

Summary and Conclusion

Analysis of Hamas Revolution and World Islamism

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Overview

Hamas gained popular support in Gaza beginning in the 1970s and by 2007 physically overthrew the Palestinian Authority (PA) quasi-state structure. From the outset, Hamas emphasized Islam to the detriment of secular Palestinian nationalism and took a non-compromising hostile position toward Jews and Israel. On the political level, the organization projected honesty and unity of purpose alongside of social programs that demanded a narrowing of gaps between socio-economic classes in Palestinian society. In subsequent years, Hamas Islamist ideals permeated Gazan society. The revolution was not intended only for Gaza, but was directed at West Bank Palestinians and Muslims throughout the Middle East and beyond, as attested to in *The Hamas Covenant*. The primary target populations beyond their immediate constituencies continue to be the Palestinian Diaspora, Jordan, Egypt and Syria. Hamas and/or the Muslim Brotherhood have directly influenced each of these groups and their adherents are inspired to export Hamas revolutionary ideals to impact the global Muslim community. As the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas will always be a faction of the greater Islamist movement.

An analysis of the Hamas Revolution is in order. Did Hamas go through stages similar to those of the French and Russian Revolutions, or was it more of a revolt against the PA? The template used by many historians and political analysts looks at distinct reasons for rebellions and transitional periods. These are accompanied by specific stages and plateaus of political/military action as the group achieved its ideological objectives. As we will determine, the Hamas Revolution succeeded only in part. Whether the revolution will go forward or recede is impossible to predict. Still, we know Hamas

revolutionary actions played a part in the Muslim Brotherhood's overall influence on the Islamic Middle East in recent years.

Discontent, Revolutionary Stages, and Hamas

Many commentators claim Hamas instituted a revolution at the will of the people. Those who maintain Hamas is a democratic force point to their 2006 electoral victory in the Palestinian Legislature. The question is whether in areas where Hamas rules, was their rise to power a revolution advocating democracy and the will of the people? In the wider Middle Eastern sense, the Islamic Awakening or supposed "Arab Spring" is far from its finale as a completed revolution. The Islamic regimes are not fully settled, and some countries like Libya, Syria and Iraq are more failed states than organized ones. A prime example is how the Syrian civil war achieved new milestones of brutality and societal breakdown. In a much less violent example, Egypt's Islamic Revolution came crashing down when the military overthrew the Muslim Brotherhood regime in the summer of 2013, although the generals did have a fair amount of popular support. As of this printing, it is unclear whether the Egyptian people support the secular nationalist military government of General Abdul Fatah a-Sisi, or the freely elected but deposed Islamist president, Mohammed Morsi. The game is far from over.

There is little doubt Hamas brought about a revolution in the Gaza Strip. But the Hamas rise to power is incomplete in the West Bank, halted by the continuing Israeli military presence in Areas B and C, as well as by the activity of the US sponsored Palestinian Authority police force under US General Keith Dayton's leadership. It may be reasonable to assume that barring these two outside factors, Hamas would also rule in the West Bank.

To put the Hamas role into context I will uphold the traditional theoretical understanding of rebellion and revolution. Revolutionary theorist and historian Crane Brinton¹ compares revolution to a fever beginning slowly, gaining force and rising to a burning delirium better known as a "reign of terror" at its height. It is in the "fever" of revolution that the disease dies; in other words, evil people lose power. Afterward, the fever subsides and

¹ Brinton, Crane, *The Anatomy of Revolution*, Vintage Books, New York, USA, Expanded Edition, 1965.

Four major revolutions are compared: The English, American, French and Russian. Brinton's theories are derived from the historical parallels. He defines these revolutions as "popular," "democratic," and advocating "freedom." They are placed in the modern period of Western world history from the 17th to 20th century. This author believes the revolutionary steps analyzed by Brinton for the most part apply to Hamas as well.

although there is change, society returns to a new norm, no longer in the clutches of a religious/ideological tyrannical regime. In the early stages, the dysfunctional old regime collapses in its own mired corruption. Members of the old order doubt their own moral and ethical right to rule, while their adversaries declare them downright illegitimate. The revolutionaries declare that an overthrow of the illegal government will bring the ideal “heaven on earth.” The “all powerful force” is embodied within the revolution, thereby guaranteeing victory. Purity will be victorious and virtue will reign. It should be pointed out that religious terminology is often used in describing revolutions, regardless of whether the revolution is in the name of God or in the name of humankind. Revolutionaries project the absolutism of purpose and objectives as true and righteous.

In the first stage of a revolution, the old regime is unable or unwilling to raise the force necessary to stop the revolt. They suffer from a lack of popular loyalty, a collapsing tax base and disintegrating organization. Realizing they are losing power the regime attempts reform in a sort of transitional period, but fails. Loyalty of both intellectuals and the security forces begins to shift, at least partially. The shift increases as the old regime collapses. The revolutionaries are ideologically driven, non-compromising, well organized and in the process of developing an armed force. Stage two is a transition period where the old regime is neither resolute in declaration, nor action. The die is cast. Shifting into third gear, the rebels enjoy mass support, sweep away the old regime and replace it with a broad-based coalition. Due to the higher ideals and the emphasis on rights and freedom, this era is known as the “rule of the moderates.” The dissatisfied, more extremist factions rise up and declare a lack of ideological purity on behalf of the “compromising” moderates, forcing them from power.

The extremists in stage four comprise a very small, highly disciplined, “self-deified” ideologically committed group. An election, or plebiscite, may be called, but this is most likely done only once to ensure support. A second election is not called, which might allow loyalties to shift in other directions. The democratic system or “will of the people” is far from the ideological objective and would only serve to allow backtracking or reforms that thwart the full revolutionary realization. This group may be referred to as “philosopher killers” and are known for the demonization of their enemies. These extremists suffered oppression in the past and are experienced ideologues; their supporters often see them as saints. They attempt to exterminate any fanatics challenging their rule, and augment such policies with puritanical laws.

For the average person there is what can be called a “religious satisfaction” with the revolution, but the people as an entity suffer from its harshness. There is some wealth distribution, demands for monastic behavior, a form of morality police is established and revolutionary determinism is society’s new leader. Many revolutionary ideals may have been imported, but the Messianic fervor or success leads to revolutionary export. On the local level, heaven is attained with forms of sainthood and martyrdom. The revolutionaries revel in their “choseness” and lead in the name of their superior power, or God, to bring a universal adherence to their values. Revolutionaries obtain world conquest through “manifest destiny,” and close all gaps between heaven and earth. In essence, a universal utopia is the ultimate objective. Extremist rule is often associated with a reign of terror which the revolutionaries identify as a reign of virtue. Brinton speaks of secular revolutions, but the actions of revolutionaries and their followers’ interpretations of the radical events taking place is often apocalyptic, contained within a virtually religious realm.

The last stage, known as Thermidor (a term from the French Revolution), settles in once the height of fervor calms down. Usually led by autocrats and dictators, nationalism re-enters the Messianic spirit and universalism takes a back seat to everyday necessities. Revolutionary export implies constant fervor and clash, a far too intensive lifestyle for any given society over an extended period of time. Many prefer to return to the less tense period before the upheaval. The people want to indulge themselves and even seek the small vices of yesteryear. Summarized, this is the thrust of Brinton’s theory, one fairly well accepted.

The Hamas Islamist revolution, like all revolutions, has its roots in deep discontent and feelings of deprivation. Ted Gurr advanced the theory of “relative deprivation” as a motivational factor in revolt against existing conditions and authority.² Overall “relative deprivation” is defined as the perceived discrepancies “between value expectations and value capabilities,” or in other words the difference between what one believes he should be

² Gurr, Ted, *Why Men Rebel*, Woodrow Wilson School of International Affairs, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1970.

