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***Hamas's Strategic Surprise: Western misunderstanding of the
2007 Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip***

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Prior to that, Mr. Diker was Knesset Affairs reporter for Israel's Channel One English News and has appeared as a commentator on Israeli and Middle Eastern Affairs on local and international news networks, including Al Jazeera, al Hurra, CNN, and Fox.

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Abstract:

Hamas' bloody takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007 came as a strategic surprise for the United States and Israel. However, the six day routing of the Fatah commanded Palestinian Authority forces did not take place in a vacuum. It occurred in the context of a 25 year ongoing Hamas-Fatah civil war. Hamas's Strategic Surprise also represented the climax of a series of watershed events that began with Israel's Gaza withdrawal in 2005 and was propelled by Hamas' electoral victory in 2006. In the immediate strategic background, Israel and the United States overestimated and over relied on the capabilities and assessments of the PA's security apparatus that was headed by Mohammed Dahlan, PA National Security Advisor, long known as "Fatah's strong man" in Gaza. There was also confusing "noise" and "signals", and an overall failure to "connect the dots". On a deeper level, Israel, the United States and the Western powers misunderstood Fatah and Hamas' political culture and their passive and active use of deception of one another and US interlocutors. Lessons learned from Hamas's surprise 2007 takeover of Gaza can be helpful in assessing and managing the complexities of the seemingly irreversible two-headed government in the Palestinian controlled territories of Gaza and in the former West Bank of Jordan.

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[Hamas' bloody takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007 came as a strategic surprise for the United States and Israel. However, the six day routing of the Fatah commanded Palestinian Authority forces did not take place in a vacuum. It occurred in the context of a 25 year ongoing Hamas-Fatah civil war. Hamas's Strategic Surprise also represented the climax of a series of watershed events that began with Israel's Gaza withdrawal in 2005 and was propelled by Hamas' electoral victory in 2006. In the immediate strategic background, Israel and the United States overestimated and over relied on the capabilities and assessments of the PA's security apparatus that was headed by Mohammed Dahlan, PA National Security Advisor, long known as "Fatah's strong man" in Gaza. There was also confusing "noise" and "signals", and an overall failure to "connect the dots". On a deeper level, Israel, the United States and the Western powers misunderstood Fatah and Hamas' political culture and their passive and active use of deception of one another and US interlocutors. Lessons learned from Hamas's surprise 2007 takeover of Gaza can be helpful in assessing and managing the complexities of the seemingly irreversible two-headed government in the Palestinian controlled territories of Gaza and in the former West Bank of Jordan.]

Background

Hamas' lightning takeover of the Gaza Strip that took place from June 7th to 13th 2007 surprised The United States and Israel; however, trained observers of Palestinian political culture are keenly aware of the deep roots of the enmity between the dueling Palestinian groups that began with Hamas's founding twenty years earlier in 1987. Some analysts have suggested that the June 2007 violence was a "clear and outward manifestation of a civil war that had gone undeclared for years."¹

In fact, Hamas had long heralded its strategy of taking over the PLO via a combination of political and military moves². However, Western tunnel vision forcing a view of the Palestinians as a political monolith reflected an inability or unwillingness to consider internal Palestinian political and cultural divisions as part of an overall strategic assessment influenced both the Western powers and international public opinion.

The Clinton and Bush administrations and even official Israel had largely made the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli crisis their main point of reference in approaching the larger Middle East conflict. This shortsightedness of western intelligence, security, and political echelons misled many in the international community as to the deep schisms both within the Palestinian camp and across the larger Arab world that have shaped the contours of the current fractured Middle East far more sharply than the ongoing Palestinian Israeli conflict.³

True, the United States, Israel, and the Western powers breathed a sigh of relief when Abbas won the PA elections in January, 2005. With Arafat gone, and the Al Aksa Intifada dying, Washington believed the peace process could be re-treaded. The west embraced Abbas as far

more moderate than Arafat and with Condoleezza Rice as the newly tapped secretary of state, the Bush doctrine was “out” and the “Clintonesque” political race for the two state solution was back “in.”

