

A Conflicts Forum Chronology

The Failure of the Palestinian National Unity Government and the Gaza Takeover

December 2005 to July 2007

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2005

December 2005: In December 2005, one month prior to the Palestinian election, the [U.S.] House of Representatives passes a resolution by an overwhelming 397-17 majority criticizing Arafat's successor, Mahmoud Abbas, for "his willingness to see Hamas participate in the elections without first calling for it to ... renounce its goal of destroying the state of Israel."

The Senate also weighs in. A letter signed by 73 of 100 senators -- including 2008 Democratic presidential aspirants Hillary Clinton, Christopher Dodd and Barack Obama -- also questioned the decision to allow Hamas to participate in the election on the grounds that "no democracy in the world allows a political party to bear its own arms." Ironically, just weeks earlier the Senate had voted unanimously to praise the recently completed Iraqi parliamentary elections in which a number of political parties with their own militias openly participated and formed the new Iraqi government.²

A poll conducted by Khalil Shikaki (Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research) reports Fateh at 50 percent leading Hamas at 32 percent. Shikaki's center receives funding from foreign governments including the U.S., and its polls likely have great affect in Washington perceptions of Palestinian public opinion. But the polls were wrong: Hamas won 74 of 132 seats in the Palestinian parliament.³

¹ Compiled by Conflicts Forum researcher Francesca Mara Ricciardone

² Zunes, Stephen. "The rise and rise of Hamas." *Asia Times*, 30 June 2007.

³ Crooke, Alistair. "Our second biggest mistake in the Middle East." *London Review of Books*, 28 June 2007.

2006

25 January: The Hamas movement defeats Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' long-dominant Fateh movement in an upset electoral victory for the Palestinian Legislative Council.⁴

26 January: The Quartet, envoys from UN, US, Russia, and the EU in charge of guiding the 2004 "Roadmap peace plan," issues a statement declaring "a two-state solution to the conflict requires all participants in the democratic process to renounce violence and terror, accept Israel's right to exist, and disarm, as outlined in the Roadmap."⁵

28 January: As a result of the Hamas victory, PA President Mahmoud Abbas, in his capacity as "supreme commander of the security services," orders the commanders of the main security branches (Preventive Security, police, and civil defense) to report to him personally, rather than the prime minister or the interior minister. These posts, as well as the post of defense minister, would otherwise be controlled by loyalists of the Hamas-led government; Abbas's announcement is viewed as an attempt to preclude Hamas interference in the Fateh security structure.⁶ Conflict over the size and supervision of the PA security structures becomes the pillar around which Fateh and Hamas contend over the next months, until the Hamas takeover in Gaza in 2007 -- and it is the subject of major discussion in the national unity talks in Mecca, under the monitoring of Saudi King Abdullah, in March of 2007.

29 January: UN special envoy de Soto and the Quartet receive a draft statement from U.S. that would have the Quartet "decide to review all assistance to the new PA government unless its members adhere to [the noted 3 conditions]."⁷

30 January: "Barely five days after [the elections] the Palestinians received an icy shower in the form of a pre-programmed Quartet meeting in London. Just as the dominant issue in September had been whether Hamas should participate in the elections, in January it was how to handle the result."⁸

End of Jan: Fateh gunmen shoot and seriously wound Khaled Abu Anzah, a Hamas commander in the Gaza Strip town of Khan Younis.⁹ Two days later, a

⁴ "CHRONOLOGY-Key events since 2006 Hamas election victory" *Reuters AlertNet*, 20 June 2007. Available at <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L17523644.htm>.

⁵ De Soto, Alvaro. "End of Mission Report." May 2007 (p.17).

⁶ Blanche, Ed. "Hamas v. Fateh: the new brooms of Hamas..." *The Middle East*, 1 April 2007.

⁷ De Soto, p.18.

⁸ De Soto, p.17.

⁹ Khan Yunis, in Gaza, is a traditional Fateh stronghold, and the home of Mohammad Dahlan.

bomb explodes at the Rafah home of Suleiman Abu Mutlek, former commander of the Preventive Security Service (PSS), long the nemesis of Hamas. Anzah claimed the bombing was an attempt to assassinate him.¹⁰ These are the first incidents in the post-election period of an emerging effort on the part of Fateh to contest the results of the election by other means.

1 February: “US envoy [to the Quartet] declared twice in an envoys’ meeting in Washington how much ‘I like this violence’, referring to the near-civil war that was erupting in Gaza...because ‘it means that other Palestinians are resisting Hamas.’”¹¹ This quote receives wide attention. **Note:** This quote is not directly attributed to a particular individual. However, subsequent reports identify the probable author of this quote as David Welch, the U.S. envoy to the Quartet. Other officials say that the quote can be attributed to Elliot Abrams, the White House national security advisor in charge of democracy programs, who has enormous influence on U.S. policy in the Middle East.

February: Deputy National Security Advisor Elliot Abrams leads plan to aid Abbas as a response to Hamas’ electoral win --- “much to the chagrin of the Central Intelligence Agency which had handled security issues with the Palestinians for years.”¹²

March, April, May 2006: “In the wake of the Hamas parliamentary victory in January of 2006, [Samir al-] Mashharawi was given responsibility for a series of street confrontations through March, April and May of 2006 that pitted the Fateh [established and supported] al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade cadre against the Popular Resistance Committees -- [which are] competitors with Fateh for power in Gaza.”¹³ Ismail Haniyah’s attempts to control the confrontations fail.

16 March: Late evening of March 16, several Fateh officials call on President Abbas to resign and dissolve the Palestinian National Authority -- the PNA -- to

¹⁰ *The Middle East*, 1 April 2007.

¹¹ De Soto, p. 21.

¹² Blanche, Ed. “Showdown in Gaza.” *The Middle East*, 1 Feb. 2007. Even so, CIA officials later noted that they had consistently shied away from any program aimed at destabilizing the Hamas government, believing that such programs were destined to fail. Israeli intelligence agencies also showed remarkable hesitation when requested by US officials to participate in programs aimed at destabilizing the Hamas government or rebuilding Fateh security services. At a key point in the US effort to build Fateh, Israel would refuse the arming of the Preventive Security Services with heavy weapons, forcing U.S. security envoy Lt. General Dayton to seek weapons from Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

¹³ Conflicts Forum notations on Usamah Hamdan interview (19 June 2007). Masharawi defied an order from Prime Minister Haniyeh to take Fateh gunmen off the street, claiming that unless Haniyeh ordered the arrest of those killed Fateh cadre his militia would remain defiant. The leaders of the PRC took an opposite position, saying that Fateh was responsible for the murder of a member of the Popular Resistance Committees in Gaza. When Haniyah order the Fateh militia off the streets, Masharawi ordered them to defy the order and hundreds fired their guns into the air.

protest Israel's raid of the Jericho Prison earlier in the week week, which resulted in the abduction of the leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Ahmad Sa'dat.¹⁴ Analysts do not consider the call “serious.”¹⁵

17 March: The Fateh movement of PA President Abbas refuses to join a government led by Hamas.¹⁶

29 March: The Hamas government is sworn in after other factions, including Fateh, refuse to join. The United States severs all contacts with the new government.¹⁷

30 March: Mohammad Dahlan¹⁸ travels to Cairo to meet with Major General Omar Suleiman, head of Egyptian General Intelligence. The two officials reportedly discuss developments in the Palestinian territories and the prospects of

¹⁴ Ahmed Sa'dat became the PFLP's Secretary General after the death of former leader Abu Ali Mustafa, who was killed by an Israeli rocket attack in late 2001. Sa'dat was arrested by the Palestinian Authority in 2002, suspected of involvement in the assassination of Israeli Minister Rehavam Zeevi. His arrest came after an intense series of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, as mediated by the United States and the United Kingdom. Israel wanted the PA to hand over Sa'dat for trial, but the PA refused. Eventually a compromise was reached where Sa'dat would be jailed in the West Bank with U.S. and U.K. supervision. In March 2006, citing security concerns, U.S. and U.K. security forces pulled out of the West Bank. Almost immediately, Israeli forces launched a raid on the jail in Jericho where Sa'dat was being held. The Israeli government was fearful that the newly elected Hamas government would set him free. As such, the Israelis captured Sa'dat (along with several other suspects in the murder) and brought him to Israel for trial. In April 2006, the Israeli government announced that there was insufficient evidence to try Sa'dat for the murder of Zeevi, and that he would stand trial for other security offenses instead. A second-generation PFLP member, Sa'dat has already spent approximately ten years in Israeli prisons stemming from various charges. It is unclear how his incarceration has affected the PFLP, which has already seen its standing drop in favor of Islamist groups such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

¹⁵ “Fateh officials reportedly ask Palestinian president to resign.” Palestinian Media Center Website, 18 March 2006. (BBC Middle East News Monitoring)

¹⁶ “Hamas aims to dominate new cabinet positions” *New York Times*, 18 March 2006.

¹⁷ Chronology, *Reuters AlertNet*.

¹⁸ Muhammad Yusuf Shakir Dahlan is a member of Fatah-Revolutionary Council, a former peace negotiator with Israel and former head of the Palestinian Authority's Preventive Security Service in the Gaza Strip. He served as PA Minister of State for Security Affairs in the Abu Mazen government of 2003 and head of the National Security Council in the National Unity Government in 2007. A leading representative of the Fatah “Young Guard” in the Palestinian Territories, and vocal critic of the older generation of leaders that returned from exile with Arafat in 1994, Dahlan remains entrenched at the head of Fatah institutions. In the wake of the Gaza troubles he went into temporary exile first in Germany and then in Cairo, but has recently (August, 2007) returned to Ramallah. He is still considered a contender, albeit a fading contender, to succeed Arafat. Retains generally good relations with Israel and the U.S. as well as reputed long-established cooperative links with the CIA.

cooperation between Hamas and Fateh.¹⁹ The Fateh-linked Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade²⁰ (in Nablus) claims responsibility for a suicide attack that kills four Israelis. The attack takes place just outside the West Bank settlement of Kedumim. This is considered the Brigade's first suicide attack in over a year. The Guardian newspaper reports that Abbas condemns the attack, but members of Hamas defend it as a legitimate act of resistance.²¹

31 March: Khalil (Abu Youssef) al-Quqah, leader of the An-Nasir Salah al-Din Brigades (the armed wing of the Popular Resistance Committees), is assassinated in Gaza. Spokesperson Mohammad Abdalaal (Abu Abir) accuses the following Palestinian officials of collaborating with Israel in his assassination: Tariq Abu-Rajab (Chief of Palestinian General Intelligence), Mohammad Dahlan (Fateh deputy in the Palestinian Legislative Council, PLC), Samir al-Mashharawi (Fateh's official in charge of national affairs), and Rashid Abu-Shabak (Preventive Security Chief).²² In response to the killing of al-Quqah, clashes break out between the brigades and supporters of Al-Mashharawi near his home. Three were killed, and more than twenty are wounded in the violence.²³

Palestinian Information Minister Yusuf Rizqah gave a telephone interview with Al-Jazeera TV, responding to PRC's accusation of Fateh officials. He states that he is not accusing the national security services for the assassination of Abu Youssef: "We feel that these hasty accusations are not only detrimental to the national cause but do not serve justice and the unity of ranks aspired to by those leveling them." Rizqah's description of the incident as a "dangerous one that serves specific goals" notes, however, the desire of some (he blames "certain hands acting under foreign orders") to undermine the Hamas government.²⁴

Samir al-Mashharawi also gives a telephone interview on Al-Jazeera (from Cairo), stating that the accusation of the PRC took him by surprise, and that, in fact, al-Quqah was a personal friend and operated under al-Mashharawi's command during the last intifadah. He argues that it is false accusations like this,

¹⁹ "Fateh to be 'constructive opposition', Palestinian official Dahlan says." BBC Monitoring Middle East, 1 April 2006.

²⁰ According to the Council on Foreign Relations: "The brigades are a group of West Bank militias affiliated with former Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat's al-Fatah faction and have been one of the driving forces behind the latest Palestinian *intifada* (uprising). While the group initially vowed to target only Israeli soldiers and settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in early 2002 it began a spree of terrorist attacks against civilians in Israeli cities. In March 2002, after a deadly al-Aqsa Brigades suicide bombing in Jerusalem, the State Department added the group to the U.S. list of foreign terrorist organizations."

²¹ "Palestinian security forces blamed for explosion." *The Guardian*, 1 April 2006.

²² "Militant group accuses Palestinian officials of collaboration in 'assassination.'" BBC Monitoring Middle East, 31 March 2006 (Al Arabiya TV, Dubai); "Fateh's war of survival versus Hamas." *Haaretz*, 3 April 2006.