Drawing on the research of many other scholars and bringing his own conclusions to the table Gurr’s work is an overall analysis of why violence and revolution break out. The major theory is “relative deprivation” and those gaps between expectations and reality. In particular, Gurr deals with society’s or the people’s perspective of the intensity, scope, unmet expectations, frustration, shifting loyalties and legitimacy (or lack) of the power elite and those revolutionaries challenging the existing order.

able to attain and what is actually achieved.³ These gaps between expectations and reality lead to frustrations, violence, rebellion and possible revolution. The more intense the deprivation, the sharper and longer the violence will continue. Relative deprivation (RD) relates to material gaps such as concerns the economy, status within a society, rights of a group or of individuals, and/or political participation usually defined as national and religious. Often there are multiple causes, and in general the ultimate goal is “freedom.” Besides being “perceived,” which means RD is real or imagined (most often the former) such expectations are often handed down as legends, historic givens and/or rights. The larger the RD, the greater the justification will be for political violence. A regime deemed “illegitimate” because it does not represent the people will be the focus of popular discontent.⁴

Rebels make gains through violence and terror attacks. Full-blown revolutions consolidate a unity of ideals and purpose, eventually leading to demands for a Utopian order to right all wrongs. When working for the advancement of social cohesion there is an expectation of godly intervention against the hated common enemy. As opposed to those in power, people express anger, discontent and an effective reordering of the world through alternative media and communications including verbal, print, and electronic venues. Actions are directed against the “oppressor” whether in the framework of a civil war or an outside power. When dealing with a civil conflict, questions of regime loyalty on the part of the military and police play a major role, as the security forces may switch sides thereby determining the outcome. Creating multiple security forces indicates doubts of loyalty to the regime. This is often enhanced by a recent defeat in conflict by an outside power.

In general, the volunteer insurgents have very high levels of loyalty, while pressured regime forces are less committed. The rebels succeed in obtaining institutionalized support from within and without. They gain territory on the ground with military training and arms acquisition. Frustration and hostility increase cohesion, forming a group identity encroaching on the specifics of personal identification. The revolutionary leaders combine the best of the old and new worlds as they package the ideal vision for mass consumption. Deep discontent fosters new religions, sects, ideals and Messianism, all of which can be diocentric or anthropocentric in perspective. A successful revolution means this rising elite, or in many cases the highly educated

³ Ibid, pp. 13-21.

⁴ Ibid.

This is the main theoretical argument made by Gurr.

suffering from RD, will become the new leaders who now must redistribute resources, eliminate discrimination and alleviate inequalities and abuse while committing to progress.⁵

The revolutionaries understand they must convert discontent into violence against the regime, while justifying their actions through their ideals. They will vilify the regime, use violence and/or terrorism, invite retaliation to increase mass suffering and exploit the increasing discontent to force even more regime attacks and possibly outright warfare. In general, the discontented seek “remedial action” from the regime, not violent solutions. But when peaceful action proves impossible and the RD gap becomes unbridgeable, they take physical action. Most applicable is the following quote taken from Gurr in explaining the susceptibility of different societies to violence, “Not all new beliefs provide justifications for violence, and most that do are derived from peoples’ own cultural and historical experience rather than alien sources.”⁶ In the case of Hamas, one can easily understand a rebellion to reaffirm commitment to Islam while forcing the unpopular PA/Fatah regime out of power. Furthermore, Israel is certainly defined as an outside adversary of the worst type, acting as a direct or indirect occupying power supporting the corrupt exploitive PA/Fatah regime. For Hamas, Israel and the PA must be defeated together.

Hamas Revolution Disrupted by Outside Forces

The above stages of revolution and theoretical analysis of rebellion are applicable as general guidelines for understanding the Hamas uprising and Gaza takeover. Of course, the intensity of each stage varies from one revolution to another since political and social theories are neither science nor math. During revolutions we note that “small determined, ideologically driven minorities are those who change history and the world while the satiated and corrupt will eventually feel their wrath and be overthrown.”⁷ Hence, the surprise when the far inferior Hamas force deposed the “criminal” Fatah-led PA regime in Gaza within a week of fighting. Hamas attributes its success to a higher power, since they launched the revolt in the name of Allah, Islam and Sharia law.

⁵ Ibid.

Gurr’s analysis of revolutionary implementation.

⁶ Ibid, pp. 357-358.

⁷ Ne’eman, Yisrael, “Palestinian Islamic Revolution – On the March,” *Mideast on Target*, June 15, 2007, <http://me-ontarget.org/pws/page!4962>.

The old Fatah/PLO-controlled Palestinian Authority regime represented secular Palestinian nationalism, solidified in the 1960s and supposedly holding Palestinian loyalties for forty years. Hamas supporters saw PA negotiations with Israel, under Yasir Arafat, as betraying Islamic principles by agreeing to discuss what was perceived as a two-state solution in the 1990s under the Oslo umbrella. Islamists particularly viewed the PA as repressive and corrupt, and the regime lost the people's support despite its involvement alongside Hamas in the 2000-04 Low Intensity Conflict (Second Intifada) against Israel. A system of "dual sovereignty" developed by the late 1970s when people began showing loyalty to the Islamic authorities and later the armed underground and not to the Fatah/PLO operatives deemed "the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian People."⁸ The process of transition intensified in the 1990s, deepening alienation between the people and PLO leadership. Corruption was rife, especially as pertained to Arafat and his associates in the PA ruling elite. They stole hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars.⁹ Fatah won the elections in 1996, but when their four-year term of office expired in the spring of 2000, there was no further balloting. In light of the failure of the Camp David negotiations that summer, clashes with Israel ensued and lasted four years.

There was to be a double Jihad, against Israel and the corrupt secular PA.¹⁰ Victory over both would defeat evil, bring a heavenly future in the name of Allah and reward his virtuous chosen. The beginning of the end of the old regime started with Arafat's death in November 2004, and continued with the Hamas parliamentary electoral victory of January 2006. PA attempts at re-imposing its authority were unraveling and hence the moves to establish

⁸ The PLO was recognized as the institutionalized leadership of the Palestinian People at the Seventh Arab League Summit Resolution in Morocco on October 28, 1974. They declared the PLO the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian People." Information retrieved August 26, 2015 from *Palestine: Information with Provenance* (PIWP database),

cosmos.ucc.ie/cs1064/jabowen/IPSC/php/event.php?eid=486.

⁹ See Uzrad Lew's book *In Arafat's Pocket* (Hebrew). Lew estimates Arafat stole at least \$300 million. This number is derived only from what Lew was able to fully document. The numbers most likely go much higher. Lew, as an activist Israeli dove advocating peace and the two-state solution was employed as a senior financial advisor to Arafat and hoped that by putting the PA financial resources in order he would be contributing to the peace process. As he writes in his book, he was sorely disappointed by rampant PA corruption driven by Arafat and his advisor Mohammed Rashid.

¹⁰ Yousef, Mosab, *Son of Hamas*, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., USA, 2010, pp. 52-53.

a national unity government (NUG) to include Fatah, Hamas and independents. It was a very insecure transition. President Mahmoud Abbas spoke of national unity, yet continued to work with Israel and the US to undermine and outmaneuver Hamas, especially in the first half of 2007. Here is the seeming contradiction: To join a NUG, Hamas needed to acknowledge the Fatah/ PA government as legitimate in some form. Fatah, the Palestinian organization advocating national liberation, was certainly legitimate, yet according to Hamas, Fatah's secularism was illegitimate (*HC*, Article 27). By participating in the 2006 parliamentary elections, Hamas implied recognition for the Oslo Accords, but never admitted as such. Hamas used the Oslo framework for elections to gain representation and international political legitimacy on the Palestinian front, and as a way of showing popular discontent with the Fatah/ PA government. But recognition of Israel would not be forthcoming. The week-long civil conflict of 2007 was a rebellion and overthrow of the government, but not a full revolution, hence, we will not use the term "war."