But Washington repeated the same mistakes. They inhaled everything that the US trained Palestinian Prime Minister Salaam Fayad—“their man in Ramallah”⁴ was telling them while Rice praised Abbas at every opportunity ⁵. Washington and Jerusalem “bet the farm” on a stronger and reformed Fatah and a weaker Hamas. They poured millions into the PA. They sent four star US generals such as William “Kip” Ward and Keith Dayton to reform the seemingly incorrigible Palestinian security militias that included terror operatives (and some still are D.D.) from the Fatah’s Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades.

But while Washington’s optimism soared, their strategy was in free-fall on the Palestinian Street. Palestinians had already written-off Abbas and the Fatah after Arafat’s late 2004 demise and final flight to Paris for medical treatment. The Palestinian chattering classes and the public held out little hope that Abbas would be any better than his mythological predecessor. Nothing much changed on the ground for Palestinians. Abu Mazen brought in the same corrupt “Abu’s” who had populated Arafat’s inner circle. Appointed Prime Minister Salaam Fayad had little power and was hated and undermined equally by Hamas and Fatah.⁶ PA reforms were cosmetic at best. Islamist Jihadi groups were paid millions of dollars in blackmail salaries by Mahmoud Abbas to go underground and hide their weapons.⁷ Arafat’s “legacy” continued: massive corruption, protection of terrorists, and talking peace in English with the West while inciting Palestinians in Arabic at home. It seemed that the administration was being defrauded once again . Or perhaps it was defrauding itself.

Washington seemed neither to be paying attention to the 20 year undeclared civil war between Fatah and Hamas that provided overall historical context to Hamas's June 2007 overthrow of Fatah in Gaza , nor the more recent "trigger" events that began in late 2005 immediately following Israel's September unilateral withdrawal from the entire Gaza Strip. Israel's pullout magnified the enmity and competition between Fatah and Hamas for control of Gaza which fell deeply into lawlessness, chaos, and anarchy.⁸

Armed Fatah gangs faced off against Hamas paramilitary groups. Both Hamas and Fatah laid claim to the valuable real estate that Israel had abandoned in Gush Katif and the settlements of the northern Gaza Strip.⁹ Jewish investment groups such as Sir Ronald Cohen's Portland Trust in which Mohammed Dahlan was the senior Palestinian partner, and former World Bank Director Jim Wolfenson who as the Quartet's Special Envoy had negotiated the turnover of Israeli greenhouses to the PA for a fraction of their market value¹⁰, had hoped to transform Gaza from a poverty stricken island of terror and hopelessness to the "Hong Kong" of the Middle East. Instead, This well intentioned if naive western investor "philanthropy" that was backed by Rice, reinforced the charge among Hamas officials that the corrupt Fatah and PA officials led by Dahlan and embraced by the U.S. and Israel were enriching themselves at the expense of the people of Gaza.

Following the Israeli unilateral Gaza withdrawal the Hamas displayed a huge banner that read" THREE YEARS OF INTIFADA BEAT TEN YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS".¹¹ Hamas "victory banner" apparently infuriated Abbas and PA leaders as they felt deceived by Israel and the Americans. For her part, Rice did not understand the complaint. She thought Israel's departure from Gaza should give reason for celebration by the Fatah, according to Rice biographer Glenn Kessler.¹²

Rice's conceptual failure to "connect the dots" was a sharp indication of the larger strategic disconnect that would lead to the June 2007 Strategic Surprise. Rice, the US administration and the Quartet understood the Gaza problem and its solution as one primarily between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, whereas the Palestinians understood the real war to be between Fatah and Hamas.

Another immediate symptom of the post Gaza disengagement Hamas-Fatah struggle was the murder of General Musa Arafat, Security Advisor to newly elected PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, former head of the PA's national Security apparatus in Gaza, and cousin to Former PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. Former ISA Chief Avi Dichter¹³ and other senior Israeli security community blamed Hamas while Hamas and even some Fatah Websites blamed the Arafat assassination on PA Preventative Security Chief Mohammed Dahlan.

