focuses on language, inserted in negotiations with **Hamas**, that insists on the right of return, "without discrimination," for all Palestinian refugees "to their homes and properties from which they were evicted and to compensate them."

The Israelis argue that this stronger language gives the lie to any claim that **Hamas** has recognized the right of Israel to exist, implicitly or otherwise, because such an interpretation of refugee rights would eliminate Israel as a Jewish state by flooding it with Palestinians.

The document has always been silent on the statehood of Israel, but has been interpreted to give it an implicit recognition because it calls for the establishment of a Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital, "on all territories occupied in 1967," presumably with Israel next door.

But a senior official, who has also briefed European diplomats, argued that the failure to mention Israel's right to exist speaks more loudly. "We don't see any implicit recognition of Israel by **Hamas**," the official said. "The most significant reason is that this right of return takes out the two-state solution."

Israel, the official said, is concerned that the document is being praised by European officials, without having yet been read. The document, Israel says, accepts previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements only in so far as they do not "affect the rights of our people," which Israel says means "cherry-picking" previous agreements.

The draft also calls for a new legislature of the Palestine Liberation Organization to be organized by the end of 2006 in a way that favors **Hamas**, the official argued, and for a "national unity government" that **Hamas** will still dominate. Mr. Abbas also appears to be giving up the right he had insisted upon to be able to call a referendum by presidential decree, without a law passed by the **Hamas**-dominated Palestinian legislature, the Israeli official said.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Palestinian firefighters tried to douse the flames at one of six burning transformers at Gaza's main power station, bombed yesterday by Israel. (Photo by George Azar for The New York Times)(pg. A15)Chart/Map: "Israeli Tanks Move Into Gaza"Bulldozers, tanks and armored troop carriers crossed the border into the Gaza airport, which will be a staging ground for Israeli operations.Maps of Israel and the Gaza Strip highlighting the surrounding area and the Approximate location of abduction of Israeli soldier on Sunday.(Satellite image by DigitalGlobe via Google Earth)(pg. A15)

Load-Date: June 29, 2006

ISRAELIS BATTER GAZA AND SEIZE HAMAS OFFICIALS

End of Document

Hamas moves in and puts fate of pacts with Israel in doubt

The International Herald Tribune

February 20, 2006 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 937 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger and Greg Myre

Dateline: RAMALLAH, West Bank

Body

As soon as a new Palestinian Parliament dominated by the militant group Hamas was installed here over the weekend, President Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas lawmakers set out on a collision course over the need to honor existing agreements with Israel and conduct negotiations to achieve Palestinian statehood.

In a speech to new lawmakers at his headquarters in Ramallah on Saturday, Abbas congratulated Hamas on its victory but warned the legislature that it could not disavow agreements and commitments by the Palestinian leadership dating back to the late 1980s. Those include UN resolutions and the 1993 Oslo accords, ratified by the umbrella Palestine Liberation Organization, that commit the Palestinians to a peace solution based on an independent state side by side with Israel.

"We have accepted and respected the right of every individual, group or political faction to voice its complaints about the Oslo accords, but we have not and will not accept any questioning of the accords' legitimacy," Abbas said. "Indeed, from the hour the accords were endorsed, they became a part of reality to which we remain committed."

As he spoke, screens in the room carried the images of Hamas legislators taking part in the ceremony through a videoconference link in Gaza; they were barred from traveling to the West Bank because of Israeli restrictions.

"To reach a peaceful and just solution, we must resume negotiations according to the international and Arab initiatives," Abbas said. "The presidency and the government," he added, with emphasis, "will continue to respect our commitment to the negotiations as a strategic, pragmatic political choice."

But in Gaza City, Hamas leaders promptly made their opposition clear.

"There were many points of disagreement," said Ismail Haniya, a senior Hamas leader who was named Sunday as the group's candidate for prime minister. Abbas "was elected according to his program, and we were elected according to a different program," he said.

Mushir al-Masri, a Hamas spokesman and legislator, said negotiations with Israel "are not on our agenda." Like many Hamas leaders, Haniya and Masri consider the Oslo accords a dead letter and often cite Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel as having said the same thing.

Hamas moves in and puts fate of pacts with Israel in doubt

Still, on Saturday, Haniya, like Abbas, promised to deal with their differences "through dialogue and understanding, to preserve the national unity of the Palestinian people and promote their higher interests."

In warning the legislators not to reinvent the wheel of Israeli-Palestinian relations, Abbas seemed intent on showing a strong hand: In effect, reminding the group that even though it had won 74 of 132 parliamentary seats, he remains in the top Palestinian post and still has a range of powers, including his role as commander in chief of the security forces.

That message was underscored later Saturday by a statement from his spokesman, Saeb Erekat, who said that if Hamas did not cooperate, Abbas would consider replacing the group's chosen prime minister or, in the event of complete stalemate, even calling new elections.

Even the site for Abbas's speech his headquarters, the Muqata, and not in the legislature's building in Ramallah was a clear effort to assert symbolic control, with almost all of the legislators coming to him in person or by a videoconference transmission for the swearing-in. Fourteen new legislators were elected from inside Israeli jails and were not allowed to attend.

Fatah members entered the hall in Ramallah in suits and ties, with women in dress suits, their hair uncovered. They greeted each other warmly, with handshakes and kisses, and many members went to speak to Muhammad Dahlan, a Gazan who is considered a crucial figure in a future, younger Fatah.

The Hamas delegation in Ramallah, those elected in the West Bank, came in together and sat in a block at the back of the room; the women wore head scarves and sat together.

When Abbas finished his speech, many Fatah members stood and clapped. Many Hamas members kept their seats, and few applauded. After the speech, before they voted to elect a new parliamentary speaker, Aziz Dweik, a Hamas member and a professor of geography, many Hamas members used a corner of the hall to pray.

Dweik asked Muslim countries to increase their assistance to the Palestinians, and he said that in the next legislative session, on Feb. 27, there would be a review of laws, including a new constitutional court appointed by the president, that were passed quickly on the last day of the old legislature.

Senior Fatah legislators said Abbas had laid down clear lines to Hamas. Erekat, who was re-elected to the legislature, said Abbas had given "a firm, clear, specific speech" that set out his program, "telling Hamas what you may do in my program," which calls for a two-state solution, negotiations with Israel and the renunciation of violence in favor of "peaceful forms of resistance to the Israeli occupation."

Nasser Abdaljawad, a new Hamas legislator, said Hamas would concentrate on domestic reform and the fight against corruption and lawlessness.

"We'll leave the political level for now to the PLO," he said, but another Hamas legislator, Ahmad Mubarak, said, "We will go into the PLO to work and to rebuild it."

Abdaljawad warned the United States and Israel against trying to undermine the new Hamas government by cutting financial assistance.

"They should deal with the new reality," he said. "It's not for them to obstruct the democratic choice of the Palestinian people."

Steven Erlanger reported from Ramallah for this article, and Greg Myre from Gaza City.

Load-Date: February 22, 2006

Hamas moves in and puts fate of pacts with Israel in doubt

End of Document

CIDA reviews assistance to Palestinians: Hamas victory fallout: Martin government pledged \$62M

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

February 1, 2006 Wednesday

Calgary Edition

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Section: CANADA; Pg. A8

Length: 734 words

Byline: Stewart Bell, National Post

Dateline: TORONTO

Body

TORONTO - Canada's foreign development agency said yesterday it was reviewing its aid programs in the West Bank and Gaza after Hamas won an upset victory in Palestinian elections.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) said its \$25-million in annual assistance to Palestinians, and last year's pledge of an addition \$37-million, were being re-examined.

Some of Canada's contributions go directly to the Palestinian Authority, which will soon be controlled by the hardline Hamas, considered by Ottawa to be a terrorist group because of its campaign of suicide bombings.

"In light of the Palestinian election result, Canadian assistance programs in the West Bank and Gaza are currently being reviewed," CIDA spokeswoman Eleonora Karabatic said in a written statement to the National Post.

Asked to elaborate, she said: "Canadian assistance programs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories are being reviewed in light of the election result. We cannot provide any further information at this time."

The Hamas victory has created a conundrum for CIDA. The federal Cabinet designated Hamas as a terrorist organization in November, 2002. Anyone financing Hamas could therefore be charged with violating the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Canada provides less than 3 per cent of the \$900-million in international aid upon which Palestinians are heavily dependent, but other donors are also questioning whether to continue bankrolling a Hamas-led government.

The Mideast Quartet -- the United States, United Nations, European Union and Russia -- said on Monday they would review their aid unless Hamas renounced violence, recognized Israel and committed itself to the peace roadmap.

Israel added to the Palestinian Authorities' financial woes yesterday when it froze \$55-million in monthly transfer payments to the P.A. The money consists mostly of taxes and customs duties collected from Palestinian merchants.

A Hamas official, Osama Hamdan, said his government would not be "blackmailed" and was already in touch with Arab and Muslim nations about replacing any shortfalls in aid.

CIDA reviews assistance to Palestinians: Hamas victory fallout: Martin government pledged \$62M

After years of living under Yasser Arafat's Fatah, Palestinians shocked the world by electing a Hamas government opposed to any peace agreement with Israelis. Hamas says in its founding charter that the only solution to Palestinian grievances is to destroy Israel through jihad.

According to Canada's Public Safety Ministry, Hamas' aim is "to kill Jews" and that it is "one of the primary groups involved in suicide bombings aimed at Israelis."

The election of a Hamas government is one of the first foreign policy challenges to face Prime Minister-designate Stephen Harper's new Conservative minority government.

At his first news conference since defeating the Liberals, Mr. Harper said he supported a secure Israel and a democratic Palestine but added that "for a nation to be truly democratic that nation must renounce any use of terrorism."

B'nai Brith spokesman Frank Dimant said he was pleased that it was not "business as usual" at CIDA but added that once Mr. Harper had appointed a new foreign minister a more thorough review of Canadian policies towards the Palestinian Authority was needed.

CIDA funding to Palestinians has totalled around \$25-million annually since 2000. Ten million of that goes to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine.

The rest goes to non-governmental organizations such as Oxfam, international agencies such as UNICEF and the World Bank, and federal agencies, to finance programs in the West Bank and Gaza.

These include: a \$4-million vocational training program for Palestinian women; a \$3.5-million teacher training program; and \$3.2-million to help Palestinian municipalities.

Last year, then-Prime Minister Paul Martin promised another \$36.7-million to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority, including a \$6.3-million housing rehabilitation project in partnership with the P.A. Ministry of Public Works and Housing and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. Some of this financing flows through the P.A. Ministry of Finance.

Amnesty International yesterday urged Hamas to stop targeting civilians, calling its campaign of suicide bombings and shelling homes crimes against humanity. "Hamas should publicly renounce this policy, commit to ending such attacks and cooperate in bringing to justice those who plan and take part in them," the human rights group said in a statement.

Load-Date: February 1, 2006

Hamas strives for political legitimacy: Palestinian elections: Voter discontent with corrupt Fatah party fuels support

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

January 18, 2006 Wednesday

All but Toronto Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A10

Length: 1428 words

Byline: Anne Barnard, The Boston Globe

Dateline: NABLUS, West Bank

Body

NABLUS, West Bank - The celebration at the Trade Union Theatre looked more like local politics at its most mundane than a campaign kickoff for Hamas, the best-organized and perhaps most feared of the terrorist groups that have unleashed scores of suicide bombings against Israel.

Banners draped the walls calling for "Change and Reform." Candidates pumped the hands of clerics in cassocks and schoolteachers in grey tweed. A union leader stepped to the microphone to deliver an uplifting, if innocuous, message: "We will all work together to serve the country!"

Party organizers handed out sweet squares of baklava to congratulate the Hamas-backed candidates who had just won 13 of 15 seats on the city council of Nablus, the West Bank's largest city, as a new slate of candidates launched a campaign for Palestinian legislative elections scheduled for Jan. 25.

For the first time, Hamas is plunging wholeheartedly into the electoral battleground, a decision that has thrown Palestinian and Israeli politics into confusion as both sides wonder whether joining an elected Palestinian government will moderate Hamas, or whether Hamas will radicalize the government.

No one is sure whether Hamas's political campaign is a Trojan horse to push Palestinian society closer to Islamic rule and return it to all-out war with Israel, or a sign that the increasingly influential group is becoming more pragmatic.

Hamas's inclusion in the election has drawn criticism from Israeli officials and threats from the United States and Europe to cut off aid to Palestinians. But its campaign has injected new energy into Palestinian politics, giving voters what they see as their first real alternative, if an imperfect one, to the Fatah party founded by Yasser Arafat.

To Israeli officials, even a significant Hamas minority in the Palestinian Legislative Council is a nightmare scenario. Hamas remains officially committed to armed struggle and the abolition of Israel. It rejects the 1993 Oslo Accords, under which Mr. Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization accepted the existence of Israel and agreed to pursue a Palestinian state only in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which Israel has occupied since the 1967 war.

Hamas strives for political legitimacy: Palestinian elections: Voter discontent with corrupt Fatah party fuels support

The U.S. State Department lists **Hamas** as a terrorist organization. But Palestinian voters -- even some who do not share **Hamas**'s vision of an Islamic state and an indefinite armed struggle -- increasingly view **Hamas** as the only viable alternative to Fatah and the leadership of the Palestinian Authority, which they view as weak and corrupt.

"**Hamas**'s victory is no surprise because of the corruption and security chaos that the Palestinian people have been suffering for the past 10 years," said Yasser Mansour, a candidate for the legislature from Nablus who is managing the campaign there, as he greeted visitors at the union hall.

Hamas draws strength from a network of mosques and social service organizations, as well as about 5,000 active fighters. Its branches provide free medical care, schooling and food to the needy, and tend to draw their support from independent businessmen rather than the government employees who support Fatah, the ruling party of the Palestinian Authority.

Hamas aims to capitalize on disarray in Fatah, which is in the throes of a generational split so deep it initially fielded two competing slates for the national elections.

In the municipal elections on Dec. 15, slates of **Hamas** members and affiliated independents -- carefully chosen for the respect they enjoy in their communities -- won 73% of the vote in Nablus, 72% in El Bireh and half the seats in Ramallah, despite the town's large Christian population. Polls suggested that in the national elections, **Hamas** is likely to receive 30% to 40% of the vote, compared with 45% to 50% for Fatah.

Hamas's popularity has grown steadily since 1993, when it commanded the support of 13% of Palestinians, according to Khalil Shikaki, a political scientist who tracks Palestinian and Israeli public opinion. Now, 32% say they support **Hamas**.

Hamas has surged as religious Muslims increasingly defect from Fatah and even some secular Palestinians support **Hamas**'s anti-corruption stance, Mr. Shikaki said.

Hamas was founded in 1984 as a militant outgrowth of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which seeks to establish Islamic law in the neighbouring country.

The name **Hamas** is an acronym for Islamic Resistance Movement, and its members see no contradiction in running for office while continuing to fight Israel. "There is a right to resistance, and our entry into the parliament will legitimize this right," Mr. Mansour said.

Palestinians are ambivalent about the use of violence, opposing further attacks on Israel but believing attacks are effective, according to Mr. Shikaki's work at the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research.

Sixty per cent of Palestinians oppose continued attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip, and 80% favour continuing a truce with Israel that has brought 11 months of relative calm, he found.

Yet in the same survey, 86% also said armed struggle had brought Palestinians their greatest recent gains in the conflict.

Hamas's political leaders are playing down their military wing in their appeal to a broader swath of society.

In the Nablus union hall, banners and buttons featured none of the snapshots of teenage suicide bombers who are lauded as martyrs on older **Hamas** posters plastered around town.

Instead, they showed a more subtle symbol, the Ottoman clock tower in Nablus's old city, which was besieged by Israelis in a 2002 military campaign against militant cells, but which also evokes pride in the city's lineage.

Mr. Mansour said the campaign would focus on internal Palestinian issues -- corruption, security, education, economic development, and health -- and stressed **Hamas**'s reputation for providing charitable services.

Hamas strives for political legitimacy: Palestinian elections: Voter discontent with corrupt Fatah party fuels support

And, like other Hamas leaders in recent months, he signaled that after taking a leading role in the bloody conflict that killed nearly 1,000 Israelis and more than 3,000 Palestinians between 2000 and early 2005, the group is shifting its tactics, at least for now, to take a more pragmatic approach.

Hamas, he said, still wants "Palestine from the river to the sea," and believes in retaking the land from Jordan to the Mediterranean, including Israel. But on the way to that "strategic goal," he said, the group might back negotiations with Israel "under certain circumstances" and would support an "interim solution."

Such language cracks open the door for Hamas to some day accept a state in the West Bank and Gaza only, although Mr. Mansour declined to say if he supports that.

Of all the Palestinian militant groups, Hamas has been the most disciplined in its adherence to the unilateral ceasefire the factions declared last February.

The six suicide bombings during that period have all been claimed by Islamic Jihad, a smaller group that rejects participation in the elections.

Israeli officials dismiss Hamas's campaign as a diversion from its real aim of continuing violent struggle.

"There's no serious evidence whatsoever that Hamas is actually moderating," said Mark Regev, a spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry, noting that Hamas militants kidnapped and stabbed to death an Israeli candy factory owner in September without any public condemnation from the group's leaders.

"If Hamas ever had a dominant position in the PA, that would be the end of the peace process, not because of anything Israel would do but because of who Hamas is," Mr. Regev said. "From Israel's perspective, the Palestinian leadership is making a terrible mistake by letting Hamas run. They're undermining their own democracy because Hamas has not disarmed."

At the reception, women in headscarves bowed in prayer, men chatted on white folding chairs, and a small boy in a green Hamas baseball cap ran around the room wearing a Hamas streamer as a necktie.

In the swirl was Maawiyeh al-Masri, a Hamas-backed candidate for the legislature, who is an emblem of the protest vote that is going to Hamas from many longtime Fatah backers who never thought of themselves as Islamists.

"Their supporters are multiplying not because they support its ideology or strategy, but because they are looking for an alternative, a new way to fight corruption," he said.

Mr. Masri, a member of a wealthy Nablus family known for his charitable donations, decided Hamas was the best vehicle for his mainstream-sounding platform: "Improving the conditions of the Palestinian people -- economic, security and political. The rule of law, and an independent judiciary system."

Graphic

Black & White

Photo: Mohammed Abed, Agence France-Presse, Getty Images; Fethi Hammad, a Hamas candidate for the Jan. 25 Palestinian election, tapes a speech at the temporary studios of Hamas-owned al-Aqsa TV yesterday. The channel, the first private television station in the Gaza Strip, has been operating on a trial basis for a week.

Load-Date: January 18, 2006

Hamas strives for political legitimacy: Palestinian elections: Voter discontent with corrupt Fatah party fuels support

End of Document

Rise of Hamas concerns brewers; Government's beliefs could affect business

USA TODAY

April 10, 2006 Monday

FINAL EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6A

Length: 673 words

Byline: Matthew Gutman

Body

TAYBEH, West Bank -- For Buthina Khoury, whose family owns the only brewery in the Palestinian territories, the election victory of Hamas carries risk.

Hamas advocates a strict, fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, one in which alcohol would presumably be forbidden.

So by June, the Khourys' Taybeh Brewing Co. will have introduced its first non-alcoholic beer.

"The times are changing, and we don't want to lose out," Khoury says, snapping off a bottle cap and pouring a rich-bodied Taybeh Dark, one of three beers the family makes.

Hamas, labeled a terrorist group by the U.S. State Department, rode to victory in elections Jan. 25 on a reputation of effectiveness and integrity. It positioned itself as a contrast to the corruption-plagued ruling Fatah faction.

Now Hamas has some Palestinians concerned it will move to ban alcohol and impose restrictions on women.

Khoury, a member of the Palestinian Christian minority, predicts Hamas "will change our social lives." She expects beer to be banned and women to be required to cover their heads.

Iyad Barghouti, director of the Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies, says many Palestinians have sought solace in Islam since the Palestinian uprising, or intifada, began in 2000. "Even before Hamas' victory, religion was on the rise," Barghouti says.

Hamas anchored its election campaign on a simple slogan: "Islam is the solution."

Islam forbids Muslims from consuming alcohol. Since 2000, the sale of alcoholic beverages has been banned in Gaza, where the two largest Palestinian Islamic factions -- Hamas and Islamic Jihad -- are based.

In the more secular West Bank, drinking and pubs remain legal. But even here there are signs of change: More women are putting on head scarves before going out in public.

Rise of Hamas concerns brewers Government's beliefs could affect business

Farid Dibwani's textile shop in the West Bank city of Ramallah has become a hub for popular new "slip-on" head scarves. "I can't sell a bolt of cloth, but (head scarves) are hot," Dibwani says.

Likewise, Ala Salhab's family owns a lingerie shop in downtown Ramallah. Turkish-made bustiers and black garter belts are gathering dust on the shelves. "Our new best-selling item is the (head scarf)," Salhab says.

On his first week on the job, Interior Minister Said Siyam announced that men in the Palestinian paramilitary forces would be permitted to grow beards. Under Fatah, paramilitary police were not allowed to have beards, which are seen as a sign of piety in Islam.

Hamas leaders say no sweeping social restrictions are planned.

"We have no intention of drastic changes ... but I believe that Islam should be an elemental part of this society," says Muhammad Abu T'eir, a **Hamas** lawmaker elected to the legislature in January.

When it comes to Taybeh's plans, Abu T'eir points out, even non-alcoholic beer is haram, or forbidden, by Islam. "I would never drink anything called 'beer,'" he says.

The rise of **Hamas** meant "the time was right to diversify," Khoury says, showing off the new bottle for Taybeh's alcohol-free beer. Both the bottle and label are green -- the color of Islam and **Hamas**.

Taybeh means "delicious" in Arabic. The brewery, which sells 300,000 bottles a year of its most popular brand, Taybeh Golden Pilsner, dates back more than 10 years. Khoury's brothers, David and Nadim, returned to this village after living for 20 years in Boston. They invested \$2 million into building a tidy brewery across from an olive grove on the edge of town.

For the first five years, Taybeh beer flowed in Palestinian and Israeli pubs and was even sold abroad. Business started declining when the intifada erupted: To stop suicide bombers, Israel expanded its network of West Bank checkpoints, making deliveries all but impossible. Israelis stopped drinking Taybeh as suicide attacks by Palestinians increased.

The Khourys' brewery suffered an 80% slump in business during the uprising. It cut its workforce from 15 to five.

Avant-Garde, a Tel Aviv pub, used to offer Taybeh beer. "Nobody asks for it anymore," manager Lior Boim says. "We haven't sold it since the intifada started."

Load-Date: April 10, 2006

In a Stronghold, Fatah Fights To Beat Back a Rising Hamas

The New York Times

January 23, 2006 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 2; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1621 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER

Dateline: NABLUS, West Bank, Jan. 20

Body

Nasser Joumaa, pale and thin, was facing some tough questions from his own Fatah members.

"Our generation is being ignored," said a tall, bearded man in a small house, packed and cloudy with cigarette smoke, as more young men listened at the windows. "Where are the respected people to vote for on Fatah's list? Not you, Nasser, but there are corrupted people in this list."

Mr. Joumaa, 39 and respected here for his military and political prowess, looked pained. "I share your concerns," he said. "People are angry with Fatah and its performance, and so am I. I'm one of the angry members of Fatah. But we express our anger inside. We face a bigger challenge now from Hamas, and in a difficult situation we stand together."

Fatah, the mainstay of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestine Liberation Organization, is in trouble, even here in Nablus, one of the West Bank's toughest and largest cities, and a longtime stronghold for the group. Fatah is struggling to beat back the radical Islamic movement Hamas -- which won an astonishing 13 of Nablus's 15 local council seats a month ago, and elected an efficient, worldly yet devout mayor, Adli Yaish.

Palestinians vote Wednesday in elections for a new legislature, the first such vote in a decade. The United States, which lists Hamas as a terrorist organization, has quietly spent almost \$2 million on dozens of quick projects to strengthen Fatah's hand, American and Palestinian officials say. [Page 10]

The coming vote is the first time that Hamas has run in elections for roles within the Palestinian Authority -- because the authority was set up in the 1993 Oslo accords with Israel, which Hamas is committed to destroy.

But Mr. Joumaa is convinced that Hamas means to destroy Fatah first, if not now then by stages, and he warns Fatah members not to lose sight of the longer battle.

"Hamas talks of partnership with Fatah, but it wants to replace Fatah," he said. "We have power and authority, and we can't just give it up. We don't know Hamas's real program or goals, or to whom they will be subject. We cannot leave ourselves in Hamas's control."

Nablus is a stunning city, set in a steep valley, founded by the Romans in A.D. 72 and proud of its ancient aqueducts. It is the second-largest city in the West Bank, with some 325,000 people. But it has also been severely

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affected by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially in the last five years, with the highest number of casualties, most severe physical damage and most intensive restrictions on movement in the West Bank, according to a report issued by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in December. Fatah and the Palestinian Authority are paying the price for the economy and the border closures, as well as for Fatah's reputation for corruption.

Palestinian opinion polls vary, but all show that Fatah still leads Hamas, but not by much, and Hamas seems to be gaining. Fatah has 42 percent to Hamas's 35 percent, according to pollster Khalil Shikaki of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research; it has 35 percent to Hamas's 30 percent, with a larger number of undecided voters, according to Nader Said, a poll director for Birzeit University in Ramallah. Both polls have margins of error of at least 2 percent, but both show Fatah holding onto a majority, especially in coalition with other secular candidate lists like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, that of the independent Mustafa Barghouti, and another independent list called the Third Way, headed by the former finance minister Salam Fayyad, the likely next prime minister.

Both independent lists are getting aid from European and American supporters. But Fatah and Mr. Joumaa are worried that those competing independents, especially in constituencies, where many are also using the Fatah symbol, could allow Hamas candidates to win with small pluralities. Each voter will cast two ballots. Half of the 132 seats will be determined by votes for party lists, and half by votes in 16 local districts, which are harder to predict through polling.

So Fatah is trying to overcome its internal hatreds and unite, at the end, to face down Hamas, including pressing Fatah members running independently to withdraw. It is not easy for some in Fatah, upset that Hamas is even being allowed to take part. Fatah activists in the Balata refugee camp in Nablus insist they will not allow the elections to proceed, and there are worries of election-day violence.

