

Palestine Update—End of Day One  
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Explanation: Additional support for including the Palestinian Territories in one or more wordings. Important highlights include

Links to Democracy Assistance, Advantage Areas, Solvency Details.

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Key pdf:

[www.fride.org/descarga/Assessing\\_Democracy\\_Assistance\\_Palestine.pdf](http://www.fride.org/descarga/Assessing_Democracy_Assistance_Palestine.pdf)

From Huber cite (in mechanism working paper):

**Recipient Countries**

USAID claims to give assistance according to strategic importance, commitment to democratic process and likely effectiveness (USAID, 2005: 7). Similarly, HRDF supports regions and countries that are 'geo-strategically critical to the U.S.' (US Department of State, 2005). Recipient countries of USAID DG assistance in MENA at the moment are: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, **the Palestinian Territories** and Yemen. Leading USAID DG per capita recipients were Iraq, Jordan, and the Palestinian Territories.

## **Debate Accessed Through Syria**

Gopin '11

Marc Gopin, Director CRDC, George Mason University. "Fatah, Hamas and the Future of Palestine". June ,6, 2011. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marc-gopin/fatah-hamas-and-the-future\\_b\\_871544.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marc-gopin/fatah-hamas-and-the-future_b_871544.html)

Why is this happening now? Clearly, the historic impact of the "Arab Spring" on Egypt and Syria, and across the region, is an enormous game changer. The increasing instability of Syria suggests that there is a strong possibility that A) Hamas may no longer have a stable home in Syria, but, on the other hand, Palestinians now have a much more sympathetic ear in Egypt which has been critical as a peace broker. B) Syria has long prevented its own Palestinian population from any kind of political activism, preferring to keep them as a bargaining chip to get back the Golan. But events of Naqba Day 2011 suggest that there are elements in Syria who are ready to unleash the power of the Palestinian masses against Israel if they see their internal situation increasingly destabilized by what they say are "outside agitators." In other words, if the spirit of the Arab Spring brings them down then these elements are threatening to take Israel with them. All of this is new and is due to the unprecedented power and effects of Arab nonviolent resistance.

## PA Restricts Democracy

Youngs and Michou '11

Richard Youngs, Director General, FRIDE, and H el ene Michou, Junior Researcher, FRIDE. "Assessing Democracy Assistance: Palestine". March 2011. [www.fride.org/descarga/Assessing\\_Democracy\\_Assistance\\_Palestine.pdf](http://www.fride.org/descarga/Assessing_Democracy_Assistance_Palestine.pdf)

It is widely agreed that democratic standards are in regression, both in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The aim of creating one democratic proto-state has given way to the emergence of two separate, authoritarian political systems. The Palestinian Authority (PA) is the body created pursuant to the Oslo accords to administer parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It cannot be directly compared with the polities of independent states, as it lacks full sovereignty over Palestinian territory.

However, its governing functions are sufficient for the decline in democratic rights to engender genuine concern.

It is well known that since 2007 Prime Minister Salam Fayyad has taken forward an ambitious institution-building programme, the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP). This has attracted widespread praise. Security is much improved in the West Bank. Economic growth has picked up. Palestinian governing institutions have managed to assume some competences in areas previously under full Israeli control. This progress has been made in the West Bank after Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip in 2007. The PRDP is set to be succeeded by the Palestinian National Plan (PNP) for 2011-2013. However, this set of policies has not represented a democratic state-building project. On most indicators, democracy is declining in the West Bank. Respected analysts observe that the government has become even more of an

obstacle to democratic rights than it was during Yasir Arafat's leadership, although he was known for his prevarication on reform promises. Freedom House today ranks the PA-administered territories as 'not free'. The 2010 score

dropped from 5 to 6, which is the second-lowest score possible for political rights. Other rankings concur that trends are negative and that effective democratic rights stand drastically emasculated. Recent years have witnessed an

increased concentration of power in the executive. The Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) has not sat since 2007. Many Hamas members elected to government in 2006 are in Israeli (or Palestinian) jails. Under the Prime Minister's reform plan large numbers of new administrative rules have been introduced without legislative oversight. President Mahmoud Abbas's term in office expired in January 2009, yet

presidential elections have been put back several times. Local elections were cancelled in July 2010. Fatah, the ruling party in the West Bank, insisted that these be cancelled because it was unable to get its electoral lists agreed and submitted on time (although the formal reason given was that more time was needed for reconciliation); Hamas had already announced a boycott. Local authorities are now appointed, as a form of

rewards distributed to political supporters. Notable political figure Mustafa Barghouti has argued that the cancellation of local elections was a particularly big blow for democracy: while most Palestinians accept that West Bank-Gaza reconciliation is needed prior to presidential elections, local polls were seen as the means of 'keeping the seeds of democratic principles and systems alive'.<sup>3</sup>

## **Reconciliation = Ripeness**

Youngs and Michou '11

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At the time of writing, the PA has just called elections and a unity pact between Fatah and Hamas has announced the formation of an interim administration in preparation for the polls. These are potentially paradigm-shifting steps. However, at present there are still doubts over whether the full set of elections will indeed take place; whether Hamas will agree to participate; and whether terms can be finalised between Fatah and Hamas for interim power-sharing. The unity accord may open the way for democratisation, but deeper problems still persist. Electoral laws at the national (although not local) level restrict the participation of Fatah's key political rivals. No standard multi-party system has taken shape. All debate that occurs is a mirror of internal Fatah factional struggle.

CSM '11

The Christian Science Monitor. "Why Israel and Obama should welcome Hamas-Fatah reconciliation". August 29, 2011.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/the-monitors-view/2011/0429/Why-Israel-and-Obama-should-welcome-Hamas-Fatah-reconciliation>

In protests in March, tens of thousands of young people in both Palestinian territories demanded a democratic government that can unite the West Bank and Gaza. Police in Gaza used violence to suppress the protests. In the West Bank, the demonstrations were directed at Mahmoud Abbas, the head of Fatah, who is also the Palestinian Authority president. This public pressure helps explain the surprise deal reached Wednesday by Hamas and Fatah. The tentative reconciliation pact, brokered by Egypt and scheduled to be formally signed May 4, aims to set up an interim government of independent technocrats that would hold presidential and parliamentary elections by the end of the year.

## **Civil Society Groups Shutdown/Journalists**

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Increased executive meddling is also evident in the violation of the Associations Law by authorities and internal security services in the West Bank and Gaza. Many civil society organisations have been shut down, and others now face pervasive administrative controls or unpredictable raids. In both the West Bank and Gaza associations seen to be affiliated to the opposition continue to be targeted for dissolution, ostensibly because of illegal activities or administrative mismanagement.<sup>4</sup> Repression of journalists has increased. The West Bank has one of the lowest rankings of all Middle Eastern states in the Press Freedom Index compiled by Reporters without Frontiers<sup>5</sup>. Although the state of integrity in public services has significantly improved under Fayyad, the OPTs are widely perceived as one of the most corrupt places in the world.

## Civil Society Overfunded

Youngs and Michou '11

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palestinian civil society depends almost entirely on foreign funding. Many local actors recognise and deplore the overfunding of the PA: 'to achieve gains in human rights, it's easier to be associated with NGOs than with the PA', said one Ramallah-based human rights leader. Representatives from another prominent NGO pointed out the irony of an international community which on the one hand echoes the Israelis in their accusations of a corrupt PA, but on the other hand pumps in money with seemingly few conditions. The PA is seen by locals as a large recipient pot into which money is poured but from which very little trickles out. As for a surfeit of funding in the NGO sector, the billions of dollars poured in every year have led to a saturation of the NGO field, with many duplicate programmes and organisations. Having common aims and coordination strategies is one thing; competition for the same funding and the same projects is another, it is widely lamented. In this case, both donors and recipients are guilty: the former for not narrowing their calls for proposals sufficiently, and the latter for being willing to change their priorities in order to access more funding from variegated sources. A surfeit of training is a common side effect of bankrolling civil society: 'we need a chance to practise what we've learnt in the classroom' insisted one civil society representative in a common lambasting of 'over-training'. Whilst some of our interviewees call for more diverse ways of absorbing everything the international community throws at them, including study trips abroad and increased scholarships for students, many say that they could actually achieve more with less. Several NGOs mentioned the German Stiftungen as taking the fore in keeping their budgets low, their projects well-defined, and their partners local.

## **Base for Dem Ass**

Youngs and Michou '11

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On the one hand, it might seem that Fayyad's plan to have a de facto state completed by August 2011 is even more than before the only game in town.

On the other hand, voices are growing more audible for a more direct approach to attaining sovereignty. Fatah and

Hamas have taken a decisive first step. There is also increasing talk of alternative strategies: some insist it is time to forget the gradual approach of building state institutions and that the PA must exert direct pressure in the United Nations Security Council for the immediate ceding of sovereignty.<sup>16</sup> Abbas himself has mooted the possibility of dissolving the PA and asking Israel to assume direct responsibility for the OPTs.

Palestinians have reached the point of despair, with many arguing that if Israel will not allow effective control they should at least be obliged to pay for the occupation. In short, the collapse of peace talks may undermine the motivation for the state-building programme. This has not been a democratic programme so far; but it at least serves as a fragile base from which to operate democracy assistance strategies.

## Not Much Dem Ass Now

Youngs and Michou '11

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Total aid to the OPTs was running at nearly USD 3 billion a year by 2008. The EU (European Commission plus member states) accounts for the largest share of this, at half the total aid spent. The Commission is by far the single largest donor, giving three times more than the US and Saudi Arabia, the second and third largest donors respectively. External aid per capita is now over USD 800 and external funding amounts to two thirds of Palestinian GDP. At the time of writing the Commission has just approved an additional financial package worth EUR 85 million, this reaffirmation of support for the PA's institution building programme comes in the wake of Israel's decision to temporarily halt the transfer of tax revenues to the PA in protest at the rapprochement between Fatah and Hamas. The biggest increase in donor assistance as a whole has been for direct budget support. Arab donors have channelled their funds mainly to direct budget support (although the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development has also provided half a billion dollars over the last ten years for separate social and relief projects); they do not engage in democracy assistance as such. A challenge in the OPTs is that it is difficult to distinguish between institution-building support and democracy assistance as traditionally defined. According to one local calculation, a broadly defined 'Governance' category represents around 10 per cent of total aid. More narrowly delineated 'Democracy enhancing' projects received less funding after the 2006 elections; by 2008 they accounted for only 3 per cent of total aid.<sup>17</sup> A number of features are common to all donors' general governance assistance in the West Bank. First, the focus is heavily on backing the PRDP in enhancing the capacity to implement service delivery aims; while labelled by donors as institution-building, much funding covers direct running costs. Second, much support now goes directly to the prime minister's office. Third, part of the support that is offered is in essence about the peace process rather than resembling a straightforward democracy-enhancing aid profile. In the case of all these features, the genuinely democracy-deepening value of much aid defined as such is questionable.