A former senior PA official¹⁴ confirmed to the author his assessment that Dahlan was responsible for Musa Arafat's murder, underscoring Dahlan's reputation as one of the most hated personalities in Gaza. The raging warlord culture, public dissatisfaction with the PA fuelled by rampant poverty would stimulate a ground swell of popular support for Hamas who convened mass public demonstrations that attracted tens of thousands of Gazans who wanted to hear Hamas' alternative political vision for Gaza¹⁵.

The Americans Help Bring Hamas to Power

The Hamas should publicly thank the former Bush Administration for forcing democratic elections on the Palestinian Authority in 2006 that brought Hamas to power. The Americans

were surprised by the election results¹⁶. The Palestinians were not. According to Palestinian analyst Khaled Abu Toameh, “Several months before the elections, the PLO leadership warned Condoleezza Rice saying, “You are making a huge mistake by forcing us to go and have a free and democratic election. Our people don't trust us. We are corrupt and we will lose. Hamas will win. So please let's not hold an election now, this is not the right time.” “No, don't worry”, Rice insisted, with active support from Elliot Abrams, Deputy Head of the NSC. “Let Hamas participate in the election. They won't win. “Everything will be okay” Abu Mazen and Mohammed Dahlan asked her how she knew Hamas was not going to win. She said she warned the Palestinians that if they vote for Hamas, she will punish them”¹⁷.

Rice's warning scored Hamas ten more points in the election. Hamas took Rice's statement and made huge banners out of it that said, “Condoleezza Rice says no to Hamas”. The Palestinians were right. On the morning of January 26, 2006, upon hearing that Hamas had won the presidential and parliamentary election by landslide, Rice reportedly told the State Department's number two man C. David Welch, in an urgent phone call, “We've got a surprise on our hands”¹⁸.

Rice had misunderstood Hamas and the internal dynamics of Palestinian politics. She was obsessed with scoring an agreement between Fatah and Hamas for which she was convinced elections had to take place. She had refused to insist that Hamas lay down its weapons and renounce terror as a precondition for Hamas' candidacy. Under US pressure Israel even allowed Hamas candidates to openly campaign in East Jerusalem.

What was not obvious to Dr. Rice was obvious to the Palestinian Street. In January of 2006, the parliamentary elections that were held in the Palestinian Authority were largely about internal reforms in the Palestinian areas. Hamas was ready to deliver. While it is a matter of debate

whether or not Hamas's electoral victory constituted a political surprise to Israel in advance of the Strategic Surprise of the Hamas 2007 coup, it is clear that the United States and other western powers were caught off guard by Hamas' electoral success.

Bush and Rice's calculated decision to back Palestinian elections was based on an overestimation of Fatah's popularity and an underestimation of Hamas which Rice would later admit, saying, "I've asked why nobody saw it coming. It does say something about us not having a good enough pulse"¹⁹. The administration's egregious error stemmed from their almost blind trust in polling data supplied by the respected Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki, and his Palestine Center for Policy and Research that had all but guaranteed a Fatah victory at the polls.²⁰ Was this simply a case of bad intelligence, over optimism, over confidence, and a fundamental underestimation of Hamas? Some analysts suggested that Shikaki, whose brother was the late Fathi Shikaki, founder and leader of the Islamic Jihad, sought to deceive the United States and the Fatah.²¹

If anything, the American miscalculation was an omen for what would be more US missteps and intensified intra-Palestinian violence. For the following 15 months, and despite a national unity agreement brokered by the Saudis at Mecca in early 2007, Hamas and Fatah would clash with growing intensity resulting in 350 Palestinians killed and 1,900 wounded, according to the Palestine Center for Human Rights.²² Beginning in mid-April 2007, hundreds of Fatah and Hamas Activists clashed at al Azhar University in Gaza and at the Islamic University. Hamas' mobilization of its newly established Executive Force with Iranian regime Quds Force training, weaponry, and financing would bring Fatah to understand that its forces and overall control of Gaza were being directly threatened by Hamas.