Ideologically Fatah/PLO and Hamas have a fair amount in common. Their similarities are obvious when comparing *The Palestinian National Charter (PNC)* and *The Hamas Covenant (HC)*, both demanding Israel's destruction (see Chapter VII "Comparative Analysis") The two documents draw deep inspiration from the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin el-Husseini, embracing not only his antisemitism but his views concerning Arab identity and Islam. Haj Amin demanded full unity of the Arab and Muslim worlds, viewing the Arab world as a Muslim domain. Working with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt from 1945 onward, the Mufti helped facilitate the establishment of branches of the organization in the Palestine Mandate during the late 1940s. In later years Haj Amin was a personal hero to the more astute and diplomatic Yasir Arafat. Although not caught making blatant anti-Jewish remarks, Arafat fully admitted Mufti Haj Amin el-Husseini was his icon and role model. Both leaders were a mix of Islam and Arab nationalism embodying anti-Western and anti-democratic understandings.

The post-2000 secular Palestinian Arab nationalism was becoming more of a veneer and less of an influence for Muslims in the region. Hamas sought a revision from an anti-Zionist stand as expressed in *The Palestinian National Charter*, into an outright antisemitic policy platform, begging implementation and Jewish demise worldwide. As a reminder, the *PNC* still holds the anti-Zionist positions that were never corrected; the Fatah/PLO was expected to make revisions to the *PNC* to reflect the goal of an agreed upon two-state solution with Israel, the foundation of the Camp David 2000 negotiations.

Lest one forget, by the end of his life Arafat publicly shifted much closer to Hamas' behavior and objectives rejecting the two-state solution. In his heart he may have already been there years before.

The difference between Article 20 of the PLO's *PNC* denying Jews a homeland and history, and the *HC*, which calls for universal Jewish destruction (Article 7), is the gap between the denial of Jewish cultural and national identity (*PNC*), and physical extermination (*HC*). Ideologically, and through both words and deeds, the legacy of Haj Amin is fully in tandem with the *HC* and Jewish physical destruction.

During the ensuing battles in Gaza, the Fatah/PA forces melted away in the face of the highly motivated Hamas fighters (see Chapter V, "Hamas Ideological Victory"). When integrating Arab nationalism into the Islamist identity, as represented by Haj Amin el-Husseini and apparently Arafat as well¹¹ but to a lesser degree, one realizes that to shift allegiance from the Fatah/PA to Hamas is not a totally revolutionary undertaking. It certainly is a revolt against existing circumstances, in particular corruption and oppression. "Relative deprivation" existed on all levels: political, economic and social. The Hamas majority in parliament, heavy representation in the 2006 NUG and control of ministries raised expectations, but the resulting influence was disappointing. Feeling cheated by the secular-led Palestinian Authority, the expectation gap widened and Hamas fighter motivation soared. When the opportunity arose, the Hamas armed forces named for the Islamist hero "Izz a-Din al-Qassam" quickly determined the military outcome. The PA regime collapsed in Gaza, but Israel held the West Bank in check until US General Keith Dayton organized a new security apparatus to enforce Fatah rule.

From June 2007 to the present (2016), Hamas continues to rule Gaza. Many viewed Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh's government as moderate because, despite increasing border tensions with Israel and a partial blockade for the next year and five months, there were semi-successful cease-fires until November 2008. Once Haniyeh lifted the cease-fire, Israel suffered from heavy shelling, and responded in kind, launching the Cast Lead operation at the end of December. Hamas instituted Sharia law throughout Gaza several days prior to the Israeli military operation. Unsuccessful military engagements with Israel forced Hamas back from the brink of increased extreme Islamist behavior, both inside Gaza and externally against Israel.

¹¹ Arafat was playing a double game, leading the secular Fatah while shifting to a more Islamist position.

There was no continual Jihad because Israel delayed Hamas from further action. Desperately needing aid from the Arab/Muslim world to counteract the continuing Israeli naval and land blockade, Hamas was obliged to retain a working relationship with Hosni Mubarak's fairly hostile secular Arab nationalist regime in Egypt in order to keep the tunnels functioning and allow for the flow of smuggled goods, while garnering international support. Plans for greater revolutionary purity were postponed to guarantee material and diplomatic support from outside sources. Patience and prudence were necessary to rebuild, consolidate resources, and acquire support. Hamas could not tout a harsh anti-Egyptian policy. Only in the aftermath of regrouping could ideological purity take the lead once again.

By 2012, in the aftermath of Mubarak's overthrow, the atmosphere fostered enormous hope for Hamas concerning revolutionary continuity and export. Egypt's newly elected Muslim Brotherhood President Morsi allied with Hamas and tunnel traffic increased between Sinai and Rafiah, demonstrating Egyptian support and bringing the two Islamist partners into closer cooperation. Hamas was shifting toward its most intense stage, but was losing control to the more radical factions in the Gaza Strip. Most specifically, Ahmed Jaabari, who led the Hamas military wing "Izz a-Din al-Qassam," challenged the Hamas political leadership. He was high on Israel's elimination list. Jaabari's political intentions were not clear, but his behavior ruled out the possibility of attaining a cabinet position at some point in the future. Jaabari was killed by an Israeli air strike at the outset of the Pillar of Defense operation in November 2012. A week later, a greatly weakened Hamas struggled to re-impose its sovereignty after Israeli air strikes destroyed most of its weapons and ammunition. With no real opposition, Haniyeh's Hamas government in Gaza persevered. In July 2013, Egypt's Morsi government was overthrown, partially by popular will but more so by the Egyptian military and General a-Sisi in what is seen as a counter-revolution.

Going into 2014, Hamas was isolated in the Gaza Strip, a complete reversal of fortunes from the prior year and a half. General a-Sisi's government in Cairo was bent on halting the smuggling and closing down the illicit tunnel traffic in commercial goods and military contraband. As noted previously, the crackdown against smuggling also brought about fuel shortages, effectively paralyzing Gaza's power plant. More significantly, Egypt's military rulers feared Islamist activists and especially Salafist and Al Qaeda supporters who were freely making their way from Gaza to Sinai, and into the Egyptian urban landscape of Cairo and Alexandria. Weakened

economically and militarily, Hamas agreed to join a NUG on June 2, 2014, and Fatah's Rami Hamdallah replaced Ismail Haniyeh as prime minister. Beating a tactical retreat, Hamas and Gaza were paying a heavy price for their previous Islamist victory. Still, even membership in the NUG would not stop Hamas activism.

Looking back on 2012, the Hamas revolt was readying for the full implementation of its ideological demands as it reached the heights of revolutionary Islamic fervor. The shift was delayed but not canceled by the previous Cast Lead clash. As well, the Pillar of Defense operation could not nullify the Hamas march to Jihadi victory. General a-Sisi's overthrow of Morsi and the Brotherhood was a much more serious challenge. Previous encouragement from the Tunisian and Libyan revolutions faltered, as both countries were in disarray. The bloody civil war in Syria pitted the Assad regime ally against the increasingly fractured Sunni Jihadis. This left Hamas to choose between its former Iranian/Hezbollah patrons and the wholehearted Turkish support they had since the *Marmara* incident in May 2010. It was increasingly difficult for Hamas to reconsolidate and retain power when the Arab/Muslim world was in deepening turmoil. Haniyeh's "victory lap" as an honored guest throughout the Arab/Muslim world in January 2012 and speeches from the winter of 2011-12 indicated a harshening of tone and return to building a total Islamist society with a full commitment to Jihad. Events had moved far too quickly for anyone to recall the Hamas hero status from just a few years prior.

Israel's July 2014 Protective Edge operation came as an immediate response to shelling and tunneling by Hamas and other Islamist organizations, launched after the murder of three Israeli teenagers. Hamas was in economic and political distress because of the increasingly effective Israeli blockade now augmented by Cairo, a result of Egyptian regime change. In addition, President Abbas and the Fatah/PA were making a comeback. Gaza sustained major physical damage, but Hamas and its allies redeemed themselves politically. Hamas popularity was restored through resistance to Israel and Fatah/PA despite participation in the NUG in the West Bank and Gaza. In the aftermath of Operation Protective Edge, due to the need for reconstruction funds from a spectrum of donor nations including the US and EU, Hamas could not capitalize on its renewed political support. The 2014 NUG arrangement with Fatah remains a major obstacle to Hamas' direct control over Gaza's destiny since funds for reconstruction must be channeled through the PA in Ramallah. Since they continue to enjoy popular support, Hamas' setback may only be temporary.

