

# **A Conflict within a Conflict: The Fatah-Hamas Strife and the Israeli-Palestinian Political Process**

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Never monolithic, the Palestinian national movement has always comprised a large array of competing organizations and factions. During the second intifada, the rivalry between the two most prominent Palestinian movements, which began in the early days of the first intifada, culminated in a full-fledged split. The mainstream, secular-oriented Fatah, which reached the helm of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the late 1960s and has led the Palestinian Authority (PA) since its formation in 1994 under the Oslo Accord, has been pitted against Hamas, which in the late 1980s grew out of the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. This rivalry evolved into a division of the Palestinian political arena into two authorities: the Fatah-led PA that rules in the West Bank, and Hamas that controls the Gaza Strip. It has also meant the evolution of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute into a three-party conflict.

The split in the Palestinian arena has significantly undermined the already limited Israeli confidence in the possibility of formulating and implementing understandings designed to promote conflict resolution. It has also curtailed the freedom of decision making enjoyed by the PLO/PA. Clearly, it was not the intra-Palestinian rivalry that generated the protracted periods of deadlock in the political process. Rather, it was the political stagnation that encouraged the ongoing search in the Palestinian arena for ideological and strategic alternatives to disappointing negotiations and to the leadership that

has failed to fulfill national aspirations. In other words, the political impasse reinforced Hamas, which in accordance with its fundamentalist Islamic orientation, rejects the idea of a negotiated end to the conflict. Inevitably, this development came at the expense of the Fatah-led camp that is committed to such a resolution.

A structural analysis of the association between the intra-Palestinian split and the peace process shows how the inter-party power struggle and the absence of an authoritative Palestinian interlocutor joined the complex array of factors that has forestalled the achievement of a final status agreement. Based on the premise that a unified Palestinian representation is a vital Israeli interest, it is suggested that Israel temper its objection to Fatah-Hamas accommodation and even make an active effort to enhance – though not unconditionally – inter-party institutional cooperation.

### **The Road to the Intra-Palestinian Institutional Split**

Somewhat ironically, the Fatah-Hamas rivalry was accelerated by international and Israeli demands that were designed to enable the resumption of negotiations, specifically, a halt to Palestinian violence and institutional reform in the PA. This dynamic was especially evident during the second intifada, which broke out following the failed talks held in 2000 under American auspices on a comprehensive solution to the conflict.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005 drew a clear line between the territorial strongholds of the two rival parties.

*Setting the stage for Hamas.* Israel's insistence on complete security calm before any dialogue could resume actually defined for Hamas and other militant Palestinian factions the nature of activity that would prevent the political process from getting back on track. The escalation of violence by Hamas – terrorist assaults and rocket fire from the Gaza Strip – triggered military responses and rounds of confrontation that prevented efforts to restore mutual Israeli-Palestinian trust and bring the Israeli and Palestinian teams back to the negotiating table. For their part, Fatah's forces sought to preserve their supremacy by leading a violent campaign of their own. However, this strategy, which in essence was crafted to address domestic institutional needs, entailed a high price. Israel held the PA responsible for the escalating violence, no matter who was the perpetrating faction, and

reacted against its security agencies and institutions.<sup>2</sup> The resulting anarchy in the territories enabled Hamas to consolidate its military infrastructure, and in any event, Hamas was largely perceived to be less corrupt and more trustworthy than Fatah. Hence, support grew for the party as a promising substitute to the Fatah-led PA.

*Institutional reform in the PA as a prerequisite for dialogue.* Disappointment with Fatah's political, security, and administrative conduct was the basis for the call for institutional reform in the PA, advocated by the United States administration and the Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East, issued by the Quartet (the international forum for advancing peace in the Middle East, comprising the United States, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations).<sup>3</sup> Israel joined a demand for reform stipulated in the Roadmap, despite reservations about the U.S. call for general elections in the PA that was motivated both by the general support for democratization and by the hope that democratization in the greater Middle East would curb the regional drift towards fundamentalist Islam.

