

Ideological & Behavioral Metamorphoses:

A New Charter for a New Hamas

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INTRODUCTION

On January 25th of 2006 a verifiably transparent and democratically conducted electoral “tsunami” hit the Palestinian political landscape with an unprecedented blow; a so-called “political earthquake” having profound reverberations throughout the Middle East, the Arab and Islamic worlds, and the international community as a whole.¹ The Islamic Resistance Movement, better known by its acronym, HAMAS,² astonished both the world and itself, by winning the Palestinian legislative elections in what many considered the Arab world’s freest, fairest, and first genuinely democratic elections.

Following its “landslide victory,” during which Hamas earned 74 out of the 132 legislative seats with nearly forty-five percent of the popular vote, Hamas instantly metamorphosed from an oppositional, anti-establishment, national resistance movement, into the governing political authority itself; a metamorphosis it neither anticipated nor entirely desired.³ In a single moment, Hamas’s identity, its position within the Palestinian community, and its very *raison d’être* transformed entirely. Acceding the thrones of power as the first Islamist party in the Arab world to successfully and *peacefully* assume majority control⁴ -- no small feat for a movement operating within a region known for Islamist-fearing dictators, democratically-

¹ Nathan J. Brown, *Aftermath of the Hamas Tsunami* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: 2006); Eóin Murray, *After Hamas: a Time for Politics* (Opendemocracy.com: 2006); Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: Unwritten Chapter*, (Hurst: London, 2006), p. 224 [Hereafter “*Unwritten Chapters*”]. See Bibliography for electronic links to all online articles cited.

² Hamas is an acronym for: Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya (“The Islamic Resistance Movement”), meaning “zeal.” Throughout this thesis, I will use the acronym “Hamas” rather than the movement’s full title.

³ According to Hroub, writing prior to the January elections, “[w]ell informed observers know that Hamas is not even trying to win a majority in the Council,” and thus, that it “will not run at full strength in PLC elections.” See Hroub, *Palestine: A New Hamas?*, (Carnegie Endowment [no date listed]).

⁴ Algeria had a similar experience in 1991, when the Islamist FIS won a majority in the Algerian national legislative elections; however, this did not result in a peaceful transition of power. Instead, it led to martial law, a military coup, and a decade-long civil war.

immunized monarchs, and coup-inclined militaries⁵ – a proud, albeit cautious, Hamas emerged to form what some have called “the most representative government” in the Middle East.⁶

Despite Hamas’s democratic basis of legitimacy, however, its hold on power has faced a variety of existential challenges, including an international economic boycott, recurring internecine violence, and intensified Israeli reprisals. Such challenges, which have openly attempted to force Hamas from power, have been fueled by a pervasive sense of fear and distrust rooted in Hamas’s suicide-bombing past, Islamist-oriented agenda, and militantly anti-Israel Charter. Particularly fixated by the latter, and more generally by Hamas’s written and spoken words, the critics of Hamas have tended to overlook, even ignore, its behaviors, and particularly its post-politically integrated behaviors. Because of this myopic approach, many have failed to notice the profound mismatch between rhetoric and reality characterizing the Hamas of today.

Indeed, because of this over-preoccupation with words, Hamas’s ideological and behavioral transformations, particularly those occurring subsequent to its integration into the political process, have gone unnoticed. Instead of recognizing that the Hamas of today is decisively more pragmatic, politically-inclined and compromising than the Hamas of 1988, as this thesis will argue, many in the West, as well as in Israel, continue to classify Hamas on the basis of its anachronistic founding Charter; a document hurriedly drafted nearly twenty years ago, under a unique set of historical circumstances (the First *Intifada*, or “uprising”), and by a different type of leadership (religious sheikhs), who didn’t, as has otherwise always been the case, consult Hamas’s wider constituency.⁷ According to one scholar of Hamas, the 1988 Charter “has never been an accurate reflection of either the philosophy or the political standpoint

⁵ Ghassan Salame (ed), *Democracy without Democrats* (I.B. Tauris: London, 1994).

⁶ “One of the World’s Most Democratically Representative Governments,” Spiegel Online, March 30, 2007.

⁷ Tamimi, *Unwritten Chapters*, 147-150.

of the movement,” an argument seemingly corroborated by the fact that, while often cited by Hamas’s critics, the Charter is rarely referenced or even mentioned by its supporters, members or leaders; a phenomenon particularly characteristic of the post-electoral Hamas.⁸

Importantly, this “problematic and embarrassing” document fails to acknowledge Hamas’s various transformational evolutions -- political, intellectual, behavioral and otherwise; and thus, continues to distract Hamas’s critics, who unfortunately often double as the Palestinians’ subsidizers, from objectively evaluating Hamas on the basis of its post-Charter words, documents, policy proposals and most importantly, behaviors. Were such an objective evaluation to be made, as this thesis will attempt, such critics would undoubtedly find that the Hamas of today bears almost no resemblance to the Hamas of 1988.⁹

MEET THE NEW HAMAS¹⁰

The object of this thesis is to examine, and ultimately, to introduce, what I will refer to as “the new Hamas”; a movement, as I will argue, which is more ideologically flexible, politically pragmatic, and behaviorally accommodative than the pre-politically integrated Hamas (and certainly the Hamas of 1988). As the gulf between Hamas’s “old” and “new” incarnations grows ever wider, the need for a new Charter grows ever greater. Because of Hamas’s many ideological and behavioral metamorphoses, a process that began long before its electoral victory but is only now coming into full view thanks to Hamas’s newfound political (and very public) position, Hamas is in imminent need of a new, up-to-date Charter; a Charter that reflects the fundamental shifts in Hamas’s logic and behavior since its early days as an armed resistance

⁸ Ibid, 7.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ I have adopted this term from Khaled Hroub, who first used it in his article: *A New Hamas Through its New Documents*, Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 35, No. 4, Washington, DC, summer 2006.

movement exclusively dedicated, at least rhetorically, to militantly establishing a state on “every inch” of historic Palestine.¹¹ To be sure, the Hamas of today, with nearly 20 years of experience, a newfound commitment to the political process, and an entirely redefined role within the Palestinian community, is decisively different from the Hamas of earlier times. It is precisely this new, different, and transformed Hamas which this thesis seeks to understand.

STRUCTURE & SCOPE

Cognizant of the increasingly-urgent need for an updated and empirically-sound Hamas Charter, this thesis aims to do precisely that; namely, to compile the substantive and empirical data necessary to construct a new, up-to-date Charter for “the new Hamas.” To ensure comprehensiveness, I have adopted the structure and format of the original Charter, thereby guaranteeing that each of the topics addressed in the original Charter are (re)examined (or more precisely, researched, compared with reality, updated and rewritten). Using the format (meaning the chapter headings) of the original Charter has both structural and comparative advantages. It not only ensures that those topics most essential to Hamas’s constitution are examined, but it provides built-in benchmarks, from which to measure Hamas’s behavioral and ideological transformations. By comparing the contents of the original Charter to contemporary empirical realities, my aim is two-fold: (1) to provide the theoretical contents for a new Hamas Charter, and (2) to realign rhetoric with current reality. Ultimately, this neglected and long-overdue endeavor will, it is hoped, help to demystify the contemporary capabilities, intentions and goals of today’s new and different Hamas.

¹¹ Translation by Khaled Hroub, reproduced in *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice* (Institute for Palestine Studies: 2000), 270. [Hereafter “Political Thought and Practice”].

While the scope of this analysis will primarily focus on the period after which Hamas was fully integrated into the political process,¹² a period I designate as beginning in March of 2005 when Hamas formally announced its decision to participate in the 2006 legislative elections, relevant aspects of Hamas's historical development throughout its twenty year existence will also be examined. In general, however, the focus will be on the politically integrated Hamas of the post-March 2005 era, which will be juxtaposed against the oppositional Hamas of the 1988 Charter.

Each Chapter will begin with a short review of the basic contents of the original 1988 Charter, followed by a more robust analysis of "the new Hamas." Chapter One, entitled "Introduction to the Movement," after briefly revisiting the components of the original Charter's Chapter One, will introduce the "new Hamas" by revisiting its historical origins, re-defining its current structural composition, re-conceptualizing its current geographical scope, and re-placing its contemporary motto. Chapter Two, entitled "Objectives," will – again, after briefly outlining Hamas's original objectives contained in the 1988 Charter – attempt to explicate Hamas's current objectives, as gleaned from its recent documents and statements. Chapter Three, entitled "Strategies and Methods," will examine the new strategies embraced by "the new Hamas" to fulfill its contemporary objectives; this analysis will be based on a scrupulous review of its post-electoral performances. Chapter Four, "Positions," will outline Hamas's relationship toward other political actors, most notably Israel; particularly focusing on the ways in which Hamas's behavioral and ideological approaches toward dealing with Israel have evolved in recent years.

¹² Though Hamas successfully participated in the earlier 2004-2005 municipal elections, I chose March 2005 as the beginning point of my analysis because it marks Hamas's full incorporation into the political process, and its most dramatic ideological reversal: its decision to participate in "national elections." Hamas has never been ideologically opposed to the concept of municipal-level elections.

Finally, Chapter Five, entitled “Historical Proof,” will conclude by listing concrete examples and empirical observations, collected during the last two years, supporting the argument expounded throughout this thesis; namely, that the Hamas of today is an exceedingly different movement than the Hamas of the 1988 Charter. In an attempt to maintain neutrality, objectivity and intellectual honesty, Chapter Five will additionally present a list of counter-examples and disconfirming evidence, which challenges the thesis defended herein.

As I will argue, what emerges following this empirical investigation of “the new Hamas” and re-visitation of its founding charter, is a portrait of a movement capable, willing, and even eager to change and evolve alongside shifting realities; and not, as the 1988 Charter would suggest, a movement ideologically and behaviorally imprisoned by a pre-determined code of unalterable ideals.

SOURCES

A variety of primary and secondary sources, as well as interviews, discussions and empirical observations, were used in constructing the “new Hamas.” Emphasis was placed on using as broad and diversified an array of resources as possible, as to provide a de-politicized, balanced and comprehensive evaluation, an endeavor that at times proved challenging given the intensity of international interest and emotional sensitivity inherent in all issues touching on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Where possible, I attempted to draw from an equal number of Arab/Palestinian and Israeli, as well as Western and non-Western, sources.

Three key primary documents, published since Hamas’s formal integration into the political process, were used in constructing my portrait of the new Hamas. These include: (1) Hamas’s 2005 Electoral Platform for “Change and Reform”, drafted in the fall of 2005 during its campaign for national legislative elections; (2) Hamas’s Draft Program for a Coalition

Government, which represents Hamas's initial attempts to form a unity government; and (3) a speech delivered on 27 March 2006 by the newly-elected Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh, which outlines Hamas's governmental agenda.¹³

These documents -- which were neither circulated nor translated into English by Hamas, almost entirely ignored by Western governments, commented on (as far as I can determine) by a single Western media source,¹⁴ and fully analyzed by only one Hamas scholar (Khaled Hroub)¹⁵ -- uncover critical aspects of the intellectual and ideological makeup of the "new Hamas." Because of both their importance and astounding neglect, these three documents will be meticulously examined in Chapter Two, where a close textual analysis will be used to extricate Hamas's new objectives.

Other primary documents used include official announcements, formal statements, policy proposals and excerpts from speeches, all of which were gathered primarily from Hamas's various websites.¹⁶ With rare exception, such data was collected and examined on a *daily* basis during the course of Hamas's first 14 months in power. This allowed me to closely track Hamas's maturation and performance as it made the revolutionary transition from being outside to being directly within the levers of political power. The data I gathered from my daily

¹³ These documents were not translated into English by Hamas, with the exception of Haniyeh's speech, which was only partially translated. With the gracious assistance of my thesis adviser, Khaled Hroub, however, I was able to receive reliable English translations.

¹⁴ "What Hamas Really Wants," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 5, 2007.

¹⁵ Khaled Hroub, *A New Hamas Through its New Documents*, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 4, Washington, DC, summer 2006 [hereafter "A New Hamas"].

¹⁶ See The Palestinian Information Center at <http://www.palestine-info.co.uk/am/publish/index.shtml> (English version, currently unavailable); <http://www.palestine-info.info/ar/> (Arabic version, still available). See also <http://www.palestine-info.com/en/> (English version); <http://www.palestine-info.info/ar/> (Arabic version).

scourings of newspaper articles, websites, and other media outlets provided much, if not most, of the empirical fodder underpinning the conclusions and observations presented herein.

The secondary sources I consulted were primarily drawn from the work of four scholars - Khaled Hroub,¹⁷ Shaul Mishal,¹⁸ Avraham Sela,¹⁹ and Azzam Tamimi²⁰ -- who are among the small handful of scholars who have conducted lengthy, substantive book-length analyses of Hamas. Each was extraordinarily influential in introducing me to the “new Hamas”; indeed, their insights, conceptual frameworks, and analyses provided the crucial background information in tracing Hamas’s various ideological and behavioral evolutions. Other secondary sources I consulted were drawn, broadly speaking, from the literature on Palestinian,²¹ Arab²² and Muslim²³ politics. As further elaborated below, much of my analysis was shaped by the frameworks and constructs specific to the Political Science and International Relations disciplines; indeed, I would situate my own analysis within the academic study of comparative politics, a modern sub-field of Political Science.

The media provided a third, and very important, layer of empirical data used in my construction of the “new Hamas.” By rigorously documenting Hamas’s political responses to domestic challenges, improvised events, interview requests, and other day-to-day happenings – which I gathered from eyewitness news and media reports -- I attempted to piece together my own, empirical-based portrait of “the new Hamas.” In order to avoid the inevitable biases,

¹⁷ Khaled Hroub -- a Hamas expert, Middle East scholar, and director of the Arab Media Project at Cambridge University -- is my primary thesis advisor.

¹⁸ Shaul Mishal, a political science professor at Tel Aviv University, and Avraham Sela, a professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, co-authored *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence* (Columbia Press: New York), 2006.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Tamimi, *Unwritten Chapters*.

²¹ i.e., Beverly Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine*, I.B. Tauris: London, 1996.

²² i.e., Michael Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics*, CUP: New York, 1998.

²³ i.e., Dale Eickelman & James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, PUP: New Jersey, 1996.

misrepresentations and errors inherent in any given report, I routinely drew from an expansive swath of news sources (as previously discussed). Moreover, whenever possible, I cross-referenced all reports to ensure the integrity of their content.

A series of personal interviews provided a fourth, and final, source of empirical data. My discussion with various scholars of Hamas, political activists, Middle East experts, Jordanian students, and other politically engaged individuals, mostly conducted during the summer of 2006 while I was living and studying in Amman, Jordan, provided insightful and enriching anecdotal information, all of which proved incredibly useful when filling in the details of my introduction to “the new Hamas.”

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A final preliminary note pertains to the theoretical framework underpinning my analysis, which more accurately, involves an interdisciplinary composite of three related frameworks. The first is referred to as the constructivist approach, a hybrid framework situated at the cross-section of International Relations and Middle Eastern Studies. This framework, which is described and applied by Michael Barnett in *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order*, is specifically designed to conceptualize political actors in a nuanced, multi-faceted way.²⁴ Such nuance is discerned, according to Barnett, in three ways: by considering discrepancies between rhetoric and reality; by taking into account the domestic, regional and international contexts; and third, by closely tracking ideological and behavioral changes. Crucial to this framework are social dialogues, or interactions between political actors, which are instrumental in ascertaining the latter’s political and ideological makeup. According to the constructivist approach, when studying a particular political movement one must always be cognizant of the ways in which the

²⁴ Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order*.

movement conducts itself when interacting with others, as well as the various contexts in which such interactions take place.

Most relevant to my own analysis is Barnett's conception of politics as a series of dialogues, rather than discrete outputs. Politics, which is driven less by a set of pre-defined norms than by the social competition involved in determining the content of such norms, constitutes, according to this approach, a continual series of debates, or an on-going discussion, concerning which norms should govern.

When applied specifically to Hamas, the constructivist theory rejects the idea that Hamas is defined by a blueprint of pre-determined principles, such as those contained in its 1988 Charter; and instead, views Hamas as an evolving social organism whose fluctuating *raison d'être* can only be gleaned from its interactions and dialogues with other political actors. Thus, getting to know "the new Hamas," must involve an examination of its internal dialogues, documents, and debates, but more importantly, a close tracking of its reactions and responses to, as well as its discussions and debates with, other domestic, regional and international political actors. Moreover, under this framework, the ideological and behavioral changes exhibited by Hamas are just as important, if not more so, than its previously codified principles and goals, the latter of which reflect Hamas's aspirations during a unique and singular moment in time. While important and worthy of examination, written or stated principles (like those contained in the original Charter), must be examined within the geographical and temporal contexts in which they emerge, measured against reality, and continuously re-examined for change. In short, the constructivist approach emphasizes the need to consider rhetoric, reality, context, and change when attempting to understand a particular political actor like Hamas.

The Network Theory, which was articulated and applied to Hamas by Shaul Mishal, is similar to the Constructivist Theory in its emphasis on taking a more interdisciplinary and contextual-based approach, but differs from the latter in its more specific emphasis on *Islamic* movements and politics. More specifically, the Network Theory, whose unique advantage involves its “special suitability for analyzing complex interactions between internally heterogeneous entities,” emphasizes the importance of social ties and political interactions in deciphering a particular movement’s composition.²⁵ Hamas, as an undeniably “internally heterogeneous entity” involved, particularly of late, in “complex interactions,” is, needless to say, perfectly suited to the network approach. Of particular use to my own analysis, is what this framework suggests about Hamas’s decision-making process; indeed, according to this approach, Hamas’s decisions are guided not by ideology, but instead by “power relations,” “political feasibility,” and “the fluctuating needs and desires of the Palestinian population.”²⁶ In other words, Hamas’s actions, like those of all rational political actors, are determined by a variety of political constraints and self-interested opportunities; and not, as is often assumed, by an unalterable code of divinely-inspired ideals.

The third theoretical framework informing my analysis is the theory of Muslim politics, as defined by Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori.²⁷ As a framework which places itself at the convergence of the anthropological and political science disciplines, the theory of Muslim politics is similar to both approaches previously discussed in its focus on adopting a more nuanced, multi-faceted approach to the study of politics (and political actors) in the Muslim world. It differs, however, in the importance it ascribes to symbolic (or ideological) politics,

²⁵ Mishal, *The Pragmatic Dimension of the Palestinian Hamas*, *Armed Forces & Society*, 29: 4, Summer 2003, 570.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Dale Eickelman & James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, PUP: New Jersey, 1996.

rather than doctrine, the former of which, according to Eickelman and Piscatori, determines the political actions and decisions taken by ideologically-driven political movements, like Hamas. As before, however, the overall implication of this approach is that Muslim politics is not guided or dictated by a predetermined template of ideas, but rather is driven, like all secular politics, by an assortment of economic, cultural and political realities.

Collectively, the three approaches outlined above advocate taking a more nuanced, multi-faceted, and contextually-based approach toward the study of politics in the Arab-Muslim world. Their relevance to my own analysis lies in the importance they ascribe to documenting social interactions, public discourses, political realities, and most importantly, political and ideological transformations. Indeed, each framework was influential in pushing me to move beyond mere rhetoric, and to focus more comprehensively on Hamas's overall performance, the theaters in which it operates, and its interactions with other political actors.

Importantly, the frameworks outlined above provide the theoretical justification for a fundamental assumption underlying my analysis; namely, that although Hamas has been reluctant to publicly compromise or renounce many of its core objectives, its behaviors and political performances suggest otherwise. Based on this assumption, it is my belief that Hamas must be evaluated on the basis of *both* its words and actions; focusing on one without the other will offer only a slice, or a mere peek, into who Hamas is, what it represents and what it's likely to become. In sum, this thesis represents a genuine attempt to provide a more accurate, holistic and empirically-informed description of a movement which is often evaluated on the basis of stale words and outdated deeds. Such an analysis, given its relevance to, and implications for, current realities in the Palestinian territories, is certainly ripe for review.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE MOVEMENT

At Hamas's one year electoral anniversary on January 25th, 2007, Hamas's political record remained ambiguously mixed. On the one hand, the Palestinian political landscape teetered on civil war, Israeli incursions continued to mount, poverty and desperation plagued an escalating number of Palestinian families (currently approximating 70%),²⁸ the Palestinian health care system was on the brink of collapse, the salaries of the 165,000 Palestinian civil servants continued to be only partially fulfilled, and the deaths caused by Palestinian-on-Palestinian violence stood at an all time high (over 300).²⁹

Needless to say, Hamas's first year in power was an exceedingly difficult one both for the movement itself and the Palestinian community as a whole. According to one leading Palestinian newspaper, which described the Hamas-led PA as "inept and totally paralyzed," only "[t]wo words explain the Palestinian democratic experience during the past year - disappointing and frustrating."³⁰ Offering a similarly dismal review was a 22-year old student from Gaza: "there are no salaries... no electricity, no water, no jobs, no free movement, there is only siege, there is fighting, security chaos and poverty."³¹

Alternatively, however, much to the astonishment of many western prognosticators Hamas has managed to maintain both its popularity and power, albeit to attenuated extent following the formation of the unity government in March of 2007; this,

²⁸ "Hospital continues health checks despite few paychecks," CNN, February 18, 2007. This figure rises to 78% in Gaza and can be compared to the 50% of Palestinians who lived in poverty just five years ago.

²⁹ "Palestinian president Abbas weighs options for confronting Hamas," Herald Tribune, December 7, 2006.

³⁰ "After One Year, Democracy Remains On Trial In Palestine," Palestine Times, January 1, 2007.

³¹ "One Year After Hamas Victory, Palestinian Life Worse," Monsters & Critics, January 24, 2007; quoting Khaled al-Attar.

despite persistent and internationally-coordinated attempts to undermine, indeed destroy, both Hamas's popular image and hold on power. Despite such daunting challenges, Hamas was able to claim a number of successes at its one year electoral anniversary: foreign aid had begun, however indirectly, to flow back into the occupied territories; Hamas and Fatah had managed, at least temporarily, to reconcile their differences; certain European states (including France, Sweden, Spain and Norway), along with Russia, had reversed their positions and begun pressuring the international Quartet to end its policy of economic isolation;³² over \$260 million in aid had been pledged by Arab and Islamic state-donors;³³ the civil servant strikes had fizzled from lack of enthusiasm and all government employees had returned to work; and a sizable amount of cash, allegedly some \$86 million dollars, had been successfully hand-delivered to the PA government, the fruits of determined Hamas officials who (oftentimes using suitcases) personally carried in the cash themselves.³⁴ Indeed, despite a massive reduction in aid flowing directly to the Palestinian Authority (PA), a recent United Nations report found that the amount of international aid given to the Palestinians (via other means) during Hamas's first year in power actually *increased* by ten percent,³⁵ a figure others have put closer to fifty percent.³⁶

Perhaps even more striking than Hamas's political survival, is its enduring popularity.³⁷ Indeed, despite 2006 being referred to as "one of the most tumultuous years in the annals of

³² "Hamas says last EU position towards the PNA is more flexible," People's Daily, March 11, 2007; "Palestinians united but still rejected," Online Journal, February 15, 2007.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ "Economist Key in Hamas-Fatah Coalition," Washington Post, March 13, 2007; but note Ismael Haniyeh's unsuccessful attempt to bring in \$35 million donated from Iran.

³⁵ "Salaries of Palestinian Servants Bolster Hamas-led Government," The Yemen Observer, February 3, 2007.

³⁶ "Aid to Palestinians Increases Since Hamas Election," Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting, February 21, 2007.

³⁷ "Salaries of Palestinian Servants Bolster Hamas-led Government," The Yemen Observer, February 3, 2007.

recent Palestinian history,” a recent report issued by the International Crisis Group confirmed that “there has been no collapse in support for Hamas,”³⁸ a contention empirically supported by the weakness, and short-lived nature, of the civil service strikes of September 2006, the “absence of anything approaching popular unrest,” and Hamas’s repeated victories in professional association and university elections throughout the year.³⁹ Though polls suggest that many Palestinians are dissatisfied with the dire economic conditions plaguing the Palestinian territories, a preexisting reality undoubtedly exacerbated by Hamas’s victory, they are quick to shift the blame from Hamas to others – to the US, the EU, and Israel in particular.⁴⁰ Even certain Israeli individuals and organizations, such as the leading Israeli Human Rights organization, *B’Tselem*, agree that “Israel,” rather than Hamas, “is greatly responsible for the Palestinian poverty and economic distress.”⁴¹ According to a reputable Palestinian research and survey group, “the more international pressure there was the more steadfast the public [has been] in supporting Hamas.”⁴²

Indeed, Hamas’s survivability has impressed both its electorate and the world. Azzam Tammimi, a London-based scholar of Hamas, posited that Hamas has “emerged much stronger, much more authentic, [and] much more credible” because of its ability to successfully tackle the many challenges it faced during its first year in power. After Hamas’s year in power, according to Tammimi, “no-one can deal with the Palestinian issue... without taking into consideration

³⁸ “Tumultuous year in Palestine,” *The Palestine Times*, January 1, 2007; “Hamas survives one year of power,” BBC, January 25, 2007.

³⁹ *After Mecca: Engaging Hamas*, ICG Report No. 62 (February 2007), 28. “Hamas wins Bir Zeit University elections,” Ynetnews, April 4, 2007; “Hamas: Khalil university election victory points to renewed popular confidence,” Palestine Information Center, April 4, 2007.

⁴⁰ “Analysis: A year after elections, Hamas riding high,” *The Jerusalem Post*, January 25, 2007.

⁴¹ “Israel harms Palestinian workers, says B’Tselem report,” Ynet News, March 6, 2007.

⁴² *Interview: Shikaki: Palestinians Support Hamas*, Council on Foreign Relations, September 25, 2006 available at <http://www.cfr.org/publication/11522/shikaki.html>.

Hamas' position."⁴³ This readiness to absolve Hamas from blame and admire its survivability, combined with a general disgust with the international reprisals imposed upon them, which have dire consequences on the Palestinian community as a whole, largely explain Hamas's enduring popularity.

While perhaps a long-winded way of introducing "the new Hamas," the relevance of its first year in power, and the radical transition which preceded it, are crucial background information in understanding the new, and very different, politically-integrated Hamas. In a way, its March 2005 announcement to participate in the national elections marks the historical birth of this "new Hamas." Yet, its actual origins, its 20 years of existence, and its founding ideals all clearly played a defining role in shaping it into the movement it represents today. While the contours of this "new Hamas" are not yet entirely known, it is clear that the Hamas of today is a far cry from the Hamas portrayed in the 1988 Charter.

What follows is a brief review of the "old Hamas," as represented in its founding Charter, followed by a more robust analysis of the "new Hamas," as gleaned from a meticulous review of its words and deeds since its political integration nearly two years ago. In the course of this analysis, a realistic and updated portrait of the "new Hamas" will, it is hoped, begin to emerge.

THE OLD HAMAS

The Introduction of the 1988 Charter opens much like a *khutba*, or Islamic sermon, beginning with a lengthy Qur'anic passage (Sura 3:109-111), followed by a fiery quote by Hassan al-Banna (spiritual founder of the Muslim Brotherhood), and ending with two hadith excerpts.⁴⁴ Both the Introduction and Chapter One (entitled "Introduction to the Movement") of the 1988 Charter, are

⁴³ "Hamas and the Future of the Palestine Question," Lecture delivered by Azzam Tamimi at the University of Tokyo, March 11, 2007 available at <http://www.dissidentvoice.org/Apr07/gyaku02.htm>.

⁴⁴ Hroub, *Political Thought and Practice*, 267.

infused with religious rhetoric; together, they include nine Quranic passages and twenty-nine references to “Allah,” nine to “jihad,” and eight to “Islam.”⁴⁵ Indeed, the Charter itself is not, as would be expected, entitled ‘The Hamas Charter,’ but instead: “The Charter of Allah.”

The overall tone of the first Chapter is militant, vitriolic, and universal. The “universality” of the impending jihad, which is to “raise the banner of God over every inch of Palestine,” is emphasized throughout, stressing that Hamas is a “universal movement” which “extends to wherever Muslims are found,” from “the depths of the earth” to “the highest heavens.”⁴⁶ Israel is repeatedly referred to as “the enemy,” whose “elimination” and “defeat” must be continuously pursued until ultimate victory is achieved, a goal explicitly stated in sectarian terms on the Charter’s opening page, which declares that “Israel will be established and will stay established until Islam nullifies it.”⁴⁷ Moreover, the terms “Jew” and “Zionist” are used interchangeably, signifying a lack of distinction, or a conflation, being made between the two. Typical of the Charter as a whole, the Introductory Chapter of the 1988 Charter is laden with inflammatory, religious, militant, and universalistic language.

More specifically, Chapter One of the original Charter includes eight brief and substance-less articles primarily focused on discussing Hamas’s ideological origins, structural composition, geographical scope, and Islamic motto. With respect to its ideological origins, the Charter vaguely attributes Hamas’s worldview to Islam alone, stating, without any elaboration whatsoever, that “[f]rom Islam, it [Hamas] reaches for its ideology, fundamental precepts, and view of life.”⁴⁸ It then goes on to briefly discuss Hamas’s origins, referring to itself simply as the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood; which is then followed by an equally vacuous

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 270, 271.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 267.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 269.

description of its composition, described as merely comprising “Muslims who are devoted to God and worship Him verily,” and its “universality,” which is described as extending “all over the globe.”⁴⁹ Finally, Chapter One concludes by introducing its undeniably militant-religious motto: “God is its goal, the Prophet its leader, the Quran its constitution; Jihad its methodology, and Death for the sake of God its most coveted desire.”⁵⁰

In sum, Chapter One of Hamas’s 1988 Charter is a brief, substantively-shallow, and religiously-myopic introduction to the original Hamas. Exempting its lengthy Quranic and hadith passages, the entire chapter, which is brimming with broad generalities and vague proclamations, constitutes less than two pages. Despite both its brevity and vacuity, however, one is nevertheless left with the undeniable impression of Hamas’s *raison d’etre*: the elimination of Israel, the enactment of God’s will, and the establishment of a sovereign state on “every inch” of historical Palestine.