Hamas seized power in Gaza in 2007, yet the height of revolutionary fervor was disrupted (beginning in late December 2008) by Israel's three military operations, and a-Sisi's rise to power in Egypt. The extremist stage is incomplete as of this writing. Ideological commitment and intensity remain high but cannot be kept so indefinitely. The most radical phase of ideological adherence and Jihad will be contingent upon events in other Arab/Muslim countries, especially Egypt. Presently in Egypt, the secular nationalists are in power; in the future the Muslim Brotherhood may return with even greater support. Hamas and the Jihadis require increasing Middle Eastern instability and the reinstatement of the Muslim Brotherhood regime in Egypt in order to be victorious.

Without their temporary setback, would Hamas have gone beyond the Islamism of Haj Amin el-Husseini? It is worth recalling that in the 1930s Izz a-Din al-Qassam and the Black Hand represented the violent Muslim Brotherhood policies even more than the Grand Mufti Haj Amin el-Husseini. Within the parameters of a traditional society, Hamas initiatives, whether peaceful or violent are more of an Islamist revolt and demand for a return to fundamentalism than a full revolution. Prime Minister Haniyeh's "political Hamas" was considered moderate while the military wing under the command of Jaabari was deemed radical. Jaabari defied the politicians, but he did not force them from power. It is not a stretch to compare the Haj Amin and al-Qassam symbiosis with that of Haniyeh and Jaabari respectively. Both Haj Amin and Haniyeh are known for political roles, while al-Qassam and Jaabari were terrorist military leaders eliminated by outside adversaries, the former by the British and the latter by Israel.

Political Hamas preached neither democracy nor national unity with Fatah. Meanwhile, the radicals of the Izz a-Din al Qassam Brigades were content with their virtual monopoly of force. We may be seeing a return to aspects of a pre-revolutionary society resulting from the crushing physical defeat suffered at Israeli hands during the November 2012 Pillar of Defense operation, and even more so with the July 2014 Protective Edge bombardments and ground incursion. During the intervening year and a half, the Gaza front was one of the quietest in recent memory. At the time, the Hamas Revolution was stunted or in abeyance, mainly due to outside events, influences and intervention. Pre-2007 Gaza was a heavy mix of Islam and Arab nationalism. Taking the cutting edge off of militant Islam and re-emphasizing Arab identity will do Hamas little damage and may aid in shoring up support. This was particularly critical when the donor nation summit met in Cairo in the autumn of 2014 and agreed to appropriate \$5.4

billion for Gaza reconstruction. The funds are to be funneled through President Abbas and the PA, bypassing Hamas.

It appears Hamas was on the threshold of an extremist stage, but today they face dire threats in the form of radical Salafists further to the right than themselves, al-Qaeda and Islamic State-types seeking to replace them. During the second half of 2015 Hamas was in military conflict with these fanatical groups and still retained the upper hand, but was exercising less-than-full control over the Gaza Strip. Hamas may not have the breathing space it needs to recuperate. To retain local support for its Islamist regime in Gaza, Hamas must unify, rearm and reassert its power sooner rather than later. No doubt if the Islamic Awakening retakes the offensive we can expect Hamas participation. Unauthorized rocket attacks against Israel initiated by fanatics may push Hamas to re-engage in battle earlier than planned. Hamas would prefer to confront Israel only after securing regional power support, be it Turkish, Iranian or Egyptian Islamist. Israel can be expected to retaliate and there may be frequent “restarts” possibly triggered by tunneling activity into Israel. Internally, Hamas will work to purge anyone opposed to their regime.

In the interim, we can foresee a remission in the direction of Palestinian Arab nationalism especially concerning participation in a NUG. The Palestinian national essence, although less significant than Islam, is viewed as a limited territorial commitment in the *The Hamas Covenant*. To broaden its appeal, we can expect Hamas to return to the Islamist/nationalist messages of Haj Amin el-Husseini. Palestinian nationalism will be played up, Islam downplayed a trifle and Jewish perfidy continually emphasized. The Fatah/PA will suffer further condemnation for betrayal and delegitimization by negotiating with Israel and accepting the two-state solution concept, at least in name.

If suffering under unbearable pressures, Hamas could accept a *hudna*-induced two-state arrangement for a limited period of time. The Hamas conditions for the *hudna* would necessitate a full Israeli withdrawal and Palestinian refugee return, nothing less. The *hudna* will end when Hamas feels strong enough to at least achieve political and military gain, if not overall victory. Of course these *hudna* conditions are theoretical since they are totally unacceptable to Israelis, including those on the furthest reaches of the Zionist left.

Revolutions lead to shifts and new baselines. In the case of Hamas, in comparison to the Fatah/PA regime, there will be more Islam, less secular identity and even less tolerance. One can foresee an intensified antisemitism

harking back to seventh century Islam in content, yet highly integrated with Czarist/Nazi motifs and ideals. Jihad, necessary for cleansing, will not be far behind. Anti-Western and anti-Christian attitudes can be expected to continue. Certainly pagans and Far Eastern non-Muslim peoples have no place in the Hamas world. On the local level Hamas will labor to spread its ideals to the West Bank, whether through some form of NUG arrangement or by way of a more militant initiative. As a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas demands a Jihadi outcome of revolutionary export to the world. The *HC* will remain the “Divine” guideline for future rule.

Islamic World Domain, Background, Message and Ramifications

The Muslim Brotherhood/Hamas draws its legitimacy and strength from the birth of Islam and continues to see its primary enemy, the Jews, in the Islamic historic theological setting. Jews are in alliance with idolaters and/ or polytheists and pagans (Koran 5:82), which nowadays means material well-being and man-made social systems such as democracy, socialism and capitalism. The Jews are the adversaries and in the broad context “modernity,” meaning liberty, the free flow of ideas and humankind ruling itself, is evil. Sayyid Qutb, the foremost Islamist thinker of our time, made this specific understanding the focal point of the Muslim clash with the West.

Irshad Manji points out that a narrow-minded fundamentalist Islam emerged in the sixteenth century Ottoman Empire when clerics destroyed an observatory, which sought knowledge about the heavens. By the mid-eighteenth century, the printing press was banned. A century later, Mecca’s leading cleric canceled three Ottoman reforms directed at eliminating slavery, freeing women from the veil and allowing non-Muslims to live in the Arabian Peninsula. These events took place on the background of the crystallization of the Saudi kingdom in a deal between Mohammed ibn Saud and Mohammed ibn al-Wahhab in the mid-1700s. The former forged political unity, while the latter solidified an extreme conservative religious reform highlighting a return to the Jihadi ruthlessness of Islam’s first century. These Wahhabist ideals continue to be acted upon through the Islamic State destruction of world heritage sites deemed “pagan” or “un-Islamic.”

A reactionary reformation set in, rooted in the ideas of the thirteenth and fourteenth century cleric Ahmed ibn Tamiya who denounced the Mongols (Tatars) for integrating their own secular laws into government despite their conversion to Islam. For ibn Tamiya, state and religion were one, and only the rule of Sharia law acceptable. In the mid-twentieth century, Qutb took inspiration from ibn Tamiya in his demand for the rule of Sharia law, and his fanaticism led Egypt’s Nasser to execute him. Ibn Tamiya railed against the

Mongol invaders no less than Osama bin Laden condemned the American presence in the Muslim Arab world. In later years, Qutb's exiled brother Mohammed taught Osama bin Laden in Saudi Arabia. In Islamist eyes, today's Americans are yesterday's Christian European Crusaders. Today's materialist Jewish-influenced New York City is the modern cosmopolitan pre-Islamic *jabili* Mecca of the 620s. The eternal resurgent pristine Islam is destined to capture America. The Islamist predictions are that New York will fall to Islam just as Mecca did close to 1,400 years ago.¹²

In theory, the above phenomena are in line with *The Hamas Covenant*. The superiority of Islam and the need for Sharia law are emphasized throughout the *HC*, but most emphatically in the Introduction-Preamble, Articles 2, 3, 8 and 11. Jews are the ultimate enemy, as seen in the Introduction-Preamble, Articles 7, 15, 20, 22, 28 and 32, and aligned with them are the Western capitalists and Eastern communists (Articles 22 and 25). The *HC* lists the previously defeated as Tatars/Mongols (Articles 29 and 35) and the Crusaders (Articles 15, 29, 32, 34 and 35) who are now part of the Christian West and allies of the Zionists/Jews. Hamas claims full membership in the world Islamist and Jihadist movement (Articles 1-5), claiming the same theological rights, history, previous and present enemies. The Jews and Israel are the most immediate adversaries slated for destruction. Hamas as part of the Muslim Brotherhood will battle the others at some future date.