Like Israel, the PA was not enthusiastic about holding elections, out of concern that results would reflect the widening influence of Hamas. Nonetheless, it acceded to the U.S. demand and prepared for the elections that were held in January 2006. Recognition of the inability to hold elections during a violent confrontation with Israel drove Fatah to try and coordinate the campaign with Hamas. The Hamas leadership assented to the call and agreed to suspend the inter-party struggle and the fight against Israel during preparations for the elections. In reality, the inter-movement coordination was intended by the respective parties to promote antithetical interests. The PA hoped that the election results would reinforce its international status, and this in turn would strengthen its standing at home. The Hamas leadership, on the other hand, sought public support that would allow it to continue to undermine Fatah's status and foil moves toward a political settlement.

The two sides attained their objective, though Hamas' achievement was more concrete. The PA was again recognized as a partner for negotiations because of its readiness to hold general elections. However, Hamas' victory in the elections in the Palestinian territories in January 2006, which were marked by widespread criticism of the PA due to its poor administrative/governmental performance more than genuine sympathy for Hamas, brought in its wake

a period of political paralysis. The Israel-Hamas mutual non-recognition dramatically reduced prospects for continuing the Israeli-Palestinian political process.

*Leaving Gaza.* Against the backdrop of the political deadlock, Israel initiated a comprehensive unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. Underlying the move was the desire to free itself from the burden of combatting the Palestinian violent struggle in and from the Strip; the drive to reduce direct friction with Palestinians; and the desire to gain international legitimacy for military responses to violent provocations. In August 2005 Israel disengaged from the Gaza Strip.

The subsequent period saw a dramatic intensification of the inter-party tension over control of the area. In November 2006, in response to calls in the Palestinian arena and the Arab world for restraint, Hamas and Fatah agreed on a lull in the struggle between them and against Israel, as well as on principles for a national unity government.<sup>4</sup> A unity government was subsequently established on the basis of understandings that were formulated in February 2007 by representatives of the two parties in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, but its platform did not include revival of the negotiations with Israel.<sup>5</sup> In any case, it was short-lived. Fatah's refusal to transfer control of the PA's security forces to the interior ministry headed by Hamas (as required by the Authority's basic law) prevented effective power sharing. In June 2007, fierce hostilities broke out in the Gaza Strip between the two camps. Hamas forces defeated and expelled Fatah operatives, and assumed control of the Strip.

Hamas entrenched itself in the Gaza Strip under the Israeli and Egyptian-imposed strict limitations on movement of people and goods in and out of the area. It was boycotted diplomatically and economically by Israel, the United States, and the European Union (with the exception of consumer goods defined as essential). For its part, having lost control over the Strip, the Fatah-led PA focused on preserving its hold on the West Bank, while enjoying increased economic and military support from external sources – primarily the US, the EU, Jordan, and Israel. This aid to the PA's intensive institutional and security reforms as well as economic buildup was provided with the goal of preventing the West Bank from falling into Hamas hands, and on the basis of the PA's declared adherence to the political process.<sup>6</sup>

Particularly the security reform did much to enhance normalization of life in the West Bank. However, given that the reform was sponsored by the United States and EU member states and coordinated with Israel, and given that the forces were almost exclusively composed of Fatah-affiliated personnel, the status of the PA itself was further undermined.

### **The Three-Party Gordian Knot**

*Renewal of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue – the Annapolis track.* Although demonstrating the weakness of Fatah, the Hamas takeover of the Strip inspired hope for the renewal of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue since it appeared to draw a clear dividing line between the camp officially committed to the goal of a negotiated comprehensive settlement and the camp rejecting this resolution.<sup>7</sup> This distinction, bolstered by the drive to undercut Hamas' influence, underlay the renewed interest, shared by Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and international actors relevant to the political process, to revive the dialogue. Talks were launched in November 2007 in Annapolis in an international conference under American aegis.<sup>8</sup>