The Case Study: Hamas June 2007 Overthrow of Fatah

Hamas-Fatah tensions reached a boiling point on June 7, 2007. American and Israeli officials were again taken by surprise. 10,000 Hamas fighters undertook a violent overthrow of tens of thousands of American-backed Fatah security “loyalists” in the Gaza Strip, even though Dahlan’s U.S. trained and supplied Fatah militia men numbered fewer than 4,000. Hamas’s violent “coup” equally surprised Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak²³ as it unfolded quickly.

In less than a week, Hamas was in full control of Gaza’s streets including the Palestinian presidential compound and the massive Al Suraya security headquarters that housed PA Fatah forces. Captives were summarily executed, some hurled from tall buildings bound and blindfolded²⁴. The Red Cross estimated that more than 100 combatants were killed in the week long battle while more than 500 Fatah and Hamas operatives were wounded²⁵. The US, Egyptian, Israeli and Jordanian trained and funded Fatah forces essentially collapsed in the face of well trained and strong willed Hamas forces. Palestinian Analyst Khaled Abu Toameh noted to the author that, “when Hamas started shooting, Fatah essentially ran away. They surrendered to Hamas on condition that they refrain from killing their Fatah Rivals”²⁶.

Over Estimation of Dahlan, Under Estimation of Hamas

In assessing what factors led to western failure to foresee and perhaps prevent the Hamas takeover of Gaza, the United States and Israel’s overreliance on the assessments and capabilities

of Palestinian National Security Advisor Mohammed Dahlan ranks high in the category of “lessons learned”.

Until Dahlan’s forces collapsed to Hamas, the U.S. had placed its full weight behind him, investing at least \$56 million in the PA security infrastructure at the Karni crossing where General Keith Dayton, U.S Security Coordinator for the Palestinian Authority, had invested much of his time supporting Dahlan’s security regime before the Hamas coup²⁷. Part of the immediate context to the U.S. surprise at Fatah’s collapse in the June 2007 coup was the U.S. over-reliance on Dahlan himself as well as on his capabilities and assessments.

The Americans had been “won over”. They had felt Dahlan was the only Palestinian security official who could deliver. Dahlan had been a key architect of the 2005 border crossing agreements he had designed with U.S. Secretary of State Rice, which fell apart after Hamas violence drove European monitors to abandon their posts. Kessler noted in his 2007 biography of Rice that in the 2005 Gaza crossing agreements, “Rice focused especially on Mohammed Dahlan, the Palestinian Authority’s civil affairs minister, but in effect Fatah’s boss in Gaza, because (PA President Mahmoud Abbas- DD) would never agree to a deal unless Dahlan gave his approval.”²⁸

Dahlan had also controlled the security and economic aspects of the Karni and Rafah crossing points, where at least 750 truckloads of goods and 1,000 Palestinians passed daily including many Hamas leaders that were on Israel’s “wanted” list.²⁹ Moreover, costly import licenses and crossing permits were all in the hands of Dahlan’s people and are widely believed to have generated millions of dollars in profits, which had infuriated Hamas leaders and activists.

Perhaps the major failure of the United States in the months prior to the Hamas coup was its mistaken conception that it could engineer a *Fatah coup* of Hamas by fully and exclusively

backing Dahlan's Fatah militia. In fact, while little known, the United States financed, trained and supplied weapons to Dahlan's Palestinian security forces to carry out a high-risk, covert plan code-named "Plan B," that called for Dahlan's Fatah forces to overthrow Hamas in Gaza and reassert control³⁰. It was widely known and hotly debated among some senior founding generation Fatah officials such as Hani al Hassan who publicly charged that this security plan was merely another example of a US- Israeli plot that would destroy Palestinian national unity prospects while "greasing the pockets" of Dahlan and his cronies³¹.