THE NEW HAMAS

The “new Hamas’s” *raison d’etre*, as gleaned from Hamas’s involvement in national politics during the past two years, could not be further from that described above. In contrast to the Hamas portrayed in the 1988 Charter, the Hamas of today is a highly structured, politically integrated, geographically-circumscribed, and multi-faceted organization, which employs an eclectic array of strategies to pursue a diversified assortment of concrete goals. Contrary to the bare-boned description provided in the original Charter, an introductory chapter describing the “new Hamas” would require a lengthy and nuanced examination of its complex composition, including its various wings, its two-headed leadership structure, its extensive humanitarian service sector, its municipal-level leadership, and its military apparatus, at the very least.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 270.

Moreover, an accurate introduction would require a detailed review of the movement's profound ideological transformations made during the course of its 20 year existence, notably involving its positions toward national elections, Israel, the PLO, the two-state solution, and previous peace agreements. Finally, a comprehensive, up-to-date portrait of the "new Hamas" would necessitate a meticulous review of the movement's political performances following its most profound ideological evolution to date, namely, its decision to politically integrate in March of 2005. Needless to say, many of these critical facets were neither addressed, nor even conceived of, by the drafters of the 1988 Charter.

The few scholars who have closely studied Hamas almost unanimously agree that "the Hamas of the past and Hamas now are not the same thing."⁵¹ Indeed, the Hamas of today has been variously referred to as a "profoundly different organization,"⁵² which has undergone a "strategic transformation;"⁵³ a movement whose "changing nature and adaptiveness to shifting conditions" have resulted in a different organization entirely;⁵⁴ an entity whose "center of gravity," ideologically speaking, has "unmistakably shifted" in the "months and years preceding January's elections;"⁵⁵ and finally, a movement which because of the speed and magnitude of its "massive transformation," is now fully "ready for change."⁵⁶ Even the Western press has recently begun to query whether Hamas is beginning to moderate given the "complexities of

⁵¹ Recep Tayyip Erdogan, *Some Advice to Hamas*, *New Perspectives Quarterly* (Spring 2006), 23 (2), 52–53.

⁵² Hroub, *New Documents*, 2.

⁵³ "Hamas survives one year of power," BBC, January 25, 2007.

⁵⁴ Graham E. Fuller, *Hamas Comes to Power: Breakthrough or Setback?*, *Strategic Insights* (February 2006), Vol. V, Issue 2. [Hereafter "Hamas Comes to Power"].

⁵⁵ "Nixed Signals," *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting*, September/October 2006.

⁵⁶ "Abu Amr: Hamas is ready to change," *Jerusalem Post*, April 2, 2007.

politics,”⁵⁷ a query that also seems to be in the minds of some top Israeli politicians who have recently exhibited a newfound openness toward negotiating with the Hamas-led government.⁵⁸

So, who is this elusive “new Hamas”? Given that Chapter One of the 1988 Charter focused almost exclusively on four aspects -- Hamas’s ideological origins, structural composition, geographical scope, and motto -- the introduction to the “new Hamas” outlined below, as an attempt to update the original Charter’s introduction, will similarly address these four components.

IDEOLOGICAL ORIGINS

Any introduction to the “new Hamas” must begin by discussing its ideologically and symbolically important date of birth, which was strategically timed to coincide with the start of the First *Intifada* (or “uprising”) in December 1987; an emotionally volatile, yet invigorating, time when an emboldened, rebellious and increasingly- aggressive mood enraptured the occupied territories. Hamas, as a manifestation of this new revolutionary mood, was the product of a dramatic ideological revolution within its parent movement, the Muslim Brotherhood. Cognizant of the dramatic shifts transpiring within public opinion at that time, the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood abandoned its decades-long commitment to non-violence and created a wing that would engage in political and militant forms of resistance. Thus, Hamas was born, the product of a profound ideological reversal, of shifts in public opinion, and of a pragmatic determination based on existing political realities.

Profoundly influenced and inspired by the story of its conception, the new Hamas is a movement sustained by popular support, cognizant of public opinion, and sensitive to shifting realities and needs. As the largest and most influential resistance movement in the Palestinian

⁵⁷ “Life under Hamas a rough ride,” BBC, January 26, 2007.

⁵⁸ “Peretz: Talks with Hamas possible,” The Jerusalem Post, September 22, 2006.

territories, a status it gained with amazing rapidity following its formation, Hamas quickly established itself as the only formidable alternative to Fatah, which dominated, indeed exclusively dictated, Palestinian politics for the four decades preceding the January 2006 elections. In addition to being the “most powerful Palestinian opposition” operating within the occupied territories,⁵⁹ Hamas is known as one of the “most democratically oriented” of the Palestinian movements due to its well-known commitment to consultative politics, internal elections and popular referenda.⁶⁰ Indeed, the opinions of its rank-and-file membership play a significant role in the movement’s decision-making process, as was the case in 1996 when the Hamas leadership consulted its wider constituency to determine whether to participate in the territories’ first “national” elections. After circulating a memorandum, which scrupulously outlined the pros and cons of participating, and after holding a number of consultative sessions, Hamas’s leadership, following the majority position, declined participation.

Hamas’s sensitivity to public opinion often emerges, particularly in recent times, when faced with ideologically controversial questions. For example, in response to questions regarding the movement’s position toward Israel, Hamas politicians often defer to public opinion, responding that only after the Palestinian public decides can this question be accurately answered. Mahmoud al-Zahar, the former Foreign Minister, when asked whether Hamas recognized Israel, responded:

First we have to listen to answers....If it is very simple, if it is very clear, if it satisfies the Palestinian demands, we can decide. But if it is not, we have to consult, we have to ask the people. We are not the owners of Palestine....We are going to discuss it in the legislative council and after that we may need to ask the general attitudes of our people.

⁵⁹ Jeroen Gunning, *Peace with Hamas? The Transforming potential of political participation?*, *International Affairs* 80, 2 (2004), p. 238. [Hereafter “Peace with Hamas”].

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 254.

This is the land of the people. It is not the land of the Government. . . . Let us wait, let us discuss and evaluate.⁶¹

Whether pure rhetoric, or sincere belief, it seems clear, given Hamas's extensive use of polling, consultations, and local elections, that the Hamas-led government is highly cognizant of, and sensitive to, public opinion.

As an ideological spawn of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Hamas of today constitutes one of the foremost humanitarian aid providers for the Palestinian territories. Prior to the January 2006 elections, Hamas was thought to devote the vast majority of its estimated seventy million dollar annual budget to providing humanitarian services, which include an extensive network of schools, orphanages, mosques, healthcare clinics, soup kitchens, and sports leagues. Indeed, an estimated ninety percent of all Hamas-related activities, including military and political, are consumed by its social-welfare initiatives.⁶² Astonishingly, the original Charter almost entirely ignores Hamas's humanitarian functions, and instead, is almost entirely fixated on its religious and militant facets; a clear misstatement of reality that perpetuates an inaccurate understanding of the "new Hamas."

A final core element of Hamas's ideological origins pertains to its decisive commitment to resistance against the Israeli occupation. As originally conceived, resistance was almost exclusively defined as *armed* resistance. Today, however, the new Hamas espouses a much more multi-faceted interpretation of resistance, including political, humanitarian, and diplomatic forms of resistance. Indeed, the language of resistance was used to justify Hamas's decision to participate in the national elections, a decision marketed as an alternative way of resisting the

⁶¹ "Hamas: Victims or Villains?," ZioNation, April 28, 2006.

⁶² *Hamas: Background Q&A. Response of Israeli scholar Reuven Paz*, Council on Foreign Relations (March 16, 2006) available at <http://www.cfr.org/publication/8968/>. Note, however, that this estimate was made just after the elections; thus, its possible that this statistic has shifted since then.

occupation and securing legitimate Palestinian rights. Reflecting on the numerous public statements made by Hamas leaders in the lead-up to the January 2006 elections, it is clear that political participation now represents one of Hamas's foremost weapons in its resistance efforts. Corroborating this view, Hamas's Gaza spokesman, Ghazi Hamad, recently assured that while "[w]e still believe in struggle...the political track is a part of [our] resistance."⁶³

Hamas has dramatically moved beyond its days when armed resistance was embraced as the exclusive means of ending the Israeli occupation, as will be further explored in the Strategies Chapter. Nevertheless, it has by no means relinquished this "right," which it continues to jealously guard as both an entitlement under international law and a necessity given the current power imbalance between Palestinians and Israelis.⁶⁴ Yet, while it continues to rhetorically embrace the right to armed resistance, it has not, with rare exception since 2004, behaviorally exploited this right.⁶⁵ More importantly, the new Hamas has expanded the definition of 'resistance' to include peaceful, diplomatic, and non-militant forms of resistance, an often unnoticed (and certainly unrewarded) ideological evolution for a movement whose founding Charter espouses the use of violence as an essential end in and of itself.

STRUCTURAL COMPOSITION

Another facet of Hamas's new personality, which is similarly ignored in the original Charter, is its highly structured composition. To be sure, Hamas's structure can seem elusive to outsiders. It is often described as clandestine, impenetrable and overlapping; as divided between an "external" and "internal" leadership; and as containing multiple arms and/or wings.

⁶³ "Al-Qaeda leader lashes out at Hamas for selling out," Taipei Times, March 13, 2007.

⁶⁴ "Excerpts from the program of the incoming Hamas-Fatah coalition government," The Herald Tribune, March 17, 2007.

⁶⁵ Hamas's last violent attack against an Israeli, with the exception of the recent shooting of an Israeli worker on the Gazan border, was in 2004.

Nevertheless, the Hamas of today is in fact a highly structured, coherent, and hierarchical entity divided roughly into two “functionally and spatially distinguishable wings,” one assigned to political/social activities and the other to military activities.⁶⁶ The former, which predates the latter and has a long history associated with the Muslim Brotherhood’s decades of devotion to humanitarian aid, constitutes “the core” of Hamas’s activities, as suggested above.⁶⁷ This characterization strikes many as contradictory, given the unequivocally militant tone of its founding charter and given the amount of media attention devoted to Hamas’s unforgivable history of suicide bombings.

Since coming to power, the Hamas-led government has gradually begun distancing itself from Hamas’s military wing, the *Izz Al- Deen al-Qassam* Brigades (“the Brigades”), by refraining from referencing it, and at certain times, publicly differentiating themselves from its actions. Such was the case following the June 2006 kidnapping of Gilad Shalit,⁶⁸ as well as the declaration by the Brigades to end the cease fire with Israel following the assassination of an Islamic Jihad commander in March 2007, neither of which the Hamas-led government seemed to have any prior knowledge of or involvement with.⁶⁹ Give such instances, and more generally, given the fact that the Hamas-led government rarely if ever publicly references Hamas’s military wing, it would be incorrect, as is often done, to characterize Hamas as only, or even primarily, a militant movement.

Although Hamas’s original leadership was comprised primarily of religious sheikhs, a fact that undoubtedly contributed to the heavily religious flavor of the 1988 Charter, the

⁶⁶ Gunning, *Peace with Hamas*, 236.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 236. Italics added.

⁶⁸ Tamimi, *Unwritten Chapters*, 243.

⁶⁹ “Hamas’ military wing: Truce is over,” Ynetnews.com, February 21, 2007, noting that Al-Qassam’s announcement was “not a formal announcement from the Hamas movement as a whole.”

leadership of the new Hamas is comprised of an all-male mixture of highly educated intellectuals, professionals, businessmen, and religious figures, many of whom hold PhDs from Western universities. As mentioned above, Hamas's leadership is divided between its internal, or Palestinian-territory-based leadership, on top of which stands Ismail Haneya (the current Prime Minister of the PA), and its external, Damascus-based, leadership, above which stands Khaled Mish'al, (the current head of the Political Bureau). While power has traditionally been shared equally between the two geographical centers, this division is becoming increasingly pronounced as the inside leadership takes on more and more control of Hamas's domestic, governmental agenda and the outside leadership assumes more control over Hamas's nationalist, promotional, and militant agendas. Reinforcing this separation, the Hamas leadership strictly prohibited its members from simultaneously serving in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and Hamas's executive council. Thus, for Hamas members, like Ismail Haniyeh, who became members of the PA apparatus, they had to first relinquish all executive responsibilities within the movement itself.⁷⁰

Despite this increasingly pronounced division, a commitment to power-sharing remains a deeply respected value characteristic of the movement as a whole. Indeed, both Haniyeh and Mish'al reportedly "abide by the decisions of the collective leadership of the movement, based on *shura* (consultation)."⁷¹ According to Hamas legislator Salah Bardawil, "Hamas is a coherent democratic movement, and no single level in the organization can dictate to the others. Neither Khalid Mashal nor Ismail Haniya can take decisions on behalf of the movement, and every

⁷⁰ Tamimi, *Unwritten Chapters*, 242; Crisis Group interview, cited in *After Mecca: Engaging Hamas*, 25.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 243.

decision must go through the necessary decision-making levels before it becomes policy.”⁷²

Corroborating this view is a recent International Crisis Group report on Hamas, which defines Hamas’s internal operations as “democratic centralism with an Islamist twist.”⁷³

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this awkward combination of power-sharing and power-dividing has led to the issuance of inconsistent statements and contradictory policies on certain occasions. Such was the case in January of 2007. In a highly-publicized interview with Reuters, Khaled Mish’al stated that Israel is a “matter of fact,” only to be corrected later the same day by Ismail Haniyeh who, in keeping with the movement’s conventional line, clarified that “Hamas will never show flexibility over the issue of recognizing the legitimacy of the occupation.”⁷⁴

Somewhat counter-intuitively, such inconsistencies can be attributed, in part, to an important feature of Hamas’s current structure. In addition to the many contemporary factors which contribute to such inconsistencies -- the movement’s current state of ideological flux as it transitions from the opposition into politics, the inclusion of both moderates and hardliners among its ranks, its numerous spokesmen, and its geographically fractured nature – is the lack of a single, dominant leader who can speak on the movement’s behalf with a unified voice. In a region whose states and movements are often lead by a single charismatic authoritarian, even dictatorial-like leader (think, Yasser Arafat, Habib Bourguiba, Gamal Nasser, King Hassan, etc.), this is a uniquely significant, and thus highly relevant, characteristic of “the new Hamas.”

Until his assassination in 2004, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the magnetically charismatic, yet extremely frail quadriplegic founder of Hamas, provided the movement’s unified voice. Since his assassination in 2004, however, no single leader has emerged to replace him, an unsurprising

⁷² Crisis Group interview with Salah Bardawil, November 21, 2006, cited in *Ibid*, 26.

⁷³ *Ibid*.

⁷⁴ “Hamas leader calls Israeli state ‘reality,’” *The Guardian*, January, 12, 2007; “Hamas spokesman...says Mesha'al did not 'recognize' Israel,” *Al-Jazeera*, January 11, 2007.

fact given Hamas's abhorrence of authoritarianism and overly-centralized control, traits Hamas associated with its two domestic nemeses, Yasser Arafat and his Fatah movement. Indeed, the Hamas of both past and present has always detested the idea of a single, domineering leader, a core belief repeatedly endorsed by Sheikh Yassin and corroborated by Hamas's consultative and constituency-based internal processes; processes which, by design, make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for a single leader to emerge.

Hamas's membership -- which includes individuals from all socioeconomic statuses and educational backgrounds, men and women, devout and secular, literate and illiterate, professional and unemployed -- is known for its diversity, despite that the majority of its support resides in the refugee camps of Gaza, and more generally, in the most destitute sectors of Palestinian society. Importantly, however, the supporters of the "new Hamas," and those who voted it into power, represent an even vaster diversity of individuals, including secularists and Islamists, ideologues and pragmatists, non-Hamas members and Hamas members alike. While some supported Hamas for ideological reasons, others offered their support for purely pragmatic reasons, such as wanting to vote Fatah *out* of power or wanting to vote into power the only party (Hamas) capable of addressing local needs. As one Hamas voter put it, "I'm not Hamas, but I voted for Hamas because they work for the benefit of the people....Sure, I would vote for Hamas again. There is no alternative."⁷⁵ Needless to say, such multifarious motivations have resulted in a highly diversified -- ideologically, professionally, economically, religiously, etc. -- constituency supporting the "new Hamas."

Hamas is simultaneously decentralized and hierarchical, features imposed on the movement by the realities of living under constant occupation. Standing at its apex is the

⁷⁵ "Amid turmoil, a Hamas mayor builds and builds," St. Petersburg Times, February 24, 2007.

“National” Shura (or consultative) Council, “the movement’s highest authority,”⁷⁶ beneath which stands an extensive network of regional shura councils, for which internal elections are regularly held. Those elected to the latter, in turn, elect representatives to the former, who in turn, elect members to the Political Bureau, the movement’s leading executive arm which sits in the movement’s headquarters in the Syrian capital of Damascus. More specifically, the National Shura Council embodies a number of specialized committees, which are tasked with handling Hamas’s various activities, such as welfare provision, social outreach, educational programs, membership services, military affairs, financial matters, media and public relations, religious education, and women’s programs.

Understanding “the new Hamas” necessitates an understanding of its intricately structured, exceedingly multi-faceted, and democratically conducted administrative structure; a structure that, despite being inexplicably ignored in the original Charter, stands at the core of who Hamas is and what it represents today.

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

In contrast to the geographically expansive image of Hamas presented in its founding Charter, the Hamas of today is an exclusively Palestinian movement, with exclusively Palestinian concerns, driven by exclusively Palestinian-centric goals. Gone are the dreams of reestablishing the Islamic *umma*, a single, unified Islamic state spanning the Muslim world, and enthroning a single Islamic *khalif*, or ruler. According to Hamas leader Musa Abu Marzuq, “[a]lleviating the debilitating conditions of occupation, and not an Islamic state, is at the heart of

⁷⁶ Tamimi, *Unwritten Chapters*, 128.

our mandate (with reform and change as its lifeblood).”⁷⁷ Today, Hamas’s goals have not only significantly narrowed, but are increasingly realistic, concrete and mundane

To be sure, its ultimate goal remains the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state. Nevertheless, this goal -- previously defined as encompassing “every inch” of historic Palestine -- is now more flexibly, pragmatically and temporally defined based on pragmatic, rather than purely ideological, concerns. Indeed, the desired Palestinian state is envisioned as comprising, at least for the foreseeable future, only a small portion of historical Palestine, as will be further explicated in the Objectives Chapter. Only rarely does “the new Hamas” speak of erecting a single, unified Islamic nation; indeed, such language has been almost entirely absent from Hamas’s post-electoral rhetoric. Today, only a “Palestinian,” not an Islamic, state is spoken of, where “Palestinians,” not all Muslims, can repatriate after decades of statelessness. In short, the “new Hamas’s” core concern, in contrast to that conveyed in its founding Charter, involves only a geographically-tiny slice of historic Palestine.

Moreover, the sweeping claims proclaimed in the founding Charter -- that each liberating phase “be followed by succeeding phases” and “supported by battalion after battalion of the vast Arab and Islamic world until the enemy is defeated and the victory of God prevails” -- have been almost entirely replaced by jargon typical of other secular political movements, such as governmental reform and health care improvements.⁷⁸ In sharp contrast to the extravagant language of the 1988 Charter, the content of the “new Hamas’s” increasingly *political* rhetoric, which is predominantly secular and commonplace in nature, is disproportionately preoccupied

⁷⁷ “What Hamas is Seeking,” Washington Post, January 31, 2006.

⁷⁸ See Hamas’s Governmental Platform, analyzed in Chapter 2.

with the “highly finite goals” of their domestic constituency, rather than the more grandiose, long-term goals of an imaginative worldwide Islamic community.⁷⁹

A thorough review of Hamas’s statements, documents, and behaviors subsequent to its integration into the political process in March 2005 evidences a more geographically-circumscribed, domestically-oriented Hamas. Indeed, its relationship with the surrounding Arab and Islamic states is increasingly based on material, rather than religious or ideological ties, as is clear from the multiple international tours conducted by top Hamas officials, which included many non-like minded nations such as Russia, Great Britain, Norway, and Venezuela. Moreover, the Hamas of today, as far as I can determine, does not recruit non-Palestinian members from abroad, as its Charter would imply (Hamas “welcomes all Muslims...to join its ranks”); its membership is, instead, purely Palestinian, with non-Palestinians being summoned only for their financial and/or political support. In short, “the new Hamas” would be unlikely to refer to itself, as it does in the original Charter, as a “universal movement” with universal ambitions. Quite to the contrary, a more honest representation would describe “the new Hamas” as a distinctly Palestinian movement staffed by Palestinian individuals with Palestinian-centric concerns and Palestinian-oriented goals.

MOTTO

The “new Hamas’s” new motto and parliamentary name, which was adopted during its electoral campaign, is “change and reform.” This simple, to-the-point three-word motto, void of ideological, Islamist or militant connotations, could not be further removed from Hamas’s original, thirty-word motto, which addresses God, the Prophet, the Quran, jihad, and death all

⁷⁹ Fuller, *Hamas Comes to Power*, 4.

within its six stanzas.⁸⁰ Representing a dramatic departure from Hamas's past preoccupations, the new motto tells us more about "the new Hamas" than its concisely and secularly drafted language would, on first sight, suggest.

In choosing this motto, a slogan that appealed to the vast majority of Palestinians and not just Hamas's core constituency, Hamas exhibited pragmatism and political sophistication. Because of the increasingly widespread dissatisfaction with Fatah, which had become associated with corruption, cronyism and incompetence, Hamas's slogan resonated well with a society hungry for governmental reform. Marketing itself as everything Fatah was not (honest, trustworthy, democratic, transparent, etc.), Hamas's campaign was focused less on ideological principles, and more on pragmatic goals designed to address immediate concerns.

Moreover, the fact that Hamas won the legislative elections despite polls suggesting that the majority of Palestinians opposed Islamist governments and embraced the two-state solution (a goal that Hamas historically rejected), reveals the "new Hamas's" remarkable ability to market itself in new, more acceptable ways and to appeal to an expanding cross-section of Palestinian society. By lessening its religious and militant rhetoric, and by espousing the concerns of the majority, Hamas portrayed itself as a movement highly attentive to the public's concerns and ideologically unencumbered by its previous (Charter-based) positions. Indeed, its core campaign promises -- governmental reform, national unity and democratic rights -- had nothing whatsoever to do with its founding Charter, but everything to do with popular demand.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the Hamas of today is more political, than ideological; more ordinary than revolutionary; more temporal, than universal; more short-sighted than far-sighted; more worldly

⁸⁰ 1988 Charter, Chapter 1, Article 8.

than transcendent; more mainstream than fringe; more nationalist than Islamist. As Hamas scholars Avraham Sela and Shaul Mishal articulately concluded, ‘the old Hamas’s’ “poetry of dogmatic ideology” is giving way to ‘the new Hamas’s’ “prose of reality.”⁸¹

⁸¹ Mishal & Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, ix.

CHAPTER TWO: OBJECTIVES

In the current chapter, a brief examination of “the old Hamas’s” original objectives, as codified in the 1988 Charter, will be followed by an analysis of “the new Hamas’s” new objectives, as gleaned from a close textual analysis of its new documents. The three documents chosen for examination -- the 2005 Electoral Platform for “Change and Reform,” the Draft National Unity Government Program, and the March 2006 Cabinet Platform – were meticulously sifted to extricate a new, more up-to-date and historically accurate list of Hamas’s post-political-integration objectives.⁸² These documents, which have been almost entirely ignored in the Western media,⁸³ “have virtually nothing in common with the founding charter,” as this chapter will reveal.⁸⁴ More importantly, they offer important and valuable insights into the “new Hamas’s” current priorities, capabilities, and future goals.

THE OLD HAMAS

In Hamas’s 1988 Charter, the ‘Objectives Chapter’ (Chapter 2) is by far the shortest and vaguest of the Charter’s five chapters, comprising two brief articles, one Quranic passage, and roughly 230 out of the Charter’s approximately 9,000 words.⁸⁵ Indeed, in this chapter only a single objective is enumerated, namely “to conquer evil” so that “truth may prevail.”⁸⁶ After a brief, yet ominous discussion of “the darkness,” “the plague of evil doers” and the “the state of evil,” all of which are deemed to be consequence of losing the Islamic spirit, the second chapter

⁸² These documents were partially translated by Hroub in *A New Hamas*, 6-27.

⁸³ “What Hamas Wants,” Middle East Online, January 16, 2007, noting that, “Western media and government bodies have not publicized any of these documents.”

⁸⁴ Personal Interview with Mouin Rabbani (International Crisis Group) by the author, August 27, 2006.

⁸⁵ 1988 Charter, Chapter 2. Translation by Khaled Hroub, *Political Thought and Practice*, 272-273.

⁸⁶ Ibid, Chapter 2, Article Nine (Hroub’s translation, *Political Thought and Practice*, 272).

concludes with an unelaborated list of subsidiary, yet no less vague, goals: to “support the weak, defend the oppressed...realize the truth and defeat falsehood.”⁸⁷

Like much of the Charter, Chapter Two is bursting with religious imagery, wholly lacking in detail, and framed in binary terms (“good” vs. “evil;” “truth” vs. “falsehood”) - features typical of Hamas’s earliest documents. Interestingly, the goal of establishing an Islamic state -- the objective most closely associated with Hamas by outsiders -- is mentioned only in passing and left entirely undefined; similarly with the loaded terms “evil” and “truth,” terms that apparently stand at the center of Hamas’s original objectives. Even more astonishing, the goals associated with Hamas’s humanitarian activities (activities which, as mentioned earlier, reportedly constitute over 90% of Hamas’s energies), are left with an even more bare-boned explication. In arguably the most appropriate place within the Charter to include such a discussion, there is only silence and the broadest of generalities (to “support the weak” and “defend the oppressed”). Indeed, apart from a brief reference to such endeavors in Article 21 of Chapter 3, Hamas never mentions its remarkable commitment to humanitarian outreach.

THE NEW HAMAS

Today, in complete contrast to the Hamas of 1988, the “new Hamas” has a multitude of specific, concrete, and realizable objectives, meticulously outlined and fully explicated in formal documents. Despite that these documents depict a new, more politically savvy and intellectually mature Hamas -- and one, which in theory, should be vastly more pleasing to a Western audience -- they were neither widely disseminated beyond the Palestinian territories, nor translated into other languages for international consumption. Thus, not only do “the new Hamas’s” objectives continue to be defined on the basis of a 20-year-old, and exceedingly obsolete, Charter, but their

⁸⁷ Ibid, Article 10 (Hroub’s translation, *Political Thought and Practice*, 273).

many uncontroversial objectives remain entirely unknown. Needless to say, Hamas's maturation in the public relations realm, unlike in the political and ideological realms, still leaves much to be desired.

As suggested above, the documents produced by "the new Hamas" in the past two years outline a series of concrete, short-term goals. While more grandiose, long-term objectives do indeed appear, such objectives are significantly fewer in number and more shallowly defined. Were a new charter to be drafted for today's Hamas, the Objectives Chapter would undoubtedly comprise its longest, most detailed, and most mundane section. Indeed, many, if not most, of Hamas's new objectives involve governmental reform and hum-drum, domestic improvements. Just as Palestinian-centric concerns significantly outnumber non-Palestinian concerns, secular proposals touching on every-day concerns are given disproportionately more attention than the document's much fewer ideological/religious-related concerns. Needless to say, such ratios are the reverse of those conveyed in the original Charter.

By choosing experienced, uncontroversial, and likeable candidates with solid reputations, by lessening its ideological language, and by espousing goals closely aligned with public opinion, Hamas proved itself to be a remarkably capable politician, successfully able to win the hearts and minds (and more importantly, the votes) of those who didn't identify with, or even outright rejected, Hamas's founding ideals. In short, by proving that it was "not a prisoner of its own dogmas," but instead, was a competent political movement attuned to the interests of the majority, "the new Hamas" successfully repackaged its identity during its campaign as one of a formidable politician, rather than a rigid ideologue; a identity transformation immediately noticed by Palestinians, but still unnoticed by many outside observers.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Mishal & Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, viii.

The three documents analyzed below, each of which was drafted exclusively by Hamas (as opposed to other relevant documents that have a blended authorship, such as the Prisoners Initiative or the Mecca Agreement), were specifically chosen for their relevance and clarity on the question of “the new Hamas’s” new objectives. Moreover, these documents, taken as a whole, illuminate certain characteristics of Hamas’s new public persona: a lessening of religious rhetoric; an obsession with national unity; a de-escalation, to the point of total abandonment, of militant language; and an emphasis on domestic, rather than regional (or Israeli-related) concerns. These documents, and more importantly the new objectives which I have extricated from each, will be discussed below in the chronological order in which they were released.

THE 2005 ELECTORAL PLATFORM

From the moment Hamas officially announced its decision to participate in the January 2006 elections, it began tirelessly planning, and later executing, its campaign strategy. As the road map for this strategy, the Electoral Manifesto represents a linguistically ambitious twenty page document, which addresses, in astonishing detail, eighteen substantive topics in roughly 8,000 words.⁸⁹ With the exception of two topics -- “Our Essential Principles” and “Religious Guidance and Preaching” -- the topics addressed are typical of ordinary secular movements; and even then, the two sections mentioned above are, in essence, more nationalist than Islamist, and more technical (i.e., covering *imam* qualifications, mosque upkeep) than ideological. According to scholar Khaled Hroub, Hamas’s electoral platform is “closer to Fatah’s outlook than to Hamas’s founding principles.”⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Translation from: Tamimi, *Unwritten Chapters*, Appendix VI.

⁹⁰ *Enter Hamas: The Challenges of Political Integration*, International Crisis Group, Report No. 49, January 2006, p. i.

The diminished level of religious content is all the more astonishing given that this document was disseminated at a time when Hamas “never thought even in its wildest dreams” that electoral victory was possible, and thus, was appealing primarily to its pre-existing base.⁹¹ Indeed, the text of the Electoral Manifesto clearly reveals how “the new Hamas’s” original worldview has expanded to such a degree that “the majority of the Palestinians [now] identify[y] with its political agenda,” a view seemingly corroborated by Hamas’s enduring popularity, as discussed in Chapter One.⁹²

The theme of domestic reform permeates the Manifesto’s eighteen articles. With very little religious or militant content, the Electoral Manifesto is almost entirely preoccupied with detailing Hamas’s domestic policies and reform initiatives, which have nothing to do with destroying Israel or “conquering evil,” but instead, to ameliorating -- educationally, agriculturally, scientifically, economically, judicially, and otherwise -- the Palestinian living conditions.

