Hamas from Cradle to Grave

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Over the past three years, the United States has uncovered just how systematically terrorist groups conceal their activities behind charitable, social, and political fronts. Investigators, faced with the threat posed by Al-Qa'ida and its many affiliates, have come to appreciate the crucial role played by charities, foundations, and individual donors, who funnel support to social service organizations. These same organizations effectively provide recruits, logistics, and cover for terrorists; part of the battle against terror has been an international effort to shut them down. Few experts are misled anymore by the fictitious entities put up by terrorist organizations. Indeed, many of these fronts have seen their officials arrested, their assets seized, and their offices closed down by authorities.

Yet there is one terrorist organization that still benefits from an ostensible distinction drawn by some analysts between its "military" and "political" or "social" wings: Hamas. Analysts who make such a distinction regularly dwell on the "good works" of Hamas, as though these activities had no connection whatsoever with the attacks on civilians and the suicide bombings that are the trademark of the organization. Because of the notion that Hamas has independent "wings," its political and charitable fronts are allowed to operate openly in many European and Middle Eastern capitals.

This distinction is convenient for certain governments and supporters of the Palestinian cause. It is certainly convenient for Hamas. However, it is totally contradicted by the consistent if scattered findings of investigators, journalists, and analysts. This article assembles and reviews the evidence for the integration of social service and terrorism in Hamas. That evidence demonstrates that the distinction is not only false but actually abets the very acts of terrorism that have thwarted all initiatives for peace.

"Hamas is One Body"

Does Hamas really have "wings"? The most persuasive denials come from within Hamas itself. Hamas's leader Sheikh Ahmad Yasin has rejected the idea that Hamas has uncoordinated wings: "We cannot separate the wing from the body. If we do so, the body will not be able to fly. Hamas is one body." Hamas leaders themselves frequently acknowledge the central role that their "political" leaders play in the group's operational decision-making. Hamas military commander Salah Shihada (killed by Israel) put it this way: "The political apparatus is sovereign

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¹ Reuters, May 27, 1998.

over the military apparatus, and a decision of the political [echelon] takes precedence over the decision of the military [echelon], without intervening in military operations."²

Another Hamas leader, 'Abd al-'Aziz ar-Rantisi, pointed precisely to the primacy of the political echelon in July 2001 when he told Reuters, "The [Hamas] political leadership has freed the hand of the ['Izz ad-Din al-Qassam] brigades to do whatever they want against the brothers of monkeys and pigs [i.e., Jews]." According to the Reuters article, "Hamas's political wing determines overall policy for the movement."

Those who have seen the evidence concur. Israel has long assumed the vertical integration of Hamas. According to court documents filed by the government of Israel in the 1995 extradition case of a Hamas leader from the United States, "the [political] bureau operates as the highest ranking leadership body in the Hamas organization, setting policies and guidelines respecting Hamas's activities. In addition to its other functions, this bureau has responsibility for directing and coordinating terrorist acts by Hamas against soldiers and civilians in Israel and the territories."⁴

The United States government has also come to share this view. In the Treasury Department's August 2003 announcement designating six senior Hamas political leaders and five charities as terrorist entities, it asserted, "the political leadership of Hamas directs its terrorist networks just as they oversee their other activities." 5

Indeed, even a Human Rights Watch report has concluded that Hamas functions as a unified entity, with the military operatives subservient to the political leadership:

In the case of Hamas, there is abundant evidence that the military wing is accountable to a political steering committee that includes Shaikh Ahmad Yassin, the group's acknowledged "spiritual leader," as well as spokesperson such as Ismail Abu Shanab, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Rantissi, and Mahmud Zahar. Yassin himself, as well as Salah Shehadah, the late founder and commander of the 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, have confirmed in public remarks that the military wing implements the policies that are set by the political wing.⁶

In short, the most rigorous observers of Hamas have reached the same conclusion, one acknowledged by the leadership of the organization itself.

The social welfare organizations of Hamas, supported by numerous charities, answer to precisely the same "political leaders." Yet some observers have determined that these institutions bear no relationship to the terrorist campaigns authorized by those same leaders. In some cases, the mere existence of these institutions is invoked to classify Hamas as a social welfare organization, rather than a terrorist organization.