Mr. Joumaa has reasons to be angry with Fatah's leader, President Mahmoud Abbas, who mismanaged its party primaries, finally scrapping them. Mr. Joumaa was a top member of a rival slate of 40-somethings led by the jailed leader Marwan Barghouti and was unhappy when that slate was merged with the official Fatah one. He is No. 18 on the list, so will be elected to the new legislature (as will Marwan Barghouti, who is No. 1), and his posters show him with Mr. Barghouti and the slogan: "Only the shoulders of the fighters can raise the torches of freedom. Vote for Fatah."

It has been an extraordinary personal journey for Mr. Joumaa, who spent 14 months in a Palestinian prison beginning in 1996, when older Fatah figures accused him of disloyalty. He was tortured there, and watched his best friend die there from torture, but then became the commander of Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades in Nablus. He was wanted by the Israelis and kept hidden, even as his mother was dying, 15 months ago, from cancer. When her body was laid out in a crowded mosque, however, he slipped in to pay last respects.

With the cease-fire brokered by Mr. Abbas early in 2005, Mr. Joumaa is no longer being hunted. He has laid aside his arms -- for good, he hopes -- and turned to Fatah politics, one of the young men toughened by a life under Israeli occupation and by Palestinian misrule. Between Sept. 29, 2000, and Oct. 31, 2005, 522 Palestinians were killed in Nablus, including 80 children and 28 women -- 27.8 percent of all West Bank Palestinians killed, according to the December United Nations report.

A center for Palestinian militancy, Nablus is surrounded by six Israeli checkpoints and 53 other physical obstacles to travel, and by 14 Israeli settlements and 26 settlement outposts. But with the cease-fire, the number of military incursions and curfews has dropped and some of the obstacles have been removed, and the number of deaths and injuries has dropped considerably from 2004.

So there is some new optimism here, but not much confidence, and many men still have difficulty getting permission to travel out of Nablus.

Mr. Yaish, the new Hamas mayor here, only three weeks in office, is an example of why the group is doing well. He is devout, but wealthy from auto parts and a Mercedes agency. He studied mechanical engineering in England

In a Stronghold, Fatah Fights To Beat Back a Rising Hamas

from 1970 to 1975 and speaks English fluently; he speaks the modern language of efficiency and budget oversight; he keeps a picture of Yasir Arafat in his office and not Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the **Hamas** leader killed by Israel in March 2004.

"This is a government office," Mr. Yaish said. "President Abbas said to leave the photos of Arafat in offices, so we left it. Sheik Yassin was not elected, and this is not my house."

Mr. Yaish agrees that some people will vote differently on national and local issues, and he expects **Hamas** to get nowhere close to the 73 percent of the local vote it received a month ago. "We want partnership with Fatah," he said. "Democracy is competition and makes us stronger."

Hamas in the legislature will monitor government work, especially finances and accounts, to prevent corruption, he said, and to improve tax collection. "The same party as judge and jury is not good," he said. "If there is no oversight, even a good man can be tempted."

Hamas opposes negotiations with Israel, but Mr. Yaish thinks its presence in the legislature will stiffen the Palestinian Authority's back in dealings with Israel. "I don't like the Palestinian Authority to negotiate from a weak position," Mr. Yaish said, pragmatically. "We're occupied, and I want my government to talk harder to Israel."

Mouna Mansour is another **Hamas** candidate, 44 years old, a physics teacher and the widow of a famous local **Hamas** leader, Jamal Mansour, who was assassinated in 2001 by an Israeli missile strike on his office. His colleague and six others, including two children, also died in what the State Department then called "excessive" and "a new and dangerous escalation."

Today, Mrs. Mansour lives in a building named for her husband in an apartment filled with his "martyrdom" posters. She is practical and straightforward. "**Hamas** wants to be in the legislature to protect the resistance against occupation," she said. "It is our strategic choice. Our political role is to back the resistance."

But resistance is not just arms and bombs, she insists. "Resistance is also the farmer steadfast on his land, or the factory worker hiring as many as he can and making local products," she said.

"We will be partners with Fatah," she said. "The role of the legislature is accountability."

Should the cease-fire with Israel continue? "It's needed for a period of time, because our people are exhausted by the occupation," she said, and then added, smiling: "It's a time for the warriors to rest up."

That is exactly what Israel warns, that **Hamas** has not changed its goals.

Mr. Yaish says benignly: "I say to the world with open heart: 'Don't worry so much.'"

Mr. Joumaa thinks differently. "**Hamas** wants to infiltrate the institutions and take over," he said. "I think a Palestinian state now is farther away."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: With an election days away, supporters of the radical Islamic movement **Hamas** held a campaign rally yesterday in the West Bank city of Nablus. (Photo by Emilio Morenatti/Associated Press)

In a Stronghold, Fatah Fights To Beat Back a Rising Hamas

Nasser Joumaa, left, a Fatah leader, greeting a supporter in Nablus. (Photo by Rina Castelnovo for The New York Times)(pg. A1)

Mouna Mansour, right, a **Hamas** candidate in Wednesday's legislative elections, campaigned in villages around Nablus on Friday.

Hamas's Adli Yaish, the mayor of Nablus, keeps a picture of Yasir Arafat in his office. He says **Hamas** wants a partnership with Fatah.

Palestinians in Nablus listened to a recent talk by Fatah's Nasser Joumaa, once the commander of Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades in the West Bank city. (Photographs by Rina Castelnovo for The New York Times)(pg. A11)Map of The West Bank, Israel, highlighting Nablus: Fatah is in trouble even in its longtime stronghold of Nablus. (pg. A11)

Load-Date: January 23, 2006

Big trouble for Fatah; Even in Nablus, Hamas is surging

The International Herald Tribune

January 23, 2006 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1126 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger

Dateline: NABLUS, West Bank

Body

Nasser Joumaa, pale and thin, was facing some tough questions from his own Fatah members.

"Our generation is being ignored," said a tall, bearded man in a small house, packed and cloudy with cigarette smoke, as more young men listened at the windows. "Where are the respected people to vote for on Fatah's list? Not you, Nasser, but there are corrupted people in this list."

Joumaa, 39 and respected here for his military and political prowess, looked pained. "I share your concerns," he said. "People are angry with Fatah and its performance, and so am I. I'm one of the angry members of Fatah. But we express our anger inside. We face a bigger challenge now from Hamas, and in a difficult situation we stand together."

Fatah, the mainstay of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestine Liberation Organization, is in trouble, even here in Nablus, a longtime stronghold for the group. It is struggling to beat back the surging radical Islamic movement, Hamas which won an astonishing 13 of 15 Nablus's local council seats a month ago and reawaken traditional loyalties. Palestinians vote on Wednesday in elections for a new legislature, the first such vote in a decade.

It is also the first time that Hamas has run in elections for roles within the Palestinian Authority because the authority was set up in the 1993 Oslo accords with Israel, which Hamas is committed to destroy.

But Joumaa is convinced that Hamas means to destroy Fatah first, if not now then by stages, and he warns Fatah members not to lose sight of the longer battle. "Hamas talks of partnership with Fatah, but it wants to replace Fatah," he told the Fatah members here. "We have power and authority, and we can't just give it up. We don't know Hamas's real program or goals, or to whom they will be subject. We cannot leave ourselves in Hamas's control."

Opinion polls vary, but all show that Fatah leads Hamas, though not by much. Fatah has 42 percent to Hamas's 35 percent, said the pollster Khalil Shikaki of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research; it has 35 percent to Hamas's 30 percent, with a larger number of undecided voters, said Nader Said, a poll director for Birzeit University in Ramallah.

Both polls have margins of error of at least 2 percent, but both show Fatah holding onto a majority, especially in coalition with other secular lists like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, that of the independent Mustafa Barghouti, and another independent list called the Third Way, headed by the former finance minister Salam Fayyad, the likely next prime minister.

Big trouble for Fatah Even in Nablus, Hamas is surging

Both independent lists are getting aid from European and U.S. supporters. But Fatah and Joumaa are worried that these competing independents, especially in constituencies where many are also using the Fatah symbol, could allow Hamas candidates to win with small pluralities. Each voter will cast two ballots. Half of the 132 seats will be determined by votes for party lists, and half by votes in 16 local districts, which are harder to predict through polling.

So Fatah is trying to overcome its internal hatreds and unite, at the end, to face down Hamas, including pressing Fatah members running independently to withdraw. It is not easy for some in Fatah, upset that Hamas is even being allowed to participate. Fatah activists in Nablus's Balata refugee camp insist they will not allow the elections to proceed, and there are worries of election-day violence.

Joumaa has reasons to be angry with Fatah's leader, the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, who mismanaged its party primaries, finally scrapping them. Joumaa was a key member of a rival slate led by the jailed leader Marwan Barghouti and was unhappy when that slate was merged with the official Fatah one. He is No. 18 on the list, so will be elected to the new legislature, as will Marwan Barghouti, who is No. 1.

It has been an extraordinary personal journey for Joumaa, who spent 14 months in a Palestinian prison beginning in 1996 and who was tortured there, and watched his best friend die there from torture, and who then became the commander of the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades in Nablus, one of the toughest and largest cities in the West Bank. He was wanted by the Israelis and kept hidden, even as his mother was dying, 15 months ago, from cancer.

With the truce, Joumaa is no longer being hunted. He has put down his weapon for good, he hopes and turned to politics, one of the men toughened by a life under Israeli occupation.

Nablus is a stunning city, set in a steep valley, founded by the Romans in 72 A.D. It is the second-largest governorate in the West Bank, with about 325,000 people. But it has also been severely affected by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with the highest number of casualties, most severe physical damage and most intensive restrictions on movement in the West Bank, according to a December 2005 report issued by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Between Sept. 29, 2000, and Oct. 31, 2005, 522 Palestinians were killed in Nablus, including 80 children and 28 women 27.8 percent of all West Bank Palestinians killed, the report said.

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So there is new optimism here, but not much confidence, and many men still have difficulty getting permission to travel out of Nablus. Fatah and the Palestinian Authority are paying the price for the economy and the closures, as well as for Fatah's reputation for corruption.

Adly Yaish, the new mayor, only three weeks in office, is an example of why Hamas is doing well. He is devout, but wealthy from auto parts and a Mercedes agency. He studied mechanical engineering in England from 1970 to 1975 and speaks English fluently; he speaks the modern language of efficiency and budget oversight; he keeps a picture of Yasser Arafat in his office and not Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the Hamas leader killed by Israel in March 2004. "This is a government office," Yaish said.

Yaish expects Hamas to get nowhere close to the 73 percent of the local vote it received a month ago. "We want partnership with Fatah," he said. "Democracy is competition and makes us stronger."

Hamas in the legislature will monitor government work, especially finances and accounts, to prevent corruption, he said. It will also ensure that any negotiations with Israel will be more aggressive. "I don't like the Palestinian Authority to negotiate from a weak position," Yaish said. "We're occupied, and I want my government to talk harder to Israel."

Big trouble for Fatah Even in Nablus, Hamas is surging

End of Document

Where does Hamas stand?

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

January 28, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. C13

Length: 267 words

Byline: Associated Press

Body

Some of the main points from the 36 articles of the **Hamas** charter dated Aug. 18, 1988:

On **Hamas**:

The group "owes its loyalty to Allah, derives from Islam its way of life and strives to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine."

"Its ultimate goal is Islam, the Prophet its model, the Qur'an its Constitution."

The destruction of Israel:

"Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it."

"There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavours."

The dangers posed by Zionism:

"After Palestine, the Zionists aspire to expand from the Nile (in Egypt) to the Euphrates (in Iraq). When they have digested the region they overtook, they will aspire to further expansion and so on."

Zionism's operations:

"(Zionism) does not refrain from resorting to all methods, using all evil and contemptible ways to achieve its end. It relies greatly in its infiltration and espionage operations on the secret organizations it gave rise to, such as the Freemasons, The Rotary and Lions clubs, and other sabotage groups. . . . They aim at undermining societies, destroying values, corrupting consciences, deteriorating character and annihilating Islam. It is behind the drug trade and alcoholism in all its kinds so as to facilitate its control and expansion."

On **Women**:

"Muslim **women** have a no lesser role than that of men in the war of liberation; they manufacture men and play a great role in guiding and educating the 'new' generation."

Where does Hamas stand?

Load-Date: January 28, 2006

End of Document

Hamas political power emerges; Militant group affiliates run for parliament

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

January 22, 2006 Sunday

Home Edition

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: NEWS; Pg. 15A

Length: 560 words

Byline: CRAIG NELSON

Body

Rafah, Gaza Strip --- Armed rivals shut down election offices in an attempt to scuttle the balloting. A foreign power threatens to intervene and block the electoral aspirations of a leading party, which has decided to participate in the democratic political process for the first time.

Against this formidable opposition, the party's candidates and their supporters are determined to press ahead with the balloting. They hold rallies. They distribute brochures door to door. They mount party flags on lampposts and rooftops.

It is retail politics at its finest.

Were this Iraq, there would an outpouring of international praise for what probably would be called an irrepressible thirst for democracy.

But this is the Gaza Strip and the resolute candidates belong to the Islamic militant group **Hamas**, which has carried out dozens of suicide bombings against Israel and is classified by the Bush administration as a terrorist organization.

Still, with only a few days before the Palestinians' first parliamentary elections in a decade, maybe the most feared of all armed groups fighting Israel is poised to become a major force in how the 3.8 million Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are governed.

Hamas stands to win at least 26 percent of the vote in Wednesday's balloting, versus 38 percent for the ruling Fatah movement led by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, according to a public opinion poll released last week by the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

To an increasing number of Palestinians, the appeal of **Hamas** is simple: Unlike the ruling Fatah movement with its reputation for corruption and incompetence, **Hamas** is seen as honest and disciplined both as a militant group and in the extensive charitable work it performs.

Hamis political power emerges Militant group affiliates run for parliament

Most of all, many Palestinians say it has shared their suffering.

"People trust us and they have tried us. We have succeeded socially, politically and militarily," Jamila al-Shanpi, a **Hamas** candidate, told some 800 children and veiled **women** gathered at a raucous campaign rally in a wedding hall festooned with red Chinese paper lanterns.

Shanpi is a 48-year-old with a degree in English literature who teaches at the Islamic University in Gaza City and runs a kindergarten.

To many Gazans, she epitomizes a vital --- and they believe often-overlooked --- face of **Hamas**.

Yet no one is quite certain what the political emergence of the secretive, highly disciplined military and social service organization means.

Is its decision to participate in democratic elections part of a Trojan horse-scheme to seize absolute power, impose strict Islamic law in the Palestinian territories and create an armed juggernaut aimed at achieving its official goal of wiping out Israel?

Or is it a sign that the group has become more pragmatic due to pressure from other Palestinians --- a majority of whom, according to Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki, oppose attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip and want the current truce with Israel to continue?

The outcome of **Hamas**' entry into a Palestinian government, which until now has been dominated by the secular nationalists of Fatah, is no less uncertain.

Like many parliamentary systems, the key decisions will come in the days following the elections, when the party that has won the most votes tries to cobble together a ruling majority.

Graphic

Photo: ADEL HANA / Associated Press Palestinian **women** political candidates from **Hamas** stand together in front of a banner during a rally for the upcoming parliamentary elections in Gaza City. The Islamic group is seen by many Palestinians as honest and disciplined. Many Palestinians say the organization has shared their suffering through the years of Mideast violence.

Photo: Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas faces pressure if **Hamas** wins big in the elections.

Load-Date: January 22, 2006

Israel Rejects Hamas Terms For Exchange Of Prisoners

The New York Times

July 11, 2006 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 4; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8

Length: 929 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE; Steven Erlanger contributed reporting from Gaza City for this article.

Dateline: JERUSALEM, July 10

Body

In dueling news conferences, the exiled political leader of the militant group Hamas said Monday that Israel's captured soldier would not be freed without the release of Palestinian prisoners, and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel ruled out any negotiations with Hamas.

Despite hints of behind-the-scenes deals that could involve the release of Palestinian prisoners at a later stage, Mr. Olmert forcefully rejected dealing with Hamas, which runs the Palestinian government and is one of the groups that claimed responsibility for seizing the soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, on June 25.

"I think that trading prisoners with a bloody terror organization such as Hamas is a major mistake," Mr. Olmert said at a news conference in Jerusalem. "I want it to be very clear: I don't negotiate with Hamas, I did not negotiate with Hamas and I will not negotiate with Hamas."

Shortly after he spoke, the exiled director of the Hamas political bureau, Khaled Meshal, held his own news conference in Damascus, Syria.

"The solution is simple: exchange prisoners," Mr. Meshal said. "There will be no freedom for the Israeli prisoner without an exchange involving Palestinian detainees."

Mr. Meshal was also critical of the United States and other Western countries for placing so much emphasis on one Israeli soldier when Israel was holding nearly 9,000 Palestinian prisoners.

"The aggression did not start with the imprisonment of the soldier," Mr. Meshal said. Speaking of Israel's current operations in Gaza, where it has been carrying out the first incursions since withdrawing almost a year ago, he said, "Israel is practicing state terrorism and is in violation of international law."

He said that Corporal Shalit had been seized in a "clean military operation" and that Hamas considered him a prisoner of war.

In Gaza, the International Committee of the Red Cross said it had offered to mediate and had sought to see the corporal but had not received a response from the Palestinians.

Israel Rejects Hamas Terms For Exchange Of Prisoners

Israeli airstrikes killed seven Palestinians in four separate attacks on Monday, said Palestinian security officials, medical workers and journalists. Four of the dead were militants, the Palestinians said. Several people were wounded, including an 8-year-old girl, medical workers said.

In one of the attacks, on Monday evening, an Israeli missile killed three unarmed teenagers who were near a site where militants were firing rockets from Beit Hanun in northeast Gaza, Palestinian journalists said. The Israeli military said that it had fired at militants who were launching two rockets there, and that it was checking the Palestinian report on the casualties.

Since Israel began its offensive nearly two weeks ago, about 50 Palestinians have been killed, most of them militants, but also several civilians. One Israeli soldier was killed, but the military concluded that he had been hit by Israeli gunfire.

While there are no signs of a breakthrough, some Israeli officials have suggested that Israel could release some Palestinian prisoners if several things happened first: the release of the Israeli soldier, a halt in the rocket fire from Gaza aimed at Israeli towns, and a renewed and more formal cease-fire.

The Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniya of Hamas, called Saturday for a mutual cease-fire, which Israel rejected as long as its soldier was held.

Mr. Olmert told his cabinet on Sunday that before Corporal Shalit had been seized, Israel had been prepared to hand over some prisoners to the Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas, who opposes attacks on Israel and seeks a resumption of negotiations.

The soldier's father, Noam Shalit, has spoken out in favor of a deal to resolve the crisis, and opinion polls indicate that a solid majority of Israelis support his position. "I say again, I think it is clear to everyone that we won't get something for nothing in the Middle East," Mr. Shalit told Israel radio.

Israeli leaders say they believe that a tough military response will discourage the Palestinians from seizing soldiers, firing rockets and carrying out other attacks.

Some European countries have criticized Israel's military actions, describing them as disproportionate and imposing too many hardships on civilians. Mr. Olmert replied that the critics' attention should be on the daily Palestinian rocket fire from northern Gaza into southern Israel.

"When was the last time that the European Union condemned this shooting and suggested effective measures to stop it?" he said. "At some point Israel had no choice but to take some measures."

The European Union has regularly called on Palestinian militants not to fire rockets into Israel.

Mr. Olmert said Israel's withdrawal from Gaza last year had raised hopes that the strip and the surrounding region of southern Israel would be calm. He acknowledged that the recent Israeli military actions had made life difficult for impoverished Gazans, but blamed the armed Palestinian factions.

"The people of Gaza deserve to have a different quality of life, and what we wanted was a quiet and peaceful border," Mr. Olmert said. "But there hasn't been a day of rest for the people inside Israel."

The Gaza crisis has put in abeyance Mr. Olmert's main political initiative, his "realignment" plan, which calls for removing some Jewish settlements from the West Bank.

"The concept of realignment is basically a concept of gradually separating the Israelis and the Palestinians," he said. "We want to separate in a friendly manner and live alongside each other."

Graphic

Photo: Bedouin women in Gaza, one holding a white flag to signal that they are unarmed, riding a cart to Dahaniya to take shelter from the fighting. (Photo by Emilio Morenatti/Associated Press)

Load-Date: July 11, 2006

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Warm and Fuzzy TV, Brought to You by Hamas

The New York Times

January 18, 2006 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 3; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1; Gaza Journal

Length: 1141 words

Byline: By CRAIG S. SMITH

Dateline: GAZA, Jan. 13

Body

Hey kids, it's Uncle Hazim time!

Hazim Sharawi, whose stage name is Uncle Hazim, is a quiet, doe-eyed young man who has an easy way with children and will soon preside over a children's television show here on which he'll cavort with men in larger-than-life, fake-fur animal suits on the Gaza Strip's newest television station, Al Aksa TV.

But Captain Kangaroo this is not. The station, named for Islam's third holiest site, is owned by Hamas, the people who helped make suicide bombing a household term.

"Our television show will have a message, but without getting into the tanks, the guns, the killing and the blood," said Mr. Sharawi, sitting in the broadcast studio where he will produce his show.

"I will show them our rights through the history," he said, "show them, 'This is Nablus, this is Gaza, this is Al Aksa mosque, which is with the Israelis and should be in our hands.'"

The new station is part of the militant Palestinian group's strategy to broaden its role in Palestinian politics and society, much as Hezbollah did in Lebanon. The station began broadcasting terrestrially on Jan. 7, and Hamas is working on a satellite version that would give it an even wider reach, like Hezbollah's Al Manar TV, which is watched throughout the Arab world.

"Their success encouraged us," said Fathi Hammad, Al Aksa TV's director. He said that Hamas had tried to find an existing broadcaster to accept its programming but that no one would take it.

"The Arab satellite broadcasters Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya both turned us down," he said, sitting beneath the seal of Hamas, which depicts the Dome of the Rock (which stands alongside Al Aksa mosque in Jerusalem) between crossed swords and an idealized map of Palestine. "Even Iraq and Saudi Arabia refused."

In 2003, after the Palestinian Authority granted Hamas a broadcast license covering both radio and television, the group started the Voice of Al Aksa, which quickly became one of the most popular radio stations in the Gaza Strip. It took more than two years to assemble the expertise and equipment necessary to start the television station.

Warm and Fuzzy TV, Brought to You by Hamas

The current 12 hours of daily television programming, which has the unfinished look of public-access cable television in the United States, consists primarily of readings from the Koran, religious discourse and discussions of women's issues, such as Islamic fashion, child-rearing tips and the right of women to work, which Hamas supports. It will eventually feature a sort of Islamic MTV, with Hamas-produced music videos using footage from the group's fights with Israeli troops. There will even be a talent search show, a distant echo of "American Idol."

But its biggest star will be Mr. Sharawi, whose radio show for children was the Voice of Al Aksa's biggest hit.

Mr. Sharawi, 27, wearing a long black leather coat with a hood over a green suit and tie, fixed with a pin, looks like a straight-and-narrow Sunday school teacher. In fact, he got his start working with children at his mosque while studying geology at Islamic University in Gaza. His hair is parted in the middle, his beard trimmed as neatly as a suburban lawn.

He said the head of Hamas's radio station spotted him leading children's games at his mosque and asked him to do a children's radio show two years ago. The show has become so popular, his appearances at occasional Hamas-sponsored festivals draw as many as 10,000 children at a time.

Mr. Sharawi will not take visitors to see him do his radio broadcast because the studio's location is a heavily guarded secret. In 2004, an Israeli Apache helicopter fired three rockets into the station's previous studio not long after Mr. Sharawi and his colleagues had fled.

Everybody involved in the television station is worried about another attack, but Mr. Sharawi said he is ready to die if it comes. "The messengers don't care if they lose their lives for the sake of revealing the message," he said.

As he describes it, his television show, which begins in a few weeks, will teach children the basics of militant Palestinian politics -- the disputed status of Jerusalem, Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and the Palestinian refugees' demand for a right to return to the lands they lost to Israel in the 1948 war -- without showing the violence that Hamas's pursuit of those goals entails.

The show will alternate between Uncle Hazim and his animal characters in the studio taking live phone calls from children and video clips recorded outside. Mr. Sharawi said he would leaven the sober and pedantic material with fun and games, including such standards as egg-and-spoon races, eating apples on a string or "tug of war, which will show children that the more you cooperate with others, the more you win."

Mr. Sharawi said he would dress up in different costumes to suit the show's locale: a sailor suit while taping on the beach, a track suit when in the park, even a Boy Scout uniform while hiking through the small patches of empty land that serve as Gaza's wilderness.

"We will invite real Boy Scouts to come and talk to us about camping," Mr. Sharawi said, warming to his theme (the Palestinian Scout Association is a member of the World Organization of the Scout Movement).

Through it all, Mr. Sharawi will be accompanied by animal-costumed sidekicks to provide comic relief. Hamas will rent the Egyptian-made plush costumes -- a fox, a rabbit, a dog, a bear and a chicken, already gray and matted from wear -- from a production company run by a Hamas supporter who has just emerged from two years in Israeli jails.

When asked if the animals will have names, Mr. Sharawi looked slightly nonplussed and said: "Bob. Bob the Fox, for example."

He said he was inspired by a children's program on Saudi television in which a young veiled woman and a Mickey Mouse-like character take calls from kids. Fingering a string of bright green plastic prayer beads, a pale blue prayer rug lying on the chair beside him, he tries to reconcile Hamas's bloody attacks that kill innocent children with his role as mentor.

Warm and Fuzzy TV, Brought to You by Hamas

"These are one of the means used by the Palestinians against Israel's F-16's and tanks," he said of the suicide attacks, giving a stock answer. "We're doing our best to avoid involving children in these issues, but I cannot turn the children's lives into a beautiful garden while outside it's the contrary."

He gets up to fiddle with a magnesium light stand in the studio, which is furnished with five beige upholstered chairs and a dusty desk in front of a rattan screen decorated with plastic grape leaves.

The show, which will be broadcast on Friday mornings, the beginning of the Muslim weekend, will be preceded by an hour of cartoons, including a serialized life of the Prophet Muhammad, and that universal send-up of deadly conflict, Tom & Jerry.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: A Palestinian family watching Al Aksa TV at home in Gaza City. The television station, owned by **Hamas**, began broadcasting this month. (Photo by Khalil Hamra for The New York Times)(pg. A4)

Hazim Sharawi, also known as Uncle Hazim, with two of the animal characters from his new children's show on Al Aksa TV in Gaza. (Photo by Khalil Hamra for The New York Times)(pg. A1)

Load-Date: January 18, 2006

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**TO SERVE THE NATIONAL CITY AND THROUGH IT THE NATION; Hamas has
staked legitimate claim**

Canberra Times (Australia)

January 28, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. B04

Length: 972 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

THAT the victory of the Islamic Resistance Movement, or Hamas, in this week's Palestinian parliamentary elections has caused consternation in Israel, the United States and Europe is hardly surprising. Hamas's ideology calls for the destruction of Israel and the establishment of an Islamic state over "every inch of Palestine". It has blood on its hands, having orchestrated many deadly terrorist attacks on Israelis. Israel, in turn, has not hesitated to hunt down and execute or jail Hamas leaders and terrorist operatives.