²³ "Fateh gunmen fire guns, defying Hamas PM." Reuters 1 April 2006; *Haaretz*, 3 April 2006.

²⁴ "Palestinian minister says gunmen off streets, situation in Gaza stabilizing." BBC Monitoring Middle East, 1 April 2006 (Al-Jazeera TV, Doha).

and the Hamas' governments' weakness in condemning such accusations, that fosters inter-Palestinian conflict.²⁵

6 April: Abbas appoints Rashid Abu Shabak head of internal security.²⁶

7 April: The U.S. and E.U. suspend aid to the Palestinian Authority.²⁷
[Groundwork for this move was apparently planned from the outset of Hamas victory. See 1/26 Quartet statement]

14 April: Hamas leader Ismail Haniya gives a speech in a mosque at the Jabaliya refugee camp, asserting that the Western and Quartet aid boycott will not force a Hamas government collapse.²⁸

30 April: *The Jerusalem Post* reports that leaflets threatening the assassination of PNA officials were distributed by a group called Al-Tawhid and Jihad (Unification and Holy War). The leaflets declare that al-Qaida is operating in Palestine, praised Musa al-Zarqawi and Osamah bin-Laden and mention as targets for assassination five Abbas loyalists: Mohammad Dahlan, Yasir Abd Rabbuh, Samir Mashharawi, Nabil Amr and Abu-Ali Shahin.²⁹

4 May: Fateh gunmen in Gaza announce the formation of a new security force to protect their leaders from al-Qaida. The force has eighty members. The spokesman for the new force says that its members come from several branches of Fateh's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. Khaled Abu Hilal, spokesman for the Interior Ministry, calls it "a very strange decision ... why does Fateh need protection [when 99 percent of the PA security forces belong to Fateh]?"³⁰

8 May: Increasing and escalating Fateh-Hamas clashes kill three in southern Gaza in Abasan, just east of Khan Younis.³¹ Two of those killed were affiliated with

²⁵ "Fateh official criticizes government's 'weak' stance on Gaza clashes." BBC Monitoring Middle East, 1 April 2006 (Al-Jazeera TV, Doha).

²⁶ "Assuming greater control, Abbas appoint loyalist to head three security agencies." *Associated Press*, 6 April 2006.

²⁷ Chronology, *Reuters AlertNet*.

²⁸ "Haniya says attempts to isolate Palestinian government will fail." *AFP*, 14 April 2006.

²⁹ "Al-Qaida offshoot threatens Palestinian leaders." BBC Monitoring Middle East, 30 April 2006. The report also appears in the pages of *The Jerusalem Post*. In the wake of the report, the provenance of the material is very much in doubt, and it now appears that the al-Qaeda posters were the work of provocateurs, either affiliated with the Preventive Security Services or, less likely, with the Hamas government.

³⁰ "Fateh creates new armed force to protect its leaders." *The Jerusalem Post*, 4 May 2006.

According to Israeli officials interviewed by Israeli newspapers, it is likely that Fateh used the threat of the emergence of al-Qaeda as a stalking horse for the restocking of its own militias.

³¹ "Palestinian press warns of civil war danger after Fateh-Hamas clashes." BBC Monitoring Middle East, 12 May 2006.

Fateh, one with Hamas.³²

9 May: Violent clashes between the groups continue in the Al-Daraj district of Gaza City. Ten citizens, including five school children, are wounded. “The clashes erupted in the wake of mutual kidnappings in al-Tuffah district that were followed by contacts to bring about the release of those abducted.” Shots are exchanged near the house of Samir al-Mashharawi.³³ Witnesses report that members of Hamas’ Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades have attacked a post outside the home of al-Mashharawi manned by members of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. Hamas accuses Fateh followers of attempting to kidnap Ezzedine al-Qassam members.³⁴

11 May: Mahmoud Abbas accepts “National Conciliation Document” drafted by Palestinians imprisoned in Israel. Signatories of the document include:

- * Marwan al-Barghuthi, Fateh Secretary deputy;³⁵
- * Shaykh Abd-al-Khaliq al-Natshah, of the Supreme Leadership Committee of Hamas;
- * Shaykh Bassam al-Sa'di, one of the leaders of the Islamic Jihad Movement;
- * Abd-al-Rahim Malluh, deputy secretary-general of the PFLP; and
- * Mustafa Badarinah, one of the leaders of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The highly influential document calls for a continuation of Palestinian resistance, but also calls for a reevaluation of methods and a renewed focus on a political

³² “Fateh official says Gaza clashes follow kidnap attempt.” BBC Monitoring Middle East, 9 May 2006 (*MENA* news agency, Cairo).

³³ “Fateh-Hamas clashes in Gaza resume, 10 reportedly wounded.” BBC Monitoring Middle East 9 May 2006 (*Ma’an News Agency* website, Bethlehem).

³⁴ “Ten wounded in fresh Hamas-Fateh clashes in Gaza.” *AFP*, 9 May 2006.

³⁵ Marwan Barghouti was born in Ramallah on 6 June 1958. He holds a BA in history and political sciences from Bir Zeit University and a masters in international relations. He was active in organizing the Shabiba youth movement during his studies in Bir Zeit, and was banned from the West Bank for his role in organizing the first Intifadah in 1987. Thereafter he directed the Intifada from Amman, Jordan until 1992, where he also served as Intifada coordinator with the PLO headquarters and leadership in Tunis. In 1993 he returned to the West Bank and in April 1994 and took over as secretary general of Fateh in the West Bank, the dominant group in the Palestinian Legislative Council. During the Second Intifada he headed the Tanzim, an 11-member young Fateh group that coordinated political actions inside of Fateh and against Israel. Wanted by Israeli authorities he was arrested and tried for murder, convicted and given consecutive life sentences. He remains a leader of enormous prestige inside the Fateh establishment and is highly respected in both the Fateh and Hamas leaderships.

agreement with borders that adhere to the 1967 territories.³⁶

16 May: Waves of clashes between Al-Qassam Brigades (the military arm of Hamas) and the Preventive Security Services are marked by a car-bombing in Al-Zaytun, south of Gaza City. The cars of Tahir and Mahir Khuwaytir are destroyed by remote control, killing the brothers who were both members of Preventive Security Service and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. This incident follows a series of related clashes that center around the conflict between the security forces; in April, the PSS blocks the convoy of PM Haniyeh in Tal al-Hawa; in early May Haniyeh's adviser Dr. Ahmad Yusuf and Hamas deputy Sayyid Abu-Musamih were beaten by al-Aqsa Brigade officers.³⁷

17 May: Tensions increase between Hamas and Fateh forces as new Hamas security force (the ESF, which was created in April) is declared operational and deployed in defiance of Abbas's veto. "Hamas officials announced the creation of the new force in April, after Abbas appointed [Rashid Abu Shabak] to lead the most important of the three branches of the security services that report to the interior ministry. The unit will be led by Jamal Abu Samhadana, a militant [from the Al-Aqsa Brigade] who is wanted by Israel."³⁸

24 May: One Hamas member is killed and two others are injured following an abduction by Fateh gunmen, in the climax of a month in which nine people are killed in clashes between the two movements.³⁹

7 June: Hamas agrees to withdraw its militia from the streets. Hamas spokesman Ghazi Hamad said the black-clad ESF "are going to be in places away from the public."⁴⁰

8 June: Jamal Abu Samhadana⁴¹ is killed in an Israeli attack on training camps of the al-Quds Brigades (the military wing of Islamic Jihad).⁴²

25 June: Hamas militants and other gunmen launch a raid into Israel from Gaza,

³⁶ "Abbas accepts joint programme issued by Fateh, Hamas prisoners." BBC Monitoring Middle East, 12 May 2006. Full Report of the National Conciliation Document available at <http://www.miftah.org/display.cfm?DocId=10371&CategoryId=32>.

³⁷ "UK Arab paper [al-Hayat] reports 'signs of escalation' in Fateh-Hamas clashes." BBC Monitoring Middle East, 17 May 2006.

³⁸ "Rival Palestinian forces deployed." BBC, 17 May 2006.

³⁹ "Gunmen kill Hamas member in Gaza." BBC, 24 May 2006.

⁴⁰ "Hamas agrees to withdraw militia." BBC, 7 June 2006.

⁴¹ Jamal Abu Samhadana (February 8, 1963 – June 8, 2006), from Rafah in the Gaza Strip was the founder of the Popular Resistance Committees a former Fatah and Tanzim member, and number two on Israel's list of wanted terrorists. On 20 April, 2006 he was appointed by Said Seyam, Interior Minister in the Palestinian Authority's new Hamas-led government, as director general of the police forces in the Interior Ministry.

⁴² "30,000 attend Samhadana's funeral." YNet, 9 June 2006.

killing two soldiers and capturing an Israeli conscript, Corporal Gilad Shalit.⁴³ Palestinian factions agree on the National Conciliation Document,⁴⁴ based on the May 11 Prisoners' Initiative.⁴⁵

26 June: Corporal Shalit's captors issue a statement offering information on Shalit if Israel agrees to release all female Palestinian prisoners and all Palestinian prisoners under the age of 18. The statement is issued by the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades (the military wing of the Palestinian governing party Hamas), the Popular Resistance Committees (which includes members of Fateh, Islamic Jihad, and Hamas), and a previously unknown group calling itself the Army of Islam.⁴⁶

The **Army of Islam** is considered an offshoot of the powerful Dagmouh clan, renowned for extortion, smuggling, arms dealing and the ruthless dispatch of rivals. This group is also believed to be responsible for the March 2007 kidnapping of BBC journalist Alan Johnston, and has since been dubbed "the Sopranos of Gaza City."⁴⁷ The Army of Islam is headed by **Mumtaz Dagmouh**, who made his name "as a militia leader during the second Intifada, from 2000 onward, as the strategist of the Public Resistance Committee (PRC), half of which is close to Hamas. But he was not rewarded by Hamas when the time came to replace the PRC's slain leader.

"That was when the disappointed leader created his own militia, the Army of Islam, with the blessing of Hamas, according to a source close to the Palestinian intelligence service. The militia is said to consist almost exclusively of Dagmouh clan members. It is also said to pursue criminal rather than religious or political goals. The Army of Islam made its first appearance with the kidnapping of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit ... The Army of Islam, Hamas and the PRC [say] that they ... planned and executed the kidnapping together."⁴⁸

The **Dagmouh** clan: "The family numbers some 2,500 members, making it one of the smaller clans in Gaza, where people can sometimes have as many as 5000 or even 7000 people in their extended families. What makes the Dagmouh clan so dangerous is its cohesion and enormous arsenal of weapons.

"The members of the Dagmouh clan were ordinary and not especially wealthy

⁴³ Chronology, Reuters AlertNet.

⁴⁴ <http://www.jmcc.org/documents/prisoners.htm>

⁴⁵ ICG Middle East Report No. 62, p. 16.

⁴⁶ "Militants issue Israel hostage demands." CNN, 26 June 2006.

⁴⁷ "The moment of greatest danger: after 97 days held captive in Gaza." Times Online, 18 June 2007.

⁴⁸ "Not Enough Room in Gaza." Miftah.org, 26 June 2007.

people until the creation of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 1994. They operated a donkey-cart delivery service, transporting food and building supplies through Gaza City. They smuggled cigarettes and drugs across the Egyptian border and into the Gaza Strip on the side. Their well-developed network of smugglers, coupled with close personal contacts to Fateh, eventually allowed them to enter the profitable arms trade. That was the foundation for their empire. Eventually the Dagmouh clan began making huge amounts of money in construction. A single clan member owns 20 of the most luxurious apartment blocks in Gaza City.”⁴⁹

28-30 June: Responding to the kidnapping of Shalit, Israel refuses to negotiate a prisoner exchange and instead continues its offensive in Gaza. There are a series of Israeli airstrikes on Gaza Interior Ministry building and sweeping arrests of Hamas officials and Hamas members.

* Gaza: “In its arrests of Hamas officials, Israel detained the ministers of Local Governance, Labour, Finance, Religious Affairs, Jerusalem Affairs and Prisoner Affairs, among others. Eight ministers and 24 legislators were rounded up in all, along with other Hamas members.” Fateh officials worry that Israel’s actions are actually increasing Hamas popularity.⁵⁰

* West Bank: “Israeli military arrested more than 60 officials from the governing Hamas movement in a pre-dawn sweep. The detainees included two dozen members of parliament and nine cabinet ministers, more than a third of the Hamas cabinet.”⁵¹

“Palestinian political analysts said they believed the arrests were timed to undermine a rare political agreement reached this week by leaders of the two leading Palestinian political movements, Fateh and Hamas ... Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who heads the secular Fateh movement, and Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas agreed in principle this week to a unified political program that would usher in a national unity government.”⁵²

5 July: Israeli attacks on Gaza intensify.⁵³

16 July: Mohammad Zaki Dahlan, 21, a security official related to Mohammad Dahlan, is shot and killed by Hamas gunmen while traveling in his car in Khan

⁴⁹ Miftah.org, 26 June 2007.