Showing a level of political sophistication and attentiveness to public concern, this document presents a starkly different Hamas than that revealed in the founding Charter. Indeed, the two most prominent characteristics of the old Charter, namely its militant-religious tone and its substance-less generalities, are (comparatively) absent from this new document. Instead, the Manifesto, which uses religious and militant language only sparingly, is remarkable for its comprehensiveness and level of detail. While religious content does indeed appear throughout the document -- including, six Quranic passages,⁹³ one *hadith* recitation,⁹⁴ the opening phrase: “Islam is the solution,”⁹⁵ the

⁹¹ “The Government: One Year On,” FrontPage, February 1, 2007. [Hamas’s website].

⁹² *Unwritten Chapters*, 225.

⁹³ See Opening passage, the Introduction, the Conclusion, and Articles 1 & 16.

statement that Islamic Shari'ah is "the main source of legislation,"⁹⁶ and ten references to "Allah" -- the lack of sectarian language is striking, particularly when compared to the more than forty Quranic and Hadith passages, and the more than ninety-five references to "Allah," which infuse the original Charter. Moreover, where portions of the Manifesto would naturally lend themselves to religious rhetoric -- such as the sections on fiscal policy or the status of women and family -- religious content has been almost entirely replaced with concrete proposals and non-sectarian recommendations.

It is perhaps an indication of Hamas's new priorities that the shortest section in the Manifesto, the "Religious Guidance and Preaching" section (comprising five sub-points), is the one most explicitly associated with religion, while the longest and most detailed section, the "Domestic Policy" section (comprising nineteen sub-points), is arguably the least religious and most secularly-toned. Indeed, eleven out of the Manifesto's eighteen articles are entirely secular in nature, having no religious content whatsoever. Of the seven articles that do contain religious content only one explicitly addresses religious-based policy ("Religious Guidance and Preaching"); as stated above, however, it involves mostly technicalities pertaining to *imam* qualifications, mosque upkeep, *haj* preparations, and the like. Of the remaining six articles, Article eight ("Education Policy") contains the most overtly religious reference: "Islam is a comprehensive system that attends to all aspects of life and that dignifies the human being."⁹⁷ Yet, Article eight's remaining eighteen sub-points, which mostly concern

⁹⁴ Article 4(7).

⁹⁵ Opening line, Electoral Manifesto.

⁹⁶ Article 5(1).

⁹⁷ Article 8(1).

routine administrative matters such as the creation of new schools, not a single religious-tinged reference appears. The remaining articles containing religious references employ only vague and formulaic religious expressions typical of other secular political parties, such as “we are defending one of the greatest ports of Islam.”⁹⁸ According to Hroub, “the [Manifesto’s] Islamic references are overshadowed by clauses that would be standard in any secular document,” an observation similarly recognized by the few others who have considered this document.⁹⁹

Even less than the level of religious rhetoric, is the Manifesto’s volume of militant rhetoric. In a seemingly intentional attempt to appeal to as wide a constituency as possible, the document “pointedly omitted talk of destroying Israel or restoring all of historic Palestine.”¹⁰⁰ Instead, it employs all the language associated with the two state solution, stating in its opening introduction, and again in Articles one [“Our Principles”] and three [“External Relations”], the goal of establishing “an independent state whose capital is Jerusalem.” Although the Manifesto explicitly endorses the right to end the occupation using “all available means including *armed resistance*,”¹⁰¹ the phrase “armed resistance” does not appear elsewhere in the document; instead, all other references to ‘resistance’ are left wholly unqualified, and even then, such references are extremely

⁹⁸ Preamble.

⁹⁹ Hroub, *A New Hamas*, 12; “Nixed Signals,” *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting*, September/October 2006, available at <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=2974>; and Tamimi, *Unwritten Chapters*, 274; Patrick Belton, *A View from Ramallah*, *The Oxonian Review of Books*, 5:2 (Spring 2006).

¹⁰⁰ “Nixed Signals,” *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting*, Sept/Oct 2006.

¹⁰¹ Article 1(4). Emphasis added.

rare.¹⁰² According to Hroub, “there is simply no comparison between the weight and detail given to civilian aspects of governance promised by Hamas and the weight accorded to resistance.”¹⁰³

In sum, important facets of the “new Hamas’s” personality can be discerned from its Electoral Manifesto. The portrait of a more detail-oriented, reform-minded, and ideologically-accommodative Hamas, who is inclined to keep religious, and particularly militant, rhetoric to a minimum, emerges from the details of this impressively substantive, and predominantly blandly mundane, twenty-page document.

But what does this document tell us about “the new Hamas’s” new objectives? The Manifesto, upon close examination, reveals five core objectives currently embraced and pursued by the new, politically-integrated Hamas. These involve:

1. A Palestinian State with the Right of Return;
2. Governmental Reform;
3. National Unity;
4. Democratic Rights; and
5. Domestic Development.

The content of each objective, and their relevance to understanding “the new Hamas,” are briefly discussed below.

A Palestinian State & Right of Return. The establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital represents “the essential principle” of

¹⁰² The Manifesto’s introduction states “this participation is intended to be an act of support for the program of resistance”, implying that “resistance” includes political participation.

¹⁰³ Hroub is the only scholar to date to carefully analyze Hamas’s Political Platform; see *A New Hamas*, available at <http://www.palestine-studies.org/final/en/journals/printer.php?aid=7087>.

the Hamas of past and present.¹⁰⁴ This ambitious, long-term objective contains several objectives within it, including the rights of return for all Palestinian refugees, self-determination, the release of all Palestinian detainees, and the right to use all necessary means in pursuit of these goals. Importantly, however, the definition of this “essential principle” is more narrowly, and less ambitiously, defined than its original formulation, which demanded “every square inch of [historic] Palestine.”¹⁰⁵ Today, Hamas’s desired Palestinian state is not only more geographically circumscribed (the Gaza Strip and the West Bank), but it’s more precisely defined; indeed, the future Palestinian state is to be a pluralistic, representative, and transparent democracy.¹⁰⁶ Gone are the days when land was the only goal. Today, Hamas’s much more geographically-limited, yet politically-ambitious goal involves not just a state, but a state based “on political pluralism and the alteration of power” with “an advanced Palestinian civil society,” wherein all “citizens are equal before the law,” “respect for all opinions” is protected, and “all forms of corruption” are eliminated.¹⁰⁷

Governmental Reform. The two topics of governmental and domestic reform (the latter is discussed below), even more than the core objective outlined above, dominate the Manifesto’s text. When examined holistically, the Manifesto gives the overall impression that all objectives are secondary to the imminent goal of building a clean, transparent and corrupt-free government; indeed, according to the Manifesto, the ultimate objective (establishing a sovereign state) is unachievable until this more pressing

¹⁰⁴ 1988 Charter, Article 6.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, Introduction, Articles 2, 4, 5 & 6.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, Introduction, Article 4, 6.

objective is fulfilled.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the thrust of the entire document is oriented toward eliminating corruption by offering the Palestinian people a “wholesome alternative” and “an honest leadership,” without which the robust array of domestic reform proposals could never be fulfilled.¹⁰⁹

To this end, the Manifesto offers a number of concrete proposals to insert transparency and accountability into the Palestinian governing system. While almost all of the articles are, in one way or another, oriented toward keeping the government in check by specifically detailing their proper (and improper) areas of involvement in society, Article four explicitly addresses this topic by offering a number of specific proposals. In order to “eliminate all forms of corruption,” which is considered “the main contributing factor to weakening the internal Palestinian front,” Article four calls for the development of modern administrative rules, the decentralization of the decision-making process, the elimination of favoritism in hiring, the enhancement of “transparency, monitoring, auditing and accountability” in all matters pertaining to the budget, and the formation of a national parliamentary committee to inspect the distribution of endowment funds, among others.¹¹⁰ Needless to say, the level of specificity, while impressive in its own right, is astonishing when compared to the scarcity of detail in the 1988 Charter; an observation which suggests the evolutionary nature of Hamas’s political and intellectual development.

¹⁰⁸ For example, Hamas promotes its domestic reform policy as one that will “bolster the steadfastness in pursuit of comprehensive liberation” and “guarantee a future that befits the struggle” [Hroub, *Political Thought and Practice*, 276].

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, Article 4.

National Unity. The issue of national unity, particularly with respect to Hamas's relations with Fatah, has consumed much, indeed nearly all, of Hamas's energies during its fragile first year in power. According to a recent statement by a senior Hamas politician, "Hamas was and still is the safety valve that preserves Palestinian national unity and blood."¹¹¹ Whether out of need or genuine desire, unity -- establishing, maintaining and protecting it -- is foremost among Hamas's new objectives.

The objective of national unity recurs frequently throughout the Manifesto: in the first sentence of its opening introduction; and again in articles one ("Our Essential Principles"), two ("Domestic Policy"), three ("External Relations"), four ("Administrative Reform and Fighting Corruption"), nine ("Social Policy"), ten ("Cultural and Media Policy"), and finally, sixteen ("Economic, Fiscal and Monetary Policy").¹¹² Moreover, the Manifesto ends by reconfirming Hamas's commitment to unity, stating that "[o]ur program is our course toward strengthening Islamic-national unity along the path of full liberation; [o]ur program is the program of the entire people and the entire homeland."¹¹³ Needless to say, the goal of unity, a theme permeating the Manifesto's entire text, is crucial to "the new Hamas."

Democratic Rights. As mentioned above, "the new Hamas" has developed higher standards with respect to its desired Palestinian state. This state, according to the Manifesto, must be "based on political pluralism," governed by "qualified representatives," guided by "an advanced Palestinian civil society," and protective of "the

¹¹¹ "Nazzal to Dahalan: don't spoil truce deal," FrontPage, January 31, 2007. [Hamas's website].

¹¹² Articles 1(3) & (7); 2(4) & (6); 3(3); 4(1); 9(2) & (16); 10(6); 16(8).

¹¹³ Conclusion [Tamimi, *Unwritten Chapters*, 294].

alternation of [political] power.”¹¹⁴ Often overlooked in the voluminous media attention devoted to Hamas’s campaign and first year in power, is Hamas’s impassioned emphasis on establishing the full panoply of democratic rights. Indeed, Hamas explicitly defines “the best framework for regulating Palestinian political activity,” as that which actively protects “[p]olitical liberties, pluralism, the freedom to form political parties...the ballot box and the peaceful alternation of power.”¹¹⁵ Interestingly, these rights are neither cloaked in, nor justified by, Islamic referents, but instead, presented as rights in and of themselves.

As with national unity, the theme of establishing democratic rights repeatedly resurfaces throughout the Manifesto’s text, leaving the undeniable impression of its central importance to the “new Hamas.” In addition to an entire article (“Public Liberties and Citizen Rights”) devoted exclusively to explicating such rights, the objective of building a vibrant democracy surfaces in both the Manifesto’s introduction and conclusion, in four sub-points within article two (“Domestic Policy”), another four sub-points within article five (“Legislative Policy and Judicial Reform”), three sub-points within article ten (“Cultural and Media Policy”), and in one sub-point in articles four (“Administrative Reform and Fighting Corruption”), eleven (“The Questions of Women, Children and the Family”) and seventeen (“Labor and Laborers”).¹¹⁶

In contrast to the original 1988 Charter, which mentions the terms “freedom” and “right” only in reference to the Israeli occupation, the “new Hamas” has developed a sophisticated understanding of, and seemingly sincere commitment to, the democratic

¹¹⁴ Introduction [Ibid, 275]; Conclusion [Ibid, 294].

¹¹⁵ Article 2(3). Ibid, 276.

¹¹⁶ Examples of where democratic rights, including the topic of civil society, are raised: Introduction, Article 2(3)(5)(8)(14); 4(4); 5(2)(3)(10) & (12); 10(1)(3) & (8); 11(5); 17(5).

ideology, which is presented as a stand-alone objective important in its own right.

Indeed, this newfound emphasis on democracy potentially reveals an important insight about today's Hamas; namely, that its scope of activity has significantly expanded from its near-myopic objective (destroying Israel) outlined in the 1988 Charter.

Domestic Development. Also emerging as an overriding objective, is the goal of reforming and improving the lives of all Palestinians, including women, minorities, disabled, journalists, students, farmers, fishermen, doctors, workers, and teachers. The Manifesto overflows with detailed, and impressively comprehensive, proposals on how to improve all aspects of Palestinian society, including its housing, educational, agricultural, familial, medical, administrative, legislative, judicial, social, cultural, media, and economic spheres. Many of the Manifesto's articles embody concrete policy proposals for very specific needs, such as the need to teach rural women how to weave carpets, the need to establish food processing projects to ensure that leftovers aren't wasted, and the need to plant trees along roads and in public parks.¹¹⁷ As before, the Manifesto's level of detail, particularly when compared against the original 1988 Charter, is astonishing. Indisputably, the Manifesto, which is replete with programmatic proposals and specific recommendations, is vastly more mundane and bureaucratic, than it is revolutionary, oppositional or even nationalistic, the latter of which are all characteristic of the Hamas of 1988.

An overall reading of the Manifesto leaves the undeniable impression of the "new Hamas's" genuine commitment to domestic reform. In addition to the movement's motto itself, "Change and Reform," the idea of domestic reform emerges in all eighteen of the

¹¹⁷ Articles 11, 14, 15.

Manifesto's articles, as well as its introduction, conclusion, and final sentence (“[o]ur program is about the means to rebuild the society...”).¹¹⁸

In sum, the portrait of a much more sober, analytical, and domestic-oriented Hamas, emerges from the text of the Electoral Manifesto. At the very least, the Manifesto proves that the “new Hamas” is capable of moving beyond vague generalities and incendiary rhetoric. Instead of the conspiracy theories, anti-Semitic references, and grandiose visions typical of the 1988 Charter, the Manifesto embodies detailed proposals, specific recommendations, and concrete policies on a comprehensive array of predominantly reform and domestic-oriented topics.

DRAFT PROGRAM FOR A COALITION GOVERNMENT

Hamas was as surprised as it was unprepared when it won the January 2006 legislative elections. Cognizant of its lack of political experience and controversial international reputation, Hamas was eager, from the moment it took power, to form a coalition government with other Palestinian factions, particularly the internationally-favored Fatah party. The Draft Program for a Coalition Government (“The Program”) represents Hamas’s desperate and seemingly genuine attempt to persuade all other formidable Palestinian factions, including those who hadn’t participated in the national elections (such as Islamic Jihad), to join with them in a coalition government.¹¹⁹ Though ultimately failing to achieve this goal,¹²⁰ the Program offers important insights into the strategic thinking and political sophistication of “the new Hamas.”

Though this document, which contains a preamble and thirty-nine articles, covers much of the same ground addressed in the Electoral Manifesto, it also sheds light on new and different

¹¹⁸ See Introduction, Articles 1-18, and Conclusion. [Tamimi, *Unwritten Chapters*, 274-294].

¹¹⁹ Speech by PM Ismail Haneya, March 2. [Hroub, *A New Hamas*, 14].

¹²⁰ While a coalition government was eventually formed in March 2007, it was on the basis of the Mecca Agreement, not the Draft Program..

facets of the “new Hamas’s” more nuanced political understanding.¹²¹ Most importantly, it reveals evolutions in Hamas’s ideological worldview, particularly with respect to its position within the Palestinian, regional, and international political landscapes. Moreover, with even less religious and militant content than the Manifesto, the Program further corroborates the view, defended throughout this thesis, that the Hamas of today is vastly more politically-compromising, sober-minded, and secular-oriented than the Hamas of earlier times, and certainly than the 1988 Charter would suggest.

The Draft Program presents three additional objectives pursued by the “new Hamas”:

1. To join the PLO;
2. To deal responsibly with previous agreements; and
3. To, at least temporarily, endorse the two-state solution.

Testifying to its ability to adapt and respond to the pressures of international and domestic politics, the “new Hamas” has embraced these three objectives, each of which was previously rejected by the “old Hamas” (and adamantly at that). Despite the almost complete lack of attention to these ideological flip-flops by the international media, which in large part continues to myopically focus on Hamas’s rejection of the Quartet’s three demands, “the new Hamas,” as this document testifies, has made strenuous efforts to amend (and in some cases renounce)¹²² its founding objectives in ways more appealing to a broader constituency. Such efforts, which include the drafting of the Program itself, have demanded important ideological and behavioral concessions on Hamas’s part. Understanding such concessions are crucial in getting to know the “new” Hamas; thus, each objective listed above, and the ideological revolution each represented, is discussed below.

¹²¹ For the sake of brevity, only the new facets will be examined here.

¹²² Example: its decision to participate in the 2006 elections.

To Join the PLO. Hamas's refusal to join the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), an umbrella association formed in 1964 encompassing many of the Palestinian nationalist movements, formed a cornerstone of its original *raison d'être*. Never, Hamas proclaimed, could it affiliate with a secular institution whose driving force was neither the Islamic faith nor a future Islamic state, but instead, raw nationalism alone. Indeed, an affiliation with such an openly secular movement who, even worse, endorsed the two-state solution, would have been anathema to the Hamas of 1988, a Hamas who viewed historic Palestine as an "Islamic waqf," or an undivisible religiously-endowed trust; a Hamas that considered the PLO to be "diametrically opposed to religious thought;" and a Hamas that would only consider joining the PLO when (and only when) the latter publicly "embrace[d] Islam as a way of life."¹²³

With respect to Hamas's original position toward the PLO, the Hamas of today could not be further removed. Not only is the "new Hamas" willing and eager to join the PLO, a matter of serious discussion since 2004 and confirmed in the "Cairo Declaration" of March 2005, but it now qualifies its desired PLO membership in political/secular, rather than religious/ideological terms. As will be seen, Hamas has "transcended its insistence that the PLO abandon secularism in order to be consistent with its own declared commitment to democracy and pluralism."¹²⁴

According to Hamas's current reasoning, the PLO can only legitimately act as the representative of the Palestinian community when its governing body, the Palestinian National Council (PNC), is comprised of members of all Palestinian factions and in numbers proportionate to their popular strength. The latter, according to the "new Hamas," can easily be determined using direct elections or where impracticable, implied through local and national electoral results. Thus, Hamas has repeatedly confirmed its eagerness to join the PLO when, but

¹²³ 1988 Charter, Chapter 4, Article 27.

¹²⁴ Hroub, *Hamas: Political Thought & Practice*, 94.

only when, it receives the number of PNC seats commensurate with its popular strength, which it estimates at approximately forty percent. This reform proposal, which according to Hamas is designed to guarantee the genuineness of the PLO's representative status, is reconfirmed in its Draft Program.

Importantly, the conditions attached to Hamas's membership, couched as they are in relatively sophisticated, entirely secular (indeed, democratic) and non-inflammatory language, reveal a level of ideological creativity increasingly typical of the "new Hamas." In an attempt to escape from the ideological straightjacket imposed by its founding position (namely, that the PLO adopt an Islamist identity and Islamist goals), Hamas not only re-aligned its position with reality (namely, that the PLO will never adopt an Islamist identity), but it reframed its position in ways that could best resonate with a skeptical international audience and a democratically-starved electorate. Thus, by linking its reservations with joining the PLO to the latter's democratic, rather than ideological, deficits, Hamas not only strategically side-stepped its earlier unsustainable position, but re-formulated the debate in ways which were vastly more desirable to Hamas's secular, domestic and international onlookers. Though subtle, this shift in Hamas's reasoning represents a quiet revolution within Hamas's ideological history, a history that began with an inflexible rejection of the PLO's representative status and ended (at least for the moment) with its wholesale embrace, albeit with defensible qualifications.

To deal responsibly with previous agreements. Entirely lost, if not intentionally ignored, in the international frenzy over Hamas's assumed unwillingness to endorse previous Palestinian-Israeli agreements, is "the new Hamas's" actual position on such agreements. In fact, "the new Hamas's" formal position is far from outright rejection; instead, its position on previous agreements is measured, nuanced, and, as with its position on the PLO, justified in a language

recognizable to a Western/secular audience. “The new Hamas’s” actual position toward such agreements emerges in the text of the Draft Program, a document which, by avoiding ideological or sectarian justifications, reveals a more conciliatory and accommodating Hamas.

Two of the document’s articles explicitly affirm Hamas’s willingness to cooperate with previous international conventions and peace agreements. While Article nine ensures that the Hamas-led government “will deal with the signed agreements with high responsibility and in accordance with preserving the ultimate interests of our people and maintaining its rights without compromising its immutable prerogatives,” Article ten assures that “[t]he government will deal with the international resolutions with national responsibility and in accordance with protecting the immutable rights of our people.”¹²⁵ This significantly more accommodating, and certainly less rejectionist, language than that typically suggested by Hamas’s critics, was echoed in Hamas’s first press conference following the elections, during which Khalid Mish’al promised to deal with preexisting agreements and peace proposals with “extreme realism.”¹²⁶

More recently, the Mecca Agreement, a Saudi-orchestrated accord formed between Fatah and Hamas in February 2007, officially codified Hamas’s more accommodating position toward past peace agreements; indeed, it went even further than the Draft program in its pledge to “respect” past agreements. While Hamas’s definition of ‘respect’ has not yet been tested, it is clear that, at least when compared to the original 1988 Charter, Hamas has undergone an important ideological transformation (or at the least, ideological softening) -- from wholesale rejection to outright “respect”-- on the matter of past agreements.¹²⁷ In short, Hamas’s position toward previous agreements is not, as is often claimed, absolute rejection; far to the contrary, its

¹²⁵ See Hroub, *A New Hamas*, 15.

¹²⁶ Tamimi, *Unwritten Chapters*, 224.

¹²⁷ 1988 Charter, Chapter 3, Article 13.

current position is one of respect, high and national responsibility, and according to Hamas's most authoritative voice on foreign policy (Mish'al), extreme realism.

The Two-State Solution? According to the only scholar to have closely examined the articles contained in Hamas's Draft Program to date: "taken as a whole, the thrust of these articles—and the entire document—hovers around the concept of the two-state solution."¹²⁸ This view was similarly endorsed in a personal interview with Mouin Rabbani, senior analyst for the International Crisis Group, who confirmed that "in varying degrees of explicitness, they [Hamas's new documents] state that the two-state settlement is an acceptable strategy."¹²⁹ According to Rabbani, this constitutes nothing short of "a virtual revolution in Hamas's thinking."¹³⁰

Though this objective is not *explicitly* endorsed by the "new Hamas," it appears to be emerging -- from the texts of its new documents, and as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, from its behaviors -- as an acceptable solution, at least for an extended, and potentially indefinite, period of time. Such an endorsement, even if only partial and implicit, arguably represents the most remarkable of "the new Hamas's" ideological metamorphoses given Hamas's well-known rejection of the two-state solution, intention to re-gain "every inch of [historic] Palestine," and desire to demolish the Israeli state.¹³¹

In contrast to its founding Charter, the Draft Program is entirely bereft of the sort of geographically-sweeping phraseology typical of "the old Hamas." Excepting only Article 2, which discusses the refugees' right of return, all references to land refer only to the territories occupied in 1967, never to non-occupied Israel itself. Thus the terms "West Bank," "Gaza

¹²⁸ Hroub, *A New Hamas*, 15.

¹²⁹ Personal Interview with the author, August 27, 2006.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ 1988 Charter, Chapter 1, Article 6.

Strip,” and “the Jordan Valley,” rather than “the whole of Palestine,” “historic Palestine,” or “every inch of Palestine,” are cited within this document. Moreover, there are no references to demolishing or ending the State of Israel, but only to ending the “occupation” and to regaining the “occupied land,” terms that in modern usage have well-known geographically-circumscribed meanings (West Bank & Gaza Strip).¹³² Coming close to an explicit endorsement, Article five promises to cooperate with the international community for the purpose of “achieving a complete withdrawal from the lands occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem,” a promise the “new Hamas” has consistently repeated, particularly since the recent Arab Summit in Saudi Arabia.¹³³

By employing the language of the two-state solution (even if avoiding an explicit endorsement), Hamas proves itself, yet again, to be a savvy politician capable of simultaneously appealing to multiple audiences. Thus in Article five, partially quoted above, Hamas additionally adds that Israel’s withdrawal from the 1967 lands will constitute only one *phase*. By inserting “during this phase,” Hamas strategically attempts to appease both the rejectionists and proponents of the two state-solution. By endorsing the two-state solution (in all but name), while qualifying it as being merely a temporary “phase” along the road to full liberation, Hamas is able to maintain ideological consistency, while simultaneously exemplifying its ideological flexibility. By carefully choosing its words, but ensuring that the precise contours of its position remain ambiguous, Hamas proves, if nothing else, to be a tactful politician attempting to court the favor of multiple constituencies.

To be sure, it is entirely unclear whether “the new Hamas” will endorse a permanent two-state solution. Yet, it is indisputable that the movement is undergoing, or has undergone, a

¹³² Ibid, Articles 4 & 5.

¹³³ Hroub, *A New Hamas*, 10.

profound ideological transformation with respect to this solution. Indeed, coming closer to outright acceptance than ever before, the Hamas-led government recently agreed, alongside the twenty-one Arab states participating in the Arab Summit, to revive the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002,¹³⁴ which explicitly endorses a *permanent* two-state solution.¹³⁵ Following this summit, an editorial in the Israeli newspaper, *Haaretz*, stated “[i]f only Israel would take the wax out of its ears, it could hear [Hamas] was calling for a two-state solution.”¹³⁶

Metamorphosing from an ideological purist oriented toward appealing only to a select clique of like-minded ideologues, into a more *realpolitik* -oriented politician trying to appease as wide a constituency as possible, Hamas has shown, in the text of its Draft Program, if nothing more, remarkable ideological flexibility and creativity.

THE CABINET PLATFORM

Delivered in a 6,000 word speech before the newly-elected parliament by the recently-elected Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh, the Cabinet Platform outlines Hamas’s governing agenda for its first year in power. As with the previous two documents, this speech provides an additional glimpse into the internal workings, as well as the external trappings, of the “new Hamas.” Containing even fewer religious references than either of the previous two documents, and entirely bereft of militant or universalistic language -- indeed, there isn’t a single reference to either “armed struggle” or “this phase”-- the Cabinet Platform additionally corroborates the ideological gulf between the “old” and “new” Hamas. While much of the speech’s content

¹³⁴ For Arab Peace Initiative, see <http://www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/league/peace02.htm>.

¹³⁵ “Behind the Riyadh Summit,” Dissident Voice, April 5, 2007 at <http://www.dissidentvoice.org/Apr07/Gordon05.htm>.

¹³⁶ “Sources: No deal reached with PM on Shalit release,” Haaretz, March 23, 2007.

overlaps with that which has been previously addressed -- governmental reform, domestic development, and national unity in particular --- the Cabinet Platform presents three new, and extremely important, objectives espoused by the “new Hamas.” They include:

1. To respect the Presidency, the Constitutional Order & the PLO;
2. To cooperate with Israel in “all mundane affairs”, and
3. To pursue “all avenues” of achieving peace with the Quartet.

As before, each new objective, and the insight it offers for understanding the “new Hamas,” is discussed below.

To Respect the Presidency, the Constitutional Order & the PLO. The overall tone of the cabinet platform is conciliatory, deferential, and moderate, with the overall message being one of assuring the world, the region and the Palestinian community that the “new Hamas” is both principled and pragmatic. Indeed, the theme of the speech itself -- “dialogue, cooperation, and consultation” testifies to its conciliatory disposition. Careful to personally address each of his potential opponents -- President Mahmoud Abbas, Israel, the Quartet, other Arab leaders, and the PLO -- Prime Minister Haniyeh personally assured, to the point of groveling, that the Hamas-led government represents the democratic will of the Palestinian people as a whole; and thus, is not to be feared, isolated or rejected. In this speech, Haniyeh eloquently delivered various messages to multiple listeners, tailoring his tone and language as necessary to appeal to whichever audience he was addressing at that moment.

Haniyeh begins his speech by thanking President Abbas -- a figure traditionally despised by Hamas for his central role in the Oslo Accords -- “for his outstanding role in holding the legislative elections and in reinforcing Palestinian democratic foundations,” including his ability

“to harness, nurture, and protect political pluralism.”¹³⁷ After lavishing him with various accolades, Haniyeh then goes on to express his sincere respect for “the constitutional relationship with the president,” promising to strengthen “this relationship for the sake of serving the interests of our people.” Making this endorsement even more explicit, Haniyeh additionally affirms that his government will operate “in accordance with the articles of the modified Basic Law 2003.”¹³⁸ In making these endorsements, both of President Abbas and the Palestinian constitution, Haniyeh heralds an unprecedented shift in Hamas’s position toward individuals, institutions and documents associated with the Oslo process. Whereas previously anything remotely affiliated with Oslo was indiscriminately rejected, today, such affiliations are either downplayed, or accepted altogether.

As with Abbas, Haniyeh reaches out to the PLO, its historical adversary, referring to it as “the umbrella for all Palestinians at home and in the Diaspora,” “the institution that built up the struggle that we are proud of,” and finally, “the framework that embodies our people’s hopes and ongoing sacrifices to restore their rights.”¹³⁹ By discussing “the need to enhance and empower the national institutions, at the top of which is the PLO,” Haniyeh comes strategically close to agreeing that the PLO is “the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people,” an endorsement (as previously discussed) anathema to the “old Hamas.” At the same time, however, Haniyeh is careful to simultaneously appease those among its supporters who continue to abhor the PLO’s monopolistic position by urging the PLO “to speed up the implementation

¹³⁷ Cabinet Platform, Opening paragraph.

¹³⁸ Ibid, Final paragraph.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

of the necessary measures to complete” its democratic reformation.¹⁴⁰ By mentioning the need for reform and avoiding an explicit endorsement of the PLO’s representative status, while simultaneously coming very close to such an endorsement, Haniyeh tactically appeals to both those who reject and those who support the PLO’s central position; once again, proving the new politically-integrated Hamas to be, if nothing else, less of an ideologue than an ideologically accommodating and increasingly skillful politician.

To cooperate with Israel. With respect to Israel, Haniyeh offered the most stunning rhetorical conciliation ever known in the history of Hamas-Israeli relations. By promising to cordially maintain all “necessary contacts in all mundane affairs: business, trade, health, and labor” with Israel, Haniyeh publicly endorsed what had never been spoken of before, namely the forging of a relationship between Hamas and “the occupation.” While Hamas politicians have for sometime (particularly since the municipal elections of 2004-2005) quietly coordinated with Israel in daily matters, no one affiliated with Hamas, until this speech, had ever before publicly affirmed such contacts.¹⁴¹ To do so, marks, at the very least, a significant ideological shift, and potentially, the harbinger of a radical ideological transformation.