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² "A May 2002 Interview with the Hamas Commander of the al-Qassam Brigades," The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), July 24, 2002, at http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP40302.

³ Reuters, July 31, 2001.

⁴ Dale L. Watson, assistant director for counterterrorism, FBI, "Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, International Emergency Economic Powers Act, Action Memorandum," memorandum to R. Richard Newcomb, director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control, U.S. Department of the Treasury, Nov. 5, 2001 (hereafter, Watson memo).

⁵ "U.S. Designates Five Charities Funding Hamas and Six Senior Hamas Leaders as Terrorist Entities," Office of Public Affairs, Department of the Treasury, Aug. 22, 2003, at http://www.ustreas.gov/press/releases/js672.htm.

^{6 &}quot;Erased in a Moment: Suicide Bombing Attacks against Israeli Civilians," Human Rights Watch, Oct. 2002, p. 63, at http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/isrl-pa/.

Thus, the *Washington Post* ombudsman wrote a column explaining that, since Hamas is a "nationalist movement" engaged in "some social work," the perpetrators of Palestinian suicide and other attacks should be described in the press as "militants" or "gunmen," as opposed to the "terrorists" of al-Qa'ida. *The Boston Globe* ombudsman wrote much the same, arguing that to "tag Hamas, for example, as a terrorist organization is to ignore its far more complex role in the Middle East drama."

To debunk these specious assumptions, it is necessary to fully expose what Hamas calls the *da'wa*—its "call" to Islam, conducted among Palestinian Muslims with the objective of recruiting and mobilizing them. This is sometimes difficult because, as one U.S. official recently testified, "Hamas is loosely structured, with some elements working clandestinely and others working openly through mosques and social service institutions to recruit members, raise money, organize activities, and distribute propaganda." of the control o

Nevertheless, there is ample evidence for the role of Hamas social institutions in the terror activities directed and authorized by Hamas leaders and commanders. Inside the Palestinian territories, the battery of mosques, schools, orphanages, summer camps, and sports leagues are integral parts of an overarching apparatus. They engage in incitement, recruitment, and logistical and operational support for weapons smuggling, reconnaissance, and suicide bombings. They provide day jobs for field commanders and shelter fugitive operatives. They socialize even the youngest children to aspire to die as martyrs.

Da'wa as Logistics

The Jihad mosque in Hebron has its own soccer team. It is not particularly famed for the quality of its soccer. But it does have a more compelling claim to fame: this one team produced several Hamas terrorists responsible for a string of attacks conducted over the first six months of 2003, five of which were suicide bombings executed by team members. The team's shirt bore a picture of a hand holding an axe with an inscription reading, "Prepare for the enemy and to fight the occupation." Another such sports club has the notorious reputation of serving as the recruitment grounds for six different suicide bombers.

The suicide soccer teams exemplify a crucial point about the Hamas network of social institutions: they provide an ideal logistical support network. By their very nature, these institutions operate openly. Many of their beneficiaries wind up supporting Hamas operations knowingly and willingly while others do so unwittingly or out of a sense of obligation for charity or services they receive from Hamas.

The charity committees, mosque classes, student unions, sport clubs, and other organizations run by Hamas all serve as places where Hamas activists recruit Palestinian youth for positions in the Hamas da'wa, for terrorist training courses in Syria or Iran, or for suicide and other terror attacks. Indeed, Hamas terror cells in the West Bank increasingly rely on Palestinians

⁷ The Washington Post, Sept. 21, 2003.

⁸ The Boston Globe, Sept. 8, 2003.

David Aufhauser, testimony before U.S. House Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Sept. 24, 2003, at http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/js758.htm.

¹⁰ The New York Times, June 13, 2003.

^{11 &}quot;Unmasking Hamas' Hydra of Terror," Simon Wiesenthal Center Snider Social Action Institute Report, Aug. 2003, at http://www.wiesenthal.com/social/pdf/index.cfm?ItemID=7993.

unaffiliated with the Oassam Brigades for logistical and operational support and even for leading suicide bombers to their targets.