## US Dem Ass Now

Youngs and Michou '11

Richard Youngs, Director General, FRIDE, and H el ene Michou, Junior Researcher, FRIDE. "Assessing Democracy Assistance: Palestine". March 2011. [www.fride.org/descarga/Assessing\\_Democracy\\_Assistance\\_Palestine.pdf](http://www.fride.org/descarga/Assessing_Democracy_Assistance_Palestine.pdf)

US political aid is divided into a number of separate projects, all implemented through large US private contractors. A USD 20 million Palestinian Authority Capacity Enhancement programme works on 'the institutional capacity of targeted PA ministries in the delivery of key services'. Projects have targeted the PA's financial and human resource management and accountability systems in particular. While defined as democracy-related, USAID's own list of successes under this programme are extremely practical: a new system of postal codes; a reformed Land Authority facility; strengthened property tax, licensing, road repair; birth and death registration departments; a new road standards manual; IT equipment; a public outreach campaign; training in customer services. The US's USD 14 million Netham Rule of Law programme works with the Ministry of Justice and High Judicial Council. It helps with financial controls, archive storage and strategic planning within the judiciary; pays to renovate courthouses; raises citizen awareness of the judiciary; funds internships and new law libraries; and offers new teaching methodologies in the rule of law. A USD 37 million Local Democratic Reform programme aims to 'improve service provision among partner municipalities and to build participation in government at a local level'. It has set up ten Youth Shadow Local Councils and dialogue forums between citizens and local authorities. A Civic Engagement programme offers community-based grants. A USD 6 million Independent Media Development programme focuses mainly on professional standards in the coverage of local news stories. A USD 6 million Electoral Assistance programme works with the Central Elections Commission on voter registration and basic training.<sup>26</sup> Of other American organisations, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) has perhaps the most established on-the-ground presence. NDI benefits from a yearly budget of around USD 1 million, mostly from the Middle East Partnership Initiative. A strong focus is placed on offering campaign training for political parties' youth cadres, especially in university elections. NDI has engaged with four of the main parties; it does not have formal contact with Hamas. The organisation sees as one of its main successes help in organising internal Fatah primaries prior to the movement's pivotal 2009 national conference. NDI is waiting for the election cycle to recommence before considering work on electoral process. It remains to be seen how NDI will react to the recent Hamas-Fatah reconciliation agreement. It also sees the deepening of familial and tribal dynamics in Palestinian politics as a challenge to be incorporated into future programming.

## **Dem Ass Fails**

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According to those interviewed for the purposes of this study, the all-pervasive nature of the Israeli occupation, the lack of Palestinian sovereignty and the internal split between Gaza and the West Bank are irredeemable barriers to effective democracy assistance. In an analysis of the PRDP, an academic-civic activist said it was 'neither a realistic option nor an appropriate form of development in the context of territorial fragmentation, limited economic space, vulnerability to external shocks, poor market conditions, and landlocked status.' In this context an alternative form of development suggested by certain local actors would be to downplay statebuilding and civil society under occupation in favour of a resistance strategy that involves the dissolution of the PA.<sup>30</sup> The frequency with which we heard this option raised was sobering. The lengthy and varied exposure to the donor community means that the Palestinian Territories suffer many of the generic problems of democracy aid in intensified form: from the geographical and institutional concentration of assistance, to the recognition that securitisation trumps democratisation in the priorities of both donors and regime, local views demonstrate awareness of hypocrisy and knowledge of how to 'play the donor game'. Factors which weaken democracy assistance can be split into various categories: factors inherent to the realities of the Israeli occupation, and factors which are rooted in donor practices and programming. One of the questions posed to local civil society actors was whether there should be a reorientation of the overarching donor focus. The answer was invariable affirmative. Instead of funnelling more project aid into the OPTs, donors must seek to empower their recipients in a more sustainable fashion, it was argued by our interviewees.

## **No Dem Ass – Gaza**

Youngs and Michou '11

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In terms of geographical concentration, democracy assistance is far less wide reaching than humanitarian efforts, development projects and charitable outreach. Although the Palestinian Territories do not suffer from the same degree of concentration as Amman and Cairo, major efforts are nevertheless based largely in Jerusalem or Ramallah. Again, this can be explained by factors on the ground and/or biases inherent to donor outlooks. The former includes the no-contact rule with Hamas which, when upheld, makes operating in Gaza more difficult; and the logistics of the occupation which make moving around the West Bank incredibly time-consuming. The latter includes the tendency of donors to cluster together, and the fact that many are not able to afford (or chose not to dedicate funds to) local staff in the more remote areas of the West Bank (under 6000 sq km) and Gaza (360 sq km), it is the physical hindrances such as obtaining permits, negotiating checkpoints, and importing materials that impact most negatively on the potential for decentralisation.

## **USAID Conditional**

Youngs and Michou '11

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Just as certain local organisations have acquired a preferential status amongst donor funding priorities, so certain donors have acquired a reputation amongst local recipients. The issue of conditionality is present in some cases and absent in others. It is widely known, for instance, that cooperation with USAID and subsequent signing of the clause preventing contact with Hamas opens the way to larger grants. Many of those interviewed preferred not to work with state-funded USAID but had enjoyed good relations with the privately-funded Ford Foundation. The latter were praised by one of their decade-long recipients of core funding for not imposing any conditions. The trend in academia and amongst donors in recent years has been to argue for a decoupling of aid from conditionality in favour of recipient priorities and locally-driven projects. Yet in areas such as Palestine where there is so much donor funding pouring in, and such a tense political backdrop, one would expect to see increased levels of conditionality. Most local activists interviewed saw donor money as 'connected with the peace process' more than with democracy as an end in itself. One warned of a failure to distinguish between the PA and NGOs, whilst another claimed that donors have turned what used to be a culture of volunteerism into an incentives based race for cash.

## **Democracy Assistance Little Effect**

Youngs and Michou '11

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From this picture of existing donor activities and local reactions to current funding patterns, a number of policy recommendations suggest themselves. The over-riding warning is that local organisations place a far higher priority today on ending occupation and easing the Israeli blockade than on democracy funding. The hope that democracy-building would open the way for mutual concessions in peace talks is today perceived to have been misplaced by the vast majority of our Palestinian interviewees. In contrast to other case studies carried out in this project, improvements to the way in which democracy aid is carried out can be expected only to have modest impact, absent changes to the broader political parameters. Having said this, as our brief in this paper was to focus not on the peace process per se but on the delivery of governance assistance, these are the policy implications we believe emerge from our consultations on this specific issue:

## Solvency

Youngs and Michou '11

Richard Youngs, Director General, FRIDE, and H el ene Michou, Junior Researcher, FRIDE. "Assessing Democracy Assistance: Palestine". March 2011. [www.fride.org/descarga/Assessing\\_Democracy\\_Assistance\\_Palestine.pdf](http://www.fride.org/descarga/Assessing_Democracy_Assistance_Palestine.pdf)

Countervailing power. Donors have been correct to focus on building the basic policy-implementation capacity of PA institutions; this is indeed a basic prerequisite to crafting a democratic polity. But they now need to complement this approach with a far more systematic focus on mechanisms of democratic accountability. The head of one civil society organisation pleads: 'Occupation must stop being used as a pretext for a weakening of monitoring and accountability mechanisms'. The international community should heed her words. Donors should deploy the standard range of democracy aid, that has been conspicuously absent in the OPTs to date. Support to civil society should be targeted. Civil society has been over-funded, sometimes to what is arguably a degree of overly-cushioned comfort, largely to fulfil relatively 'soft functions'. Funding should be limited more to the essentials of what CSOs really need and oriented towards them playing more genuinely independent roles of political oversight. One European official laments: 'we have taught Palestinians to be very good at log-frame applications, while their government abuses basic human rights with impunity.' Assistance in party building may help the over-due move away from resistance 'movements' to more standard political party agglomerations, although this would require prior movement in the election cycle. One pending challenge is how to build in the deeply-rooted dynamics of familial and clan loyalties, while also aiming at a modernisation of Palestinian party politics. In the field of elections, donors have provided much good support to the CEC; they should work to ensure that its pronouncements and efforts to hold elections are not countermanded by the PA. A huge amount of funding has flowed into the justice sector, but this now needs to take on a less technocratic focus that pushes for less executive interference in legal decisions. There is now so much of the narrower, technical capacity-building aid in the justice sector that much funding cannot be disbursed.

Dunn '10

Michele Dunn, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and editor of the online journal, the Arab Reform Bulletin. "A Two-State Solution Requires Palestinian Politics". Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. June 2010. [carnegieendowment.org/files/palestine\\_politics.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/palestine_politics.pdf)

All roads lead toward the need for Palestinian reconciliation, as difficult as that is for Israel, the United States, and many European states to accept. This does not mean that the United States should open a direct dialogue with Hamas, particularly when that group has not yet renounced the use of terror. But the United States should adjust its policies now in recognition of the inescapable imperative of reconciliation. It should: • Pursue a durable state-building plan as well as Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. The United States historically has focused on securing a negotiated Israeli-Palestinian deal at the expense of promoting the emergence of functioning and representative Palestinian institutions. Instead, the United States should take the long view, encouraging the building of Palestinian state institutions in a serious way while pursuing a negotiated agreement. • Support the resumption of politics. The United States has tried for too long to control and constrain Palestinian politics and leadership choices. Decision making and institution building can succeed only if Palestinian democratic political life resumes. The United States should explicitly support the holding of legislative and presidential elections with the participation of all Palestinian parties. The United States also should support negotiations among Palestinians about revisions to the electoral system. Abbas's September 2007 decree, which changed the system from a mixed system to one of complete proportional representation, does not enjoy widespread support. • Signal openness to Palestinian reconciliation. The Fatah/Hamas rift is deeply painful for Palestinians and has distorted and paralyzed political life. It is time to remove the impediments to reconciliation and the excuses for avoiding it by signaling that the international community will accept a deal that allows Palestinians to move forward. The 2007 Mecca agreement and national unity government, although not a panacea, offered an important opportunity; missing it resulted in bloodshed and years of political stalemate. The United States should indicate its openness to a Palestinian modus vivendi—even if it does not meet the specific Quartet principles—as long as a Palestinian unity government would be willing to negotiate with Israel and to maintain security cooperation in order to prevent terrorism.

## Civil Society Key

Abusrour '9

Amal Abusrour, completed a BA in Social Science from Al Quds University, an MA in Politics and International Studies from the University of Leeds and completed a one year non-degree program in public policy and public administration at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. She worked for the Reform Program at the Palestinian Prime Minister Office for two years, before Hamas electoral victory in 2006. Currently she is a civil society activist and works for one of the Local NGOs in Palestine. "Palestinian Civil Society: A time for action". The Atkins Paper Series. March 2009.

[icsr.info/publications/papers/1242995685ICSRAmalAbusrourReport.pdf](http://icsr.info/publications/papers/1242995685ICSRAmalAbusrourReport.pdf)

The role of Palestinian civil society in affecting the political organization of the future Palestinian state should be perceived through the challenge in relation to the state. Paving the way towards democracy and independence are not mere responsibilities of political parties. Palestinian civil society has both the capacity and power to monitor and affect good governance, peace-building, and the forthcoming Palestinian elections through mobilizing the silent majority that evolved after last legislative elections in 2006 and the split between the West Bank and Gaza. This challenge should be twofold; political to establish an independent state and social to create a democratic and functioning society.

Abusrour '9

Amal Abusrour, completed a BA in Social Science from Al Quds University, an MA in Politics and International Studies from the University of Leeds and completed a one year non-degree program in public policy and public administration at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. She worked for the Reform Program at the Palestinian Prime Minister Office for two years, before Hamas electoral victory in 2006. Currently she is a civil society activist and works for one of the Local NGOs in Palestine. "Palestinian Civil Society: A time for action". The Atkins Paper Series. March 2009.