To pursue “all avenues” with the Quartet. Similar words of conciliation were offered in Haniyeh’s speech to the International Quartet, which was assured of the Hamas-led government’s commitment to “reinforcing *shura* [consultancy] and democracy,” to protecting “the constitutional rights of all citizens,” and to “reinforce[ing] the spirit of tolerance,

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ *A New Hamas*, 18.

cooperation, [and] coexistence among the Muslims, the Christians, and the Samaritans.”¹⁴²

Moreover, the international community was reminded of the Hamas-led government’s commitment to dealing with the international agenda and all international agreements “with high responsibility,” a concession explicitly designed (it was hoped) to fulfill the Quartet’s demand that Hamas endorse all preexisting agreements. Finally, in the most sweeping concession made to the Quartet, Haniyeh offered his government’s readiness “to explore all avenues to put an end to the state of conflict” and to “bring peace to the region,” a comment which reveals the lack of ideological ‘red-lines’ preventing the “new Hamas” from pursuing any particular action.¹⁴³

As before, however, Haniyeh counterbalances his words of conciliation with words of strength and defiance. Thus is the case when Haniyeh, at the close of his speech, criticizes the “hasty decisions taken in the wake of the PC elections, and particularly by the U.S. administration.”¹⁴⁴ Haniyeh strategically employs the language of democracy -- a language understood and appreciated by the Quartet -- to appeal to their senses, as well as to more persuasively criticize their behaviors. Thus is the case when Haniyeh calls on the international community to side with the “values of justice and fairness” and to end its punishment of the Palestinians “because of their democratic choice.”¹⁴⁵ By appealing to the very democratic values publicly embraced by the Quartet itself, while simultaneously acknowledging their hypocrisies, Haniyeh delicately balances the interests and concerns of Hamas’s multiple audiences.

CONCLUSION

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

In sum, the documents produced by the “new Hamas” since its integration into electoral politics, a decision that itself marked a radical ideological transformation, uncover new and different objectives than those contained in the 1988 Charter. Showing a markedly more sophisticated level of thinking, and offering a more robust array of proposals, the new objectives that emerge from these three documents introduce what appears to be an ideologically transformed Hamas; a Hamas profoundly more sober, domestic-minded, and politically-oriented; a Hamas less inclined to exploit militant-ideological terminology; a Hamas with clear, concrete and realizable objectives; in short, a Hamas having almost nothing in common with its 1988 Charter. Needless to say, Hamas has come a long way since the time when its only objectives were to “conquer evil” and ensure that “truth prevail”!¹⁴⁶

CHAPTER THREE: STRATEGIES & METHODS

As in Chapter Two, this chapter will begin with a brief outline of Hamas’s strategies and methods as outlined in Chapter Three of its 1988 Charter; this will then be followed by a more intensive investigation of the ways in which these strategies have changed and evolved, particularly since Hamas’s integration into the political process. As before, a theoretical list of current, up-to-date strategies will be compiled, following a close analysis of each.

Unlike the preceding Chapter, however, the empirical data underlying the current chapter’s analysis will be based less on formal documentation than on Hamas’s actual performances and public statements. By extricating Hamas’s new strategies from observations of its recent performances, this Chapter seeks to balance the close textual analysis of Hamas’s new documents, endeavored in the earlier Chapter, with a critical analysis of their actual words and deeds from the past two years. While attempting to balance (and to measure the

¹⁴⁶ 1988 Charter, Chapter 2, Article 9.

correspondence between) rhetoric and reality, this chapter aims to more comprehensively introduce the “new Hamas” by examining the strategies it currently embraces in pursuit of its new objectives.

THE OLD HAMAS

Unlike the extremely succinct Objectives Chapter in the 1988 Charter, which contains only two articles comprising three percent of the Charter’s total word-count, its Strategies and Methods Chapter comprises its longest and most detailed section, containing eleven articles and over thirty-three percent of the Charter’s word-count. Moreover, the Strategies Chapter has played a significantly more influential role in shaping Hamas’s international reputation, replete as it is with the most contentious features of Hamas’s original ideology, including its rejection of peace agreements,¹⁴⁷ its promotion of “*jihad*”,¹⁴⁸ and its belief that all of historic Palestine constitutes an un-negotiable Islamic *waqf*.¹⁴⁹

Without a doubt, the core strategy endorsed in the original charter is “*jihad*.”¹⁵⁰ According to the Charter itself, which notably never uses the often-cited term ‘armed resistance,’ *jihad* embodies both violent and non-violent manifestations, and necessitates the involvement of militants and non-militants alike. *Jihad*, according to Article 30, is defined as “not only carrying arms and confronting the enemy,” but also “[u]ttering positive words, writing good articles and useful books, and lending support and assistance.”¹⁵¹ According to the Charter’s relatively expansive definition, *jihad* not only requires fighters, but also “scholars, teachers, educators,

¹⁴⁷ 1988 Charter, Chapter 3, Article 13; stating, peace agreements are “contrary to [its] ideology.”

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, Article 15 [Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine is Obligatory].

¹⁴⁹ Meaning “trust.”

¹⁵⁰ 1988 Charter, Chapter 3, Article 13; stating, “[t]here is no solution to the Palestinian problem except through struggle [jihad].”

¹⁵¹ Ibid, Chapter 4, Article 30 (translation: The Palestine Center at <http://www.palestinecenter.org/cpap/documents/charter.html>).

communicators, journalists, and the educated.”¹⁵² Thus, the *mujahid* (“the fighting Muslim”), the one providing equipment for the *mujahid*, the one raising the *mujahid*, and the one teaching the *mujahid* are each equally important to the *jihad* mission, which is obligatorily imposed on the individual and the collective society alike.¹⁵³

The level of nuance, otherwise lacking in the original Charter, attached to the definition of *jihad* is often lost on Hamas’s international critics who often indiscriminately equate *jihad* with armed resistance or, even more often, terrorism. To be sure, militant/armed resistance stands at the core of the “old Hamas’s” strategic thinking; indeed, peace initiatives were explicitly rejected while armed resistance was openly embraced.¹⁵⁴ While the more passive forms of *jihad* are discussed, the theme of preparing for, and engaging in, aggressive activities against the Israeli occupation permeate the Charter’s (and particularly chapter 3’s) text, leaving the undeniable impression of its heightened, even prioritized, importance.

Much like the rest of the Charter, the obligation to engage in *jihad* is justified in religious terms; and more specifically, in the concept of the Islamic *waqf*. Meaning “Islamic trust,” the *waqf* concept refers to the idea that Palestine, as sacrosanct Islamic land owned exclusively by *Allah* and temporarily entrusted to the Muslim *umma* (or community) until the Day of Judgment, can never be bargained, divided, or given away. Until this sacred day, no one, not even a “king or president” or even “all kings and all presidents,” can “relinquish or cede any part of [the land]”, not even an inch.¹⁵⁵ As mere custodians of *Allah*’s holy land, all Muslim generations --

¹⁵² Ibid, Chapter 3, Article 15 (Hroub’s translation).

¹⁵³ Ibid, Article 16.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, Article 13 & 15.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, Article 11.

past, present and future -- are unequivocally proscribed from relinquishing any portion of Palestine.¹⁵⁶

In short, the Strategies and Methods Chapter contained in the 1988 Charter revolves around two central strategies, *jihad*, particularly its militant manifestations, and the Islamic *waqf*, which prescribes usurping, and then maintaining, all of historic Palestine.

THE NEW HAMAS

As before, the “new Hamas’s” new strategies profoundly differ from those enshrined in its 1988 Charter. Based on a meticulous analysis of Hamas’s behaviors and statements, which I routinely observed and documented over the course of its first year in power, five strategies emerge as the “new Hamas’s” preferred methods for accomplishing its goals. These include:

1. The *hudna*, or long term truce;
2. The *tahdiyya*, or period of calm;
3. Politics, Popular Referenda, and Elections;
4. Welfare Assistance and Grassroots outreach; and
5. Resistance using all necessary forms.

It is my contention, based on empirical realities and actual behaviors, that a new Hamas Charter should, at the very least, include all five of the aforementioned strategies, as each has been regularly employed and/or promoted since Hamas’s integration into the political process. Each strategy, including its historical evolution and current articulation, are examined below.

The Hudna. The *hudna*, typically translated “long term truce,” stands at the center of “the new Hamas’s” strategic thinking with respect to its core objective of establishing an independent Palestinian state. According to recent statements issued by Hamas’s top leadership,

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, Chapter 1, Article 6.

the *hudna* constitutes an offer to temporarily exchange peace for land. Its specific terms, which are currently on offer to Israel, are as follows: in exchange for a complete withdrawal from Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, the right of return of refugees, and the release of all Palestinian political prisoners, Hamas will grant Israel a *renewable* truce lasting at least 10 years.¹⁵⁷ According to Ahmed Yousef, chief political adviser to Ismail Haniyeh, the *hudna* offer is, in addition to its literal terms, an attempt to show the world, particularly Israel, that Hamas members are “not the terrorists [they] have been stigmatized as,” but instead, committed and disciplined individuals “serious about peace.”¹⁵⁸

Considered a sacred contract, the *hudna*, once formed, must be obligatorily respected; responsibility for the first breach constitutes a serious and punishable sin.¹⁵⁹ Arguably, the *hudna* is identical, in all but duration, to the two-state solution; yet, its duration is theoretically indefinite, as the possibility for continual renewal and/or decisive action by future generations are explicitly provided as available options. According to one scholar of Hamas, the *hudna* offer seems “to confirm” that Hamas has come to “tacitly accept a share out of Palestine on the basis of the borders as they stood before the 1967 war,” which is to say, the two-state solution.¹⁶⁰ This view was similarly expressed by Jordan’s King Abdullah, who recently stated that the *hudna* is nothing more than “a truce that allows people to sit around the table to solve the problem, which I believe is a two-state solution.”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. At times, this figure has been cited as 15 or 20 years.

¹⁵⁸ “AP Interview: Hamas-Fatah government weeks - even days - away,” Herald Tribune, November 4, 2006.

¹⁵⁹ Tamimi, *Unwritten Chapters*, 159.

¹⁶⁰ “What Hamas Really Wants,” Le Monde Diplomatique, January 2007.

¹⁶¹ “Hamas to Israel: Temporary State is a Phase to Your Destruction,” Israel Hasbara Committee, January 22, 2007.

As a concept rooted in early Islamic history, the *hudna* concept allows Hamas to strategically outmaneuver, without total abandonment, its core concept of the Islamic *waqf*.¹⁶² As an ideological noose requiring Hamas to settle for nothing less than the whole of mandatory Palestine (and indirectly, Israel's elimination), the *waqf* idea inflexibly proscribes land-bargaining. Yet, by endorsing the *hudna*, which allows Hamas to engage in an ideologically heretical bargain by including a temporal qualification, Hamas managed to masterfully escape from the *waqf*'s stranglehold. Using the *hudna* offer, Hamas has moved from a position of refusing to give up even a single inch of historic Palestine, to its current position of wholeheartedly welcoming "any inch of Palestine."¹⁶³ This profound ideological revolution, which was recently confirmed by Ismail Haniyeh¹⁶⁴ and Mahmoud Al-Zahar,¹⁶⁵ has gone almost entirely ignored by Hamas's international critics/subsidizers.

Conveniently, the *hudna* proposal does not require formal recognition of Israel; indeed, the issue of recognition is theoretically irrelevant to the concept's constitution. Thus, not only does the *hunda* concept enable Hamas to maintain "its rhetorical support for a maximalist solution on Palestine even while 'tactically' accepting a political solution far short of that,"¹⁶⁶ it also allows the movement to, at least rhetorically,¹⁶⁷ dodge the ever-contentious issue of Israel's recognition. Ismail Haniyeh recently confirmed this assertion when he announced: "we [the

¹⁶² Tamimi, *Unwritten Chapters*, 158.

¹⁶³ "Hamas offers truce deal over Palestine," *BreakingNews.ie*, January 20, 2007.

¹⁶⁴ 1988 Charter, Chapter 1, Article 6.

¹⁶⁵ "Al-Zahar on Hamas Positions Towards National Unity Government and Negotiations with Israel," *Al-Jazeera*, January 27, 2007, stating: "we want a state on any part of the land that is to be liberated."

¹⁶⁶ Fuller, *Hamas Comes to Power*, *Strategic Insights*, December 27, 2006.

¹⁶⁷ Some argue that the *hudna* requires an implicit recognition of Israel. According to one Hamas observer, "governments don't make offers to non-existent entities." See "Hamas and a Bully," *International News*, January 23, 2007.

Hamas-led government] accept a Palestinian state on the lands occupied in 1967, but in return for a long-term truce and *not recognition*.”¹⁶⁸

Nevertheless, some argue that the *hudna* concept, by its very promotion, foreshadows radical ideological change by Hamas with respect to Israel’s recognition and a permanent two-state solution. According to one scholar, it is precisely from “such tactical moves [that] ideological change comes about.”¹⁶⁹ This potential for change was recently hinted at when a Hamas interviewee was asked what would happen at the end of the 10-year *hudna*. Responding that “it will be up to future generations,” he went on to allude to its possible permanence: “By then, they will have learned to live under different, more normal conditions. Who knows what they will decide.”¹⁷⁰

The “interim solution,” sometimes referred to as the “theory of phases,” was, at least originally, fundamental to the *hudna* offer. This theory, which justifies temporarily accepting a two-state solution as the first of a multi-phased process leading toward the ultimate liberation of Palestine, has historically been paired with the *hudna* concept in an attempt to emphasize the latter’s temporariness.¹⁷¹ Interestingly, however, this pairing has rarely been made since Hamas’s integration into the political process. While Hamas continues to regularly affirm its refusal to recognize Israel when publicly discussing the *hudna*, a meticulous examination of their speeches and statements during the course of their first year in power reveals a remarkable de-emphasis, and oftentimes a complete absence, of the “phases theory” in the context of such discussions. Indeed, Hamas leaders have shown a repeated pattern of evading discussions of the

¹⁶⁸ “Palestinian PM says U.S. aims to topple his govt,” Reuters, January 22, 2007 (emphasis added).

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ *Engaging Hamas*, ICG Report No. 62 (February 2007), 30.

¹⁷¹ Haim Malka, *Forcing Choices: Testing the Transformation of Hamas*, *The Washington Quarterly*, 28:4 (Autumn 2005): 39 [“Forcing Choices”].

hudna's temporary nature in instances where such discussions would be natural or expected. Indeed, the "phases theory," or the *hudna*'s temporariness, is typically raised by questioning journalists or probing critics, rather than the Hamas politicians themselves.

While Hamas's true intentions are unclear, it is undisputable that while the *hudna* offer has increased in prominence since Hamas's time in power, the "phases theory," at one time part-and-parcel of the *hudna* offer, has fallen into near (rhetorical) disuse, an ideological revolution for a movement whose Charter advocates the immediate and unqualified demolition of the Israeli state.

The Tahdiyya. Literally meaning "cooling-off period," but typically translated as "cease-fire," the *tahdiyya*, unlike the *hudna*, is easily broken, more limited in scope, often used to contain Palestinian-on-Palestinian violence, and can be bilaterally *or* unilaterally imposed.¹⁷² The *tahdiyya*, which can serve many functions, but has recently been used to control internal conflict, is viewed as a temporary and necessary period of calm, during which tensions deescalate, civility resumes, and ultimately, progress is made toward the more important objectives. Ultimately, the *tahdiyya*, like the *hudna*, constitutes an important strategy, among a cache of diversified strategies, designed to bring Palestinians one step closer to the ultimate goal of an independent Palestinian state.

Hamas, for all its flaws, is widely known as being loyal to its word. Of those *tahdiyyas* formed between Hamas and other Palestinian factions, "Hamas was never the party that violated the agreements between them."¹⁷³ With rare exception,¹⁷⁴ such has also been the case with

¹⁷² Ibid, 46.

¹⁷³ Hroub, *Political Thought and Practice*, 75.

¹⁷⁴ On March 19, 2007 Hamas militants shot and wounded an Israeli worker on the Gaza border; this marked Hamas's first violation of its cease-fire with Israel. However, the Hamas militants

respect to those formed between Hamas and Israel.¹⁷⁵ The most enduring of Hamas's declared *tahdiyyas*, formed bilaterally with Israel in March 2005 concomitant to its electoral announcement, lasted nearly fifteen months, nearly six months after its expected end date (December 2005) and months after being openly violated by both Israel and other Palestinian factions. Because of its proven capability to uphold cease-fire agreements, Hamas has been praised -- by domestic, international, and even Israeli observers¹⁷⁶ -- for showing remarkable self-discipline and commitment to their agreements.

During Hamas's first year in power the *tahdiyya* was primarily used as a way of maintaining national unity, a goal it has tirelessly pursued since the January 2006 elections. Since coming to power, at least four different cease-fires have been formed between Hamas and Fatah, with two being formed in a single week and the most recent being formed in Gaza on March 22, 2007;¹⁷⁷ a phenomenon perhaps less remarkable for its outcome than for what it suggests about Hamas's sincere dedication to the goal of national unity. To be sure, in a narrow, economically-deprived 365-square kilometer plot of land, which is described as one of the world's most densely populated locations with nearly 1.5 million Palestinian inhabitants (referring to Gaza), the fate of these various cease-fires has been less than inspiring. Nevertheless, the fact that Hamas has repeatedly and persistently offered to establish cease-fires (long and short) with its Israeli and domestic rivals, and once formed has shown "remarkable

who performed the attack announced that it was in retaliation to Israeli actions in the West Bank, and implicitly, not in violation of its cease-fire with Israel, which is restricted to Gaza.

¹⁷⁵ Hroub, *Political Thought and Practice*, 75.

¹⁷⁶ "Mecca deal an opportunity," Yedioth News, February 16, 2007, describing Hamas as "a disciplined movement that has refrained from engaging in terrorism lately."

¹⁷⁷ "Fatah, Hamas Agree on Ceasefire in North Gaza Strip," Mathaba News, March 23, 2007.

discipline” even in the face of serious provocation, says something about the “new Hamas’s” preference for solving things peacefully rather than militaristically.¹⁷⁸

Politics, Popular Referenda and Elections. In contrast to the opposition-oriented “old Hamas,” whose *raison d’etre* was tied to its militant rejection of the Oslo process, the “new Hamas” is a politically engaged movement, whose modern vocabulary is disproportionately replete with diplomatic terms, such as *tahdiyya* and *hudna*, rather than militant terms, such as *jihad* and *intifada*. Hamas’s often-repeated campaign slogan, which promised to transform Palestine “from an era of single-party domination to one of participation that provides all movements with an opportunity,” illuminates its new diplomatic, even democratic, spirit.¹⁷⁹

Needless to say, the Hamas of today has come a long way from its adamant refusal to participate in “national” elections, which were originally viewed as corrupted by-products of the Zionist-laced Oslo Accords. Today, political participation represents one of the core strategies used by Hamas to achieve its objectives, which not only include the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state, but an extensive array of domestic achievements, as previously discussed.¹⁸⁰ As an increasingly pragmatic political actor ever-wary of public opinion and increasingly cognizant of the inherent impotencies of maintaining a position outside the political levers of power, Hamas now recognizes the many advantages afforded by having a presence within the PA. To be sure, without such a presence, “the new Hamas” would be incapable of enacting its heavily reform-oriented agenda.

¹⁷⁸ Personal Interview with Mouin Rabbani, August 27, 2006.

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Usama Hamda (Hamas representative in Lebanon), February 19, 2006, cited in *After Mecca: Engaging Hamas*, ICG Report No. 62 (February 2007), 25.

¹⁸⁰ The introduction of the Electoral Platform states that “its participation in the legislative elections at this time... falls within its comprehensive program for the liberation of Palestine,” and fulfills “our duty to reform the Palestinian reality and alleviate the suffering of our people.” See Hroub, *A New Hamas*, 7.

The historical evolution of Hamas's position on electoral politics at the "national" level, which began as "no elections except after the expulsion of the occupier," and ended with its full and active participation, was neither straightforward nor unanimous.¹⁸¹ Prior to retreating from its decade-old policy of inflexibly opposing national elections, Hamas debated participation in a series of deep, analytical discussions in the context of the earlier (and first ever) 1996 legislative elections. During such discussions, Hamas's leaders and membership differed sharply in their views. Several high-profile Hamas members, such as Ismail Haniyeh (the current Prime Minister), Mahmoud al-Zahhar (the former Foreign Minister), and Sheikh Yassin (the founder of Hamas), vigorously argued in support of such participation. Nevertheless, after circulating a highly-analytical memorandum, detailing the pros and cons of electoral participation, and after conducting extensive consultations, the movement's leadership voted to boycott the Palestinians' first ever "national" elections.

Despite its boycott of the Oslo-orchestrated 1996 elections, Hamas has never opposed elections at other levels, nor has it ever been opposed to the concept of elections in general. Quite to the contrary, from its very founding Hamas has actively (and successfully) participated in elections at the societal, student body, chamber of commerce, professional, and union levels.¹⁸² Moreover, it regularly urged Arafat to hold municipal elections, a call that went unheeded until 2004. When municipal elections were finally announced, Hamas immediately announced its intention to run, and did so with remarkable success.¹⁸³ Indeed, it was Hamas's success at the municipal level which, in large part, convinced "the new Hamas" to reverse its opposition to "national" elections.

¹⁸¹ Hroub, *Political Thought and Practice*, 221.

¹⁸² Hamas has consistently received between 40- 50% of the vote when participating in such elections. *See Ibid*, 217.

¹⁸³ Prior to this date, Yasser Arafat insisted on appointments rather than elections.

Adding a final layer of nuance to Hamas's historical position towards elections, is the fact that some sixty- seventy percent of its members participated as voters in the 1996 elections; an often overlooked historical fact that makes it slightly disingenuous to speak of a "Hamas boycott" of the earlier elections.¹⁸⁴

Needless to say, Hamas has been neither ideologically nor holistically opposed to elections. Its opposition to the elections of 1996 had everything to do with its opposition to Oslo, and nothing whatsoever to do with electoral politics itself; and even then, its opposition was only partial, unsupported by some of its top leaders, and apparently rejected by the vast majority of its membership who participated as voters. Indeed, even when elections were direct by-products of the Oslo process, such as the municipal elections of 2004-2005, Hamas was quick to develop ideological loopholes to justify its participation. By drawing a distinction between municipal level elections, which Hamas defended as non-political, service-oriented, and independent of Zionist control, and "national" level elections, which Hamas perceived as political, inseparable from Oslo and Zionist-controlled, Hamas was able to justify its endorsement of an undeniably Oslo-conceived phenomenon while simultaneously remaining loyal to its ideological rejection of Oslo itself.¹⁸⁵

Despite the nuance involved in Hamas's historical position toward electoral politics, it is clear that political participation in general, and elections in particular, did not loom large among Hamas's original cache of strategies, at least according to its 1988 Charter, which notably lacks any reference to "elections" and contains only one extremely vague reference to "politics."¹⁸⁶ To

¹⁸⁴ Mishal & Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, 136.

¹⁸⁵ Muhammad Muslih, *The Foreign Policy of Hamas*, Council of Foreign Relations, February 2000, stating that PA legislators would inevitably operate "in the shadow of a balance of power that decisively favored Israel, thus enabling it to dictate the conditions."

¹⁸⁶ 1988 Charter, Chapter 1, Article 2.

be sure, the most highly-prized strategy endorsed by the “old Hamas” was militant *jihad*, a term rarely heard in the documents or from the mouths of today’s Hamas leaders, who now openly embrace and actively support political participation at all levels and in all forms.

Welfare Assistance & Grassroots Outreach. As previously discussed, scholars of Hamas estimate that over ninety percent of the movement’s budget and activities are devoted to its extensive social service sector.¹⁸⁷ According to one such scholar, while the “smallest fraction” of Hamas’s budget is allotted to their military wing, “the lion’s share goes to [its] social and welfare programs.”¹⁸⁸ Described as Hamas’s “strongest aspect,” its tireless efforts to assist the neediest sectors of Palestinian society are largely credited for Hamas’s “unstoppable rise over the past 20 years and eventual triumph over other Palestinian factions” in the elections of 2006.¹⁸⁹ In the eyes of many, it is Hamas’s social work that sets it apart from other ideological/nationalist movements, a widely-held belief that explains Hamas’s continual victories in societal, municipal, and most recently, national elections.

Admiration for Hamas’s social-welfare services repeatedly surfaced in the personal interviews and discussions I held with observers and scholars of Hamas during the summer of 2006 while living in Amman, Jordan. Indeed, many I spoke with often referred to Hamas’s humanitarian outreach when asked about their identifying characteristics, extensive popularity and electoral successes. According to Adnan Abu Odeh, a political adviser to the current and previous Kings of Jordan, “they [Hamas] were certainly not elected for religious reasons; they were elected because of their performance socially.”¹⁹⁰ This view was similarly expressed by Dr.

¹⁸⁷ *Hamas: Background Q & A*, Council on Foreign Relations, March 16, 2006.

¹⁸⁸ Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: A Beginner’s Guide* (Pluto, 2006), p. 136.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 70.

¹⁹⁰ Personal Interview, August 15, 2006.

Fathi Malkawi,¹⁹¹ a Jordanian professor; Mouin Rabbani, a senior analyst at the International Crisis Group;¹⁹² Amal Sabbagh, the former Secretary General of the Jordanian National Commission for Women;¹⁹³ and many of the students at the University of Jordan, who shared with me, in private and informal discussions, their respect and admiration for Hamas's social efforts despite differences of opinion with respect to their militant past.¹⁹⁴ Most recently, such admiration was expressed in a personal exchange I had with Janet Michael, the first female mayor of a major Palestinian city (Ramallah), who praised Hamas for their ability to do "good work," to engage in "liberal activities," and to make pragmatic decisions, such as supporting her in the municipal elections.¹⁹⁵

Unsurprisingly, welfare provision is thought to be "Hamas's major strategic strength."¹⁹⁶ Indeed, it is Hamas's "powerful pervasive networks" of schools, mosques, kindergartens, hospitals, orphanages, charities, sports clubs, and unions which continue to foster the perception of Hamas as a generous, honest, transparent, even altruistic, welfare provider.¹⁹⁷ Because of such perceptions, many Palestinians who otherwise disagree with Hamas's militant past and/or

¹⁹¹ Personal interview, August 20, 2006.

¹⁹² Personal Interview, August 27, 2006.

¹⁹³ Personal Interview, August 4, 2006.

¹⁹⁴ Most of these discussions were held informally and/or anonymously during my time in Amman, Jordan in the summer of 2006. While studying at the University of Jordan, I had access to many Jordanian students; I took every opportunity to speak with them about Hamas. Overall, Hamas enjoyed widespread acceptance and admiration among the students I spoke with; indeed, the only pro-Hamas rally held in Amman during my time there (as far as I know), was held on the University of Jordan's campus.

¹⁹⁵ Personal exchange with Michael Janet during her visit to St. Antony's College, March 8, 2007.

¹⁹⁶ Hroub, *A Beginner's Guide*, 71.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 70.

religious ideals, nevertheless find themselves admiring, respecting, and even voting for Hamas.¹⁹⁸

Various factors related to Hamas's extensive social services network help to explain how this network acts as one of "the new Hamas's" core strategies in achieving its goals. First, by establishing a benevolent presence throughout the Palestinian territories, Hamas has managed to combat its more militant image portrayed in the international and regional media; thereby, allowing it to gain the support of many who would otherwise be opposed to such militancy. Secondly, the geographical extensiveness of its social infrastructure proved useful in disseminating Hamas's electoral message and thus, in gaining support. Third, by transparently and effectively extending their (often cost-free) services to all Palestinians, irrespective of class, gender, political affiliation or religiosity, Hamas positioned itself as Fatah's competent, corrupt-free and undiscriminating foil. Finally, through its humanitarianism, Hamas helped to foster a "culture of participation," or a civil society, by providing forums for like-minded individuals to gather and openly voice their political dissent. Such forums bolstered Hamas's position, while undermining Fatah who, as the ruling party, was often the object of the political dissent being voiced within the Hamas-affiliated forums.¹⁹⁹

Needless to say, a new Hamas Charter should fully address what has always been, and continues to be, one of Hamas's core strategies, namely its deeply admired humanitarian services.

Resistance using all necessary forms. Without a doubt, Hamas's most internationally-identifiable and jealously-guarded strategy is the right to resist the Israeli occupation using all -- including militant -- means. Renown for its string of suicide bombings in the mid-to-late 1990s,

¹⁹⁸ Hamas equally assisted Fatah members whose income fell below the poverty line.

¹⁹⁹ Muslih, *The Foreign Policy of Hamas*, 46.

and again at the turn of the century following the outbreak of the *Second Intifada*, Hamas continues to adamantly defend its right to resist the Israeli occupation using all means unless and until its ultimate goal, the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, is fulfilled.

The consistency and repetitiveness with which this right has been proclaimed has only fed Hamas's international image as a militant, terrorist group single-mindedly intent on annihilating Israeli civilians. Such an image, however, both flies in the face of current empirical realities and fails to recognize the nuance attached to Hamas's current definition of 'resistance,' a definition that contains many forms of resistance having nothing whatsoever to do with militancy. Clarifying this expansive conception of 'resistance,' Hamas spokesman Ghazi Hamad recently confirmed that "the political track is a part of resistance."²⁰⁰ While Hamas continues to rhetorically cling to the right to resist militarily, Hamas has in reality shown itself willing, capable, even eager, to bargain away, and at times even voluntarily renounce, this specific form of resistance.

While it is understandable, given Hamas's militant past, that its core strategy is often defined as armed resistance, the "new Hamas" does not, at least behaviorally, appear to subscribe to this form of resistance as its preferred strategy. While Hamas's military wing continues to have a formidable role within the movement, militant activities are increasingly viewed by top Hamas officials as disfavored, secondary, and embarrassing,²⁰¹ and further, as activities that should only be resorted to when the other strategies outlined above- the *hudna*, the *tahdiyya*, electoral politics, and welfare provision – are deemed incapable of accomplishing their goals.

