

MEMMO

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'Unity' Deal with Unreformed Hamas Undermines Peace

Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas' decision to pursue an interim unity government with Hamas will severely hinder Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. As Abbas well knows, Hamas remains a terrorist group bent on Israel's destruction. Congress has made clear to the PA that U.S. aid will be jeopardized if a unity government is formed as a result of an agreement with an unreformed Hamas.

Abbas' plan to establish a unity government and embrace an unreformed Hamas raises serious questions about his desire for peace.

- By seeking to reconcile with Hamas, Abbas is violating the PLO's fundamental pledge to fight terror—a commitment that was a critical basis for all peace efforts.
- Abbas cannot seriously hope to negotiate in good faith with Israel while simultaneously embracing a group dedicated to Israel's destruction.
- Hamas' participation in the PA would create an untenable situation for Israel, legitimizing an armed terrorist group's continued amassing of weapons in Gaza and advocacy of war against Israel.
- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has advised Abbas not to implement the agreement. If Abbas "implements what has been signed in Doha, he will have chosen to abandon the way of peace and to join with Hamas, without Hamas having accepted the minimal conditions of the international community," Netanyahu said.



The Fatah-Hamas reconciliation deal signed in Qatar does not require Hamas to renounce violence or recognize Israel.

The proposed Hamas-Fatah unity government unfortunately does not require Hamas to recognize Israel and end violence.

- The Feb. 6 announcement that Hamas and Fatah will form a unity government fails to require Hamas to accept the Quartet (the United States, European Union, United Nations and Russia) conditions for international recognition of a Palestinian government: recognizing Israel, rejecting violence and endorsing previous Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements.
- Hamas recently reaffirmed its commitment to war against Israel. "We promise you that we will not cede a single part of Palestine, we will not cede Jerusalem, we will continue to fight and we will not lay down our arms," Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh said Jan. 8 while in Tunis. "...We will not recognize Israel."
- The Hamas charter, published in 1988, details the guiding principles of the group. The charter is laced with anti-Semitism and racism, rejects peaceful efforts to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and calls for the destruction of the State of Israel through *jihad*, or holy war.

- Since its founding, Hamas has claimed responsibility for more than 1,100 attacks that have killed the lives of hundreds of Israelis and two dozen Americans.
- Since taking over Gaza in 2007, Hamas has launched more than 7,000 rocket and mortar attacks against Israeli civilians.

Israel has called for talks and helped condition the environment for peace.

- Netanyahu has taken far-reaching steps to pave the way for substantive talks with the Palestinians—calling for a Palestinian state, reducing barriers to movement in the West Bank and implementing an unprecedented 10-month West Bank housing construction moratorium.
- The prime minister has repeatedly called for direct, high-level negotiations on final status issues. “I’m ready to get into my car at any time and go to Ramallah,” Netanyahu said.
- Israel has facilitated easier movement of Palestinians in the West Bank, increased commerce, and enabled the completion of major infrastructure projects by removing more than 400 checkpoints and roadblocks. In the West Bank, the economy grew by nearly 10 percent in 2010.
- Israel has coordinated closely with Palestinian security forces to increase their capabilities and reduce Israeli activity in the territories. Eight brigades of Palestinian security forces have undergone U.S.-funded training in Jordan and seven new police stations were opened in the West Bank last year.

Congress has made clear to the PA that U.S. aid will be jeopardized if a unity government is formed with an unreformed Hamas.

- The United States should continue its policy of refusing to deal with a Palestinian government that includes an unreformed Hamas. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said last May, America has “made it very clear that we cannot support any government that consists of Hamas unless and until Hamas adopts the Quartet principles.”
- Congress passed provisions as part of the fiscal year 2012 foreign aid bill that broaden prior congressional prohibitions on any aid to a Palestinian unity government with Hamas to include “any power-sharing government of which Hamas is a member or that result from an agreement with Hamas and over which Hamas exercises undue influence.”
- The Obama administration should also make clear that the PA—regardless of who is in control of the governing body—is bound by its commitment to end violence, dismantle the terrorist infrastructure and adhere to all agreements with Israel and understandings with the United States.
- The United States should also urge the international community to continue to insist on the Quartet conditions. Supporting any Palestinian government that rejects the Quartet principles will undermine the prospects for peace with Israel.