The possibility that Hamas, as a legitimate partner in the Palestinian Government, will ever be able to sit down with Israel and negotiate a peaceful settlement to the Middle East's most intractable geopolitical conundrum seems remote, even impossible.

Yet there is some rationale for allowing a more sanguine view of Hamas's unexpected success. The most important of these is Hamas's very decision to contest the elections.

It is the first time it has contested a parliamentary vote, and it suggests a belief and ambition among Hamas leaders that the group can prosper further through legitimate means than it has done up till now as an outlawed terrorist group.

Hamas was always more than that for Palestinians (providing as it does welfare and community services that are significantly better than those provided by the Palestinian Authority) but it has remained a pariah on the international stage. History is replete with examples of terrorist groups having come in from the cold to transform themselves into legitimate, respected political forces.

Indeed, Fatah, the vehicle used by Yasser Arafat in his rise to the top of Palestinian politics, and which did so dismally in the election, began as a terrorist organisation devoted to guerrilla attacks on Israel. Of course, Hamas has not renounced any of its goals, as US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, and Israeli political leader Benjamin Netanyahu pointed out after the poll results were announced. For them, Hamas is beyond the pale, and will not be granted any legitimacy until it forsakes its violent ideology.

Hamas will not do that, at least not in the foreseeable future, and nor will it give up its aim of winning back Israel, but it has given a commitment to an indefinite ceasefire, a de facto recognition of the legitimacy of Israel. As much as Hamas is detested outside of Gaza and the West Bank, the organisation has now earned itself a veneer of

TO SERVE THE NATIONAL CITY AND THROUGH IT THE NATION Hamas has staked legitimate claim

respectability by embracing the democratic process, and George W. Bush cannot, after commending the emergence of democracy in Palestine since the death of Yasser Arafat in November 2004, now exclude them entirely from any determination of Palestine's future.

Considering the failure of Fatah and the Palestinian Authority to advance either the cause of peace or the well-being of ordinary Palestinians, Hamas's emergence on to the political stage will be, if nothing else, a circuit-breaker.

It was clear to all that Yasser Arafat had become an impediment to the peace processes up to the time of his death - indeed his sole preoccupation appeared to be the retention of personal power. His successor as leader, Mahmoud Abbas, together with Prime Minister Ahmed Queria, have made some progress in dismantling Arafat's nepotistic, corrupt and avaricious administration, but they and their lieutenants are themselves tainted by their roles in the ancient regime. Fatah, or at least its older guard who spent time in exile with Arafat, have not impressed as a disciplined and energetic organisation of ideas and action, and perhaps deserve their rejection. It's still unclear if Hamas will govern alone or in a coalition with Fatah. The young turks of Fatah (one of whom includes the influential Marwan Barghouti, who won a seat from his Israeli prison) are thought to be much closer to the politicians of Hamas than they are to their party's old guard, so a coalition would not be surprising.

Some hard-line critics of Hamas, notably leader of Israel's right-wing Likud Party Benjamin Netanyahu, suggest the win will herald the emergence of an Iran-style theocracy in Palestine. It's true that Hamas champions Islamist values, but the suggestion ignores the reality that Palestine is one of the most secular and educated societies in the Arab world. Fatah itself is a secular organisation, as is the Palestinian Authority. The veil, for instance, is common among women in the Hamas stronghold of Gaza, but relatively rare in West Bank cities. However, pejorative readings of Hamas's likely social intentions do not matter at this point. Palestinians have voted in open and fair elections for a group that shows every sign that it is prepared to use political rather than violent means to achieve its short-term goals, and which seems anxious to reassure the world of its intentions.

Hamas's triumph will increase the stakes in Israel's coming election. There, as in Palestine, the popular feeling seems to be for the resumption of negotiations with the Palestinian Authority. This development was probably what motivated Ariel Sharon to break with his Likud to form a new centrist party, Khadima, shortly before his crippling second stroke. His effective demise leaves Khadima in limbo, and if Israelis decide that Hamas is not to be trusted then they might again choose Netanyahu to take over as prime minister.

As much as Israeli and Western political leaders might lament Hamas's emergence as a political force, and demand that they disarm, they will have to be realists and recognise that they cannot marginalise a group which has been endorsed by Palestinians as a vehicle for their aspirations for a lasting political settlement. In offering the possibility of extending an olive branch rather than a gun, Hamas has staked a legitimate claim for engagement.

Load-Date: January 27, 2006

Hamas PM rules out swapping soldier for Gaza politicians

The Irish Times

July 1, 2006 Saturday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 9

Length: 640 words

Byline: Michael Jansen in Jerusalem

Body

MIDDLE EAST: Palestinian prime minister Ismail Haniyeh called yesterday for an immediate end to the Israeli siege of Gaza and for the government and populace to remain steadfast. Speaking at a mosque in his first public appearance since Israel sent tanks into the Gaza Strip, he ruled out exchanging Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, captured on Sunday, for Hamas ministers, legislators and officials detained by Israel early on Thursday.

Israel also appeared to be ruling out a swap involving the soldier and Hamas political figures because the Israeli attorney general has already initiated legal proceedings against the detainees. Prosecutions are to be based on their membership of a banned organisation and incrimination in the seizure of the soldier.

Warned by Israel that he too could be targeted by a missile attack or snatch squad, Mr Haniyeh said the Israeli offensive was not meant to merely rescue the soldier but to bring down the Hamas government.

"When they kidnapped the ministers, they meant to hijack the government's position, but we say no positions will be hijacked, no governments will fall." He and his ministers may be detained or assassinated, "but the Palestinian flag will not fall", he said.

However, there is speculation that if the Palestinian government is unable to function and the legislature cannot meet or muster a quorum because of the detention of members, President Mahmud Abbas may have to dismiss the cabinet and dissolve parliament. He would then appoint a government of non-party technocrats and, perhaps, resign.

The mass detentions in Ramallah, Nablus, East Jerusalem and Jenin demonstrate that Israel is able to operate freely in the West Bank and to seize almost anyone it wishes. Raids and arrests take place every night but the Sabbath, and have become routine.

While there seems to be no chance of an exchange of the soldier for Hamas politicians and officials, the Lebanese daily Al-Safir reported that negotiations are taking place on a deal which would free the corporal for the handing over of a number of Palestinian prisoners.

His captors - the Popular Resistance Committees and Hamas's military wing - have demanded the freeing of 95 women and 313 minors. Al-Safir said the Israeli would be freed and the prisoners would be released some time later, perhaps into Egyptian custody.

Hamas PM rules out swapping soldier for Gaza politicians

Palestinians expect a pause in Israeli military action until the Sabbath ends this evening, but cannot predict what will happen thereafter. Fearing escalation, many families appear to be hoarding fuel and foodstuffs in Gaza, which is totally cut off from external supplies because all goods crossing points are closed.

A senior official in the Gaza City council said that the city requires 2,500 to 3,000 litres of diesel fuel a day for the essential generators which pump water and sewage. Four new generators are urgently needed to draw water from Gaza City's 12 wells.

Two sonic booms resounded in quick succession over the phone line as he was speaking.

Israeli warplanes overfly the Strip day and night, breaking the sound barrier, shaking the nerves of adults and terrorising children already traumatised by years of conflict.

Meanwhile, Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak is trying to resolve the crisis before the situation deteriorates further. But few observers believe that there can be an early settlement. One analyst explained: "Israel cannot back down. The critical factor is psychological: it cannot bear the thought that its soldier is under the control of people it calls terrorists. Israel also does not know how to deal with Hamas.

"Hamas is not ready to back down even though the political leadership may have not been responsible for the seizure of the soldier by the movement's military wing. Most of its members are young men in their 20s who have nothing to live for, so they are prepared to die."

Load-Date: July 1, 2006

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Hamas stands its ground as West demands change

The Times (London)

January 28, 2006, Saturday

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Section: HOME NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 973 words

Byline: Stephen Farrell

Body

Mahmoud al-Zahar, widely regarded as the leader of ***Hamas*** in the Palestinian territories, is the group's most senior figure in Gaza after the assassination of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi in 2004.

Born in Gaza, he studied medicine at Cairo University. An admirer of Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, he turned to Islamism after Israel's rout of the Arab regimes in 1967. He grew disillusioned at what he called the 'contamination and poverty' of the Egyptian system.

An early follower of Sheikh Yassin in Gaza during the 1970s, he was a co founder of ***Hamas*** in 1987. He served as its first press spokesman, was expelled from Gaza in 1992 and sent into temporary exile in Lebanon.

Israel regards the 60-year-old thyroid surgeon as a terrorist who runs an organisation that has sent suicide bombers to kill innocent men, ***women*** and children. It tried to assassinate him, but he escaped an F16 raid on his home that killed his eldest son and injured his wife.

Dr al-Zahar offered no apologies for his past or his hardline views when he spoke to Stephen Farrell of The Times this week.

On giving up weapons:

"Why do we have to give up our weapons? If Israel comes back to occupy our land, will your country come to defend our people? Why do we have to put up our guns while every country everywhere has in addition to a political system a strong military system in order to protect their homeland, their interests and their people?"

"So why do you consider us a unique phenomenon that we have to keep the Israeli border, to keep the Israeli aggression against our people, to keep our people inside Israeli jails without resistance?"

On negotiations with Israel: "Negotiation is not a goal in itself. It is a method; it is not an objective. If Israel has anything to offer on the issues of halting attacks, withdrawal, releasing prisoners...then one thousand means can be found.

"Negotiation is not taboo. The political crime is when we sit with the Israelis and then come out with a wide smile to tell the Palestinian people that there is progress, when in fact, there is not.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) negotiated with them for many, many years and reached lastly a deadlock. So why should we be a new copy, like Fatah, wasting the time and money of the people negotiating for nothing?"

Hamas stands its ground as West demands change

On relations with Israel:

"We have to disengage from Israel economically, on security, everything. We have to open the doors to the Arab and Muslim countries.

"Co-operation on the security field was a disaster for the Palestinians because it threatened the integrity of the Palestinians. When the PA co-operated against Hamas, that was a very critical moment that could have pushed some Hamas people to attack the PA.

"We destroyed our economical status by the linkage of our economy with the Israeli (one)...For example, we pay 5.5 shekels (66p) per litre for petrol from Israel. From Egypt, one metre from our borders, it is one Egyptian pound (9p). In 2004 we paid to Israel in one year \$186 million (£ 105 million) for electricity. If we took it from Egypt it will be \$20 million. We have ten commercial agreements with the Arabic and Islamic world without taxes. Israel takes from us 17 taxes and they are destroying our industry."

On fears that the West will cut off aid:

"Forty per cent of donated money is conditional. If the condition is to dismantle the resistance movement to prevent Hamas participating in the government, when the people vote for Hamas, how can we justify to the Palestinians that we are taking money from a donor country at the expense of national interest?

"So we are not in need of the money, especially if it is at the expense of our national interest. But even so we ask everybody to help the Palestinian people, but without conditions. And they have the full right to come, watch and observe where the money went, where it is used. But if they are going to help Israel's long-standing occupation this is unacceptable."

On Europe:

"The European people came to me in the last month and they said within six months they are going to do their best to change the attitudes of their administration, because they do not accept Hamas is a terrorist organisation.

"Sooner or later the European countries in particular are going to change their mind concerning their attitude with Hamas."

On relations with America:

"With America in such a 'dirty man' period I think nothing can be changed. In America there is a Christian Zionism. They believe that Jesus will return for the second 1,000 years. You heard from Bush when he said, 'It is a new Crusade'. He is arousing a deep hatred, an historical hatred in this area.

"The F16 which destroyed my house is American. The Apache helicopters are American. The international decisions in the Security Council backing Israel are American. The pressure on you to help the Israelis and to consider Hamas terrorist is American."

On US foreign policy:

"After the attack on Iraq they are suffering from a big hatred, a bad feeling from the Arabic and Islamic world and also the international community...They arrange for a very dirty policy in the Middle East. They attacked Afghanistan and put in (Hamid) Karzai, an American collaborator, and put in a corrupt Iraqi collaborator. And they dismantled the security of Egypt by arousing the protests of Christianity and Islam. They tried to interfere in Saudi Arabia. Now they destroy the integrity of Lebanon. Now they threaten the situation in Syria. What is running here is big crimes, international crimes."

On electoral victory:

Hamas stands its ground as West demands change

"It is good for the history of Palestine because the corrupted system should reach an end for the benefit of the Palestinian people. For Hamas it will give a second stage towards being legitimate. We achieved the first process: the legitimacy of fighting against the enemy and achieving success. The second is constitutional."

Load-Date: January 28, 2006

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On the new Hamas agenda: 'learn to queue like the British'

The Sunday Telegraph (LONDON)

February 19, 2006 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; International; Pg. 25

Length: 658 words

Byline: HARRY DE QUETTEVILLE in Jerusalem

Body

THEY HAVE mulled the works of Dickens and penned agony aunt columns in magazines. They believe the British habit of queuing to be the hallmark of a decent society, and hold fond memories of campus life in the United States.

And yet they have probably racked up more jail time than any other political outfit in the world. They are the 74 freshly minted parliamentarians for the Palestinian militant party **Hamas**.

The group, including six **women**, yesterday officially took its seats in the 132-seat Palestinian Legislative Council, in its first session since **Hamas**'s huge majority in the Palestinian elections last month.

Not everyone could make it. Eleven of **Hamas**'s new MPs languish in Israeli jails and will be unable to take part in debates or votes. It would have been 12, almost one in six of the **Hamas** bloc, were it not for the release of Ahmed el-Haj Ali, 66, last Thursday.

Yesterday saw the first exchanges in what is likely prove a tempestuous legislative chamber. Calls by the Palestinian president and Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas for **Hamas** to open negotiations with Israel were instantly dismissed.

Meanwhile in Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert, the acting Israeli prime minister, declared the new administration an official "enemy", hinting that further security restrictions on Palestinian movements were imminent.

Because of existing restrictions, many of the key figures - including the **Hamas** leader Ismail Haniya, 42, tipped as the new Palestinian prime minister - had to take part yesterday by video link.

But while Mr Haniya has long been in the public eye, many of his fellow **Hamas** council members were yesterday taking their first real steps in politics. Among the **women**, Maryam Farahat, is the mother of three sons who died fighting Israel. She appeared in a video with one of them, demanding that he not return alive from a gun attack.

Others, such as Jamila al Shanti, 51, have also promised to continue what **Hamas** calls its armed "resistance". She holds an English literature degree and has spent 20 years teaching English around the Arab world.

"My favourite author is Charles Dickens," she told the Sunday Telegraph, "but my favourite book is the Holy Koran."

Her colleague Huda Naim al-Qreinawi, 37, has earned a reputation as a **Hamas** feminist, offering "social advice" to students at the Islamic university of Gaza. She even turned her agony aunt talent into a column for a local magazine.

On the new Hamas agenda: 'learn to queue like the British'

"We need to make men aware of the real importance of women," she told reporters in a post-election press conference, where she revealed that her own husband did half the household chores. "Women didn't come into life only to be man's servant."

For the new Hamas MP Anwar Zboun, 37, political office offers the chance to implement social reforms of a different kind. After studying at Keele University, he concluded that Britain had two great exports for the Palestinians - queues and roundabouts.

"The fact that people queued without complaining showed the respect that British people have for the rights of others," he said. "Our society is chaotic and people do not recognise the rights of others. If we can instil the respect that queuing requires, we can instil a moral basis here."

His penchant for roundabouts is based on the same moral theory. "They only work if you let other people go first," he said.

Abdul Rahman Fahmi Zeidan, 45, will draw inspiration from America's Bible Belt, having studied engineering in Alabama between Israeli jail stints. Even the speaker of the new parliament cherishes time spent in the United States. Aziz Salem Mustafa Dwaik, 57, gained his PhD in Philadelphia while studying at the University of Pennsylvania, the alma mater to none other than Richard Clarke, a former national counter-terrorism director under George W Bush.

"I loved Philadelphia, it was one of the best times of my life," he said. "The Americans were so generous. Philadelphia is the city of brotherly love and it surely meant that to me."

Load-Date: February 19, 2006

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Palestinian Premier Calls Israeli Action Part of a Pre-Existing Plan to Oust Hamas

The New York Times

July 1, 2006 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8

Length: 971 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE

Dateline: GAZA, June 30

Body

The Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniya, asserted Friday that Israel's military operations in the Gaza Strip were part of a larger attempt to oust the **Hamas** government, and he demanded that Israel pull back if it wanted the release of its captured soldier.

The soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, a 19-year-old tank gunner captured by militants on Sunday, was reported by Israeli television on Friday to be in or near the southern Gaza town of Rafah. The report also said he had been treated by a Palestinian doctor for minor injuries to his abdomen and one arm.

Mr. Haniya, in his first public remarks about the capture and the crisis that followed, told worshipers at a packed Gaza City mosque that his government was in contact with Egypt and other countries in search of a solution that would lead to the return of the Israeli soldier.

But "this Israeli military escalation complicates matters and makes it more difficult," added Mr. Haniya, who was mobbed by the large crowd of cheering supporters as he entered and left the Mahata Mosque for midday prayers on Friday, the Muslim Sabbath. Palestinian security guards armed with automatic rifles maintained a lookout from the roof of the mosque while Mr. Haniya spoke for almost an hour.

The **Hamas** government, which has struggled with financial problems and internal Palestinian fighting since taking office in March, has received a surge of support over the latest showdown with Israel. In addition, the Palestinian factions have stopped feuding with each other, at least for the moment.

While Mr. Haniya received a hero's welcome at the mosque, another prominent **Hamas** figure, Mushir al-Masri, led a spirited rally nearby, with many in the crowd wearing green hats, indicating their support for **Hamas**.

"When Israel increases its attacks against us, it just increases Palestinian unity," said Mr. Masri, who spoke from the top of a van in the middle of a crowded street.

Israel carried out more than 20 airstrikes in Gaza overnight and during the day on Friday, with most of the attacks targeting empty buildings, as well as roads and areas used by Palestinians to fire rockets. Two Palestinian militants

Palestinian Premier Calls Israeli Action Part of a Pre-Existing Plan to Oust Hamas

were killed, one in southern Gaza and one in a shootout in the West Bank, according to the Israeli Army and Palestinian security officials.

Despite the heightened tensions of recent days, Friday's deaths were the first Palestinian fatalities in fighting since the abduction of the soldier five days earlier.

Israel says it will not negotiate for the release of Corporal Shalit, and has moved troops into southern Gaza. Another large contingent is just outside the northeast boundary of the territory.

Mr. Haniya did not specify any conditions for freeing the soldier. He was seized by Palestinian gunmen who tunneled into Israel, attacked an Israeli military post, killing two other Israeli soldiers, and then slipped back into Gaza. The military wing of Hamas was one of three groups that claimed collective responsibility.

Some Hamas leaders have said that they wanted the release of the hundreds of Palestinian women and youths held by Israel in exchange for Corporal Shalit. On Thursday, Israel detained more than 60 Hamas members in the West Bank, including 8 who serve in the Palestinian cabinet and more than 20 in the legislature, saying Hamas had stepped up its involvement in terrorism recently.

On Friday, Israel revoked the Jerusalem residency of four Hamas lawmakers. As a result, the men will have to find new homes, most likely in the West Bank.

Israel captured East Jerusalem in the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 and considers all of the city its capital, a position not recognized internationally. The Palestinians seek a future capital in East Jerusalem.

"Before the capture of the soldier, Israeli military officers already had plans on their desks to undermine the government and humiliate the Palestinian people," Mr. Haniya said. "Now they are acting on these plans. They want us to kneel and raise our hands."

Israeli officials have sent somewhat mixed signals about the ultimate aim of their Gaza operation. Defense Minister Amir Peretz said this week that if the soldier were released, Israel would be prepared to pull back.

But Israeli officials also say that Hamas has resumed its involvement in violence, and one senior Israeli security official was quoted in the Israeli press as saying that Israel should try to remove Hamas from power.

Israeli political analysts said the Israeli government wanted to use the current military operation to win the soldier's release and to suppress the persistent Palestinian rocket fire coming out of Gaza. However, they said it was not yet clear whether Israel was prepared for a concerted effort to undermine or oust the Hamas government.

"In Israel's point of view, Hamas has not made the transformation into a government, and there's a feeling that conditions are only going to get worse," said Gerald Steinberg, a political science professor at Bar-Ilan University. "Israel is setting down a marker that Hamas will be held responsible for what happens in the Palestinian territories. But if the level of violence declines, then I think Israel will back off."

Mark Heller, of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, said he believed that many in the Israeli government would be hesitant to oust Hamas for at least two reasons.

First, the alternative could be even greater chaos in the Palestinian areas, Mr. Heller said. Second, he said, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's government has little interest in negotiating with the Palestinians, despite international pressure to do so.

"The presence of a Hamas government makes it easier to resist this pressure to negotiate," Mr. Heller said. "All in all, I don't see a strong push against Hamas right now."

Palestinian Premier Calls Israeli Action Part of a Pre-Existing Plan to Oust Hamas

Load-Date: July 1, 2006

End of Document

Hamas Cabinet Is Sworn In, Widening Break With the Israelis

The New York Times

March 30, 2006 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 10

Length: 811 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE

Dateline: RAMALLAH, West Bank, March 29

Body

The new Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniya, and his cabinet were sworn in Wednesday, formally putting the Islamic movement **Hamas** in charge of the Palestinian Authority and marking an almost total break in the government's contact with Israel.

The swearing-in of the **Hamas**-dominated cabinet, coming just a day after Israel's national elections, crystallized the great shifts in Israeli and Palestinian politics that have come in the past decade: from sweeping peace negotiations to years of fighting and now to declarations that neither side wants anything to do with the other.

Israel's acting prime minister, Ehud Olmert, and his Kadima Party, which came out ahead in the Israeli election, say they want to define Israel's borders over four years and are ready to do it unilaterally.

But **Hamas** refuses to recognize Israel and has shown no signs of meeting Israeli and international demands to disavow violence and accept previous agreements.

"My message to Israel is to put an end to the occupation, and then there will be no fighting," said Aziz Dweik, the new speaker of the Palestinian parliament and a **Hamas** member.

He presided over a budget session on Wednesday that took place simultaneously, through video conference, in Ramallah and in Gaza City because Israeli travel restrictions prevent **Hamas** members from traveling between the territories.

Mark Regev, a spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry, said: "With **Hamas** formally taking over the government structure of the Palestinian Authority, Israel and many in the international community cannot continue with business as usual. We will not talk to an unreformed **Hamas**, and we believe many countries think the same as we do."

The United States and the European Union regard **Hamas** as a terrorist group and refuse to deal with it. Immediately after the new government was sworn in, Canada suspended some assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

But American officials have maintained ties with Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority president, who leads Fatah, the dominant political movement until its electoral defeat in January.

Hamas Cabinet Is Sworn In, Widening Break With the Israelis

Still, Israel and the Palestinians cannot completely disentangle themselves. For example, Israel controls the electricity and much of the water supplied to the Palestinians. All food, medicine and other goods going in and out of Gaza must pass through an Israeli-controlled crossing.

Mr. Regev said the policy was to avoid contact with the **Hamas** government, while trying not to impose hardship on ordinary Palestinians.

But Palestinian officials argue that this distinction is impossible. The Palestinian Authority runs the schools and hospitals, and if Israel continues withholding monthly tax revenues of some \$50 million that it collects on behalf of the Palestinians, these essential institutions could quickly collapse, the officials say.

"A hungry man is an angry man," said Mr. Dweik, the speaker. "We hope the world will not allow the Palestinian people to suffer, because this will only make people more radical."

The new Palestinian government faces the urgent problem of raising roughly \$170 million each month that it says it needs just to pay government workers and keep the Palestinian Authority functioning.

The swearing-in ceremony on Wednesday, which was held after the parliamentary session, was also conducted by video conference.

Mr. Abbas, who is allowed to travel between the West Bank and Gaza, was in Gaza City. He stood before the 10 new ministers from Gaza as each took his oath with his right hand on the Koran. In Ramallah, the 14 ministers were sworn in before a large television screen beaming the image of Mr. Abbas.

Olmert's Border Plan Draws Fire

By The New York Times

KHARTOUM, Sudan, March 29 -- At the end of a two-day Arab League summit meeting here, the leaders on Wednesday condemned Israel's acting prime minister, Ehud Olmert, for his threat to draw up Israel's borders unilaterally by 2010.

The leaders passed a resolution that rejected the plan as "advancing an insatiable expansionist intention," adding that any such action would prevent establishing an independent and sovereign Palestinian state.

Other concerns raised at the talks included the tense situation in Iraq, Iran's nuclear program and growing influence, and the victory of **Hamas** in the Palestinian election. Arab countries also pledged \$150 million to support the African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur in Sudan.

This year, only 12 of the 22 Arab heads of state attended.

Commentators for the Arab news media have reflected a general feeling of disappointment with the meeting. One, Dawood as-Shiryan, wrote in the pan-Arab newspaper Al Hayat: "Clearly, the Khartoum summit has earned its place as a model Arab summit. It ignored the important issues. It failed to play a mediatory role, let alone rise to the challenges."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Hamas Cabinet Is Sworn In, Widening Break With the Israelis

Photo: At the cabinet induction yesterday, the only woman, Miriam Saleh, minister of women's affairs, joined colleagues in Ramallah, West Bank. (Photo by Muhammed Muheisen/Associated Press)

Load-Date: March 30, 2006

End of Document

Letters - The West must not allow Hamas terror to win;

Irish News

February 02, 2006

Copyright 2006 The Irish News Limited

Section: Pg. 24

Length: 457 words

Body

Media coverage has totally distorted the Palestinian election results with headlines talking of a 'Hamas Landslide'.

The votes tell a different story.

The Israeli-style 'national party list' form of proportional representation gave 49.5 per cent of votes and 34 of 66 seats to the four secular parties including the 'Third Way' of Anglican Dr Hanan Ashrawi, a literature professor and former higher education minister; 'Independent Palestine' of Dr Mustafa Barghouti, an MD and strong opponent of Arab terror; and leftist 'The Alternative'.