²⁰⁰ "Al-Qaeda leader lashes out at Hamas for selling out," AP, March 13, 2007.

²⁰¹ On March 19, 2007 Hamas militants injured an Israeli electrician working on the Gaza border. According to media reports, this incident, which was Hamas's first violation of a four-month old cease-fire with Israel, caused great embarrassment for the newly formed unity government, including Hamas. See "Hamas militants shot Israeli worker new govt takes office," Kuwait Times, March 20, 2007.

While the “old Hamas” proudly announced its attacks against Israeli citizens, the Hamas of today proudly announce its adherence to cease-fires, non-involvement in suicide bombings and disapproval of violent acts, such as the kidnapping of foreigners.²⁰²

As Hamas’s objectives have become increasingly domestic and reform-focused, as described in Chapter Two, militant acts have become perceived as less necessary, less desirable, and increasingly counter-productive. Indeed, a generalized glance at the themes characterizing Hamas’s words and the behaviors dominating their behaviors during its first year in power -- preventing inter-Palestinian violence, reinforcing cease-fires, making continuous truce offerings, and preventing provocations -- reveals a notable absence of planning, espousing, and certainly of executing, militant acts against Israel. While Hamas continues to rhetorically refuse to renounce its right to armed resistance, in practice, and increasingly so in the past thirteen months, it has consistently shown a reluctance and disinclination to behaviorally indulge in this right.

Nevertheless, just as Hamas’s militant proclivities should not be exaggerated, they equally should not be ignored; indeed, armed resistance has always been, and continues to be, one of Hamas’s most cherished strategies. Hamas, according to its current leaders, was not only “born from the womb of armed resistance” but was born for the very purpose of offering a militant alternative to what was perceived as an ineffective and unfair peace process.²⁰³ To be sure, armed resistance stands at the core of Hamas’s original identity, birth, distinctiveness, and purpose. Needless to say, perceptions rooted in such notions are not easily discarded or ignored. Fearing that its identity would become indistinguishable from that of the PLO, which was viewed as having shamefully sold the Palestinian cause (and specifically the right to resist) for

²⁰² “Hamas denounces attack on UNRWA Gaza director,” Kuwait News Agency, March 16, 2007.

²⁰³ “Abbas Swears in Hamas Cabinet,” Palestine Media Center, March 30, 2006.

political dominance, “the new Hamas” has repeatedly assured its constituency that, despite all appearances to the contrary, it has not and will not give up the fundamental right to resist.²⁰⁴

Importantly, today Hamas justifies its commitment to the principle of armed resistance on the basis of international law, as well as majority opinion.²⁰⁵ Indeed, in a public opinion poll conducted during Hamas’s first year in power, fifty-seven percent of Palestinians supported armed attacks against Israeli civilians.²⁰⁶ However one feels about such statistics, one can not dispute Hamas’s claim that in defending the right to resort to armed resistance it is simultaneously defending the will of the Palestinian majority.

While behaviorally the “new Hamas” prefers to use a variety of *political* tools to accomplish its core objectives, rhetorically the “new Hamas” continues to ardently support the right to resist using all available means; a contradiction likely explained by Hamas’s heightened sensitivity to popular support and desire for political survival. As an increasingly typical political party, Hamas has begun to show signs of its willingness to do and say whatever it takes to secure its prized political position. For a variety of reasons, the right to armed resistance continues to be endorsed by the majority of Palestinians, and thus, by Hamas, the democratically elected representative of the Palestinian electorate.

CONCLUSION

²⁰⁴ “We will not sell our people or principles for foreign aid,” *The Guardian*, January 31, 2006; “Hamas: Talk of Movement’s Transformation Into Political Party Premature,” *Al Ayyam*, February 16, 2005; “Mashaal: Armed struggle a strategy,” *Mideast.jpost.com*, December 9, 2006; “Hamas: We didn’t sell out,” *Ynet News*, March 20, 2007.

²⁰⁵ “Hamas slams US reward for Shallah’s capture,” *FrontPage*, February 14, 2007, explaining: “[the] UN charter sanctioned the right of all people under occupation to resist that occupation with all means available till full liberation, which the Palestinian resistance factions are practicing.” [Hamas’s website].

²⁰⁶ “Joint Poll: Palestinian Support for Hamas Unchanged,” *The Palestine Chronicle*, September 27, 2006.

An analysis of Hamas's current strategies presents a portrait of Hamas, which is almost entirely unrecognizable from that portrayed in its founding Charter. Indeed, standing at the core of Hamas's strategic thinking at the moment is the *hudna*, a proposal that envisions a long-term, albeit temporally defined, exchange of land for peace. With the exception of Hamas's rhetorical adherence to the right to resist using all available means, Hamas's other core strategies -- the *hudna*, the *tahdiyya*, popular referenda, electoral politics, and grassroots outreach -- are indisputably political and non-militant in nature. Gone are the days when preparing for, and engaging in, militant *jihad* was the preferred, indeed highly prized, strategy. Today, the "new Hamas's" behavior, even if not its rhetoric, represents a profound transformation away from militancy and towards diplomacy.

CHAPTER FOUR: POSITIONS

Since Hamas's electoral victory in January of 2006, the movement has been forced to publicly articulate its positions toward, and relationship with, other domestic, regional and international actors, including its historical enemies, domestic challengers, and most significantly, its Israeli neighbor. Drawing from *both* Hamas's new documents and recent behaviors, this chapter attempts to objectively construct yet another facet of the "new Hamas's" personality, namely its attitudes and positions toward its most formidable rival, Israel.

As before, such an analysis reveals a strikingly different Hamas than the one portrayed in the founding Charter. Indeed, the "new Hamas" is eager to establish allies, rather than enemies; to forge relationships on pragmatic (financial, material, etc.), rather than ideological, grounds; and to actively promote, rather than uncaringly tarnish, its image in the region and abroad. While it is important to note at this juncture that Hamas does not always speak with one voice, and that its supporters include both "fiery radicals" and pacifistic moderates, *in general* "the new

Hamas,” as a coherent movement, has shown - and continues to show - “signs of pragmatism” with respect to its relationship with other state and political actors.²⁰⁷ Indeed, the idea that Hamas is becoming increasingly pragmatic in its foreign relations has been voiced by various political actors (i.e., The King of Qatar²⁰⁸), scholars (i.e., Jeroen Gunning,²⁰⁹ Graham Fuller²¹⁰), journalists (i.e., Khalid Amayreh), and recently two leading Israeli newspapers (Haaretz²¹¹ and Yediot Achronot²¹²).

For the sake of brevity and non-repetition, this chapter will exclusively focus on Hamas’s position towards Israel, the most contentious and arguably the most potentially transformed of its current positions. While other positions could, and concededly should, be covered in any comprehensive analysis of “the new Hamas” -- including its position toward the International Quartet, other Islamist movements, and the surrounding Arab states -- space and time constraints regrettably prevent the inclusion of such an analysis. Nevertheless, by specifically focusing on the most crucial, relevant, and as will be argued, evolving of Hamas’s positions (namely its position towards Israel), this chapter offers valuable insight into the strategic thinking, and behavioral outputs, of the “new Hamas.” As before, this chapter will begin with a brief sketch of the “old Hamas’s” positions as depicted in its 1988 Charter.

THE OLD HAMAS

²⁰⁷ *Enter Hamas: The Challenges of Political Integration*, International Crisis Group Report, i.

²⁰⁸ “Peres says Qatar sees Israel-Hamas peace possible,” Reuters, January 31, 2007; stating: “Hamas is more pragmatic than we think.”

²⁰⁹ Gunning, *Peace with Hamas*, 238; stating: “Hamas is a pragmatic movement intent on maintaining popular support.”

²¹⁰ Fuller, *Hamas Comes to Power*, December 27, 2006, Ikwaneb.com available at <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/Home.asp?zPage=Systems&System=PressR&Press=Show&Lang=E&ID=5981>.

²¹¹ “Judged by its actions,” Haaretz, March 19, 2007.

²¹² “Leading Israeli Dailies Say End International Boycott, Talk to Hamas,” TPM, March 21, 2007.

In the original Charter, the Positions Chapter provides an ideological mapping of Hamas's distinct location within the domestic, regional and international contexts in which it operated at the time of its writing, 1988. By addressing its relationship with other Islamic and nationalist movements,²¹³ the PLO,²¹⁴ the Arab and Islamic States,²¹⁵ Nationalist and Religious Associations,²¹⁶ members of other religions,²¹⁷ and finally, Zionism,²¹⁸ Hamas rather comprehensively maps its unique place within the Palestinian, and more broadly, the Arab community. While ensuring its compatriots, particularly the PLO, that its purpose is not to compete or replace, but rather, to cooperate, the Charter warns Hamas's enemies, most notably Israel and its "Zionist collaborators," of its determination for wrathful revenge.²¹⁹

The tone of Chapter Four is both conciliatory and enraged. The articles which address other Palestinian actors exude the theme of unity, cooperation, and friendship; while the articles on "World Zionism and the imperialist forces" convey themes of strife and defeat. In keeping with the Charter's overall tone, the language of Chapter Four is sectarian, apocalyptic and bombastic, conveying Hamas's mission as an essential part of "the stream of destiny," which will flow until "the invaders are vanquished and Allah's victory is assured."²²⁰

Moreover, the positions outlined in Chapter Four are framed in universalistic and overly generalized terms. Thus, the standard for respecting and working with other Islamic Movements is only that they display "good intentions and devotion to Allah"; with similar analytical vacuity,

²¹³ 1988 Charter, Articles 23-26. Translation: Mishal & Sela, Palestinian Hamas, Appendix 2.

²¹⁴ Ibid, Article 27.

²¹⁵ Ibid, Article 28.

²¹⁶ Ibid, Article 29.

²¹⁷ Ibid, Article 31.

²¹⁸ Ibid, Article 32.

²¹⁹ Compare Article 23, which vows to treat other Islamic movements with "respect and appreciation" with Article 32, which vows to "confront this vicious, Nazi, Tartar invasion" and all others who "leave the circle of conflict with Zionism."

²²⁰ Ibid, Article 33.

the standard for respecting other nationalist movements requires only that they “not give their allegiance to the Communist East or the Crusader West.”²²¹ Without a doubt, the positions adopted by the Hamas of 1988 were both intellectually unsophisticated and pragmatically lacking, framed as they were in binary and ideological terms. Indeed, while Hamas chose its friends purely on the basis of their religious conviction, they defined its enemies on the basis of their complicity with the “Zionist enemy.” Needless to say, political exigencies and pragmatic realities were of little to no concern to the ideologically-driven Hamas of 1988.

THE NEW HAMAS

In dramatic contrast to the “old Hamas,” the new, more intellectually sophisticated and pragmatically-driven Hamas forms its relationships largely on the basis of pragmatic *realpolitik* considerations. Rather than choosing friends, or making enemies, on the basis of ideological considerations, as was typical of the “old Hamas,” “the new Hamas” appears to be making such determinations on the basis of practical, political and domestic necessity. Astonishingly, such pragmatism is now even being applied to Israel, as discussed below.

Position on Israel. Certainly the most contentious, but perhaps the most evolving, of Hamas’s various positions, is that pertaining to Israel. Obfuscating any analysis of this relationship, however, are discrepancies between “the new Hamas’s” words and deeds; an analysis which is further complicated by the contradictive statements issued by its various spokesmen. Because of the regularity of such contradictions, sorting through the panoply of conflictive positions emanating from Hamas’s rhetoric and behaviors has proved an exceedingly difficult challenge. With this disclosure in mind, onward my analysis goes!

²²¹ Ibid, Chapter 4, Article 25.

Hamas, as an opposition-cum-political actor, is in the midst of an existential reexamination of one of its founding principles: its unqualified rejection of the Israeli state. While the dust has yet to settle on this front, it is nevertheless illuminating to track what is known about the various changes which have transpired within Hamas's ideological and political thinking towards Israel, particularly since its integration into politics. At the very least, such an analysis testifies to the adaptability and fluidity of Hamas's worldviews, which many erroneously assume to be identical to those contained in the 1988 Charter. From the nature of the dialogue transpiring between and among Hamas's internal and external leadership, it can safely be said that Hamas's position toward Israel is anything but stagnant. In keeping with the constructivist approach (described in the Introduction), which elevates the importance of dialogue over concrete outputs, this section will (boldly) attempt to track and analyze -- based on words, deeds and dialogues -- the "new Hamas's" position toward Israel.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the Hamas-led government made a revolutionary concession (at least by Hamas's own standards) in its agreement to work cordially with Israel in "all mundane affairs."²²² Such a concession was just the first of many, including: an agreement to allow Abbas to conduct negotiations with Israel on behalf of the Hamas-led government,²²³ a promise to "respect" and "honor" international resolutions and prior commitments made between Israel and the PLO,²²⁴ and an affirmation by Hamas's leading figure, Khaled Mish'al, to recognize "Israel as a geopolitical reality," which Hamas "would be willing to coexist in peace

²²² Hroub, *A New Hamas*, 18.

²²³ "Hamas pledges support for Abbas in talks with Israel," Focus Information Agency, February 1, 2007.

²²⁴ "Al-Shaer: Europeans are mulling new mechanism in dealing with PA unity government," FrontPage, February 12, 2007. [Hamas's website].

with” under certain specified conditions.²²⁵ Such concessions, while not generous enough for the international Quartet, are striking when compared to Hamas’s original positions outlined in its founding Charter.

Despite that Hamas continues to deny having made any substantive changes in its “strategic thinking” toward Israel, its post-electoral words and actions suggest otherwise.²²⁶ While certain high-profile Hamas figures, such as Ismail Radwan,²²⁷ Riad Mustafa,²²⁸ and Ghazi Hamad²²⁹ continue to reject any recognition -- past, present or future -- of Israel, there has been a definite “evolution in the movement’s political phraseology” with respect to its position on Israel’s existence.²³⁰ Indeed, Hamas has responded to the three Quartet demands (to endorse previous agreements, recognize Israel, and renounce violence), with unnoticed and unrewarded pragmatism. Under the pressures imposed by such demands, Hamas’s rigidity towards Israel has begun to flag, however reluctantly. By agreeing to “respect” previous agreements (as discussed earlier), recognize Israel as a “fait accompli,” and work with Israel in all “mundane affairs,” Hamas has come a long way from its original position of unqualified and wholesale rejection.²³¹

²²⁵ “Hamas: Before and after Makkah,” FrontPage, February 12, 2007. [Hamas’s website].

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ “Hamas wants the West to end Blockade,” The Age, February 9, 2007.

²²⁸ *Palestinians, Israel and the Quartet: Pulling Back from the Brink*, ICG Report No. 54 (June 2006), 3; stating: “Hamas does not and never will recognize Israel.”

²²⁹ “Hamas’ Unreality Check,” HonestReporting.com, January 17, 2007.

²³⁰ Ibid, stating: “Radwan’s perception of reality, however, doesn’t negate the fact that Hamas has come a long way from its ideological rigidity as encapsulated in its charter of 1988, which students of Hamas, such as Azzam Tamimi, head of the London-based Institute of Islamic Thought, believes is anachronistic...”

²³¹ “Quartet’ put PLO and Hamas in no-win situation,” Online Journal, February 6, 2007.

In contrast to the “old Hamas,” the Hamas of today is explicitly willing to negotiate with Israel under certain specified conditions.²³² As previously discussed, the first condition involves negotiating with Israel in “all mundane affairs,” including all “business, trade, health, and labor” related issues.²³³ With this announcement, Hamas proclaimed its willingness to work with Israel on a day-to-day basis on a multitude of fundamental issues, such as health. Showing a distinct willingness to prioritize political exigency over historical ideology, Hamas spokesman Mohammed Ghazal, in a series of “unprecedented comments” made in the lead-up to the January 2006 elections, announced that “[h]istorically, we believe all Palestine belongs to Palestinians, but we’re talking now about reality, about political solutions... The realities are different”; thus, Ghazal concluded, “I don’t think there will be a problem of negotiating with the Israelis.”²³⁴

The second condition under which Hamas has announced its willingness to negotiate with Israel is through a mediator, specifically designated (at least for now) as the internationally-trusted President of the PA, Mahmoud Abbas.²³⁵ By allowing Abbas, a chief architect of the Oslo process, renown for his support of the two-state solution and endorsement of Israel’s existence, to directly negotiate with Israel on Hamas’s behalf (and with no strings attached), Hamas has given Abbas the implicit approval to bring his own beliefs to the negotiating table. Indeed, in recent times Abbas made clear -- and with no rebuttal from Hamas -- that “Palestinian positions are identical [to] the Road Map peace plan’s obligations,” which include promises to

²³² Usher, *The New Hamas: Between Resistance and Participation*, Middle East Report Online, August 25, 2005, stating: “Hamas now publicly accepts that it, too, would negotiate with the Jewish state.”

²³³ Cabinet Platform; see Hroub, *A New Hamas*, 18.

²³⁴ “Hamas: We could one day recognize Israel,” News Wire, September 21, 2005.

²³⁵ “Hamas pledges support for Abbas in talks with Israel,” Focus Information Agency, February 1, 2007.

endorse the two-state solution, accept the legitimacy of past peace agreements, and renounce violence.”²³⁶ Such concessions were made even more explicit with the recent revival of the Arab Peace Initiative at the Arab Summit in Riyadh, which was accomplished with the full participation and explicit complicity of both the Hamas-led government and top Hamas officials.

Third, Hamas has publicly and repeatedly offered to negotiate with Israel when and if they are willing to accept the principle of a long-term truce, or the *hudna*, described earlier. Though Hamas continues to rhetorically uphold what it refers to as the “Palestinian constants”²³⁷ (or *thawa-bit filisteenia* in Arabic), which include an adamant rejection of Israel’s legitimacy, it nevertheless – in both its public proclamations and actions – seems well prepared to engage with Israel in extensive contacts, whether directly or indirectly, on issues of every-day, albeit fundamental, importance.

Summarizing its newfound willingness to engage with Israel, a Hamas interviewee reported: “we [Hamas] are prepared to deal with Israel on day-to-day matters. We are prepared to have President Abbas negotiate a peace agreement with Israel. And we are prepared to have any agreement submitted to a national referendum. No more, no less.”²³⁸ More recently, Hamas published a statement on its website confirming that “there is no religious prohibition against negotiating with Israel.”²³⁹

Hamas’s language toward Israel has dramatically evolved since its earlier days, when it often used the terms “Zionism” and “Judaism,” or “Zionist” and “Jew,” interchangeably, a

²³⁶ “President Abbas: Palestinian Positions Identical in Terms of the Road Map,” IMEMC, February 23, 2007.

²³⁷ “Hamas affirms insistence on constants,” FrontPage, February 1, 2007. [Hamas’s website].

²³⁸ *After Mecca: Engaging Hamas*, ICG Report No. 62, 30.

²³⁹ “Abu Marzouk: Mishaal-Abbas meeting within days,” January 13, 2007, FrontPage. [Hamas’s website].

linguistic sloppiness particularly evident in the 1988 Charter.²⁴⁰ Today, such sloppiness is rarely, if ever, heard or written. Since Hamas's rise to public prominence, it has repeatedly affirmed that it "does not adopt belligerent positions against anyone on the basis of his creed or ideology," but instead, on the basis of his/her actions alone.²⁴¹ In an editorial written in the *Guardian* on January 31, 2006, following Hamas's surprise electoral victory, Khaled Mish'al assured Israeli Jews of Hamas's distinction between religious identity and political behavior:

Our message to the Israelis is this: we do not fight you because you belong to a certain faith or culture. Jews have lived in the Muslim world for 13 centuries in peace and harmony; they are in our religion "the people of the book" who have a covenant from God and His Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) to be respected and protected. Our conflict with you is not religious but political. We have no problem with Jews who have not attacked us...²⁴²

Even while Ismael Haniyeh was visiting the Iranian capital in December of 2006, during which much of the incendiary rhetoric typical of the "old Hamas" resurfaced, Haniyeh was careful to avoid any mentioning of the term "Jew" or "Judaism," instead criticizing only "the usurper Zionist government" or the "Israeli occupation."²⁴³

The most contentious issue pertaining to Hamas's position towards Israel involves recognition of Israel's right to exist. Here, more than in any other area, Hamas's current position is better characterized as a dialogue, or an on-going discussion, and thus, as something

²⁴⁰ See 1988 Charter: Preamble ("Our struggle against the Jews..."); Hadith quote cited in Preamble ("The Day of Judgment will not come about until Moslems fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees"); Article 13 ("In face of the Jews' usurpation of Palestine, it is compulsory that the banner of Jihad be raised"); Article 20 ("In their Nazi treatment, the Jews made no exception for women or children"); Article 28 ("Israel, Judaism and Jews challenge Islam and the Moslem people. May the cowards never sleep"); Article 32 ("...the warmongering Jews"). [Translation: Avalon Project at Yale Law School available at: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/hamas.htm>].

²⁴¹ Khaled Hroub, *Political Thought and Practice*, 45.

²⁴² "We will not sell our people or principles for foreign aid," *The Guardian*, Tuesday January 31, 2006.

²⁴³ "Hamas: We Will Never Recognize Israel," *The Guardian*, December 8, 2006.

continually subject to change, amendment, and even reversal. This dialogue entered its most intensively public stage on January 11th, 2007 when Khaled Mish'al, in a widely-publicized interview with Reuters, announced that Hamas does not seek the destruction of Israel, as specified in its founding Charter, but instead "accepts the existence of the state of Israel" as a "matter of fact" that "will remain."²⁴⁴ Drawing a distinction between accepting Israel's existence and offering official recognition, Mish'al affirmed the former, while promising to extend the latter if and when Israel agreed to the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Although such acknowledgements have been made before,²⁴⁵ they were more explicit, and certainly more widely disseminated, following the interview with Mish'al, who as the "supreme leader" of Hamas is viewed as largely responsible for shaping and dictating Hamas's foreign policy toward Israel.²⁴⁶ Nevertheless, despite generating a day's worth of unprecedented headlines reporting on Hamas's "softening" position,²⁴⁷ in the hours and days following the interview, other Hamas leaders eagerly emerged to clarify the "impossibility" of ever "recognizing Israel's moral legitimacy."²⁴⁸ Indeed, a mere hour following Mish'al's interview, Hamas spokesman Ghazi Hamad was on the airwaves reporting that "there was no change in our

²⁴⁴ "Hamas official accepts Israel but stops short of recognition," *The Guardian*, January 11, 2007.

²⁴⁵ See interview Mish'al conducted with the Paris daily *Le Figaro*, March, 29, 2006, during which he stated: "If Israel withdraws from the West Bank and East Jerusalem, recognizes the refugees' right of return, and dismantles the new wall, I can guarantee you that Hamas, and the whole Palestinian people behind it, will be ready to take serious steps, based on justice and equality, towards a permanent peace with the Israelis," *available at* <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=2974>.

²⁴⁶ "Who's Who in Hamas," *Times Online*, January 26, 2006.

²⁴⁷ i.e., the *Guardian* headline read "Hamas leader accepts the 'reality' of Israel" (January, 12, 2007); *The Independent* read "Hamas softens Israel stance in calls for Palestinian state" (January 11, 2007).

²⁴⁸ "Government seeks to hurl ball into the Israeli court," *FrontPage*, January 25, 2007 [Hamas's website].

stance that Hamas does not recognize Israel.”²⁴⁹ Soon thereafter a number of other Hamas officials rushed forward with their own clarifications: Salah Bardawil, head of Hamas’s parliamentary faction, insisted that Mish’al’s words had been “twisted and distorted”;²⁵⁰ Ahmed Yusuf, political adviser to Haniyeh, distinguished between *de facto* recognition, which Hamas accepts, and *de jure* recognition, which Hamas rejects²⁵¹; and Ismail Haniyeh, current Prime Minister, clarified that the *hudna* was based on exchanging land for peace, not land for *recognition*.²⁵² In addition to these individual clarifications, Hamas’s official Information Bureau issued an official statement criticizing Reuter’s professionalism and noting Hamas’s “utter dismay and protest over the distortions and alterations” contained in the reporting of Mish’al’s interview.²⁵³

Unlike Mish’al, many Hamas officials avoid or evade responding to questions pertaining to Hamas’s position toward Israel. This is done using a variety of avoidance techniques, which include: stating that the Palestinian community at large will have to be consulted before responding,²⁵⁴ referring the questioner to preexisting documents, such as the Prisoner’s Initiative,²⁵⁵ or avoiding the question altogether by deferring to a more definitive position such as “[t]he Palestinian government insists on the June 4, 1967 borders [and] full Palestinian

²⁴⁹ “Hamas' Unreality Check,” HonestReporting.com, January 17, 2007.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ “Hamas official accepts Israel but stops short of recognition,” The Guardian, January 11, 2007.

²⁵² “Palestinian PM says U.S. aims to topple his government,” Reuters, January 22, 2007.

²⁵³ “Angry Hamas blasts Reuters: we are still in the business of destroying Israel,” January 15, 2007.

²⁵⁴ “Europe cuts off aid to Hamas,” The Times Online, April 7, 2006.

²⁵⁵ “‘We know what we want’,” The Guardian Unlimited, September 5, 2006, quoting Ismail Haniyeh, who responding to a question regarding Israel’s recognition, stated: “The national government has a programme that relates to the adjusted prisoners document.”

sovereignty with Jerusalem as its capital.”²⁵⁶ By deflecting the ever-contentious recognition question, a tendency that has appeared with increased frequency since acceding to power, the “new Hamas” has exhibited a level of discomfort previously unseen; a change which, at the very least, suggests an ideological fluidity on the question of Israel’s existence.

Despite the confusing status and undefined contours of the “new Hamas’s” position toward Israel, three observations can be made with certainty. First, its position is negotiable and subject to dialogue; in other words, its position toward Israel is not set in stone. Second, its position is currently in a state of ideological flux, a fact that, at the very least, corroborates Hamas’s ability to ideologically change and evolve. And third, its position closely aligns with Palestinian public opinion, which suggests, and for some justifies, Hamas’s reluctance to move closer to full recognition.²⁵⁷

Despite its current state of ideological flux, it is increasingly clear that the “new Hamas” acknowledges that Israel is an existing “fact”²⁵⁸ whose “de facto existence”²⁵⁹ is “a reality” that can no longer be ignored.²⁶⁰ In addition to such explicit comments, such concessions are arguably implicit in many of Hamas’s actions directed toward Israel: its agreement to negotiate with them on every-day matters, its offer of a long-term truce, its approval of Abbas’s mediating role, its promise to ‘respect’ PLO-Israeli agreements, just to name a few. Foreshadowing further

²⁵⁶ “Hamas secures more Iranian funding,” MWC News, March 7, 2007.

²⁵⁷ “Shikaki: Palestinians Support Hamas,” September 25, 2006, Council on Foreign Relations, available at <http://www.cfr.org/publication/11522/shikaki.html>, quoting Shikaki: “two-thirds [of those polled] support Hamas’ views that it should not support the state of Israel as a precondition for international support or for entering negotiations with Israel... we clearly see the public taking the position of Hamas...”

²⁵⁸ “Hamas reiterates non-recognition of Israel,” Deutsche Presse-Agentur, January 11, 2007.

²⁵⁹ “Hamas leader calls Israeli state ‘reality,’” The Guardian, January 12, 2007; see also, “What Hamas Wants,” Middle East Online, January 16, 2007.

²⁶⁰ “Hamas spokesman, Ismail Radwan, accuses Abbas of unrealistic slogans, says Mesha'al did not 'recognize' Israel,” Al-Jazeera, January 11, 2007.

changes, the Hamas website recently published an article stating: “the provisions in its charter [calling] for the destruction of Israel are not indelible.”²⁶¹ While only the future will tell where and when the dust will settle on this point, a transformation seems clearly underway.

CONCLUSION

To conclude that Hamas has undergone “a fundamental shift” in its thinking toward Israel is perhaps a bit premature.²⁶² Yet, it is undeniable that Hamas has come along way from its original position of absolute rejection, a phenomenon beginning to be noticed by the international²⁶³ and Hamas-run press.²⁶⁴ Still, while Hamas seems willing to negotiate, sign a truce, and cooperate daily with Israel, it refuses to recognize the latter’s legitimacy so long as the occupation persists. While it remains to be seen whether Hamas will take the next step, an increasingly tiny step, toward full recognition, it is clear that the Hamas of today, at least behaviorally, and in some instances rhetorically, is not the Hamas of the past.

²⁶¹ “Abu Marzouk: Mishaal-Abbas meeting within days,” FrontPage, January 13, 2007. [Hamas’s website].

²⁶² “Hamas and Israel / Road map to recognition,” Haaretz, January 12, 2007.

²⁶³ “Hamas leader calls Israeli state ‘reality,’” The Guardian, January 12, 2007.

²⁶⁴ “Hamas: Before and after Makkah,” FrontPage, February 13, 2007, stating that “Hamas has come a long way from its ideological rigidity as encapsulated in its charter of 1988.” [Hamas’s website].

CHAPTER FIVE: HISTORICAL PROOF

The purpose of this Chapter is three-fold. First, in an attempt to consolidate and summarize two years worth of empirical observations, collected from Hamas's statements, behaviors, documents, and negotiations during the course of its electoral campaign and first year in power, this chapter begins, following a brief re-visitation of the Historical Proof Chapter in the 1988 Charter, by providing the "proof" necessary to corroborate the thesis defended herein, namely: that, despite a history of inexcusable violence and on-going rhetorical rigidity, the Hamas of today is a vastly more pragmatic and *politically*-oriented (as opposed to ideologically-oriented) movement, ever-ready to exploit ideological escape-hatches and creative loop-holes in

an effort to accomplish its increasingly mundane goals and maintain its popular support. This “proof” will be presented by way of a list of concrete examples, which exemplify “the new Hamas’s” more accommodative spirit and pragmatic orientation.

Second, this chapter will attempt to dispel, or at least cast doubt on, the widely held view that Hamas is a “one-track organization with a monolithic, fanatic vision; unshakable fundamentalist interests; rigidly binary perceptions; and intransigent preferences,” as its founding Charter certainly suggests.²⁶⁵ If nothing else, Hamas’s recent performances and statements undermine the view that the movement is ideologically bound to a preexisting set of ideals; and support the contrary view that “the new Hamas” is an ever-evolving organism capable and willing to change (ideologically, behaviorally, etc.). This “proof” will similarly be presented by listing a series of concrete examples, or more precisely, a collection of statements, affirming the impermanence, and increasing irrelevance, of Hamas’s founding Charter.