[icsr.info/publications/papers/1242995685ICSRAmalAbusrourReport.pdf](http://icsr.info/publications/papers/1242995685ICSRAmalAbusrourReport.pdf)

Palestinian civil society can play a significant role in fostering peace-making and peace-building in Palestine. Its function is to promote civic peace in Palestinian cities and towns by creating a culture of conflict transformation and resilience. In doing so, civil society will also make a significant contribution to building peace between Palestinians and Israelis. At the present time, civil society institutions are working towards peace by providing people with the knowledge and skills that enable conflict transformation and resilience. Such techniques encourage people to live side by side with Israel, but the very same methods are also needed in healing the political division between Palestinians. As Allam Jarrar points out, Peace-making is necessary not only in relation to peace negotiations with Israel. Conflict transformation and resilience allow Palestinians to find ways to live together with Israelis... But they are also necessary so that Palestinians can work together in laying the foundations of a democratic state.<sup>13</sup> Palestinian civil society institutions have participated actively in peace movements, aiming to eliminate elements of hostility in Palestinian society. This is particularly true for NGOs that have been involved in educational, economic and social projects, which have enabled Palestinian and Israeli NGOs to share perspectives on possible solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>14</sup> Civil society organisations have played an important role during the ongoing split between the West Bank and Gaza Strip by meeting with the two parties and others in order to identify a middle ground. Abdel Hadi Abu Khusa of the Palestinian Medical Relief Society noted that these efforts succeeded to a certain extent, but that civil society organisations obviously could not manage to resolve the dispute entirely. In future, it would be useful to combine civil society's 'diplomatic' missions with widespread communal mobilisation, which would communicate popular aspirations for civic peace. Yet it seems as if civil society continues to be reluctant, if not fearful, of confronting the existing two political powers. Civil society must organise a bottom-up campaign consisting of students, teachers, women, professionals, and NGO representatives to end the division between the West Bank and Gaza. It is time for various 'fragmented' networks to disseminate one message – to call for a consensus, or at least a middle ground, that enables people to focus their efforts and attention on building the foundation of the Palestinian state rather than destroying this dream. Civil society organisations and networks must work beyond their professional, geographical and cultural differences and present one voice, the voice of civic peace. Peace-building is one of the most important pillars of civil society campaigns, because peace is a prerequisite for the acceptance of democratic rule and civic reform in the Palestinian state. If people want to enjoy democracy, they need to accept the rules of the game: the loser should abide by the rules of this democratic process, and start acting as an opposition. These are some of the values and messages that civil society institutions should disseminate to Palestinians.<sup>15</sup>

## **Peace Process Link**

Youngs and Michou '11

Richard Youngs, Director General, FRIDE, and H el ene Michou, Junior Researcher, FRIDE. "Assessing Democracy Assistance: Palestine". March 2011. [www.fride.org/descarga/Assessing\\_Democracy\\_Assistance\\_Palestine.pdf](http://www.fride.org/descarga/Assessing_Democracy_Assistance_Palestine.pdf)

The Peace Process Link. A current debate in the OPTs is over whether funds for institution-building are now rendered ineffective by the collapse of peace talks. Many European diplomats, in particular, express frustration that support for state-building has not been a catalyst for final settlement negotiations. Interviews reveal growing doubts over the value of continuing to prioritise institution-building to quite the same extent. A commonly heard sentiment is that state-building was supposed to be a means, but has become an end in itself. State-building has now become a substitute for the lack of progress in the peace process. Some diplomats lament that the international community keeps pouring money into training programmes when Palestinians are probably the most over-trained people in the world. There is emerging debate among donors over the balance between governance assistance, on the one hand, and diplomacy aimed more directly at a final settlement and Palestinian sovereignty, on the other hand. These reflections are understandable, but the stalling of peace negotiations makes democratisation more not less imperative. The perception that the US and other governments have switched between different institution-building strategies and indulged abuses in an instrumental attempt to shore up a small number of Fatah 'reformers' cannot be divorced from the peace process' stagnation.<sup>47</sup> The creeping doubts suggest that institution-building needs to regain public support and engagement quickly. For this, donors must press for it to become a participatory rather than technocratic enterprise.

## **Israel Freakout Link**

Wall '11

James M. Wall, currently a Contributing Editor of The Christian Century magazine, based in Chicago, Illinois. "If Obama's Libyan Intervention "Succeeds", Will Palestine Be Next?". April 4, 2011. Sabbah Report. <http://sabbah.biz/mt/archives/2011/04/04/if-obamas-libyan-intervention-succeeds-will-palestine-be-next/>

Israel's greatest fear is that the Palestinian civil society within Israel, and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, will continue to expand and gain confidence. Ramzy Baroud, editor of the Palestine Chronicle, describes what it is about the growing impact of civil society that frightens Israel's leaders. . . . The concept of civil society is often used as a meeting point between other forces, including a healthy and fully functional state. In the Palestinian scenario, however, with the occupation, siege and regular assassinations and imprisonments of political leaders, such a state is missing. This reality has skewed the traditional balance, resulting in a political void engineered by Israel to de-legitimize Palestinian demands and rights. It is most impressive, to say the least, that representatives of Palestinian civil society have managed to step up and fill the void. This success would have never been possible without individuals from international civil society, including Rachel Corrie, the Turkish heroes aboard the Mavi Marmara, and the many Israeli activists and organisations who are currently being targeted by the rightwing government of Binyamin Netanyahu and Avigdor Lieberman. Israel has shown alarm over the growing importance of civil society by reacting on many fronts. In Palestine, it has imprisoned Palestinian non-violent resisters. In Israel, it has cracked down on funds received by Israeli human rights groups. And internationally, it has pushed forward a media campaign of defamation. Palestinian civil society will not "overthrow" the Israeli government. But Palestinians have demonstrated that they have the power to expose the aggressive Israeli policies that are so antithetical to the "moral imperative" that lies at the core of American ideals.

## May Cut Aid

Meyers '11

Steven Lee Meyers. "Reconciliation Deal by Rival Factions Forces U.S. to Reconsider Aid to Palestinians". The New York Times. April 27, 2011. The New York Times. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/28/world/middleeast/28policy.html>

The announced reconciliation on Wednesday between Fatah and Hamas, the estranged Palestinian movements, puts the Obama administration in the uncomfortable position of having to reconsider its financial support for the Palestinian Authority, including millions of dollars the United States has spent to train and equip Palestinian security forces, officials and members of Congress said. The agreement, reached after secret talks brokered by Egypt, caught the Obama administration, like many others, by surprise. At a minimum it complicates the administration's faltering hopes to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. It also casts doubt on American efforts in recent years to build up the Palestinian Authority on the West Bank, led by Fatah, as the legitimate leader of the Palestinians. The White House, which has been debating how best to revive peace talks ahead of an address to Congress next month by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, all but dismissed the proposed reconciliation by reiterating the longstanding American designation of Hamas as a terrorist organization that has never expressed a willingness to recognize Israel, let alone negotiate with it. "As we have said before, the United States supports Palestinian reconciliation on terms which promote the cause of peace," Tommy Vietor, a spokesman for the National Security Council, said in the administration's only public response. "Hamas, however, is a terrorist organization which targets civilians." He added that any Palestinian government had to accept certain principles announced by international negotiators known as the Quartet: the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and Russia. They include renouncing violence, abiding by past agreements with the Israelis and recognizing Israel's right to exist. Hamas has never agreed to those conditions. Administration officials declined to discuss publicly the impact the reconciliation might have on American policy, saying they were still trying to learn more about how exactly the two rival organizations would be able to reunite years after violently splitting. There were, however, immediate calls by pro-Israeli members of Congress to withhold American aid to the Palestinians if their leadership included Hamas. "It calls into question everything we have done," Representative Gary L. Ackerman, Democrat of New York, said in a telephone interview. He later issued a statement saying the United States would be compelled by "both law and decency" to cut off all aid. "I don't think there is any will on the part of the administration or the Congress to provide funds to a government that is dominated by a dedicated terrorist organization," he said. The administration is already on record warning of that. Shortly after taking office, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton flatly ruled out cooperating with a Palestinian Authority that included Hamas as a partner. "We will not deal with, nor in any way fund, a Palestinian government that includes Hamas unless and until Hamas has renounced violence, recognized Israel and agreed to follow the previous obligations of the Palestinian Authority," she told Congress then.

## Now is Key

Ashraqi and Muasher '11

Hanan Ashrawi and Marwan Muasher. May 27, 2011. "Palestine and the Arab Spring". Carnegie Endowment.  
<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/events/?fa=3269>

On May 4,  Hamas, Fatah, and other Palestinian factions signed a reconciliation agreement in Cairo, signaling their willingness to form a national unity government comprised of independent technocrats that will pave the way for general elections in 2012. By bringing an end to the rivalry that had prevented Palestinian leaders from confronting the Israeli occupation as a unified force, the agreement has opened a limited window of opportunity for progress on the peace process, Ashrawi said. Growing Palestinian unity: On May 15, protesters in Gaza and the West Bank were joined by Palestinian diaspora communities in an unprecedented wave of solidarity protests commemorating the "Nakba," or the anniversary of Israel's establishment, Ashrawi said. The demonstrations, fueled by the positive outcome of the Fatah-Hamas reconciliation talks and a newfound sense of empowerment and confidence among Palestinians, revealed a new level of cohesion and commitment to achieving key demands, including UN recognition of Palestinian statehood, a freeze on Israeli settlement construction, and the right of return for Palestinian refugees. A limited window of opportunity: The reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas has presented a unique and time-sensitive opportunity for progress toward achieving a settlement with Israel. Palestinian leaders had been using the internal schism to justify their inability to confront the occupation with a unified strategy, but a national unity government will enjoy enhanced leverage and negotiating power, according to Ashrawi. No more excuses: In response to the Palestinian reconciliation, Israeli leaders were quick to rule out negotiations with Hamas, which they seek to portray as "the Palestinian equivalent of al-Qaeda," Ashrawi said. But this argument ignores key terms of the Cairo agreement, which paves the way for a national unity government comprised of political independents who are driven not by partisan or ideological loyalties, but rather by the need to meet popular demands for better governance and essential services, she noted. A truly democratic process must permit the participation of all political forces, Ashrawi said. " Hamas belongs within a pluralistic system, not as an alternative to it," she added.

## U.S. Action Key

Moore '11

Ben Moore, Master of International Affairs candidate at SIPA, specializing in Conflict Resolution and Middle East Studies, with a concentration in International Security Policy. "Spring Cleaning in the O.P.T.". May 4, 2011. The Morningside Post at Columbia University.  
<http://themorningsidepost.com/2011/05/spring-cleaning-in-the-o-p-t/>

Has the Arab spring begun to thaw the dreary Israeli-Palestinian winter? The answer to this question lies largely in the hands of the international community, especially those of America. If current policies remain unaltered, Hamas' terrorist label will discount a power-sharing Hamas-Fatah government from foreign aid or diplomatic recognition. Left unsupported, this handicapped government, along with its potential to negotiate with Israel, will quickly fall. A unified Palestine is oft-cited as a necessary prerequisite to a broader Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement.

