

The Stealth Plan of the Palestinian Authority to Erase Israel From the Map

Israel and Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah-controlled Palestinian Authority (PA) are engaging in negotiations refused for years by the PA. Yet only weeks ago, the PA minister of religious affairs, Mahmoud Al-Habbash, delivered a paean to Shekih Ahmad Yassin, founder and leader of Hamas, the terrorist organization that has murdered hundreds of Israelis in scores of suicide bombings, calling him a Palestinian "icon." How can peace talks and glorifying a terrorist chieftain coexist in the PA?

Al-Habbash gave us the answer this summer, when he justified this return to diplomacy by reference to something well-known to his mosque audience: the 628 Treaty of Hudabiyyah.

Hudabiyyah was an agreement between Muhammad and the Meccan Quraysh tribe, in which Muhammad promised a decade of peace. But in less than two years, a Qurayshi-allied tribe committed a breach by attacking a Muhammad-allied tribe. Muhammad, who had meanwhile organized a huge army, took this pretext to attack the Qurayshis. Isolated and unprepared, the Qurayshis surrendered.

This approach, says Al-Habbash, has "brought us to where we are today."

"We have a [Palestinian] Authority, and the world recognizes the [Palestinian] state," he says. "All this never would have happened ... only through the wisdom of the leadership ... exactly like the Prophet [Muhammad] did in the Treaty of Hudabiyyah. ... This is the example, this is the model."

In short, the Hudabiyyah strategy—working toward the weakening

and eventual elimination of Israel through negotiations—has been the operative Palestinian strategy since the **Oslo Accords** were signed 20 years ago. Arafat said as much in a May 1994 speech in a Johannesburg mosque. (Israel demanded a retraction and an end to terrorism and got neither—but continued nonetheless negotiating and conceding.)

When **Arafat** told Arab ambassadors in a confidential meeting in Stockholm in January 1996 that the aim of Oslo was “splitting Israel psychologically” and “eliminat[ing] the State of Israel and establish[ing] a purely Palestinian State” that would “make life unbearable for Jews,” the revelation was ignored even by Israel, which chose to ignore Arafat’s words as well as their political ramifications.

Since Arafat’s death, his successor, Mahmoud Abbas, has made it abundantly clear that not only has he not accepted Israel’s right to exist as Jewish state (“I do not accept the Jewish state, call it what you will,” he has said) but he also intends to set up a Jew-free state (saying, “When a Palestinian state is established, it would have no Israeli presence in it”).

Questioned in an interview on the need for recognition of **Israel**, Abbas replied that, while official recognition was unavoidably necessary for the purpose of obtaining vital Israeli concessions, “It is not required of Hamas, or of Fatah, or of the Popular Front to recognize Israel.”

And, indeed, Abbas’ Fatah has never altered its constitution calling for the destruction of Israel and the use of terrorism to achieve it. Former Fatah strongman in **Gaza**, Muhammad Dahlan, put it plainly when he said, “The Fatah movement does not recognize Israel, even today.”

Words and bombs are thus the Fatah/PA strategy, a strategy made possible only by duplicity. That’s why the late Palestinian leader Feisal Hussein once dubbed it the strategy

of the “Trojan horse,” in which the Palestinian regime installed via negotiations would serve “[its] final aim ... the liberation of all of historical Palestine, from the river to the sea.”

That’s why senior PA figure Abbas Zaki tells an Arab audience, “If I say that I want to remove [Israel] from existence, this will be great, great, [but] it is hard. This is not a [stated] policy. You can’t say it to the world. You can say it to yourself.”

That’s why the PA claims to be interested in a negotiated peace, even while it tells its people repeatedly that the **Jews** have no historical connection of rights in Jerusalem or anywhere else.

In short, the PA has a long-established policy of duplicity about its anti-peace intentions. In these circumstances, not only are the **Israeli-Palestinian** conflict negotiations convened under American auspices foredoomed, but in pursuing them, the Obama administration has embarked on a fool’s errand. Furthermore, by pressuring Israel to make further concessions—like the freeing of jailed Palestinian terrorists, merely to get the PA to the negotiating table—it is endangering an ally.

This is a moment for the Congress to act. It can produce a detailed list of Palestinian bad-faith statements (of which we have provided here only a fraction) and call upon the PA to explicitly retract each statement to its own public. It can make further aid to the PA conditional on verifiable **Palestinian** reforms, like outlawing terrorist groups, arresting terrorists and ending the incitement to hatred and murder that feeds the conflict. And it can withhold aid until these prerequisites for a genuine peace are forthcoming.

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