Third, this chapter will present countervailing evidence to the thesis defended herein; namely, that the Hamas of today is not only incapable of and/or unwilling to change, but worse, is ideologically imprisoned by an inflexible set of Islamic doctrines and founding ideals, as contained in its ever-relevant founding Charter. As a movement operating under uniquely oppressive circumstances, including a foreign occupation, economic isolation and domestic unrest, “the new Hamas” has, unexpectedly, suffered moments of relapse and indecision regarding its choice to pursue the political track. As such, counterexamples to the thesis presented above certainly exist, and increasingly so since Hamas’s more profound concessions of recent times (the Mecca Agreement, the unity government, the giving up of sensitive cabinet posts, the endorsement of the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002, etc.), which have gone almost

²⁶⁵ Mishal & Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, 170.

entirely unrewarded by the very audience, the International Quartet, for whom the concessions were made. In getting to know “the new Hamas,” it is crucial that such counterexamples also be examined; to do otherwise, would be both intellectually dishonest and empirically misleading. Thus, this chapter, while arguing that the empirical evidence weighs in favor of the thesis defended herein, will additionally tabulate, by way of a list of concrete examples, the countervailing evidence casting doubt on the core contention of this thesis, as outlined above.

THE OLD HAMAS

The final chapter of the original Charter, Chapter Five, is devoted to confirming the certainty of victory over “the Zionist invasion,” a victory that is as certain, according to Article thirty-four, as “a law of nature” or “a pattern in the universe.”²⁶⁶ As one of the shortest, vaguest, and most substantively vacuous chapters, Chapter Five reflects on Palestine’s unenviable historical plight as the “coveted” “object of greed,” which has suffered from the “avaricious” desires of “the Crusaders,” “the Tartars,” and most recently, “the Zionists.”²⁶⁷

In addition to establishing the religious, historical, and geographical significance of Palestine -- “the heart of earth” and “the meeting of the continents” -- Chapter Five presents Hamas’s mission as an apocalyptic battle of faith and destiny, of good versus evil, wherein all Muslims, united under a single “religious banner,” engage in “endless *jihad*” against an “ideological invasion.”²⁶⁸

Needless to say, the original Chapter Five would have little relevance for a new Charter introducing the “new Hamas,” given that it offers nothing of value regarding Hamas’s ideological composition or behavioral tendencies, other than its (now obsolete) preference for

²⁶⁶ 1988 Charter, Chapter 5, Article 34.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, Articles 34 & 35.

inflammatory rhetoric, medieval allusions and anachronistic phraseology. Nevertheless, in an attempt to maintain the structural consistency of the original Charter (as well as this thesis, which structurally mimics the 1988 Charter), this chapter seeks to provide the ‘historical proof,’ drawn from modern Palestinian history, of Hamas’s ideological and behavioral metamorphoses since the drafting of its Charter, with a particular emphasis on the post-March 2005 period.

THE NEW HAMAS

While a number of high profile individuals, as well as the Israeli foreign ministry,²⁶⁹ deny Hamas’s ideological and behavioral metamorphoses -- among them, Dennis Ross,²⁷⁰ Madeline Albright,²⁷¹ Richard Haass,²⁷² and Danny Rubenstein²⁷³ -- an increasing number of scholars, journalists, politicians and outside observers have recognized Hamas’s transformational achievements and capabilities. Such individuals include, among others, Jeroen Gunning,²⁷⁴ Sara Roy,²⁷⁵ Graham Fuller,²⁷⁶ Khaled Hroub,²⁷⁷ Shaul Mishal,²⁷⁸ Avraham Sela,²⁷⁹ Remi Kanazi,²⁸⁰ The King of Qatar,²⁸¹ George Soros,²⁸² Marwan Al Kabalan²⁸³ Janet Michael,²⁸⁴ Amir Kulick,²⁸⁵ Robert Novak²⁸⁶ the list grows ever-longer.

²⁶⁹ See statement issued by the Israeli foreign ministry; “Israel Foreign Ministry: Hamas-Fatah Agreement Does Not Meet the Requirements of the International Community,” Independent Media Review Analysis, February 25, 2007.

²⁷⁰ “Dennis Ross: Too Confused to Surrender,” Jerusalem Post, July 2, 2006.

²⁷¹ Hroub, *Political Thought & Practice*, 198.

²⁷² “Richard N. Haass: The New Middle East,” Newsweek, January 8, 2007.

²⁷³ “Hamas' Fall is Nearer,” Palestine Chronicle, October 10, 2006.

²⁷⁴ Gunning, *Peace with Hamas*, 248.

²⁷⁵ Sara Roy, *Hamas and the Transformation(s) of Political Islam in Palestine*, 20.

²⁷⁶ Fuller, Hamas Comes to Power, Ikwaweb.com, December 27, 2006.

²⁷⁷ Hroub, *Political Thought & Practice*, 152.

²⁷⁸ Mishal & Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, 7.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ “All roads lead to checkpoints,” Online Journal, February 27, 2007, stating: “Hamas is not the same organization it was in 1988.”

²⁸¹ “Peres says Qatar sees Israel-Hamas peace possible,” Reuters, January 31, 2007.

²⁸² “Soros wants to make Hamas a ‘partner,’” American Thinker, March 9, 2007.

Historical Proof of the “New Hamas.” A cursory review of the empirical data strongly supports two contentions. First, Hamas is an ideologically transformed (and ever-transforming) movement, which values pragmatism, diplomacy, and increasingly, ideological accommodation. Second, Hamas’s past and present transformations, strongly suggest the likelihood of future transformations; and in a direction toward greater accommodation and pragmatism.

The following empirical observations provide concrete examples of both contentions:

- On February 15th, 2007 Prime Minister Haniyeh agreed to resign his democratically-installed government in order to establish a unity government; a move which required him to relinquish the three most sensitive posts: the interior, foreign, and finance ministries. Those nominated to fill these posts were chosen strictly on pragmatic grounds with an eye toward appeasing the international community. The finance ministry went to a PhD-holding “US favorite,” with “close ties to the Bush administration,”²⁸⁷ the interior ministry went to an entirely uncontroversial, non-partisan academic,²⁸⁸ and the foreign ministry similarly went to an independent, Georgetown-educated, former Fatah member.²⁸⁹ In making these nominations, the Hamas leadership was careful to exclude members, such as Said Siam (former Interior Minister) and Mahmoud Zahar (former Foreign Minister), who had controversial and/or internationally-disfavored reputations. Many outsider observers credited the Hamas politicians, which voluntarily relinquished fourteen of the twenty-four cabinet ministries (despite its entitlement to sixteen such posts based on its sixty percent majority in

²⁸³ “Reality of Hamas rule,” Gulf News, March 23, 2007.

²⁸⁴ Personal Exchange during her visit to St. Antony’s, March 8, 2007.

²⁸⁵ “The Platform of the Palestinian Unity Government,” INSS Policy Brief, April 2, 2007.

²⁸⁶ “Olive Branch From Hamas,” Washington Post, April 16, 2007.

²⁸⁷ “US Favorite accepts key Palestinian ministry post,” Reuters, February 21, 2007.

²⁸⁸ “Hamas and Fatah to confirm cabinet,” The Guardian Unlimited, March 15, 2007.

²⁸⁹ “Hamas-Fatah coalition misses West's goals,” The Herald Tribune, March 16, 2007.

the legislature),²⁹⁰ with constructing “a reasonable government with a reasonable program,” staffed by “peace makers” and “personalities that the world knows very well.”²⁹¹

- Despite Israel’s mass arrest of over thirty Hamas lawmakers and nine cabinet members (most of whom are still being detained without charge),²⁹² the killing of 660 Palestinians (including 141 children), the demolition of 334 Palestinian homes (housing over 1,849 individuals), the detention of over 11,000 Palestinians,²⁹³ and the steady intensification of Israel’s “campaign of provocations, bombings, missile attacks, house demolitions and targeted assassinations,” all of which occurred during Hamas’s first year in power, many in the media noted, with astonishment, that “no effective resistance operations have been attributed to Hamas since it took over power,” with the one recent exception of the shooting of an Israeli electrician on the Gaza border.²⁹⁴ Apart from this one exception, the last such attack was in 2004, prior to Hamas’s integration into national politics.
- Despite constant provocation by Fatah rebels, including their siege of the Hamas-affiliated Islamic University, the fire-torching of multiple Hamas-led ministries, several assassination attempts, and the mass laying-off of Hamas sympathizers employed by the PA, among other such acts, the leaders of Hamas have worked tirelessly to restrain (to the extent possible) their own militants from responding in kind by repeatedly calling for calm and national unity.
- Despite personal provocations by President Abbas, including his declared outlawing of the Hamas-constructed Executive Forces, his calling for early elections, his appointing of

²⁹⁰ “After One Year, Democracy Remains On Trial in Palestine,” Palestine Times, January 1, 2007.

²⁹¹ “US Favorite accepts key Palestinian ministry post,” Reuters, February 21, 2007.

²⁹² “The Devastating Failure of the Political Process,” Palestine Times, November 11, 2007.

²⁹³ “IOF killed 660 Palestinians and demolished 334 homes in 2006,” FrontPage, December 30, 2006. [Hamas’s Website].

²⁹⁴ “The Devastating Failure of the Political Process,” Palestine Times, November 11, 2007.

Mohammed Dahlan (a highly provocative figure despised by Hamas) to a position of prominence, his threatening to enlarge the Fatah-loyal Presidential Guards, and his acceptance of weapons, training and financial support from the US government, which were specifically designated for use against Hamas,²⁹⁵ the Hamas-led leadership elevated Abbas to a position of diplomatic dominance, allowing him to unilaterally negotiate with Israel and the international community on their behalf; a deeply pragmatic move given Hamas's historical rejection of Abbas's negotiating terms.

- Janet Michael, a liberal-minded, independent Christian who recently became the first female mayor of a major Palestinian city, attributed her electoral success, in large part, to the votes of Hamas politicians. In a recent personal exchange, Michael spoke approvingly of Hamas's political performance since coming to power, describing the movement as neither fundamentalist nor conservative, but instead, "committed to liberal causes."²⁹⁶
- Beginning in February 2007, "the new Hamas" went further than it ever had before by way of concessions and compromises. Indeed, by agreeing to endorse the Mecca Agreement, creating a unity government, and participating in the resurrection of the Arab Peace Initiative, the Hamas leadership, in addition to significantly diluting its political power and transferring the levers of foreign policy-making largely to Abbas, showed a newfound openness to a *permanent* two-state solution, to "respecting" previous peace agreements, to expanding the cease-fire with Israel to include the West Bank, and to extending *de facto* recognition to the Israeli state, as discussed in previous chapters. Such concessions, which revealed "the new pragmatism characterizing Hamas," prompted immediate praise (and an

²⁹⁵ "Hamas Pledges to Boost Forces in Gaza," The Columbian News, January 7, 2007.

²⁹⁶ Personal exchange with Janet Michael, Mayor of Ramallah, during her visit to Oxford, March 8, 2007.

official visit) by the Norwegian government,²⁹⁷ a ringing endorsement by all Arab states,²⁹⁸ a conciliatory (albeit cautious) welcome by the EU,²⁹⁹ and even a noticeable softening by the US and UK governments.³⁰⁰

While many additional examples could be cited, many of which are contained throughout this thesis, those presented above are intended to summarize the more remarkable and visible behavioral accommodations exhibited by the “new Hamas,” a movement clearly capable of showing restraint, prioritizing domestic over ideological concerns, compromising its founding ideals, and engaging in diplomacy, rather than militancy, to achieve its goals. According to one scholar/journalist, since coming to power “Hamas has never missed an opportunity to prove to the rest of the world that it was and remains as rational and pragmatic as any other secular group.”³⁰¹ While it is certainly possible that the old oppositional, militant Hamas could be resurrected if “the new Hamas” is forced to relinquish its democratically-earned political position; the reverse seems equally plausible, namely, if allowed to maintain its politically integrated status, “the new Hamas” will likely continue showing signs of moderation, pragmatism and sensitivity to popular opinion.

Given the accumulated evidence of Hamas’s various ideological and behavioral metamorphoses, it is striking that many (mostly in the West) continue to ignore empirical realities and instead, focus on pre-existing characterizations informed by stale evidence and obsolete documents, such as Hamas’s 20-year old Charter. Such uninformed characterizations,

²⁹⁷ “The Platform of the Palestinian Unity Government,” INSS Policy Brief, April 2, 2007.

²⁹⁸ “Saudis Leave Rice Stranded,” TIME, March 30, 2007.

²⁹⁹ “US Cool on Palestinian Government,” BBC, March 18, 2007.

³⁰⁰ “US, UK to water down policy against speaking with Hamas-led government,” Israeli Insider, March 17, 2007.

³⁰¹ “Reality of Hamas rule,” Gulf News, March 23, 2007.

in addition to ignoring reality, fail to recognize the potentially momentous rewards involved in encouraging Hamas's newfound conciliatory attitude toward more productive ends.

Historical Proof of the Charter's Impermanence. Movements, like people, have the ability to change and evolve. Thus, movements can, and often do, contradict, amend and even renounce their earlier aspirations, even those memorialized in founding charters, as the PLO's own history attests.³⁰² Such is the case with Hamas, whose leaders have acknowledged that its Charter is neither sacred nor unchangeable, and strongly hinted at the possibility for future amendment or even replacement.³⁰³ Hamas Leader Khaled Mish'al recently affirmed that "changing the Hamas Charter" was "a matter for the future,"³⁰⁴ an affirmation corroborated by Hamas spokesman, Mohammed Ghazal, who publicly announced that "Hamas's charter is not the Koran."³⁰⁵ Suggesting that Hamas is not ideologically imprisoned by its earlier principles, Mish'al additionally noted that "the distant future will have its own circumstances and positions could be determined then."³⁰⁶ In a separate interview, conducted several years prior to the legislative elections, Khaled Mish'al stated that the Charter "should not be regarded as the fundamental ideological frame of reference from which the movement derives its positions or on the basis of which its justifies its actions," but instead, as a historically-circumscribed document which was "rushed out to meet what was perceived at the time as a pressing need to introduce the newly founded movement to the public."³⁰⁷ Other members of Hamas's leadership similarly "do

³⁰² The PLO, as part of the Oslo peace process, agreed to eliminate several key provisions in its founding Charter calling for the destruction of Israel.

³⁰³ "Nixed Signals," *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting*, September/October 2006; stating: "Hamas leaders have not ruled out changing their movement's charter."

³⁰⁴ "Hamas official accepts Israel but stops short of recognition," *The Guardian*, January 11, 2007.

³⁰⁵ "Hamas: We'll rethink call to destroy Israel," *Ynetnews*, September 21, 2005.

³⁰⁶ "Hamas leader says Israel's existence is a reality," *Mail & Guardian*, January 11, 2007.

³⁰⁷ Tamimi, *Unwritten Chapters*, 149; cross-reference footnote 4, page 319.

not preclude significant changes over time in their policies toward Israel and in their founding charter.”³⁰⁸ Hamas spokesman Ibrahim Ghosheh, for example, confirmed that “the articles of the charter are not sacred,” but instead, “subject to review and revision.”³⁰⁹

In addition to these comments made by members and leaders of Hamas, similar comments have been voiced by non-affiliated outside observers. Such comments include the following:

- a recent International Crisis Group Report, which reported that the provisions in Hamas’s charter “are not indelible”,³¹⁰
- a commentary written by Israeli scholar Reuven Paz, stating that Hamas’s current “positions do not coincide with the movement's 1988 charter”,³¹¹
- a book written by Hamas expert Azzam Tamimi, who wrote that “the Charter has never been an accurate reflection of either the philosophy or the political standpoint of the movement”,³¹²
- a publication by the leading Hamas scholar, Khaled Hroub, who confirmed that Hamas’s “irrelevant” Charter, has become “largely obsolete”,³¹³
- a personal discussion with analyst Mouin Rabbani, who reported that Hamas’s new statements, documents and deeds “have virtually nothing in common with the founding charter”,³¹⁴

³⁰⁸ “Hamas: The Last Chance for Peace?,” Foundation for Middle East Peace, April 5, 2006.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ *Enter Hamas: The Challenges of Political Integration*, ICG, Report No. 49 (January 2006), 40.

³¹¹ “Judge the Hamas movement by its deeds, not its ideology,” The Daily Star, February 9, 2007.

³¹² Tamimi, *Unwritten Chapters*, 7.

³¹³ Hroub, *A Beginner’s Guide*, 33.

³¹⁴ Personal Interview with the author, August 27, 2006.

- a recent book, published by political scientists Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, which defends the thesis that Hamas “is not a prisoner of its own dogmas”;³¹⁵ and finally,
- a personal email exchange with author Azzam Tamimi, who recently wrote:

You can hardly find a single Hamas leader who quotes the charter or refers to it. In fact, many of Hamas leaders contradict the Charter when for instance they talk about the Jews or about the nature of the conflict. The Charter is increasingly seen as a redundant historical document. It is very likely that Hamas will in the future come up with a different document whose purpose will be to better introduce it to the world. It may not be called a new charter but that is exactly what it will be.³¹⁶

Needless to say, the number and frequency of such comments, expressed by both Hamas and non-Hamas affiliated individuals, strongly suggest the founding Charter’s impermanence and increasingly so, its irrelevance.

Historical Counter-Proof of “the new Hamas.” It is important that the “new Hamas” not be viewed with “rose colored glasses,” as one of the aforementioned scholars has been accused of doing.³¹⁷ After all, the 1988 Charter has neither been replaced, nor even amended; both of which the movement is fully capable of doing. To be sure, evidence of Hamas’s ideological metamorphoses should not preclude an evaluation of Hamas’s ideological reversions and/or entrenchments. Such an evaluation is crucial, given the distinct possibility of Hamas’s re-transformation back into the “old Hamas” described in the founding Charter.

Indeed, armed militancy and ideological inflexibility represent an increasingly tantalizingly option for an opposition-cum-governing political party, which continues to be boycotted, economically strangled, and unrewarded for its revolutionary integration into the

³¹⁵ Mishal & Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, viii.

³¹⁶ Personal email exchange with the author, received February 26, 2007.

³¹⁷ “Hamas through rose-colored glasses,” Haaretz, January 11, 2007, suggesting that Hroub’s new book, *Hamas: A Beginner’s Guide*, presents Hamas in an overly-favorable, and thus misleading, light. But note that Hroub’s book has also been praised as “the most fair-minded and balanced piece of literature on Hamas in the English language.” See “A Review of Hamas: A Beginner’s Guide,” Znet.com, March 4, 2007.

electoral process. Thus, it is important to consider the existing contradictory data to that presented above, data suggesting that Hamas has not, as this thesis has argued, moderated, accommodated, or shown signs of political pragmatism since its integration into the political process. While it is my contention that the data in support of Hamas's transformational achievements and potential is much stronger, and more empirically consistent, than the existing dis-confirming data, the latter certainly exists, and thus, should be considered. As such, the concededly incomplete list provided below will, as before with the confirmatory evidence, provide a brief overview of the most visible and explicit examples. These contradictory examples implicate:

- Hamas's silences. Questions regarding Hamas's transformational potential are raised not only when Hamas speaks, but when it remains silent. Hamas remained silent following the recent shooting of an Israeli electrical worker on March 19, 2007,³¹⁸ the Eilat suicide bombings on January 29, 2007,³¹⁹ an attempted (but failed) suicide bombing on February 20th,³²⁰ an announcement by the Al-Qassam Brigade's (Hamas's military wing) on February 21st of its withdrawal from the cease-fire,³²¹ and more generally, its silences following the almost daily missile launchings from Gaza.
- Hamas's continual lauding of "martyrdom." In the wake of the one (unsuccessful) suicide bombing launched under Hamas auspices since the November 2005 ceasefire, which involved a 57-year old grandmother in November of 2007, Hamas publicly praised her

³¹⁸ "Hamas: End Military Group Attacks Against Civilians," Human Rights Watch, March 23, 2007.

³¹⁹ "Suicide blast kills four in Eilat," The Guardian Unlimited, January 29, 2007.

³²⁰ "Palestinian human bomber arrested in Tel Aviv," The Palestinian Information Center, February 21, 2007. [Hamas website].

³²¹ "Qassam Brigades: Truce with occupation no longer valid," Palestinian Information Center, February 21, 2007. [Hamas website].

efforts on their various websites and in their biweekly magazine, *Al-Risala*.³²² More recently, Hamas's *Al-Aqsa* television station broadcast a film dramatizing a 4-year old pledging to follow "mommy in her steps," after her mother's suicide bombing attack.³²³ Indeed, Hamas regularly valorizes its 'martyrs' on its websites and in its published materials.

- Hamas's unrestrained voices. Hamas's more firebrand members, purporting to speak on behalf of Hamas, often publicly espouse their own vehemently inflexible views, without condemnation by higher Hamas officials. Mahmoud al-Zahar (Hamas member and former foreign minister), for example, continues to publicly define Palestine as an entity extending from the "sea to the river," a phrase otherwise absent from Hamas's modern vocabulary.³²⁴ Additionally, al-Zahar publicly called for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Canada,³²⁵ denied that Hamas would ever offer the "enemy" (Israel) even a "single inch",³²⁶ and announced, in the immediate wake of the movement's electoral victory, that Hamas "will join the Legislative Council with [] weapons in [] hand."³²⁷ Similar comments, which are often accompanied by incendiary language (i.e., references to a "third intifada,"³²⁸ the "ticking bomb,"³²⁹ "the next battle"³³⁰), have been voiced by Hamas spokesman Ismail

³²² *Al-Risala* (Gaza), November 27, 2006.

³²³ "PA deals new blow to 'hopes' for peace," Jerusalem Newswire, March 24, 2007.

³²⁴ "Hamas, The Tories and the Globe and Mail," Judeoscope, January 23, 2007.

³²⁵ "Canada making enemies, Hamas warns: Palestinian minister shunned by MacKay," The Globe and Mail, January 22, 2007.

³²⁶ "Hamas, The Tories and the Globe and Mail," Judeoscope, January 23, 2007.

³²⁷ Herzog, *Can Hamas be Tamed?*, Foreign Affairs (January 2007).

³²⁸ "Hamas Threatens Third Intifada," CBN News, October 11, 2006.

³²⁹ "Masri: World should move before the ticking bomb explodes in the region," Palestinian Information Center, March 10, 2007. [Hamas's Website].

³³⁰ "Hamas: We're ready to defend Gaza from IDF invasion," Jerusalem Post, April 1, 2007.

Radwan,³³¹ Hamas politician Mushir al-Masri,³³² and on occasion, Khaled Mi'shal himself.³³³

- Hamas's commitment to freedom of speech. Causing concern regarding Hamas's commitment to freedom of speech, the leaders of the Hamas-led government became unnecessarily infuriated over an incident involving the Arabic satellite network, *Al Arabiya*, during which the latter broadcast Ismail Haniyeh speaking out of context. In their furious response, which involved accusing the network of blasphemy and calling for a government-wide boycott, the network was forced to temporarily shut-down out of fear of physical attack.³³⁴
- Hamas's Islamist agenda. Certain incidents have raised concern over Hamas's Islamist tendencies, including the temporary banning of a Palestinian folktale book which contained, according to the Hamas-run Ministry of Education, "offensive language which contradicts our beliefs and morals."³³⁵ Other alleged incidents preceding the January 2006 elections include the banning of a cultural festival that allowed mixed-sex dancing, the occasional harassment of Gazan women wearing immodest clothing, and the closing of several alcohol-selling restaurants in Ramallah.³³⁶
- Hamas's defensiveness. At certain times, particularly after making concessionary speeches, Hamas officials will remind their constituency of their commitment to armed resistance. In addition to generating unflattering headlines, such reminders infuse the principle of armed

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² "Hamas: We didn't sell out," Ynet News, March 20, 2007.

³³³ "Mashaal: No change in Hamas's policies," JPost, April 7, 2007.

³³⁴ "Threats by Hamas prompt Arabic network's shutdown," The Boston Globe, January 20, 2007.

³³⁵ "Book ban turns intra-Palestinian fight cultural," Christian Science Monitor, March 9, 2007.

Note, however, that two weeks after the ban was imposed, it was rescinded due to public outcry.

³³⁶ Ibid.

resistance with a passion and emphasis un-reflected in Hamas's actual behaviors. Such was the case when Ismail Haniyeh, on the day following a speech in which he was particularly conciliatory toward many of Hamas's traditional rivals (i.e., Fatah), assured his followers that "We [Hamas] were born from the womb of resistance, we will protect resistance and the arm of resistance will not be touched."³³⁷ Hamas's representative in Lebanon, Usama Hamdan, similarly assured that "Hamas still sees resistance as a strategic option and will not make any concessions until - if Allah wills it- we shall be victorious in Palestine."³³⁸ Such comments were also voiced in the wake of the formation of the unity government, during which Hamas was viewed (by many among its ranks) as having made serious concessions.³³⁹

- Hamas's differing voices. Hamas speaks in differing tones, using differing words, when speaking to its various audiences, a confusing reality that lends fodder to those who argue that Hamas is just as immoderate as its founding Charter conveys. Such was the case during Ismail Haniyeh's December 2006 visit to Iran, during which he coddled the Iranian President's favor in an attempt to gain financial assistance by resurrecting many of the slogans and phrases typical of the "old Hamas," including: "The current PA government will never recognize the Zionist entity at [any] cost" and "resistance and resistance only is the only option before the Palestinian people to liberate their occupied lands."³⁴⁰ Similarly, in a "martyrdom commemoration ceremony" in March 2007, Hamas officials, speaking amidst crowds of angry Gazans (infuriated by Israel's recent excavations of the *Al-Aqsa* Mosque),

³³⁷ "Abbas Swears in Hamas Cabinet," Palestine Media Center, March 30, 2006.

³³⁸ Interview on Al-Manar radio station, February 14, 2007.

³³⁹ "Mashaal: No change in Hamas's policies," Jerusalem Post, April 7, 2007.

³⁴⁰ "Victory will be for the Palestinians," Frontpage, December 11, 2006. [Hamas's website].

similarly recycled phrases from Hamas's rhetorical past, including the infamous "inch" phrase: Hamas "will not compromise an inch of historical Palestine."³⁴¹

- Hamas's unwillingness to fulfill the Quartet demands. Following the February 2007 agreement reached in Mecca, a number of statements were issued by leading Hamas voices casting doubt on Hamas's future capability to compromise and/or moderate, particularly with respect to the Quartet's three demands. For example, Ahmed Youssef (Haniyeh's political advisor) clarified that "[t]he issue of recognition was not addressed at all in Mecca. In the platform of the new government there will be no sign of recognition (of Israel)..."³⁴² Hamas spokesman Ismail Radwan was similarly eager to assure that the Mecca agreement did not indicate any change in Hamas's position toward Israel, stating that "the position of Hamas is firm and well known and it is one of non-recognition of the legitimacy of the Zionist entity..."³⁴³
- Hamas's unsatisfactory concessions. For many critics of Hamas, the Mecca Agreement provides evidence of Hamas's unchanging intransigence. The Agreement, for example, calls on the parties to "uphold resistance," "engage in resistance against the occupation," and only "respect" (rather than 'accept') previous agreements.³⁴⁴ Moreover, it avoids any mention of recognizing Israel. According to critics, the Mecca Agreement represents "little more than a

³⁴¹ "Hamas stresses on resistance, vows not to abandon an inch of Palestine," The Palestinian Information Center, March 08, 2007. Note: this phrase has begun reappearing once again since the formation of the unity government. [Hamas website].

³⁴² Reuters, February 10, 2007; *cited at* "Behind the Headlines: Hamas-Fatah Agreement does not meet requirements of the international community," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 25, 2007 at <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/About+the+Ministry/Behind+the+Headlines/Hamas-Fatah+Agreement+does+not+meet+requirements+of+the+international+community+25-Feb-2007.htm>.

³⁴³ Interview to French News Agency, February 9, 2007.

³⁴⁴ Articles 3 & 10 of the Mecca Agreement, February 8, 2007; cited in: "Don't whitewash reality – Hamas hasn't changed," The Jerusalem Post, March 1, 2007.

willingness to selectively accept those parts of the agreements which do not contradict Hamas's long-standing extremist goals."³⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

According to scholar Khaled Hroub "[u]ltimately what is most important is what leaders and movements do, not what they say",³⁴⁶ a sentiment later echoed by Javier Solana, the EU's foreign policy chief,³⁴⁷ and even, the International Quartet.³⁴⁸ While this analysis has attempted to highlight the importance of examining acts, and the erroneousness of focusing only on words (and more specifically, on outdated, 20-year old, un-empirically sound, written words), it has assumed the importance of examining *both* words and deeds when attempting to understand "the new Hamas." Given that its words and deeds don't always, or even often, match up, an analysis of one can, at best, only offer a skewed and uni-dimensional portrait of the whole; thus, an analysis of both (rhetoric and behavior) is not only illuminating, but crucial.

This thesis has attempted to conduct a holistic, comparative, and contextual-based analysis of what I have referred to as the "new Hamas," a movement which, as I have argued, is exceedingly different from the one presented in its 1988 Charter. Inevitably, this multi-layered review unearthed contradictory evidence, which challenges the overall thesis defended herein. This thesis -- that the Hamas of today is profoundly more politically-oriented, ideologically-flexible, and pragmatically-inclined than its 1988 Charter would suggest -- is indeed a conceptually difficult one to maintain when compared against Hamas's *past* actions and words;

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Hroub, *Political Thought and Practice*, 9.

³⁴⁷ "Solana hopes for Quartet meeting with Israel, Palestinians and Arab countries," EJP, March 30, 2007.

³⁴⁸ "Tentative Moves Toward New Palestine Govt," Antiwar.com, March 24, 2007.

yet, when measured against more recent realities, this thesis becomes increasingly persuasive, if not undeniable.

