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## Palestinian Attitudes Toward Israel

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PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD ISRAEL

By Dr. Michael Sharnoff

<http://www.fpri.org/enotes/2012/201205.sharnoff.palestinian-attitudes-israel.html>

The writer, a recent graduate of King's College, London, writing for the Foreign Policy Research Institute, surveys Palestinian attitudes from the standpoint of the secularists, Hamas, Fatah, and the general public toward the state of Israel. In general he finds that Palestinians of all categories embrace "popular, non-violent resistance." That attitude leads to demonstrations, hunger strikes, boycotts, and sanctions. Sharnoff posits that billionaire Munib al-Masri speaks for the secularists in advocating a peace with Israel in return for a state in the West Bank and Jerusalem as its capitol. Interviewing a respected moderate Islamist and professor at a Palestinian university, the writer was told that the 'Arab Spring' has emboldened Islamist radicals and that American inaction in promoting moderate Islamists constituted a missed opportunity. Moreover, in spite of corruption and authoritarianism, which characterizes the Palestinian leadership, any uprising among the Palestinians will be directed at Israel, not the Palestinian leadership.

According to Sharnoff, Hamas's attitude has been tempered by its diminishing outside support. Having chosen to side with the Sunni Arab world against their Syria Alawi benefactors, as well as still suffering from their mauling at the hands of the Israelis in the operation Cast Lead in 2008-9, Hamas has been assiduously avoiding a clash with the Israelis and making overtures to join the PLO, trends that seem to indicate they are leaning to a more moderate stance.

The Fatah/PLO faction of the Palestinian movement, also seems inclined toward continued negotiations with Israel, but PLO corruption and the dictatorial rule of Mahmoud Abbas, gives them little public support for any peace moves toward Israel.

Most importantly, the "Arab Street" evidences little optimism that a peace can be achieved, and most oppose a peace with Israel, unless settlement activity is frozen and Israel agrees to return to 1967 boundaries.

The reviewer, while attending the American University of Beirut, watched the growth of the Palestinian movement from its early days and finds little reason for optimism. Having been imbued with the concept of an eventual victory by a succession of pied pipers, from Haj Hussein, Ahmad Shukeiri, Yasir Arafat, and now the divided and corrupt leadership of the PLO and the authoritarian leadership of Hamas, the Palestinians continue their pattern of never failing to miss every opportunity for progress toward an Arab-Israeli peace.

Reviewed by Norvell B DeAtkine

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