Thus, the recent Hamas-Fatah reconciliation deal has triggered much emotion. Yet, the reactions thus far have been unsurprising: denunciation from Israel; a warm welcome from the Arab world; a hesitant, yet congratulatory response from Europe; and a qualified welcome from the US. For those keeping tabs on the conflict, the air reeks of déjà vu. Four years ago Palestinian citizens, like today, called for unity. Fatah and Hamas eventually agreed to form a National Unity Government. Three months later the Occupied Palestinian Territory (O.P.T.) descended into a brief, but bloody civil war and was divided into the reality we see today: Hamas' de jure control in Gaza and Fatah's de facto West Bank rule. What happened? Based on the interviews I conducted with both parties, as well as Israelis and Americans, the biggest obstacle this unity government faced was not political partisanship, but the international condemnation it received.

With little control over its own economy, the Palestinian Authority depends on enormous amounts of foreign aid. Hamas' violent past was unacceptable to the US and other states, as was their presence in government. Thus, diplomatic contacts and economic aid from the West were cut-off and the government fell apart. At the time, Bush pushed democracy in the Middle East; Hamas' free and fair electoral triumph made quick work of that. Most Palestinians support the moderate views on the peace process espoused by Fatah.

However, the political parties elected must not merely negotiate, they must also govern. Support for Hamas is based on promises of better governance in the face of Fatah's corruption.

Indeed, Hamas' rule in Gaza has seen the construction of schools, hospitals and a social welfare system; violent rhetoric has taken a backseat. Most Palestinians do not identify with Hamas' militant, fundamental Islamic side; they condemn it. And, like any political organization, Hamas is not monolithic; think fiscal conservatives versus social conservatives—both can be Republican. Unfortunately, the voices of moderate Hamas leaders are often drowned-out by their militant colleagues.

Hamas has the capacity and propensity to become more pragmatic; their willingness to embrace democracy and join a government that will negotiate with Israel signals this.

The fate of the recent reconciliation deal does not depend solely on international reactions. Fatah and Hamas have called for elections despite their violent and divisive past; the losing party will resist ceding power. I can offer suggestions for building confidence within such a government: joint-policing of Gaza's borders, facilitation of a bipartisan cabinet, and low-level dialogue with Hamas' more moderate leaders. But, without international recognition from the U.S., unity

government likely will not last. Israel will lose a legitimate negotiating partner. The U.S. must throw out unfruitful policies and support the spirit of democracy wrought by the Arab Spring: a spring cleaning of

American policy vis-à-vis the O.P.T. Should a Palestinian unity government emerge, the U.S. could abandon current policy while still saving face. Though direct support of organizations labeled "terrorist" in nature is illegal under U.S. law, we still manage to support a Lebanese government that includes Hezbollah by channeling funds through specific, monitored channels. Along a different vein, if Palestinian unity is a priority, the U.S. could simply abstain from the debate, refraining from condemnation of E.U. and U.N. support thereof. The democratic choices of the Palestinian people should be respected, allowing Israeli-Palestinian negotiations to proceed legitimately.

If the democratic foundations of

the Arab Spring are important to the American people, as they should be, a softening of policy with regards to Hamas is in order. Absent this shift, the exciting, reconciliatory events of the past few days will fall to the

wayside, yet again. Whether the idealism of unification becomes reality—whether the Arab spring comes to the Holy Land—hinges on the potential of pragmatism in American foreign policy.

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## Terminology (from solvency authors)

Swenson uses “Palestine” and “Palestinian territories” interchangeably.

Swenson '10 [Geoffrey, rule of law specialist for the Asia Foundation in Nepal and a 2009 fellow with the Stanford Center on International Conflict and Negotiation and the Truman National Security Project, “Promoting Democracy with Neither State Nor Security: U.S. Democracy Promotion Efforts in the Palestinian Territories from the Oslo Accords to the Rise of Hamas,” Winter, <http://yalejournal.org/2010/03/promoting-democracy-with-neither-state-nor-security-u-s-democracy-promotion-efforts-in-the-palestinian-territories-from-the-oslo-accords-to-the-rise-of-hamas/>]

As President Obama seeks to jumpstart the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and promote democracy **in the Palestinian territories** (while simultaneously avoiding the Bush administration’s foreign policy missteps) he has much to learn from democracy promotion efforts during this crucial time. American policymakers and NGOs cannot be faulted for lacking ambition. They attempted to reform and support Fatah, construct a viable state backed by free elections, and foster a vibrant civil society—all against a backdrop of intense conflict. The limited successes and larger failures highlight the important policy tradeoffs that inevitably exist in democracy promotion. Even programs with the best intentions often have unintended negative consequences. Election assistance presents the most obvious example. Election assistance ranks as the most successful programming area, at least from a technical perspective, because it normalized free and fair elections. But in the 2006 PLC elections, voters designated Hamas—an extremist group that supports the use of violence against Israel—as the legitimate governing party. The election process may be sound, but the results unsavory. Nevertheless, elections, regardless of their outcome, have helped institutionalize credible voting procedures in a territory with little previous experience with democratic rule. An established norm of free elections could check the party or parties in power regardless of their ideology. Indeed, Hamas’ victory exemplifies the often non-linear pattern of democratization.

<he continues>

The ad hoc quality of many democracy programs illustrates the need for more comprehensive strategic planning. Successful programming must reflect local realities and demonstrate a willingness to seize opportunities, but also refrain from prioritizing short-term gains at the cost of long-term setbacks. **Democracy promotion in Palestine** highlights the reality that a fuller understanding the impact of U.S. efforts work requires contextualizing programming within the overarching policy apparatus. In other words, the relationship between NGOs and the U.S. government has a substantial impact on both program implementation and results. A better strategic paradigm demands critical reflection. Thus, improved programming requires taking evaluation seriously at both the level of individual programs and countries. USAID, NED, and U.S. democracy promotion NGOs frequently resist even minor criticisms. Outside evaluators contracted by USAID to analyze their programming may be hesitant to make earnest assessments since a review that the agency deems unfair could jeopardize future contracts. In an extremely competitive marketplace, NGOs suffer from a pervasive fear that existing funds will evaporate and new funds will be directed elsewhere. They are understandably apprehensive about their budget being slashed by a Congress perpetually skeptical of foreign aid. Building on past successes and learning from failures requires a willingness to critically examine earlier decisions. For such a system to develop, Congress and the administration must collaborate to adopt a more nuanced approach to democracy promotion rather than placing a premium on immediate results.

## Historical Assistance

### **Election assistance (monitoring, NGO support, oversight) to Palestinian authorities has historical foundations.**

**Swenson '10** [Geoffrey, rule of law specialist for the Asia Foundation in Nepal and a 2009 fellow with the Stanford Center on International Conflict and Negotiation and the Truman National Security Project, “Promoting Democracy with Neither State Nor Security: U.S. Democracy Promotion Efforts in the Palestinian Territories from the Oslo Accords to the Rise of Hamas,” Winter, <http://yalejournal.org/2010/03/promoting-democracy-with-neither-state-nor-security-u-s-democracy-promotion-efforts-in-the-palestinian-territories-from-the-oslo-accords-to-the-rise-of-hamas/>]

U.S. policymakers believed that free elections would empower moderate Palestinian leadership capable of furthering the peace process. For them, elections represented a vital step toward a democratic Palestine and ultimately a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Carter Center were the primary implementers of election assistance for the 1996 polls, the 2005 presidential and local elections, and the 2006 PLC elections. Both USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) have actively financed election programming. The International Republican Institute (IRI), NDI, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), and the Carter Center—often working together—provided substantial election assistance. Preparation for the 1996 presidential and parliamentary election commenced in 1994, two years before the polls. Pre-election assessments outlined potential difficulties and opportunities. NGOs monitored voter and candidate registration, helped educate voters, party members, and election administrators about the election process, resolved disputes over the polling process, and observed the actual elections. American NGOs, most notably NDI, worked with local monitoring organizations to develop an indigenous domestic monitoring capacity. All NGOs issued comprehensive post-election reports and helped resolve post-election disagreements. These organizations conducted high-quality election monitoring. The Palestinian public expressed widespread skepticism about whether the 1996 elections would be credible. While the transitional elections experienced some administrative shortcomings and procedural irregularities, little evidence of systematic fraud appeared. Subsequent elections featured imperfections, but were largely free and fair. By engaging elections comprehensively, American NGOs helped establish a reliable electoral process and built public legitimacy for future elections.

### **Previous assistance has also included formation of political parties through USAID, although the effectiveness of US support has been called into question.**

**Swenson '10** [Geoffrey, rule of law specialist for the Asia Foundation in Nepal and a 2009 fellow with the Stanford Center on International Conflict and Negotiation and the Truman National Security Project, “Promoting Democracy with Neither State Nor Security: U.S. Democracy Promotion Efforts in the Palestinian Territories from the Oslo Accords to the Rise of Hamas,” Winter, <http://yalejournal.org/2010/03/promoting-democracy-with-neither-state-nor-security-u-s-democracy-promotion-efforts-in-the-palestinian-territories-from-the-oslo-accords-to-the-rise-of-hamas/>]

Political party assistance from the United States attempted to simultaneously prop up and reform the ruling Fatah party—a thoroughly corrupt party with pronounced anti-democratic tendencies—out of fear of the alternative. International party aid did not begin in earnest until 2003, nearly seven years after the 1996 elections; while technically available to all non-violent parties, Fatah received the bulk of this assistance. NDI emphasized the long-term structural development of Fatah and a multi-party system that marginalized Hamas. Programming there centered on increasing knowledge about the role of parties in a representative government and offering key party figures with the necessary background needed to revitalize Palestinian political parties. Assistance included registering new voters, honing communication and outreach skills, policy and message development, survey and canvassing assistance, and help with outreach to youth and women. Before the local and PLC elections, aid became more campaign-focused with candidate and activist trainings, creation of a major voter database, an extensive voter mobilization campaign, and manuals on campaign management, voter targeting, and fundraising. Even though NGOs

distributed only a small portion of this aid, an analysis of U.S. party assistance would be incomplete without mentioning USAID's massive support for Fatah's electioneering efforts. USAID spent roughly \$2.3 million to bolster Fatah and undercut Hamas;<sup>[vii]</sup> assistance included paying for advertisements and events praising the then Fatah-led Palestinian Authority. USAID funded roughly 40 projects through Abbas' office including: "a street cleaning campaign, distributing free food and water to Palestinians at border crossings, donating computers to community centers and sponsoring a national youth soccer tournament."<sup>[viii]</sup> In contrast, Hamas spent only \$1 million on the entire campaign. Despite certain gains, outside investment, produced few tangible results. On the positive side, these investments likely did allow Fatah to run a better campaign. Thousands of activists and candidates have been trained and voter outreach techniques improved. And, given the desperate living situations in much of the West Bank and Gaza, the patronage programs undoubtedly swayed some voters. However, Fatah not only lost power, but showed little interest in reform. Indeed, Fatah's corruption and willingness to accommodate the United States and Israel no doubt helped to propel Hamas to electoral victory.