⁵⁰ AP, 30 June 2006.

⁵¹ *The Washington Post*, 30 June 2006.

⁵² *The Washington Post*, 30 June 2006.

⁵³ “Seven killed as Israel pushes back into Gaza.” AFP, 19 July 2006.

Younis.⁵⁴

18 July: Gunmen storm the home of Nabil Tammous, a senior member of the Preventive Security Services, loyal to Abbas, known to be at odds with Hamas. The Hamas movement denies responsibility for the attack. Tammous was not at home. One guard was killed, and three others captured.⁵⁵

19 July: E.U foreign policy chief Javier Solana pledges to start international donor funds flowing to Palestinian hospitals as early as 1 August. The details of the financial package are still being worked on, according to EU officials. The Quartet has been working to find ways to channel money to the PA while retaining pressure on the Hamas government. “The effect has been to shift the balance of power in Mr. Abbas’ favor, making the Hamas government dependent on him for its financial survival.”⁵⁶

21 July: Israeli forces destroy a government building in Nablus, killing one. The attack marks the third day of a standoff between Palestinian militants and Israeli troops in Nablus, and raises the death toll of clashes in the city to six. Among the dead are three militants affiliated with Fateh. The Israeli army says the attacks are linked to the Israeli operation in Lebanon.⁵⁷

Abu Fu’ad, the spokesperson of the Al-Aqsa Brigades is appointed spokesman of the “joint operations room” – “which is comprised of all the armed factions in Gaza since the beginning of the Israeli offensive in Gaza.”⁵⁸

14 August: Dagmouh’s Army of Islam kidnaps two Fox News journalists, reportedly finalizing the clan’s split with the Hamas movement. The split signals the break between of the Army of Islam’s interest in pursuing money, and Hamas’s interest in maintaining law and order. The Dagmouh clan uses force to block the establishment of a Hamas HQ in one of the Dagmouh neighborhoods. The fighting between the clan and Hamas claims the lives of two Dagmouh clan members, whose deaths were avenged by further clashes. Mu’zad Dagmouh, the brother of clan leader Mumtaz Dagmouh, is wanted by Hamas for the murder of one of the group’s fighters.⁵⁹

27 August: Fox news journalists Steve Centanni and Olaf Wiig are released after almost two weeks of captivity. Their release is reportedly facilitated by the

⁵⁴ “Relative of Fateh strongman killed by Hamas in Gaza.” AFP, 16 July 2006.

⁵⁵ “Gunmen attack home of Gaza security chief, kill 1.” Reuters, 18 July 2006.

⁵⁶ “Europeans agree on plan to send money to Palestine.” *New York Times*, 20 July 2006.

⁵⁷ “Large explosion in West Bank city of Nablus kills one: Palestinian officials.” AP, 21 July 2006.

⁵⁸ “Fateh military branch names new spokesman of ‘joint operations.’” BBC Monitoring Middle East, 21 July 2006 (Ma’an News Agency website, Bethlehem).

⁵⁹ Miftah.org, 26 June 2006.

Popular Resistance Committee, which have with links to the Hamas leadership.⁶⁰
“After a two-week hostage drama, the militia received a ransom of between \$450,000 and \$1.2 million, according to rumors.”⁶¹

28 August: U.S. Lieutenant General Keith Dayton proposes deployment of an international observer force at the Karni Crossing between Israel and Gaza. The plan also calls for training Palestinian security, trade and customs officials and building a new terminal at Karni, reports Saeb Erakat. According to Erakat, the Dayton initiative calls for an investment of some \$22 million to train and equip Palestinian officials; the “current trickle” of traffic does not meet Palestinian needs, and the revamped crossing could facilitate more activity. Abbas approves the plan. Israeli Defense Minister Perez, however, says he will not approve the plan until Corporal Shalit is released.⁶²

2 September: Widespread school strikes at the start of school year spread through the Palestinian territories, in protest of salary non-payment. Strikes also spread through the government sector. The strikers ignore PM Haniyeh’s call to continue working. Fateh officials support the strike of government workers, while Hamas expressed empathy for the financial hardship, but frustration with the factional goals of the strike.⁶³

4 September: Dozens of Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) members hold a sit-in in Gaza in protest against six months without salaries.⁶⁴

7 September: Armed masked men open fire at a member of the Presidential Guard in Khan Younis. A bystander is injured.

11 September: Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas’s Ismail Haniyeh announce an agreement to form a national unity administration. The issue of the new cabinet’s stance towards Israel remains contentious.⁶⁵

13 September: Armed men open fire on two lawyers in Gaza City. Both are wounded.

22 September: Armed clash between ESF and armed members of Fateh in Beit Lahia injures four Palestinian civilians. A gunfight at Rafah Terminal injures a member of the Palestinian Presidential Guard.

28 September: Chances of a National Unity Government look increasingly slim.

⁶⁰ “Freed journalists: despair, then hope.” *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 August 2006.

⁶¹ Miftah.org, 26 June 2006.

⁶² *Dow Jones International News*, 28 August 2006.

⁶³ Ma’an News Agency, 2 September 2006.

⁶⁴ Ma’an News Agency, 4 September 2006.

⁶⁵ Chronology, Reuters AlertNet.

A meeting between presidential envoy Rawhi Fattuh and PM Haniyeh “failed to bear fruit” say sources close to the presidency.⁶⁶

28 September: A 45 year-old man dies from wounds sustained on September 23 during an armed clash between Fateh and ESF militias.

29 September: In Al-Maghazi, there is an armed clash between two gunmen from the Preventive Security Services and the Popular Resistance Committees. Eight Palestinians are injured.

30 September: The Hamas government orders its militia, the ESF, into the streets of Gaza to end the protests/strikes of civil servants (over unpaid salaries) encouraged by Fateh. Hamas militiamen order protesters to disperse, then open fire. The violence spreads to the parliament building in Gaza City where protesters throw rocks at the ESF troops. The militia responds first with sticks, then the weaponry escalates to gunfire, anti-tank rockets, and grenades. Four Palestinians are killed in the street battles, including a member of the Presidential Guard and a 15-year-old boy. At least 100 are injured. Another member of the Presidential Guard is killed as unknown gunmen fire on his car. Three Palestinians are injured by hand grenade thrown by an ESF member in the direction of PA security forces in Deir al Balah.

1 October: Prime Minister Haniyeh and President Abbas appeal separately for calm and an end to the internal violence in the Palestinian territories. Despite the calls for calm, members of Executive Security Force clash with Fateh supporters of civil strike in Gaza City and Khan Younis. Eight people are killed. As a result of the increased tensions, Fateh protesters storm the government headquarters in Ramallah.⁶⁷ These increasing and escalating clashes mark the worst internal Palestinian fighting in decades, raising fears of a Palestinian civil war.⁶⁸

Gaza:

* Four Palestinian men are killed, 61 injured, during armed clashes between ESF and PA security forces in Gaza City.

* Twenty-six Palestinians are injured in gunfight between ESF and PA security forces in Khan Younis.

* One Palestinian man (age 28) is killed and 37 Palestinians are injured in armed clashes between Hamas and Fateh in Al-Buraji camp.

⁶⁶ Ma'an News Agency, 28 September 2006

⁶⁷ “Hamas closes government offices.” BBC, 2 October 2006.

⁶⁸ Chronology, Reuters AlertNet.

W.Bank:

- * One Palestinian man (age 22) injured in gunfire between Hamas and Fateh, Askar Camp.
- * Two Palestinian men (ages 45 and 55) injured by gunfire when masked men attack an Islamic private school in Nablus City.
- * Militants from Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade set fire to Cabinet building in Ramallah.
- * Fateh-linked militants kidnap Samir Birawi, Finance Ministry official from Hamas. They burn his car and state it was in retaliation for Gaza violence.
- * Dozens of Fateh-allied gunmen close a major road in Nablus by firing their guns into the air and burning tires.
- * Fateh-allied militants block roads with burning tires and ransack offices of Hamas lawmakers in Hebron.

2 October: Shootouts continue to erupt between factions fighting in Gaza, though the violence is markedly less intense and less widespread than on 1 October.

- * Rafah: a policeman and a demonstrator are killed as Fateh supporters demonstrate and clash with members of the ESF in Gaza. The ESF responds by pulling back from the main streets in Gaza City.
- * Gaza City: There was a gunfight (no casualties) at Shifa hospital, and militants set fire to the Agricultural Ministry (no casualties).
- * Fateh supporters march from Nusseirat refugee camp to nearby Breij refugee camp: the march turns violent when Fateh activist Ashraf Abu Dalal, 36, attempts to bomb the houses of Hamas leaders. A bomb accidentally kills Dalal and wounds 36 others.
- * Nablus: Two bodyguards of deputy Prime Minister Nasser al-Shaer are shot and wounded by Fateh gunmen. Also in Nablus, two buses belonging to Hamas-affiliated societies are set on fire.⁶⁹
- * Jericho: According to Palestinians, a shopkeeper who refused to adhere to

⁶⁹ “Unidentified men set fire to Palestinian Hamas buses.” BBC Monitoring Middle East, 3 October 2006 (*Ma'an News Agency* website, Bethlehem).

Fateh's general strike is shot and seriously wounded.⁷⁰

* Bethlehem City: Fateh activists shut down the ministries of the interior, agriculture, and local governance. They also fire on the offices of Hamas Palestinian Legislature Committee (PLC) members.

3 October:

* Rafah: A Palestinian civilian is killed and 15 others injured in continuing clashes in Rafah, where 200 armed supporters of Fateh were demonstrating. Another civilian dies of injuries from 2 October. The Palestinian news agency Wafa reports the clash to be between members of the ESF and armed Fateh members.⁷¹

* Fateh members destroy the main power transformer that supplies the Shujaia suburb's 50,000 residents with electricity.

* The Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades issues a statement that it will attempt to assassinate Interior Minister Said Siyam, Hamas militia chief Youssef Zahar, and Khaled Meshaal.⁷²

* Fateh members block the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and issue a statement holding the Hamas-led government and the interior minister responsible for the violence in the Gaza Strip. The statement calls for the withdrawal of all armed displays from the streets, especially the ESF, and for the deployment of National Security Forces and official police.⁷³

* The "Higher Follow-up Committee of the National and Islamic Forces in the Gaza Governorate" blames Interior Minister Said Siyam's decision to deploy the ESF for the two days of violence in Gaza. The delegation's spokesperson is Deputy Jamil Majdalawi, who is a member of the political bureau of the PFLP.⁷⁴

4 October:

* Near Qalqiliya: Local Hamas leader Mohammed Odde, 37, is shot dead on his way to morning prayers in the town of Hable by masked gunmen, widely believed

⁷⁰ "2 Killed in Second Day of Clashes between Palestinian Factions." *New York Times*, 3 October 2006.

⁷¹ "Two deaths after intra-Palestinian clashes in Rafah." BBC Monitoring Middle East, 3 October 2006 (Wafa website, Gaza).

⁷² "Fateh militia threatens Hamas Leaders." *AP*, 3 October 2006.

⁷³ "Fateh bloc blames Hamas government for Palestinian 'bloodbath.'" BBC Monitoring Middle East, 3 October 2006 (Wafa website, Gaza).

⁷⁴ "Palestinian committee criticizes interior minister's Executive Force decision." BBC Monitoring Middle East, 3 October 2006 (Palestinian newspaper *Al-Ayyam*).

to be from the rival Fateh faction. Israeli army has denies involvement.⁷⁵ The Palestinian Ma'an News Agency reports that some witnesses saw an Israeli license plate on the car that shot at Odde. It also reports an IDF statement that Israeli forces have raided Qalqiya at dawn and arrested Samir al-Aqra, 17.⁷⁶

* Khan Younis: Unidentified gunmen fire at the home of Hams lawmaker Younis al-Astal. One of his bodyguards is killed. Al-Astal is considered among the more hardline figures in Hamas.⁷⁷

* ESF members open fire on a march staged by Fateh in Rafah, killing two and wounding dozens of others.

* Martyr Abu-Ali Mustafa Brigades (PFLP) and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Briades (Fateh) claim responsibility for two rockets fired at the Nahal Oz military position east of Gaza.⁷⁸

* U.S. Secretary of State Rice meets with President Abbas during a Middle East tour to "rally moderate forces and moderate voices." Low expectations pervade the visit, considering her "utterly incomprehensible" hands-off policy to the Israel-Palestine conflict.⁷⁹

* President Abbas announces an end to the dialogue with the Hamas movement, revoking the preliminary coalition agreement between Fateh and Hamas announced on 11 Sept. 2006.⁸⁰

5 October:

* Four Palestinians injured when masked man throws a bomb at Hamas ESF officers in Rafah.