Dayton, though listed as a key figure in the secret US- Dahlan initiative would later deny any material involvement with the plan. However, he testified before Congress on May 23, 2007, just weeks before the Fatah collapse in Gaza, saying, "Our efforts have been closely coordinated with my Israeli colleagues; there will be no surprises. The practical effect of our preparations is that U.S. funds should begin to make a difference by mid-summer. He added, "The \$3 million assistance package to the (Palestinian) Office of National Security ensures that the U.S. Security Coordinator has a strong and capable partner as we proceed with Palestinian security sector transformation and our focus on a smaller but more capable Palestinian security force, operating under the rule of law and with respect for human rights."³²

Subsequently, Dayton's security program that centered on arming, financing and training what was essentially Dahlan's militia was roundly criticized by some senior Israeli defense officials as "a complete failure"³³. A former Senior White House official would admit to the author in November 2012, that, "Yes, we were surprised. We did not expect the coup or the instant collapse of the PA forces. We had indications that there would be trouble if Hamas challenged Fatah because over time Dahlan's story changed. He (told us) he had the forces, he might have them, he would get them, he had them but needed to train them.....and so on"³⁴.

It is widely recognized in Palestinian circles that at the time of the Hamas coup, Dahlan's Fatah force simply refused to fight. Fewer than 10,000 armed Hamas men managed to defeat tens of thousands of Fatah loyalists, even though, as mentioned above, there were fewer than 4,000 professionally trained Fatah militia fighters.

It was also no secret among Palestinians and even eventually among American and Israeli interlocutors that Dahlan had deceived his US and Israeli backers as he shuttled between Cairo and Germany for "medical treatment" for "bad knees" during the fighting, despite having been paid handsomely by the United States for his security leadership. In fact, some months after the Hamas coup, Israel's Defense Minister Ehud Barak would remark that For Him "Dahlan does not exist anymore"³⁵. Exasperated Former White House Middle East Advisor David Wurmser would also note that Hamas did not have to work too hard to repel what he charged was *Fatah's failed coup attempt* to uproot Hamas control of Gaza, which Wurmser charged flew in the face of Bush's Middle East democracy initiative³⁶. This was another case of missing or misreading "Humint", brutal overconfidence in Dayton's assessments of Palestinian intelligence and their operational assets. American missteps had not only been clear in misreading events since 2005 but also reflected a basic U.S. misunderstanding of Palestinian political culture since the 1990's. Dahlan had done an effective job in passive and active deception of both the Bush and Clinton administrations.

Dahlan had been a long-time favorite of the Clinton and Bush White Houses. He had been praised as a reformer during the Oslo years for publicly criticizing Arafat's dictatorship and calling for Palestinian security reforms. Starting in 1996, President Clinton approved intensive CIA and FBI backing of Dahlan's Preventive Security forces and other PA security organs that were no more than armed gangs³⁷.

None the less, Dahlan's relationships with Washington were top-tier. He referred to Bill Clinton as "a friend" and to CIA Director George Tenet as "simply a great and fair man."³⁸ President George W. Bush following talks with Dahlan at the White House in July 2003, publicly praised him as "a good, solid leader" and reportedly referred to Dahlan as "our guy" to advisors behind closed doors³⁹. However, officials of both the Clinton and Bush administrations failed to consider how hated Dahlan was on the Gaza street due to his reputation as a brutal and highly corrupt US backed warlord, and how this might backfire on US interests to stabilize Palestinian Authority controlled Gaza.

Torture of Hamas and other opponents in Gaza by Dahlan loyalists has been documented on "YouTube"⁴⁰. The Palestinian street had branded Dahlan "the CIA" for years, ever since the U.S. spy agency had provided him a black bullet-proof SUV⁴¹. In early 2007 Hamas had accused Dahlan of being a central figure in the attempted assassination of Gaza based Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyah, who had been elected by landslide in the 2006 National elections whose results PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas cancelled as illegitimate. In short, the U.S. - Dahlan cooperation further radicalized Palestinian society. Hamas and Fatah were publicly at war. The Bush Administration backed Fatah, the Palestinians backed Hamas. Hamas won with a Palestinian majority.

Just as the United States and Israel had overestimated Fatah's capabilities to assert control in Gaza, they underestimated Hamas' capabilities and political will to launch a successful counter coup. First, Hamas had been accumulating large caches of weaponry, since 1993 via the burgeoning tunnel smuggling operation under the Philadelphi Corridor near the Gaza -Egyptian border. Since Israel's evacuation of Philadephi in 2005, Hamas and Gaza warlord groups

including al Qaeda affiliates and the Hamas-affiliated Dormush and Samadhanna crime clans increased weapons smuggling exponentially.