**\*\*\*Solvency Mechanisms\*\*\***

## General

### **US support is necessary for any Palestinian stability, even if the UN recognizes their statehood.**

**Schanzer 5-10-11** [Jonathan, PhD, vice president of research at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and former counterterrorism analyst for the Office of Intelligence and Analysis at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Why the Hamas-Fatah Deal Is Bad for the Palestinians,” [http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/why-hamas-fatah-deal-bad-palestinians\\_560809.html](http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/why-hamas-fatah-deal-bad-palestinians_560809.html)]

Finally, even if the U.N. recognizes a unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood, a lack of U.S. support will create political and financial challenges that may smother the state in its cradle. Already, 29 senators have asked Obama to turn off the spigot of aid to the Palestinians. And even in the Obama era, with the United States showing less assertiveness on the world stage, the Palestinians need America and its robust foreign policy assistance. Though Fatah and Hamas may have temporarily reconciled themselves to one another, the Palestinians will eventually need to reconcile themselves to Washington. As long as Hamas is in the picture, it won't be easy.

### **Assistance to Palestine is generally subject to intense scrutiny to avoid manipulation by “terrorist” organizations, including Hamas.**

**Zanotti '10** [Jim, Analyst in Middle Eastern Affairs, “U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians,” August 12, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS22967.pdf>]

USAID's West Bank and Gaza program is subject to a vetting process (for non-U.S. organizations) and to yearly audits intended to ensure that funds are not diverted to Hamas or other organizations classified as terrorist groups by the U.S. government. 7 This vetting process has become more rigorous in recent years in response to allegations that U.S. economic assistance was indirectly supporting Palestinian terrorist groups, and following an internal audit in which USAID concluded it could not “reasonably ensure” that its money would not wind up in terrorist hands.

### **Although Palestine is struggling for recognition as a state, meaningful democratic reform is a precursor to statehood.**

**Horing 2-10-11** [Shoula, attorney and political commentator, “Palestinian democracy first, before a state,” [http://www.kcjc.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=200:palestinian-democracy-first-before-a-state&catid=903:opinion&Itemid=2](http://www.kcjc.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=200:palestinian-democracy-first-before-a-state&catid=903:opinion&Itemid=2)]

The Obama administration adopted a new foreign policy when it turned its back on a key ally, like Mubarak and started talking about “an orderly transition to lasting democracy.” As in Egypt, Palestinian society is struggling with a corrupt, undemocratic, authoritarian and divisive PA leadership with a long record of human rights violations and an economy which is artificially resuscitated by handouts from foreign donors. Hence, Israel's government should not agree to negotiate for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the strategic hills of the West Bank, until the Palestinian people first have a chance to cleanse its leadership and move toward lasting democracy as Obama has demanded from Egypt. Israel needs to know who will be the ultimate true representative of the Palestinian people before it gives its strategic assets away. It is quite dangerous for Israel and hypocritical of Obama to ask the Jewish state to agree to the establishment of a state that eventually through free elections or a military coup may be taken over by the Islamic pro-Iranian terrorist organization. After all, Hamas' stated goal is the destruction of the Jewish state and global Islamic rule. Such possibility should not be a surprise to anyone looking at recent Palestinian history. In 2006, Hamas won a majority of seats in the Palestinian legislature in free elections conducted in Gaza and the West Bank by defeating the secular Fatah Party of the so called moderate leader Abbas. Hamas won with its claims of political corruption and undemocratic rule. In June 2007, Hamas forces took over Gaza from the U.S.-trained Palestinian Authority forces, establishing separate Islamic rule in Gaza. Since that time they have fired more than 6,000 rockets at Israeli towns and become a safe haven to terrorists.

## **Election Assistance**

**Palestine has yet to see an election since 2006 due to divisions within the Palestinian people. Although Horing doesn't mention US assistance as key, it does set the stage for potential reform in the future.**

**Horing 2-10-11** [Shoula, attorney and political commentator, "Palestinian democracy first, before a state," [http://www.kcjc.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=200:palestinian-democracy-first-before-a-state&catid=903:opinion&Itemid=2](http://www.kcjc.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=200:palestinian-democracy-first-before-a-state&catid=903:opinion&Itemid=2)]

As in Egypt, Israel must demand that the PA conduct new fair and free elections to choose its president and legislature. Mahmoud Abbas, who was the first leader Obama called after being elected, has stayed in power for the last two years without any elections. In 2005 he was elected for four years. In fact the last elections to the Palestinian legislature occurred in 2006, for four-year terms, but since then there have been no new elections. The problem is that the Palestinians are divided between Gaza and the West Bank and until they are reconciled or reunite, any new election would not reflect the true preference of the people.

**Promoting fair and free elections is one of the most prominent areas for suggested reform.**

**Swenson '10** [Geoffrey, rule of law specialist for the Asia Foundation in Nepal and a 2009 fellow with the Stanford Center on International Conflict and Negotiation and the Truman National Security Project, "Promoting Democracy with Neither State Nor Security: U.S. Democracy Promotion Efforts in the Palestinian Territories from the Oslo Accords to the Rise of Hamas," Winter, <http://yalejournal.org/2010/03/promoting-democracy-with-neither-state-nor-security-u-s-democracy-promotion-efforts-in-the-palestinian-territories-from-the-oslo-accords-to-the-rise-of-hamas/>]

As President Obama seeks to jumpstart the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and promote democracy in the Palestinian territories (while simultaneously avoiding the Bush administration's foreign policy missteps) he has much to learn from democracy promotion efforts during this crucial time. American policymakers and NGOs cannot be faulted for lacking ambition. They attempted to reform and support Fatah, construct a viable state backed by free elections, and foster a vibrant civil society—all against a backdrop of intense conflict. The limited successes and larger failures highlight the important policy tradeoffs that inevitably exist in democracy promotion. Even programs with the best intentions often have unintended negative consequences. Election assistance presents the most obvious example. Election assistance ranks as the most successful programming area, at least from a technical perspective, because it normalized free and fair elections. But in the 2006 PLC elections, voters designated Hamas—an extremist group that supports the use of violence against Israel—as the legitimate governing party. The election process may be sound, but the results unsavory. Nevertheless, elections, regardless of their outcome, have helped institutionalize credible voting procedures in a territory with little previous experience with democratic rule. An established norm of free elections could check the party or parties in power regardless of their ideology. Indeed, Hamas' victory exemplifies the often non-linear pattern of democratization.

**Specifically, supporting opposition of Hamas (should the choice to pick a side arise if the peace deal breaks down) could have a stabilizing effect on the region that would access most of the big advantage areas of this aff.**

**Zanotti '10** [Jim, Analyst in Middle Eastern Affairs, "U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians," August 12, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS22967.pdf>]

Because of congressional concerns that, among other things, U.S. funds might be diverted to Palestinian terrorist groups, much of this aid is subject to a host of vetting and oversight requirements and legislative restrictions. Experts advise that PA stability appears to hinge on improved security, economic development, Israeli cooperation, and the continuation of high levels of foreign assistance. The

possibility of a consensus or unity government to address the problem of divided rule among Palestinians could lead to a full or partial U.S. aid cutoff if Hamas is included in the government and does not change its stance toward Israel. Even if the immediate objectives of U.S. assistance programs for the Palestinians are met, lack of progress toward a politically legitimate and peaceful two-state solution could undermine the utility of U.S. aid in helping the Palestinians become more cohesive, stable, and self-reliant over the long term.

## Funding

**US monetary assistance to Palestine has been pretty generous in recent years- many funding targets encompass traditional democracy assistance areas, including good governance, reforming justice systems, and general democratic reform.**

**Zanotti '10** [Jim, Analyst in Middle Eastern Affairs, "U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians," August 12, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS22967.pdf>]

U.S. aid to the Palestinians has fluctuated considerably over the past five years, largely due to Hamas's changing role within the Palestinian Authority (PA). After Hamas led the PA government for over a year, its forcible takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007 led to the creation of a non-Hamas government in the West Bank—resulting in different models of governance for the two Palestinian territories. Since then, the United States has dramatically boosted aid levels to bolster the PA in the West Bank and President Mahmoud Abbas vis-à-vis Hamas. The United States has appropriated or reprogrammed nearly \$2 billion since 2007 in support of PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad's security, governance, development, and reform programs, including \$650 million for direct budgetary assistance to the PA and nearly \$400 million (toward training, non-lethal equipment, facilities, strategic planning, and administration) for strengthening and reforming PA security forces and criminal justice systems in the West Bank. The remainder is for programs administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development and implemented by nongovernmental organizations in humanitarian assistance, economic development, democratic reform, improving water access and other infrastructure, health care, education, and vocational training. In December 2009, Congress approved \$500 million in total FY2010 assistance pursuant to P.L. 111-117, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010.

**A more stable and centralized funding policy for democracy assistance is key to effective NGO cooperation and allocation of resources.**

**Swenson '10** [Geoffrey, rule of law specialist for the Asia Foundation in Nepal and a 2009 fellow with the Stanford Center on International Conflict and Negotiation and the Truman National Security Project, "Promoting Democracy with Neither State Nor Security: U.S. Democracy Promotion Efforts in the Palestinian Territories from the Oslo Accords to the Rise of Hamas," Winter, <http://yalejournal.org/2010/03/promoting-democracy-with-neither-state-nor-security-u-s-democracy-promotion-efforts-in-the-palestinian-territories-from-the-oslo-accords-to-the-rise-of-hamas/>]

The ad hoc quality of many democracy programs illustrates the need for more comprehensive strategic planning. Successful programming must reflect local realities and demonstrate a willingness to seize opportunities, but also refrain from prioritizing short-term gains at the cost of long-term setbacks. Democracy promotion in Palestine highlights the reality that a fuller understanding the impact of U.S. efforts work requires contextualizing programming within the overarching policy apparatus. In other words, the relationship between NGOs and the U.S. government has a substantial impact on both program implementation and results. A better strategic paradigm demands critical reflection. Thus, improved programming requires taking evaluation seriously at both the level of individual programs and countries. USAID, NED, and U.S. democracy promotion NGOs frequently resist even minor criticisms. Outside evaluators contracted by USAID to analyze their programming may be hesitant to make earnest assessments since a review that the agency deems unfair could jeopardize future contracts. In an extremely competitive marketplace, NGOs suffer from a pervasive fear that existing funds will evaporate and new funds will be directed elsewhere. They are understandably apprehensive about their budget being slashed by a Congress perpetually skeptical of foreign aid. Building on past successes and learning from failures requires a willingness to critically examine earlier decisions. For such a system to develop, Congress and the administration must collaborate to adopt a more nuanced approach to democracy promotion rather than placing a premium on immediate results.