'Fatah' itself got 28 seats but Hamas got only one more, 29, in the national list.

Fatah were only 3.02 per cent and 29,855 votes behind Hamas in votes but the three other secular democratic parties totalled 8.05 per cent or 79,744 votes - giving the four secular parties a workable majority if based on their actual electoral support.

The serious distortion in the share of seats allotted comes from the absense of PR in the other half of the 132 seats which were filled in 16 local constituencies.

There Hamas got a major bonus and took 45 seats against only 17 for a divided Fatah and none for the other parties.

Could there be a better case for either our or the Israeli-type PR system?

If European Union, Israeli and USA leaders hold firm and force the Hamas minority to either rely on exclusively peaceful means or else face complete suspension of funding, then the real Palestinian secular four-party majority will be in a strong position to put a realistic strategy to the electorate, under a strong and dynamic leader like Fatah's Gaza poll-topper, Mohammed Dahlan of Khan Younis constituency.

Palestinians are, along with their Israeli and Jordanian neighbours, among the most literate (90 per cent) and best educated people in the Middle East.

They can together carve out a bright future, eventually in EU-style collaboration with the whole Levant region - if only the West now resists the easy temptation to appease the Hamas 'suicide-belt plus ballot' strategy.

Their enforced veiling of their women is not their only resemblance to the Taliban thugs to the East.

Letters - The West must not allow Hamas terror to win;

Ariel Sharon at last faced down his 'ultras' and - like our great Sean Lemass going to Stormont on January 14 1965 or Jack Lynch firing ministers Blayney and Haughey in the 1970 'arms trial' or De Valera holding 1,100 IRA-Nazi collaborators in 1940-1946 - a tough but imaginative new coalition under Dahlan must now get ready to do likewise.

We in Ireland, and Fianna Fail in particular, have a lot to share with Dahlan and the emerging Palestinian new guard.

We in Ireland, north and south, also have reason to know about the need to be equally 'tough on terror' and 'on the causes of terror'.

TOM CAREW, Ranelagh, Dublin 6.

Load-Date: February 2, 2006

End of Document

Redirecting its zeal: Hamas must make transition from terror: Victory will force group to be clear on issues

Ottawa Citizen

January 27, 2006 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A7

Length: 684 words

Byline: Michael Matza, Knight Ridder Newspapers

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - The political earthquake that swept **Hamas** to power in Wednesday's parliamentary elections has been rumbling below the surface of Palestinian life for nearly two decades.

Founded in the crowded Gaza Strip in 1987 as an outgrowth of the Egyptian fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood, the group, whose name means "zeal," is an Arabic acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement.

Its birth coincided with the start of the first Palestinian uprising against Israel and its covenant, published a year later, called for a zealous campaign to destroy Israel.

"Holy war," the document declared, is a duty binding on all Muslims whenever "enemies usurp Islamic lands."

Now, as **Hamas** faces the demands and responsibilities of governing, is it the same organization it was at birth, or will the desire to participate in politics mean that its leaders will steer a more moderate course?

"**Hamas** faces the difficult task of adjusting from a resistance movement to a political party in the system," said Ziad Abu Amr, an independent Palestinian lawmaker who ran for office with **Hamas**' backing.

"What is it going to do with militants who made resistance a career? How is it going to deal with issues that matter to its voters: corruption, internal order, the peace process? It is much easier to be in the opposition and criticize mistakes," Mr. Amr said.

Hamas "has translated those mistakes into power," he said. "Now it has to translate power into change."

Palestinian political analyst Khaled Duzdar thinks that **Hamas** will dance delicately.

"**Hamas** is not going to make concessions on their bedrock beliefs. But at the same time they want to prove to the world that they are not the devils they are perceived to be," he said.

From its earliest days, the group's fundamentalist ideology -- put forward by its founder, the paraplegic Sheik Ahmed Yassin, who was killed by an Israeli missile two years ago -- spoke to a growing segment of disenfranchised Palestinians.

Redirecting its zeal: Hamas must make transition from terror: Victory will force group to be clear on issues

Spreading its ideology through mosques and social-service programs, **Hamas** provided medical care and free food programs, pressured **women** to dress modestly, attacked stores that sold liquor and killed those who were suspected of collaborating with "the Zionist entity."

Hamas took responsibility for six attacks on Israelis in 1989, including kidnappings, stabbings, and shootings, while its efforts to delegitimize Yasser Arafat's dominant Palestine Liberation Organization grew bolder. It went on to kill hundreds of Israelis in scores of suicide attacks.

At the outset, Israel didn't deal death blows to **Hamas** because the group seemed to be undermining Arafat. But Israel eventually outlawed **Hamas** because of its relentless anti-Israel campaign. In a string of airstrikes in recent years, the Israeli air force killed many in **Hamas**' top echelon, including Mr. Yassin, all while keeping Mr. Arafat pinned down in his headquarters in Ramallah, West Bank.

Some analysts think the targeted killings fuelled **Hamas**' popularity.

So did **Hamas**' calls to reform the decades-old ruling Fatah party, which many Palestinians had come to see as corrupt and ineffective. Many analysts think voters' hopes of better services played a major role in **Hamas**' national election victory.

During the campaign, **Hamas** leaders had hinted they'd be content to be a strong force in the opposition rather than enter the government, a stance that allowed them to dodge questions about whether they'd recognize Israel if bilateral negotiations ever were revived.

But the group's landslide victory might force it to take clearer positions on key issues, including whether to renounce violence or revise its charter. For the moment, that seems unlikely.

Peace with Israel "is not on our agenda," Mushir al-Mari, a **Hamas** lawmaker-elect from the northern Gaza Strip town of Beit Hanoun, said in an interview yesterday.

Mazen Sinokrot, the Palestinian economy minister who resigned with the rest of the cabinet after **Hamas**' victory, told the British Broadcasting Corp. that **Hamas** "now has to look deeply into itself to figure out how to become an accepted player in the international arena."

Graphic

Colour Photo: Majdi Mohammed, The Associated Press; The photo of Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the founder of **Hamas**, can be found throughout the Palestinian territories, including on the wall, above, in the town of Nablus.

Load-Date: January 27, 2006

Israel readies troops: Hints at targeting Hamas leaders if abducted soldier is not released

The Gazette (Montreal)

June 27, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 669 words

Byline: LAURA KING, Los Angeles Times

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israel massed troops and tanks along the frontier with the Gaza Strip yesterday as diplomats sought to win the release of an Israeli soldier captured a day earlier in a deadly raid by Palestinian militants.

The incident has threatened to ignite a major conflagration between Israel and Hamas, the Islamist group that took power three months ago in the Palestinian territories.

A consortium of Hamas-linked Palestinian groups claiming to hold Cpl. Gilad Shalit, 19, demanded the release of Palestinian female and underage prisoners held in Israeli jails in exchange for information that could lead to his release.

Shalit, a tank gunner, was seized in a brazen cross-border raid before dawn Sunday that left two Israeli soldiers dead and seven wounded. Two Palestinian attackers also were killed in the firefight, which came after militants crossed under the frontier through a tunnel that Israeli officials said probably took months to dig.

Israel ruled out any prisoner swap and demanded Shalit's immediate and unconditional release.

Israeli officials again hinted at the possibility of measures including the assassination of Hamas's political leaders or a wide-ranging military offensive in Gaza if any harm comes to the young soldier.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, a moderate who repeatedly has clashed with Hamas, was working with Egyptian mediators and Arab and Western leaders to locate the soldier.

Hamas government spokes-person Ghazi Hamad said he had information Shalit was alive and urged the captors to keep him safe.

"I think we are interested in avoiding any confrontation or bloodshed," he said.

The abduction delivered a blow to Abbas's efforts to coax Hamas into accepting a plan implicitly recognizing Israel.

Abbas, elected separately last year, has endorsed the plan in hopes of lifting economic sanctions against Hamas and opening the way for new peace talks.

Israel readies troops: Hints at targeting Hamas leaders if abducted soldier is not released

The crisis also exposed divisions within Hamas ranks.

The group maintains separate political and military wings, and political leaders based in Syria are more extreme than many leaders in the West Bank and Gaza.

No Israeli soldier has been taken prisoner by Palestinian militants for 12 years, and the drama has captivated Israelis.

Huge photographs of Shalit - gangling, dark-haired and bespectacled - covered the front pages of Israeli newspapers. Headlines referred to him by his first name only. His family appealed to his captors not to harm him.

"Those who are holding him also have families and children, and they know what we are feeling right now," Shalit's father, Noam, told reporters.

"I hope they are treating him reasonably, and remembering that he is a human being."

Shalit holds dual French and Israeli nationality, and French diplomats, without providing details, confirmed their involvement in efforts to free him. Mediators from Egypt, which in the past has tried to resolve conflicts between Israel and the Palestinians and among quarreling Palestinian factions, were also reported to be in contact with the various parties.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert reiterated that Israel holds the Palestinian leadership, not only the Hamas-led government but also Abbas, responsible for the soldier's safety.

Olmert's senior security advisers set a deadline of today for Shalit's release, and the prime minister said Israel was prepared to launch a crushing strike if the demand is not met.

"I gave the order to our commanders to ready our forces for a broad and ongoing military operation to strike the terrorist leaders and everyone else involved," the Israeli leader told a conference in Jerusalem.

Olmert also made a thinly veiled threat to strike directly at the elected leaders of the Hamas government, a step that Israeli commentators acknowledged could have far-reaching diplomatic and military repercussions.

"Let it be clear: We will reach anyone and everyone, wherever they are hiding, and they know it," Olmert said.

Online Extra: The abduction of the Israeli soldier has laid bare a power struggle inside Hamas.

montrealgazette.com

Load-Date: June 27, 2006

Faction fights make mockery of peace as Hamas goes political

The Times (London)

January 14, 2006, Saturday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 52

Length: 1292 words

Byline: Stephen Farrell

Body

STEPHEN FARRELL REPORTS FROM GAZA Palestinians will vote in parliamentary elections for only the second time on January 25.

The militant group **Hamas** is expected to win nearly half the 132 seats and possibly places in the Cabinet, raising alarm in Israel and the US, where it is still deemed a terrorist group.

Campaigning has been marred by clashes between **Hamas** and the Fatah movement, founded by Yassir Arafat, raising doubts about whether elections will go ahead.

The illness of Ariel Sharon, who championed Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, adds to the uncertainty.

FIVE seconds inside Gaza and the Kalashnikovs are already into their death rattle.

It is Eid al-Adha, the Feast of the Sacrifice, but this is no celebration.

Two of Gaza's most powerful families are settling a petty dispute in the only way they know how, and the hospitals will be busy again tonight.

Six months ago it would have been Israeli raiding parties trading bullets with Palestinian militants. No more. Israel has withdrawn behind the razor wire that fences in 1.3 million Gazans, and it is now Palestinian on Palestinian violence that keeps ambulances racing along litter-strewn streets.

This is life in the 25-mile coastal strip that was meant to nurture the seedlings of a Palestinian state after disengagement, the now comatose Ariel Sharon's last significant political act. But peace is a receding dream for most Gazans, amid a law and order crisis before parliamentary elections on January 25. The kidnapping of foreigners has halted investment and forced out most international aid workers.

The United Nations has downgraded Gaza from level three to four (of five), ranking it alongside parts of Iraq.

The Palestinian Authority's weakness feeds violence and as the new order disappears older power structures re-emerge.

In a semi-tribal society Gaza's powerful clans - "the families" - compete with the militant groups Fatah and **Hamas** to extort their share of patronage, money and guns, or have been subsumed into them.

Faction fights make mockery of peace as Hamas goes political

Death comes quickly, and on the slightest of pretexts. On January 4 in Gaza City Rami al-Dalo, a 26-year-old member of Hamas's military wing, ran out from celebrations of his wedding to resolve a dispute.

Fatah election bill-stickers had put up their bills inside a Hamas area, and trouble flared when Hamas did the same. Mr al-Dalo's brother was beaten and guns came out. Even as mediators assembled, gunfire broke out and the young Hamas activist fell dead, his hands still in his pockets.

The al-Dalos blame a local Fatah family. They deny it. Both have now retreated to armed camps.

"This is blood. We know who did it. He lives 100 yards away," said Mr al Dalo's father, Talal, glowering behind a phalanx of AK47s inside the family's Gaza City sewing factory. Outside the dead man's distraught mother wails: "The Jews were better. At least they didn't shoot us in cold blood."

As the victim's father fulminates a far more composed figure begins to speak with the remorseless, unhurried rhetoric of the committed Islamist.

"This is not personal, it is Hamas business," says Dr Jawad al-Dalo, the ghost of Michael Corleone suddenly entering unbidden from Sicily. "Rami is the son of Hamas and Qassam. He was not killed because he stole or harmed anyone from that family.

He was killed because he was one of the most active members of Hamas. That is why we consider this an assault from Fatah. Hamas has taken it on itself to gain revenge by killing his killer."

Hamas has spoken. Everyone falls silent.

The accused, his Fatah guards shivering behind logs smouldering in the rain, laments that he has been wrongly vilified and cannot leave his house. "I am totally innocent," he tells The Times. "I was trying to calm everything down. I don't know how he was killed, and Hamas are using this for their election campaign."

Israel, the international community and Gazans themselves look to the Palestinian Authority, dominated by President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah, to solve the crisis.

But Fatah is the crisis, as even its senior officials admit. Fatah militants, fragmenting under the strain of its first serious electoral challenge, have twice raided Gaza's central election commission headquarters, leaving bullet holes in the stonework and windows.

Fatah's primaries in Gaza were halted after masked thugs burned ballot boxes, and its military wing, the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, threatened to target international election observers.

Even attempts to arrest the kidnappers of the British peace activist Kate Burton were thwarted. Police released Alaa al-Hams from jail, Interior Ministry officials told The Times, because al-Aqsa Brigades allies took over municipal buildings and bulldozed the Rafah crossing, killing two Egyptian security officers.

Last year more Palestinians were killed by internal feuds than by Israeli strikes, confirmed Tawfiq Abu Khousa, spokesman for the Ministry of Interior. "Most of the time the problem starts with the factions, not as family disputes," he said. "But the families back the organisations they are loyal to, which means they fight each other as their proxies."

In Khan Younis and Rafah -the wilder southern fringes of Gaza rarely visited by outsiders because of kidnappings - The Times this week saw sandbags and oil drums stacked as barricades outside the driveways of feuding houses.

Here the Tahas, Masris and other clans fight over jobs, women, animals, drugs and other slights real and imagined, as the rain turns Gaza into a sandy quagmire.

Faction fights make mockery of peace as Hamas goes political

All agree that Mahmoud Abbas has acted bravely by forcing his own organisation to undergo the shock therapy of unaccustomed elections. His supporters also point to the huge difficulties of reconstructing Gaza after decades of Israeli military occupation.

"Look at it from a historical context of post-trauma societies such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Ireland, Lebanon, Somalia and Iraq," says Nabil Shaath, the former Foreign Minister.

"It took Lebanon 25 years and they are not really out of the post-trauma period.

Whenever you are in a conflict with a far superior occupation army this immediately leads to the proliferation of small arms.

"The problem is when that superior force either vanishes, withdraws or starts to reduce significantly its own campaign then those who fought look around and substitute the goals with other local, provincial, personal or sectarian objectives to survive after the end of the conflict, to obtain assurances about their own future or to engage in local politics or power." The problems were compounded, he said, by Israel's destruction of Gaza's police force and infrastructure.

"All of these factors are there in Palestine. Terrible economic conditions, unemployment, siege, continued Israeli incursions and vestiges of occupation and an absence of any indication of permanent solution."

Fatah is likely to suffer electoral punishment, with Palestinians acutely aware of how the world sees them. "If the Authority doesn't get its act together then the Jews will be right in what they say about us, that we don't deserve a state," sighs Abu Sameh, in Rafah.

CRITICAL VOTE

The election on Wednesday, January 25, is the second ever

Hamas did not contest the first round in 1996

728 candidates are contesting 132 seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council - 66 seats from central party lists; 66 in district elections

Fatah's list is headed by Marwan Barghouti, the West Bank populist jailed by Israel as a terrorist

Hamas is contesting under the Change and Reform label

Salam Fayyad, the Finance Minister, is contesting under The Third Way, with Hanan Ashrawi, the most prominent Palestinian woman politician

There are 485,000 registered voters in Gaza and 788,000 in the West Bank

100,000 of these are in Jerusalem where Israel has allowed limited campaigning.

Load-Date: January 14, 2006

Hamas leaps up polls in Palestinian vote: Chaos plagues election that threatens crisis in relations with Israel

Ottawa Citizen

January 23, 2006 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 1007 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, The Ottawa Citizen; with files from The Associated Press

Dateline: RAFAH, Gaza Strip

Body

RAFAH, Gaza Strip - Violence and abductions have become so common in this tiny strip of desert by the Mediterranean Sea recently that few international observers will be on hand to witness Palestinians vote for a new legislative council on Wednesday.

What they will miss is the meteoric rise of **Hamas** from a small municipal party, widely acknowledged to have provided good social services, into a powerful new player in Palestinian politics that's ready to vie with the long-ruling Fatah party for power.

Thousands of the **Hamas** faithful turned out at dusk on Saturday a few metres from the Rafah crossing into Egypt to wave green Islamic banners and roar their approval as Ismail Hanieh -- No. 1 on **Hamas**'s list of candidates for the elections -- demanded a crackdown on government corruption, including what he termed "blood files" and urged "the resistance to keep your weapons and continue the fight against Israel."

Mr. Hanieh's tough words made it sound unlikely that **Hamas**, which has never run candidates for the council before, could work with Fatah in a future coalition government or that it intended to renounce its longstanding call for Israel's destruction. This would, in turn, make it difficult, if not impossible, for Israel or the West to discuss anything with **Hamas**, which is already considered to be a terrorist organization because it has sent suicide bombers into Israel and kidnapped Israelis.

Acting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert met top military and political officials yesterday to discuss Israel's response should **Hamas** dominate the election.

"What Israel has to do is the big question," cabinet minister Tzachi Hanegbi said before yesterday's meeting. "We have to think hard and explore all the options."

The United States and the EU both consider **Hamas** a terrorist group, and both have said millions of dollars in aid to the Palestinians could be jeopardized.

"As a matter of policy, we don't deal with **Hamas**," said Stewart Tuttle, the U.S. Embassy spokesman in Tel Aviv. "If **Hamas** members win seats ... we are not going to deal with those individuals."

Hamas leaps up polls in Palestinian vote: Chaos plagues election that threatens crisis in relations with Israel

Behind the scenes, however, U.S. officials are considering the possibility of distinguishing between Hamas legislators tied to violence and those who are not -- a position Israel rejects. European diplomats said they would decide what to do after election results are in. But nothing is ever clear in Palestinian politics. Mr. Hanieh and others in the Hamas leadership have sent contradictory messages recently regarding co-operation with Fatah and their willingness to open a dialogue with Israel.

"The results of the election will determine our future," Sami Abu Zhor, the senior Hamas spokesman, said coyly. "We leave all our options open."

"The Palestinian Authority tried to negotiate and failed. With this kind of failure it is difficult for us to continue negotiations. We cling to the resistance as long as there is occupation. But we do not reject solving the conflict gradually because it has a complicated history."

Softening even further, Mr. Abu Zhor added: "Having talks with the West is at the top of our list of priorities. We only resist here, nowhere else. We do not escalate the conflict."

The reason voters preferred Hamas to Fatah was because "we have no record of corruption," Mr. Abu Zhor said. "We do not live in fancy hotels. We live with the people. We are modest."

Until very recently Fatah had run a bizarre campaign centred largely around the memory of Yasser Arafat who remains a cherished figure to Palestinians. Even now Fatah campaign literature invariably features many photographs of the Palestinian icon, who died 14 months ago, and its posters feature Mr. Arafat prominently, too.

As if that were not enough, Fatah campaign workers wear kafiyahs on their heads or around their shoulders, just as Mr. Arafat did.

Fatah has drummed home the message in recent days that Hamas was wrong to claim that it had a right to rule simply because it had had long ties to the Egypt-based Muslim Brotherhood, which recently did well in elections there.

"What they have found in Palestine is that Fatah has been leading the people and they hate us and our martyrs for this although we started the intifada, not them," Mohommad Dalhlan, Fatah's hugely popular leader in Gaza, told several hundred supporters at a campaign rally two days ago.

Mr. Dahlan warned his audience that Hamas interpreted Islam "as it sees it and gives Islamic rulings as it likes."

Recent polls have shown that Hamas, which began the campaign well behind Fatah, may be in a statistical tie with the movement founded by Mr. Arafat.

"Hamas says we accomplished zero and that makes us angry," said Mahmoud Al-Najar, who runs Fatah's campaign in the Hamas stronghold of Khan Younis. "But their attacks have unified us"

Raji Al Sourani, a Palestinian human rights worker and one of the few independent observers in Gaza, agreed that Fatah had recovered some of its popularity after belatedly awakening to the fact that it was doing very poorly.

"A few weeks ago it looks absolutely as if there would be a Hamas majority, but you can feel Fatah is doing better now," Mr. Al Sourani said. "One of the reasons is that many of its candidates have pulled out to avoid splitting their vote."

"Hamas has run a very good campaign but they have lately sounded very much like they were only talking to their membership, rather than to all Palestinians. It as if they are speaking in a mosque and this has left ordinary people wondering "Are you only going to speak with God?"

Fatah's Mr. Al-Najar had been angered by how Hamas had wrapped itself in Islamic green and adopted "Islam is the solution" as its campaign slogan.

Hamas leaps up polls in Palestinian vote: Chaos plagues election that threatens crisis in relations with Israel

"They are trying to tell people that if you don't vote for them you are not a good Muslim," he said.

Hamas's Islamic ideology also troubled a group of young **women** studying at Al Azar University in Gaza City.

"If **Hamas** wins, we are afraid that they will make us change the way we think," said Halima Venasco, who studies English literature.

"I don't want less freedom. I want more."

Graphic

Colour Photo: Stoyan Nenov, Reuters; A Palestinian man casts his ballot in the West Bank city of Ramallah yesterday, ahead of Wednesday's main poll. About 60,000 members of the security forces are eligible to vote until today, to free them for duty on election day.

Load-Date: January 23, 2006

End of Document

Hamas victory rocks Mideast: Stunning election sweep by militant anti-Israeli party brings warning from U.S. president

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

January 27, 2006 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 816 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: RAMALLAH, West Bank

Body

RAMALLAH, West Bank -- Palestinians and Israelis alike used such words as "earthquake" and "tsunami" to describe **Hamas**'s stunning victory in national elections Wednesday.

Hamas won 76 of the 132 seats in the Palestinian legislative council in its first attempt at national politics since it was founded in 1987, according to preliminary results released Thursday, several hours after the entire Palestinian cabinet resigned.

Hamas's shock victory totally changes the face and body of Palestinian politics, which was dominated for decades by the late Yasser Arafat's Fatah party.

Hamas -- which will take over responsibility for Palestinian security forces while maintaining its own armed wing -- remains ferociously committed to its founding manifesto which calls for the destruction of Israel.

There were few gentle or gracious words about Israel from the Palestinian victors Thursday.

Hamas was "not playing [at] terrorism or violence," one of **Hamas**'s senior leaders and potential prime minister, Mahmoud Zahar, told the BBC from Gaza City. **Hamas** would continue to practise "self-defence" in response to what he called Israeli "aggression."

Speaking during a victory parade in Ramallah, Farhat Assad, **Hamas**'s campaign manager and spokesman in the West Bank, said the elections were "first steps in our national project," which is the creation of a Palestinian state.

"There is nothing to discuss with Israel because 50 years of negotiations got us nothing," Assad said. "Now is the time for Israel to end its occupation of the West Bank."

U.S. President George W. Bush, who has been fighting a global war on terror for more than four years while encouraging democracy in the Middle East, made it clear at a news conference in Washington that the United States would not speak with **Hamas** unless it renounces violence and declares Israel has a right to exist.

Other than to state that it would not deal with "an armed terrorist organization," the official Israeli reaction was fairly subdued. Acting prime minister Ehud Olmert, who is involved in national elections scheduled for March 28,

Hamas victory rocks Mideast: Stunning election sweep by militant anti- Israeli party brings warning from U.S. president

convened an emergency cabinet meeting in Jerusalem and consulted with senior ministers and security officials. While the cabinet followed Olmert's order to remain mum until a formal government response was formulated, other Israeli politicians did not.

Former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who took over the right-wing Likud party again a few weeks ago, blamed Olmert and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who has been in a coma since suffering a severe stroke Jan. 4, for the result because they had unilaterally pulled out of Gaza. He warned that more trouble awaits if voters allow Olmert to continue Sharon's policy of carrying out further withdrawals from settlements in the West Bank.

But an influential retired Israeli general predicted that now that Hamas was in parliament, Israel would have to begin speaking with it.

"Our failure to see through the different [peace] processes with the PA [Palestinian Authority] has led to the Hamas's drastic political rise," former major-general Itzik Eitan told the Jerusalem Post.

For all those wondering what the consequences of Arafat's death 14 months ago might mean, Wednesday's result provided a partial answer.

While the world and Israel understandably focus on Hamas threats against Israel and the bloody history of its suicide bombers and rocket and mortar gunners, many Palestinians have insisted they voted for Hamas because it had shown itself to be disciplined and fair when running schools, hospitals and welfare programs after Fatah had shown itself to be grossly corrupt and inefficient.

Hamas's harsh words in Gaza and the West Bank on Thursday about future relations with Israel and its campaign slogan that "Islam is the solution," does not square with polls that have shown that Palestinians remain largely secular and that a little more than half of those who voted for Hamas two days ago, and most of those who didn't, want peace to be achieved with Israel through negotiation.

Hamas had already been warned by the U.S. and the European Union during the campaign that if it does not moderate its policies billions of dollars in aid would be at risk.

Palestinian Economy Minister Mazen Sinokrot, who was attending the World Economic Forum in Switzerland, told Reuters that the surprise election result should be respected by the donor community because "we have acted and implemented the election with full transparency."

The Palestinian Authority's already beleaguered president, Fatah veteran Mahmoud Abbas, who remains the head of government by law, has been placed in an awkward, perhaps untenable position.

Abbas, who is a strong supporter of peace talks with Israel, pleaded with Hamas in a nationally televised speech Thursday night to abide by international agreements that the Palestinian Authority had signed "because this is the only way to peace."