Iranian regime military trainers including Quds force and Hizbullah officers were sent to train Hamas forces in Gaza while hundreds of Hamas operatives were also sent to Iran, Syria and Lebanon for terror training⁴². Hamas had clearly won over the Gaza Street during the previous 25 years. They had built a vast network of educational, social, health, and economic services. While Arafat and his cronies were known for building the casino in Jericho, Hamas was known for what had made the Muslim Brotherhood popular in Egypt- building a strong social infrastructure such as orphanages and charities that sought to help the local Gaza population. Perhaps a central failing of the United States and perhaps of Israel has been a lack of appreciation for the meaning of tens of thousands of Gazans who have turned out each year to Gaza's main sport stadium to celebrate the anniversary of Hamas' founding.

The US, Israel, and the West have yet to assimilate fully the notion that many, if not a majority of Palestinians have continued to sympathize with Hamas because they see the movement as a victim of a US-led conspiracy to bring down a democratically-elected government. For these Palestinians, the 2007 takeover and subsequent wars in the Gaza Strip were launched in the context of this conspiracy and not in response to the firing of rockets and mortars at Israel. Efforts by Fatah to form a joint government with Hamas are seen by many Palestinians as evidence that the Islamic movement is a legitimate and important player in the region.

Summary and Conclusions

The renowned Middle East historian, Professor Bernard Lewis, noted in a key note lecture in Jerusalem in 2010, that the West's major mistake in trying to manage conflicts of the Middle East is that it engages in what Lewis calls "mirror imaging"—projecting its own western image and understanding on the Middle East instead of trying to understand the Near East region through the culture and self-understanding of its own people.⁴³ This is true for the United States and the Western powers as it has been for Israel with respect to understanding and managing the Palestinian issue. It seems little surprise that five major US and Israeli governments introduced peace initiatives beginning with the 1993 Oslo Exchange of Letters that Israel pushed to the Palestinians and sold to the Clinton Administration and that today seem further than ever from reaching a successful conclusion.

The US and Israel seemed to commit the same Western "mirror imaging" error Lewis mentions with regard to the strategic surprise of Hamas 2007 takeover of the Gaza Strip.

Much of the literature, nomenclature, and code words defining the 2007 Hamas Strategic Surprise are true and helpful to a point. The Western underestimation of Hamas, overestimation of Fatah, overconfidence, ignoring signals, ignoring passive and active deception of the Palestinians as they fought one another, and neglecting quality HUMINT that was not lacking particularly from the Israelis whose contacts and intelligence in Gaza are first rate, all played a role.

The failure to connect the dots, understand, communicate and weigh alternative options was also missing from the US and Israeli approach to the ongoing Hamas -Fatah civil war. In the end,

strategic surprises can be effective “teachers” if government leaders, Intelligence services, the media and “experts” and security officials would be open to accept constructive criticism of themselves and their given approaches to understanding the complexities of the Palestinian and larger Middle Eastern realities before committing to new policy.

This is a lesson that President Barack Obama and his administration would do well to assimilate before pressuring an Israel surrounded by Iranian proxies and a weak, divided, and unelected Palestinian Authority leadership to return to the negotiating table for yet another round of high profile talks. In recent years western diplomatic pressure and unrealistic expectations have done more to drive the sides apart than help forge a final peace agreement. That holds true for Israel and the Palestinian Authority as well as for Fatah and Hamas.

¹ Jonathan Schanzer, *Hamas VS. Fatah, the Struggle for Palestine*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.2

² Jonathan Doha Halevy, *Undermining Mahmud Abbas: The "Green Revolution" and the Hamas Strategy to Take Over the Palestinian Authority*, Jerusalem Issue Brief, Volume 4, No 21, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, April 14th 2005.

³ The so called “Arab Spring”—the violent overthrow of Arab regimes in Tunisia, and Egypt, and the civil war in Syria all without regard to the Palestinian Israeli conflict underscores the thesis that the clash of civilizations is a clash of *Arab Civilizations* as Middle East Scholar Lee Smith suggests in his best-selling book *The Strong Horse, Power Politics and the clash of Arab Civilizations* that Professor Bernard Lewis called a “Game changer” in understanding the Arab Muslim world.