*A spoiler in action.* Hamas, which was not present at the negotiating table, nevertheless remained a key player in molding the Israeli-Palestinian arena, and in late 2008 effected an end to the Annapolis talks. A war broke out in the Gaza Strip, after Hamas failed to regard explicit Israeli warnings that a military offensive loomed if it did not stop the escalating rocket fire from the Strip into Israeli territory. The end of the war, which caused many Palestinian civilian casualties and massive damage, left Hamas in control of an incapacitated area. Iranian aid helped Hamas restore and further augment its military infrastructure, although civilian rehabilitation was delayed by Israeli-imposed sanctions and the distribution of resources by Hamas itself, which favored military entrenchment. Hamas became a target of public criticism for provoking the Israeli offensive, but the erosion in its domestic prestige did not help Fatah restore its own control of the Strip. Yet another outcome of the war was the impact on Israeli public opinion. Sentiments inspired by the confrontation were reflected in the results of the general elections held in February 2009: the public supported parties that advocated a hard line toward both Hamas and the political process. Specifically, the

war reinforced concerns over redeployment in the West Bank, let alone withdrawal from the area.

The political process remained frozen for about four years. Differences on opening conditions for talks, and indeed, on the very purpose of the talks, magnified the fundamental obstacles that time and again have prevented the peace process from moving forward. As a condition for returning to negotiations, the PA demanded a complete freeze on Israeli construction in the West Bank. It also demanded that discussions begin with the question of borders. For its part, the government of Israel called for resumption of dialogue without preconditions. However, it also demanded that security arrangements be placed at the top of the agenda and conditioned the conclusion of an agreement on Palestinian recognition of the State of Israel as the home of the Jewish people – demands that were continually rejected by the PA.<sup>9</sup>

*Renewed attempts at Palestinian reconciliation – the Cairo Agreement.* In an effort to circumvent the blocked bilateral path, the PA launched an international campaign to enlist support for a vote in the UN General Assembly on recognition of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders. The announcement that the United States would veto a Security Council resolution to recognize Palestinian statehood upset the original plan, and instead, in November 2012 the PA turned to the General Assembly with a request to upgrade its observer status. The approval by the GA of the petition to recognize Palestine within the 1967 borders as a UN non-member observer reinforced the PA's international status. However, since there was no concrete progress toward Palestinian independence, the PA could not translate its diplomatic achievement into a change of the balance of power with Hamas.

The PA's drive to broaden its popular base and reinforce its democratic image, as part of the preparations for applying for international recognition of a Palestinian state, led it to renew a plan to hold general elections. Yet holding elections without Hamas threatened to deny the results any legitimacy and hence the PA revived its efforts to reach an agreement with Hamas, at least on the elections process. Hamas, which viewed the inter-party coordination as an opportunity to breach the boundaries of its geographical and political isolation, conditioned its participation in the elections on institutional coordination, that is, power sharing with the PA.

The leaderships of both Fatah and Hamas were driven by a widespread popular call for unity to embrace – at least rhetorically – the campaign for inter-party reconciliation. Demonstrations that were held under the banner of unity were presumably inspired by the concurrently growing assertiveness of the masses throughout the Middle East and the Arab Spring protests that were sweeping the region. Concern over a spillover of the riots to the Palestinian territories was yet another factor that played a role in laying the groundwork for the reconciliation effort. For its part, Hamas at that time was also losing its stronghold in Damascus, with the civil war in Syria.

Therefore, in May 2011 in Cairo, and under the auspices of the Temporary Supreme Military Council that had replaced Mubarak's toppled regime, Fatah and Hamas signed an agreement of principles for institutional coordination. The agreement focused on an intention to prepare jointly for presidential and legislative council elections and to revise the structure of the PLO in order to enable Hamas integration into its ranks.<sup>10</sup> However, the agreement did not refer to Hamas' massive military infrastructure – the PA chose to postpone dealing with the sensitive matter of the monopoly of weapons until after elections and the official delineation of the power relations between Hamas and Fatah based on the election results.