Graphic

Photo: Pedro Ugarte, AFP, Getty Images; Hamas women celebrate their victory in the Palestinian Legislative elections in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Load-Date: January 27, 2006

Hamas victory rocks Mideast: Stunning election sweep by militant anti- Israeli party brings warning from U.S. president

End of Document

The founding beliefs of Hamas

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

January 28, 2006 Saturday

FINAL C Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A13

Length: 302 words

Byline: Vancouver Sun

Body

Some of the main points from the 36 articles of the **Hamas** charter dated Aug. 18, 1988:

On **Hamas**:

- The group "owes its loyalty to Allah, derives from Islam its way of life and strives to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine."
- "Its ultimate goal is Islam, the Prophet its model, the Qur'an its Constitution."

The destruction of Israel:

- "Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it."
- "There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavours."

The dangers posed by Zionism:

- "After Palestine, the Zionists aspire to expand from the Nile [in Egypt] to the Euphrates [in Iraq]. When they have digested the region they overtook, they will aspire to further expansion and so on."

Zionism's operations:

"[Zionism] does not refrain from resorting to all methods, using all evil and contemptible ways to achieve its end. It relies greatly in its infiltration and espionage operations on the secret organizations it gave rise to, such as the Freemasons, the Rotary and Lions clubs, and other sabotage groups. . . . They aim at undermining societies, destroying values, corrupting consciences, deteriorating character and annihilating Islam. It is behind the drug trade and alcoholism in all its kinds so as to facilitate its control and expansion."

On **Women**:

- "Muslim **women** have a no lesser role than that of men in the war of liberation; they manufacture men and play a great role in guiding and educating the 'new' generation."

The founding beliefs of Hamas

-- "We must pay attention to the schools and curricula upon which Muslim girls are educated, so as to make them righteous mothers, who are conscious of their duties in the war of liberation."

Load-Date: January 28, 2006

End of Document

Israel says it will not deal with Hamas for soldier

The Irish Times

June 27, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 613 words

Byline: Peter Hirschberg in Jerusalem

Body

MIDDLE EAST: Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert says there will be no negotiation with the Palestinian militants who kidnapped an Israeli soldier and are holding him in Gaza. The Israeli leader's remarks came just hours after the soldier's captors began making their demands known.

With thousands of Israeli troops and long lines of armoured vehicles massing on the Gaza border, Mr Olmert warned that time was "running out" and threatened a sweeping military response if the soldier, Cpl Gilead Shalit (19) was not freed.

However, Israeli officials, fearing that a military operation in Gaza could threaten Cpl Shalit's life, were still feverishly working through diplomatic channels yesterday in the hope that international pressure and the threat of military action would win his release.

The **Hamas** military wing, along with two other smaller armed groups, which carried out Monday's attack on an Israeli army post next to the Gaza border, released a pamphlet yesterday demanding the release of all Palestinian **women** and children under 18 in Israeli jails in exchange for information on the kidnapped soldier. There are 95 Palestinian **women** and 313 Palestinians under 18 in Israeli prisons.

Cpl Shalit was captured when militants tunnelled their way into Israel and opened fire in a pre-dawn raid on Monday on an army post. It was the first infiltration by militants from Gaza since Israeli withdrew its military and 7,000 Jewish settlers from the strip last year.

"The question of releasing prisoners is absolutely not on the agenda of the government of Israel," Mr Olmert said at a meeting of Jewish leaders in Jerusalem last night. He also warned that an "broad, fierce and harsh Israeli response" was near.

"We will not allow ourselves to become the object of **Hamas** terrorist blackmail."

Israel, he added, would hunt down "every terrorist and every terrorist organisation . . . even in far away places" - an apparent reference to Khaled Meshal, a leading **Hamas** figure in Damascus whom Israel believes gave the green light for Monday's raid.

French diplomats entered the fray yesterday after it emerged that the abducted soldier had dual Israeli and French citizenship.

Israel says it will not deal with Hamas for soldier

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas was also trying to track down Cpl Shalit's location with the help of mediators from Egypt, which has been active from the start in trying to defuse the growing stand-off.

Ghazi Hamad, a spokesman for the Hamas-led Palestinian government, confirmed that Cpl Shalit was alive and called on his captors to "keep him alive. We are interested in ending this matter quickly."

But the fact that the statement demanding the release of prisoners was signed by the military wing of Hamas has exposed apparent divisions within the Islamic movement, which swept to power in parliamentary elections in January.

Israeli intelligence officials told parliament yesterday that more moderate elements in Hamas, including prime minister Ismail Haniyeh, wanted to end the affair as quickly as possible.

However, pressure on those holding Cpl Shalit not to release him also began to mount yesterday, with Palestinian security prisoners - there are some 8,000 in Israeli jails - saying he should only be freed if Israel released prisoners in exchange.

In Washington, state department spokesman Sean McCormack said secretary of state Condoleezza Rice had spoken over the weekend to both Mr Abbas and the Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni to try to secure the release of the soldier.

"Bottom line, we call upon this individual to be released immediately," Mr McCormack told reporters.

"What we would urge is that all sides exercise restraint and avoid steps which further escalate the situation," he added.

Load-Date: June 27, 2006

Fatah, Hamas already talking coalition: On final day of campaign, polls say outcome is too close to call

Ottawa Citizen

January 24, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A13

Length: 1121 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak, The Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - The ruling Fatah party and the Islamic **Hamas** traded bitter accusations and made impassioned last-minute appeals for support yesterday, the final day of campaigning for Palestinian parliamentary elections.

With polls showing tomorrow's election is too close to call, **Hamas** and Fatah signalled an interest in forming a coalition after the vote. **Hamas** officials said even if they win a majority, they would prefer lower-profile cabinet posts and to let Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, deal with the Israelis.

That would likely rule out a **Hamas**-run government, an alarming prospect for Israel and the West that would spell trouble for future peace prospects.

"We will not put obstacles in the way of Abu Mazen, but we want to correct his policy, to support him in how he can bring more rights for the Palestinians," said Ghazi Hamad, a **Hamas** ideologue and candidate in Gaza.

Across Gaza and the West Bank, Palestinians plastered posters on walls and electric poles, strung up banners and held large rallies to drum up support.

"Don't let anyone steal your achievements," Fatah candidate Samir Masharawi told followers in Gaza City. "It's not a shame to negotiate. ... It's a shame to give up."

Fatah candidates in Gaza joined hundreds of supporters on a pilgrimage to the home of Yasser Arafat, hoping to parlay the memory of the late iconic leader into votes.

Led by candidate Mohammed Dahlan, the chanting crowd pledged its commitment "to the blood of the martyrs, to the wounds of the wounded, to the suffering of the prisoners, and to vote for the Fatah list."

Thousands attended a **Hamas** rally in the West Bank city of Hebron, waving green **Hamas** flags and posters of leaders killed by Israel in a huge show of strength. In a sign of Islamic conservatism, men and woman stood on opposite sides.

Fatah, Hamas already talking coalition: On final day of campaign, polls say outcome is too close to call

Hamas, known for its suicide bombings and calls for Israel's destruction, has emerged as a formidable political force. It has attracted voters with a platform stressing clean government and an end to Fatah's corruption, while pointing to its popular social and education programs.

"The people of **Hamas** are close to God and their hands are clean," said Abdel Khalim Amer, 38, a resident of Nablus who plans to vote for the group. **Hamas** recently won municipal elections in the West Bank city.

With many Palestinians weary after five years of fighting with Israel, **Hamas** has played down its violent ideology. But appealing to its hardline core, leaders also say they remain committed to armed struggle.

The mixed messages were evident yesterday. Khaled Mashaal, the group's exiled supreme leader, rejected negotiations with Israel.

"What is the point of negotiations when your enemy does not acknowledge your rights," he told the Al-Arabiya satellite channel. "We should escalate the resistance."

But in Gaza, **Hamas** leader Mahmoud Zahar, a parliamentary candidate, said the group might be willing to negotiate with Israel through a third party.

"Negotiation is not a taboo," he said. "If there is something from the enemy side to be offered, like stopping aggression, releasing our prisoners, we could find a way."

Mr. Zahar's statements reflected the growing likelihood that Fatah and **Hamas** will seek to work together after the election. In a sign of **Hamas**'s pragmatism, the group has not carried out a suicide bombing in the year since a ceasefire was declared with Israel.

Hamas officials said they will decide whether to join the government only after the vote. But if they do, it will be as a partner in a coalition with Fatah.

"Fatah is the first choice as a coalition partner," said Mr. Hamad. He said **Hamas** would demand service ministries, such as health and education, though it would want some say in diplomatic affairs as well.

The Issues and Where the Key Parties Stand

Negotiations with Israel:

The Fatah party wants to resume negotiations with Israel to achieve an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, seized by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war. **Hamas** has sent mixed messages about talking to Israel -- sometimes rejecting it and at other times not ruling it out. **Hamas** advocates Israel's destruction, but at the same time says a long-term truce might be possible. Two independent parties, Independent Palestine and the Third Way, favour negotiations with Israel.

Use of violence:

Fatah rejects the use of violence by either side, although gunmen affiliated with Fatah have carried out repeated attacks on Israelis, and have occasionally clashed with rival Palestinians. **Hamas** favours "armed struggle" against Israel, saying it will respond with force to Israeli attacks, though it has largely honoured a ceasefire during the past year. The small terror group Islamic Jihad, which is boycotting the elections, continues to carry out suicide bombings.

Jerusalem, refugees and borders:

All parties demand East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state, and say Palestinians who lost their homes during Israel's creation in 1948 should be allowed to return. Israel strongly opposes both demands. Fatah, Independent Palestine and the Third Way parties accept the 1993 Oslo peace accords, which recognized Israel and set up the Palestinian Authority. **Hamas** rejects Oslo and is vague about its vision of a future state, but says

Fatah, Hamas already talking coalition: On final day of campaign, polls say outcome is too close to call

sovereignty in the West Bank and Gaza would be only a first stage toward an Arab state in all of historic Palestine. Another group, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, in the past has spoken of a single state to be shared equally by Jews and Arabs.

Corruption:

All parties have pledged a frontal attack on corruption, including Fatah, widely seen as the main offender. Hamas' growing popularity is largely due to its image of incorruptibility.

Election facts

Voters

Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem: 3.5 million

Residents of voting age: 1.7 million

Registered voters: 1.3 million

Polling stations

In Gaza: 254

In the West Bank/Jerusalem: 754

Parliament seats: 132

Total number of legislators chosen in 16 electoral districts: 66

Total number of legislators chosen from party slates: 66

Candidates: 728

Competing in districts: 414

Competing on party slates: 314

Total: 728

Number of female candidates: 85

Parties: 11

The five main ones:

Fatah: Ruling party of Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas

Reform and Change: Name under which Islamic terror group Hamas is competing in election

Third Way: Headed by outgoing Palestinian Finance Minister Salam Fayyad

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine: Radical PLO faction headed by Ahmed Saadat, jailed for ordering the assassination of an Israeli cabinet minister in 2001

Independent Palestine: Headed by Mustafa Barghouti

Source: Palestinian Central Election Commission

Fatah, Hamas already talking coalition: On final day of campaign, polls say outcome is too close to call

Graphic

Photo: Nasser Ishtayeh, The Associated Press; A veiled Palestinian woman stands in front of a **Hamas** flag as she attends a **Hamas** pre-election rally in the West Bank town of Tulkarem yesterday.

Load-Date: January 24, 2006

End of Document

***Hamas rejects Blair's Mideast plan: PM wants group to recognize Israel.
Olmert, Abbas to meet 'without condition'***

The Gazette (Montreal)

September 11, 2006 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A14

Length: 338 words

Byline: BRENDAN CARLIN, London Daily Telegraph

Dateline: RAMALLAH, WEST BANK

Body

Tony Blair's hopes of inspiring a breakthrough in the Middle East were dashed yesterday when **Hamas** rejected his conditions for any future talks with the militant group.

During a visit to the region, the British prime minister said Britain would talk to **Hamas** if it joined a new Palestinian government of national unity that renounced violence and recognized Israel. He encouraged other Western governments to do the same.

But Blair's offer was immediately rejected by **Hamas**, which said that although it was ready to form a government with the moderate group Fatah, it would be on its own terms.

Sami Abu Zuhri, a **Hamas** spokesperson, said: "**Hamas** supports the creation of a national unity government, put in place for the Palestinian people and not for powers abroad."

Blair's attempts to play the statesman's role in the Middle East claimed a small success in the long-paralyzed peace process when both Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, and Ehud Olmert, the Israeli prime minister, consented to hold talks "without preconditions."

The two have not met since Olmert succeeded Ariel Sharon this year.

"We signal our readiness to resume serious negotiations that put an end to the conflict and an end to the cycle of violence," Abbas told reporters in the West Bank city of Ramallah after talks with Blair. No timetable for the talks was set however, and the timing of the announcement betrayed a strong element of stage management.

Persuading **Hamas** to shift its position on Israel is a far bigger obstacle. The organization has a history of sponsoring terrorism and stunned the world when it won elections in the Palestinian territories, after Israeli forces and settlers made a unilateral withdrawal from Gaza.

Israel has never officially talked to **Hamas** and there have been no government contacts between Israel and the moderate Abbas since militants linked to **Hamas** killed two Israeli soldiers and captured another in June near the border with Gaza.

Hamas rejects Blair's Mideast plan: PM wants group to recognize Israel. Olmert, Abbas to meet 'without condition'

Blair travels to Beirut today, where already police are preparing for protests.

Graphic

Chart/Graph: KHALIL HAMRA, AP; Palestinian women wait in line to receive food at a UN warehouse in Gaza City yesterday. The UN's refugee relief agency, working in Gaza since 1950, said yesterday it had increased the amount of food aid to refugees in the Strip because of conditions there.

Load-Date: September 11, 2006

End of Document

Suicide bomb worsens tension between Israelis and Hamas

The Times (London)

April 18, 2006, Tuesday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 890 words

Byline: Stephen Farrell

Body

Refusal by militants to condemn attack in which nine people died confronts Israel's acting Prime Minister with his first test, writes Stephen Farrell

NINE Israelis were killed in a suicide bombing outside a fast-food stall in Tel Aviv during the Jewish Passover holiday yesterday.

It was the first such attack since the Hamas militant group came to power and the deadliest in 20 months.

The bomb came on the day that Israel's new parliament was sworn in, providing the first test for Ehud Olmert, the acting Prime Minister, even before he has formed a ruling coalition.

The bomb went off at 1.40pm outside a falafel stand near Tel Aviv's old bus station, the same spot that was targeted by a bomber in January. The area was packed with poor immigrant shoppers seeking holiday bargains. Scores of shoppers were injured.

The attack was claimed by Islamic Jihad, who screened a suicide video by Sami Salim Hamad, a 21-year-old university dropout from Jenin. In the video he dedicated his death to Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and gave a warning that "there are many other bombers on the way".

A day earlier Ramadan Shallah, the exiled leader of Islamic Jihad, told an anti- Israel conference in Tehran that his armed faction was determined to send bombers into Israel.

"The non-stop crackdown against our resistance might limit this effort, but it's not going to stop it," he said.

Condemnations were swift. Israeli officials called on Hamas to halt attacks by other militant groups, which it has refused to do. Mr Olmert, speaking at the Knesset opening, said: "We will know how to respond in the way and manner required, and we will continue to act with all means at our disposal to thwart further such incidents."

As he spoke, Israeli troops rolled into the West Bank city of Nablus and began carrying out arrests. Last night Israeli aircraft fired missiles at a metal workshop in Gaza City, causing some damage but no injuries, Palestinian officials said. The Israeli Army said that the strike had targeted a building used by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine for constructing rockets to fire at Israel. At least 25 Palestinians have been killed and 45 wounded in Israeli attacks this month.

Suicide bomb worsens tension between Israelis and Hamas

Hamas remained defiant over the Tel Aviv blast. "This operation is a natural consequence of continued Israeli aggression and escalation," Sami Abu Zuhri, a spokesman, said. "The Israeli occupation bears the responsibility for this situation as a consequence of its crimes against our **women** and children, as well as the assassinations (and) arrests."

Moussa Abu Marzouk, a **Hamas** leader living in exile, gave warning of further escalation, saying: "The Israeli side must feel what the Palestinian feels, and the Palestinian defends himself as much as he can."

Yesterday's was the third suicide bombing this year. In January 15 people were wounded in the first bus station blast, and on March 30 four Israelis were blown up by al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades near Kedumim, a Jewish settlement in the occupied West Bank.

Hamas's stark response to the latest attack is certain to harden Israeli and US determination to cripple the new Palestinian administration through financial pressure and possible sanctions against regimes and businesses that support it.

Raanan Gissin, an Israeli government spokesman, said that **Hamas** would be held to account: "This Palestinian Authority, which has clearly defined itself as a terrorist entity, has tried to instigate terrorist support more than the previous one did, and we will act accordingly."

Mahmoud Abbas, the moderate Palestinian President, whose Fatah party was routed by **Hamas** in the elections in January, also condemned the bombing as a "terrorist attack".

Witnesses said that the bomber's bag was being searched by a security guard outside a shopping centre when he blew himself up.

"I saw a young man starting to open his bag," Moussa al- Zidat, a shopper, said. "The guard begins opening the bag, and then I heard a boom."

The blast shattered the windshields of cars, pornography cinemas and shops near by. Police quickly sealed off the city centre.

Israel Yaakov said that he saw a woman killed near her family. "The father was traumatised, he went into shock. He ran to the children to gather them up and the children were screaming, 'Mom! Mom!' and she wasn't answering, she was dead already...It's a shocking scene," he said.

Medical workers feared that dozens of illegal immigrants were also wounded but were too afraid to attend hospital. Immigration police declared a 24-hour amnesty, assuring victims that they would not be rounded up and deported.

Police said that a car that fled the scene containing three Palestinian suspects, was seized on the main road from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Israeli security was tight because of previous holiday attacks.

The bomber's mother, Samya, said later that she had had no knowledge of her son's intentions. "I thought that he had gone to work in Jenin before I was told on the phone that he had carried out this attack in Tel Aviv," she said.

The EU condemned the attack and strongly urged the Palestinian Government to renounce violence. Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, also condemned the attack and urged the Palestinian Authority to take a clear public stand against acts of terrorism.

www.timesonline.co.uk/mideast - Latest news from the Middle East

Load-Date: April 18, 2006

Palestinians' vote a choice between Fatah, Hamas: Pollsters predict a cliffhanger, with peace or confrontation in the balance

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

January 25, 2006 Wednesday

FINAL C Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 621 words

Byline: Karin Laub, Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- In their first parliament election in a decade, Palestinians faced a historic choice today: give the corruption-tainted Fatah Party another chance to pursue an elusive peace deal with Israel or opt for confrontation and international isolation under the Islamic party **Hamas**.

Both **Hamas** and Fatah were confident of victory, but pollsters said the race was too close to call. Despite the bitter rivalry, both parties said they would consider a coalition if no clear victor emerges.

Polls opened at 7 a.m. across the West Bank and Gaza, with some 1.3 million voters eligible to choose a 132-member parliament. Nearly an hour into the voting, there were no reports of fraud or violence.

Hamas has won over voters with a tightly organized campaign focusing on local issues, such as public services and the need to clean up government, while playing down its violent ideology. In contrast, Fatah has been plagued by disarray, infighting and widespread perceptions of corruption.

"Something inside me led me to vote for **Hamas** because we are tired of corruption," said Samer Lulu, 29, a merchant in Gaza City, voicing a popular sentiment. "With religious people at least we will have our public money in clean hands."

Both parties were out in full force early Wednesday. At a polling station in the upscale Rimal neighbourhood of Gaza City, **Hamas** activists warmly greeted voters.

About a dozen male activists wearing **Hamas**' trademark green hats and bandanas held computerized lists of voters, and assigned volunteer drivers to transport supporters to the station. On the opposite side, five **Hamas women** -- covered in full-length black robes and veils over their faces -- handed out hats and cards with candidates' names. Fatah activists were nowhere to be seen.

But in the nearby Beach refugee camp, both parties formed long reception lines to welcome the voters. Fatah activists, wearing the party's black and white scarves decorated with Palestinian flags, mingled with voters, and the party transported voters in on buses.

Palestinians' vote a choice between Fatah, Hamas: Pollsters predict a cliffhanger, with peace or confrontation in the balance

The camp was decorated in a sea of flags -- green for Hamas, yellow for Fatah -- and the sense of excitement in the air was palpable. Some vehicles were decorated with carnations, as if a wedding were taking place.

"Historically Fatah has been the only group leading the Palestinian march," said Wissam Abu Ajina, 28, who voted for the party in the northern Gaza village of Beit Lahiya.

He said he feared the rise of Hamas would isolate the Palestinians internationally. "It's an armed group. It doesn't have good relations with the West," he said.

Some 13,000 police officers deployed at 1,008 polling stations, taking up positions on rooftops and at entrances to enforce a weapons ban.

Rival party groups pledged to keep their guns out of sight today, but several pre-election skirmishes and two killings, including the shooting of a Fatah politician in internal fighting Tuesday, kept security forces on alert.

Early today, Palestinian police arrested eight Fatah activists in connection with the killing, security officials said.

Pollsters predicted a turnout of at least 75 per cent, but rain forecast for today could give Hamas, with its ideologically more committed electorate, an edge.

Nearly 20,000 local observers and 950 international monitors, led by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, were watching the vote.

There were some allegations of fraud in the 1996 parliament election and the 2005 presidential election that brought Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas to power, but international monitors said at the time the problems weren't widespread.

Wednesday's election marked the first time Palestinians have a clear choice between two political camps since Hamas boycotted the 1996 vote.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Emilio Morenatti, Associated Press; Masked Palestinian gunmen from Hamas (bottom centre) and Fatah participate in a joint press conference in Gaza City Tuesday. Both parties pledged to maintain calm during the elections.

Load-Date: January 25, 2006

Parliament dominated by Hamas sworn in; Abbas urges group to respect all existing pacts

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

February 19, 2006 Sunday

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Section: NATIONAL/WORLD; Pg. a7

Length: 268 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Body

A new parliament dominated by **Hamas** was sworn in Saturday, with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas asking the Islamic militant group to form the next government but imploring it to honor existing peace deals and take the path of negotiations.

Hamas leaders rejected Abbas' calls, but signaled a willingness to compromise.

In the battle for Palestinians' political future, time is short and stakes are high: Israel is on the verge of imposing sanctions that would seal off the Gaza Strip.

Hooked up via video conferencing because Israel wouldn't let them travel between the West Bank and Gaza, the new Palestinian lawmakers in the two territories took their oath of office collectively, reciting a prayer with upturned palms.

At the back of a meeting hall in the West Bank city of Ramallah, **Hamas** lawmakers - the men sporting traditional Muslim beards and the **women** in headscarves and long robes - held up portraits of fellow legislators sitting in Israeli jails.

Abbas, whose Fatah Party lost Jan. 25 elections, urged the new legislature not to endanger diplomatic gains worked out over years of painstaking talks with Israel and the international community. **Hamas** controls 74 of parliament's 132 seats.

"We, as a presidency and a government, will continue our commitment to the negotiation process as the sole political, pragmatic and strategic choice through which we reap the fruit of our struggle and sacrifices over the long decades," Abbas said.

He reminded the new legislators "of the need to respect all signed agreements," including the so-called Oslo Accords of the 1990s that set up the Palestinian Authority.

Load-Date: February 19, 2006

TV for kids: Militancy and games in Gaza; Hamas to broadcast show for children

The International Herald Tribune

January 19, 2006 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 1013 words

Byline: Craig S. Smith

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Hey kids, it's Uncle Hazim time!

Hazim Sharawi, whose stage name is Uncle Hazim, is a quiet, doe-eyed young man who has an easy way with children and who will soon act as the host of a children's television show here on which he will cavort with men in larger-than-life, fake-fur animal suits on the newest television station in the Gaza Strip, Al Aksa TV.

But Pee Wee's Playhouse this is not. The station, named for Islam's third-holiest site, is owned by Hamas, the people who made suicide bombing a household term.

"Our television show will have a message, but without getting into the tanks, the guns, the killing and the blood," said Sharawi, sitting in the broadcast studio where he will produce his show.

The new station is part of the militant Palestinian group's strategy for emerging from the shadows of its bloody terrorism campaign to claim a place as a legitimate player in Palestinian politics, much as Hezbollah once did in Lebanon.

The station began broadcasting Jan. 7, and Hamas is working on a satellite version that would give it an even broader reach, like Hezbollah's Al Manar TV, which is watched throughout the Arab world.

"Their success encouraged us," said Fathi Hammad, Al Aksa TV's director. He said Hamas had tried unsuccessfully to find an existing broadcaster to accept its programming. "The Arab satellite broadcasters Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya both turned us down," he said, sitting beneath the seal of Hamas, which depicts the Dome of the Rock, which shares the Temple Mount with Al Aksa Mosque, between crossed swords and an idealized green map of Palestine. "Even Iraq and Saudi Arabia refused."

In 2003, after the Palestinian Authority granted Hamas a broadcast license covering both radio and television, the group started the Voice of Al Aksa, which quickly became one of the most popular radio stations in the Gaza Strip. It took more than two years to assemble the expertise and equipment necessary to start the television station.

The current 12 hours of daily television programming, which has an unfinished look, consists primarily of readings from the Koran, religious discourse and discussions of women's issues, like Islamic fashion, child-rearing tips and

TV for kids: Militancy and games in Gaza Hamas to broadcast show for children

the right of women to work, which Hamas supports. It will eventually feature a sort of Islamic MTV, with Hamas-produced music videos using footage from the group's fights with Israeli troops.

But its biggest star will probably be Sharawi, whose radio show for children was the Voice of Al Aksa's biggest hit.

Sharawi, 27, wearing a long black leather coat with a hood over a green suit and tie, started working with children at his mosque while studying geology at the Islamic University in Gaza.

He said the head of Hamas's radio station spotted him leading children's games at the mosque and asked him to do a children's radio show two years ago. The show has become so popular that his appearances at occasional Hamas-sponsored festivals draw as many as 10,000 children at a time.

Sharawi does not allow visitors to see him do his radio broadcast because the studio's location is a heavily guarded secret. In 2004, an Israeli Apache helicopter fired three rockets into the station's previous studio not long after Sharawi and his colleagues had fled.

Everybody involved in the television station is worried about another attack, but Sharawi said he was ready to die if it came. "The messengers don't care if they lose their lives for the sake of revealing the message," he said.