⁴ Tim McGirk, “ *Why America's Man in Ramallah Quit*”, Time Magazine, March 10, 2009.

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1884103,00.html>

⁵ AFP, “Rice vows to leave 'no stone unturned' in quest for Mideast peace”, October 14, 2008 http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5gbsFdLBShyWtUppI74F_UqJvtQOA

⁶ Khaled Abu Toameh, *Why the Palestinians do Not Want Fayyad*, Gatestone Institute, July 15, 2011.

⁷ Dan Diker and Khaled Abu Toameh, *Can the PA's Fatah Forces Retake Gaza?*, Jerusalem Viewpoints, No, 569, January, 2009. Hamas is not the only major threat to Fayyad’s forces in the West Bank. There are multiple armed terror groups and militias that have temporarily kept a low profile. However, they are capable of undermining the entire PA security regime. Despite reports in early 2008 by Fayyad’s office that militias such as the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades and Islamic Jihad in the West Bank had been dismantled, it turned out that Fayyad had essentially agreed to a mutually advantageous modus vivendi with these groups. Gunmen have agreed to hide their weapons, and Fayyad has agreed to “hide” operatives on Israel’s target list in PA jails under a “revolving door” policy allowing freedom of entry and exit, which had created serious concern among senior IDF commanders.

⁸ Pinchas Inbari and Dan Diker, *The Murder of Musa Arafat and the Battle for the Spoils of Gaza*”, Volume, 5 No.6, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, October 10, 2005.