To be sure, “the new Hamas” is neither pacifistic nor ideologically-neutral; indeed, it continues to jealously protect its reputation as a Palestinian *resistance* movement lawfully and morally entitled to defend its “national” rights using all available means. Nevertheless, Hamas’s recent (post-political integration) words and deeds have shown a remarkable ability and willingness to deviate from its founding ideals, and to an extent that its original Charter would never have allowed. As has been shown, the “new Hamas,” at least in its actions, has renounced violence,³⁴⁹ adopted the two-state solution,³⁵⁰ consented to working with Israel under a variety of circumstances,³⁵¹ and agreed to respect earlier peace agreements.³⁵² Moreover, with respect to its words, “the new Hamas” has embraced democracy, advanced an overwhelmingly domestic/secular (rather than a radical/ideological) agenda, committed itself to national unity, and offered a long-term peace proposal to Israel.³⁵³ While the sincerity of these words and the sustainability of “the new Hamas’s” more accommodating actions are not yet fully known, it is clear that the movement has changed and evolved in profoundly transformative ways. Indeed, the most significant of these changes involved its transition from an obdurate, oppositional, and outside-the-system *ideological* movement to a flexible, accommodating, and integrated *political* movement. In other words, Hamas’s voluntary integration into the “national” political system in

³⁴⁹ With the only exception, cited earlier, of the recent shooting of an Israeli worker on the Gaza border. See “Olive Branch From Hamas,” *Washington Post*, April 16, 2007. See also “A Just Peace of No Peace,” *The Guardian*, 31 March 2006, quoting Ismail Haniyeh: “We in Hamas are for peace and want to put an end to bloodshed.”

³⁵⁰ This can be read into its endorsement of the recently resurrected Arab Peace Initiative, first proposed in 2002.

³⁵¹ See discussion in Chapter 4, position toward Israel.

³⁵² This was made explicit in the Mecca Agreement between Fatah and Hamas.

³⁵³ See discussions in Chapters Two & Three.

March of 2005 represented the most profound metamorphosis of its 20 year existence. It was precisely this transition that virtually, if not literally, transformed the movement into something entirely *new*.

A new Hamas Charter is not only long-overdue, but in imminent need. So long as Palestinians' traditional subsidizers (the US, Israel and the EU) continue to form judgments and craft policies on the basis of Hamas's threateningly militant-fundamentalist-conspiratorial Charter, Hamas, and more generally, the Palestinian community as a whole, will continue to suffer under the oppressive repercussions of international ostracism and economic isolation. According to a recent International Crisis Group report, "such judgments have proved costly and – if the ultimate goal is to influence Hamas's behavior – are in need of revision."³⁵⁴ That Hamas needs an honest and empirically-updated Charter, and that the international community needs to recognize Hamas's unprecedented transformations, are undeniable. Yet, given the latter's improbability without the former, it is crucial that, in the meantime, objective, best-faith attempts be made to understand Hamas's new intentions, capabilities and agendas. Such an understanding is precisely what this thesis has sought to offer.

Needless to say, only "the new Hamas" can bring about its own introduction; and certainly, only it can draft a new Charter. Unless and until this time, it is understandable, however regrettable, that misperceptions based on stale evidence and anachronistic assumptions will continue to obfuscate, and defame, Hamas's current identity. Concededly, this thesis represents nothing more than a purely theoretical attempt to offer such an introduction; an introduction which, based on a rigorous review of contemporary empirical realities, explicated the objectives, strategies, positions and historical proof of today's verbally and behaviorally

³⁵⁴ ICG Report (Feb 2007), 24.

transformed Hamas. Until a new Charter is drafted, such best-faith conjecture will have to suffice in introducing the world to a movement whose influence is unquestioned, whose popularity is unwavering, and whose political integration has inspired, and continues to inspire, radical transformation.

APPENDIX I:³⁵⁵

The following represents, in mega-condensed form, a draft Charter for the “new Hamas” based on the analyses contained in Chapters 1- 5. Needless to say, the Charter presented below, like the founding Charter, has a limited shelf life; indeed, as Hamas continues to change and evolve, so too will the Charter eventually lose its relevance. Yet, such an endeavor – which in actuality is only a snapshot glimpse of a particular movement at a particular moment in time – is useful for several reasons. Not only is a benchmark created, from which future comparisons can be made, but more importantly, such snapshots provide useful and generalizable insight into how political circumstances and social contexts can affect the ideological and behavioral makeup of ideological-turned-political movements, like Hamas.

Thus, while the relevance of the theoretical Charter presented below is certainly not indefinite,³⁵⁶ it is nevertheless insightful for what it suggests about (1) the ways in which Hamas

³⁵⁵ I originally intended to include this in the body of my thesis, but because of space/word constraints, moved it to the Appendix. It represents a theoretical Charter for “the new Hamas” and serves as a brief summary for Chapter 1-5.

³⁵⁶ This comment addresses an insightful critique raised by Dr Walter Armbrust during my thesis presentation for the MPhil research seminar in January 2007.

has changed since 1988 and (2) the effects of its recent political integration on its ideological and behavioral orientations. By capturing, in snapshot form, one stage, or according to Michael Barnett “one dialogue,” the Charter outlined below illuminates one phase -- the current phase -- of Hamas’s maturational evolution. Given that Hamas’s 20-year old Charter has never been altered or amended, and given Hamas’s central role within Palestinian society, this (concededly) purely intellectual exercise has both practical and timely significance, however limited its ripeness.

A PROPOSED NEW CHARTER FOR THE NEW HAMAS APRIL 2007

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE MOVEMENT

ARTICLE 1: IDEOLOGICAL ORIGINS

Hamas was conceived as a result of an ideological revolution within its parent organization, the Muslim Brotherhood; a revolution born from a pragmatic determination based on existing political realities (a shift away from diplomatic/peace initiatives toward more aggressive tactics). Inspired by its founders, Hamas adopted the Brotherhood’s commitment to humanitarian outreach, sensitivity to public opinion, and respect for consultative governance. Unlike its founders however, Hamas adopted the right to resist the Israeli occupation using all, including militant, means as one of its core and distinguishing ideals. Despite having renounced militancy, at least temporarily, this right remains at the core of the new Hamas’s ideological worldview. More relevantly, however, resistance is now expansively defined to include, among other non-militant forms, electoral and political participation. It is this latter form of resistance that Hamas, at present, exploits and prioritizes.

ARTICLE 2: STRUCTURAL COMPOSITION

Hamas is composed of two separate wings; the first is devoted to political and social activities and the second, to military and resistant activities. With respect to the former, a sharp distinction is made between those serving in leadership positions within the PA (as members of the PLC or as cabinet ministers) and those serving in leadership positions within Hamas’s own top political institution, the Political Bureau. No one is allowed to serve in both simultaneously. However, those serving in the PA are required to adhere to the policies and strategies agreed upon by the collective leadership of the movement; a fact that continues to blur the distinction between

Hamas as the majority party within the PA and Hamas as the most popular national resistance movement.

Hamas's internal workings operate according to the Islamic principle of *shura*, or consultation. As such, regular elections, both internal and now "national," are regularly held to rotate leadership positions. Hamas's democratic, consultative and constituency-based internal processes prevent the emergence of a single, authoritarian leader, a principle first promoted by Hamas's spiritual founder, Sheikh Yassin, and deeply honored still today.

Standing at the apex of the Hamas hierarchy, above a series of regional consultative councils, is the "National" Shura (consultative) Council, the movement's highest institutional authority. The National Consultative Council itself is composed of a multi-faceted array of committees responsible for overseeing a variety of domestic and regional issues; and from its membership is drawn an elected, 10-member executive body, known as the Political Bureau.

Hamas's membership is drawn from a wide swath of the Palestinian populace, representing individuals of all socio-economic, political and ideological stripes. Moreover, Hamas's support extends far beyond its membership base; indeed, many non-Hamas members support the Hamas-led governing party, known as the "Change and Reform" bloc. Thus, Hamas supporters comprise a much larger cross-section of Palestinian society than actual Hamas members, while Hamas beneficiaries – those who benefit from Hamas's extensive social service sector- comprise an even larger group.

ARTICLE 3: GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

Hamas is an exclusively Palestinian movement, with exclusively Palestinian concerns, driven exclusively by Palestinian-centric goals. It endeavors neither to interfere in the political affairs of other states, including its sheltering state of Syria, nor to sever links with any government, Western or Eastern, Sunni or Shiia, Islamic or non-Islamic. Hamas has one, and only one enemy: the Israeli occupation.

ARTICLE 4: MOTTO

Hamas's new motto is contained in its party's name, "Change and Reform," a slogan adopted during its campaign for national legislative elections in March of 2005. Representing both its determination to affect change by reforming the Palestinian political landscape and its newfound commitment to participating in electoral politics, this motto embodies Hamas's most prioritized goal, namely to improve the living conditions of all Palestinians.

CHAPTER 2: OBJECTIVES

ARTICLE 5: A PALESTINIAN STATE & RIGHT OF RETURN

At the core of Hamas's objectives, is the establishment of a sovereign and independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. Implicit within this core objective is

the right of return for all Palestinian refugees, the right of self-determination, and the right to end the Israeli occupation using all necessary means.

ARTICLE 6: GOVERNMENTAL & DOMESTIC REFORM

Building a clean, transparent and corrupt-free government is an essential prerequisite to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. As such, Hamas aims to build transparent institutions, a system of political checks and balances, and a reliable electoral system designed to ensure peaceful and democratic transfers of power.

ARTICLE 7: NATIONAL UNITY

Maintaining national unity is Hamas's most urgent and pressing concern, a concern that must be addressed prior to the advancement of any other objective. Only by forming a national unity government, consolidating the security forces, and creating non-partisan coalitions can the Palestinians hope to dismantle the Israeli occupation. Hamas's commitment to national unity is codified in the Mecca Agreement, formed with Fatah in February of 2007.

ARTICLE 8: DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

The best framework for regulating the Palestinian political landscape is that which scrupulously protects all political liberties, including the freedom to form political parties, the freedom of speech, the peaceful alternation of power, and the equality of women and minorities. Hamas not only desires a sovereign Palestinian state, but a pluralistic, democratic Palestinian state with a vibrant civil society.

ARTICLE 9: DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENT

Reforming and improving the living conditions of all Palestinians is another essential, albeit more gradually achievable, objective. In every sphere of Palestinian society - educational, agricultural, familial, medical, administrative, legislative, judicial, social, cultural, media, and economic - standards must be elevated and met. Specific proposals, defined by the exigencies of the time, will be outlined, implemented and routinely updated until improvements in the living standards of all Palestinians are effectuated.

ARTICLE 10: TO JOIN THE PLO

Hamas aspires to join a democratically reformed PLO, the primary representative organ for all Palestinians. However, unless and until the membership of the PLO more accurately reflects the popular strengths of its various constituent groups, Hamas will continue refusing to join. Given Hamas's commitment to democracy and pluralism, it would be both improper and counterproductive to consider the PLO the "sole representative of the Palestinian community" prior to its reform.

ARTICLE 11: TO RESPECT PREVIOUS AGREEMENTS

As codified in the Mecca Agreement of February 8, 2007, Hamas vows to respect all previous peace agreements. While Hamas itself continues to ideologically deny certain elements contained within these agreements, including recognizing the legitimacy of the Israeli occupation and relinquishing the right to resist, it will neither stand in the way of, nor interfere with, the implementation of such agreements. To be sure, Hamas will deal with such agreements responsibly, respectively and with the Palestinians' fundamental rights and interests in mind.

ARTICLE 12: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TWO-STATES

The current generation of Hamas is committed to the establishment of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, including the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital. It is up to future Hamas generations, and the popular support that sustains them, however, to determine whether to memorialize this as a final, or merely a temporary, state. Regardless, for a period of not less than ten years, Hamas has committed itself to the establishment of a Palestinian state, the borders of which are defined above, living side-by-side with a non-occupying Israel.

ARTICLE 13. TO RESPECT THE PRESIDENCY, THE CONSTITUTION, AND THE PLO

Through dialogue, cooperation, and consultation Hamas is committed to respecting the constitutional order of the PA as defined in the Basic Law. In addition, regardless of whether Hamas joins the PLO, it is committed to offering the latter the utmost level of deference and respect. Hamas wholly realizes the important and valuable functions it serves particularly for the Palestinian Diaspora.

ARTICLE 14. TO COOPERATE WITH ISRAEL IN “ALL MUNDANE AFFAIRS”

Hamas will maintain all necessary contacts with Israel in all mundane affairs, including in the areas of business, trade, health, and labor. This is to essential to fulfilling its objective of improving the living conditions of all Palestinians. Moreover, Hamas is committed to maintaining these contacts in a peaceful, cooperative way.

ARTICLE 15. TO PURSUE “ALL AVENUES” OF ACHIEVING PEACE WITH THE QUARTET

Hamas is committed to exploring and discussing all avenues of potential compromise with the international Quartet in an effort to put an end to existing disagreements and ultimately, to bring about a state of peace and stability in the Palestinian territories.

CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIES & METHODS

ARTICLE 16: THE *HUDNA*, OR LONG TERM TRUCE

The *hudna*, or “long term truce,” stands at the center of Hamas’s strategic thinking with respect to the accomplishment of its core objective, the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state. Roughly equivalent to a temporally-defined “land for peace” proposal, the *hudna* proposes an exchange of specific areas of land, namely the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, as well as the release of Palestinian prisoners and the right of return of all Palestinian refugees for a renewable period of peace extending for at least ten years. The *hudna* envisions a Palestinian state peacefully coexisting side-by-side with an Israeli state for an extended period of time, after which it will be left for the democratically elected Palestinian leadership, and indirectly, the Palestinian community at large, to renew, abandon, or permanently memorialize the original *hudna* agreement.

ARTICLE 17. THE *TAHDIYYA*, OR PERIOD OF CALM

The *tahdiyya*, or cease fire, is a more limited strategy. It can be entered into bilaterally, multilaterally or unilaterally, and is currently used primarily to ensure national unity. Creating a period of cooling-off, this strategy is used to ensure that movement towards Hamas’s core objectives is neither disrupted nor preempted by the threat of internal or external violence. Typically formed between rivaling Palestinians, as well as with Israel, the *tahdiyya* ensures both internal stability and unity, which are viewed as prerequisites for the ultimate objective of establishing an independent Palestinian state.

ARTICLE 18. POPULAR REFERENDA AND ELECTIONS.

Hamas views political participation as an important and crucial strategy for accomplishing both the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state and the maintenance of national unity. Moreover, political participation, most notably including the participation in elections and the holding of popular referenda, are essential for the fulfillment of Hamas’s many domestic objectives, including governmental reform and national development. By participating in free and fair elections and holding frequent popular referenda, Hamas ensures that the PA adequately represents the Palestinian community as a whole. Most importantly, however, only by participating in politics can Hamas hope to address the many domestic problems plaguing the Palestinian territories at this time. Indeed, only when the internal Palestinian house is in order and individuals have a voice in the policies governing them, can the more ambitious attempts at establishing a Palestinian state be made.

ARTICLE 19. WELFARE ASSISTANCE AND GRASSROOTS OUTREACH.

Welfare provision has been, and will always remain, one of the core strategies pursued by Hamas, consuming some ninety percent of its energies and budget. Offering humanitarian, medical, educational, financial, and agricultural assistance is crucial to the creation of an energized and resilient Palestinian population prepared to endure the long and arduous road toward statehood. Moreover, having a healthy and strong electorate is fundamental to building a future Palestinian state; thus, strengthening all Palestinians, regardless of creed, religion, gender or nationality, through grassroots initiatives, is not only essential for ensuring the durability of the future Palestinian state, but more importantly, is crucial in bringing about its very existence.

ARTICLE 20. RESISTANCE USING ALL NECESSARY FORMS.

The right to resist the Israeli occupation using all necessary means, including armed resistance, is a fundamental and moral right protected under International Law. Moreover, as representative for a large cross-section of the Palestinian electorate, Hamas is legally and morally obliged to protect this right, which is viewed as one of the only formidable bargaining chips held by the Palestinians in their negotiations with its disproportionately mightier Israeli neighbor. Nevertheless, Hamas is willing, ready and indeed, eager, to immediately cede the militant forms of this right provided Israel agrees to the *hudna*. Importantly, Hamas is committed to resisting in ways that will best achieve its objectives. As such, diplomacy and negotiations will be pursued, and armed resistance suppressed, when deemed effective; and vice versa. Moreover, Hamas harbors an expansive cache of resistant strategies, only one of which includes armed resistance. Indeed, most of them -- including the core strategies outlined above (welfare provision, electoral participation, *hudna*, *tahdiyya*) -- are diplomatic and pacifistic in nature, and serve to indirectly resist the Israeli occupation by focusing on internal reform and self sufficiency.

CHAPTER 4: POSITIONS

ARTICLE 21: POSITION TOWARD ISRAEL

Hamas's position toward Israel is neither stagnant, nor principled; nor can it be disentangled from existing needs and realities. Instead, Hamas's position toward Israel changes and evolves alongside the ever-altering needs of its Palestinian constituency. At root, however, Hamas believes that Israel is an illegal occupying force that must return the Palestinians' rightfully-owned portion of the land. Nevertheless, Hamas clearly distinguishes between Judaism, which it deeply respects, and Zionism, which it intensely despises. As a group who is committed to protecting and accepting "the People of the Book," which includes the Israeli Jews, Hamas is no less accepting of Jews as it is of the Christian minority that it whole-heartedly embraces. Indeed, Hamas's ultimate hope is for Christians, Jews and Muslims to live side-by-side in peace and harmony within a free and sovereign Palestinian state. In addition to working cordially with Israel in all mundane matters, Hamas is willing to negotiate with Israel either through a mediator or directly, provided Israel is willing to discuss the *hudna*. Finally, while Hamas is unwilling to recognize the moral legitimacy of the Israeli occupation, it recognizes the fact of its existence and will deal with it as such.

CHAPTER 5: HISTORICAL PROOF

ARTICLE 22: IDEOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATIONS

While Hamas is proud of its historical origins and its early accomplishments, including the leading role it played in the armed uprising against the Israeli occupation during both the first and second *intifadas*, Hamas is equally proud of its matured outlook and more sophisticated level of participation within the Palestinian community. Previously focused on its social- humanitarian outreach and its militant resistance tactics, and blindly fixated on the single goal of ending the

occupation, today Hamas is politically engaged at all levels of Palestinian society. Moreover, it is interested in a multi-faceted array of domestic issues touching on the lives of the average and under-privileged Palestinian, in addition to its longer-term goal of establishing a Palestinian state. Hamas acknowledges that this long term goal can only be accomplished if and when the Palestinian populace is nourished, educated, patient and most importantly, unified. Political integration, rather than militancy, is the path best suited to accomplishing all of Hamas's many contemporary goals at this moment in history. Such goals include strengthening the Palestinian population, reforming the PA, improving the political and social infrastructure, and only finally, establishing a future Palestinian state. Needless to say, Hamas has transformed from an armed oppositional resistant movement, to a politically-engaged and domestically-focused reformer. Indeed, only when the Palestinians have their own house in order can they even begin to dream of having their own state.

APPENDIX II:

Below is a copy of Hamas's original 1988 as translated by the Avalon Project at Yale Law School and is available at <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/hamas.htm>. The only alterations I made were the inclusion of Chapter headings, which I put in bold and underlined. These chapter headings were taken from Khaled Hroub's translation of the 1988 Hamas Charter as published in *Political Thought and Practice* (Institute for Palestine Studies: Washington DC, 2000), see Appendix, Document No. 2, pages 267 - 291.

Hamas Covenant 1988

The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement

18 August 1988

In The Name Of The Most Merciful Allah

"Ye are the best nation that hath been raised up unto mankind: ye command that which is just, and ye forbid that which is unjust, and ye believe in Allah. And if they who have received the scriptures had believed, it had surely been the better for them: there are believers among them,

but the greater part of them are transgressors. They shall not hurt you, unless with a slight hurt; and if they fight against you, they shall turn their backs to you, and they shall not be helped. They are smitten with vileness wheresoever they are found; unless they obtain security by entering into a treaty with Allah, and a treaty with men; and they draw on themselves indignation from Allah, and they are afflicted with poverty. This they suffer, because they disbelieved the signs of Allah, and slew the prophets unjustly; this, because they were rebellious, and transgressed." (Al-Imran - verses 109-111).

Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it" (The Martyr, Imam Hassan al-Banna, of blessed memory).

"The Islamic world is on fire. Each of us should pour some water, no matter how little, to extinguish whatever one can without waiting for the others." (Sheikh Amjad al-Zahawi, of blessed memory).

In The Name Of The Most Merciful Allah

Introduction

Praise be unto Allah, to whom we resort for help, and whose forgiveness, guidance and support we seek; Allah bless the Prophet and grant him salvation, his companions and supporters, and to those who carried out his message and adopted his laws - everlasting prayers and salvation as long as the earth and heaven will last. Hereafter:

O People:

Out of the midst of troubles and the sea of suffering, out of the palpitations of faithful hearts and cleansed arms; out of the sense of duty, and in response to Allah's command, the call has gone out rallying people together and making them follow the ways of Allah, leading them to have determined will in order to fulfill their role in life, to overcome all obstacles, and surmount the difficulties on the way. Constant preparation has continued and so has the readiness to sacrifice life and all that is precious for the sake of Allah.

Thus it was that the nucleus (of the movement) was formed and started to pave its way through the tempestuous sea of hopes and expectations, of wishes and yearnings, of troubles and obstacles, of pain and challenges, both inside and outside.

When the idea was ripe, the seed grew and the plant struck root in the soil of reality, away from passing emotions, and hateful haste. The Islamic Resistance Movement emerged to carry out its role through striving for the sake of its Creator, its arms intertwined with those of all the fighters for the liberation of Palestine. The spirits of its fighters meet with the spirits of all the fighters who have sacrificed their lives on the soil of Palestine, ever since it was conquered by the companions of the Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, and until this day.

This Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS), clarifies its picture, reveals its identity, outlines its stand, explains its aims, speaks about its hopes, and calls for its support, adoption and joining its ranks. Our struggle against the Jews is very great and very serious. It

needs all sincere efforts. It is a step that inevitably should be followed by other steps. The Movement is but one squadron that should be supported by more and more squadrons from this vast Arab and Islamic world, until the enemy is vanquished and Allah's victory is realised.

Thus we see them coming on the horizon "and you shall learn about it hereafter" "Allah hath written, Verily I will prevail, and my apostles: for Allah is strong and mighty." (The Dispute - verse 21).

"Say to them, This is my way: I invite you to Allah, by an evident demonstration; both I and he who followeth me; and, praise be unto Allah! I am not an idolator." (Joseph - verse 107).

Hamas (means) strength and bravery -(according to) Al-Mua'jam al-Wasit: c1.
Definition of the Movement

Chapter One: Introduction to the Movement

Ideological Starting-Points

Article One:

The Islamic Resistance Movement: The Movement's programme is Islam. From it, it draws its ideas, ways of thinking and understanding of the universe, life and man. It resorts to it for judgement in all its conduct, and it is inspired by it for guidance of its steps.

The Islamic Resistance Movement's Relation With the Moslem Brotherhood Group:

Article Two:

The Islamic Resistance Movement is one of the wings of Moslem Brotherhood in Palestine. Moslem Brotherhood Movement is a universal organization which constitutes the largest Islamic movement in modern times. It is characterised by its deep understanding, accurate comprehension and its complete embrace of all Islamic concepts of all aspects of life, culture, creed, politics, economics, education, society, justice and judgement, the spreading of Islam, education, art, information, science of the occult and conversion to Islam.

Structure and Formation

Article Three:

The basic structure of the Islamic Resistance Movement consists of Moslems who have given their allegiance to Allah whom they truly worship, - "I have created the jinn and humans only for the purpose of worshipping" - who know their duty towards themselves, their families and country. In all that, they fear Allah and raise the banner of Jihad in the face of the oppressors, so that they would rid the land and the people of their uncleanness, vileness and evils.

"But we will oppose truth to vanity, and it shall confound the same; and behold, it shall vanish away." (Prophets - verse 18).

Article Four:

The Islamic Resistance Movement welcomes every Moslem who embraces its faith, ideology, follows its programme, keeps its secrets, and wants to belong to its ranks and carry out the duty. Allah will certainly reward such one.

Time and Place Extent of the Islamic Resistance Movement:

Article Five:

Time extent of the Islamic Resistance Movement: By adopting Islam as its way of life, the Movement goes back to the time of the birth of the Islamic message, of the righteous ancestor, for Allah is its target, the Prophet is its example and the Koran is its constitution. Its extent in place is anywhere that there are Moslems who embrace Islam as their way of life everywhere in the globe. This being so, it extends to the depth of the earth and reaches out to the heaven.

"Dost thou not see how Allah putteth forth a parable; representing a good word, as a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed in the earth, and whose branches reach unto heaven; which bringeth forth its fruit in all seasons, by the will of its Lord? Allah propoundeth parables unto men, that they may be instructed." (Abraham - verses 24-25).

Characteristics and Independence:

Article Six:

The Islamic Resistance Movement is a distinguished Palestinian movement, whose allegiance is to Allah, and whose way of life is Islam. It strives to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine, for under the wing of Islam followers of all religions can coexist in security and safety where their lives, possessions and rights are concerned. In the absence of Islam, strife will be rife, oppression spreads, evil prevails and schisms and wars will break out.

How excellent was the Moslem poet, Mohamed Iqbal, when he wrote:

"If faith is lost, there is no security and there is no life for him who does not adhere to religion. He who accepts life without religion, has taken annihilation as his companion for life."

The Universality of the Islamic Resistance Movement:

Article Seven:

As a result of the fact that those Moslems who adhere to the ways of the Islamic Resistance Movement spread all over the world, rally support for it and its stands, strive towards enhancing its struggle, the Movement is a universal one. It is well-equipped for that because of the clarity of its ideology, the nobility of its aim and the loftiness of its objectives.

On this basis, the Movement should be viewed and evaluated, and its role be recognised. He who denies its right, evades supporting it and turns a blind eye to facts, whether intentionally or unintentionally, would awaken to see that events have overtaken him and with no logic to justify his attitude. One should certainly learn from past examples.

The injustice of next-of-kin is harder to bear than the smite of the Indian sword.

"We have also sent down unto thee the book of the Koran with truth, confirming that scripture which was revealed before it; and preserving the same safe from corruption. Judge therefore between them according to that which Allah hath revealed; and follow not their desires, by swerving from the truth which hath come unto thee. Unto every of you have we given a law, and an open path; and if Allah had pleased, he had surely made you one people; but he hath thought it fit to give you different laws, that he might try you in that which he hath given you respectively. Therefore strive to excel each other in good works; unto Allah shall ye all return, and then will he declare unto you that concerning which ye have disagreed." (The Table, verse 48).

The Islamic Resistance Movement is one of the links in the chain of the struggle against the Zionist invaders. It goes back to 1939, to the emergence of the martyr Izz al-Din al Kissam and his brethren the fighters, members of Moslem Brotherhood. It goes on to reach out and become one with another chain that includes the struggle of the Palestinians and Moslem Brotherhood in the 1948 war and the Jihad operations of the Moslem Brotherhood in 1968 and after.

Moreover, if the links have been distant from each other and if obstacles, placed by those who are the lackeys of Zionism in the way of the fighters obstructed the continuation of the struggle, the Islamic Resistance Movement aspires to the realisation of Allah's promise, no matter how long that should take. The Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, has said:

"The Day of Judgement will not come about until Moslems fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say O Moslems, O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him. Only the Gharkad tree, (evidently a certain kind of tree) would not do that because it is one of the trees of the Jews." (related by al-Bukhari and Moslem).

The Slogan of the Islamic Resistance Movement:

Article Eight:

Allah is its target, the Prophet is its model, the Koran its constitution: Jihad is its path and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes.

Chapter Two: Objectives

Incentives and Objectives:

Article Nine:

The Islamic Resistance Movement found itself at a time when Islam has disappeared from life. Thus rules shook, concepts were upset, values changed and evil people took control, oppression and darkness prevailed, cowards became like tigers: homelands were usurped, people were scattered and were caused to wander all over the world, the state of justice disappeared and the

state of falsehood replaced it. Nothing remained in its right place. Thus, when Islam is absent from the arena, everything changes. From this state of affairs the incentives are drawn.

As for the objectives: They are the fighting against the false, defeating it and vanquishing it so that justice could prevail, homelands be retrieved and from its mosques would the voice of the mu'azen emerge declaring the establishment of the state of Islam, so that people and things would return each to their right places and Allah is our helper.

"...and if Allah had not prevented men, the one by the other, verily the earth had been corrupted: but Allah is beneficent towards his creatures." (The Cow - verse 251).

Article Ten:

As the Islamic Resistance Movement paves its way, it will back the oppressed and support the wronged with all its might. It will spare no effort to bring about justice and defeat injustice, in word and deed, in this place and everywhere it can reach and have influence therein.

Chapter Three: Strategies and Methods

Strategies of the Islamic Resistance Movement: Palestine Is Islamic aqf:

Article Eleven:

The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf consecrated for future Moslem generations until Judgement Day. It, or any part of it, should not be squandered: it, or any part of it, should not be given up. Neither a single Arab country nor all Arab countries, neither any king or president, nor all the kings and presidents, neither any organization nor all of them, be they Palestinian or Arab, possess the right to do that. Palestine is an Islamic Waqf land consecrated for Moslem generations until Judgement Day. This being so, who could claim to have the right to represent Moslem generations till Judgement Day?

This is the law governing the land of Palestine in the Islamic Sharia (law) and the same goes for any land the Moslems have conquered by force, because during the times of (Islamic) conquests, the Moslems consecrated these lands to Moslem generations till the Day of Judgement.

It happened like this: When the leaders of the Islamic armies conquered Syria and Iraq, they sent to the Caliph of the Moslems, Umar bin-el-Khatib, asking for his advice concerning the conquered land - whether they should divide it among the soldiers, or leave it for its owners, or what? After consultations and discussions between the Caliph of the Moslems, Umar bin-el-Khatib and companions of the Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, it was decided that the land should be left with its owners who could benefit by its fruit. As for the real ownership of the land and the land itself, it should be consecrated for Moslem generations till Judgement Day. Those who are on the land, are there only to benefit from its fruit. This Waqf remains as long as earth and heaven remain. Any procedure in contradiction to Islamic Sharia, where Palestine is concerned, is null and void.

"Verily, this is a certain truth. Wherefore praise the name of thy Lord, the great Allah." (The Inevitable - verse 95).