As he describes it, his television show, which is scheduled to begin in a few weeks, will teach children the basics of militant Palestinian politics: the disputed status of Jerusalem, Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and Palestinian refugees' demand for a right to return to the land and homes they lost to Israel in the 1948 war. He said the show would not show the violence that is part of the Hamas worldview.

"I will show them our rights through the history," he said. "Show them, 'This is Nablus, this is Gaza, this is Al Aksa Mosque, which is with the Israelis and should be in our hands.'"

The show will alternate between video clips recorded outside the studio and live telephone calls from children taken in the studio by Uncle Hazim and his animal characters. He said he would leaven the sober and pedantic material with fun and games, including such standards as egg-spoon races, eating apples on a string or "tug of war, which will show children that the more you cooperate with others, the more you win."

Sharawi plans to dress up in costumes to suit the show's locale: a sailor suit while taping on the beach; a track suit when in the park; or a Boy Scout uniform while hiking through the small patches of empty land that serve as the wilderness in Gaza.

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Through it all, Sharawi will be accompanied by animal-costumed sidekicks to provide comic relief. Hamas will rent the Egyptian-made plush costumes: a fox, a rabbit, a dog, a bear and a chicken, already gray and matted from wear, from a production company run by a Hamas supporter who has just emerged from two years in Israeli jails.

Fingering a string of bright green plastic prayer beads, a pale blue prayer rug lying on the chair beside him, he tried to reconcile Hamas's bloody attacks, in which children are killed, with his role as mentor.

"These are one of the means used by the Palestinians against Israel's F-16s and tanks," he said of the suicide attacks, giving a stock answer. "We're doing our best to avoid involving children in these issues, but I cannot turn the children's lives into a beautiful garden while outside it's the contrary."

The show, which will be broadcast Friday mornings, the Arab world's equivalent of Sunday mornings in the West, will be preceded by an hour of cartoons, including a serialized life of the Prophet Muhammad and that universal parody of deadly conflict, Tom and Jerry.

TV for kids: Militancy and games in Gaza Hamas to broadcast show for children

End of Document

Militants to fill new security force: Israel, U.S. condemn move by Hamas-led gov't

The Vancouver Province (British Columbia)

April 21, 2006 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A35

Length: 404 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- The **Hamas** government yesterday named a Palestinian whose group has attacked Israel and was blamed for bombing a U.S. convoy to head a new security force made up of Islamic militants.

The move is a direct challenge to the authority of President Mahmoud Abbas, and was quickly denounced by Israel and the U.S.

Hamas Interior Minister Said Siyam issued a decree appointing Jamal Abu Samhadana, the head of the Popular Resistance Committees, as director-general of his ministry.

Samhadana, a former security officer who was dismissed for refusing to report for duty during the uprising against Israel, was given the rank of colonel.

His group is responsible for many of the homemade rockets launched at Israel in recent weeks. It also is suspected by some of involvement in the attack on a U.S. Embassy convoy in Gaza that killed three marine security guards in October 2003.

Interior Ministry spokesman Khaled Abu Hilal said Siyam would form a new security branch, answerable only to him, to bring law and order to the Palestinian streets.

"This force is going to include the elite of our sons from the freedom fighters and the holy warriors and the best men we have," he said. "It's going to include members of all the resistance branches."

Abbas' office had no immediate response.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack criticized the move. He said it showed "the true nature and the true tactics of this particular **Hamas**-led government," and the U.S. would still hold the Palestinian Authority responsible for stopping terror attacks.

Israeli Foreign Ministry official Gideon Meir echoed that.

Militants to fill new security force: Israel , U.S. condemn move by Hamas-led gov't

"If someone needed proof about the connection between the Hamas rule and Palestinian terror, this appointment is the ultimate proof," he said. "It's like allowing the fox to guard the chicken coop."

Abu Hilal said officials have begun recruiting for the new force, but they could not say how it would be structured or how big it would be. He also did not know whether the new force would be paid by the Interior Ministry or serve as volunteers, paid by their militant groups.

After Hamas' Jan. 25 election victory over Abbas' Fatah Party, the Islamic group's leaders said they planned to incorporate some of their militants into the security forces. But the announcement of a new force made up of militants appeared to be an effort to counter Abbas' moves to take control of all other security branches.

Graphic

Colour Photo: The Associated Press; A Palestinian boy wears a hat with the Hamas banner during a rally by women supporting the Hamas government in Gaza City yesterday.

Load-Date: April 21, 2006

End of Document

Hamas era begins with swearing-in of parliament: 74 members to take oaths of office, as Israel plans drastic sanctions

The Gazette (Montreal)
February 18, 2006 Saturday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A18

Length: 598 words

Byline: KARIN LAUB, AP

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

A Palestinian housewife who sent her son on a suicide mission against Israel has been taking civics lessons to prepare for her new assignment - becoming a legislator.

Signalling the start of the **Hamas** era, Mariam Farhat will be among 74 members of the Islamic militant group to take their oaths of office and assume control of the Palestinian parliament today.

Farhat and others in **Hamas** are confident they'll be able to govern, even alleviate poverty in the West Bank and Gaza, with help from God and cash from the Muslim world.

But life is bound to get harder very quickly, with Israel planning drastic sanctions, including a blockade of Gaza and a travel ban between the two territories.

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas is caught between Israel and **Hamas**.

His aides said Abbas wouldn't mind seeing a **Hamas** government collapse over an economic squeeze, but that he won't resort to political ploys to bring down the militants himself.

In his opening speech to parliament today, he'll demand **Hamas** publicly recognize peace agreements with Israel and the U.S.-backed "road map" peace plan, but his advisers said he's unsure whether he would fire a **Hamas** prime minister who would probably defy those demands.

Today's parliamentary session will be held simultaneously in Gaza City and the West Bank city of Ramallah because of Israeli travel bans, with legislators in the two locations hooked up by video conference. Many of the 132 legislators won't show for sure: 14 are in Israeli prisons, and two are on the run from the Israeli security forces.

In the Gaza City parliament building, there were no signs that the domination of Abbas's Fatah Party had come to an end. The facade was still plastered with posters of the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who founded Fatah in the 1960s.

Hamas era begins with swearing-in of parliament: 74 members to take oaths of office, as Israel plans drastic sanctions

Next door, a new three-storey parliament building is under construction, funded with the equivalent of \$3.6 million U.S. from the European Union. Parliament officials said the work would be halted, however, because the EU is not willing to foot the bill for a **Hamas**-dominated legislature.

Hamas has responded with bluster and evasion to the West's threats to cut off hundreds of millions of dollars in aid if the group does not renounce violence and recognize Israel.

"We are ready to eat the leaves off the trees, before we make a trade for our rights and our land," said Abdel Aziz Duaik, **Hamas**'s nominee for parliamentary speaker. "We will depend on Allah. ... He is our sustainer, not the United States or the West."

Farhat, the new **Hamas** legislator, also brushed aside money woes, saying Muslim countries would come to the rescue.

In recent days, she and others in **Hamas** were taught by the group's leaders about parliamentary procedures and assigned portfolios. The **women** got the welfare, health and education beat. Farhat said she's eager to improve Gaza's hospitals and increase stipends for the poor.

The mother of 10 got into parliament as the unlikely symbol of holy war, or jihad, against Israel. Three of her six sons died violent deaths, and one of **Hamas**'s top bombmakers, Emad Akel, died in a hail of Israeli fire in her front yard after hiding in her basement for a year.

In 2002, she sent her 18-year-old son Mohammed on a suicide mission, a shooting rampage in the Jewish settlement of Atzmona that killed five Israeli teens.

Farhat is unapologetic. She said she cries for her boys, but that "jihad comes ahead of everything, including my feelings as a mother."

Online Extra: An old friend of Ariel Sharon promises to fulfill his vision for Israel. Find out more at our website: www.montrealgazette.com

Load-Date: February 18, 2006

No U.S. aid for Hamas-led regime: Tens of millions at risk if radical party won't renounce terrorism

Ottawa Citizen

January 30, 2006 Monday

EARLY Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 998 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher in Jerusalem and Kevin Sullivan in London, The Washington Post; CanWest News Services and The Associated Press

Body

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said yesterday that the U.S. would not provide financial assistance to a Palestinian government run by Hamas, the radical Islamic group that won last week's parliamentary elections.

"The United States is not prepared to fund an organization that advocates the destruction of Israel, that advocates violence," Ms. Rice told reporters travelling with her to London for a 40-hour visit to focus on the Hamas issue and Iran's nuclear program, as well as an international conference on Afghanistan.

Ms. Rice said the Palestinian Authority stands to lose much of the foreign assistance that helps make up its \$1.6-billion annual budget if Hamas does not change its policies.

"Perhaps Palestinian people want their children to be suicide bombers and that's the great desire of large numbers of the Palestinian population," Ms. Rice said. "I don't believe it."

The loss of U.S. funds would come on top of an estimated \$54 million in tax revenue that Israel says it will withhold should Hamas be installed as government.

Israel has "no intention" of sending funds to terror groups, acting Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert told reporters yesterday.

Donor nations will hold meetings in London today to decide whether to continue to fund a Palestinian government that is to be led by an Islamic party that denies Israel's right to exist and refuses to renounce violence.

"We're going to review all of our assistance programs but the bedrock principle here is we can't have funding for an organization that holds those views just because it is in government," Ms. Rice said.

The U.S. government provided \$403 million U.S. in aid to the Palestinian Authority in 2005, according to U.S. officials. She said humanitarian aid would be considered "case by case."

Nevertheless, many Palestinians have more pressing concerns. They worry that a government led by Hamas, which won a landslide victory in national elections last Wednesday, will force unwanted cultural and social changes on what until now has been the most secular Muslim society in the Middle East.

No U.S. aid for Hamas-led regime: Tens of millions at risk if radical party won't renounce terrorism

It is feared that Hamas may try to make Palestinian women wear the veil or cover their heads and severely restrict their rights in divorce and property cases. There is also anxiety over a possible ban on the sale of alcohol and on satellite dishes that can receive European television stations that show many X-rated movies.

"Nobody in my family has ever worn a hijab (garments that cover the head and the entire body) and Hamas cannot force me to do anything I don't want to do," said Ferihan Bader, who works at a Palestinian medical clinic in Silwan, a hardscrabble Jerusalem suburb. "Not all of us believe in what Hamas believes in, and they know it."

While westerners consider whether it is proper to give money to the Palestinian Authority if Hamas does not make recognizing Israel and disarming its militants the top priority, social anthropologist Reema Hammami said Palestinians were not cowed by the prospect of desperately needed financial aid being cut off.

"This society has learned over the past 50 years how to deal with immense hardship, because there has been a constant national economic emergency that has taught people how to make bread from water," the Birzeit University professor said.

"Palestinians are thinking more right now about how Hamas may want to change their social lives. They are talking about which restaurants might be closed and how shariah (Islamic law) might be applied to banks."

The Islamic Resistance Movement, to call Hamas by its full name, received a modest check on its powers when the final election results were released yesterday. Hamas won two fewer seats (74) and Fatah won two more (45) than preliminary results had indicated four days ago. While this change does not affect Hamas's majority in the 132-seat Palestinian Legislative Council, it means that Fatah, which had ruled Gaza and the West Bank for decades, now has enough votes to block any attempt by Hamas to Islamicize the constitution.

Hamas would not try to implement drastic social change because "it always reads the mood of the people very well," Mr. Hammami said. "When something doesn't work, and these things wouldn't, they back off."

Despite some fierce anti-Israeli rhetoric since winning the election, Hamas has been showing a pragmatic side, too. It had behaved "responsibly" by not launching any provocative military actions, Israel's Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz said yesterday.

The first real test of Hamas's intentions toward Israel may be whether it prevents Fatah's al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade from launching terrorist attacks, the defence minister said.

Mr. Olmert, the acting prime minister, told the regular weekly cabinet meeting yesterday that Israel had received strong backing from world leaders for its government's stance that it will have no contacts with a Hamas-led government unless Hamas was "giving up its ways of terror, recognizing Israel's right to exist in peace and security and honouring all the accords with Israel undertaken by the Palestinian Authority."

The tax revenue he said will be withheld includes tariffs and fees collected at border crossings and other tax rebates.

In the past, Israel has held up the transfers during times of tension. Such a delay now would cripple the cash-strapped Palestinian government.

According to Israeli media reports, the security ministries favour the release of the funds, which have been earmarked to pay government salaries, to prevent the chaos that would ensue if the Palestinian Authority were to go bankrupt.

Without providing specifics, Yunis Sumrain, who works in the Palestinian Authority, said ways to deliver aid via non-government organizations were already being discussed.

"The U.S. and Europe cannot throw four million Palestinians out because they voted for Hamas, with the democracy that George Bush wanted us to have," Mr. Sumrain said. "Too many people have a black view of the future, but Hamas is not the Taliban."

No U.S. aid for Hamas-led regime: Tens of millions at risk if radical party won't renounce terrorism

Graphic

Colour Photo: Mohammed Salem, Reuters; A Fatah supporter brandishes a rifle in Gaza yesterday.

Load-Date: January 30, 2006

End of Document

Hamas triumphs over Fatah; Bush calls victory 'a wake-up call'

The International Herald Tribune

January 27, 2006 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 752 words

Byline: Doreen Carvajal

Dateline: PARIS

Body

As world leaders struggled Thursday to come to grips with a changed political landscape in the Middle East, President George W. Bush demanded that the Islamic militant group Hamas renounce violence, but called the group's upset victory in Palestinian elections "a wake-up call" to the region's old guard.

"Obviously, people weren't happy with the status quo," Bush said in a news conference at the White House, where he praised the peaceful election and the high Palestinian turnout as positive developments. "People are demanding honest government. The people want services. They want to be able to raise their children in an environment where they can get a decent education and they can find jobs."

But Bush cautioned that his administration was waiting to see the new government take form because "if your platform is the destruction of Israel it means you're not a partner in peace and we're interested in peace."

As Hamas supporters took to the streets in celebration of a Palestinian election that could give the party 70 of 132 new seats in Parliament, other leaders around the world issued similar messages, using both measured terms and blunt language.

Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy described the outcome as a "very, very, very bad result" that could delay the peace process.

Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin of France, said Paris would impose several "indispensable conditions" for working with the new Palestinian government, including "the renunciation of violence" and "the recognition of Israel and the recognition of international accords, notably the Oslo accords."

European leaders said Hamas, outlawed in the 25-nation European Union as a terrorist organization since 1994, must lay down its weapons to avoid international isolation.

The German foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, said his country expected Hamas to renounce violence and recognize Israel, but added: "This appears to still be a long way off."

Jack Straw, Britain's foreign secretary, said: "The international community will want Hamas to make a proper rejection of violence and to acknowledge that Israel exists."

Hamis triumphs over Fatah Bush calls victory 'a wake-up call'

But along with the warnings came some praise that the election had been carried out in a relatively smooth and fair way.

The Council of Europe, in Strasbourg, the Continent's human rights watchdog, sent observers to monitor the election. They commended the Palestinian Legislative Council for conducting a well-organized and democratic vote. They said large numbers of women participated in the voting, which took place in a festive manner with only minor shortcomings.

The council said in a statement: "The results gained by Hamas cannot be seen but as a protest vote of the Palestinian population against the often nontransparent and ineffective manner in which the governing structures operated."

In Brussels, the EU's external relations commissioner, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, said the union was ready to cooperate with any Palestinian government if it pursued a peaceful resolution of the Middle East conflict.

Some leaders spoke from Davos, Switzerland, where they were attending the World Economic Forum.

The secretary general of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, called on Hamas to renounce violence.

"Any group that wishes to participate in the democratic process should ultimately disarm," he said. "Because to carry weapons and participate in a democratic process and sit in Parliament, there is a fundamental contradiction and I'm sure they are thinking about it, too."

President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan said the election results must be respected. "The solution lies in accepting the existence of Israel on the one side," he said, "but Israel has to accept a Palestinian state. The U.S. should adopt a neutral, strong stand, putting pressure on both sides."

On the same day that leaders were preparing to deal with a new Palestinian leadership, the World Economic Forum itself was embroiled in a controversy over Middle East politics.

The storm started with the publication of an article, "Boycott Israel," that appeared in the current issue of Global Agenda, the official magazine of the World Economic Forum that is circulated for free to all the participants.

The Anti-Defamation League denounced the article, written by Mazin Qumsiyeh, as an "outrageous anti-Israel screed." And Klaus Schwab, executive director of the forum, issued a formal apology Thursday, saying, "This article is totally in contradiction to my own, and the forum's mission and values."

Load-Date: January 27, 2006

TV recipe: Militance and egg races; Hamas seeks a new image with programming for children

The International Herald Tribune

January 18, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 1019 words

Byline: Craig S. Smith

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Hey kids, it's Uncle Hazim time!

Hazim Sharawi, whose stage name is Uncle Hazim, is a quiet, doe-eyed young man who has an easy way with children and who will soon act as the host of a children's television show here on which he will cavort with men in larger-than-life, fake-fur animal suits on the Gaza Strip's newest television station, Al Aksa TV.

But Pee Wee's Playhouse this is not. The station, named for Islam's third holiest site, is owned by **Hamas**, the people who made suicide bombing a household term.

"Our television show will have a message, but without getting into the tanks, the guns, the killing and the blood," said Sharawi, sitting in the broadcast studio where he will produce his show.

The new station is part of the militant Palestinian group's strategy for emerging from the shadows of its bloody terror campaign to claim a place as a legitimate player in Palestinian politics, much as Hezbollah once did in Lebanon.

The station began broadcasting on Jan. 7, and **Hamas** is working on a satellite version that would give it an even broader reach, like Hezbollah's Al Manar TV, which is watched throughout the Arab world.

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The current 12 hours of daily television programming, which has the unfinished look of public access cable television in the United States, consists primarily of readings from the Koran, religious discourse and discussions of **women's** issues, such as Islamic fashion, child-rearing tips and the right of **women** to work, which **Hamas**

TV recipe: Militance and egg races Hamas seeks a new image with programming for children

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Load-Date: January 24, 2006

TV recipe: Militance and egg races Hamas seeks a new image with programming for children

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HAMAS POINT-BLANK; Russia will need to prove that maintaining contacts with extremists is productive

What the Papers Say Part B (Russia)

July 3, 2006 Monday

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Section: PRESS EXTRACTS;; No. 116

Length: 1357 words

Byline: Grigori Asmolov, Jerusalem; Alexander Reutov

Highlight: Israeli hostage dilemma offers Russia an opportunity to distinguish itself; Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni arrived in Moscow yesterday. The agenda for her visit has been changed substantially due to the tumultuous events associated with the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier. Livni's main objective is to persuade Russia to use its influence with Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal.

Body

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni arrived in Moscow yesterday. The agenda for her visit has been changed substantially due to the tumultuous events associated with the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier. Right now, Livni's main objective is to persuade Russia to use its influence with Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal, who visited Moscow in March, and who (as Israel alleges) personally gave the order to seize the hostage. If Russia can provide some real assistance in freeing the hostage, this would offer a chance to overcome the chill in Russian-Israeli relations.

Right up until the last moment, Israel was unable to confirm that Tzipi Livni would actually go to Moscow. Eventually, however, Israel decided that her visit would be particularly useful at this point in time. The point here is that Moscow has direct access to the person who gave the order to attack an Israeli checkpoint, and from whom the abductors of Corporal Gilad Shalit take their orders, according to Israeli intelligence reports. This is Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal.

His visit to Moscow in March of 2006, as head of a delegation from the radical Palestinian movement Hamas, led to a very perceptible chill in Russian-Israeli relations. Hamas, the winner of a parliamentary election in the Palestinian Authority, received a personal invitation from President Vladimir Putin. Israel was categorically opposed to the visit. According to the Israelis, Moscow's actions undermined the solidarity of the Mideast quartet (Russia, the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations): the government formed by the Palestinian radicals ought to remain isolated until Hamas publicly renounces terrorism and recognizes earlier Palestinian-Israeli agreements, as well as recognizing Israel's right to exist.

Moscow supported this position at first, but then changed its minds, stating that isolating the Hamas government wouldn't bring about the desired results. Russia told its quartet partners and Israel that a dialogue with the Palestinian radicals should be maintained, and for that purpose, at least one of the quartet should have continual direct contacts with the Hamas leadership. Moscow argued that this would eventually benefit Israel itself. As a result, Khaled Mashaal came to Moscow in early March and was granted an audience with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

HAMAS POINT-BLANK Russia will need to prove that maintaining contacts with extremists is productive

And today Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni will ask Moscow to prove that its exclusive contacts with Hamas, extremist leader Khaled Mashaal, and Syria (which has provided Mashaal with a refuge) really are useful and can assist the cause of peace in the Middle East. "Moscow's partners" must be persuaded to return Corporal Shalit - and once this is done, Israel promises to call off Operation Summer Rain, launched with the aim of rescuing the soldier.

This offers Russia an opportunity to distinguish itself. The Russian Foreign Ministry considers that relations with Hamas are now at a level that enables Russia to request the Hamas leadership to cooperate in liberating the Israeli hostage. According to our sources, Russia has already contacted Khaled Mashaal about this issue, and he assured Russia that although he himself was not involved in the kidnapping of Gilad Shalit, he can assist in freeing him. The Russian Foreign Ministry believes, however, that securing the soldier's release will require Israel to make some concessions to the Palestinians, meeting at least some of their demands. Note that the abductors want Israel to stop the military operation in Gaza, and release Palestinian women and minors from Israeli jails. Moscow is prepared to be a mediator here.

But Russia isn't the only country claiming a mediation role. The Israeli government has already requested cooperation from the United States. President George W. Bush himself has called for the immediate release of Corporal Shalit, saying this would resolve the crisis at once. UN Middle East Envoy Alvaro de Soto was due in Gaza yesterday on a mediation mission, planning to meet with the Palestinian leadership, including Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas.

But the greatest activity is being shown by Egypt. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak himself is working on this issue. On Friday, June 30, Egyptian mediators handed Hamas a list of their proposals for a solution to the crisis, and gave the Palestinians 48 hours to reply. But that deadline expired yesterday, with no answer forthcoming.

Meanwhile, Israel's patience is running out. In the early hours of Sunday, July 2, Israeli attack helicopters delivered a missile strike at the Gaza office of Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh. An official Israeli military spokesman said: "The Israeli Army will continue to use all means at its disposal against Palestinian terrorist infrastructure in the Gaza sector, with the aim of ensuring the unconditional release of Corporal Gilad Shalit." Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert ordered the military and the special services yesterday to "intensify their actions."

But the Palestinians are standing their ground. Hamas government spokesman Ghazi Hamad said yesterday: "The Israeli government needs to realize that all it has to do is release our prisoners - and the crisis will be successfully resolved. Otherwise, the situation will become extremely complicated for them and for us. All this could lead to a large-scale military escalation, with the loss of many lives."

And this difficult moment is precisely when Moscow could get involved in resolving the crisis. Success would not only demonstrate that Russia is a major player in the Mideast arena, but also substantially improve Russia's relations with Israel, which have been damaged of late.

The history of Russian-Israeli relations over the past 18 months is primarily a history of crises. The first aggravation followed Russia's decision to sell weapons to Syria in early 2005; the latest aggravation followed Israel's shocked reaction to Moscow's decision to invite Hamas leaders to visit Russia. Ehud Olmert, in office as prime minister for over three months now, has found time to visit three world capitals: Washington, London, and Paris. Contrary to established practice, however, he has not scheduled a visit to Moscow. All we're getting so far is a visit from the Israeli foreign minister.

According to Israeli sources, Israel still can't decide how to behave with regard to Russia. In the wake of the crisis caused by Russia's sale of Strelts surface-to-air missiles to Syria, former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon instructed then-Security Council chief Giora Eiland to prepare a report on potential developments in Russian-Israeli relations. Sharon never saw the results. The report was submitted to Ehud Olmert, then acting prime minister, a few days after Hamas leaders were invited to visit Moscow. The Israeli Security Council stressed the strategic importance of cooperation with Russia, with some gentle hints that the Israeli government simply lacks a proper understanding of its Russian counterparts, preferring emotional reactions to Moscow's actions, rather than a precise analysis of the situation.

HAMAS POINT-BLANK Russia will need to prove that maintaining contacts with extremists is productive

But not everyone accepted these conclusions. A few months ago, the Haaretz newspaper reported on an argument within the Israeli halls of power, over whether Israel should support Russia's proposal for resolving the Iranian nuclear crisis (establishing Russian-Iranian joint enterprises for uranium enrichment), or whether any compromise on anything related to Iran cannot be trusted. In effect, Israel is torn between the potential of economic cooperation and the importance of political cooperation with Russia, on the one hand - and the fact that Moscow openly supports Israel's main enemies, Iran and Syria, as well as taking a conciliatory line with regard to Palestinian Islamists.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry is now hoping that Tzipi Livni's visit will provide some positive momentum in bilateral relations.

Moscow officials are also resolved to improve the situation. According to our sources in Israel, Livni may be received by President Vladimir Putin.

Source: Kommersant, July 3, 2006, p. 9

Translated by Elena Leonova

Load-Date: July 3, 2006

End of Document

Israel takes key Hamas figures into custody; 8 cabinet ministers are held as operation in Gaza intensifies

The International Herald Tribune

June 30, 2006 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 770 words

Byline: Ian Fisher and Steven Erlanger

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Ian Fisher reported from Gaza City and Steven Erlanger reported from Jerusalem. Christine Hauser contributed from New York.

*

Israel on Thursday stepped up its confrontation with Palestinian militants over the capture of an Israeli soldier, carrying out further airstrikes in the Gaza Strip and detaining Palestinian lawmakers and ministers in the **Hamas**-led cabinet.

In the West Bank city of Ramallah, Israeli forces detained 20 lawmakers and 8 ministers in the 24-member cabinet, including Deputy Prime Minister Nasser Shaer and Labor Minister Mohammed Barghouti, security officials said.

An Israeli warplane fired a missile in Gaza City that an Israeli spokeswoman said hit a soccer field near the pro-**Hamas** Islamic University.

Reuters reported that the missile hit inside the university.

Israeli forces also hit a site in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip that the army said was used to store and manufacture weapons, including rockets meant for attacks on Israel.

The army said in a statement that it would "employ all means" to rescue the soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit, 19, who was captured Sunday in an attack near Gaza led by **Hamas**, and to prevent rocket attacks on Israel from Gaza.