## Media

**USAID currently provides support for Palestinian media outlets to strengthen democracy. Zakariya 6-1-11** [Nevine, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist at USAID, "Enhancing Palestinian Independent Media Program," [http://www.convergemag.com/grants/arts-humanities/Enhancing\\_Palestinian\\_Independent\\_28707.html](http://www.convergemag.com/grants/arts-humanities/Enhancing_Palestinian_Independent_28707.html)]

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission to the West Bank and Gaza is seeking applications from qualified U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), U.S. Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) registered with USAID, Public International Organizations (PIOs), or U.S. for profit firms (provided they forgo profit) to implement a program entitled "Enhancing Palestinian Independent Media" program in the West Bank and Gaza. The overarching goal of the media program entitled "Enhancing Palestinian Independent Media "program" is to promote informed dialogue between the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian public by enhancing the role of independent media in a future democratic state. The two major program objectives are: (1) To foster sound business management practices and to improve the financial viability of targeted independent media networks and outlets; and (2) To increase the number of viewers and listeners to targeted programs coming from independent media networks and outlets. The program should contain three interrelated program components: (1) Strengthen Targeted Local Independent Television and Radio Networks: In order to achieve this, USAID will support the continuing development of one of the existing independent radio networks, as well as one of the existing non-state television networks, currently operating out of the West Bank. USAID assistance will focus on building the management capacity at the network level, supported by on-site training in business planning, network-wide sales and marketing, use of audience research, editorial management, program management, and incorporation of new media platforms into existing program schemes. Network models will be introduced that build affiliates' capacity to contribute programs to the network schedule while also improving their skills in program production; (2) Improve the Professionalism of Partner Independent Media Networks and Outlets: The prime Recipient will ensure selected organizations have the capacity to successfully meet responsibility determination requirements and to successfully manage and account for USG funds. This may include assisting the organizations by providing training and developing policies, procedures and internal controls; and (3) Development of a local Palestinian Service Delivery and Research Institution: Under this component, USAID will support the continued development of an existing Palestinian media institution that can provide assistance to local outlets through specialized training in investigative journalism, sector-specific journalism, media management, program production, use of media research and integration of new media innovations into program planning. This institution will serve as a focal point for media policy dialogue between the government and media outlets, and provide a venue for donor coordination and mapping of the media sector. As an essential means to achieve many of the intended results under various program components, it is expected that the Recipient will provide numerous small grants to program partners under Components A.2 and A.3. In doing so, the Recipient will need to develop a grants manual consistent with USAID regulations governing assistance awards. All sub-grants awarded must be awarded through an approach that espouses the principles of competition and transparency so as to allow the natural market dynamics to prevail, rather than have them compromised by donor interference in the "appointing" of sub-grantees. Sub-grantees cost sharing should also be encouraged by the prime Recipient. USAID will approve both the grants manual and all sub-awards made throughout the life of this program. The total amount of sub-awards should not exceed 20% of the overall program budget.

## **Support Hamas-Fatah peace deal**

**US backing of the Hamas-Fatah peace agreement would allow for a more effective elections process and would resolve regional tensions- all the familiar advantage ground is accessible.**

**Carter 5-9-11** [Jimmy, former US president, “Pro & Con: Should the U.S. support the Hamas-Fatah unity agreement?” <http://www.ajc.com/opinion/pro-con-should-the-940600.html>]

This is a decisive moment. Palestine’s two major political movements — Fatah and Hamas — have signed a reconciliation agreement that will permit both to contest elections for the presidency and legislature within a year. If the U.S. and the international community support this effort, they can help Palestinian democracy and establish the basis for a unified Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza that can make a secure peace with Israel. If they remain aloof or undermine the agreement, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory may deteriorate with new violence against Israel. This accord should be viewed as a Palestinian contribution to the “Arab awakening,” as well as a deep wish to heal internal divisions. Both sides understand that their goal of an independent Palestinian state cannot be achieved if they remain divided. The accord commits both sides to consensus appointments of an election commission and electoral court. I have observed three elections in the Palestinian territory, and these institutions have already run elections that international observers found to be fair, honest and free of violence. The two parties also pledge to appoint a unity government of technocrats — i.e., neither Fatah nor Hamas. Security will be overseen by a committee set up by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), and Egypt will assist. Why should the U.S. and the international community support the agreement? First, it respects Palestinian rights and democracy. In 2006, Hamas won the legislative election, but the “Quartet” — the U.S., the European Union, the United Nations and Russia — rejected it and withheld aid, and the unity government collapsed. Competition between the two factions turned vicious, and each side has arrested the other’s activists. The international community should help them resolve disagreements through electoral and legislative processes. Second, with international support, the accord could lead to a durable cease-fire. Israel and the U.S. are concerned that Hamas could use a unity government to launch attacks against Israel. I have visited the Israeli border town of Sderot and share their concern. I urged Hamas’ leaders to stop launching rockets, and they attempted to negotiate a lasting mutual cease-fire.

**It would certainly be inherent- Obama won’t currently support Hamas in any way.**

**Schanzer 5-10-11** [Jonathan, PhD, vice president of research at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and former counterterrorism analyst for the Office of Intelligence and Analysis at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Why the Hamas-Fatah Deal Is Bad for the Palestinians,” [http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/why-hamas-fatah-deal-bad-palestinians\\_560809.html](http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/why-hamas-fatah-deal-bad-palestinians_560809.html)]

Now, the Obama administration has little choice but to cut ties with the new Palestinian interim government. The State Department lists Hamas as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, barring all formal diplomatic engagement with it. The Treasury Department also lists Hamas as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity, banning direct U.S. aid all institutions in which Hamas is involved.

**This would prevent tensions with Israel and lead to a legitimately perceived Palestinian state.**

**Carter 5-9-11** [Jimmy, former US president, “Pro & Con: Should the U.S. support the Hamas-Fatah unity agreement?” <http://www.ajc.com/opinion/pro-con-should-the-940600.html>]

Third, the accord could be a vehicle to press for a final peace agreement for two states. Abu Mazen will be able to negotiate on behalf of all Palestinians. And with Quartet support, a unity government can negotiate with Israel an exchange of prisoners for the captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit and a settlement freeze. In my talks with Hamas leader Khaled Meshal, he said Hamas would accept a two-state agreement that is approved in a Palestinian referendum. Such an agreement could provide mutual

recognition — Israel would recognize an independent Palestinian state and Palestine would recognize Israel. In other words, an agreement will include Hamas' recognition of Israel.

**The peace deal has the potential to differ from previous accords and result in peaceful conflict resolution if the US (and EU, fortunately for the neg) carefully give support.**

**Baconi 5-17-11** [Tareq, has an MPhil in international relations from Cambridge and is currently completing his PhD specialising in Hamas at King's College, London, "Hamas and Fatah can work together," <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/may/17/hamas-fatah-palestinians-eu-us-israel>]

The recent reconciliation deal between Hamas and Fatah could hold more merit than past deals between the two parties. Since both parties need unity in the face of the present changes in the Middle East, its survival prospects are stronger than before. One could argue that the deal reflects subtle changes in Hamas's attitude towards the Palestinian Authority and indeed hesitant acceptance of Fayyadism. This would not be entirely surprising. The institution-building and economic development that prime minister Salam Fayyad is carrying out in the West Bank, successfully or otherwise, is in principle similar to the Islamisation rolled out by Hamas. Fayyadism focuses internally on the development and growth of the Palestinian social, economic and hard infrastructure as the embryonic state moves, despite occupation, towards a declaration of independence at the UN general assembly. In a secular way, this approach mirrors aspects within Hamas that focus internally on Palestinian society by instilling values into the population through the movement's vast social and civil infrastructure. Both approaches seek to strengthen Palestinians for future statehood and are as a result somewhat compatible. That is not to say that Hamas has given up resistance, because despite Fatah's objections it continues to see resistance as one means to ending the occupation. This is not to say, either, that Hamas does not despise Fayyad; it does – because of his dependence on foreign aid, his cosiness with the western powers, his willingness to negotiate with Israel and not least his secularism and personal background. Still, the two Palestinian movements are at a point where they have strong complementary features which are becoming even more so in the face of current regional changes. Therefore, unlike past reconciliations, this deal could be more than just the empty rhetoric of fraternal love; it could actually hold the semblances of "compatibility in the interim". Apart from that, both Palestinian parties recognise that a united front could empower them in the months ahead. Within the Palestinian movement, Fatah is gearing to declare an independent Palestine in September, and is creating a reality which Hamas needs to contend with. Regionally, the wave of Arab revolutions is changing the geopolitical reality for both movements. The fall of President Mubarak in Egypt leaves Fatah in a particularly vulnerable position, one that is potentially favourable to Hamas, while the unravelling of the Syrian regime provides Hamas with challenges of its own. An added pressure for Hamas is the challenge within Gaza from Salafi parties that view Hamas as a moderate player. Stakes are high. Hamas, frequently the opponent of reconciliation talks, has been pragmatic. Despite often opting for ideological purity at the expense of its popularity ratings, Hamas this time chose to risk ideological compromise for political security. So Hamas is playing it safe – to protect itself against the tumultuous changes in the region, and to ensure it has a political role in Palestine's future beyond September. The Palestinian Authority equally needs this deal, as Hamas is a much-needed element in Fayyad's quest for statehood. It integrates Hamas into the political system, thereby reducing potential dissent and resistance. In doing this, Fatah is pre-empting complications that may be caused by an Egyptian regime that is more friendly towards the Islamic movement than it has been in the past. Despite potential disagreement internally within each of the movements, the deal provides strength for both of them in the face of regional changes. In the past, of course, Hamas and Fatah have had many rounds of reconciliation, periods of tension, bouts of civil war and exaggerated calls of fraternity. Previous agreements brokered by Egypt and Saudi Arabia usually fell apart after a few months. In some ways, this latest deal is especially vulnerable as it has received only a lukewarm reception from some key Palestinian figures. Still, this might be a positive indication as it shows the deal is being driven by the parties, rather than individuals, and it is being shaped by mutual needs. While competitiveness might eventually kick in between the parties, the mutual need for unity at present is buying time for the

international community to engage. The EU and the US are until now showing flexibility and waiting for details of the deal to be known before deciding whether or not to treat the unity government as a partner for peace. Rather than immediately adopting a rejectionist stance – as happened after Hamas's election victory in 2006, the EU should resist Israeli and American calls to boycott a unity government. Similarly, President Obama should learn from his predecessor's mistakes and seek out potential moderation from within Hamas before pursuing a surreptitious policy of marginalisation.

## Judicial Reform

### **Lack of a functioning judiciary is a huge setback in Palestinian politics.**

**Richman 1-9-11** [Rick, Harvard and NYU Law School graduate, “The Tragedy of Palestinian Democracy,” <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2011/01/09/the-tragedy-of-palestinian-democracy/>]

We are not likely to see Palestinian elections in the foreseeable future: Hamas lacks a tradition honoring the peaceful transfer of power, and Fatah does not like elections held before their outcome is fixed. A month ago, the Palestinian “High Court” ruled that the cancellation of the West Bank elections was illegal, and the vast majority of Palestinians want them held. But the court lacks the power to enforce its decision, and the “prime minister” has not yet responded to the letter sent to him about holding elections in light of it. A recent poll found that Palestinians view both Gaza and the West Bank as an increasingly police state. The “institutions of a state” the prime minister is building do not include an empowered judiciary or a free electorate.

### **Palestine is in need of a stable judiciary and rule of law.**

**Horing 2-10-11** [Shoula, attorney and political commentator, “Palestinian democracy first, before a state,” [http://www.kcjc.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=200:palestinian-democracy-first-before-a-state&catid=903:opinion&Itemid=2](http://www.kcjc.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=200:palestinian-democracy-first-before-a-state&catid=903:opinion&Itemid=2)]

Moreover, Israel must demand that the PA establish an independent judiciary and the rule of law, including toward opposition parties, as Obama has demanded from the Egyptians. The “Palestinian Papers” which were the cache of PA confidential documents concerning the peace talks leaked to al-Jazeera TV, revealed that the CIA and British intelligence were aware that hundreds of Hamas and other activists have been routinely detained without trial in recent years, and subjected to widely documented human rights abuses and torture. The PLO’s chief spokesman, Saeb Erekat, is recorded as telling senior U.S. official David Hale in 2009: “We have had to kill Palestinians to establish one authority ... We have invested time and effort and killed our own people to maintain order and the rule of law.”

