



The Hamas-Russia Connection

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Russia's determination to undermine the U.S. policy in the Middle East may well weaken U.S. power. But opposing punitive [sanctions for Iran](#) at the U.N. and endorsing HAMAS is likely to cost Russia dearly.

On March 8, 2006, after discussing the Iran crisis with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Russian Foreign Minister [Sergei Lavrov](#) conveyed Russia's objections to sanctioning Iran, while warning that "there is no military solution to this crisis." Instead, [he welcomed](#) the European Union proposal to continue exploring diplomatic solutions with Iran, despite years of European-led negotiations that merely allowed Tehran to continue to develop its nuclear program. And nuclear weapons in Iran, are likely to pose a grave danger to Russia; much graver than to the U.S.

In a similar move, after visiting the State Department, [Lavrov](#) said that the HAMAS government should receive international funding because HAMAS chief Khaled Mashaal had assured him that the money would "be spent in a transparent manner." And Like Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas before him, Mashaal promised Lavrov to allow international monitors to ensure this.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Khaled Mashaal noted, "At the Russian Foreign Ministry we felt that we were being understood."

Mashaal went on to praise Russia for breaking "the blockade which Israel and the United States have been trying to impose on us," and added that his visit to Russia "opened the door to the entire [global community.](#)"

HAMAS wants the international community to accept its goal to destroy Israel, which Mashaal reiterated on March 6, 2006 on [Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya TV](#). "If they [Israel] want an all-out war - we are ready. If they want peace - let them acknowledge the rights of the Palestinian people and get out of our land." The demand to turn HAMAS into a mere political party is unrealistic, he said, elaborating on a February 13 Dream 2 TV interview, in which HAMAS deputy head and [designated terrorist Musa Abu Marzouq](#) explained the "phased" approach to seek "an independent Palestinian state with full sovereignty over the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza," while unflinchingly insisting that "From the [Jordan] River to the [Mediterranean] Sea belongs to the Palestinians ..."

This is not only the HAMAS agenda; as evidenced by the large majority of Palestinians that elected HAMAS, they too, identify with this terrorist agenda. This should be reason enough for international leaders to avoid contact with the HAMAS Palestinian Authority government, which can only serve to legitimize this terror regime.

Russia, for now, is only talking with HAMAS, not funding the terrorist organization. But its accommodating stance sends exactly the wrong signal to other members of the international community, who are already opening their checkbooks. On March 7, 2006, the World Bank granted [\\$42 million](#) to the HAMAS-led PA. Lavrov expressed the [apparent reasoning](#) for the grant, in

his Washington D.C. [press conference](#), the same day, saying that HAMAS would "hopefully endorse the road map as drafted by the Quartet without any reservations." The World Bank grant followed [\\$143 million](#) in emergency aid granted to the PA by the European Union on February 27, 2006. Clearly, the international donor community is willing to be duped again by yet another Palestinian leader.

Wasting no time, HAMAS on March 9, 2006, declared that Lavrov's hopes are utterly wrong. Hamas official Assad Farhat said that "Hamas rejects the Roadmap Plan," because it is a non-binding "American Zionist" plan. The HAMAS spokesman reiterated, "After Israel announces she will withdraw to pre-1967 boundaries, releases Palestinian prisoners, ceases attacks against the Palestinian people, and agrees to the Palestinian right of return, only then will Hamas enter into [negotiations.](#)"

The international grants should have been avoided not only because HAMAS is a terrorist organization and proud of it, but because the exact same promises made by Mashaal's Palestinian predecessors helped to encourage and spread terrorism. Those past promises facilitated the disappearance of more than [\\$10 billion](#) in foreign aid into the coffers of corrupt Palestinian officials and funded all Palestinian terrorist organizations. That much had already been recognized even by the Palestinian people who voted HAMAS in, in part, to clean up the PA's [corruption](#).