The traditional stereotype of the Jews as a discarded, despised, cowardly and laughable *dhimmi* community gave way to the twentieth century contradiction of the re-assertive nationalist Jew claiming rights in his ancient home, the Land of Israel. The success of the State of Israel was humiliating in the face of previous Islamic historic and religious understandings. The only way to explain Jewish strength when confronted with Islamic "righteousness" was through theological demonization. Jewish insidiousness was in alignment with all the forces of evil, including the devil himself. Today the Jews, Christianity and the secular West are viewed as one entity—all anti-Islamic. Jews are singled out for special hatred even more so nowadays because they are the people who dared to establish an independent entity of their own on *waqf* lands in the Islamic-dominated Middle East. Czarist and traditional Islamic antisemitism gave way to embracing Nazi accusations and solutions before the final replacement of the Divine by the Jihadi determinists who will now act as Allah Himself. Jews worldwide are to pay the ultimate price of Islamist hatred.

¹² Manji, Irshad, *The Trouble With Islam Today*, St. Martin's Griffin, New York, 2003, pp.144-150.

Furthermore, wittingly or not, the rise of secular Arab nationalism is accused of aiding the Jewish success in building a state entity. Secular Arab nationalism in the Middle East is charged with betraying Islam by not invoking an eternal Jihad against the Jews. The anthropocentric leadership of these Muslim nations showed discretion and took it upon themselves to make either war or peace. In diocentric Islamic thinking such considerations are forbidden; devout Muslims have no right to make such determinations. The singular path must be that of Jihad, with the *budna* Islamic cease-fire enacted only when absolutely necessary. Agents of betrayal come in the form of King Farouk, Gamal Abdul Nasser and Anwar Sadat of Egypt, King Hussein of Jordan, the Shah of Iran, the Turkish leader Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and those Palestinians who engaged in the Oslo process with Israel, such as Yasir Arafat. Some of these Arab Muslims made peace with Israel, while others were involved in constant war, but because they were deemed secular and made decisions invoking secular logic, they could never defeat the Jews. Secularism was and is the eternal cardinal sin of the betrayers. Hamas believes in a future total reform when Islam recaptures these bastardized societies. On the Palestinian front, Hamas must defeat Fatah (HC, Articles 26 and 27) and impose Sharia law throughout Palestine/Land of Israel, allowing for no territorial or theological compromises (HC, Articles 11, 12, 13 and 32).

As a small piece in the world-Islamic puzzle, Hamas followed the trends begun in the mid-twentieth century when revolting against the Western imposition of its values. The Western liberal argument in the post-WWII era claims everyone would benefit from adopting Western values and the accompanying democratic form of government, whether through persuasion or coercion. Still, much of the Muslim world as well as parts of the Far East continue to reject the Western ideals of individual human rights and democracy.¹³

Urging readers to take a broad view of the historic understanding, Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (1996) dedicates a significant amount of research to understanding what is titled "The Islamic Resurgence." Western Enlightenment values such as human rights, liberalism, secular understanding and democracy are perceived as the universal panacea to be adopted by all people and cultures to ensure the advancement of humanity. Yet by the end of the twentieth century, the

¹³ Huntington, Samuel, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1996, pp 81-91.

Muslim world justified its resistance to such values, as the West began declining on the economic, demographic and military fronts.

Islamic movements advocated the destruction of secular and material (capitalist and/or socialist) ideals in favor of a return to the true source of Islam as led by the Prophet Mohammed and the first caliphs. Nationalism, communism and socialism are viewed as doomed to failure, being empty secular materialist replacements for a Divinely given Islam. By the end of the twentieth century, Western-influenced regimes throughout the Muslim and Arab world indeed failed, in particular in supplying social services to their people. Most failed countries had corrupt former military power elites exploiting the people for their own narrow interests. In Tunisia and Egypt, mass revolutionary activism led to elections where the popular will of Islam began to rule by the winter of 2011-12, less in the former and overwhelmingly in the latter.

A reconstructed, purified Islam, as defined by the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist groups, provided the much craved for education and social welfare demanded by the masses. Islam was not to be modernized; rather modernity was to be Islamicized.¹⁴ Islamic revivalism is two pronged. First there is domestic improvement for the Muslim community reaching down to the individual and second is the demand to crush all Western influences. Once rejuvenated, the Muslim community is to take offensive action, destroy Western influences and replace them with the culture determined by Allah, Islam and Sharia law. A reinvigorated Islam will embrace modernity and in particular its technological advancements while advocating the obliteration of Western values and societal norms. Social and universal justice coupled with rule on earth must be Islamic, not Western Enlightenment.

The slogan "Islam is the Solution," sums up opposition to nation states in favor of the Divine perfection of heavenly dictates. Dismissing secularism, law and education are to be Islamic and thereby permeate every aspect of society. Demand for social change may be seen as mainstream while the political movements of Islamism or Islamic fundamentalism embody extremism. According to Huntington, the Islamic awakening is similar to the European Reformation in its demand for sweeping reform and reevaluation of everything. The differences are in scope, the European model was limited to northern Europe while the "Islamic Resurgence" affects one and a half billion Muslims. Today's Islamists are well-educated, urbanized, lower

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 96.

middle class youth. For them, the power of religion is obvious; the Pope toppled Communism and Ayatollah Khomeini overthrew the Shah of Iran.¹⁵

Although democratic elements and Islamism may be the two opposition forces in the Muslim world used to challenge secular dictatorships, they are only temporary allies since Islamic culture and society are steadfast enemies of Western liberalism and the democratic process. Liberal democrats are easily repressed by nationalist dictatorships. However, when outlawed due to security concerns, Islamists can take refuge within religious organizational frameworks such as mosques and charities while continuing educational indoctrination. The democratic thinkers not only lack such institutions, but have shallow roots within the Muslim world. Furthermore, secular dictatorial regimes in the Muslim world identify more with Islam on the cultural level and are willing to integrate aspects of Islamic law, values and symbols within the secular national system. This forms a political/cultural hybrid in the hope of co-opting moderate Islamists.¹⁶ We saw this clearly in the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 begun by the secular Facebook and Tweeter generation who initiated the massive demonstrations that toppled the Mubarak regime. In the aftermath, the Islamists represented by the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists won the elections by a landslide vote of over 70 percent. The Muslim vote was 80 percent in favor.

As of this writing, on the demographic level, the West and Christendom have had no population growth while Islamic populations are increasing at several percent a year. From an economic perspective, the West has material comfort while the majority of the Muslim East lives in relative poverty. Europe's population is aging at a time when the Muslim world is enjoying a "youth bulge." Still, too many young people with too few opportunities to achieve the promises of a secular world can become a major destabilizing factor, not only in their own lands but worldwide, and particularly in relation to the declining West.¹⁷ This trend may be slowed, but continues into the second decade of the twenty-first century.

Islam expects Muslim loyalty to be exclusively to Allah and the Koran. Family, clan, tribe and culture may be pieces in the puzzle, but they must come second to the eventual unification of everyone in the global Islamic empire. There is no room for democracy, the nation state, or the separation of religion and the supposed "secular" authority, as exists in the West where one differentiates between "church and state." The Prophet Mohammed and

¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 109-114.

¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 114-115.

¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 117-121.

caliphs represent the power and glory of past leadership, which held both religious and political power, in contrast to the Western Christian artificial duality.¹⁸

Writing in the 1990s, Huntington touted the possibilities for a multi-cultural, multi-religious world once the “resurgence” calmed down. He believed a “core state” such as Turkey would arise and unify the Muslim world, representing Islam to all others and seeking nonconflictual arrangements. He expected a balance to be reached.¹⁹ It is here that Hamas and the universal Muslim Brotherhood ideals exhort all believers to crush any attempt at splitting sovereignty into a multi-cultural and multi-religious world. Although a temporary ceasefire or *hudna* may be called, the Western interpretation of a cease-fire to achieve conflict resolution is unlikely. Ideologically, the Muslim Brotherhood-Hamas were and are ordained to overthrow any “core state” regime (Turkey or otherwise) attempting to eternalize a world balance of power preventing Islam from obtaining universal conquest. The lure of peace, stability, and material-well-being for their own societies are obstacles in the path of the command to spread the word of Allah to everyone and Islamicize humanity. Hamas uses the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a cover for principles concerning Islamic world conquest aspirations; the *HC* is clear on this point in Articles 11, 13, 14 and 32.

The West has a major problem by remaining in denial. Prior to 9/11 Huntington’s perspective appeared unnatural despite the warning signs. In the early 1990s, President Bill Clinton maintained that the battle was against violent Islamic radicals, despite evidence pointing to overall Islamic rejection of Western values and forms of government. As seen previously, President Barack Obama in his June 2009 Cairo speech almost eight years after the al-Qaeda attacks on America, went a step further in naiveté by declaring, “Hamas does have support among some Palestinians, but they also have to recognize they have responsibilities, to play a role in fulfilling Palestinian aspirations, to unify the Palestinian people, Hamas must put an end to violence, recognize past agreements, recognize Israel’s right to exist.”²⁰ Hamas will reject any attempt at engagement or compromise, with complete

¹⁸ See Sayyid Qutb’s writings in *Milestones*. See Chapter II “Ideologues,” *Hamas Jihad*.

¹⁹ Huntington, pp. 174-178.

²⁰ Text of Obama speech in Cairo, June 4, 2009, *USA Today*, retrieved January 20, 2016,

www.usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2009-06-04-Obama-text_N.htm

disdain (*HC*, Articles 11, 13 and 32). What is shocking is that Obama never recognized Hamas, nor the Muslim Brotherhood, for who and what they claim they are. Failing to recognize Islamists as “Divinely inspired” is the greatest of insults, and only makes Americans and Europeans a more implacable and foolish enemy.

In 1990, Bernard Lewis, the eminent Western scholar on Islam, explained the rumblings in the Muslim world to be “no less than a clash of civilizations – that the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both.”²¹ Lewis made the comment once the Khomeini Revolution in Iran, the Soviet banishment from Afghanistan and the pro-Islamist coup by Zia ul-Haq in Pakistan, were in the past. Complementary trends showed the strengthening of extremist Islam in Sudan under Omar al-Bashir and Hezbollah’s Khomeinism gaining strength in Lebanon. While it is said that Muslim commentators spoke of the coming clash, others mentioned above were already engaged in their anti-Western mission. Hamas has no pretenses as to its role and views itself as a “cog in the wheel,” just part of the overall Jihad apparatus.

The West is understood to be “materialist, corrupt, decadent and immoral,” devoid of religion and belief. Secular liberals are most despised as “arrogant” in their attempt to analyze Islam and Muslim societies. Western Christianity, because it is a recognized *dhimmi* belief system, is seen in a more positive light. The greatest clash is between the Western “universality” of culture verses Islamic religious global conquest.²² The democratic West feels an obligation to extend its secular liberalism to the Muslim world, while Islamists live under the Divine obligation to Islamicize the planet. Islamists see the West as culturally self-righteous, and there are those in the West who see Islamists as religiously self-righteous. Islamists condemn the West as conceited for its attempt to implement man-made laws, as opposed to bending a knee to Allah and taking upon themselves Islam and Sharia law.

Islamists view the Soviet Afghan war of the 1980s as a Jihadi victory, and not a victory of the democratic West over the communist East. The American-led West is next on the Jihadi agenda, each superpower being destroyed in turn. The early 1990s saw US and European involvement in the Gulf by confronting Saddam Hussein after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In retrospect the entire West is portrayed as the enemy despite being called in by the Saudis, Kuwaitis and others to halt Saddam Hussein’s murderous

²¹ Lewis, as quoted by Huntington, p. 213.

²² Huntington, pp. 213-214 and 218.

imperial policies.²³ The US finally toppled Saddam in 2003, eternalizing his hero status in the Arab/Muslim world. Islamic unity was solidified despite Saddam's pro-Baath secular policies and harsh anti-religious repression leading to the deaths of hundreds of thousands.²⁴ The West is condemned to the fate of the Byzantine Empire, crushed by Islam in 1453.

Although seen as a "fault line" or "civilizational" wars, there is no doubt of the absolutism of the split between *Dar al-Islam*, the abode of Islam, and *Dar al-Harb*, the abode of war. Other civilizations accept faiths and cultures different from their own, but according to Jihadists, Muslims heralding compromise and a multi-cultural existence or any acceptance of these principles, are deemed betrayers. There is the rationalist expectation that exhaustion as a result of continual conflict will lead to moderation.²⁵ But as long as the fundamentalist Jihadist understanding is unchanged, any halt in conquest will only be a temporary delay or *hudna* necessary to regroup and reactivate the conflict. To continue with the geological metaphor from the Islamic Jihadi perspective, peace will only arrive when plate tectonics and fault lines are concepts from the past. The earth is destined to be one single Islamic plate.

"Islam's borders *are* bloody," much more so than any other religions or civilizations of recent memory. Already twenty years ago over 50 percent of wars involved Muslims, as did two-thirds to three-fourths of inter-civilizational wars.²⁶ As of late and just prior to the 2011 Islamic Awakening the number rose to 80 percent of all wars involving Muslims.²⁷ Internal Muslim bleeding from the 1990s continues into the 2000s as we witness wars in Libya, Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, the Palestinian territories, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Forms of civil conflict continue to plague Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Sudan. The estimate is that from 2006 to 2008 some 98 percent of all those killed in terror attacks by al-Qaeda were themselves Muslims. This was a serious increase from the already astounding 85 percent of Muslim victims at the hands of al-Qaeda, from the more inclusive 2004 to 2008

²³ Ibid, pp. 246-249.

²⁴ Ne'eman, "Arab World Heroes," July 31, 2006, <http://mc-ontarget.org/pws/page!5035>.

²⁵ Huntington, pp. 291-297.

²⁶ Ibid, pp. 256-258.

²⁷ Williams, Armstrong, "WILLIAMS: The endless wars of Islam," *Washington Times*, September 12, 2010, retrieved December 16, 2015, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/sep/12/williams-the-endless-wars-of-islam/>.

statistics.²⁸ Despite these casualties, overwhelming majorities in most Muslim countries and significant minorities in Western Muslim communities support extremist Islamist groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah, al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Support may be limited for the Islamic State, however tens of thousands of Muslims including many Westerners have joined the emerging caliphate and participate in its brutalities. There are very few wars worldwide that do not involve Muslims (the Russian-Ukrainian conflict being the most notable). This translates into a not insignificant approval of terror attacks against Western targets, including suicide bombings, the full implementation of Sharia law, rape of non-Muslim women and quite notably female honor killings.²⁹ It is not clear how much support the fanatical Islamic State enjoys. The Pew Research Center recently reported very limited global Muslim support for Islamic State actions adding up to several percentage points, while on the other hand a May 2015 on line poll by the *Al Jazeera* Arabic language satellite station based in Qatar showed an overwhelming 81 percent approval rating in the Arab world for Islamic State goals and behavior.³⁰

²⁸ Mayer, Alexander, "Muslims account for 85% of casualties in al-Qaeda attacks," *Long War Journal*, December 9, 2009,

www.longwarjournal.org/.../muslims_account_for_85_percent.

Musharbash, Yassin, "Surprising Study on Terrorism: Al Qaeda Kills Eight Times More Muslims Than Non-Muslims," *Spiegel*,

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/surprising-study-on-terrorism-al-qaeda-kills-eight-times-more-muslimsthan-non-muslims-a-660619.html>.