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- ⁹ Pinchas Inbari and Dan Diker, *The Murder of Musa Arafat and the Battle for the Spoils of Gaza*, Volume, 5 No.6, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, October 10, 2005. According to Palestinian Assessments, Land adjacent to abandoned Israeli Settlements
- ¹⁰ Kessler, *The Confidante*, p.131. Wolfenson, the Quartet Special Economic Envoy for disengagement, raised 14 million dollars from an American Jewish investment group that included renowned financier Michael Milken and US News and World Report owner, Mort Zuckerman to pay Israeli owners of the Gush Katif Greenhouses and hand the 500 million dollar business to the PA. Within weeks the greenhouses were destroyed and some 5000 Palestinians had lost their jobs.
- ¹¹ Kessler, *The Confidante*, p.131.
- ¹² Kessler, *The Confidante*, p. 131.
- ¹³ Avi Dichter, speech in Jerusalem, MEMRI September 8th, 2005. Amos Gilad told Israel Radio on September 26, 2005 that Hamas and Fatah elements were responsible
- ¹⁴ A former PA Cabinet Minister told this author directly that Dahlan ordered the murder of Musa Arafat and was sewing chaos, enmity of Hamas and branding Fatah's reputation among the Gazan public that the Fatah was the corrupt partner of Israeli and western interests.
- ¹⁵ <http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5iXcD9MMMY9EifZiiWBLoltjPQoMQ>
- ¹⁶ Steven Weisman, *Rice Admits U.S. Underestimated Hamas Strength*, New York Times, January 30th 2006. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/30/international/middleeast/30diplo.html?pagewanted=all>
- ¹⁷ Dan Diker and Khaled Abu Toameh, *State of Frenzy, How Washington's Obsession to Create Palestine, Is undermining the Middle East*, Book Proposal for Harper Collins, May 25th 2009
- ¹⁸ Glenn Kessler, *The Confidante, Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy*, (New York: St Martin's Press)
- ¹⁹ Steven Weisman, *Rice Admits U.S. Underestimated Hamas Strength*, New York Times, January 30th 2006. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/30/international/middleeast/30diplo.html?pagewanted=all>
- ²⁰ Schanzer, *Hamas VS Fatah*, P. 98 Shkaki's polling data predicted Fatah would win 44 to 50% of the vote while Hamas would win 32 to 33%.
- ²¹ Schanzer, *Hamas VS Fatah*, P. 98.
- ²² Schanzer, *Hamas VS Fatah*, p. 99.
- ²³ Associated Press, *Mubarak calls Hamas' takeover of the Gaza Strip a 'coup'*, Haaretz, June 23, 2007.
- ²⁴ Gaza: Armed Palestinian Groups Commit Grave Crimes, Human Rights Watch report, June 13, 2007, <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2007/06/12/gaza-armed-palestinian-groups-commit-grave-crimes>
- ²⁵ International Committee of the Red Cross, Bulletin 22, 2007
- ²⁶ Interview with Palestinian Analyst Khaled Abu Toameh, in Jerusalem, May 25, 2009.
- ²⁷ David Horowitz, "This Time It Will Be Different," Interview with U.S. Security Coordinator General Keith Dayton, Jerusalem Post, December 11, 2008, <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1228728164523&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>.
- ²⁸ Glenn Kessler, *The Confidante, Condoleezza Rice and the Bush Legacy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), p. 133.
- ²⁹ Erica Silverman, "Two Steps Back," Al-Ahram Weekly, December 8-14, 2005.
- ³⁰ David Rose, "The Gaza Bombshell." Vanity Fair, April, 2008
- ³¹ Former PA Interior Minister and senior Abbas advisor Hanni al-Hassan sharply criticized the U.S plan to the author in a meeting several days after the coup on June 17, 2007. According to Hanni al-Hassan, former senior advisor to Mahmoud Abbas, in a meeting with the author, June 17, 2007. al-Hassan, former senior political advisor and member of Fatah's central committee, said in an Al-Jazeera TV interview on June 27, 2007, that what was happening in Gaza was not a Hamas defeat of Fatah but defeat of the coup plans of American Major General Keith Dayton, Mohammed Dahlan and his Fatah followers. See <http://www.ynet.co.il/english/articles/0,7340,L-3418486,00.html>. See the Al-Jazeera interview at <http://uk.truveo.com/Hani-AlHassan-of-the-Fatah-Executive-Committee/id/517194181>. David Wurmser, former Middle East Advisor to Vice President Dick Cheney, would later note, "It looks to me that what happened wasn't so much a coup by Hamas but an attempted coup by Fatah that was pre-empted before it could happen." See David Rose, "Gaza Bombshell." Vanity Fair, April 2008.
- ³² "Remarks by U.S. Security Coordinator, LTG Keith Dayton, Update on the Israeli-Palestinian Situation and Palestinian Assistance Programs," House Foreign Affairs, Middle East and South Asia Subcommittee, May 23, 2007, www.internationalrelations.house.gov/110/day052307.htm. Also see, <http://israelbehindthenews.com/bin/content.cgi?ID=2972&q=1>
- ³³ Yaakov Katz, "Israeli Official: Dayton Failed," Jerusalem Post, June 17, 2007.

³⁴ Author correspondence with former senior White House official under President George W. Bush, November 20, 2012.

³⁵ Dan Diker and Khaled Abu Toameh, Can the Palestinian Authority's Fatah Forces Retake Gaza?, Jerusalem Viewpoints No, 569, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs,

³⁶ David Rose, The Gaza Bombshell, Vanity Fair, April, 2008.

³⁷ Patrick Devenny, Training our Enemies, FrontPage Magazine, October 18, 2005.

³⁸ David Rose, the Gaza Bombshell, Vanity Fair, April 2008

³⁹ David Rose, The Gaza Bombshell, Vanity Fair, April, 2008

⁴⁰ David Rose, The Gaza Bombshell, Vanity Fair, April, 2008

⁴¹ Dan Diker and Khaled Abu Toameh, Can the Palestinian Authority's Fatah Forces Retake Gaza?, Jerusalem viewpoints No, 569, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, January, 2009.

⁴² http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/data/pdf/PDF_08_079_2.pdf

⁴³ See the interview of Professor Bernard Lewis by the author at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BujdKt1wKZo> in February 2009. Lewis discussed Western Mirror Imaging and also noted that the greeting Wah' Salaam Al Lakum offered by President Barack Obama to Al Azar University in his Spring 2009 address was accepted as if he were a Muslim.