The move toward inter-party reconciliation encountered severe criticism from Israel. Israel responded by blocking the transfer of funds to the PA, although it revoked the sanction under international, particularly European pressure. The reaction of the United States administration, on the other hand, was quite restrained and demonstrated an evolving change in the approach to the inter-party rift.<sup>11</sup> A State Department spokesman expressed hope that the Cairo agreement would improve chances for renewing the peace process, should Hamas meet the demands posed by the Quartet as prerequisites for dialogue: recognition of Israel, a halt to violence, and recognition of agreements signed between Israel and the PLO. However, the parties did not manage to overcome the hostility between them and move beyond their contentious ideological and political directives to even draft election procedures.

*A renewed round of violence.* Further confirmation of Hamas' control over the strip was registered following a renewed round of hostilities that broke out in the Gaza sphere in November 2012. As in the previous round

of confrontation, in early 2009, the large scale fighting had a major effect on the Palestinian inter-party balance of power. Hamas' military infrastructure was severely damaged, while yet again, the confrontation also highlighted its popularity, necessarily at the expense of the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority, and ended with ceasefire agreements that attested to and confirmed Hamas' control over the Gaza Strip. The political backing that was given this time to Hamas by the Muslim Brotherhood-led government of Egypt, as well as the United States support of the indirect dialogue between Israel and Hamas on terms for a ceasefire, constituted a diplomatic achievement for Hamas. It also earned credit in the Palestinian arena due to its standing up to the military might of Israel. Yet another accomplishment was the conclusion drawn by the Israeli opposition to further redeployment in the West Bank: the war exacerbated the concern over security risks emanating from the entrenchment of Hamas in any territory evacuated by Israel.

*Resumption and suspension of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.* A new round of Israeli-Palestinian talks was launched under American auspices in July 2013. Both Israel and the PLO/PA were driven to the negotiating table by the wish to avoid paying the price of refusing an American request. Under pressure applied by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, they agreed to discuss all the core issues of the conflict. However, mutual mistrust and shared skepticism as to prospects for generating a breakthrough kept the talks confined to procedural matters. In fact, from the very initiation of the talks the two sides sought to place the responsibility for their expected failure on each other. This attitude proved to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. In April 2014, toward the end of the assigned negotiating period, the U.S. administration acknowledged its failure to have the two sides even discuss a framework of principles for continuation of the talks. An end to the negotiations was announced officially and President Obama expressed the commonly-shared conviction that a time out in the political process was in order.<sup>12</sup>

Just prior to this, the PA revived two initiatives intended to pressure Israel to soften its positions or, alternatively, to advance toward Palestinian statehood not necessarily within the context of bilateral talks. The PA applied for signature on 15 UN treaties so as to join their respective organizations. Concurrently, the Fatah-Hamas talks on institutional accommodation culminated in yet another agreement in principle on establishing a unity

government of technocrats during preparations for the long overdue elections in the territories. Once again, Hamas, invited by Fatah, moved closer to the center of the Palestinian and hence the Israeli-Palestinian political stage. President Mahmoud Abbas stressed that the inter-party agreement should not contradict the underlying logic of the political process.<sup>13</sup> As far as Israel was concerned, the very attempt to regulate intra-Palestinian relations was an immediate catalyst for suspending the negotiations and announcing tenders for new housing units in settlements in the West Bank. This was also the backdrop for renewed thought regarding the potential benefit of unilateral steps toward separation from the Palestinians.

*Fatah-Hamas rapprochement – a recurrent dynamic.* The Fatah-Hamas interim unity government was announced in early June 2014. Despite Israel's criticism and insistence on non-recognition of Hamas as a political partner as long as it did not recognize Israel's right to exist, the U.S. administration expressed readiness to cooperate with the unity government.<sup>14</sup> Similar reactions were registered world-wide, including recognition of the unity cabinet by all other Quartet members.