* One ESF officer is injured when masked men open fire at him in Beit Lahia.

* One Fateh member (age 26) is killed by masked men in Junena quarter, Rafah.

* One 24-yr-old man dies of wounds sustained 3 October during armed clash

⁷⁵ "Hamas member killed near northern West Bank town of Qalqiliya, witnesses say." *AP*, 4 October 2006.

⁷⁶ "Palestinian agency reports Hamas commander killed in W.Bank..." BBC Monitoring Middle East, 4 October 2006 (Ma'an, Bethlehem).

⁷⁷ "Gaza gunmen fire on Hamas lawmaker, kill bodyguard." *Reuters*, 4 October, 2006.

⁷⁸ "Palestinian agency reports Hamas commander killed in W Bank..." BBC Monitoring Middle East, 4 October 2006 (*Ma'an*, Bethlehem).

⁷⁹ Bob Malley in "Rice off to Middle East – with no new ideas." *The Guardian*, 4 October 2006.

⁸⁰ "Abbas says talks with Hamas break down." *AP*, 4 October 2006.

between Hamas and Fateh.

7 October: In Beit Lahia, the ESF kidnaps and injures Fateh-member. Armed clashes lead to four more injuries.

9 October: A member of the Presidential Guard (aged 29) dies from wounds sustained 1 October in clash between Hamas and PA security forces.

12 October:

* One PA intelligence officer shot dead by unknown gunmen in Gaza City.

* One Hamas member (age 47) killed, his wife injured, when armed masked men stormed their house in Beit Lahia.

* Fifteen Palestinians are injured in ESF/Fateh clashes in Gaza.

* In the West Bank, a 52 year old man (affiliated with Hamas) is injured when unknown gunmen open fire.

13 October: The day is marked by a series of bloody crimes by “unknown armed men”:⁸¹

*Beit Lehia: armed men shoot and injure Preventative Security officer Khalid Salman.

*Saftawi (northern Gaza City): unknown armed men attack offices of labor union and burn labor union radio station Sawt al-Ummal. Armed clashes inside the building involved grenades and bombing devices. Medical sources reported many casualties from the building.

* Beit Lehia: Hamas member Majid Daraybah is assassinated.

* Jala’a (Gaza City): angry Fateh members shoot at the home of Interior Ministry spokesman Khalid Abu Hilal, injuring four people.

* Gaza City: intelligence officer Ali Shikshik is shot and killed.

15 October: In Gaza, a clash between the ESF and a local family result in one injury.

16 October: In northern Gaza City, a device is exploded in front of home of

⁸¹ *Ma’an News Agency* website, 13 October 2006.

Preventative Security Services officer Ahmad Shobair, who was not at home.⁸²

17 October: * A Fateh member dies from wounds sustained in Hamas/Fateh clash 1 October.

* A Fateh member is injured when group of armed masked men attacks his home in Khan Younis.

* US Consul General Jacob Walles denies media reports that the US is paying money to the Fateh movement: “All the money which the US government provides is aid [that] goes to the education sector and enhances democracy, in addition to the aid to the women's sector or any other civil sector in the territories.”⁸³

18 October: Hamas member Amar Taher, 42, is killed by masked gunmen in Nablus.

20 October: Shooting breaks out hours after a deal is struck by Hamas and Fateh to end the inter-faction fighting in Gaza.⁸⁴

* Gunmen fire on PM Haniyeh's convoy in Gaza (he is unharmed).

* Three Palestinians injured in Fateh/Hamas gunfight in Beit Hanoun.

* One Fateh member (age 30) is kidnapped and injured by unknown gunmen in Khan Younis.

21 October:

* Gaza: Fateh security men burn tires in the streets, erect barricades, and force shop owners to close in protest of non-payment of salaries. Hamas militia attempts to stop the protest and fighting erupts: one Fateh activist is killed, one Hamas activist is stabbed, and 3 people are wounded.

* Al-Bureij Camp: two ESF members are injured in an armed clash with Fateh.

22 October: Mahmoud Abbas brings top security commander Ismail Jaber,⁸⁵

⁸² *Ma'an News Agency* website, 16 October 2006.

⁸³ *Ma'an News Agency* website, 17 October 2006.

⁸⁴ “A Memorandum of Understanding.” *Ma'an*, 20 October 2006; “Shooting mars Gaza factions deal.” BBC News, 20 October 2006.

⁸⁵ This was a surprise appointment. Jaber was an Arafat loyalist, and not considered to be particularly close to Abu Mazen, with whom he had often disagreed with openly in meetings in Tunis. Considered harsh and often brutal in his personal relations, Jaber returned to the Palestinian territories in 1994 as an aide to Arafat, and then was appointed as a security official, over the

widely believed to be corrupt, back into the security forces to counter Hamas' plan to expand its ESF into the West Bank.

* Mohammad Shehade, 27, a member of of the Preventive Security Service is shot dead in al-Bureij camp.

* Two Fateh activists are assassinated in Tul Karem and Jericho.

23 October: A man is injured in exchange of fire between ESF and Preventive Security in Rafah.

25 October: A Fateh activist, 25, is stabbed by four masked men in Bureij Camp.

27 October: A Fateh activist is injured when armed masked men open fire on Al-Nusairat camp.

29 October: A Palestinian man, 30, is killed by PA security forces when they open fire at a group of people entering the Gaza airport.

14 November: A Palestinian man, 30, is killed by armed masked men in Khan Younis.

15 November: A Palestinian man, 40, is kidnapped and shot by group of armed men in Jabalia camp, Gaza.

16 November: Two bystanders are injured when a group of unknown armed men open fire in Jabalia, Gaza.

17 November:

* Four Palestinians are injured in an armed family feud in Gaza City.

* One Palestinian is injured in armed family feud in al-Nuseirat camp.

* Two Palestinians are injured in an armed family feud in al-Maghazi camp.

21 November: In Gaza City, Abdel Aziz (Abu Ali) Shahin, a veteran member of the Fateh Revolutionary Council, is shot and wounded in what seems to be an assassination attempt. A Palestinian analyst considers this to be the first such attack [in the Hamas-Fateh struggle for political power] on a politician with no

objections of members of the Central Committee. Jaber's appointment was considered "a move of desperation by a member of the Central Committee" and "Abu Mazen's big gamble" by another. Jaber was considered by them to be "a Hamas hater who would have no trouble shooting them down."

connection to the security forces.⁸⁶ The attempted assassination of Abu Ali Shahin marks an escalation in the confrontation between Hamas and Fateh, as Shahin is a well-known political figure in the Palestinian territories.⁸⁷

23 November: ESF members open fire at a man they are attempting to arrest, injuring two bystanders.

24 November: LTG Keith Dayton to Reuters: “We’re involved in building up the presidential guard, instructing it, assisting it to build itself and giving them ideas. We are not training the force to confront Hamas.”⁸⁸ He adds: “Hamas is receiving money and arms from Iran and possibly Syria, and we must make sure that the moderate forces will not be erased.”⁸⁹

26 November: A ceasefire in Gaza is announced, ending a five-month Israeli offensive that follows the abduction of Shalit, who remains held by militants.⁹⁰

29 November: A Palestinian man, 40, is killed and two others injured when armed men open fire in Deir al Balah.

30 November: Mahmoud Abbas announces that continued unity talks are at a “dead end.”⁹¹

* Khan Younis: A Palestinian man, 21, is killed in an armed family dispute.

11 December: Rimal neighborhood shootings: unidentified gunmen in Gaza City kill three sons, ages 3 to 9, of Fateh intelligence officer Baha Balousha. Also killed was one of Balousha's bodyguards. Colonel Balousha is a security advisor to Abbas and played a key role in earlier crackdowns on Hamas by a Fateh-controlled PA.⁹²

13 December: In Khan Younis, senior Hamas militant Bassam al Farra (of a

⁸⁶ ICG Middle East Report No.62, p. 14.

⁸⁷ Abu Ali Shahin is a strange, controversial, and yet quite attractive figure in Palestinian politics. A former cabinet minister, he is a Hamas enemy and yet is a constant and outspoken radical critic of both the United States and Israel. During one notorious interview, he responded to al-Qaeda's and specifically Ayman al-Zawahiri's criticism of Hamas (for agreeing to run in the January 2005 elections) by responding: “Oh (Al-Qaeda) brother, leave us and focus on your business. You have Bush! Do to Bush what you want, and we wish you success with Bush, even more. I, Abu Ali Shahin, wish you success with Bush.”

⁸⁸ Keith Dayton would later claim that he had nothing to do with arming or helping the Preventive Security Services.

⁸⁹ Blanche, Ed. “Showdown in Gaza.” *The Middle East*, 1 Feb. 2007.

⁹⁰ Chronology, *Reuters AlertNet*.

⁹¹ Chronology, *Reuters AlertNet*.

⁹² “Prominent Hamas Rebel Is Killed as Palestinians Renew Infighting.” *New York Times*, 14 Dec. 2006; *The Middle East*, 1 Feb. 2007.

prominent clan) is killed execution-style by a death squad from Fateh.⁹³

14 December: The motorcade of PM Haniyeh takes fire near the Egyptian border at Rafah. His bodyguard is killed.⁹⁴

15 December: Palestinian security forces fire on a Hamas rally in Ramallah. At least 20 are wounded. The fighting comes shortly after Hamas accused Fateh of 14 December Haniyeh assassination attempt. Mohammad Dahlan named by Hamas as the perpetrator.⁹⁵

16 December: Mahmoud Abbas calls for early elections after failing to reach a consensus with Hamas about the formation of a government. The move triggers clashes between Hamas and Fateh. The factions agree to a ceasefire four days later.⁹⁶ Hospital officials report at least 32 (Hamas supporters) have been wounded by gunfire in clashes in Ramallah.⁹⁷

17 December: The convoy of Hamas Foreign Minister Mahmoud al-Zahar comes under fire in Gaza City.⁹⁸ Hours later, Hamas gunmen stormed a Force 17/Presidential Guard training camp in Gaza, sparking gunbattles that kill one officer and wound several others. The assailants are believed to be members of the Hamas military wing, although Hamas publicly denies any involvement. Among the wounded is Didier Francois, a reporter for the French daily *Liberation*.

A Fateh PA security officer abducted earlier in the day is executed. A Palestinian woman (age 19) shot dead in the chest during a gunbattle between Fateh and Hamas.⁹⁹

18 December: Gunmen from Hamas and Fateh face off in a gun battle in the middle of Gaza City, wounding one 16-year-old boy. About ten masked Hamas gunmen, with rifles, grenades and rocket launchers, take shelter behind walls in downtown Gaza as they fight one dozen gunmen from Fateh, witnesses said. The fighting is an abrogation of an existing truce agreement.¹⁰⁰

* In the Gaza strip, Hamas gunmen kidnap Sufian Abu Zaydeh, a former Fateh cabinet minister. Fateh kidnaps 11 Hamas activists in response. Zaydeh was later

⁹³ *New York Times*, 14 Dec. 2006; *The Middle East*, 1 Feb. 2007.

⁹⁴ *The Middle East*, 1 Feb. 2007.

⁹⁵ "Hamas accuses Fateh over attack" *Al Jazeera*, 15 Dec. 2006.

⁹⁶ Chronology, Reuters AlertNet.

⁹⁷ "Hamas says Abbas wants war." *Al Jazeera*, 19 Dec. 2006.

⁹⁸ "U.S. weapons prompt Hamas arms race?" *World Net Daily*, 18 Dec. 2006.

⁹⁹ "Gunfire erupts by Abbas' home, despite cease-fire." *Haaretz*, 18 Dec. 2006.

¹⁰⁰ "1 Palestinian wounded in new gunfight in Gaza City." *Ynet*, 18 Dec. 2006.

freed “as gesture of goodwill.”¹⁰¹

* *World Net Daily* reports that the U.S. has been providing arms to Fateh militant groups in an attempt to bolster it against rival Hamas factions. “According to Israeli and Palestinian security officials, the U.S. weapons shipments have prompted an arms race with Hamas, which has been smuggling into the Gaza Strip larger than usual quantities of weaponry from neighboring Egypt.” The report cites Palestinian officials who say the U.S. last week provided Abbas’ Force 17 militants in Gaza (forces directly under Dahlan) with 250 new assault rifles and 5,000 rounds of ammunition. The month’s total shipment of rifles is reported at 1000, and more are expected.¹⁰²

NOTE: This article details proposed/expected weapons and ammunition transfers. But the article may be at least partially apocryphal and it clearly *over*-emphasizes the connection between the Al-Aqsa Brigades and their anti-Israel rhetoric/actions, with Force 17. Lt. General Dayton and U.S. sources deny that the United States has been engaged in any direct arms transfers with Fateh or with militias associated with Fateh, and such transfers are barred by law unless approved by the U.S. Congress or as a part of an intelligence finding signed by the president.

