



## Statehood for Palestine? Take a good look

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The long war between Fatah and Hamas was raging last month when Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas addressed a Fatah rally in Ramallah. "The priority for me is preserving national unity and preventing internal fighting," he told the crowd on Jan. 11. "Shooting at your brother is forbidden."

But Abbas made clear it was only intra-Palestinian bloodshed he opposed. Attacking Jews was still OK.

"We should put our internal fighting aside and raise our rifles only against the Israeli occupation," he said, according to [a WorldNetDaily report](#). In a nod to his Arab rivals, he praised arch-terrorist Ahmed Yassin, the co-founder of Hamas who was killed by Israel in 2004. For good measure, he threw in some anti-Semitic boilerplate: "The sons of

Israel are mentioned as those who are corrupting humanity on earth."

Most media accounts of the Fatah rally mentioned only Abbas's "unity" remarks, leaving out the gamier stuff about raising rifles against the humanity-corrupters (AP headline: ["Abbas calls for respect at Fatah rally"](#)). In similar fashion, news reports have rarely pointed out that in the Gaza Strip, where the Fatah-Hamas street battles have taken place, the "occupation" ended in August 2005, when Israel razed 21 Jewish settlements and [expelled every Jew](#) from the territory. For all intents and purposes, there has been a sovereign Palestinian state in Gaza for the past 18 months. The anarchy and violence, the kidnappings, the myriad of armed gangs -- that is the authentic face of Palestinian statehood. Take a good look.

"In the State of Palestine," writes the Jerusalem Post's [Caroline Glick](#), "two-year-olds are killed and no one cares. Children are woken up in the middle of the night and murdered in front of their parents. Worshipers in mosques are gunned down by terrorists who attend competing mosques. . . . In the State of Palestine, women are stripped naked and forced to march in the streets to humiliate their husbands. Ambulances are stopped on the way to hospitals and the wounded are shot in cold blood."

The wonder is not that the Palestinian Authority seethes with violence and instability; there are other places too where bloodshed is the daily fare. The wonder is not that the Palestinians, who receive copious amounts of international aid -- [more than \\$1.2 billion](#) last year from Western governments alone -- channel so much of their resources and energy into weapons and warfare. The wonder is that so many voices still push for a Palestinian state.

But has any population ever been *less* suited for statehood than the Palestinians? From the [terrorists they choose as leaders](#) to the [jihad promoted in their schools](#), their culture is drenched in [violence](#) and [hatred](#). Each time the world has offered them sovereignty -- an offer that the Kurds or the Chechens or the Tibetans would leap at -- the Palestinians have opted instead for bloodshed and rejectionism.

"What do you want more," a frustrated Shimon Peres once asked

Yasser Arafat, "a Palestinian state or a Palestinian struggle?" Over and over, Palestinians have chosen the "struggle." The very essence of Palestinian national identity is a hunger for Israel's destruction. Both the [Fatah](#) and  [Hamas](#) charters call for the obliteration of the Jewish state through bloodshed. A two-state solution -- Israel and Palestine living peacefully side-by-side -- is emphatically [not what the Palestinians seek](#). No amount of Israeli concessions or American wheedling or Quartet cajoling is likely to change that.

So why does the Bush administration continue to pretend otherwise?

"There is simply no reason to avoid the subject of how we get to a Palestinian state," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice [blithely asserted](#) Feb. 2, even as the best reason to do so -- the Palestinians' unfitness for self-government -- was on display in Gaza's streets. Last week Abbas agreed to form a "unity" government with Hamas, making any prospect of peace with Israel more remote. Yet next week Rice will host a summit meeting with Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, and there will be a fresh flood of empty words about peace and statehood.

[James Woolsey](#), who served as director of central intelligence under President Clinton, said recently that it would take "many decades" before Palestinian society is civilized enough for statehood. [Even some Palestinians might agree](#). "Everyone here is disgusted by what's happen-

ing in the Gaza Strip," Shireen Atiyeh, 30, a Palestinian Authority government worker, told the Jerusalem Post. "We are telling the world that we don't deserve a state. . . To-

day I'm ashamed to say that I'm a Palestinian."

When will it be time to consider statehood for Palestine? When it is led by people like her.