On Wednesday, the crisis escalated as Israeli tanks hunkered down at the airport in southern Gaza after warplanes knocked out half of Gaza's electricity and pounded sonic booms over houses.

Israel then battered northern Gazan towns with artillery shells and sent warplanes over the house of the Syrian president, who is influential with the **Hamas** leader who Israel believes ordered the raid Sunday.

The crisis also spilled over into a second and possibly third kidnapping.

Israel takes key Hamas figures into custody 8 cabinet ministers are held as operation in Gaza intensifies

Early Thursday, the body of an 18-year-old settler, Eliahu Asheri, was found near Ramallah. A militant group with ties to Hamas, the Popular Resistance Committees, claimed to have kidnapped him in the West Bank and threatened to kill him if Israel did not halt operations in Gaza.

Israeli news media carried unconfirmed reports that a 60-year-old Israeli missing for two days had also been abducted.

The Israeli defense minister, Amir Peretz, approved an extension of the incursion into northern Gaza, where Palestinian militants had been firing crude Qassam rockets into Israel, but Israel denied reports that it was moving tanks into the area.

Political leaders of Hamas have joined the militants to demand the release of Palestinian women and children from Israeli jails in exchange for Shalit a condition that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has rejected.

The choice, Israeli officials said, was the soldier's unconditional release or an escalation that could widen the conflict regionally.

Justice Minister Haim Ramon raised the possibility of an Israeli strike in Syria to kill Khaled Meshal, the exiled political leader of Hamas. The men who hold Shalit are believed to be following Meshal's orders.

On Wednesday, Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, condemned Israel's attacks on infrastructure in Gaza, which disabled its only power plant and knocked down three bridges. In a statement, Abbas said he considered "the aggression that targeted the civilian infrastructures as collective punishment and crimes against humanity."

Two Palestinians, aged 2 and 17, were reported to have been killed Wednesday while playing with an unexploded Israeli shell in the town of Khan Yunis. But there were no reports of casualties in Israeli airstrikes.

For the Israelis, the operation is aimed at deterring Hamas, which now leads the Palestinian government, from carrying out similar attacks in the future. Israeli newspapers carried articles on Wednesday speaking of the attacks on the infrastructure as a way to extract a concrete longer-term cost for the actions of the Palestinian leaders.

For many Palestinians, the refusal to back down seemed a collective effort to highlight their own sense of grievance. The economy has broken down under an embargo of Western aid since Hamas took power in January.

The Palestinians say they remain under siege even after the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza last year, with their borders often closed and encircled by Israeli warplanes and ships.

There remains widespread approval for the capture of Shalit and Hamas's demand for an exchange, given that there are nearly 9,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails, among them 95 women and 313 people under age 18.

"There is support for this because I am not safe when I walk on the street," said Mustafa Raghieb, the director of Gaza's largest flour mill, which was forced to shut for several hours after the electricity was cut. "Give me a good life and I will not support actions like this."

Load-Date: June 30, 2006

Hamas agrees to share power with Fatah; The deal is based on a proposal that many believe implies recognition of Israel

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

September 12, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NATIONAL/WORLD; Pg. a5

Length: 368 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

The Islamic group **Hamas** made a deal Monday to share power with the more moderate Fatah headed by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas after six months of crushing sanctions imposed to force the militants to recognize Israel and end violence.

Without the foreign aid, the **Hamas**-led Palestinian government has been unable to pay salaries to its tens of thousands of civil servants, causing widespread hardship. In a sign of desperation, **women** parted with their dowry of gold jewelry - their only financial security in the event of divorce.

The government had pleaded with Muslim countries for funds, launched fundraising drives in mosques and even resorted to smuggling in cash in suitcases to help keep itself afloat.

But on Monday, Abbas and Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, of **Hamas**, announced an accord that could restore international aid and lead to contacts with Israel.

"The continuous efforts to form a national unity government have ended successfully with the announcement of a political program for this government," Abbas told Palestinian television. "Efforts in the next few days will continue to complete the formation of the national unity government."

The breakthrough compromise falls short of international demands that **Hamas** fully renounce violence, but Israeli officials still voiced cautious support for the accord.

Both Fatah and **Hamas** officials said their deal was based on a proposal - formulated last spring by prominent prisoners held by Israel - that many have interpreted to imply recognition of Israel.

That proposal calls for a Palestinian state alongside Israel - effectively abandoning the **Hamas** goal of destroying the Jewish state - and accepts U.N. resolutions that call for compromise with Israel. **Hamas** also would allow Abbas to handle all dealings with Israel.

In addition, it endorses a wider Arab plan seeking a comprehensive peace agreement with Israel. Arab allies of the U.S. are expected to present the plan to the U.N. Security Council this month.

Hamas agrees to share power with Fatah The deal is based on a proposal that many believe implies recognition of Israel

Israel has been cool to the Arab plan, since it would require a withdrawal from all territories captured in the 1967 Mideast War, including east Jerusalem. Israel wants to adjust the borders to include some main Jewish settlements.

Load-Date: September 12, 2006

End of Document

Palestinians strike over pay owed: Unrest marks first public sign of discontent with Hamas-led cabinet over financial crisis

The Gazette (Montreal)

May 7, 2006 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A7

Length: 658 words

Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK, AP

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

Hundreds of Palestinians staged strikes and demonstrations yesterday in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to demand payment of overdue salaries to government workers - the first public signs of discontent with the **Hamas**-led cabinet's handling of a growing financial crisis.

The unrest occurred ahead of a meeting in Gaza late yesterday between Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of **Hamas** and moderate President Mahmoud Abbas. The two, involved in a power struggle since **Hamas** defeated Abbas' Fatah party in January legislative elections, failed to resolve their differences during four hours of talks but agreed to meet again today.

Haniyeh has complained that Abbas has stripped the government of many of its powers. Abbas, who seeks a resumption of peace talks with Israel, wants **Hamas** to soften its hard line against the Jewish state.

"They are going to discuss every small issue and every big thing, whether financial or security," Fatah official Azam al-Ahmed said before the meeting started. "We hope through dialogue we can reach something realistic."

Hamas, sworn to Israel's destruction, has come under intense international pressure to change its ways. After the cabinet took office in late March, the United States and European Union - the two biggest donors to the Palestinian Authority - cut off hundreds of millions of dollars in aid.

Hamas has rejected the calls, despite a financial crunch that has left the treasury unable to pay the salaries of 165,000 government workers for the past two months. The government is by far the largest employer in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and many families are scraping by on dwindling savings, loans and handouts.

Until now, the Palestinian public had heeded calls for patience, largely following the government in blaming the crisis on Western hostility to **Hamas**.

Yesterday, however, teachers at five schools in the West Bank city of Hebron cancelled classes - a strike that affected only a small number of the city's schools but marked a change in attitude.

Palestinians strike over pay owed: Unrest marks first public sign of discontent with Hamas-led cabinet over financial crisis

"I haven't received a salary for 66 days. Of course I'm not happy with the government," said one teacher. "I need to live and I need to feed my children."

In Nablus, also in the West Bank, hundreds of Palestinian government workers demonstrated to demand their salaries.

"If this government can't function, it has to think carefully about its people and change its political way of thinking," said Sheik Majed Dwikat, a local religious leader.

Most participants at the Nablus rally were supporters of Abbas's Fatah party, reflecting the growing tensions with Hamas. Fatah dominated Palestinian politics for four decades before losing the January parliamentary vote.

In the Gaza city of Rafah, about 150 people - mostly women and children - rallied in the Gaza city of Rafah, criticizing the government for the growing hardship. The protesters banged empty pots with large spoons.

Russia delivered \$11 million Canadian in emergency aid to the Palestinians late yesterday, bypassing the government by sending the money to Abbas's office. Abbas immediately distributed the money to humanitarian programs agreed upon with Russia, his office said.

Palestinian officials said the delivery of the funds could serve as a model for a European proposal to set up a fund to funnel humanitarian aid to the Palestinians without dealing with Hamas. The U.S., European Union, Russia and the United Nations are to discuss the proposal on Tuesday.

A new security unit headed by a top militant wanted by Israel will begin operating this month, Hamas announced yesterday, intensifying the rivalry between Hamas and Abbas over control of Palestinian security forces.

The new unit is to consist of at least 3,000 people and be headed by Jamal Abu Samhadana, No. 2 on Israel's most wanted list. Abu Samhadana heads the Popular Resistance Committees, a group involved in numerous rocket attacks against Israel and suspected in the fatal bombing of a U.S. diplomatic convoy in 2003.

Load-Date: May 7, 2006

Hamas and Israel hint at deal to free captured corporal

The Times (London)

July 8, 2006, Saturday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 43

Length: 473 words

Byline: Stephen Farrell in Gaza City

Body

HOPES of a negotiated end to Israel's military offensive in Gaza rose last night after Hamas said that the soldier whose abduction sparked the operation was safe and well.

The Islamist movement's first direct statement on the fate of Corporal Gilad Shalit came as the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas claimed that Israelis had offered to pull troops out of Gaza and release Palestinian prisoners if their soldier were set free.

Despite a public refusal to negotiate, an Israeli Cabinet minister indicated that Palestinian prisoners could be freed as part of a deal.

Hamas said last night: "His treatment is being done well and in a humanitarian way in accordance with the orders of our religion. We stress that negotiations are the only way out of this case and the sole way to preserve the life of the soldier and secure his safe return to his family."

Speaking at his Gaza headquarters, Mr Abbas claimed that Israel had told President Mubarak of Egypt that a deal could be done. "There are Israeli promises to release a number of prisoners who have been in jail for more than 20 years, the sick, women and children," Mr Abbas said. "This promise was given to Mubarak. If they release the soldier this will happen, they will withdraw and release the (Hamas) MPs and prisoners."

The statement came shortly after Avi Dichter, Israel's Minister of Public Security, said that if Corporal Shalit were released and militant groups halted rocket attacks on Israel, then his Government could reciprocate. "Then, in a goodwill gesture, Israel, as it has in the past, knows how to free prisoners," he said.

Israel escalated its incursion into Gaza on Wednesday after a ten-day stand off during which Palestinian militants demanded 1,500 women and young prisoners be released in return for Corporal Shalit, and then halted discussions when an ultimatum passed. On Thursday more than 20 people died in heavy fighting and yesterday five Palestinians were killed by Israeli troops in northern Gaza.

Ehud Olmert's Government has refused to negotiate, instead seeking to pressure the Hamas-led Government by moving tanks into Gaza, destroying Palestinian infrastructure and crippling its only power station. However, Israel has no desire to become bogged down in the densely populated Palestinian strip that it evacuated 10 months ago.

Amir Peretz, the Defence Minister, said: "On the one hand, we are determined not to be dragged into the Gaza mire. On the other, it must be clear to everyone that their hiding in this swamp will not clean it or distance it. We will find a way to strike all those who try to strike the citizens of Israel."

Hamas and Israel hint at deal to free captured corporal

As Israel's military operation in Gaza continued the EU accused it of using disproportionate force. "The EU condemns the loss of lives caused by disproportionate use of force," a statement by the Finnish presidency said.

Load-Date: July 8, 2006

End of Document

**Israel strikes Palestinian PM's office: Military intensifies pressure on Hamas;
official says captured Israeli soldier alive**

Ottawa Citizen

July 2, 2006 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A3

Length: 666 words

Byline: The Washington Post; with files from The Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Israeli military aircraft destroyed the offices of Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, the highest-ranking official in the Hamas-led government, before dawn today in the latest phase of a building military effort to force the release of a captured Israeli soldier.

The missile strike set Mr. Haniyeh's offices ablaze, although no one was inside the building at the time. Israel last week battered the empty offices of Interior Minister Saed Siyam, who controls a Hamas-dominated security force deployed in Gaza's streets.

A second pre-dawn strike less than an hour later hit a post used by the militia in the Jabaliya refugee camp north of Gaza City, killing one gunman and wounding at least two others, according to Palestinian hospital officials.

Israel blames the radical Islamic movement for the June 25 attack on an Israeli army post just outside the Gaza Strip that killed two soldiers and captured Cpl. Gilad Shalit, who is being held by Palestinian gunmen. An Israeli military statement said Mr. Haniyeh's office was targeted because Hamas, which does not recognize Israel's right to exist, is a "terrorist organization" that it holds responsible for Cpl. Shalit's capture.

Ziad Abu Aen, a Palestinian deputy minister and Hamas official said yesterday that Cpl. Shalit was wounded, but in stable condition.

Another Hamas official, however, cast doubt on the credibility of the statement. Osama Muzami said only the military wing of the group knows the soldier's condition.

The airstrikes followed a day when Egyptian efforts to broker Cpl. Shalit's safe return appeared near collapse as Israel rejected a demand that it free hundreds of Palestinians from Israeli jails in exchange for his release.

Egypt's intelligence chief, Omar Suleiman, cancelled a planned visit here amid signs the talks he is supervising with the armed Palestinian groups holding Cpl. Shalit would not result in a deal. Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas said in a statement that "though the efforts are still ongoing, we have not reached an acceptable solution."

Israel strikes Palestinian PM's office: Military intensifies pressure on Hamas; official says captured Israeli soldier alive

"We haven't lost hope," said Nabil Aburdeneh, an adviser to Mr. Abbas and his chief spokesman. "There is a glimpse of it left."

Israeli officials said the dim assessment could be a negotiating tactic that the Egyptians are using with the military wing of Hamas, which along with two smaller armed groups is holding the 19-year-old soldier. Hamas's political leadership, led by Mr. Haniyeh, has denied involvement in Cpl. Shalit's capture.

Although the Israeli government makes little distinction between the military and political wings, Hamas officials say they are powerless over militia commanders, who last month broke a 15-month informal truce amid Israeli artillery shelling and air strikes that killed more than a dozen Palestinian civilians.

Israel has accused Khaled Mashal, Hamas' exiled political leader in the Syrian capital of Damascus, of ordering the attack that resulted in Cpl. Shalit's capture.

Referring to Mr. Mashal and other hardline exiled leaders, Mr. Aburdeneh said, "I think there are hidden efforts under way with the people abroad. The pressure is coming from the people in exile."

In a statement issued early yesterday, the armed groups holding Cpl. Shalit demanded Israel free 1,000 Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the soldier's release.

The Israeli government rejected the offer, reaffirming its own demand that Cpl. Shalit be returned safely without conditions.

The groups had proposed previously that Israel release the roughly 400 Palestinian women and minors in Israeli jails for information about Cpl. Shalit, who was reportedly wounded in the torso during the attack. According to Israel's prison authority, there are slightly more than 8,500 Palestinians in Israeli jails.

Mr. Aburdeneh said Egyptian officials working on Cpl. Shalit's release "have not told us it's over," indicating negotiations would continue. But he said "the next 24 hours are going to be very sensitive, very delicate and very dangerous."

Load-Date: July 2, 2006

Hamas to renew its attacks on Israel; Vow is a response to shelling that killed 7 on a Gaza beach

The International Herald Tribune

June 10, 2006 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1202 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israeli shells hit a crowded beach in northern Gaza on Friday, killing at least seven Palestinians, including a family of five and two women, and wounding more than 30 others, according to Palestinian journalists and medical personnel.

In response, the military wing of the ruling Hamas movement issued a leaflet declaring that it would renew attacks on Israel after abiding by an intermittent cease-fire for more than a year. "The Israeli massacres represent a direct opening battle, and that means the earthquake in the Zionist cities will resume," the statement said.

Ghazi Hamad, spokesman for the Hamas government, confirmed the accuracy of the statement but implied that a response to the shelling would not mean a complete end to the cease-fire.

"They killed innocent civilians who were enjoying their time on the beach and have nothing to do with military affairs," he said in a telephone interview. "So I believe that we, the Palestinians, including Hamas, have the right to respond and defend ourselves."

Asked whether this meant an end to the cease-fire and a renewal of open warfare with Israel, Hamad responded: "What kind of war can we declare against Israel, with its army?"

The Israeli commander for the south, General Aviv Kochavi, called the incident "an accident" and said the army was investigating whether a shell had missed its target 400 meters, or 1,300 feet, from the beach.

The Israeli shelling was part of what Israel says is its continuing effort to repress the firing of Qassam rockets from Gaza into Israel. Israel also fired missiles Friday at two cars belonging to Palestinians alleged to have fired rockets at Israel. The Israeli missiles killed three Palestinians two brothers and a cousin who were members of the Popular Resistance Committees and wounded another three, who were members of Islamic Jihad, in the second car.

The Ghaliya family Ali, Raisa and three children aged 1, 3 and 10 was having a picnic on the northern Gazan beach on a hot afternoon when they were all killed in the shelling.

President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority condemned Israel for what he called "a bloody massacre" in the Gaza Strip, and the Israeli chief of staff, Lieutenant General Dan Halutz, ordered a halt to the shelling until the deaths of the civilians could be investigated.

Hamas to renew its attacks on Israel Vow is a response to shelling that killed 7 on a Gaza beach

An Israeli Army spokesman, Captain Jacob Dallal, said that the army was sure that the shells that hit the beach had not come from Israeli gunboats or aircraft, and that the army was checking on whether artillery was responsible. He said that Israel was prepared to help with medical care for civilians wounded in the incident.

Kochavi, the Israeli commander, said in a telephone interview that his troops had fired four shells toward an area 400 meters inland from the beach "often used to shoot Qassam rockets toward Ashkelon," in the early morning, and another six shells in the late afternoon. Three of the six fell north of the target, he said, and "the accident was south of the target, so we're trying to discover whether one of our shells fell wrong or whether a dud shell," fired previously, had exploded on the beach.

Palestinians fired at least five Qassam rockets into Israel on Friday, but no Israelis were hurt; about 30 Qassams were fired this week, the Israeli Army said. Some of the rockets were said to be in response to the Israeli Air Force bombing of a Palestinian training camp around midnight Thursday that killed a senior a Palestinian commander and **Hamas** Interior Ministry official, Jamal Abu Samhadana, and three others.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians attended the funerals of Samhadana and his colleagues in Rafah on Friday, filling a stadium with a makeshift mosque and calling for revenge against Israel. The ongoing cycle of violence is taking place against the backdrop of a political confrontation between the militant **Hamas**, which runs the Palestinian Authority, and Fatah's Abbas, who is expected on Saturday to announce a referendum for July 31 on a political program **Hamas** opposes.

Hamas made another appeal to Abbas on Friday to cancel the proposed referendum, as a senior figure in Al Qaeda, in a videotape, called on Palestinians to vote against Abbas in any such vote.

Prime Minister Ismail Haniya of **Hamas** asked Abbas to back down for the sake of Palestinian unity and continue political dialogue instead, on the basis of a document produced by prisoners calling for a national-unity government but opposed in central elements by **Hamas**.

In the Qaeda videotape, Ayman al-Zawahiri, considered to be Osama Bin Laden's deputy, urged Palestinians to reject a political platform that implicitly recognizes Israel alongside a Palestinian state within pre-1967 borders. "I call on them to refuse any Palestinian referendum because Palestine belongs to the Muslim world," Zawahiri said in a video aired Friday on Al Jazeera television. "Palestine is not for any bargaining or sale."

Zawahiri also criticized the 2002 Arab proposal that offers Israel peace if it pulls back completely to pre-1967 boundaries, something that Israel has rejected. He called it the "Arab capitulation initiative," and lambasted Arab governments for not defying Washington to support **Hamas** and the Palestinians in the face of an economic siege imposed on **Hamas** because it will not recognize Israel, forswear violence and accept previous agreements.

"They did not have the courage to even meet the Palestinians' needs for one month," said Zawahiri, who insisted that "the orders" came from Washington "to their agents to starve the Palestinians and to isolate them."

Haniya, the prime minister, told Abbas in a letter: "The idea of the referendum now on the table carries many dangers. I'm afraid it will cause a historic rift that will hurt the Palestinian cause for decades to come."

He repeated **Hamas**'s assertion that the president had no power to call a referendum that would leave out Palestinians living outside the territories, and said such a vote "has no legal and constitutional basis." He said that the killing of Samhadana, 43, who ran the Popular Resistance Committees and whom **Hamas** had appointed security chief, created a dangerous atmosphere that required Palestinian unity, not division.

But Abbas seems determined to set a date for the vote, though his aides said that discussions with **Hamas** would continue in the meantime and could mean that no vote takes place.

Abbas is eager to reassert the primacy of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which he heads. He is also eager to commit **Hamas** to a two-state solution, which implicitly recognizes Israel, in the hope that the West will then resume budgetary aid to the Palestinians. Abbas would then have more justification for calling on Israel to reopen peace talks with him.

Hamas to renew its attacks on Israel Vow is a response to shelling that killed 7 on a Gaza beach

Hamas reacted angrily Friday to the Israeli attacks, even before the shelling of the beach created even more political pressure on **Hamas** to respond. Hamad, the **Hamas** spokesman, said, "The ongoing Israeli attacks are an attempt to topple the government, and the strike on the members of the military wing today is a new phase in the Israeli activity and will oblige us to reconsider our steps."

Hamad added: "Israel must pay a price."

Load-Date: June 23, 2006

End of Document

The brains at the helm of Hamas; Khaled Mashaal is seen as mastermind of a group steeped in violence and challenged to be political.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

February 2, 2006 Thursday

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A01

Length: 1259 words

Byline: Michael Matza, Inquirer Staff Writer

Body

Tucked into the terraced hills of this quiet village, the one-story house where hard-line **Hamas** leader Khaled Mashaal was born sits near the elementary school where he was routinely first in his class.

Older residents remember Mashaal, 50, as the "brainy" kid from a conservatively religious family whose rise to fame in **Hamas** accelerated rapidly after Israeli agents botched an attempt to assassinate him with poison sprayed into his ear on a Jordanian street in 1997.

The attempt by Mossad agents who traveled on forged passports followed a series of **Hamas** suicide bombings in which dozens of Israelis were killed. **Hamas** charter, adopted in 1988, calls for Israel's extinction.

Mashaal's brush with death bolstered his image among radical Palestinians as an invincible mastermind.

Now, as **Hamas** enters mainstream politics for the first time through its sweeping parliamentary victory last week, Mashaal plays a critical role.

"He was ingenious," recalled Sheikh Abdulhai Ayad, a Silwad imam, who attended classes with Mashaal. "In the fifth grade we had a math problem that no one could solve. The teacher said, 'Go bring Khaled,' " and sure enough, Ayad said, Mashaal had the answer in the blink of an eye.

Heading **Hamas** political bureau from a shadowy base in Damascus, Syria, Mashaal will be Mr. Outside to the group's inside leadership of Mahmoud Zahar and Ismail Haniya, based in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas victory produced a sharp internal crisis within the Palestinian movement that an as-yet-unscheduled meeting between Mashaal and Palestinian leader Mamoud Abbas is expected to address. Reports yesterday, however, indicated that Abbas was increasingly reluctant to have the meeting, believing that the more time that passed, the more concessions he could get from **Hamas**.

The brains at the helm of Hamas Khaled Mashaal is seen as mastermind of a group steeped in violence and challenged to be political.

Abbas' ruling Fatah party was trounced by Hamas in the elections. That also threatens the Palestinian Authority's world standing because many countries, including the United States, Israel and the European Union states, define Hamas as a terrorist group that cannot legitimately govern unless it disarms and recognizes Israel's right to exist.

Mashaal's first public comments after the election suggest Hamas has no intention of being tamed.

In a celebratory news conference in Damascus, he obliquely pledged to keep targeting Israel.

"Resistance is a legitimate right that we will practice and protect," he said. "Our presence in the legislature will strengthen the resistance... . If people raised the issue of targeting civilians... we say that when our enemy stops targeting civilians, we will abide by that."

In an op-ed article published yesterday in Britain's Guardian newspaper, Mashaal defied the Western countries that have threatened to cut off foreign aid, made a pitch to Muslim and Arab countries to step in if Western donors withdraw, and sent Israel a mixed message.

"We shall never recognize the legitimacy of a Zionist state created on our soil," Mashaal wrote. "But if you are willing to accept the principle of a long-term truce, we are prepared to negotiate the terms."

A long-term truce while continuing the struggle is the sort of relationship Israel has with neighboring Syria and Lebanon. But it also sounds to many Israelis like a stalling tactic while Hamas rebuilds the capacity of its armed wing.

"I would be very surprised if Khaled Mashaal really means what he says [because] that puts off the resolution of all the outstanding issues, such as permanent borders, Jerusalem and refugees, to an uncertain date," said Gidi Grinstein, president of Re'ut, a Tel Aviv-based political consultancy. "What Hamas is trying to do right now is to buy time - by spin and politics. The spin is all these statements that blur their ideology."

Mashaal's distrust of Israel is deeply personal and runs to his roots.

A stone monument at the entrance to Silwad lists several members of his extended clan who have died fighting Israel. The monument, in the shape of historical Palestine, is outlined in neon lighting in the shade of lime green that has become Hamas' signature color. A year ago, the village where almond trees were budding blossoms last week elected a municipal council dominated by Hamas candidates and has since paid off 40 percent of its \$167,000 deficit.

The village, which has a population of about 7,000, was once much larger, but locals estimate that 25,000 Silwadi refugees from wars with Israel are now living in Jordan.

Most present-day residents are manual laborers. Many formerly worked in Israel on construction sites, but those jobs are fewer since the Palestinian uprising that began in 2000 has resulted in fewer permissions for day laborers to enter Israel. Although some have found work as contractors in the West Bank, many are unemployed.

Mashaal's family fled the West Bank for Kuwait after the 1967 Six-Day War. As a physics student at Kuwait University, Mashaal led a group of Islamists who were part of the challenge to the dominance of Yasir Arafat's PLO.

He married in 1981 and has seven children. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, Mashaal moved his family to Jordan and continued his work with Hamas as one of its founders. He has headed its political bureau since 1996, although critics see no moral distinction between the group's political and military wings.

A year later, on the heels of Hamas suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Israel tried to kill Mashaal with poison. He would have died, but the Mossad agents were captured and a livid King Hussein of Jordan insisted that Israel send the antidote to save Mashaal's life. Israel agreed and the Mossad agents were eventually released in a prisoner exchange that included freedom for imprisoned Hamas' spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, who returned to the Gaza Strip.

The brains at the helm of Hamas Khaled Mashaal is seen as mastermind of a group steeped in violence and challenged to be political.

Jordan later expelled Mashaal to Qatar. From Qatar he moved to Damascus.

After the March 2004 assassination of Yassin by an Israeli helicopter gunship, Mashaal took the reins of Hamas as its first world leader and indefatigable Mr. Outside.

The Hamas Charter

The 9,000-word Hamas charter, written in 1988,

is explicit about the struggle for Palestine as

a religious obligation.