Homeland and Nationalism from the Point of View of the Islamic Resistance Movement in Palestine:

Article Twelve:

Nationalism, from the point of view of the Islamic Resistance Movement, is part of the religious creed. Nothing in nationalism is more significant or deeper than in the case when an enemy should tread Moslem land. Resisting and quelling the enemy become the individual duty of every Moslem, male or female. A woman can go out to fight the enemy without her husband's permission, and so does the slave: without his master's permission.

Nothing of the sort is to be found in any other regime. This is an undisputed fact. If other nationalist movements are connected with materialistic, human or regional causes, nationalism of the Islamic Resistance Movement has all these elements as well as the more important elements that give it soul and life. It is connected to the source of spirit and the granter of life, hoisting in the sky of the homeland the heavenly banner that joins earth and heaven with a strong bond.

If Moses comes and throws his staff, both witch and magic are annulled.

"Now is the right direction manifestly distinguished from deceit: whoever therefore shall deny Tagut, and believe in Allah, he shall surely take hold with a strong handle, which shall not be broken; Allah is he who heareth and seeth." (The Cow - Verse 256).

Peaceful Solutions, Initiatives and International Conferences:

Article Thirteen:

Initiatives, and so-called peaceful solutions and international conferences, are in contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement. Abusing any part of Palestine is abuse directed against part of religion. Nationalism of the Islamic Resistance Movement is part of its religion. Its members have been fed on that. For the sake of hoisting the banner of Allah over their homeland they fight. "Allah will be prominent, but most people do not know."

Now and then the call goes out for the convening of an international conference to look for ways of solving the (Palestinian) question. Some accept, others reject the idea, for this or other reason, with one stipulation or more for consent to convening the conference and participating in it. Knowing the parties constituting the conference, their past and present attitudes towards Moslem problems, the Islamic Resistance Movement does not consider these conferences capable of realising the demands, restoring the rights or doing justice to the oppressed. These conferences are only ways of setting the infidels in the land of the Moslems as arbitrators. When did the infidels do justice to the believers?

"But the Jews will not be pleased with thee, neither the Christians, until thou follow their religion; say, The direction of Allah is the true direction. And verily if thou follow their desires, after the knowledge which hath been given thee, thou shalt find no patron or protector against Allah." (The Cow - verse 120).

There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavors. The Palestinian people know better than to consent to having their future, rights and fate toyed with. As in said in the honourable Hadith:

"The people of Syria are Allah's lash in His land. He wreaks His vengeance through them against whomsoever He wishes among His slaves It is unthinkable that those who are double-faced among them should prosper over the faithful. They will certainly die out of grief and desperation."

The Three Circles:

Article Fourteen:

The question of the liberation of Palestine is bound to three circles: the Palestinian circle, the Arab circle and the Islamic circle. Each of these circles has its role in the struggle against Zionism. Each has its duties, and it is a horrible mistake and a sign of deep ignorance to overlook any of these circles. Palestine is an Islamic land which has the first of the two kiblans (direction to which Moslems turn in praying), the third of the holy (Islamic) sanctuaries, and the point of departure for Mohamed's midnight journey to the seven heavens (i.e. Jerusalem).

"Praise be unto him who transported his servant by night, from the sacred temple of Mecca to the farther temple of Jerusalem, the circuit of which we have blessed, that we might show him some of our signs; for Allah is he who heareth, and seeth." (The Night-Journey - verse 1). Since this is the case, liberation of Palestine is then an individual duty for every Moslem wherever he may be. On this basis, the problem should be viewed. This should be realised by every Moslem.

The day the problem is dealt with on this basis, when the three circles mobilize their capabilities, the present state of affairs will change and the day of liberation will come nearer.

"Verily ye are stronger than they, by reason of the terror cast into their breasts from Allah. This, because they are not people of prudence." (The Emigration - verse 13).
The Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine is an Individual Duty:

Article Fifteen:

The day that enemies usurp part of Moslem land, Jihad becomes the individual duty of every Moslem. In face of the Jews' usurpation of Palestine, it is compulsory that the banner of Jihad be raised. To do this requires the diffusion of Islamic consciousness among the masses, both on the regional, Arab and Islamic levels. It is necessary to instill the spirit of Jihad in the heart of the nation so that they would confront the enemies and join the ranks of the fighters.

It is necessary that scientists, educators and teachers, information and media people, as well as the educated masses, especially the youth and sheikhs of the Islamic movements, should take part in the operation of awakening (the masses). It is important that basic changes be made in the school curriculum, to cleanse it of the traces of ideological invasion that affected it as a result of the orientalist and missionaries who infiltrated the region following the defeat of the Crusaders

at the hands of Salah el-Din (Saladin). The Crusaders realised that it was impossible to defeat the Moslems without first having ideological invasion pave the way by upsetting their thoughts, disfiguring their heritage and violating their ideals. Only then could they invade with soldiers. This, in its turn, paved the way for the imperialistic invasion that made Allenby declare on entering Jerusalem: "Only now have the Crusades ended." General Guru stood at Salah el-Din's grave and said: "We have returned, O Salah el-Din." Imperialism has helped towards the strengthening of ideological invasion, deepening, and still does, its roots. All this has paved the way towards the loss of Palestine.

It is necessary to instill in the minds of the Moslem generations that the Palestinian problem is a religious problem, and should be dealt with on this basis. Palestine contains Islamic holy sites. In it there is al-Aqsa Mosque which is bound to the great Mosque in Mecca in an inseparable bond as long as heaven and earth speak of Isra' (Mohammed's midnight journey to the seven heavens) and Mi'raj (Mohammed's ascension to the seven heavens from Jerusalem).

"The bond of one day for the sake of Allah is better than the world and whatever there is on it. The place of one's whip in Paradise is far better than the world and whatever there is on it. A worshipper's going and coming in the service of Allah is better than the world and whatever there is on it." (As related by al-Bukhari, Moslem, al-Tarmdhi and Ibn Maja).

"I swear by the holder of Mohammed's soul that I would like to invade and be killed for the sake of Allah, then invade and be killed, and then invade again and be killed." (As related by al-Bukhari and Moslem).

The Education of the Generations:

Article Sixteen:

It is necessary to follow Islamic orientation in educating the Islamic generations in our region by teaching the religious duties, comprehensive study of the Koran, the study of the Prophet's Sunna (his sayings and doings), and learning about Islamic history and heritage from their authentic sources. This should be done by specialised and learned people, using a curriculum that would healthily form the thoughts and faith of the Moslem student. Side by side with this, a comprehensive study of the enemy, his human and financial capabilities, learning about his points of weakness and strength, and getting to know the forces supporting and helping him, should also be included. Also, it is important to be acquainted with the current events, to follow what is new and to study the analysis and commentaries made of these events. Planning for the present and future, studying every trend appearing, is a must so that the fighting Moslem would live knowing his aim, objective and his way in the midst of what is going on around him.

"O my son, verily every matter, whether good or bad, though it be the weight of a grain of mustard-seed, and be hidden in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allah will bring the same to light; for Allah is clear-sighted and knowing. O my son, be constant at prayer, and command that which is just, and forbid that which is evil: and be patient under the afflictions which shall befall thee; for this is a duty absolutely incumbent on all men. Distort not thy face out of contempt to men, neither walk in the earth with insolence; for Allah loveth no arrogant, vain-glorious person." (Lokman - verses 16-18).

The Role of the Moslem Woman:

Article Seventeen:

The Moslem woman has a role no less important than that of the Moslem man in the battle of liberation. She is the maker of men. Her role in guiding and educating the new generations is great. The enemies have realised the importance of her role. They consider that if they are able to direct and bring her up the way they wish, far from Islam, they would have won the battle. That is why you find them giving these attempts constant attention through information campaigns, films, and the school curriculum, using for that purpose their lackeys who are infiltrated through Zionist organizations under various names and shapes, such as Freemasons, Rotary Clubs, espionage groups and others, which are all nothing more than cells of subversion and saboteurs. These organizations have ample resources that enable them to play their role in societies for the purpose of achieving the Zionist targets and to deepen the concepts that would serve the enemy. These organizations operate in the absence of Islam and its estrangement among its people. The Islamic peoples should perform their role in confronting the conspiracies of these saboteurs. The day Islam is in control of guiding the affairs of life, these organizations, hostile to humanity and Islam, will be obliterated.

Article Eighteen:

Woman in the home of the fighting family, whether she is a mother or a sister, plays the most important role in looking after the family, rearing the children and imbuing them with moral values and thoughts derived from Islam. She has to teach them to perform the religious duties in preparation for the role of fighting awaiting them. That is why it is necessary to pay great attention to schools and the curriculum followed in educating Moslem girls, so that they would grow up to be good mothers, aware of their role in the battle of liberation.

She has to be of sufficient knowledge and understanding where the performance of housekeeping matters are concerned, because economy and avoidance of waste of the family budget, is one of the requirements for the ability to continue moving forward in the difficult conditions surrounding us. She should put before her eyes the fact that the money available to her is just like blood which should never flow except through the veins so that both children and grown-ups could continue to live.

"Verily, the Moslems of either sex, and the true believers of either sex, and the devout men, and the devout women, and the men of veracity, and the women of veracity, and the patient men, and the patient women, and the humble men, and the humble women, and the alms-givers of either sex who remember Allah frequently; for them hath Allah prepared forgiveness and a great reward." (The Confederates - verse 25).

The Role of Islamic Art in the Battle of Liberation:

Article Nineteen:

Art has regulations and measures by which it can be determined whether it is Islamic or pre-Islamic (Jahili) art. The issues of Islamic liberation are in need of Islamic art that would take the spirit high, without raising one side of human nature above the other, but rather raise all of them harmoniously in an equilibrium.

Man is a unique and wonderful creature, made out of a handful of clay and a breath from Allah. Islamic art addresses man on this basis, while pre-Islamic art addresses the body giving preference to the clay component in it.

The book, the article, the bulletin, the sermon, the thesis, the popular poem, the poetic ode, the song, the play and others, contain the characteristics of Islamic art, then these are among the requirements of ideological mobilization, renewed food for the journey and recreation for the soul. The road is long and suffering is plenty. The soul will be bored, but Islamic art renews the energies, resurrects the movement, arousing in them lofty meanings and proper conduct. "Nothing can improve the self if it is in retreat except shifting from one mood to another."

All this is utterly serious and no jest, for those who are fighters do not jest.

Social Mutual Responsibility:

Article Twenty:

Moslem society is a mutually responsible society. The Prophet, prayers and greetings be unto him, said: "Blessed are the generous, whether they were in town or on a journey, who have collected all that they had and shared it equally among themselves."

The Islamic spirit is what should prevail in every Moslem society. The society that confronts a vicious enemy which acts in a way similar to Nazism, making no differentiation between man and woman, between children and old people - such a society is entitled to this Islamic spirit. Our enemy relies on the methods of collective punishment. He has deprived people of their homeland and properties, pursued them in their places of exile and gathering, breaking bones, shooting at women, children and old people, with or without a reason. The enemy has opened detention camps where thousands and thousands of people are thrown and kept under sub-human conditions. Added to this, are the demolition of houses, rendering children orphans, meting cruel sentences against thousands of young people, and causing them to spend the best years of their lives in the dungeons of prisons.

In their Nazi treatment, the Jews made no exception for women or children. Their policy of striking fear in the heart is meant for all. They attack people where their breadwinning is concerned, extorting their money and threatening their honour. They deal with people as if they were the worst war criminals. Deportation from the homeland is a kind of murder.

To counter these deeds, it is necessary that social mutual responsibility should prevail among the people. The enemy should be faced by the people as a single body which if one member of it should complain, the rest of the body would respond by feeling the same pains.

Article Twenty-One:

Mutual social responsibility means extending assistance, financial or moral, to all those who are in need and joining in the execution of some of the work. Members of the Islamic Resistance Movement should consider the interests of the masses as their own personal interests. They must spare no effort in achieving and preserving them. They must prevent any foul play with the future of the upcoming generations and anything that could cause loss to society. The masses are

part of them and they are part of the masses. Their strength is theirs, and their future is theirs. Members of the Islamic Resistance Movement should share the people's joy and grief, adopt the demands of the public and whatever means by which they could be realised. The day that such a spirit prevails, brotherliness would deepen, cooperation, sympathy and unity will be enhanced and the ranks will be solidified to confront the enemies.

Supportive Forces Behind the Enemy:

Article Twenty-Two:

For a long time, the enemies have been planning, skillfully and with precision, for the achievement of what they have attained. They took into consideration the causes affecting the current of events. They strived to amass great and substantive material wealth which they devoted to the realisation of their dream. With their money, they took control of the world media, news agencies, the press, publishing houses, broadcasting stations, and others. With their money they stirred revolutions in various parts of the world with the purpose of achieving their interests and reaping the fruit therein. They were behind the French Revolution, the Communist revolution and most of the revolutions we heard and hear about, here and there. With their money they formed secret societies, such as Freemasons, Rotary Clubs, the Lions and others in different parts of the world for the purpose of sabotaging societies and achieving Zionist interests. With their money they were able to control imperialistic countries and instigate them to colonize many countries in order to enable them to exploit their resources and spread corruption there.

You may speak as much as you want about regional and world wars. They were behind World War I, when they were able to destroy the Islamic Caliphate, making financial gains and controlling resources. They obtained the Balfour Declaration, formed the League of Nations through which they could rule the world. They were behind World War II, through which they made huge financial gains by trading in armaments, and paved the way for the establishment of their state. It was they who instigated the replacement of the League of Nations with the United Nations and the Security Council to enable them to rule the world through them. There is no war going on anywhere, without having their finger in it.

"So often as they shall kindle a fire for war, Allah shall extinguish it; and they shall set their minds to act corruptly in the earth, but Allah loveth not the corrupt doers." (The Table - verse 64).

The imperialistic forces in the Capitalist West and Communist East, support the enemy with all their might, in money and in men. These forces take turns in doing that. The day Islam appears, the forces of infidelity would unite to challenge it, for the infidels are of one nation.

"O true believers, contract not an intimate friendship with any besides yourselves: they will not fail to corrupt you. They wish for that which may cause you to perish: their hatred hath already appeared from out of their mouths; but what their breasts conceal is yet more inveterate. We have already shown you signs of their ill will towards you, if ye understand." (The Family of Imran - verse 118).

It is not in vain that the verse is ended with Allah's words "if ye understand."

Chapter Four: Our Position

Our Attitudes toward:

A. Islamic Movements:

Article Twenty-Three:

The Islamic Resistance Movement views other Islamic movements with respect and appreciation. If it were at variance with them on one point or opinion, it is in agreement with them on other points and understandings. It considers these movements, if they reveal good intentions and dedication to Allah, that they fall into the category of those who are trying hard since they act within the Islamic circle. Each active person has his share.

The Islamic Resistance Movement considers all these movements as a fund for itself. It prays to Allah for guidance and directions for all and it spares no effort to keep the banner of unity raised, ever striving for its realisation in accordance with the Koran and the Prophet's directives.

"And cleave all of you unto the covenant of Allah, and depart not from it, and remember the favour of Allah towards you: since ye were enemies, and he reconciled your hearts, and ye became companions and brethren by his favour: and ye were on the brink of a pit of fire, and he delivered you thence. Allah declareth unto you his signs, that ye may be directed." (The Family of Imran - Verse 102).

Article Twenty-Four:

The Islamic Resistance Movement does not allow slandering or speaking ill of individuals or groups, for the believer does not indulge in such malpractices. It is necessary to differentiate between this behaviour and the stands taken by certain individuals and groups. Whenever those stands are erroneous, the Islamic Resistance Movement preserves the right to expound the error and to warn against it. It will strive to show the right path and to judge the case in question with objectivity. Wise conduct is indeed the target of the believer who follows it wherever he discerns it.

"Allah loveth not the speaking ill of anyone in public, unless he who is injured call for assistance; and Allah heareth and knoweth: whether ye publish a good action, or conceal it, or forgive evil, verily Allah is gracious and powerful." (Women - verses 147-148).

B. Nationalist Movements in the Palestinian Arena:

Article Twenty-Five:

The Islamic Resistance Movement respects these movements and appreciates their circumstances and the conditions surrounding and affecting them. It encourages them as long as they do not give their allegiance to the Communist East or the Crusading West. It confirms to all those who are integrated in it, or sympathetic towards it, that the Islamic Resistance Movement is a fighting movement that has a moral and enlightened look of life and the way it should cooperate with the other (movements). It detests opportunism and desires only the good of people, individuals and

groups alike. It does not seek material gains, personal fame, nor does it look for a reward from others. It works with its own resources and whatever is at its disposal "and prepare for them whatever force you can", for the fulfilment of the duty, and the earning of Allah's favour. It has no other desire than that.

The Movement assures all the nationalist trends operating in the Palestinian arena for the liberation of Palestine, that it is there for their support and assistance. It will never be more than that, both in words and deeds, now and in the future. It is there to bring together and not to divide, to preserve and not to squander, to unify and not to throw asunder. It evaluates every good word, sincere effort and good offices. It closes the door in the face of side disagreements and does not lend an ear to rumours and slanders, while at the same time fully realising the right for self-defence.

Anything contrary or contradictory to these trends, is a lie disseminated by enemies or their lackeys for the purpose of sowing confusion, disrupting the ranks and occupy them with side issues.

"O true believers, if a wicked man come unto you with a tale, inquire strictly into the truth thereof; lest ye hurt people through ignorance, and afterwards repent of what ye have done." (The Inner Apartments - verse 6).

Article Twenty-Six:

In viewing the Palestinian nationalist movements that give allegiance neither to the East nor the West, in this positive way, the Islamic Resistance Movement does not refrain from discussing new situations on the regional or international levels where the Palestinian question is concerned. It does that in such an objective manner revealing the extent of how much it is in harmony or contradiction with the national interests in the light of the Islamic point of view.

C. The Palestinian Liberation Organization:

Article Twenty-Seven:

The Palestinian Liberation Organization is the closest to the heart of the Islamic Resistance Movement. It contains the father and the brother, the next of kin and the friend. The Moslem does not estrange himself from his father, brother, next of kin or friend. Our homeland is one, our situation is one, our fate is one and the enemy is a joint enemy to all of us.

Because of the situations surrounding the formation of the Organization, of the ideological confusion prevailing in the Arab world as a result of the ideological invasion under whose influence the Arab world has fallen since the defeat of the Crusaders and which was, and still is, intensified through orientalists, missionaries and imperialists, the Organization adopted the idea of the secular state. And that is how we view it.

Secularism completely contradicts religious ideology. Attitudes, conduct and decisions stem from ideologies.

That is why, with all our appreciation for The Palestinian Liberation Organization - and what it can develop into - and without belittling its role in the Arab-Israeli conflict, we are unable to exchange the present or future Islamic Palestine with the secular idea. The Islamic nature of Palestine is part of our religion and whoever takes his religion lightly is a loser.

"Who will be adverse to the religion of Abraham, but he whose mind is infatuated? (The Cow - verse 130).

The day The Palestinian Liberation Organization adopts Islam as its way of life, we will become its soldiers, and fuel for its fire that will burn the enemies.

Until such a day, and we pray to Allah that it will be soon, the Islamic Resistance Movement's stand towards the PLO is that of the son towards his father, the brother towards his brother, and the relative to relative, suffers his pain and supports him in confronting the enemies, wishing him to be wise and well-guided.

"Stand by your brother, for he who is brotherless is like the fighter who goes to battle without arms. One's cousin is the wing one flies with - could the bird fly without wings?"

D. Arab and Islamic Countries:

Article Twenty-Eight:

The Zionist invasion is a vicious invasion. It does not refrain from resorting to all methods, using all evil and contemptible ways to achieve its end. It relies greatly in its infiltration and espionage operations on the secret organizations it gave rise to, such as the Freemasons, The Rotary and Lions clubs, and other sabotage groups. All these organizations, whether secret or open, work in the interest of Zionism and according to its instructions. They aim at undermining societies, destroying values, corrupting consciences, deteriorating character and annihilating Islam. It is behind the drug trade and alcoholism in all its kinds so as to facilitate its control and expansion.

Arab countries surrounding Israel are asked to open their borders before the fighters from among the Arab and Islamic nations so that they could consolidate their efforts with those of their Moslem brethren in Palestine.

As for the other Arab and Islamic countries, they are asked to facilitate the movement of the fighters from and to it, and this is the least thing they could do.

We should not forget to remind every Moslem that when the Jews conquered the Holy City in 1967, they stood on the threshold of the Aqsa Mosque and proclaimed that "Mohammed is dead, and his descendants are all women."

Israel, Judaism and Jews challenge Islam and the Moslem people. "May the cowards never sleep."

E. Nationalist and Religious Groupings, Institutions, Intellectuals, The Arab and Islamic World:

The Islamic Resistance Movement hopes that all these groupings will side with it in all spheres, would support it, adopt its stand and solidify its activities and moves, work towards rallying

support for it so that the Islamic people will be a base and a stay for it, supplying it with strategic depth in all human material and informative spheres, in time and in place. This should be done through the convening of solidarity conferences, the issuing of explanatory bulletins, favourable articles and booklets, enlightening the masses regarding the Palestinian issue, clarifying what confronts it and the conspiracies woven around it. They should mobilize the Islamic nations, ideologically, educationally and culturally, so that these peoples would be equipped to perform their role in the decisive battle of liberation, just as they did when they vanquished the Crusaders and the Tatars and saved human civilization. Indeed, that is not difficult for Allah.

"Allah hath written, Verily I will prevail, and my apostles: for Allah is strong and mighty." (The Dispute - verse 21).

Article Thirty:

Writers, intellectuals, media people, orators, educators and teachers, and all the various sectors in the Arab and Islamic world - all of them are called upon to perform their role, and to fulfill their duty, because of the ferocity of the Zionist offensive and the Zionist influence in many countries exercised through financial and media control, as well as the consequences that all this lead to in the greater part of the world.

Jihad is not confined to the carrying of arms and the confrontation of the enemy. The effective word, the good article, the useful book, support and solidarity - together with the presence of sincere purpose for the hoisting of Allah's banner higher and higher - all these are elements of the Jihad for Allah's sake.

"Whosoever mobilises a fighter for the sake of Allah is himself a fighter. Whosoever supports the relatives of a fighter, he himself is a fighter." (related by al-Bukhari, Moslem, Abu-Dawood and al-Tarmadhi).

F. Followers of Other Religions: The Islamic Resistance Movement Is A Humanistic Movement:

Article Thirty-One:

The Islamic Resistance Movement is a humanistic movement. It takes care of human rights and is guided by Islamic tolerance when dealing with the followers of other religions. It does not antagonize anyone of them except if it is antagonized by it or stands in its way to hamper its moves and waste its efforts.

Under the wing of Islam, it is possible for the followers of the three religions - Islam, Christianity and Judaism - to coexist in peace and quiet with each other. Peace and quiet would not be possible except under the wing of Islam. Past and present history are the best witness to that.

It is the duty of the followers of other religions to stop disputing the sovereignty of Islam in this region, because the day these followers should take over there will be nothing but carnage, displacement and terror. Everyone of them is at variance with his fellow-religionists, not to speak about followers of other religionists. Past and present history are full of examples to prove this fact.

"They will not fight against you in a body, except in fenced towns, or from behind walls. Their strength in war among themselves is great: thou thinkest them to be united; but their hearts are divided. This, because they are people who do not understand." (The Emigration - verse 14). Islam confers upon everyone his legitimate rights. Islam prevents the incursion on other people's rights. The Zionist Nazi activities against our people will not last for long. "For the state of injustice lasts but one day, while the state of justice lasts till Doomsday."

"As to those who have not borne arms against you on account of religion, nor turned you out of your dwellings, Allah forbiddeth you not to deal kindly with them, and to behave justly towards them; for Allah loveth those who act justly." (The Tried - verse 8).

The Attempt to Isolate the Palestinian People:

Article Thirty-Two:

World Zionism, together with imperialistic powers, try through a studied plan and an intelligent strategy to remove one Arab state after another from the circle of struggle against Zionism, in order to have it finally face the Palestinian people only. Egypt was, to a great extent, removed from the circle of the struggle, through the treacherous Camp David Agreement. They are trying to draw other Arab countries into similar agreements and to bring them outside the circle of struggle.

The Islamic Resistance Movement calls on Arab and Islamic nations to take up the line of serious and persevering action to prevent the success of this horrendous plan, to warn the people of the danger emanating from leaving the circle of struggle against Zionism. Today it is Palestine, tomorrow it will be one country or another. The Zionist plan is limitless. After Palestine, the Zionists aspire to expand from the Nile to the Euphrates. When they will have digested the region they overtook, they will aspire to further expansion, and so on. Their plan is embodied in the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion", and their present conduct is the best proof of what we are saying.

Leaving the circle of struggle with Zionism is high treason, and cursed be he who does that. "for whoso shall turn his back unto them on that day, unless he turneth aside to fight, or retreateth to another party of the faithful, shall draw on himself the indignation of Allah, and his abode shall be hell; an ill journey shall it be thither." (The Spoils - verse 16). There is no way out except by concentrating all powers and energies to face this Nazi, vicious Tatar invasion. The alternative is loss of one's country, the dispersion of citizens, the spread of vice on earth and the destruction of religious values. Let every person know that he is responsible before Allah, for "the doer of the slightest good deed is rewarded in like, and the doer of the slightest evil deed is also rewarded in like."

The Islamic Resistance Movement consider itself to be the spearhead of the circle of struggle with world Zionism and a step on the road. The Movement adds its efforts to the efforts of all those who are active in the Palestinian arena. Arab and Islamic Peoples should augment by further steps on their part; Islamic groupings all over the Arab world should also do the same, since all of these are the best-equipped for the future role in the fight with the warmongering Jews.

"..and we have put enmity and hatred between them, until the day of resurrection. So often as they shall kindle a fire of war, Allah shall extinguish it; and they shall set their minds to act corruptly in the earth, but Allah loveth not the corrupt doers." (The Table - verse 64).

Article Thirty-Three:

The Islamic Resistance Movement, being based on the common coordinated and interdependent conceptions of the laws of the universe, and flowing in the stream of destiny in confronting and fighting the enemies in defence of the Moslems and Islamic civilization and sacred sites, the first among which is the Aqsa Mosque, urges the Arab and Islamic peoples, their governments, popular and official groupings, to fear Allah where their view of the Islamic Resistance Movement and their dealings with it are concerned. They should back and support it, as Allah wants them to, extending to it more and more funds till Allah's purpose is achieved when ranks will close up, fighters join other fighters and masses everywhere in the Islamic world will come forward in response to the call of duty while loudly proclaiming: Hail to Jihad. Their cry will reach the heavens and will go on being resounded until liberation is achieved, the invaders vanquished and Allah's victory comes about.

"And Allah will certainly assist him who shall be on his side: for Allah is strong and mighty." (The Pilgrimage - verse 40).

Chapter Five: Historical Proof

Article Thirty-Four:

Palestine is the navel of the globe and the crossroad of the continents. Since the dawn of history, it has been the target of expansionists. The Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, had himself pointed to this fact in the noble Hadith in which he called on his honourable companion, Ma'adh ben-Jabal, saying: O Ma'ath, Allah throw open before you, when I am gone, Syria, from Al-Arish to the Euphrates. Its men, women and slaves will stay firmly there till the Day of Judgment. Whoever of you should choose one of the Syrian shores, or the Holy Land, he will be in constant struggle till the Day of Judgment."

Expansionists have more than once put their eye on Palestine which they attacked with their armies to fulfill their designs on it. Thus it was that the Crusaders came with their armies, bringing with them their creed and carrying their Cross. They were able to defeat the Moslems for a while, but the Moslems were able to retrieve the land only when they stood under the wing of their religious banner, united their word, hallowed the name of Allah and surged out fighting under the leadership of Salah ed-Din al-Ayyubi. They fought for almost twenty years and at the end the Crusaders were defeated and Palestine was liberated.

"Say unto those who believe not, Ye shall be overcome, and thrown together into hell; an unhappy couch it shall be." (The Family of Imran - verse 12).

This is the only way to liberate Palestine. There is no doubt about the testimony of history. It is one of the laws of the universe and one of the rules of existence. Nothing can overcome iron except iron. Their false futile creed can only be defeated by the righteous Islamic creed. A creed

could not be fought except by a creed, and in the last analysis, victory is for the just, for justice is certainly victorious.

"Our word hath formerly been given unto our servants the apostles; that they should certainly be assisted against the infidels, and that our armies should surely be the conquerors." (Those Who Rank Themselves - verses 171-172).

Article Thirty-Five:

The Islamic Resistance Movement views seriously the defeat of the Crusaders at the hands of Salah ed-Din al-Ayyubi and the rescuing of Palestine from their hands, as well as the defeat of the Tatars at Ein Galot, breaking their power at the hands of Qataz and Al-Dhaher Bivers and saving the Arab world from the Tatar onslaught which aimed at the destruction of every meaning of human civilization. The Movement draws lessons and examples from all this. The present Zionist onslaught has also been preceded by Crusading raids from the West and other Tatar raids from the East. Just as the Moslems faced those raids and planned fighting and defeating them, they should be able to confront the Zionist invasion and defeat it. This is indeed no problem for the Almighty Allah, provided that the intentions are pure, the determination is true and that Moslems have benefited from past experiences, rid themselves of the effects of ideological invasion and followed the customs of their ancestors.

The Islamic Resistance Movement is Composed of Soldiers:

Article Thirty-Six:

While paving its way, the Islamic Resistance Movement, emphasizes time and again to all the sons of our people, to the Arab and Islamic nations, that it does not seek personal fame, material gain, or social prominence. It does not aim to compete against any one from among our people, or take his place. Nothing of the sort at all. It will not act against any of the sons of Moslems or those who are peaceful towards it from among non-Moslems, be they here or anywhere else. It will only serve as a support for all groupings and organizations operating against the Zionist enemy and its lackeys.

The Islamic Resistance Movement adopts Islam as its way of life. Islam is its creed and religion. Whoever takes Islam as his way of life, be it an organization, a grouping, a country or any other body, the Islamic Resistance Movement considers itself as their soldiers and nothing more.

We ask Allah to show us the right course, to make us an example to others and to judge between us and our people with truth. "O Lord, do thou judge between us and our nation with truth; for thou art the best judge." (Al Araf - Verse 89).

The last of our prayers will be praise to Allah, the Master of the Universe.

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