Both retrieved March 2, 2012.

²⁹ Muslim Opinion Polls "A Tiny Minority of Extremists?" *The Religion of Peace*, retrieved October 14, 2014,

www.thereligionofpeace.com/pages/opinion-polls.htm.

Presented are wide-ranging studies, in particular Pew Research and Surveys. There are extensive links to global surveys of Muslim public opinion both in the West and Arab/Muslim nations where Islam is the dominant religion.

³⁰ Constantine, Tim, "Eighty-One Percent Support Islamic State and Its Barbaric Acts," *Washington Times*, May 28, 2015, retrieved August 19, 2015,

www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/may/28/tim-constantine-islamic-stateand-their-barbaric-a/.

This survey was done by the *Al Jazeera* Arabic language satellite station covering 38,000 respondents much more than the usual representative number used in public opinion polls. The question posed was, "Do you support the organizing victories of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)?" 81% voted "Yes" in support of the Islamic State and 19% were opposed. The survey received global coverage.

Poushter, Jacob, "In nations with significant Muslim populations, much disdain for ISIS," November 17, 2015, retrieved December 16, 2015,

www.pewresearch.org/.../in-nations-with-significant-muslim-populations.

Nowadays when pitting Islamists against their secular nationalist kin, repression by the former highlights everyday life in Ahmedinejad's or even Rouhani's Shiite Iran and in general wherever Sharia law rules in Arab countries or entities. Following this trend, it appears that even the Islamic State may solidify rock bottom support in a small yet deadly activist sector of the Sunni Muslim world. That is not to say the secular nationalist regimes are not dictatorial, they usually are; however, they do allow for non-Islamic thinking, therefore the possibility for democratic reform exists. The confrontation continues and it matters little which specific Middle Eastern region is under discussion.

For Palestinians, this is the heart of the Hamas-Fatah clash. Hamas rules in Gaza, and Fatah holds the upper hand in the West Bank. Hamas is not only part of the Islamic Resurgence but takes its place as those in the universal vanguard despite its lack of physical military power and dependence on a very narrow land base in the Gaza Strip. Hamas was a forerunner, taking the overall Palestinian legislative elections in January 2006 in Gaza and the West Bank, and overthrowing the PA NUG arrangement with Fatah in Gaza in June 2007. Islamists worldwide were inspired. It is believed and most likely quite accurate to claim that only Israeli and American support for Fatah's President Mahmoud Abbas and then Prime Minister Salam Fayyad prevented a similar outcome in the West Bank. Hamas continues to confront its Fatah rivals through an underground threat in the West Bank, and by way of embracement in a NUG, a panacea constantly advocated as a way to end Palestinian disunity.

Politically the question of the necessity of Palestinian national unity, or whether there was to be a Hamas Islamic victory sometime in the very distant future, was overridden by the events of the Arab "Islamic Awakening" of 2011, ushering in revolution and changing the Middle East forever. The pace quickened and several of the previous Arab nationalist regimes are now gone; others are collapsing. Even the supposedly "popular" Egyptian military coup against the Muslim Brotherhood may be of short duration, Islam remaining a major political force. Any Palestinian unity government will prove Fatah the weaker party, and a redirection toward the Hamas-Muslim Brotherhood ideals will be in order. Peace with Israel will not be an option but instead only a limited *budna* implemented for practical purposes, leaving the confrontation with the Jewish nation state and world Jewry to be delayed to some future date.³¹ Hamas acknowledges that the decision to go to war is preordained. This complements the overall Jihadist policy toward the rest of the world

³¹ Elliot Chodoff's theory of "delayance," unpublished 2009.

with its emphasis on the destruction of the secular West. So the question is whether a NUG is preferable where Hamas will work to weaken Fatah from the inside, or whether remaining on the outside and applying constant pressure will bring about the same result of Islamic domination.

Hamas built popular support, defeated Fatah politically and militarily, mobilized much of world opinion against Israel and acted as a brake on US and EU liberal secular democratic influences on Palestinian Muslims, particularly in Gaza but also in the West Bank. Today Hamas is recalled as one of the pioneers of Islamist victories in the pre-2011 phase. Hamas projects ideological power and defiance toward all enemies of Jihad. In the pre-revolutionary period the Muslim Brotherhood took control of Sudan, the Khomeinists overthrew the Shah of Iran, and Afghanistan fell to the Taliban. Afghanistan will fall again when the Americans leave, as did much of Iraq to the Islamic State. Hamas is one link in the Islamic chain. Just recently, Egypt became the newest and largest link following the Hamas lead even if it only lasted two years. Hamas is a symbol and icon to be emulated as evidenced by the tumultuous welcomes afforded Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh when visiting the Arab and/or Muslim world.

Hamas is vindicated in the Arab Muslim world and beyond, whether through the recent revolutions or by Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan's increasingly anti-Israel, pro-Islamist policies. Outmaneuvering Iran, Ankara became the primary Hamas patron since the *Mavi Marmara* event of May 2010. This is an enormous feat considering that the Turkey of Ataturk was still the "model" bastion of a secular state in the Muslim world at the turn of the past century. Erdogan's Islamist Justice and Development Party is curtailing secularism in Turkey step-by-step, particularly in the military, and clamping down on journalistic freedoms. Straddling Islam in the Middle East and democracy in the West, the Turks are encountering little criticism and remain NATO members. Gaza and Ankara have much in common even if at the moment the Turks retain diplomatic relations with Israel and speak of a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders.

With Erdogan's increasing Islamic activism and retention of popular support as evidenced by his party's victory in the November 2015 elections, Hamas has a Sunni role model which can be viewed as just passing through the democratic stage on its way to a more perfect Sharia-ruled, Islamic society. This does not contradict any sort of positive relationship with the Iranians, as proven by the warm welcome Prime Minister Haniyeh received during his February 2012 visit. Whether a slow steady Islamization at the expense of democracy is a realistic option in the Turkish framework is yet to

be seen, but it certainly gives hope to Hamas and the universal Muslim Brotherhood. When it appeared the Turks would not go far enough in Islamization, it was probable the Egyptians would replace them in the post-2011 era. Cairo may be a more comfortable benefactor, but in the meantime the Egyptian military acts contrary to Hamas interests, and Erdogan retains his influence. As much as Hamas needs a patron, because of its small size and military weakness, it is an inspiration to be emulated throughout the Muslim world. Hamas is not only fully embedded in the movement, but is a leader in the Islamic Resurgence.

As of this writing, Hamas is not engaged in a direct clash with the West, even if crossing swords with Israel quite often. Hamas is cognizant of the need for overall Jihadi victory and the use of tactical *budnas* when necessary to achieve the goal of Islamic triumph.³² In the meantime, the Muslim Brotherhood is working to regroup and consolidate its internal victories throughout the Islamic world. Hamas can be expected to do likewise. By late 2012 the Muslim Brotherhood was on the verge of victory throughout the Middle East. Seen through an Islamic lens, this was comparable to the period just prior to Mohammed's victorious entrance into Mecca in early 630 CE. Recent setbacks may be compared to the Medina years of the 620s when the Prophet Mohammed was still building an offensive force. Consolidation and the defeat of adversaries in the Muslim world and patience in taking on non-Muslims are the key factors in the prerequisite to the "export" of the Islamic Revolution on a universal scale, better known as "offensive Jihad." In essence the "export" began in earnest with the Islamic State Caliphate policy decision to attack Paris in mid November 2015 in a well coordinated operation. The Paris attacks may signify the beginning of offensive Jihad against the West. Although viewed as fanatical, Islamic State actions are the logical continuation of Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas policy objectives. Hamas and the Brotherhood are simply more cautious, fearing for their own existence. In practice Hamas is more "moderate" at the moment because the timing may not appear prudent, but theologically Hamas beliefs are very much in tandem with those of the Islamic State. This begs the question as to whether Hamas loyalists will consider shifting their allegiance to the Islamic State and participating in global Jihad while not abandoning the front against

³² Akram, Fares, "At Rally for Hamas Celebration and Vows," December 14, 2011, *The New York Times*, retrieved December 28, 2015, www.nytimes.com/2011/12/15/world/middleeast/on-anniversary-hamas-repeatsvows-on-israel-and-violence.html? r=0.