To be sure, from the outset prospects of establishing solid and lasting institutional cooperation between Fatah and Hamas seemed quite slim. Fatah's leadership was unlikely to concede to Hamas' persistent demand for a structural reform of the PLO, which would facilitate Hamas' road to prevalence in the Palestinian national movement.<sup>15</sup> As for Hamas, its spokesmen declared that even within the context of a unity deal, the party would not recognize Israel and accept the PA's weapons monopoly in the Palestinian territories, particularly in the Gaza Strip.<sup>16</sup> Thus, this move toward reconciliation appeared to face the same problematic dynamic that thwarted previous attempts to reunite the Palestinian political sphere. Moreover, the inter-party reconciliation was not Hamas' ultimate ambition, but rather a step within the framework of undermining the national prevalence of the Fatah-led PLO and hindering efforts to formulate strategic understandings with Israel. Thus, Israel's reaction to the establishment of the unity government provided Hamas with an interim, tactical gain.

Indeed, the unity cabinet lost effective meaning against the backdrop of a series of violent events that culminated in the eruption in July 2014 of yet another war between Israel and Hamas. However, the issue of a Palestinian

unity government rose again to the surface in the context of intensive talks that were held at a regional and international level concerning reestablishing security quiet in the Gaza sphere and rehabilitation of the area following the massive damage that was caused in the course of the war. Egypt insisted that the PA take part in managing the rehabilitation enterprise. Actually, Egypt hoped this to be a stage toward the return of the PA to the Strip. From the early days of the war, President Abbas took part in Cairo's efforts to articulate terms for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and principles for the future relations among Hamas, Egypt itself, the PA, and Israel. Israel, for its part, encouraged this policy, acknowledging the inevitability of coordination between Hamas and Fatah, if efforts to rehabilitate the Strip were to succeed.

At the same time, two developments that were clear both during the war and as the fighting drew to a halt threatened to jeopardize prospects for establishing genuine, practical cooperation between the two rival parties: Hamas' control over the Strip was regionally and internationally confirmed, and public opinion polls indicated a dramatic increase in Hamas' popularity among the Gaza Strip and West Bank populations.

Understandings that were articulated in order to reach a ceasefire were testimony to the fact that Israel, the United States, Egypt, and other regional actors view Hamas as the ruler of the Strip. This affirmation of a given situation also confirmed the bifurcation of the Palestinian political sphere into two authorities. This recognition of Hamas' rule over the Strip compensates Hamas partially for the resentment and harsh criticism of its conduct – in particular, provoking the Israeli counter attack on the Strip – on the part of Arab states.<sup>17</sup>

The rise in the popularity of Hamas was directly associated with its proven ability to stand up to Israeli military power for over seven weeks.<sup>18</sup> It also compensated Hamas for public criticism accusing it of rendering the Strip into a crisis zone, for the sake of organizational survival and preservation of its control over the Strip.

What follows is that it does not really matter what official role will be assigned to the PA in the areas of security, administration, and rehabilitation in the Strip. Rather, the scope and quality of coordination established between Fatah and Hamas and the balance of power between the two rival camps will

eventually determine the ability of the PA to rehabilitate its own position and status in the Strip, and hence in the Palestinian arena as a whole.<sup>19</sup>

### **Untying the Gordian Knot**

The circular connection between the political stalemate in the Israeli-Palestinian sphere of conflict and the internal rift in the Palestinian arena might possibly be broken by the establishment of a Palestinian coalition government. Progress in this direction can be expected to coincide with reduced strength of the Palestinian opposition and encourage a softening of rejectionist stances within the diverse Palestinian forces, first and foremost, Hamas. Thus far, repeated Fatah-Hamas reconciliation attempts have failed, but their recurrence reflects the persistence of their underlying motivation. Both Fatah and Hamas share an interest in institutionalizing the balance of power between them created over the years and the awareness of the need to formulate new rules of the game, whereby they will continue to conduct their political struggle. Moreover, this appears to be the only way to establish an authority in the Palestinian arena that will enjoy the legitimacy essential for concluding a settlement with Israel, let alone guarantee its implementation.

Hence, a unified and broadly-based Palestinian leadership should be considered a focal Israeli interest. In order to facilitate its evolution and consolidation, Israel should not only abandon the paradigm of driving wedges between Fatah and Hamas – by resisting rapprochement between the two parties and conditioning negotiations with the PLO on the marginalization of Hamas – but even endorse active encouragement of reconciliation and cooperation between the various Palestinian parties.