The examples are legion. It happens in charity (zakat) committees: Ahmad Saltana, a Jenin bomb maker on such a committee, recruited young men working for the committee into Hamas.¹² It happens in hospitals: Hamas is known to use hospitals it supports to secure recruits. medical supplies, and chemicals. In one case, Hamas recruited Mustafa Amjad, a doctor at al-Ghazi Hospital in Jenin, to help infiltrate suicide bombers into Israel from the Jenin area. After his arrest in June 2002, Amjad confessed to helping Hamas terrorists enter Israel while delivering medicines in his professional capacity.¹³

It happens in schools: Hamas has buried caches of arms and explosives under its own kindergarten playgrounds. 14 In one case, a Nablus homeowner rented an apartment to someone who claimed to be a schoolteacher. In fact, the schoolteacher proved to be a Hamas fugitive bomb maker who used the apartment as a safe house and bomb production lab. This became selfevident when the explosives he was handling detonated prematurely, wrecking the apartment and killing the tenant.¹⁵

It even happens in libraries. For example, at one point Hamas operatives in Gaza were in need of a place to safely photocopy Hamas leaflets (claims of responsibility for attacks, political messages, propaganda) they received from the West Bank cell that produced them. The Gaza cell commander recounted photocopying the materials himself "in the library on 'Umar al-Muranawi Street beside the court house of appeals through a fellow named Nazim who works as a caretaker there as a cover for his Hamas activity." Hamas so valued its access to the library, and the services Nazim provided, that it contributed to the library. "We helped him buy books for four hundred dinars" for the library and "bought a photocopying machine for 4,000 [Israeli] shekels and saw to it that it was taken to the library."16

As early as 1996, Israeli authorities identified Hamas logistical support networks as critically important support structures facilitating Hamas attacks. In the wake of a series of suicide attacks in February-March 1996, then-prime minister Shimon Peres told the Israeli Knesset (parliament): "Hamas has established charitable organizations in order to camouflage its true nature. These charitable organizations raise funds abroad, supposedly to aid orphans, but in fact they use the contributions to purchase explosives."17

The da'wa's logistical role in the attacks of early 1996 is among the most fully documented examples available in unclassified sources. Hamas military commander Hasan Salamah openly acknowledged the support he received from Hamas facilitators, "from contacts to recruiting, to locating the places, and all these matters."18 After sneaking into Israel from

¹² Watson memo.

^{13 &}quot;Terrorists Misuse of Medical Services to Further Terrorist Activity," Israel Foreign Ministry, Aug. 26, 2002, at http://www.israel-mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0md20. The FBI has described al-Ghazi Hospital as Hamas-affiliated; Watson memo.

¹⁴ U. S. State Department, Patterns of Global Terrorism 2000, at http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2000/2438.htm.

¹⁵ Associated Press, Aug. 27, 2003.

^{16 &}quot;Transcript of Interview with Sufian Abu Samara on 14 January, 1991," Israeli police document dated Aug. 21, 1995, author's personal files.

¹⁷ Shimon Peres, address to the Knesset, Feb. 26, 1996, at http://www.israel.org/mfa/go.asp?MFAH01el0.

^{18 &}quot;Suicide Bomber: The Planning of the Bloodiest Suicide Bombing Campaign in Israel's History," CBS 60 Minutes, Oct. 5, 1997.

Gaza, Hamas *da'wa* facilitators ferried Salamah across Israel's midsection into the West Bank, avoiding Israeli checkpoints as they traveled from town to town in the West Bank before arriving in Jerusalem. According to Salamah, Hamas operatives provided him with safe houses, scouts to identify targets, and recruiters to find the individual suicide bombers.

The operatives came from West Bank colleges and vocational schools, and the safe houses included private homes and, in at least one case, a Ramallah mosque where Salamah met a potential suicide bomber for final vetting and assignment. Hamas logistical operatives drove Majdi Abu Wardah, one of the suicide bombers, to a Jerusalem safe house where others shaved his beard and dressed him to look like an Israeli. The following morning, Abu Wardah boarded the number 18 bus on Jerusalem's Jaffa Road and detonated his explosive vest killing twenty civilians, including three Americans, and wounding ten, ¹⁹ including another American. ²⁰

Today, Hamas leaders openly call for civilian support for Hamas terrorists wanted by authorities. In August 2003, Hamas leader Rantisi urged average Palestinians to help Hamas fugitives, writing that "protecting the fighters and to offer them support is part of our religion, is part of the holy war."²¹

Da'wa as Day Job

Hamas operatives frequently hold day jobs working within the group's da'wa system, which provide both a salary to live on and cover for planning and carrying out terror attacks. Additionally, the placement of battle-hardened operatives in key da'wa positions, especially on charity committees, streamlines the organization's ability to deftly skim and launder funds from its charities and social service organizations.