### **There is historical and effective precedent for US-led judicial reform of Palestine.**

**Swenson ’10** [Geoffrey, rule of law specialist for the Asia Foundation in Nepal and a 2009 fellow with the Stanford Center on International Conflict and Negotiation and the Truman National Security Project, “Promoting Democracy with Neither State Nor Security: U.S. Democracy Promotion Efforts in the Palestinian Territories from the Oslo Accords to the Rise of Hamas,” Winter, <http://yalejournal.org/2010/03/promoting-democracy-with-neither-state-nor-security-u-s-democracy-promotion-efforts-in-the-palestinian-territories-from-the-oslo-accords-to-the-rise-of-hamas/>]

On a structural level, assistance from the U.S. Government proved vital to the establishment and continued maintenance of distinct executive, judicial, and legislative branches. While they continue to face major problems - including rampant corruption and waste - their very existence of these three discrete branches constitutes a major success. They were constructed from scratch in a very difficult environment. U.S. NGOs also made notable contributions. The entire PLC membership and most staff (at least prior to the 2006 elections) received training and assistance. Along with the administrative and material assistance, these activities enhanced the capacities of members and the PLC as an institution. Likewise, judicial aid had visible impact, aiding the Palestinian judiciary in becoming extremely independent, especially in comparison to the rest of the Arab world. Palestinian legal institutions and law schools face chronic resource shortages that U.S. funding helps alleviate. Though many challenges remain, aid generated tangible improvements to the court system and the legal academy.

## **Condition State Recognition on Reform**

**The US could condition state recognition of Palestine on political reforms, including enforcement of separation of powers and respecting election term limits.**

**iloubnan 5-27-11** [Lebanese news service, "For Palestine, democracy is not a one-size-fits-all model," <http://www.iloubnan.info/politics/actualite/id/58821/lebanon/For-Palestine,-democracy-is-not-a-one-size-fits-all-model>]

The critics, who include Western scholars such as Nathan Brown of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and organisations such as Human Rights Watch, have charged that in their efforts to build a state, Fayyad, Abbas and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) have been resorting to authoritarian-like measures. They cite the expired terms for the president and the parliament, lack of separation of power between the executive, legislative and judicial branches, and illegal detainment of Hamas supporters in the West Bank as examples of how the PNA is advancing administration at the expense of democracy. But the criticism is neither wholly accurate nor appreciative of the context within which the leadership must operate. That the PNA recently announced both parliamentary and presidential elections will occur in September shows that the government is eager to implement certain democratic norms, a point which should be embraced by its critics. But they should also understand that Palestine will not emulate a Western-style democracy in its entirety, because democracy is not a one-size-fits-all model. Indeed, the particular set of political and security circumstances that the Palestinian government must contend with are, at times, very challenging to marry with Western democratic norms and values. At the initial stage of the state-building project, the top priorities included: ridding the West Bank of the lawlessness that had turned West Bank towns into battle grounds for armed gangs, strengthening the West Bank economy and clearing the political system of decades-old corruption and nepotism to create a transparent and accountable government. For over a year, the PNA has been extremely successful in achieving these goals, although they are still work in progress. One example of the impressive results is that in 2010, Israel experienced the quietest "security year" in a decade. This lull in terrorism has been directly related to coordination between the Israeli Defence Force and Palestinian security forces, along with the PNA crackdown on Hamas and other violent groups in the West Bank. These security measures have, however, included instances in which basic human rights have been violated, as with the illegal detainment of Hamas supporters. This is a problem that has not been addressed effectively and is unlikely to be, given the complex power relations between the PNA and Hamas, and the conditions set by the international community in exchange for donor support. The contours within which Fayyad must work are incredibly complicated and an impediment to the democratic process. The international community and Israel have set certain security standards to which the PNA must adhere. If Fayyad, for example, were to be seen as unable to deliver a certain measure of security in the West Bank through arrests of those deemed as "security threats", then Israel could decide to re-enter the areas currently under the PNA's control and threaten the state-building enterprise in its entirety. One way to quell the criticism levelled at Fayyad while giving him the political space to manoeuvre in this fragile environment would be for the Obama Administration and the European Union to tie their recognition of a Palestinian state, which is expected to be presented to the United Nations in September, with restarting peace negotiations. Tying recognition to the political process would help bring the two sides back to the negotiating table and help the United States recover some of its badly tarnished reputation after it vetoed a UN resolution condemning Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Continued support for Fayyad's state-building initiative means giving a real chance to the only concrete plan which has the potential to dramatically transform the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and, by extension, the Middle Eastern political landscape. Western countries should accept that at least for the moment, the pursuit of Palestinian statehood may be at odds with an ideal democratic model.

**\*\*\*Advantages\*\*\***

## **Democracy Advantage**

### **Reforming US democracy assistance to Palestine is key to overall democratic transitions in the Middle East.**

**Bahour 2-7-11** [Sam, Director at the Arab Islamic Bank and the community foundation Dalia Association and staff writer for The Guardian, “Palestine is the key to Arab democracy,” <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/feb/07/palestine-arab-democracy-unrest>]

The obvious question is: if Palestinians are so experienced in taking to the streets, why then are there so few serious demonstrations in Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem or Gaza in solidarity with the Egyptian people? The reason is that the Palestinian Authority has been co-opted by a US-dominated and foreign-funded agenda which, in times of crisis, understands a single tool: force. The same applies to the Palestinian government in Gaza, for different reasons. Since the last Palestinian elections, which ended in infighting, the US has equipped, trained and led a new generation of Palestinian security services to serve their old model of Arab world governance – police states and banana republics. Expect the US not to embrace real democracy in the Arab world, but rather to put a new, younger facade on an old and corrupt system of governance. If you want a barometer for today's Middle East political temperature, follow Egypt; however, if you want a barometer for tomorrow's possibilities for serious, sustainable reform, keep your eye on the Palestinian people who are in a dual struggle – one to shed themselves from 43 years of a brutal Israeli occupation and one to create the first Arab model of truly representative and accountable governance. The main factor preventing the Palestinians from continuing on their path to structural reform, following their first genuine elections in 2006, is the refusal of the US to accept the results of those elections. Expect a similar US veto on any forthcoming Egyptian move towards electoral reform that encompasses true representation. Until the people of the Middle East take reforms seriously and transform their mass demonstrations into sustained, organised efforts that address all aspects of society – political, legislative, economic and social – then the blood and tears invested in this latest round of civil outcry will be wasted.

## statehood inevitable

( ). Palestinian statehood is inevitable.

**Medzini , 6-11-11**, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4080609,00.html>, Ronen, acsd 6/11/11)

Amid Jerusalem's efforts to block international recognition of a Palestinian state in September, former senior Israeli diplomats warned Saturday that Israel's current strategy might cause more harm than expected. In a conversation with Ynet, Prof. Ruby Siebel, the former legal adviser to the Foreign Ministry and an international law expert said, "We must say 'yes' to a Palestinian state, but set the conditions. "I think the approach of the government is a mistake," Prof. Siebel explained, "There is no point in struggling against recognition. There is almost an international consensus in support of the establishment of a Palestinian state. "If (the Palestinians) declare the establishment of a state – almost everyone will recognize them, and this will be reflected in the General Assembly." Professor Siebel offered a new approach to deal with the Palestinians' unilateral step: "We must say: 'Yes, but.' "This way we leave out issues that the Palestinians must discuss with us, for example the passage from Gaza to the West Bank, which they cannot do unilaterally," he said. The former legal adviser noted that a conditional recognition of a Palestinian state will alleviate the current international pressure on Jerusalem. "We have another interest in the conflict, which is to transform the international image of the conflict as portrayed by the Palestinians – a conflict between a state and a people under occupation – to a conflict between two states." Former Israeli Ambassador to the European Union and Germany Avi Primor claimed that in the case of a vote at the United Nations General Assembly in September, Israel should abstain, but later recognize the Palestinian state.

### Uniqueness -- More

( ). The question for the Palestinians in the West Bank is really one of “freedom of movement.” This means a few things: 1. Fatah and Hamas are both working against democracy movements to keep their own power; 2. Things like assistance from the U.S. can make a big difference now with U.N. statehood deliberations on the horizon.

**Cooper, June 11** (Helene, June 11, 11, NYT, June 11, 2011 “The Quiet Corner of the Mideast (Surprise))”  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/12/weekinreview/12palestinians.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=print, acsd 6-1-11](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/12/weekinreview/12palestinians.html?_r=1&pagewanted=print, acsd 6-1-11))

WASHINGTON — In the Arab democracy movement, there is a dog that has not yet barked. And whether or not it does — and how loudly — is causing a lot of heartburn among American policy makers. Egyptians, Tunisians, Libyans and Syrians gathered in their respective city squares and neighborhood streets to demand democratic rights, and the Western world cheered, if with varying degrees of diplomatic or military support. But by and large, so far, the Palestinians in the West Bank, who see Israel as the source of their grievances, have not. Yet. In part, this is because the Palestinians’ own leaders — elected, but weak — have another timetable in place, for a diplomatic campaign against Israel in the fall that turmoil on the ground could complicate. But some other prominent Palestinians are beginning to say that the moment of the Arab Spring offers a more urgent opportunity to join fellow Arabs in the streets. And that worries policy makers and experts here, as well as the political leaders in Hamas and Fatah, whose own authority could be undermined. “If you’re looking for a game-changer, that would be it,” says Robert Malley, the program director for the Middle East and North Africa at the International Crisis Group. “At a time when the entire world, including President Obama, is applauding nonviolent popular protests from Cairo to Tehran, it would put Israel in an acute dilemma about how to react if tens of thousands of Palestinians started organizing protests in the West Bank, or marching on Israeli settlements or on Jerusalem demanding an end to the Israeli military occupation.” Even more significantly, Mr. Malley said, “it would put the United States in an equally acute dilemma about how to react to Israel’s reaction.” And it would box President Obama into a corner, penned in by his own words: on one side, that the democratic aspirations of people in the region must be heeded and that Palestinians deserve their own state, and on the other side, 44 years of American national policy that strongly sides with Israel on issues involving its security. The biggest worry for Mr. Obama is that Israel would react with violence toward nonviolent Palestinian protesters in the West Bank. Last Sunday, Israeli forces fired at pro-Palestinian protesters on the Syrian frontier as they tried to breach the border for the second time in three weeks. The Syrian news agency SANA reported that 22 protesters were killed and more than 350 wounded; Israeli officials said that they had no information on casualties, but suggested that the Syrian figures were exaggerated. Israeli and American officials both said those protests were instigated by Syria, in a move to draw attention away from the violent crackdown on its own democracy movement. By and large, there was not a huge outcry over Israel’s decision to fire on the protests, in part because of the role that Syria is believed to have played, and partly because the march on the border was viewed as a hostile and provocative action on a sovereign country with which Syria is still legally at war. **But the West Bank is a whole different ballgame.** This is the disputed territory captured in 1967, the land occupied by Israel after its three southern and eastern Arab neighbors united to fight it 44 years ago. It is the land that Israeli settlement blocks have since sprouted throughout, in an ever-growing reminder that the longer a peace deal remains elusive, the more the facts change on the ground. And now, **Palestinians there have started to draw a direct line between the Arab Spring movement and their own push for an end to the Israeli occupation. “You will see waves,”** Mustafa Barghouti, a former Palestinian Authority presidential candidate and independent member of Parliament who has been critical in the past of the Fatah leadership, said in a telephone interview. **“It’s already happening. We, the Palestinians, have inspired Arabs many times in the past, and now we’re getting inspired by them.” On Sunday, a few hundred Palestinians in the West Bank tried to organize marches around the territory, but were stymied by the forces of both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, neither of which are eager to see widespread Palestinian democracy protests.** That is in part because leaders of both Hamas, the militant Islamist organization that controls Gaza, and Fatah, the party that controls the Palestinian Authority, fear that a popular Palestinian uprising could upend their own authority in the West Bank and Gaza. **“We have been talking to the youth movement in Tunisia,”** said a Palestinian activist in Ramallah who asked to be identified only by his initials, F. A., because he said he has been threatened by both the Palestinian Authority and by Israeli officials. “They are telling us how they did it, and when we tell them our situation, they say, ‘Wow, your situation is much more complicated.’” He said his house, in Ramallah, had had no running water this month, but he could see Israeli settlers in a nearby settlement enjoying the summer in their swimming pool. Because of such daily indignities, he said: “We will do this. Our time will come.” **In Israel, the political discourse in the past two weeks has centered on the increased fear that the Palestinians in the West Bank will join the Arab Spring movement.** On Sunday, Aluf Benn, the influential Israeli editor at large for Haaretz wrote: “The nightmare scenario Israel has feared since its inception became real — that Palestinian refugees would simply start walking from their camps toward the border and would try to exercise their ‘right of return.’” Mr. Benn was referring to the Syrian border episodes, but many Middle East experts say that a West Bank uprising would actually be more seismic, for both Israel and the United States. **In Washington, Obama administration officials have been fretting**