In the charter, Hamas describes itself as "a distinct Palestinian Movement which owes its loyalty to Allah, derives from Islam its way of life and strives to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine." It calls for the elimination of Israel and Jews from Islamic holy land and portrays Jews as evil.

- *N.Y. Times News Service*

From Article 13:

There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavors. The Palestinian people know better than to consent to having their future, rights and fate toyed with.

From Article 20:

In their Nazi treatment, the Jews made no exception for women or children. Their policy of striking fear in the heart is meant for all. They attack people where their breadwinning is concerned, extorting their money and threatening their honor. They deal with people as if they were the worst war criminals. Deportation from the homeland is a kind of murder.

From Article 32:

The Zionist plan is limitless. After Palestine, the Zionists aspire to expand from the Nile to the Euphrates. When they will have digested the region they overtook, they will aspire to further expansion, and so on. Their plan is embodied in the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion..."

SOURCE: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/hamas.htm>

Contact staff writer Michael Matza at 215-854-2405 or foreign@phillynews.com.

Load-Date: February 2, 2006

Women MPs vow to change face of Hamas: Sexual discrimination is tradition not Islam, say new Palestinian leaders

The Guardian - Final Edition

February 18, 2006 Saturday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 16

Length: 939 words

Byline: Chris McGreal, Bureij refugee camp, Gaza

Body

Ask Huda Naeem how she intends to use her influence as a newly elected MP for **Hamas** and she ticks off a list of wrongs done to **women** in the name of religion.

Forced marriage, honour killings, low pay and girls being kept out of school are her priorities for change in the Palestinian parliament. That is when she is not preparing her 13-year-old son to die in the fight against Israel.

"A lot of things need to change," she said. "**Women** in Gaza and the West Bank should be given complete rights. Some **women** and girls are made to marry someone they don't want to marry. This is not in our religion, it's our tradition. In our religion, a woman has a right to choose.

"As a woman and an MP, there are areas I want to concentrate on but that does not mean we have forgotten our struggle for our homeland, and preparing our children to die when the homeland calls for it."

Mrs Naeem, a 37-year-old social worker at the Islamic University in Gaza City and a mother of four, is one of six **women** elected to parliament on the **Hamas** ticket in the Islamist party's landslide victory last month. They will be sworn in when the new parliament opens today.

Women played a crucial role in getting out the vote for **Hamas**, knocking on doors and often getting a sympathetic hearing. **Hamas's** strategy to build political support through its social programmes - the provision of health clinics, nurseries and food for the poor - sealed the loyalty of many Palestinian **women**.

"**Women** are closer to the problems of the society," said Mrs Naeem. "They are the ones who feel the unemployment. They are the ones who have to look after the children when their husbands are in prison. They feel well treated by **Hamas** institutions. Now these **women** are looking to us, the **women** in parliament, to change other things."

Shortly before the election, **Hamas** launched a **women's** armed wing and pictured its members brandishing guns and rocket-propelled grenades in its campaign posters. But the **women** MPs say their priority is reform, not armed struggle.

Jamila Shanti, a philosophy professor at the Islamic University who headed the list of **Hamas's women** candidates, says the **female** activists agree on the need to tackle discrimination. "Our first job is to correct this because this is

Women MPs vow to change face of Hamas: Sexual discrimination is tradition not Islam, say new Palestinian leaders

not Islam," she said. "We are going to show that women are not secondary, they are equal to men. Discrimination is not from Islam, it is from tradition. It may not be easy. Men may not agree."

Attempts in the last parliament to change laws that impose stiff punishments on women who commit adultery while going easy on men and provide relatively light sentences for "honour killings" of women who are deemed to have disgraced the family, ran into the sand amid resistance from older secular MPs. Islah Jad, a lecturer in women's studies at Birzeit University, says the party is at odds with itself over women's rights. "In 1999, they admitted for the first time that women are oppressed and they have a cause. The second step is to attempt to formulate a kind of vision but it's very unstable. When family law was discussed they approved some reforms: that the age of marriage was 18 and that a woman can put any condition she wants in the marriage contract," she said.

"But when it came to the penal code and the punishment for adultery, (the late Hamas spiritual leader) Sheikh Yassin said it was based on sharia law and shouldn't be touched."

Many of the male leaders of Hamas favour the extension of sharia to cover civil as well as criminal codes. Some have said they want to segregate schools, others favour a ban on the sale of alcohol. They also want to see women dress in accordance with Islam.

Mrs Naeem says changes should come only after Hamas has taken time to explain the benefits of religious law. "Our sharia is great if it's practised according to its values. It's not like they say about only cutting off hands," she said.

"It's not going to be forceful but anybody who believes in the religion has to be educated in it. At the end, what matters is fighting corruption, not what people wear."

Then there is an issue unlike any other. The most controversial of the newly elected Hamas women is Miriam Farhat, known as the "Mother of Martyrs" after losing three sons fighting Israel. Her campaign video included a scene of her bidding a son goodbye before he died killing five people in a Jewish settlement. Mrs Farhat said later that she wished she had 100 sons to sacrifice as "shaheeds" - Muslims who die in a holy war.

Mrs Naeem, who named her youngest child after a Hamas leader assassinated by Israel, says there is nothing illegitimate about suicide bombers. "(The Israelis) bomb our neighbourhoods with high explosive. What kind of weapons do we have against F16s?" she asked. But would she encourage her own 16-year-old son to die killing Israelis? "Yes, as soon as his homeland calls for it. I am preparing him to be a shaheed," she said.

guardian.co.uk/palestinians >

Backstory

Palestinian law regards all women as minors who need a close male relative's permission to marry and, if married, a husband's permission to travel. Women can earn half as much as men doing the same job and often find it much more difficult to find work. They are denied equal rights in inheritance, pensions and death benefits. Women who commit adultery are treated considerably more harshly in court than the men they sleep with. Honour killings: Courts recognise the defence of family honour as an extenuating circumstance when men murder female relatives for becoming pregnant outside marriage, refusing an arranged marriage or affairs. Men who commit such murders are very rarely prosecuted.

Load-Date: February 20, 2006

Israeli air strike kills 5 Palestinians: MIDDLE EAST I Attack that targets training camp inflames tensions between Israel and the Hamas-led government

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

May 6, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A13

Length: 613 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak, Vancouver Sun

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- An Israeli aircraft Friday attacked a training camp used by Palestinian militants, killing five members of a group that has close ties to the ruling **Hamas** movement.

The air strike raised already-heightened tensions between Israel and the **Hamas**-led Palestinian government and sparked a new crisis for its leadership, which is under heavy international pressure to renounce violence.

The attack hit a base used by the Popular Resistance Committees, an umbrella group responsible for numerous rocket attacks against Israel. During five years of fighting, the Israeli army has killed dozens of militants in so-called targeted killings.

The air strike scattered body parts and left pools of blood in a field just metres away from the home of Mourtaz Dourghmush, the top militant commander in the resistance committees. Dourghmush was not at the scene, but a brother and three cousins were among the dead, hospital officials said.

Dourghmush is known to have close ties with **Hamas**' military wing and has received training and funding from the Islamic group in the past.

Israeli security officials say he was involved in an attack last month on the main Israel-Gaza commercial crossing. That attack, they say, was planned in co-ordination with **Hamas**.

Abu Mujahid, an official with the resistance committees, said at least three missiles landed in the field as members were training. "God willing, this is not going to stop our heroic battle against the Zionists, and the blood is the fuel of our resistance and our reprisal is coming soon," he said.

The group pledged to respond with more than 100 homemade rockets.

The army confirmed it had targeted the militants as they were training to carry out attacks. It said it will "continue to employ all means at its disposal to combat terrorists and their supporters." Later Friday, the army fired artillery shells at suspected rocket-launching sites in northern Gaza.

Israeli air strike kills 5 Palestinians: MIDDLE EAST | Attack that targets training camp inflames tensions between Israel and the Hamas-led government

Since the Hamas government took office in late March, Israel has stepped up military activity in Gaza in response to repeated rocket fire. Earlier Friday, six rockets were fired toward Israel, the army said.

The rudimentary projectiles have not caused any serious casualties recently, but have been deadly in the past. While not directly involved in the rocket fire, Hamas has refused to condemn the attacks or take steps to stop them.

In addition to firing rockets, the Popular Resistance Committees has in the past blown up Israeli tanks and is widely believed to be behind the deadly bombing of a U.S. diplomatic convoy in October 2003.

Last month, Hamas appointed the head of the PRC, Jamal Abu Samhadana, to head a new security force. The appointment infuriated Israel and was vetoed by the moderate Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas.

Hamas has vowed to push forward with its plan. Last week, about 200 PRC militants conducted an exercise in the same field that was hit Friday in preparation for joining the new force.

The air strike occurred as Abbas was arriving in Gaza from his West Bank headquarters. Abbas is scheduled to meet this weekend with Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh in hopes of resolving an ongoing power struggle.

Nabil Abu Rdeneh, an aide to Abbas, said the president condemned the attack and urged the international community to intervene. "Such Israeli escalation won't help efforts to restore calm in the region," he said.

The air strike was the latest crisis for the beleaguered Hamas government. Thousands of Palestinians marched throughout the Gaza Strip and the West Bank on Friday in support of Hamas, heeding calls by the Islamic militant group to remain defiant in the face of bruising western economic sanctions.

Associated Press

Graphic

Photo: Nasser Ishtayeh, Associated Press; Palestinian women and children gesture to Israeli soldiers as troops take away a detained man during a raid in the West Bank city of Nablus Friday. Later a Palestinian man was killed and another wounded by Israeli gunfire during a stone-throwing demonstration against Israeli troops in Nablus, Palestinian medical workers said.

Load-Date: May 6, 2006

Israel ready to cut a deal: official: But messages are mixed: Minister proposes freeing some Palestinians if Hamas releases soldier and halts attacks

The Gazette (Montreal)

July 8, 2006 Saturday

EARLY Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A16

Length: 692 words

Byline: SARAH EL DEEB, AP

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

Two weeks into Israel's violent standoff with Hamas, Israel sent conflicting signals yesterday on whether it is prepared to swap Palestinian prisoners for a

19-year-old Israeli soldier whose capture by Palestinian militants has touched off a harsh Israeli military campaign.

Israeli troops killed 32 Palestinians in two days of air strikes and artillery barrages, Palestinian officials said. The campaign is aimed at stopping rocket attacks on Israel and pressuring the ruling Hamas movement to release the kidnapped soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit.

Israel's public security minister, Avi Dichter, suggested yesterday that Israel is ready to cut a deal that would fall short of a direct prisoner swap,

Dichter said Israel could free some Palestinian prisoners as a goodwill gesture, provided Shalit is released and Hamas stops rocket attacks on Israel. If there is calm, "Israel will need to, after some time, release prisoners as a reciprocal gesture," Dichter said. "Israel knows how to do this. Israel has done this more than once in the past."

He was referring to previous prisoner swaps, usually in deals that free far more Palestinians than Israelis. Privately, Israeli officials have said they did not rule out talks in Shalit's case, either.

Moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said he has won Israeli assurances that it would reciprocate for Shalit's release by freeing some prisoners, as well as Hamas politicians it has rounded up in recent days.

Officials close to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert later said that Dichter's statement did not reflect the government's views, and that Israel insists on the soldier's unconditional release. However, the government did not issue a formal statement distancing itself from the minister.

Israel does not want to be seen as cutting a deal with Hamas militants, but also does not seem to have a way to free the soldier by force.

Israel ready to cut a deal: official: But messages are mixed: Minister proposes freeing some Palestinians if Hamas releases soldier and halts attacks

Hamas said yesterday that Shalit, seized June 25, is alive and being treated well. It also urged Israel to negotiate. The Islamic militant group initially demanded the release of hundreds of prisoners, but then scaled back its demands, seeking freedom for some 150 **female** inmates and several dozen men serving long sentences.

The internal Israeli debate came as ground troops backed by tanks pursued militants in the streets of crowded Gaza towns, and aircraft struck northern Gaza.

Shalit is believed to be held in southern Gaza, and days after he was seized, Israel launched its biggest military campaign in Gaza since ending its 38-year occupation there nine months ago.

The incursion began in southern Gaza, then expanded Thursday to the north as troops seized control of a ribbon of land. Yesterday, Israeli aircraft struck Palestinian gunmen in Gaza.

Palestinian health officials said 32 Palestinians were killed over two days, including 24 on Thursday, in the bloodiest day of clashes since the renewed fighting began last week. An 11-year-old boy shot in the chest during fighting on Wednesday died of his wounds late yesterday, Palestinian hospital officials said.

Despite the Israeli offensive, Palestinian rocket fire from Gaza continued yesterday, with militants launching a dozen projectiles toward Israel.

Egyptian mediators have proposed a two-stage deal in which **Hamas** would free Shalit and halt rocket attacks. In exchange, Israel would halt its offensive and promise to free some Palestinian prisoners in the future.

A Palestinian official close to the negotiations said Israel has agreed to the Egyptian formula, but wants the deal to be confidential, to avoid the impression of a direct prisoner exchange. **Hamas** wants the terms of the deal to be announced publicly, he said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the talks are confidential.

Israeli cabinet minister Roni Bar-On said Israel would not negotiate with **Hamas** over the release of prisoners. However, his comment did not appear to contradict Dichter who also did not call for direct contact with the militants.

Hamas needs an enemy, Page B7

ONLINE EXTRA: The shift is subtle but unmistakable. European governments - accused of being pro-Arab - have toned down their criticism of Israel.

montrealgazette.com

Load-Date: July 11, 2006

**Crisis in Gaza: Hamas says Israel is out to destroy its administration:
Palestinian ministers and MPs seized in night raid after kidnapping of soldier**

The Guardian - Final Edition

June 30, 2006 Friday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 18

Length: 890 words

Byline: Chris McGreal, Beit Hanoun

Body

The **Hamas**-led Palestinian government accused Israel of attempting to depose its administration after the army arrested eight cabinet ministers and 20 of its MPs as pressure increased for the release of a captured Israeli soldier believed to be held in a Gaza refugee camp.

Hamas leaders in the Gaza Strip went into hiding after the detention of the deputy prime minister, Nasser Shaer, as well as the finance and Jerusalem affairs ministers, in a raid that rounded up 64 **Hamas** officials in the West Bank.

Israel's defence minister, Amir Peretz, said the detained **Hamas** officials could be put on trial for involvement in "acts of terror", adding: "The masquerade ball is over. The suits and ties will not serve as cover to the involvement and support of kidnappings and terror."

Israeli artillery continued to shell the Gaza Strip, but a planned ground offensive by tanks and troops was reported to be on hold last night after appeals from the Egyptian government for Israel to give more time for diplomatic efforts to free 19-year-old Corporal Gilad Shalit. If the moves fail, however, the army says a large force of tanks and troops is ready to move into the territory.

Hamas has accused Israel of taking its leaders hostage as a bargaining chip to win Cpl Shalit's release. The Islamist group's military wing was involved in his capture during an attack inside Israel that killed two other soldiers. **Hamas**'s political leadership said it had no prior knowledge of the raid, but it has backed a demand by Cpl Shalit's captors for Israel to free Palestinian **women** and youths held in its jails in return for the soldier's release. The Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, has rejected any such deal.

There were also questions over Cpl Shalit's welfare after the Popular Resistance Committees, another of the groups responsible for his abduction, refused to provide information on whether he was alive or dead. It also claimed responsibility for killing a teenage Jewish settler in the West Bank, which has helped to increase tensions. The Palestinian group originally claimed to have kidnapped 18-year-old Eliyahu Asheri, but after his body was found buried near Ramallah the police said he had more likely been shot straight away and not abducted.

Five of the detained **Hamas** cabinet ministers were picked up after midnight when the Israeli army demanded the guest list of a Ramallah hotel and took them from their rooms. Israel has also hinted that **Hamas** leaders in the Gaza Strip, who include the prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh, could be targets for assassination if Cpl Shalit is not returned alive. Few were to be found at their offices or homes yesterday.

Crisis in Gaza: Hamas says Israel is out to destroy its administration: Palestinian ministers and MPs seized in night raid after kidnapping of soldier

A **Hamas** leader and MP, Mushir al-Masri, said the detentions amounted to a coup. "It's a preplanned plot to destroy the Palestinian Authority, the government and the parliament and to bring the Palestinian people to their knees," he said.

The chief Palestinian negotiator, Saeb Erekat, said Israel was "waging an open-ended all-out war against the Palestinian people that aims to topple the Palestinian presidency and government".

Israel radio said yesterday that the head of Israel's Shin Bet security service, Yuval Diskin, had warned the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, on the day of the soldier's abduction that the future of the **Hamas** government hung in the balance. It quoted him as saying: "If the soldier is not returned in 24 hours, Israel will not allow the government to survive."

But yesterday the Israeli government denied it was trying to topple the **Hamas** administration. "Our goal here is defensive. It's to stop the terrorism. It is not to nation-build on the Palestinian side," said a foreign ministry spokesman, Mark Regev. Israel also denied that the **Hamas** ministers were hostages to win Cpl Shalit's release, saying that it had a legitimate right to arrest those who were members of an organisation it defined as a terrorist group. "They are not being used as bargaining chips. These are people with terrorist records, with allegations and charges pending against them," said an army spokesman, Captain Jacob Dalal.

There is a widespread belief among Gaza's 1.4 million residents that the Israeli army will attack whether or not Cpl Shalit is freed. Israel dropped thousands of leaflets over the Gaza town of Beit Hanoun on Wednesday night warning residents to stay in their homes when the army came. Troops fired dozens of artillery shells in both south and northern Gaza, wounding two policemen. Earlier missile strikes this week have knocked out bridges, power and water supplies in Gaza.

Yesterday the **Hamas** mayor of the town of 42,000 people, Muhammad El Kafarna, said residents expected an Israeli attack at any time. He said he would not flee to avoid arrest. "I'm not leaving. It's my obligation to stay, whatever happens. I was arrested in 1988 for a year and a half," he said.

"What the Israelis are trying to do is dismantle the **Hamas** government and kill the people's democratic choice. This will plant violence in everybody's heart. People have tried democracy in order to live in dignity," he said.

But Mr Kafarna said he was discouraging armed groups from fighting an Israeli invasion inside the town, in order to avoid reprisals such as house demolitions.

"We said anyone who wants to resist should maybe leave Beit Hanoun and resist from outside," he said.

Load-Date: June 30, 2006

West Bank crisis grows as Israelis arrest Hamas leaders in revenge

The Daily Telegraph (LONDON)

June 30, 2006 Friday

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Section: NEWS; International; Pg. 19

Length: 586 words

Byline: Tim Butcher in Jerusalem and Harry de Quetteville in Beit Hanoun

Body

ISRAEL opened a new front in its campaign to free its abducted teenage soldier yesterday when it arrested scores of leading Hamas members including cabinet ministers, parliamentarians and a senior Islamic cleric.

The mass arrests were designed to ramp up pressure on the militant Islamic movement which Israel blames for the abduction of Cpl Gilad Shalit, the 19-year-old tank gunner seized on Sunday.

Last night, Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian president, indicated in a newspaper interview that Hamas had made at least one conditional offer to hand over its captive but Israel had rejected the offer. Israeli officials would not confirm this and repeated that the soldier must be released without conditions.

As negotiations continued, Israel decided to delay a further offensive in northern Gaza at Egypt's request. But its tanks remained inside the Gaza Strip and further attacks on two power sub-stations plunged more Palestinians into darkness last night.

Fearing further detentions, senior Hamas figures in the West Bank, including Nasser al-Shaer, the deputy prime minister, went underground, switching off cellphones so they could not be traced by Israeli intelligence.

The move effectively crippled the democratically-elected Palestinian government which Hamas took control of following its dramatic and unexpected general election victory in January.

At the Palestinian parliament in the West Bank city of Ramallah, photographs of the detained MPs were placed on their seats in the debating chamber. Israel said its move was legal but doubts were raised by the Group of Eight industrialised nations which issued a lukewarm response during its meeting in Moscow.

"We call on Israel to exercise utmost restraint," a statement said. "The detention of elected members of the Palestinian government and legislature raises particular concerns."

Inside the Gaza Strip, where the people are used to sieges, bombings and incursions, there were only paltry efforts to erect anti-tank barriers. There was no mass exodus. Israel was reported to have cut the pipeline that provides fuel to run the sanitation system.

"Without fuel, the sanitation pumps don't function," said Alvaro de Soto, the UN special envoy for the Middle East. "You have women, children and ailing people. That's pretty grave. And it needs to be addressed." More than half of the population of Gaza is without electricity. The water supply is also in jeopardy because water pumps need electricity to function.

West Bank crisis grows as Israelis arrest Hamas leaders in revenge

The 30,000 residents of Beit Hanoun have been warned of an onslaught. A leaflet signed by army commanders said: "The Israeli Defence Forces are executing operations all over the Gaza Strip. This including military operations in your area. Anybody who tries to disrupt the forces that are working on this mission will be in danger."

In Beit Hanoun there are signs that the militant factions are preparing a feeble resistance. Piles of sand that would not delay a saloon car, let alone a tank, are ready for service as barricades.

"There will be resistance but I don't know if it will be strong or not," said Dr Basil Hamed, a university lecturer in the town. "Just compare the weapons. Palestinians have Kalashnikovs. Israel has tanks and planes."

The first casualty of the current crisis was an 18-year-old Israeli settler in the West Bank. Eliahu Asheri, who disappeared hitchhiking two days ago, was found murdered in a field near Ramallah.

Israel believes he was abducted by Palestinian militants connected to the Popular Resistance Committees.

Load-Date: June 30, 2006

End of Document

Cornell U., Qatar and Hamas

University Wire

April 21, 2006 Friday

Copyright 2006 Cornell Daily Sun via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN

Length: 995 words

Byline: By Jamie Weinstein, Cornell Daily Sun; **SOURCE:** Cornell U.

Dateline: ITHACA, N.Y.

Body

In 2001, Cornell University announced a bold new project. With \$750 million dollars in funds pledged by the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, the University declared its intention to build a new medical school campus in Qatar.

The Qatar Foundation, while private, was set up by Qatar's Emir (read "dictator"), Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, and is currently chaired by the Emir's wife. And, while Qatar is considered one of the most "moderate" countries in the Middle East, moderate is a relative term in that region of the world. Certainly, its citizens do not have all the rights that are taken for granted in Western countries. The latest Freedom House rankings still rate the country as "not free." Nonetheless, we should look optimistically upon the reforms the country has instituted and urge them to continue along that path.

Yet the controversy engendered by this project is not without merit. At the time of its announcement and thereafter, many concerned students and alumni protested the University's decision to open a campus in Qatar. In doing so, some recounted the story of Louay Abdulla.

Louay Abdulla, a naturalized American citizen who was born in Qatar, was a professor of political science at Kent State University before moving back to the nation of his birth to take a job at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1995. In March of 2000, he was arrested by Qatari authorities. His crime? Allegedly creating an internet site which asked visitors to vote on who was more attractive: the Emir's wife or a prominent female Qatari professor.

According to Qatari law, it is a crime to insult the Emir and this internet site supposedly violated this illiberal law. And for this grievous offense -- of which Abdulla reportedly insisted that he was wrongly accused -- the American citizen was sentenced to two years in jail (he was ultimately pardoned). Besides the obvious troubling human rights aspects of this case, the question must be raised whether a top notch University supposedly dedicated to freedom of thought and expression can exist in a country with such restrictive laws?

This, of course, was just part of the criticism leveled against Cornell's decision. Gay rights activists questioned whether Cornell should open a satellite campus in a country with discriminatory laws against them while a conservative columnist chided the University in The Sun for allying itself with a country which, at the time, was vocally opposed to America's War on Terrorism. These all remain valid points.

In recent days, a new concern has emerged. While the civilized world has pledged to withhold aid from the newly formed Palestinian government headed by the terrorist organization Hamas, Qatar has joined the terrorist state of

Cornell U., Qatar and Hamas

Iran in pledging millions of dollars to the government. To put it bluntly: The Emir has committed his country to supporting a Palestinian regime with genocidal intentions.

I don't use the term genocide lightly. Hamas' charter not only calls for the destruction of Israel, but the killing of Jews. This is a genocidal goal. And Qatar has signed on as a financial backer.

Can Cornell maintain its silence? I think not, unless it wants to remain neutral on the question of murdering Jews.

Just this week, a suicide bomber killed eight innocent Israelis. The bomber targeted them for death for being Israelis, for being Jews. The Hamas controlled Palestinian Authority praised the attack. In doing so, the newly installed Palestinian government went on record to endorse wanton and intentional slaughter. Any decent society would find that the only option in dealing with such a government would be to cut off ties with it. But not Qatar. No no. They are helping to finance this government.

I don't want to overstate this. I believe that, in general, it is good for Cornell to help bring liberal education to the largely totalitarian Middle East. I think it is good that Qatar has begun to enact some liberal reforms. I think it is admirable and praiseworthy that Qatar has allowed America to use its soil as a base for Operation Iraqi Freedom. On the other hand, I find it reprehensible that the Qatari government may be giving, as some reports suggest, millions of dollars to al Qaeda in order to thwart an attack on the country -- this money, mind you, could very well be used by al Qaeda to attack America.

I will say that there is something to the idea that the mere presence of the West in these societies will help open them up. So I think I am being eminently fair. There are some positive aspects of the Qatari government. However, there are also grave concerns. And funding a terrorist regime which has sweet dreams about genocide is one of them. Is this something that Cornell should tolerate being associated with? We must have some standards, shouldn't we?

It is not as if Cornell has built a satellite campus in Qatar that is independent of the Qatari government. It is the Emir's very own foundation that is funding its construction. And his government has made the dastardly decision to fund terrorism by supporting Hamas and possibly paying off al Qaeda.

So, Cornell, the ball is in your court. Will you make a statement of outrage and distance yourself from Qatar's hideous policy? Will you return the Emir's money? Will you shut down the University until the Qatari government repudiates its position and changes its ways? Or will you do nothing?

Make no mistake: Cornell's reputation is on the line. We already have taken one big blow in recent weeks with Professor pugilist Cynthia McKinney, herself an apologist of terrorism, attacking a Capitol Hill police officer. Now is the time for Cornell to take control of its reputation. It must take tangible steps to distance itself from its partner in Qatar. It must repudiate Qatar's Emir who, while lavishing funds upon Cornell, also acts as the sugar daddy of one of the most heinous regimes that exists today.

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Load-Date: April 21, 2006