According to a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) report on the Holy Land Foundation, a Hamas charity that funds many charity (*zakat*) committees, the funded committees "are controlled by Hamas. GOI [government of Israel] analysis has also determined that Hamas activists have been elected or appointed to senior leadership positions on these *zakat* committees." The Hamas social welfare activists running these organizations in the West Bank and Gaza are often closely tied to the group's terror cells or may even be current or former members of such cells. Consider the following examples cited by the FBI:

- Fadil Muhammad Salah Hamdan, a member of the Ramallah charity committee, was "directly connected with the planning of suicide attacks and the spiritual preparation of those about to commit suicide attacks, including the Mahane Yehuda attack in July 1997."
- Ahmad Salim Ahmad Saltana, head of the Jenin charity committee, was involved in transferring bomb-making materials for the preparation of explosives in 1992 and participated in a car bombing in 1993.

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¹⁹ Ibid.; "Details Released on Hamas Bombing Supporters," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 9, 1996, at http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0cbi0.

²⁰ U. S. District Court for the District of Columbia, Susan Weinstein, et al., Plaintiffs v. The Islamic Republic of Iran, et al., Defendants, Civil Action No. 00-2601 (RCL) and United States District Court for the District of Columbia, Leonard I. Eisenfeld, et al., Plaintiffs, v. The Islamic Republic of Iran, et al., Defendants, Civil Action No. 98-1945 (RCL).

²¹ Associated Press, Aug. 27, 2003.

²² Watson memo.

- Khalil 'Ali Rashad Dar Rashad, an associated member of the Orphan Care Association in Bethlehem, was known to provide shelter and assistance to Hamas fugitives, including Hamas bomb maker Muhi ad-Din ash-Sharif and Hasan Salamah, the commander behind the string of suicide bus bombings in February-March 1996.
- Nur ad-Din Kamal Asad Tahayna was in charge of the Jenin *zakat* committee computer. Tahayna was imprisoned from July to December 1994 for "aiding' one of the suicide bombers in the 1994 terrorist attack against an Israeli bus in Afula" and again from January 1995 to January 1996 "for conducting Hamas activities."
- Nasir Khalid Ibrahim Jarrar, another member of the Jenin *zakat* committee, was detained for three months in April 1994 "for recruiting young men to the Hamas terrorist wing" and again in January 1998 "for his connection to one of the suicide bombers in the 1994 terrorist attack against an Israeli bus in Afula, as well as his assistance to other Hamas operatives."
- 'Abd al-Jabir Muhammad Ahmad Jarrar, also a member of the Jenin *zakat* committee, was arrested in May 1993 "for transferring weapons to Hamas recruits who subsequently conducted terrorist attacks."
- Fawaz Hamdan, active in both the Jenin *zakat* committee and the Hamas-funded al-Ghazi Hospital there, "was imprisoned for his activities in connection with Hamas, which included aiding fugitives and funding weapons purchases."
- 'Adnan 'Abd al-Hafiz Musbah Maswada, directorate co-chairman of the Islamic Charity Association (the Islamic Charitable Society in Hebron), was detained for several months in 1989 and again in 1994 "for Hamas activity." According to the government of Israel, "Maswada is a member of Hamas headquarters in Hebron and is connected to Hamas terrorist activities against settlers." Maswada was therefore included among the Hamas and Islamic Jihad leaders Israel deported to Lebanon in 1992. ²³