about how the United States would respond. In many ways, Mr. Obama's decision to come out in favor of Palestinian statehood based on Israel's pre-1967 lines, with land swaps, stemmed from a desire at the White House to give both Palestinians and the world at large a place to park their grievances. That, they felt, might help forestall both a United Nations resolution in September recognizing a state of Palestine within the 1967 boundaries, and a popular uprising among Palestinians in the West Bank. That such an uprising hasn't happened yet, Mr. Barghouti and other Palestinians say, goes beyond the simple Hamas-and-Fatah-won't-allow-it reasons. Palestinians in different West Bank cities are disconnected from each other, separated by Israeli checkpoints that don't allow freedom of movement even within the territory. Israel's security fence also inhibits movement among Palestinians.

Beyond that, Palestinians may be exhausted from the two intifadas — the second one, in the last decade, extremely violent — that ended with the Israeli construction of the security fence and the imposition of increasingly strict restrictions on movement throughout the West Bank. But exhaustion from the violence may feed more nonviolent uprisings. “There is now a growing belief,” Mr. Barghouti said, “that nonviolence is the only form of struggle we should use. Or, at least, that it is the most effective form of struggle we should use.”

## ( ). Now the time to encourage the reconciliation

**Buck, June 10** (<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/275a89c2-929f-11e0-96e0-00144feab49a.html#axzz1P0AB3EmY>) West urged to put Hamas 'on board' By Tobias Buck in Jerusalem Published: June 10 2011, acsd 6-11-11)

The US and Europe **must engage with a new Palestinian government, even if it is supported by the Islamist Hamas group**, says a letter signed by 23 world figures. The appeal contradicts the demands of the Israeli government, which wants western leaders to shun any Palestinian government that includes Hamas. But the letter states: "A durable settlement with Israel can only be achieved if the Palestinian leadership is able to negotiate on behalf of all Palestinians and with the agreement of [the] main political forces." It adds: "A lasting peace with Israel is only possible if Hamas is on board." Signatories include **Massimo d'Alema, former Italian prime minister; Shlomo Ben-Ami, former foreign minister of Israel; and Gareth Evans, former foreign minister of Australia. Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, former prime minister of Denmark, and Sir Jeremy Greenstock, former UK ambassador to the UN,** also signed the appeal. The letter **calls for a rethink of western policy in the wake of last month's reconciliation deal between Hamas and the Fatah party** of Mahmoud Abbas, the western-backed president of the Palestinian Authority. Ending years of bloody rivalry, the deal seeks to establish a unity government that would rule both the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip and the Fatah-dominated West Bank. Israel – which along with the US and Europe regards Hamas as a terrorist organisation – reacted angrily to the agreement. For other western governments, the deal poses a dilemma: most want to continue supporting Mr Abbas and his Palestinian Authority, but they remain unwilling to engage with Hamas as long as the group sticks to its hardline position. The letter, however, calls for a more flexible approach. It suggests that Hamas should ultimately recognise Israel, but says this is a "goal" rather than a "precondition". The letter adds: "Adherence to a ceasefire and non-violence is a realistic threshold from which to commence negotiations." In a direct rebuke to statements made by Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, the document says: "**Reconciliation is a prerequisite for achieving a two-state solution. It is not an obstacle to it.**" Asking Fatah to choose between making peace with Hamas and making peace with Israel presents a false choice." Other former leaders who have signed the letter include Alvaro de Soto, former UN special co-ordinator for the Middle East peace process; Louis Michel, former EU commissioner and former Belgian foreign minister; Hans van den Broek, another former EU commissioner and former Dutch foreign minister; and Thorvald Stoltenberg, former UN High Commissioner for Refugees and former Norwegian foreign minister.

## **social networking and internet**

( ). Hamas reprioritizing its role in government to allow assistance. Things like Facebook are key to this rebranding.

**Harel and Issacharoff, June 10** (<http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/hamas-leaders-open-facebook-pages-in-attempt-to-woo-palestinian-public-1.366854>, Haaretz.com, 10.06.11 "Hamas leaders open Facebook pages in attempt to woo Palestinian public The Islamist movement that rules Gaza is now trying to rebrand itself as more open and more moderate." By Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff)

A few leading Hamas figures have opened Facebook pages over the past few weeks, as part of the organization's broader attempt to win hearts and minds among the Palestinian public to reverse its declining support in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. According to an opinion poll published Wednesday by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Center, 39.2 percent of West Bank and Gaza Palestinians have faith in Fatah, while only 16.6 percent put their trust in Hamas. Hamas is now trying to rebrand itself as a more open and, above all, a more moderate movement. The strategy is rooted in part in the organization's fear of a rout in next year's expected parliamentary and presidential elections, and is being expressed in the softer tack being taken by certain senior officials. Senior Hamas leader Khaled Meshal, for instance, said during the reconciliation process with Fatah that Hamas was willing to give negotiations with Israel another chance. But that drew fire from some of his colleagues, demonstrating that not everyone is on board. The Associated Press reported yesterday that the organization "is weighing a new strategy of not directly participating in future governments even if it wins elections - an approach aimed at avoiding isolation by the world community and allowing for continued economic aid." Hamas officials told the AP this idea has gained favor recently in closed meetings of the movement's leadership in the West Bank, Gaza, Egypt and Syria, and that it helped enable last month's reconciliation agreement with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party. "Hamas found that being in government caused huge damage to the movement, and therefore it has changed its policy," said a top participant in the Hamas talks, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the extreme sensitivity of the issue. "Hamas is reevaluating its choices and resetting its priorities," added Yehya Mussa, a prominent Hamas lawmaker who is one of the organization's new Facebook members. "Being in government was a burden on Hamas, a burden on Hamas' image, a burden on its resistance enterprise."

( ). Internet access and info tech is important—could be an area for improvement

**Toameh, June 11** (<http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=224539> 'Abbas shuts down web sites run by Dahlan supporters' KHALED ABU TOAMEH, 11/06/2011)

The Palestinian Authority has blocked five Fatah-affiliated web sites, Fatah activists said over the weekend. The activists named the sites as Kofia Press, Pal Voice, Firas Press, Amad and Falasteen Baituna. RELATED: 'PA bans journalists from reporting human rights abuses' US tells PA it will block 'Palestine' statehood bid at UN They said that decision to close down the sites was in the context of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas's punitive measures against former Fatah security commander Mohammed Dahlan. Abbas has accused Dahlan of plotting to topple the PA regime in the West Bank – an allegation that has been strongly denied by Dahlan. The web sites that were blocked are run by supporters of Dahlan in the Gaza Strip, the activists said. The Fatah Central Committee has suspended Dahlan pending the findings of a special commission of inquiry that was established to investigate his alleged involvement in the plot.

( ). **there is a need for democracy**

BBC News (<http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/9508060.stm>, Young, frustrated and in Gaza As Arab Spring lengthens into Arab Summer, Newsnight's Tim Whewell travels to Gaza - one of the most enclosed societies on earth - to find out what freedoms and changes revolutions elsewhere in the Middle East have brought to young Palestinians there.)

In the front room of a house in the tightly-packed concrete slum that is Gaza's Jabaliya refugee camp, they are learning to dance. A group of young teenage girls are stepping high in the air, hands on hips, as they practice the debka. Traditionally, it was performed by boys and girls together. But since the Islamist movement Hamas took over Gaza in 2007, mixed dancing has been stopped. “ **The ridiculous game between Hamas and Fatah has ruined every Palestinian life** ” **Osama Shomer** "I feel sad and depressed that I can't have freedom in my own country," says **Roba Salibi**, the university student who teaches the debka in her spare time. "The government puts pressure and does not allow us to do what we love." Even to criticise Hamas so publicly is daring in Gaza. But Roba has gone much further. She is one of a group of students who organised an unprecedented independent demonstration in March, calling on the movement to end its bitter, sometimes murderous feud with the rival secular faction, Fatah, and concentrate instead on a united struggle for Palestinian rights. "We said we were sick of political games and we want to be part of a society more tolerant and open to new ideas," says Roba's friend Osama Shomer. "The ridiculous game between Hamas and Fatah has ruined every Palestinian life." In December, Osama was among the authors of a deliberately provocative Facebook manifesto that cursed all the forces they felt were imprisoning Gazan youth. **Fighting uniformity** "That was the reason for the frustration," says another member of the group, Ruwan Abu Shahla. "No-one cared what we felt, what we had to offer, what we could be." It was a passionate cry for both political and social freedom. Ruwan is one of only 15 or so female students, of a total of 9,000 at Gaza's al-Azhar University, who do not wear the hijab head-covering. "The faction which is controlling us is trying to make every person be the same thing. A girl like me not putting on hijab is not acceptable." "You used to look around to see if someone is listening, so we used to stay silent, not even to think," adds her colleague, Abu Yazan. He was called in for questioning by Hamas after the publication of the manifesto. During the March demonstration, many protestors were beaten by police. But three months on, the atmosphere in Gaza has changed, if only slightly. "We made mistakes," says Hamas' deputy foreign minister Ghazi Hamad, referring to some of the Islamic restrictions imposed by his movement - an admission he would have been unlikely to make before this year's youth activism. **'Quarrelling'** More importantly, pressure from the street helped lead to the reconciliation deal between Hamas and Fatah signed in Cairo in May, though mediation by the new Egyptian government and the current political weakness of both Palestinian factions, played a more important role.