19 December: Hamas and Fateh forces engage in a gun battle outside the headquarters of the pro-Fateh intelligence service in Gaza, killing at least three people and wounding a dozen others.¹⁰³ Among the killed are two Fateh and one Hamas member of the security forces. Also, the body of a Fateh security official (from the Palestinian Intelligence Forces) who was kidnapped earlier on that day by Hamas gunmen was found in Gaza city.¹⁰⁴

20 December: Hamas and Fateh reach a new truce on the evening of 20 December. Eyewitnesses say that gunmen are retreating from the streets.¹⁰⁵

21 December: Two Fateh members are killed during a morning gunfight with Hamas-members.

* Jabalya: Seven Palestinians are wounded by Hamas members in a confrontation in Jabalya. A civilian is killed due to gunfire between Hamas loyalists and Fateh loyalists. Eyewitnesses say the Fateh loyalists are family of the Fateh members killed on the 20th.

* In a separate incident, the bodyguard of the Foreign Minister Mahmoud al-

¹⁰¹ “Hamas: We freed senior Fateh official.” Ynet, 18 Dec. 2006.

¹⁰² *World Net Daily*, 18 Dec. 2006.

¹⁰³ “Hamas, Fateh forces clash near headquarters of security branch.” AP, 19 Dec. 2006.

¹⁰⁴ “Hamas, Fateh agree on ceasefire, but killings continue.” Ynet, 20 Dec. 2006.

¹⁰⁵ Ynet, 20 Dec. 2006.

Zahar, from Hamas, has been abducted.¹⁰⁶

22 December: Nine Palestinians are wounded, one of them seriously, in a clash between Hamas and Fateh. The clash began when Fateh members fired at a pro-Hamas crowd in Nablus.¹⁰⁷

23 December: PM Olmert and President Abbas hold first formal talks. Israel agrees to unfreeze \$100 million in withheld Palestinian tax funds.¹⁰⁸

Late December: Prime Minister Ehud Olmert reportedly approves the shipment of four truckloads of arms (2,000 automatic rifles, 2m rounds of ammunition and 20,000 clips) through the Israeli controlled Kerem Shalom Sinai crossing into Gaza. The report is not confirmed, and the Israeli government denies it. Other shipments of arms to Fateh are reported, including an Egyptian shipment of 1900 rifles. Jordan recently provided 3000 rifles to the PSS, according to press reports. It appears that though the U.S. insists its assistance is non-lethal, it is facilitating the shipment of weaponry through friendly Arab states. Egypt is wary of the connection between Hamas and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.¹⁰⁹ U.S. and European officials visit the Jordanian base of the Badr-Brigade, a unit of the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA). This unit is considered extremely well-trained and intensely loyal to Fateh.¹¹⁰

2007

1 January: Palestinian security sources report that activists from Hamas' military wing and the special security force have abducted three Fateh activists. Among the abducted are the brothers of al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades' commander on the northern Gaza Strip. The reports said that al-Aqsa men retaliated by kidnapping ten Hamas activists. Gun battles also erupt between the two parties, and two people, one from each faction, are wounded in the incident.

Meanwhile, Palestinian sources from the northern Gaza Strip report that Hamas gunmen have fired two 'Yasin' mortar shells at the home of a senior al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades official in Beit Lahiya, Munzer Abur Nasr. Eye witnesses report that the third floor of the building has partially collapsed as a result of the shells.

Palestinians reported that Fateh and Hamas are greatly increasing their presence

¹⁰⁶ "Gaza: Al-Zahar's bodyguard kidnapped; civilian killed." *Ynet*, 21 Dec. 2006.

¹⁰⁷ "At least nine hurt in clashes between Hamas, Fateh in Nablus." *Haaretz*, 22 Dec. 2006.

¹⁰⁸ Chronology, *Reuters AlertNet*.

¹⁰⁹ *The Middle East*, 1 Feb. 2007.

¹¹⁰ *The Middle East*, 1 Feb. 2007.

in the streets, especially in the north of the Gaza Strip. The report says that the parties are setting up roadblocks at a distance of dozens of meters from one another, and there is great fear that a war might erupt.¹¹¹

3 January: Five Palestinians are killed in exchanges of fire between Hamas and Fateh throughout the northern Gaza Strip. Of those killed, four are loyal to Fateh and one is a female bystander who is caught in the crossfire near Jabaliya. Three of the Fateh members are killed in Khan Younis, as their vehicles are attacked by Hamas forces. The female is killed in a clash between Hamas and Fateh in Jabalya. A dozen gunmen are wounded in this clash. A fourth person is gunned down in Beit Lahiya. Ten people, from both sides, are kidnapped.¹¹²

4 January: Sheik Adel Nasser, a Muslim cleric hostile to Hamas, is gunned down while leaving a mosque in the Maghazi refugee camp. His sermon had criticized the Islamists' role in the escalating violence.¹¹³

* Colonel Mohammad Abu Ghrayeb, then-head of Abbas' Preventive Security Service (and a close associate of Mohammad Dahlan), is executed after a sustained siege on his home in northern Gaza.¹¹⁴ Six of his bodyguards are also killed. His wife and eight children are among the 30 wounded. In response, "Fateh unleashed a wave of reprisals that reached the West Bank."¹¹⁵

* There are some reports that Abbas appointed Dahlan General Commander of the PA security forces after the events at the home of Colonel Abu Ghrayeb. Dahlan: "I don't have such a position. But if I am asked to advise or assist I do so."¹¹⁶

5 January: A Fateh member of the Palestinian security forces dies of wounds he received the previous day during clashes and an anti-Hamas cleric was gunned down near a mosque.

6 January: Gaza: Three members of a family affiliated with Hamas are killed by members of a Fateh-affiliated family.

W.Bank:

*The mayor of Nablus was abducted, and later released.

¹¹¹ "Wave of Kidnapping in Gaza." *Ynet*, 2 Jan. 2007.

¹¹² "Gaza infighting: 5 killed, 10 kidnapped." *Ynet*, 3 Jan. 2007.

¹¹³ ICG Middle East Report No. 62, Feb. 2007; "In Gaza, Hamas Critic Gunned Down Outside Mosque." *AP*, 5 Jan. 2007.

¹¹⁴ Aged 48 and a lifelong member of Fateh, the colonel began his career as a trusted bodyguard of Dahlan, serving with him in Khan Yunis and then constantly at his side in Ramallah. He is one of the few associates of Dahlan not to have been accused of corruption, though Hamas and ESF officials cite him as one of Dahlan's most capable security and intelligence officials.

¹¹⁵ *The Middle East*, 1 Feb. 2007.

¹¹⁶ *Haaretz* 11 Jan. 2007, cited in ICG Report.

*In Ramallah, the Hamas-controlled Interior Ministry is stormed. One Palestinian is injured and abducted. Later he was released.

*Heavy clashes are reported in Jenin.

*At least five Palestinians, all supporters of Hamas are kidnapped.¹¹⁷

7 January: Mohammad Dahlan leads mass a rally in Gaza City (Dahlan claims 250,000 people attended the rally). Dahlan's influence seems to have led to better coordination of the security services through January. *Haaretz* reports that according to Dahlan "the Palestinian security organizations are at the height of a process of change: retiring officers over 60, uniting the forces into three branches: national security (the army), internal security (police) and preventive security (intelligence)."¹¹⁸

10 January: Palestinian officials announce plan to retire at least 160 Palestinian Authority security officers as part of a plan to reform the PA security forces. A *Jerusalem Post* article reports Abbas to be unhappy with the performance of some of his top officers in their confrontations with Hamas. The reporter's source (an anonymous senior PA official) indicates that the US and the EU have hinted that Mohammad Dahlan would be a good candidate to take a key security role: "They believe that only someone like Dahlan would be able to stop Hamas ... but we don't believe that this is possible under the current circumstances."¹¹⁹

Jerusalem Post continued: Mohammad Dahlan stokes factional tensions by calling the Hamas government "a bunch of murderers and thieves." Dahlan, formerly head of the Fateh-led Preventative Security Force, is considered responsible for the persecution and torture of Hamas members and supporters during his term. Interestingly, author Mohammed Shakeel notes, "Fateh leadership, including Abbas, appear not to be interested in reducing the political temperature. Indeed, given their recent pronouncements, [they] seem fairly content with pumping up the pressure."¹²⁰

Jailed Fateh leader Marwan Barghouti threatens open-ended hunger strike to protest the fighting between Hamas and Fateh. He calls for the declaration of Sunday, 14 January as a 'day of national unity.'¹²¹

Marwan Barghouti: Fateh leader imprisoned in Israel's Hadarim Prison, seized in 2002 and convicted and sentenced to five life terms in 2004. Sometimes referred to as a Palestinian Nelson Mandela for his street-level politics, grass-

¹¹⁷ "3 Palestinians killed in Gaza; gun battles in Jenin." *Ynet*, 6 Jan. 2007.

¹¹⁸ "Mohammed Dahlan in a special Haaretz interview" *Haaretz*, 11 Jan. 2007.

¹¹⁹ "PA to retire at least 160 security officers." *The Jerusalem Post*, 11 Jan. 2007.

¹²⁰ "Opposition Strongman Hits Out at Palestinian Government." *Global Insight*, 11 Jan. 2007.

¹²¹ *The Jerusalem Post*, 11 Jan. 2007.

roots agitation, in the face of a more powerful enemy. Charismatic leader, considered a promising (if impossible, due to his imprisonment) candidate to remold and restore Fateh because of his popularity in both Gaza and the West Bank. Also see biographical footnote #35 above.

Hamas officials in Gaza reportedly welcome the Abbas decision to deploy members of the Presidential Guard around Hamas-run ministries and institutions. “PA Planning Minister Samir Abu Aisheh of Hamas said the decision was an indication of cooperation between the PA presidency and government in restoring law and order and ending the state of anarchy.”¹²²

11 January: Fateh supporters rally in Ramallah in a show of force against Hamas.

20 January: Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal and Mahmoud Abbas fail to settle differences in Damascus on talks on a unity government.¹²³

Note: The International Crisis Group reports an apparent direct correlation between “reality on the ground” and the “state of play at the top”: “Just as the renewal of negotiations between Abbas and Haniya in late Nov. 2006 produced an almost instantaneous halt to the clashes for the duration of the talks, the failure of [this] meeting] precipitated a further round of fighting.”¹²⁴

25 January: Members of Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade fire on a rally in Nablus marking the anniversary of Hamas’s election victory. Two dozen masked Hamas gunmen returned fire, and a civilian was killed by a stray bullet in his home. A Fateh police officer is shot dead in Gaza city and one Hamas operative was killed just before midnight.

26 January: Seven Hamas militants, five Fateh militants, and one Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade militant, three civilians (including a 16- and a 2-year-old) are killed in heavy clashes. Twenty-four Hamas militants are detained by Fateh in the West Bank.¹²⁵

27 January: Mortar shells, gun clashes and car bombs kill six people: two Hamas militants, two Fateh militants and two civilians (including a 12 year old boy).

* A Hamas security official, injured the day before during fighting in Beit Lahiya, dies of his wounds.¹²⁶

¹²² *The Jerusalem Post*, 11 Jan. 2007.

¹²³ Chronology, *Reuters AlertNet*.

¹²⁴ ICG Middle East Report No. 62, Feb. 2007.

¹²⁵ “Baby boy killed in Gaza cross-fire.” *Ynet*, 26 Jan. 2007.

¹²⁶ “24 killed in weekend of factional clashes in Gaza.” *Haaretz*, 28 Jan. 2007.