Buying Friends

Hamas aid buys the support of those who benefit from the group's largesse. Sheikh Ahmad Yasin himself proudly noted, "We don't go looking for people, they come to us." Citing one of the many examples of people won over by Hamas financial support, Yasin talked of a family of ten living in one room: "We gave them 1,200 shekels (\$300). Sometimes it's a sack of flour, or at very least the taxi fare home" from visiting Yasin.²⁴ As the mother of ten children and a recipient of Hamas aid told a reporter, "All we know is they [Hamas] are the ones who bring us food."²⁵

In the words of an Israeli defense official, "In the territories, there are no free lunches: those who receive help from the Islamic associations pay with support for Hamas." Recipients of such aid know better than to ask questions when asked for a favor by Hamas *da'wa* activists. Palestinians dependent on Hamas charity allow their homes to serve as safe houses for Hamas fugitives moving from place to place to avoid capture. They assist Hamas by ferrying fugitives,

²³ All examples from ibid.

²⁴ Agence France-Presse, Aug. 15, 2001.

²⁵ Associated Press, Mar. 2, 2001.

²⁶ *Ha'aretz* (Tel Aviv), June 27, 2002.

acting as couriers of funds or weapons, storing and maintaining explosives, and more. Hamas employs unsuspecting Palestinians to unknowingly launder and transfer funds on behalf of the group.²⁷

Ibrahim al-Yazuri, an original participant in the founding of Hamas, offered this description of Hamas's all-strings-attached philosophy regarding charitable giving:

Everyone knows that the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, is a Palestinian jihad movement that strives for the liberation of all Palestine, from the [Mediterranean] sea to the [Jordan] river, from the north to the south, from the tyrannical Israeli occupation, and this is the main part of its concern. Social work is carried out in support of this aim, and it is considered to be part of the Hamas movement's strategy ... The Hamas movement is concerned about its individuals and its elements, especially those who engage in the blessed jihad against the hateful Israeli occupation, since they are subjected to detention or martyrdom. The movement takes care of their families and their children and provides them with as much material and moral support as it can. This is one of the fundamental truths of Islamic work and thus represents the duties of the Islamic state ... The movement provides this aid through the support and assistance it gives to the zakat committees and the Islamic associations and institutions in the Gaza Strip.²⁸

Hamas grant making is largely determined by a cold cost-benefit analysis that links the amount of aid awarded to the extent of support that aid will buy. According to Hamas founder Yasin, Hamas distributes \$2 to \$3 million in monthly handouts to the relatives of Palestinian suicide bombers, "martyrs" killed in attacks on Israelis, and prisoners in Israeli jails.²⁹ According to the FBI, "evidence strongly suggests that the Holy Land Foundation has provided crucial financial support for families of Hamas suicide bombers, as well as the Palestinians who adhere to the Hamas movement."³⁰ By providing these annuities to families of Hamas members, the FBI concludes, "Hamas provides a constant flow of suicide volunteers and buttresses a terrorist infrastructure heavily reliant on moral support of the Palestinian populace."³¹

Individuals tied to Hamas receive more assistance than those unaffiliated with the organization while members linked to terrorist activity receive still more. An Israeli government report notes that Hamas charitable organizations accord preference to those close to the movement and assure that they receive increased financial assistance. According to the report, families of Hamas activists killed or wounded while carrying out terror attacks and those imprisoned for their involvement in such attacks, "typically receive an initial, one-time grant of between \$500-\$5,000, as well as a monthly allowance of approximately \$100." Significantly,

^{27 &}quot;The Financial Sources of the Hamas Terror Organization," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 30, 2003, at http://www.israel-mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0nmu0.

²⁸ Filastin al-Muslima (London), Jan. 1998, quoted in Watson memo.

²⁹ The Washington Post, Aug. 11, 2001.

³⁰ Watson memo.

³¹ Ibid.