From a purely structural perspective, it should not really matter what parties join a Palestinian coalition government, as long as Israel and other international actors relevant to the political process have a clear address on the Palestinian side. However, ideological determinants cannot be totally ignored. They matter, since a nationally-unified Palestinian representation would challenge progress toward viable peace if established while Hamas still adheres to its rigid ideological directives. Therefore it is essential for Israel that demands that were presented to Hamas as preconditions for dialogue, which essentially imply endorsement of the two-state final status agreement, remain on the international agenda.

At the same time, in order to disentangle itself from the trap of the three-party conflict and also leave an opening for an eventual acceptance by Hamas of Israel's existence, it will be enough for Israel, at least during negotiating terms for a comprehensive agreement, to settle for the existing, de facto mutual recognition with Hamas. This would mean accepting the results of elections in the territories – if indeed they take place. The Palestinian national leadership should reflect the voice of the Palestinian people. Boycott of a coalition Palestinian government by Israel will not change the people's choice but rather further reduce the already shrinking chance of putting concrete negotiations toward an end-state solution back on track.

There is no way to ensure that establishing a Palestinian coalition leadership and moving the political process forward will transform the atmosphere in the Palestinian territories and diminish militant inclinations among radical factions. At the same time, it is also possible that a concrete political process, along with progress toward unification of the Palestinian political arena, will challenge the resolution to the hardships and grievances of the Palestinian people formulated in Hamas' platform. Perhaps this is the only path toward normalization of Israeli-Palestinian relations.

## Notes

- 1 Rallying public support for territorial and political concessions is a challenge that faces the Israeli government as well. Presumably, however, accomplishing this goal will be much more complicated in the Palestinian arena.
- 2 The criticism leveled at Israel at that time for attacking the PA's agencies and infrastructure was offset by the U.S. understanding of Israel's struggle against Palestinian violence, particularly after the attacks of September 11, 2001.
- 3 The Roadmap detailed three stages, starting with a cessation of violence and reforms in the PA and a freeze on Israeli construction in the West Bank, followed by general elections in the territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state within provisional borders, and the establishment of a permanent settlement in the course of 2005. See "A Performance Based Roadmap to a Permanent, Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," <http://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/20062.htm>.
- 4 Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, concerned over the Iranian penetration of the Gaza Strip through support for Hamas and by the deadlock in the political process, mediated principals for the formulation of a national unity government.

- 5 *Towards Palestinian National Reconciliation* (Ramallah and Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAFF)), pp. 46-56; Anat Kurz, "The Riyadh Summit, the Mecca Agreement, and What Lies Between them," *INSS Insight* No. 15, April 22, 2007.
- 6 *Building the Palestinian State: Sustaining Growth, Institutions and Service Delivery*, Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, The World Bank, April 13, 2011. On Israel's policy on economic development in the Palestinian arena, see *Measures Taken by Israel in Support of Developing the Palestinian Economy and Socio-Economic Structure*, Report of the Government of Israel to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, Brussels, April 13, 2011.
- 7 There is a debate within Hamas over two conflicting approaches: one holds that the time has not come to articulate terms for a permanent settlement; the other holds that pragmatic policies should be considered that will not necessarily focus on the maximal aspirations of the Palestinian people. This has been at the backdrop of expressions of readiness in principal to accept a settlement with Israel, should one be attained by President Mahmoud Abbas, without a requirement that Hamas recognize Israel and commit to an end-state agreement. See, for example, "Hamas will Accept any Agreement that has a Majority [among the Palestinian Public]," *Ynet*, October 21, 2010; Nathan J. Brown, "Is Hamas Mellowing?" Carnegie Endowment, January 17, 2012, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/01/17/is-hamas-mellowing>; Anat Kurz, Benedetta Berti, and Marcel Konrad, "The Institutional Transformation of Hamas and Hizbollah," *Strategic Assessment* 15, no. 3 (2012): 87-98.
- 8 Roni Sofer, "Olmert: Annapolis Strength Lies in Absence of Hamas," *Ynetnews*, November 26, 2007.
- 9 This demand was presented as prerequisite for the very initiation of talks. See, for example, Amos Harel, Avi Issacharoff, News agencies, and Akiva Eldar, "Netanyahu Demands Palestinians Recognize 'Jewish State,'" *Haaretz*, April 16, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/netanyahu-demands-palestinians-recognize-jewish-state-1.274207>; "Netanyahu: If the Palestinians Recognize the Jewish State, We will Agree to Another Freeze [on construction in the West Bank]," *Haaretz*, October 22, 2010; "Netanyahu: For Peace, Palestinians Must Recognize Jewish Homeland," *Jerusalem Post*, October 6, 2013. The Palestinians remained adamant in their refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, even during the round of talks that was initiated in July 2013. See, for example, Khaled Abu Toameh, "Abbas Reaffirms Refusal to Recognize Israel as a Jewish State," *Jerusalem Post*, November 1, 2013, <http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Abbas-reaffirms-refusal-to-recognize-Israel-as-a-Jewish-state-337854>.