* Armed siege of senior Fateh activist Mansur Shalayil (Gaza) was lifted in response to the abduction and threat of execution of nine Hamas cadres in Nablus.¹²⁷

28 January: One Hamas militant, one Fateh militant and one civilian (age 45) are killed in clashes in Gaza.

29 January: A Hamas security force member is killed in Gaza City early in the morning.

30 January: Fateh and Hamas agree to a ceasefire.

* A senior Hamas official, Hussein al-Shabasi, is shot dead outside a mosque in Khan Younis and three civilians were killed in the ensuing fighting after the shooting.¹²⁸

Late January – Early February

“The clear majority of dead and wounded in late January [came] from Hamas ranks...As demonstrated by the heavy clashes in early February, concentrated in the northern Gaza Strip, Fateh’s cheer was short-lived. It sustained the majority of casualties, and most PA security installations in northern Gaza were overrun by the ESF as well as Qassam Brigades support units. By the time the leaders departed for Mecca, only the *saraya* (the main security headquarters in Gaza City) and the presidential compound remained under Fateh control in Gaza City.”¹²⁹

1 February:

* Bureij and Nuseirat Camps: Six Palestinians are killed as clashes erupt outside the entrance to the refugee camps in the heart of Gaza, where a Fateh Presidential Guard was shot dead when Hamas gunmen ambushed an alleged supply convoy from Egypt. Three more members of the presidential guard are killed in continued fighting in Nuseirat.

* Jabaliya: one Palestinian is killed as violence spreads.

* Gaza City: gunbattles continue, a ESF member killed.

* The total wounded in over the last two days in Gaza reaches 70.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ ICG Middle East Report No. 62, Feb. 2007.

¹²⁸ “Hamas member killed after truce called.” *The Jerusalem Post*, 30 Jan. 2007.

¹²⁹ ICG Middle East Report No. 62, Feb. 2007.

¹³⁰ “Clashes threaten Fateh-Hamas three-day truce.” *AFP*, 2 Feb. 2007.

2 February: Gaza clashes between Hamas and Fateh gunmen intensify.

* Hamas fighters attack and seize several Fateh security compounds, killing three members of Presidential Guard and two members of the General Intelligence Service and wounding about 40 to 50 recruits and two civilians in a mortar attack.

* Fateh Presidential Guard takes control of Gaza Islamic University (a Hamas location). Eight Iranians were said to have been nabbed in the attack, one of them committing suicide (this allegation is later denied by Hamas and remains unproven).

* Hours later, the Fateh-affiliated Al Azhar University comes under heavy fire from activists in an apparent retaliatory attack by Hamas (although the movement denies any involvement).

* In the evening a new truce was signed, but was soon broken in central Gaza after Hamas intercepts a supply convoy (flak jackets, no arms) from Egypt headed for the Presidential Guard.¹³¹

* Two Palestinians, including a Hamas militant and a civilian, are killed in gun battles in Khan Younis. In total nine Fateh and five Hamas operatives and seven civilians are killed in armed clashes on February 2.¹³²

Ma'an News Agency learns and reports that Muhammad Dahlan will join the Fateh delegation to Mecca for dialogue with Hamas. The delegation will also include: President Mahmoud Abbas, Nasser Yousif, Muhammad Dahlan, Rawhi Fattuh, Samir al-Mashharawi, Ahmad Hillis and Maher Miqdad.¹³³

3 February: Fighting wounds twelve people. Hamas gunmen set up roadblocks in Gaza and detain up to 40 unarmed Fateh security forces. Hours after a new truce agreement is reached (as announced by Interior Minister Saed Seyam of Hamas) a member of the Fateh-affiliated presidential guard is killed and another abducted.¹³⁴

4 February: Ignoring the new truce, Hamas fighters attack several security installations loyal to Fateh with mortars and RPGs, causing no injuries. Two members of Abbas' Presidential Guard die of wounds they suffered during the

¹³¹ ICG Middle East Report No. 62, Feb. 2007.

¹³² "Gaza fighting escalates but truce efforts renewed." *Reuters*, 2 Feb. 2007.

¹³³ *Ma'an News Agency*, 5 Feb. 2007.

¹³⁴ "Gaza fighting continues despite ceasefire deal." *Reuters*, 4 Feb. 2007.

past days.¹³⁵

5 February: A hostage swap between abducted interior ministry official Arafat Said (Ramallah) and one of Dahlan's nephews (seized in Gaza 4 Feb) is effected.¹³⁶

6 February: In an apparent revenge killing, gunmen loyal to a local clan open fire on a car in Gaza city on Tuesday night, killing a Hamas commander and wounding three other members of the group. The clan later said that the target of the assassination was responsible for the killing of two family members in December. Hamas blamed Fateh for the attack, Fateh spokesperson denied responsibility.¹³⁷

8 February: The Mecca Agreement is signed in Saudi Arabia. Abbas and Meshaal sign a coalition deal in Saudi Arabia to end factional warfare.¹³⁸

Also: Al-Bawaba News report of "bizarre" incident at a "recent" meeting: article reports Fateh members gathered in government headquarters (Ramallah) to discuss the formation of a national unity government with Hamas. During the meeting Tawfiq Tirawi, head of the intelligence department, became so angry with Jabril Rajoub, former head of Preventative Security in the West Bank, that he removed his shoe in order to hit Rajoub with it. Rajoub had insinuated that elements of Fateh, including Tirawi, were attempting to spread the fighting with Hamas in Gaza to the West Bank. At the beginning of the meeting, Tirawi told Rajoub "I have a message from you from the Fateh children who have been killed in Gaza" and removed his shoes and tried to hit Rajoub. Abbas reportedly hurried to intervene, asking Tirawi to leave the conference room. A day after, Tirawi apologized to Abbas but not to Rajoub.¹³⁹

Tawfiq Tarawi,¹⁴⁰ the head of intelligence for Fateh and for the PA, is rumored to be supported by American funds. He maintains files on Hamas, its West Bank networks, and its reach inside the religious community. He also has a network of

¹³⁵ Reuters, 4 Feb. 2007.

¹³⁶ ICG Report, Feb. 2007; "Fateh Gunmen Abduct Hamas Official in West Bank Despite Truce." AP, 5 Feb. 2007.

¹³⁷ "Gaza gunfire kills Hamas man, wounds three others." Reuters, 6 Feb. 2007.

¹³⁸ Full text of Mecca Agreement available at <http://www.jmcc.org/new/07/feb/meccaagree.htm>.

¹³⁹ "Palestinian Shoe Fight" [Jordanian] Al-Bawaba News, 8 Feb. 2007.

¹⁴⁰ Longtime Fatah member, member of the Tarifi clan, intelligence expert, rank of Colonel and head of General Intelligence -- and former part of what Israel called "the Muqata terrorists" -- Tawfiq Tirawi is a long-term Fateh member and American intelligence asset. In an interview in March of 2006, he said that he had received millions of dollars from the US intelligence services to conduct "surveys" of all of the West Bank's and Gaza's mosques to determine the strength of Hamas and proudly showed off the detailed files of his findings in the General Intelligence offices in Ramallah. In the wake of the Gaza troubles, Tirawi held a press conference in which he said that Hamas was aided in the takeover of Gaza by Iran.

associates who work to undermine Dahlan and Jabril Rajoub.¹⁴¹

13 February: Fateh officials admit (to the *Jerusalem Post*) that they are facing difficulties in persuading the US and the EU to accept the Mecca Agreement.¹⁴²

14 February: The PA fires hundreds of security officers who refuse to participate in the recent fighting against Hamas in Gaza. The fired officers belonged to the Preventative Security Service, Military Intelligence, and Force 17. They were suspected of sympathizing with Hamas and the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC), a group comprised of militants from both Hamas and Fateh. The dismissal of the personnel is condemned by Hamas legislator Salah Bardawil as “politically motivated” and a blow to the unity government. *Jerusalem Post*: sources close to Hamas claim the movement is considering recruiting the dismissed officers to its Executive Force. Islam Shahwan, spokesman for the Executive Force, announces that Hamas is opposed to integrating its forces into the PA security forces. However, Fateh representatives who participated in the Mecca summit claim that Hamas has agreed to merge its forces.¹⁴³

15 February: Mahmoud Abbas formally asks Ismail Haniyeh to form a unity cabinet and urges him to respect the peace accords signed with Israel.¹⁴⁴

19 February: U.S. Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice meets with Ehud Olmert and Mahmoud Abbas in Jerusalem, nominally unfreezing the peace process that had been shelved since the Clinton administration.¹⁴⁵

5 March: Members of the Popular Resistance Committees fire at a senior police official's car. The police official Muhammad Youssef escapes the attack unharmed, and police chase the gunmen. The PRC justified their actions, saying that Youssef had broken an agreement to integrate group members into the police force. In a separate episode in Gaza, security officials reported that Hamas

¹⁴¹ Conflict Forum notes on Usamah Hamdan interview, 19 June 2007. The former head of the Preventive Security Service in the [West Bank](#), Rajoub once led one of the most powerful of the [Palestinian Authority's](#) various security agencies and has several thousand officers under his command. Rajoub, now 54 earned his credentials on the Palestinian street after spending years in Israeli jails, where he also learned to speak [Hebrew](#). He was later deported to [Lebanon](#) and then followed the PLO leadership into exile in [Tunisia](#). From Tunis, he helped coordinate the first Palestinian [intifada](#), or uprising, against Israeli occupation, beginning in 1987. Rajoub has been a negotiator on security issues with the Israelis under U.S. mediation. Tough-minded, but politically savvy, Rajoub has been an outspoken critic of Abu Mazen's unwillingness to engage in reconciliation talks with Hamas in the wake of the Gaza troubles.

¹⁴² “PA fires hundreds of ‘mutinous’ security officers. Haniyeh delays resignation.” *Jerusalem Post*, 14 Feb. 2007.

¹⁴³ *Jerusalem Post*, 14 Feb. 2007.

¹⁴⁴ Chronology, *Reuters AlertNet*.

¹⁴⁵ Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, April 2007.

gunmen and security forces have fought a bitter battle. The battle erupted over a disagreement between Hamas and Fateh members over who had control of a training compound in Gaza City. The security forces, which are Fateh-allied, ordered Hamas to leave the area, but Hamas ignored the demand, saying the compound was under the authority of the Hamas-controlled Interior Ministry.

10 March: Rival militias battle once again in the Gaza Strip. A Hamas-militant is killed in the gunfire, seven others are wounded. Hamas and Fateh each blamed the other for attacking first.

12 March: BBC correspondent Alan Johnston is kidnapped. “When Alan Johnston stepped out of the building in central Gaza City where the BBC and half a dozen other media are based on the afternoon of March 12, he was abducted before he could climb into his armored BBC vehicle. He was most likely taken to Sabra, a Dagmouh stronghold just south of the city center.”

“Johnston has been a kind of life insurance policy for the Dagmouh clan ever since. Hamas cannot afford the death of a foreign journalist in ‘Hamastan,’ which it has supposedly pacified, and Dagmouh has threatened to kill Johnston if attacked.” “Local journalists in Gaza see the Army of Islam’s demand for the release of an Islamic hate preacher close to al-Qaida, imprisoned in Britain, as little more than a pretext. ‘Maybe they were even paid by al-Qaida to formulate this demand,’ one journalist says. It is much easier to see the handwriting of the clan in the other demands the clan has made, according to the source. “There are indications that they have demanded \$5 million and a large piece of real estate from the former Jewish settlements on Gaza’s Mediterranean coast,” he says.’¹⁴⁶

15 March: Hamas and Fateh agree on the make-up of a coalition government they hope will end infighting and lift a crippling Western aid embargo.¹⁴⁷

16 March: Near Gaza City, unidentified Palestinian gunmen attack a U.N. relief convoy in a botched kidnapping attempt. The UNRWA convoy was carrying operations chief John Ging. No one was hurt. Spokesmen for both Hamas and Fateh condemned the attack.¹⁴⁸

17 March: The Palestinian unity government takes office. Ismail Haniyeh is reinstated as Prime Minister, but the Deputy Prime Ministry goes to a member of Fateh as well as several other strong portfolios.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Miftah.org.

¹⁴⁷ “Gaza gunmen attack U.N. convoy, kill Fateh officer.” Reuters, 16 March 2007.

¹⁴⁸ Reuters, 16 March 2007.

¹⁴⁹ Chronology, Reuters AlertNet.

The appointment of **Hani al-Qawasmi** to serve as interior minister was a compromise between Abbas and PM Haniyeh. Al-Qawasmi is a career civil servant, has had little experience in law enforcement, and wields little influence in government. He was considered a “relative independent,” chosen for the politically sensitive post after months of bickering between Hamas and Fateh.¹⁵⁰ His term lasted only 2 months (he resigns 14 May).

18 March: Abbas appoints Mohammad Dahlan as his national security advisor, reestablishing a National Security Council and promoting Dahlan’s influence beyond that of the interior minister. This appointment is part of Abbas’ move to restructure the National Security Council; with himself as head and Haniyeh as his deputy. Other members to serve on the council will be the Palestinian foreign, interior, justice ministers, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization’s chief negotiator, security advisor Mohammed Dahlan, and the commanders of the intelligence and national security organizations¹⁵¹ Officials predict Interior Minister Qawasmi is unlikely to wield much power, given the authoritative role of Dahlan.¹⁵²

Mohammad Dahlan is a former minister of internal security and former chief of Gaza’s powerful Preventive Security Service, and has long been one of Hamas’s harshest critics. A leading Fateh figure, he led a merciless crackdown on Hamas in the 1990s, rounding up thousands of the Islamists who refused to recognize the legitimacy of the newly created Palestinian Authority.

