**Palestinian Authority and Hamas Join Forces against U.S. at UN**

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December 3, 2018

<http://jcpa.org/palestinian-authority-and-hamas-join-forces-against-the-united-states/>

Although reconciliation talks between Hamas and Fatah in Cairo have failed, and in spite of continuing sanctions imposed by Mahmoud Abbas on the Gaza Strip, and notwithstanding the vast differences of opinion between the two organizations over the past 10 years, the Palestinian Authority and Hamas have joined forces to torpedo a U.S. draft resolution [text below] on which the UN General Assembly is expected to vote on Thursday, December 6, 2018.

The draft resolution was drawn up and led by U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley, who is soon leaving her position at the United Nations. It includes a demand to condemn the firing of rockets into Israel and incitement to violence by Hamas.

The United Nations is being called upon to denounce Hamas’ usage of civilian resources for military purposes.

Ambassador Haley and Israel’s ambassador to the United Nations Danny Danon are making intense efforts among the ambassadors of other UN member states to pass the resolution denouncing Hamas. The idea is to obtain extensive international condemnation of Hamas’ terror activities, which would put both Hamas and the PLO under pressure.

Riyad Mansour, the PLO’s permanent observer to the United Nations, is working very hard to torpedo the U.S. draft resolution, claiming that it “is intended to cause harm to the entire Palestinian people.”

At the end of November 2018, Hussein al-Sheikh, a member of the Fatah Central Council, called upon UN member states to reject the U.S. draft resolution condemning Hamas, and he expressed his opposition to the wording of the resolution.

Abbas Zaki, a member of the Fatah Central Committee, has also been working against the draft resolution. On December 2, 2018, he stated that the U.S. draft resolution is a “racist draft” and the Palestinians would fight it in every way possible because it harms their struggle.

“Hamas comes from among us, and we are connected to it. It has a prominent presence among the Palestinian people, and we are opposed to any resolution that turns the ‘resistance’ into a crime. We will not leave Hamas to battle on alone,” Zaki stressed.

In an unprecedented move, Hamas senior official Mousa Abu Marzook praised the Palestinian Authority’s position. He particularly praised the activities of the PLO’s UN observer, Riyad Mansour, and described the position of the Palestinian Authority as “a responsible position that expresses national responsibility toward a nation under occupation.”

Ismail Haniyeh, chairman of the Hamas political bureau, sent a letter to the president of the UN General Assembly in which he protested against the plan to hold a vote on condemning his organization.

“We are a national liberation movement, not a terrorist organization,” Haniyeh claimed.

What Are the Palestinians Worried About?

The Fatah movement, or the Palestinian Authority, is concerned that a precedent will be created if the UN General Assembly condemns the terror acts against Israel that Fatah refers to as “legitimate resistance” to the occupation.

Fatah also defines itself as “a national liberation movement,” and it claims “resistance to the occupation” is a legitimate activity in accordance with international law. It is playing a double game here. While the PLO renounced violence in the Oslo accords, Fatah, the PLO’s major component, has never abandoned the principle of “armed struggle” against Israel. Senior Fatah officials are thereby dancing at two weddings at the same time.

A senior Fatah official stated that the unity displayed by Fatah and Hamas on this issue reflect the fact that Fatah reserves for itself the option of returning in the future to the “armed struggle” against Israel if there is no significant breakthrough in the deadlocked diplomatic process, and it will ally itself to Hamas through “resistance” (meaning terror).

For this reason, a senior official stated that “Fatah is defending Hamas in the same way that it will defend any other Palestinian faction that follows the principle of ‘resistance.’ In the end, our objective is the same – to liberate ‘Palestine’ and establish an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital. The dispute is only over the method.”

The Hamas leadership is concerned that if the U.S. maneuver is successful in achieving condemnation of Hamas at the UN General Assembly, it will give Israel the “green light” to assassinate senior Hamas officials on the grounds that they are terrorists.

Only recently, Saleh al-Arouri, deputy chairman of the Hamas political bureau, was placed on the U.S. list of terrorists, which already includes other Hamas senior officials, such as Ismail Haniyeh, Yahya Sinwar, Mohammed Deif, Rouhi Mushtaq, and Fathi Hamad.

Another concern for Hamas is that if the U.S. draft resolution is passed at the United Nations, it will give Israel the legitimate right to invade the Gaza Strip to destroy the organization’s military capability and hand Gaza over to a local or Arab body.

Seventy-third session

Agenda item 38

The situation in the Middle East

United States of America: draft resolution

Activities of Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming support for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between Israelis and Palestinians, in accordance with international law, and bearing in mind relevant United Nations resolutions,

Recognizing that all acts of violence against civilians, particularly acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation, incitement and destruction only serve to erode trust and hinder efforts to bring about a peaceful solution,

Condemns Hamas for repeatedly firing rockets into Israel and for inciting violence, thereby putting civilians at risk;

Demands that Hamas and other militant actors, including Palestinian Islamic Jihad, cease all provocative actions and violent activity, including by using airborne incendiary devices;

Condemns the use of resources by Hamas in Gaza to construct military infrastructure, including tunnels to infiltrate Israel and equipment to launch rockets into civilian areas, when such resources could be used to address the critical needs of the civilian population;

Calls for full respect by all parties for international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including in regard to the protection of the civilian population;

Also calls for the cessation of all forms of violence and intimidation directed against medical and humanitarian personnel, and reiterates the importance of respecting the inviolability and neutrality of United Nations premises;

Encourages tangible steps towards intra-Palestinian reconciliation, including in support of the mediation efforts of Egypt, and concrete steps to reunite the Gaza Strip and the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority and ensure its effective functioning in the Gaza Strip;

Welcomes and urges further engagement by the Secretary-General and the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process to assist, in cooperation with concerned partners, in the efforts to de-escalate the situation and address urgent infrastructure, humanitarian and economic development needs.