"the families of Hamas terrorists usually receive larger payments than those of non-Hamas terrorists."³²

This finding was reinforced by materials confiscated in a 1995 raid of the Holy Land Foundation's office in Beit Hanina outside Jerusalem. Israeli authorities seized financial records of fund transfers from the Holy Land Foundation to the Islamic Aid Committee (Islamic Relief Agency, IRA) and lists of people supported by those funds. Analysis of this material revealed that individuals unaffiliated with Hamas received relatively small monthly payments. In contrast, families of Hamas terrorists killed or detained in the process of conducting terror attacks received the largest stipends. Examples include the family of Yasir Hajjaj, "a Hamas activist serving a life sentence for placing an explosive charge on a Tel Aviv beach on July 28, 1990, killing a Jewish tourist from Canada"; the brother of Ra'id Zakarna, a Hamas terrorist who committed a suicide bombing in Afula in April 1994; and the family of Sulayman Idan, killed during a car-bomb attack in Beit-El in October 1993.³³

Similar evidence was found in searches of the Islamic Relief Agency offices in Nazareth on July 27, 1995, and November 8, 1995. Records seized there revealed that "the IRA transferred funds to, among others, the families of Hamas activists who carried out several terrorist attacks, including kidnapping and murder of civilians, policemen, and soldiers" as well as families of prisoners, deportees, and Hamas terrorists killed during attacks. According to IRA documents, the agency paid salaries to ten Hamas activists in the West Bank who were imprisoned or deported in the past and were acting as IRA representatives. Investigators uncovered forms seeking financial support for the families of "the fallen," which reported details of the attack in which the terrorist was killed; his former activities in Hamas; and a description of the special circumstances of the family of "the fallen." "34"

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell highlighted the twisted nature of such benevolence, saying, "I think it's a real problem when you incentivize in any way suicide bombings." 35

Incitement Machine

In its effort to Islamize the Palestinian national struggle, Hamas invests significant resources in molding Palestinian culture. Experts have noted that giving the Palestinian cause an Islamic flavor is part of Hamas's effort "to link the particular Palestinian struggle with the wider Islamic wave in the Muslim world." ³⁶

To this end, Hamas charities, social service organizations, hospitals, schools, and mosques openly laud suicide bombing, teach hate, and incite even the youngest and most impressionable of Palestinians to violence.

For example, the graduation ceremony at a kindergarten run by al-Jam'iya al-Islamiya, a Hamas charitable association run by Sheikh Ahmad Bahar, featured 1,600 preschool age children

^{32 &}quot;Hamas's Use of Charitable Societies to Fund and Support Terror," Israel Government Press Office, Sept. 22, 2003, at http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0nt70.

³³ Watson memo.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Colin L. Powell, interview on *Fox News Sunday with Tony Snow*, Washington, D.C., June 30, 2002, at http://usembassy.state.gov/tokyo/wwwhse1499.html.

³⁶ Meir Litvak, "The Islamization of Palestinian Identity: The Case of Hamas," The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Tel Aviv University, at http://www.dayan.org/d&a-hamas-litvak.htm.

wearing uniforms and carrying pretend rifles. A five-year-old girl reenacted attacks on Israelis by dipping her hands in red paint, mimicking the bloodied hands Palestinians proudly displayed after the lynching of two Israelis in Ramallah.³⁷

Radicalization of Palestinian youth in Hamas early childhood programs has been widely documented. Consider the following account reported in *USA Today*:

In Hamas-run kindergartens, signs on the walls read: "The children of the kindergarten are the *shaheeds* [martyrs] of tomorrow." The classroom signs at al-Najah University in the West Bank and at Gaza's Islamic University say, "Israel has nuclear bombs; we have human bombs." At an Islamic school in Gaza City run by Hamas, 11-year-old Palestinian student Ahmed states, "I will make my body a bomb that will blast the flesh of Zionists, the sons of pigs and monkeys ... I will tear their bodies into little pieces and cause them more pain than they will ever know." "Allah Akbar," his classmates shout in response: "God is great." "May the virgins give you pleasure," his teacher yells, referring to one of the rewards awaiting martyrs in paradise. Even the principal smiles and nods his approval.³⁸

The Hamas radicalization and incitement campaign continues through the course of a Palestinian student's academic career. The Hamas Islamic Student Movement in the Bethlehem area distributed instruction cards bearing the pictures of Hamas suicide bombers and others killed carrying out terrorist attacks and encouraging Palestinian youth to follow in their footsteps.³⁹ Other educational material produced by Hamas *da'wa* activists and distributed by the Hamas charity committees includes collectible postcards featuring Hamas and Islamic Jihad suicide bombers with rhythmic Arabic inscriptions such as "Oh, Mother, the time for leaving [this world] is quickly approaching," and "Oh, Mother, do not speak of me should I fall and lie dead on the ground."⁴⁰ In the al-Fawwar refugee camp, key rings and children's trading cards also feature suicide bombers, and teenage singing groups, such as "The Martyrs," sing their praises.⁴¹ Similar material, including pamphlets, posters, and a printed timetable for university lectures, features a picture of Karim Nimr Mafarja, an 'Izz ad-Din al-Qassam activist, with the inscription, "The *shahids* [martyrs] are with their Lord and light shines from them."⁴²