Khaled Meshaal and Hamas speaks out against the appointment of Dahlan. Hamas lawmaker Salah Bardawil called Dahlan “undesirable...He has left his prints on...the internal fighting.” Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar suggests the appointment is illegal, as Dahlan was a parliamentarian and could not legally take on this role. Hamas members accuse Dahlan of stoking factional violence, of attempting to overthrow the previous Hamas-led government, and of cracking down on/torturing Hamas activists in the 1990s in his security position under Yasser Arafat.¹⁵³

The rival factions agree that security reform is necessary, but disagree on what reform will mean. The controversial appointment is defended by Nimr Hamad, top aid to Abbas: “Everyone knows that Dahlan is an expert.” Gazan analyst Shaker Shabat says that Dahlan is the only figure powerful enough to reform Palestinian security, as he has the loyalty of the heads of each of the 12 Palestinian security apparatuses. Shabat predicts Dahlan will take a carrot (or

¹⁵⁰ “Palestinian Interior Minister calls it quits.” *LA Times*, 15 March 2007.

¹⁵¹ “Abbas orders formation of Palestinian national security council.” *Haaretz*, 15 April 2007.

¹⁵² “Palestinian leader restructures national security council.” BBC Monitoring Middle East, 18 March 2007.

¹⁵³ “Hamas slams president’s new security advisor.” *AFP*, 19 March 2007.

“sweet”) approach to dismantling Hamas’ Executive Forces, but that security reform will ultimately favor the Fateh movement.¹⁵⁴

21 March: Armed clash erupt in northern Gaza killing a 24-year-old man and seriously wounding two others. The local Fateh commander blames Hamas for opening fire. Later, a Hamas-affiliated professor from the Islamic university is kidnapped while leaving a mosque south of Gaza City. Hamas blames Fateh. Fateh spokesman Abdel Hakim Awad said that Hamas and Fateh met after the incidents to smooth tensions, reaching an agreement to withdraw gunmen from the scene of the shooting and to release the professor.¹⁵⁵

22 March: Hamas accuses the Preventative Security Services of abducting university lecturer Hamdan As-Soufi in Gaza. (“Hamas, Palestinian security trade accusations over abductions, killings in Gaza” *Ma’an News Agency*, reported by BBC News 3/24).

24 March: Preventative Security Officer Arafa Nofal is found dead in central Gaza with 30-plus bullets in his body. He was abducted on 23 March with his colleague Officer Nabil Moqdad. The Preventative Security Service accuses Hamas of the crime and demands the release of Moqdad.

1 April: PA security forces blame Hamas for the assassination of Salafist sheikh Adnan Manasreh outside a Gaza City mosque. Hamas denies responsibility, saying that Fateh was trying to raise tensions between Salafi and Hamas supporters. The Gazan Salafi movement has grown increasingly critical of Hamas, especially since al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri accused Hamas of selling out to Israel and the U.S. There is heavy PA presence at Manasreh’s funeral led to speculation that the PA was trying to undermine Hamas by splitting its follower base through such action.

6 April: Palestinian gunmen ambush Ghassem Bayrie (50), a top union leader, as he drives with his family in the Gaza Strip, shooting and moderately wounding the man in the leg before fleeing in his vehicle. There was no claim of responsibility for the shooting, but Bayrie is a prominent Fateh loyalist in the Gaza Strip and has feuded with the rival Hamas movement in the past.

7 April: Four Palestinian men kidnapped Jihad Ziyara, 46, an Arab-Israeli originally from Gaza now living in Jaffa, outside his family house in Gaza.

9 April: A street argument degenerates into a firefight after members of two powerful family-clans, Jerwan and Sakr, in the town of Khan Younis intervened, medics and security sources said. The clash left three dead, including one from

¹⁵⁴ “Cracks appear in Palestinian Coalition.” *AP*, 21 March 2007.

¹⁵⁵ *AP*, 21 March 2007.

each family and a bystander, all aged under 27. Seven are wounded.

10 April: Fateh-associated officials say Al-Qaida is operating in the Gaza Strip and previously attempted to assassinate Abbas and other top leaders from Fateh.

26 April: A member of the Fateh-affiliated Force 17 security force is killed and another three Palestinians are wounded in a gunfight in Ramallah. Israel Radio reported that the clashes erupted after the security force tried to arrest several members of a large gang in the West Bank city.

27 April: A member of the Palestinian National Security Force was killed and two others were wounded in a firefight with Palestinian gunmen at the Rafah border crossing in the Gaza Strip. Clashes erupt following an argument between one of the gunman and police about his family crossed the terminal into Egypt. An unarmed Palestinian citizen is also hurt in the firefight. The gunmen, part of an armed gang in Rafah, threw stones at the policeman before firing at them.

30 April: The Jordanian government censors printing of 1 May issue of *Al-Majd*, which intended to run a story “based on a Jordanian government translation of a reputed US intelligence document that was obtained by the newspaper from a Jordanian government official. The document, an official at the newspaper said, was drawn up by ‘Arab and American parties’ and ‘presented to Palestinian President Abbas by the head of an Arab intelligence agency’.” It presents a security plan focused on the strengthening of Presidential forces with U.S. and Israeli cooperation. This plan undermines the plan floated at the February Mecca Accords, which endeavored to forge a cooperative security effort through the National Unity Government.¹⁵⁶

Palestinian newspaper *Al-Risalah* reports on the “growth of the illegal arms trade in Gaza Strip.”¹⁵⁷ The reporter Fayiz Ayyub al-Shaykh explores the arms market that is located in the car market. Several self-described “fat-cats” of the arms trade chase and kidnap the journalist when he tries to take photos of the trade. After convincing them he had no images of them, the journalist was released and spoken to freely. Merchants in the car market are upset that their trade is cramped by the presence of the dangerous arms market. Administrators claim they are helpless. The article is an interesting look at how public, and how problematic, the flourishing Gazan arms trade is.

The first part of the Winograd report is released, criticizing Israeli decision-making during the Summer 2006 War on Lebanon, and further breaking the

¹⁵⁶ “US Plans to ‘Sink’ Hamas.” *Asia Times*, 16 May 2007.

¹⁵⁷ “Growth of the illegal arms trade in Gaza Strip.” BBC Monitoring Middle East, 9 May 2007 (Palestinian newspaper *Al-Risalah*).

political strength of PM Ehud Olmert.¹⁵⁸

4 May: A *Haaretz* article details the US-sponsored “Benchmarks for Agreement on Movement and Access.” The “Acceleration Benchmarks” propose a series of deadlines for Israel to begin dismantling a large number of its security obstacles and checkpoints in the West Bank -- allowing increased access in the occupied territories.¹⁵⁹

5 May: The Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades shoot Savri Rezawei, 26, in the head after he admitted to giving information leading to the arrests of several Palestinian operatives in Ramallah.

6 May: A “New security plan” is published in full in *Haaretz*. The document -- authored by LTG Keith Dayton, US Ambassador to Israel Dick Jones, and Consul-General in Jerusalem Jacob Walles -- took more than a month to write, according to an American diplomat, and was begun in mid-March soon after the announcement of the formation of a Palestinian unity government. “According to the ‘Benchmarks’ document, Dahlan would be required to develop a plan against Qassam rockets with the support of President Abbas by no later than June 21, and the forces under Dahlan must be deployed to problem areas no later than that date.”¹⁶⁰

10 May: Fateh deploys a few thousand men without coordinating with Hamas or with the interior minister, Hani al-Qawasmeh.¹⁶¹ Mr. Qawasmeh walked out of a meeting with the Fateh security chief, Rashid Abu Shabak, over the deployment. Mr. Shabak has not commented on the dispute. Seeing the Fateh deployments, Hamas gunmen opened fire at the national security building in central Gaza and at some of the Fateh men operating roadblocks. The Hamas-organized Executive Force, a parallel police force to the Fateh-dominated security forces, did not take part. Ten people are wounded.

13 May: A group of gunmen ambush a senior Fateh member of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, Baha Abu Jrad, 32, and his aide, Tawfiq al-Budi, near Beit Lahiya. Both suffer serious injuries and die in the hospital. Fateh blames Hamas for the attack. Thousands of Fateh supporters rallied in the streets and participate in the funerals of the two militants. During the funeral procession, Hamas militants fire on Fateh protesters, injuring three. Heavy exchanges of gunfire erupt in the afternoon in the western neighborhoods of Gaza City.

A Fateh gunman fired against Hamas militants outside a mosque, killing 2. Eleven

¹⁵⁸ “Winograd Report may end Olmert’s political life.” The Palestinian Information Center online, 2 May 2007.

¹⁵⁹ Discussed in *Asia Times*, 16 May 2007.

¹⁶⁰ *Asia Times*, 16 May 2007.

¹⁶¹ “Palestinian Interior Minister calls it quits.” *LA Times*, 15 May 2007.

Palestinians were subsequently injured in the exchanges of fire. Three of them are in serious condition. During the fighting, dozens of members of each faction were abducted by the rival groups. A ceasefire brokered by Egyptian mediators announced by Hamas and Fateh leaders in Gaza seemed to have taken effect at least in part as agreed at 2200 GMT (0100 local time 14 May). Both sides begin to pull gunmen off the streets and to swap fourteen hostages from Hamas being held by Fateh for at least six from Fateh held by Hamas. According to Palestinian cabinet spokesman Ghazi Hamad, the two factions reaffirmed their pledge 'to make this [unity] government stand.' However, two more people were killed in fighting overnight.¹⁶²

14 May: Palestinian Interior Minister Hani al-Qawasmeh (Hamas) resigns and his resignation is accepted. He steps down because neither Hamas nor Fateh would support his efforts to integrate the competing security forces, complaining that his hands had been tied since the beginning of his tenure. His resignation is a strike against the semblance of a national unity government. Ghazi Hamad says that Haniyeh had personally called Hamas commanders to tell them to withdraw forces, lay down arms, and release captives taken in kidnappings.¹⁶³

Hamas gunmen attack a training base used by Fateh forces near the Karni border crossing at the Israeli border killing eight people, all Fateh Presidential Guard officers. An additional Fateh member is killed when two officers were shot at by Israeli forces after they tried to escape from the battle, running to the Karni crossing. After the battle militants flee the scene and IDF tanks and soldiers take control of the area.¹⁶⁴ In separate incident, one Hamas member and one pro-Fateh member are killed in fighting in Gaza City, three other Fateh militia-men are wounded.

Hamas also accuses Fateh of killing one of its own commanders, a Fateh member.

In the afternoon, Hamas said they fired 2 mortars and 10 Qassam rockets into Israeli territory. 17 people in Sderot are wounded, sparking the rumour that Israel would soon intervene in the Gaza-Strip. Another three civilians are reported killed during the fighting on May 15, to make a total of 24 killed in the last three days of fighting.

15 May: The Presidential Guard issues a statement to Wafa News Agency, addressing the 14 May incident at the Karni crossing, saying that armed groups from the Al-Qassam Brigades and the Executive Force of Hamas were fiercely attacking at 4am. They refer to this crossing as a "commercial" crossing and argue that there were only new recruits, unarmed, in training that had to face over

¹⁶² *LA Times*, 15 May 2007.

¹⁶³ *LA Times*, 15 May 2007.

¹⁶⁴ *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 May 2007.

1,000 Hamas militants “armed to the teeth.”¹⁶⁵

Al-Quds Al-Arabi reports “Six reasons behind the Gaza Clashes:”¹⁶⁶ (1) The two extremist wings in the Hamas and Fateh movements were not satisfied with the terms of the Mecca agreement and did not want to embark on political partnership. (2) The agreement was unable to lift the financial blockade on the Palestinian people, supporting the cause of the extremists. (3) The Israeli conspiracy. They might be carrying out assassinations. (4) The U.S. has been exacerbating the atmosphere of suspicion and doubt between Hamas and Fateh through their financial aid in training and arming the Presidential Guard. (5) The escalation of media propaganda campaigns. (6) The transformation of the Gaza Strip into a “weapons’ jungle,” evident in the spread of security confusion, an increase of criminal acts, the abduction of Alan Johnston, and the continuation of arms smuggling.