Israel. An Islamic State military and/or terror initiative against Hamas should not be ruled out.

Hamas Future within the Palestinian and Arab/Islamic World

The Hamas objective is to reunite with all Muslims in a reconstituted Islamist Middle East and beyond (*HC*, Articles 5, 7, 9, 11 and 33). They dream about a renewed Caliphate and one supreme Muslim ruler. Palestinian Muslims are to play their part as one of the regional actors in this “New Middle East,” no longer separated by nation state boundaries or vying for outside patrons, whether American, European or Russian. The Muslim world is predestined to become a superpower and spread the Islamist message.

Well before such a victory, Hamas must capture the Palestinian Authority apparatus either through elections or violent overthrow. Should elections be won, future open balloting should not be expected. Elections will either be Iranian style, with a limited amount of acceptable Islamic candidates with somewhat more liberal or conservative views, or the Palestinian Legislature can vote itself out of existence. It does not seem reasonable to expect Hamas to allow for Fatah or any form of Western-influenced secular comeback unless faced with no options. In that case, Hamas will consolidate itself in the opposition until achieving power. The Hamas ultimate objective is Islamic power, and they can play the democratic game as a tactic for as long as necessary.

Hamas is intent upon defeating Fatah (*HC*, Article 27) and once that is accomplished, Israel is next. In the aftermath of the 2014 Protective Edge repercussions, taking on Israel is best not done alone with little chance of battlefield victory although periodic eruptions to release internal social, political and economic pressures can be expected. In the meantime, Hamas speaks of and implements a *budna*, never intending to accept Israel’s right to exist. Militarily defeating Fatah in the West Bank means conflict with Israel since a Hamas-controlled West Bank is an existential threat to the Jewish State. Presently taking on the IDF would be counter-productive; however, undermining Fatah support through a dual sovereignty approach will supply a slow and steady erosion provided the PA does not reform itself and make its rule beneficial to the masses.

On the material level, Fatah can deliver a higher standard of living and security for PA citizens but to do so they must partner with Israel, the US and Europe. Should the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank accrue popular support for a two-state solution and Palestinian independence, such

a move would be a defeat for Hamas (*HC*, Article 11, 13, 15 and 32). All outstanding issues need to be resolved with Israel, including mutual recognition, borders and security, a “non-militarized” Palestinian State, Jerusalem and refugees. It is very unlikely such an agreement can be reached with the sides so far apart on all of the issues, especially over the status of Jerusalem and refugee return. Most of the Israeli right/religious do not support a two-state solution, but rather advocate more settlements and a continuation of the status quo. Most have no faith in the PA and many would like to see it collapse.

But even should the Israeli political left prevail, for a Palestinian leader to drum up popular support for an “End of Conflict” agreement with Israel appears hallucinatory, especially in light of the weakening of secular Arab nationalism and the continuing struggles of the 2011 Islamic Awakening. For many Palestinian Muslims, an alliance with the West is to the detriment of life in a society dominated by Islam and is totally unacceptable. Politically, serious peace overtures by the Barak and Olmert governments were spurned in the past when Jordan and especially Mubarak’s Egypt stood behind such initiatives. Today the gap has widened further.

At present, a wave of Islamism continues to engulf the West Bank even if seemingly deflected by Western and Israeli influences. The PA will be undermined should it make full peace or even settle for an interim accord with Israel. The Hamas long-term future depends on the level of success of the Islamic sweep throughout the Middle East. Left on its own, Fatah/PA would suffer the same fate as the other secular Arab regimes. But President Abbas has an advantage because Hamas must defeat Israel to wrest control of the West Bank from Fatah, which is highly unlikely. To defeat Israel, a coordinated Jihad led by the surrounding Arab nations and worldwide volunteers would be necessary. The Hamas challenge is to muster allies in its Jihad against Israel as made clear throughout their *Covenant* in Articles 28-30, 32 and 33.

Were free and open elections held, Hamas would be the winner. One must question the effect on the PA security services and their coordination with the IDF and Israeli intelligence. The scenario of unhindered rocket attacks from the West Bank hitting Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Beersheva must be taken seriously. The shorter range Qassams would continue to be fired from Gaza on Sderot less than a kilometer away, while longer range Grads threaten Beersheva, Tel Aviv, central Israel and Jerusalem. Attacks of all types against Jewish settlements in the West Bank would be a matter of routine. The Israeli response could include a reoccupation of the West Bank,

essentially putting an end to the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority and the on-ground interim arrangements. The ramifications of Israel being forced into a virtual one-state solution confronted by Hamas as the unchallenged representative of Palestinian Muslim loyalties are deep and far-reaching, especially as concerns security. Such a discussion is beyond the range of the topic at hand.

Hamas can be expected to be true to its ideology and *Covenant*, making few, if any, limited temporary concessions even when on the defensive. Once successful, an uncompromising implementation can be expected. *The Hamas Covenant* was and is the overall vision of history, victory, the Islamist worldview and strategy to achieve the holy objectives as dictated by Allah through his faithful. For an Islamist, any reversal is as fleeting as Israel's existence. History is understood to be linear—Islam will be victorious. It is only a matter of time; one must be patient. We can expect recurring peaks of Jihadism as the direct result of the Islamic Awakening.

For those who expected a liberal, democratic form of Islam after the 2006 elections they will continue to be disappointed. Palestinians were free to vote but freedom of thought and criticism outside of Sharia law were not and are not part of the Hamas agenda. Nor would non-Muslims or women be equal under a Palestinian Islamic regime. One does not openly criticize or demonstrate against Hamas unless willing to face the consequences.

Revolution to overthrow an unjust regime is positive but replacing it with a more repressive one, even if freely elected, only increases suffering. It is easy to claim that the Palestinian people have a responsibility for the Hamas rise to power and that they can demand Hamas step down in the name of a more liberal regime. Revolutions in the name of human rights and democracy overthrew dictatorships in the past and will do so in the future. As concerns Hamas, this is not the case. Hamas controls Gaza and can call elections at will, but for the past nine years has declined to do so. Hamas continues to solidify power and barring massive outside intervention can be expected to reign for years into the future. Most significantly, Hamas continues to enjoy popular support; the Palestinian people do not want a liberal democratic regime. They support Islamist governance. The only serious challenges to Hamas rule are the Salafist Islamic State fanatical types. As a counter weight, the Egyptian counter-revolution is applying pressure to Hamas and acts as a temporary brake on the spread of Hamas influence both within and outside Palestinian circles.

On the other hand, Hamas may enter into elections should the April 2014 agreement with Fatah prevail, but the Fatah leadership will nix any balloting

should they believe Hamas will emerge the victor. Theologically powerful, but physically weakened, elections or a national unity arrangement would only be acceptable to Hamas as a carefully devised policy of self-preservation. As of early 2016, Hamas enjoys majority support making such a move by the Fatah/PA semi-suicidal. Hamas can exploit participation in a NUG before elections to Islamicize Fatah (*HC*, Article 27) and transform itself into the ultimate victor with or without balloting. Both organizations draw from the same mid twentieth century ideals pursued by Haj Amin el-Husseini. As shown previously, *The Hamas Covenant* and *The Palestinian National Charter* overlap in most places and therefore Fatah would have little problem reverting to Islamist terminology.

The issue of “reverse abrogation” discussed in the previous chapter, allowing for theological acceptance of others, appears unlikely in the foreseeable future even though it is the best chance for conflict resolution between Islamists and the rest of humanity. Such a move demands a universal Islamic initiative to be open and accepting of others. At present the Islamic agenda is diametrically opposed to these Enlightenment values. Returning to today’s realities, even should Hamas suffer temporary setbacks, as is the case at present, the anti-democratic, antisemitic, Jihadi Hamas Revolution and its legacy, although not complete, will continue to reverberate throughout the Arab world. Specifically, Hamas may absorb Fatah, first ideologically and then physically.

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