- 10 For the reconciliation agreement, see “Fatah-Hamas Reconciliation Agreement,” <http://middleeast.about.com/od/palestinepalestinians/qt/Fatah-Hamas-Reconciliation-Agreement.htm>.
- 11 “US to Palestinians: Unity Deal Must Advance Prospects of Peace with Israel,” *Haaretz*, May 4, 2011; See also Quartet Statement on preconditions for dialogue with Hamas, January 30, 2006, [http://www.un.org/news/dh/infocus/middle\\_east/quartet-30jan2006.htm](http://www.un.org/news/dh/infocus/middle_east/quartet-30jan2006.htm).
- 12 Matt Spetalnick, “‘Pause’ Perhaps Needed in Israeli-Palestinian Talks; Obama,” *Reuters*, April 25, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/04/25/us-palestinian-israel-obama-idUSBREA300RW20140425>.
- 13 Abbas: “Any government formed would comply with our national agreements... to recognize the State of Israel and renounce terror,” in Ruth Eglash, “Palestinians Signal Willingness to Continue Peace Talks,” *Washington Post*, April 26, 2014.
- 14 Barak Ravid and Jack Khoury, “Despite Israel’s Stance, U.S. Likely to Cooperate with Palestinian Unity Government,” *Haaretz*, May 19, 2014, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/.premium-1.591607>; Julian Pecquet, “Congress to Obama: Cut Aid to Palestinians,” June 2, 2014, *al-Monitor*, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/ru/originals/2014/06/congress-cut-aid-palestine-reconciliation-hamas.html#>; Barak Ravid, “Netanyahu’s Diplomatic Meltdown on Palestinian Unity,” *haaretz.com*, June 5, 2014, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/.premium-1.597060>.
- 15 Tamara Cofman Wittes, “What Matters, and What Doesn’t, About Palestinian Unity,” *Brookings UpFront*, April 25, 2014, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2014/04/25-palestinian-reconciliation-israel-wittes>.
- 16 “Zahar: Palestinian Unity Deal will not Make Hamas Recognize Israel’s Right to Exist,” *Jerusalem Post*, April 29, 2014.
- 17 Kareem Fahim, “Palestinians Find Show of Support Lacking from Arab Leaders Amid Offensive,” *New York Times*, July 19, 2014, [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/20/world/middleeast/palestinians-find-show-of-support-lacking-from-arab-nations-amid-offensive.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/20/world/middleeast/palestinians-find-show-of-support-lacking-from-arab-nations-amid-offensive.html?_r=0); Khaled Abu Toameh, “Palestinians: The Arabs Betrayed Us – Again,” Gatestone Institute, July 21, 2014, <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/4463/paletinians-arabs-betrayed-us>.
- 18 “Special Gaza War Poll,” Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR), September 2, 2014, [www.pcpsr.org/en/node/489](http://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/489).
- 19 Elie Hanna, “Meshaal: Full Partnership in the Palestinian Authority and a Palestinian State within pre-1967 Borders,” *al-Akhbar English*, September 6, 2014, <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/21414>.