According to Sheikh Bahar, Hamas summer camps are especially successful in indoctrinating religious and secular youth alike. Bahar explained that by teaching children the history of Islam and surrounding them with pictures of Hamas suicide bombers, the camps instill "seeds of hate against Israel."⁴³

³⁷ *Ma'ariv*, June 23, 2002.

³⁸ USA Today, June 26, 2001.

³⁹ "Incitement to Terror and Hatred," Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies, Special Information Bulletin, Tel Aviv, June 2003, http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/var/h sch/hs inc.htm.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ The New York Times, Mar. 18, 1996.

⁴² "The Martyrdom and Suicide Culture in Palestinian Universities—an-Najah University in Nablus as a Case Study," Special Information Bulletin, Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies, Tel Aviv, May 2003, http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/bu/sib mb/university.htm.

^{43 &}quot;Participation of Children and Teenagers in Terrorist Activity during the Al Aqsa Intifada," Government of Israel, at http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0n100.

Surrounding Palestinians with messages extolling Hamas carries over from Hamas schools and camps to its social service organizations. For example, the waiting room at a Jenin hospital was plastered with posters of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades terrorists, including suicide bombers and those who dispatched them.⁴⁴ Press reports on the Islamic Charity Association described an assembly line of Palestinian men and teenage boys packing food items to the tune of inspirational music praising Hamas. The lyrics informed, "The holy war is calling," and pledged, "We will continue the resistance, the Hamas revolution."⁴⁵

Children socialized in this environment make willing and supple recruits. In one recent case, Hamas military commander Muhammad Zakarna recruited a twelve-year-old Palestinian boy to courier small arms to Hamas terrorists across the West Bank, to shoot at Israelis traveling West Bank roads, and to carry out a "sacrificial terror attack" targeting the West Bank settlement of Maale Adumim. The boy, in his statement to police, expressed no remorse, stating instead, "I have no heart, like the Jews have no heart," and adding, "I hate Jews, and at any opportunity I have, I will kill Jews. I am a *shahid* [martyr]."⁴⁶ At the child's hearing, the judge commented that "from everything taken together, there emerges a picture that in the heart of a young child influenced by the adults around him is aroused a hatred that leads him to carry out actions that are among the gravest in the law books."⁴⁷

According to press reports, moderate Palestinian parents find it increasingly difficult to shelter their children from Hamas recruiters seeking to breed future suicide bombers. One mother recounted how her son's behavior changed when he started going to the mosque regularly:

At first I thought it was normal when my son Muhammad, who is eighteen, started going to the mosque frequently. But when I found out he was watching films about suicide attacks, I was worried ... My son was going to the mosque late at night and early in the morning, adding to our fears ... His behavior changed. He became introverted, which made his father and me search his room and spy on his comings and goings ... We even locked the door to stop him going out ... We later found out that those in charge of the mosque are members of Hamas, which teaches children about jihad and shows them documentaries about suicide bombings.⁴⁸

The father of fifteen-year-old Hamas recruit Musa Ziadah told a similar tale. Originally pleased with his son's growing faith, the father did not realize Hamas had begun radicalizing his son when the boy was just ten years old and sweeping the mosque floors. Musa would later tell reporters that Hamas "taught me about the heroes of Islam who were killed as saints and how they are now in heaven beside God ... I also learned that the Jews have no right to exist on this land, which belongs to Muslims."⁴⁹

^{44 &}quot;Palestinian Hospital Endorses Palestinian Terrorists," Israel Defense Forces (IDF), Spokesperson's Unit, Nov. 6, 2002, at http://www.idf.il/newsite/english/1106-7.stm .