"The vast plunder of EU money by the Palestinian Authority has had much to do with the electoral success of HAMAS, stated Dr. Charles Tannock, a member of the European Parliament, on March 1, 2006. He added, "We would be showing that we have learned absolutely nothing if we sent so much as a penny to a Palestinian Authority led by [HAMAS](#)."

Yet, it seems that the EU and the World Bank are competing with Iran to fund the HAMAS led PA. Already, Iran has [announced](#) that "they would fulfill all financial needs of the Palestinian Authority." Thus, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was correct to [repeat](#), on [March 9](#), 2006 at a Senate hearing that "Iran is a central banker for terror."

Meanwhile, HAMAS is busily preparing for war. A HAMAS official, identified as [Abu Huzeifa](#) in an interview with Gaza City newspaper *Dunia al-Watan*, revealed that since Israel left the Gaza Strip, HAMAS has built training camps in all Palestinian cities. These camps are training new cadres of Jihadists. The basic training lasts a month, followed by three more months of advanced instructions in battle skills, endurance building, marksmanship, missile launching, commando fighting, hand-to-hand combat, crawling under fences and urban warfare.

The instructors are HAMAS members trained internationally, most likely in Lebanon, Syria and Iran. According to Abu Hufeiza, the HAMAS military production units

are diligently developing new weapons, including rockets and advanced explosives. He emphasized that the al-Kassam Brigades will remain as HAMAS' military arm and will continue its struggle to liberate all Palestinian lands. According to the *Dunia al-Watan* reporter who accompanied Abu-Hufeiza to these training camps, each camp occupies over five acres, and accommodates dozens of trainees.

HAMAS coordinates its activities via an internal communications system known as SENAQ, which is also used to alert thousands of loyalists of Israeli Air Force strikes. SENAQ in addition conveys instructions on where and when to attack Israelis. Abu Hufeiza ended by warning Israel that if it tries to reconquer the Gaza Strip, it will face extraordinary resistance.

While HAMAS gets more organized and openly establishes itself in the territories, the Fatah terrorist arm, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, on [March 1](#) also announced the start of a new military campaign against Israel: the Ababil Campaign - named after the legendary [birds](#) that dropped stones on the infidels. This new military campaign aims to launch 200 Kassam rockets at Israeli towns along the border. This is the so-called "moderate" Fatah, led by Mahmoud Abbas.

This is the same Abbas who allowed HAMAS to participate in the election in the first place, without demanding that they disarm and renounce terrorism. This is the Abbas who told al-Jazeera on March 2, "let

us give it [HAMAS] a chance,” and further offered that HAMAS should “proceed with any course or program you want.” Moreover, [Abbas agreed](#) to transfer all the Palestinian security forces, excepting one intelligence unit, to HAMAS.

Even if international money supported only civilian and humanitarian projects, it would be equivalent to giving money to North Korea for humanitarian purposes – every dollar frees another to spend on its nuclear project.

Moreover, supporting the HAMAS led PA is also the same as supporting Al Qaeda. According to Dore Gold, al Qaeda “operations chief Abu Zubaydah entered the world of terrorism through HAMAS. And according to a 2004 FBI affidavit, al Qaeda recruited HAMAS members to conduct surveillance against potential targets in the [United States.](#)”

Russia should know better since it suffers obvious susceptibility to domestic and international Islamic terrorism. Chechen terrorists have

since 1991 committed more than 240 terror attacks, killing and wounding thousands of innocent Russian victims. Traditionally, Russia has quite understandably taken a hard-line stance against Chechen Islamic terror, presumably thanks partly to proven Chechen links and [ideological affinity to Al Qaeda](#), and HAMAS. The Israeli Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies revealed [last month](#), that HAMAS supports the Chechen rebels in their battle for independence against the Russian regime and considers them part of the global Jihad.

All those factors make Russia's current HAMAS and Iran policies simply incomprehensible. It is difficult to understand why Russia would now simultaneously give succor to HAMAS terrorists and Iran's thug-gish nuclear-club hopefuls. While Russia attempts to weaken U.S. influence in the region, doubtless these decisions will come back to bite Moscow sooner rather than later.

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