⁴⁵ Associated Press, Mar. 2, 2001.

⁴⁶ *Ha'aretz*, Oct. 24, 2003.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Agence France-Presse, July 8, 2003.

⁴⁹ *The New York Times*, Mar. 18, 1996.

By all accounts, polling data corroborates the anecdotal evidence of Hamas's successful radicalization efforts. According to an April 2001 survey conducted by the Islamic University in Gaza—itself intimately tied to Hamas—while 49 percent of children aged nine to sixteen claimed to have participated in the *intifada*, a terrifying 73 percent claimed they hoped to become martyrs.⁵⁰

Indeed, the Palestinian Authority (PA) grew concerned about Hamas's successful penetration of the its Ministry of Education and the group's radicalization of Palestinian youth in PA schools. According to a PA intelligence report, "the Hamas movement has begun to constitute a real threat to the PA's political vision, its interests, presence, and influence. The influence of the Hamas movement through its teachers in the [PA] schools is absolutely clear."51

Zero Tolerance

David Aufhauser, the just-retired general counsel to the Treasury Department and chair of the National Security Council's policy coordinating committee on terrorist financing, describes the drawing of distinctions between terrorist groups' charitable and military wings as "sophistry" and maintains that "the idea that there's a firewall between the two defies common sense." 52 He adds:

No one is at war with the idea of building hospitals or orphanages or taking care of people who are displaced. But the same people that govern how to apply the money to hospitals govern how to apply the money to killing people, and you cannot abdicate responsibility for one and celebrate what you're doing on the other: it remains blood money.⁵³

The State Department concurs: "As long as Hamas continues to rely on terrorism to achieve its political ends, we should not draw a distinction between its military and humanitarian arms, since funds provided to one can be used to support the other."54

For any renewed peace initiative to take hold, the international community must endorse this basic principle. Recognizing this, President Bush issued a call on June 25, 2003, for "swift, decisive action against [Palestinian] terror groups such as Hamas, to cut off their funding and support." Such cooperation, however, remains elusive largely due to the veil of legitimacy Hamas charitable work provides for its terror attacks.

⁵⁰ Associated Press, Mar. 2, 2001.

^{51 &}quot;Hamas Penetration into the PA Ministry of Education and Its Growing Influence over Palestinian Youth," Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, Center for Special Studies, Tel Aviv, at http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/bu/hamas/education.htm.

⁵² Reuters, Nov. 27, 2002.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ E. Anthony Wayne, assistant secretary of state for economic and business affairs, Department of State, "The Hamas Asset Freeze and Other Government Efforts to Stop Terrorist Financing," testimony to the House of Representatives Committee on Financial Services, Sept. 24, 2003, at http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/rm/2003/24622.htm.

^{55 &}quot;President Bush, European Leaders Act to Fight Global Terror," remarks by President Bush, Prime Minister Simitis, and President Prodi, White House news release, June 25, 2003, at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/06/20030625-12.html.

Islamic social welfare groups must not be given a free pass simply because they provide humanitarian support alongside their support role for terrorism. Instead, the international community must insist that humanitarian support for Palestinians be divorced from support for terrorist activity. To do otherwise is to be complicit in the Hamas campaign to destroy any prospect of Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation. It is essential that Europe, the Gulf states, and other countries strictly regulate which Palestinian charities receive international aid and shut down front organizations raising funds for Hamas and other terrorist groups.

To be sure, Palestinians face dire social welfare needs not addressed by the PA, creating an opportunity Hamas eagerly exploits. Tolerating this exploitation is neither in the interest of Israeli-Palestinian peace nor Palestinian humanitarian assistance. Islamic social welfare groups that contaminate their benevolent activities with support for terrorism muddy the waters of charitable giving and good works, making the job that much harder for those genuinely trying to better conditions in the West Bank and Gaza.

Shutting down the Hamas da'wa must be accompanied by a cooperative effort by the international donor community to fill the gap and provide organized humanitarian aid for needy Palestinians in a way that does not support terrorists, facilitate their attacks, fill their ranks with new recruits, and incite society. Cutting off the flow of funds to Hamas and replacing its terror-spawning social network with an organized and regulated international aid effort are now more urgent than ever.

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