16 May: Hamas gunmen ambush a jeep in which Fateh officers are transporting arrested members of Hamas, killing five Hamas and two Fateh fighters. Fighting also rages close to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' heavily guarded compound. Two members of the Palestinian national security forces (aligned with Fateh) are killed while trying to enter an area of Gaza where Hamas men have positions. One Hamas man, one Fateh member (who was a presidential guard loyal to Abbas) and two civilians are killed in open street fighting, and a nurse traveling in an ambulance was shot in the head, requiring life support.

Hamas militants also attack a National Security outpost in the Jebalya refugee camp killing one member of the National Guard allied with Fateh. Day toll: 19 killed.

17 May: Israel allows the transfer of 500 Fateh troops into Gaza.¹⁶⁷ They were admitted through the Rafah crossing from Egypt, where they had been receiving U.S. training.¹⁶⁸ The troops are “widely reported” to be members of Abbas’ Presidential Guard, though a source in Israel says they may have been from another Palestinian unit. LTG Dayton refers to the men as “soldiers” and members of the National Security Service in his Congressional testimony on 23 May.

Israel’s view: The troops were admitted into Gaza after the 14 May Hamas attack on another camp of the Presidential Guard near the Karni crossing. Gershon

¹⁶⁵ “Statement of Presidential Guard to Palestinian news agency WAFA.” BBC News, 15 May 2007.

¹⁶⁶ “Six reasons behind the Gaza Clashes.” BBC Monitoring Middle East, 15 May 2007 (*Al-Quds Al-Arabi*).

¹⁶⁷ “Fateh Troops Enter Gaza With Israeli Assent.” *Washington Post*, 18 May 2007.

¹⁶⁸ “Israel, U.S., and Egypt back Fateh’s fight against Hamas.” *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 May 2007.

Baskin, codirector of the independent Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information in Jerusalem called that attack a “wake-up call” to Olmert and Abbas regarding the need to strengthen Abbas’ loyalists. Mr. Baskin also said that though the Israeli military establishment was initially uncomfortable allowing arms shipments to Abbas, the general belief is that direct military confrontation inside Gaza with Hamas is inevitable, so it is perhaps worth arming Abbas first.¹⁶⁹

This agenda, to create a new security force from the Presidential Guard, is also mentioned in a 19 June interview with Usamah Hamdan as a “new security plan,” trumping the security plan floated, and not rejected by Abbas, in Mecca. This new plan Hamdan considers U.S.-generated, after the old plan was rejected by Dahlan. [It was published in the Jordanian *Al-Majd* and detailed in *Asia Times* 5/16].

18 May: Hamas releases two press statements, reported by the Hamas-affiliated Palestinian Information Center and reproduced by the BBC on 18 May.

#1) “Conspiratorial contacts between the Preventive Security and foreign quarters.” Alleges that Rashid Abu-Shabak, Yusuf Isa, Bassam al-Yazuri, and senior security officials have had secret contacts with officials in several foreign countries. These contacts exchanged information about the Palestinian resistance movement and its commanders. These contacts “related to the exchange of plans to strike at the resistance and the Executive Force *and on how to impose control on the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and empty them of their substance.*”

#2) Denounces Abbas’s absence from Gaza: his presence might have helped to calm the fighting.

19 May: “Showy deployment this week” of 3,000 troops organized and placed by the Hamas-led Interior Ministry, the Executive Security Force (ESF). The deployment of these forces demonstrates the centrality of the oppositional Palestinian security forces to the political battle between Hamas and Fateh government officials. This struggle is exemplified in the weighted power dynamic within the Interior Ministry, where the authority of Hamas Minister Saed Siyam is undercut by Abbas’s appointment of Fateh’s Rashid Abu Shabak to head the Palestinian police, civil defense, and Preventative Security branch (Abu Shabak reports directly to Abbas through Dahlan, bypassing Siad Siyam).¹⁷⁰

21 May: Palestinian Ma’an News Agency website reports that a “Panel of Palestinian Speakers Calls for Reform of Security Services.”¹⁷¹ Speakers: Brigadier Jibril Rajoub, former advisor on national security; Yasir Abid Rabbu, member of the PLO’s executive committee; Hani al-Masri, political analyst; Qays

¹⁶⁹ *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 May 2007.

¹⁷⁰ Wilson, Scott. “In Gaza, Politics at the End of a Gun.” *Washington Post*, 20 May 2007.

¹⁷¹ BBC Monitoring Middle East, 21 May 2007.

Abd-al-Karim, Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) member; Hanan Ashrawi, PLC member; Muhannad Abdul Hamid, writer.

Points of Interest: Rajoub and al-Masri criticized Mecca agreement as containing the “seeds of explosion” and not meeting the joint interests of the concerned parties. Abid Rabbu suggested the possibility of adopting a Somalia-style “micro-state system” due to an unacceptable “proportional division of security dominion.” Ashrawi bemoaned the paralysis of the legislative system.

23 May: “Senior U.S. officials in Washington promise ongoing military support for secular Palestinian President Abbas as part of an \$84 million aid package largely aimed at improving the fighting ability of an elite corps of loyalists from his Fateh party” --- a re-vamped Presidential Guard.¹⁷² LTG Keith Dayton testifies before Congress: “In summary, I am committed personally and professionally to putting the \$59 million authorized to me by the Congress to the uses you intended with the Presidential Guard, the Karni Crossing, and the Office of National Security under President Abbas.”¹⁷³ Another report on Dayton’s testimony reports his belief that Hamas’ influence in Gaza is waning.¹⁷⁴

In the West Bank, Israeli troops arrest 30-plus top Hamas officials (including Education Minister Nasser Shaer) in a renewed offensive against the group after a spike in rocket fire on southern Israel.¹⁷⁵

27 May: Rashid Abu Shabak resigns and moves with his family to the West Bank after Hamas militiamen storm his villa and execute six of his bodyguards. A source for the Jerusalem Post (a PA official in Ramallah) claims that Hamas has proposed to Abbas that the President appoint former security commander Jibril Rajoub to Abu Shabak’s position.¹⁷⁶ Another key Dahlan ally, Samir Masharawi, has also disappeared from the Gaza Strip and is believed to be hiding in Ramallah.¹⁷⁷ Hamas says it will not halt rocket fire against Israel, as proposed by Abbas, after Israeli officials vow to press ahead with its attacks on Gaza.¹⁷⁸ A Fateh delegation, including Rawthi Fatouh, Deputy Prime Minister Azzam al-Ahmed, Samir Mashharawi and Abu Maher al-Hils, travel to Cairo. Delegation member Abdel Hakim Awad said that the delegation planned to meet with

¹⁷² *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 May 2007.

¹⁷³ “Update on the Israeli-Palestinian Situation and Palestinian Assistance Programs House Foreign Affairs Middle East and South Asia Sub-Committee.” Available at <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/day052307.htm>.

¹⁷⁴ “U.S. General Says Hamas Influence Waning in Gaza.” USINFO, 24 May 2007. Available at <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=May&x=20070524114446NDyblehS0.419491>.

¹⁷⁵ *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 May 2007.

¹⁷⁶ “Fateh security chief quits.” *Jerusalem Post*, 27 May 2007.

¹⁷⁷ *Jerusalem Post*, 27 May 2007.

¹⁷⁸ Chronology, *Reuters AlertNet*.

Egyptian Intelligence Chief General Omar Suleiman.¹⁷⁹

28 May: The Palestinian newspaper *Al-Ayyam* reports that Colonel Majdi al-Ghul (director of operations of the Presidential sector in Force 17 has denied that Force 17 has carried out killings on the basis of the identify of the victims or because they are bearded, as is being rumored.

Al-Ghul: “The Hamas movement was the one to initiate the incidents and fabricated many problems. We were in a position of self-defense and we did not move in any direction ... we left many positions to safeguard Palestinian blood and not because we are cowards for we have the necessary power to settle matters.” He said that Abbas’ orders have always emphasized the importance of avoiding the spilling of Palestinian blood. He denied the receipt of weapons from the U.S. as shameful accusations.¹⁸⁰

1 June: “The number of Qassams fired this week declined by about two-thirds (from a peak of more than 30 a day to an average of 10), the [Israeli] army is not attributing this to its activity, most certainly not in public. It's possible that the decrease can be explained in part by Hamas' desire to retain ammunition for the future.”

“A checkpoint manned by members of [the Presidential Guard] was checking cars on a street in Gaza City. Passengers in one of the cars, Hamas activists, declined to be checked and opened fire. The incident was the signal for dozens of militants from both organizations to launch the local ‘real estate competition’: which side would seize control of more roofs on Gaza high-rises. The higher the building, the better it is for observation, control and sniping. That evening, activists of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades moved quickly to take positions atop the buildings close to the Saraya, the main headquarters of the security forces of Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas.”¹⁸¹ (*Haaretz* 6/1)

“A new Dahlan force trained in Egypt was infiltrated into the Strip over the past two weeks, joined with Al-Aqsa Brigades militia from ... Khan Younis, and began to take control of the streets in the northern Strip. Hamas interpreted this as the beginning of the coup, and began counter-moves to consolidate their control in Gaza ... The clashes took on their own momentum.” (Paul Hilder email, 15 June 2007.)

6 June: 40th anniversary of the start of 1967 war. Mahmoud Abbas, in television appearance, says that Palestinians are on the brink of civil war and that their internal battles are as dangerous to their welfare as the Israeli occupation. In

¹⁷⁹ *Jerusalem Post*, 27 May 2007.

¹⁸⁰ “Palestinian commander denies receiving US arms, discusses infighting.” Translation by BBC News, 20 May 2007.

¹⁸¹ “The northern bother.” *Haaretz*, 1 June 2007.

Gaza, several fighters are reported injured in what news reports describe as a gun battle lasting up to three hours near the sensitive Karni commercial crossing on the Gaza-Israel border.¹⁸²

7 June: The two-week ceasefire is broken:

* Shootout at Rafah house of Fateh official. Hamas kills Fuad Wahbi, 27, brother of a Fateh official, also a member of Fateh party.¹⁸³ Medics said that at least 17 people were wounded in gun battles since the morning, and that 2 were in serious condition.¹⁸⁴

Before this firefight, Hamas charged Fateh with kidnapping three of its men earlier in the week and torturing one of them, a bodyguard for Prime Minister Ismail Haniya of Hamas. Each faction blames each other for the shootout. Roadblocks divide two Rafah neighborhoods into enclaves, while Hamas and Fateh fighters take up positions on rooftops in areas under their control.¹⁸⁵

* Beit Hanoun hospital doctor Fayez al-Barrawi, 29, “a known Hamas supporter,” is blindfolded, handcuffed, interrogated, and shot six times in the legs before being tossed on the street. Al-Barrawi was reportedly attending and videotaping a Presidential Guard graduation ceremony (one of his brothers was graduating). He was approached by security guards and accused of spying for Hamas. Hamas has accused Fateh militants. This is the first time a doctor has been seized.¹⁸⁶

* Palestian security officials request military equipment including dozens of armored cars, hundreds of armor-piercing RPG rockets, thousands of hand grenades and millions of rounds of ammunition for small caliber weapons. In addition, Fateh is organizing yet another paramilitary force in the Gaza Strip, sources say.¹⁸⁷ [Note: Some of these requests were made through Israeli officials, and some through LTG Keith Dayton.¹⁸⁸ Israeli officials said they were discussing the issue with LTG Dayton.¹⁸⁹ Both Israeli and Palestinian security officials confirm that a request to import military equipment had been submitted “in recent days,” as the Hamas-Fateh truce appeared to be dissolving. Senior Fateh officials said the armored cars are necessary to protect them and their personnel, and to disperse hostile Hamas demonstrations.

Haaretz reports the requested vehicles to be located in Egypt. [Note: n 2006,

¹⁸² Kershner. *New York Times*, 6 June 2007.

¹⁸³ BBC News, 7 June 2007; *Ma'an*, 7 June 2007.

¹⁸⁴ *International Herald Tribune*, 7 June 2007.

¹⁸⁵ *International Herald Tribune*, 7 June 2007.

¹⁸⁶ AP 9 June 2007; “Nowhere Safe for Gaza Residents.” *AP*, 11 June 2007.

¹⁸⁷ *Haaretz*, 7 June 2007.

¹⁸⁸ *Haaretz*, 7 June 2007.

¹⁸⁹ *International Herald Tribune*, 7 June 2007.

Israel allowed Fateh to bring weapons into Gaza on a number of occasions. Those shipments, which included 2,500 rifles and millions of rounds of ammunition, came from Jordan and Egypt, and were transferred to the Gaza Strip in coordination with Israel.¹⁹⁰

Friday, 8 June: Ismail Haniyeh calls for recognition of ESF within PA forces, while Fateh spokesman Maher Miqdad said keeping the Hamas militia intact is a deal breaker.¹⁹¹

* The day's clashes began after gunmen fired at a group of Hamas militants deployed east of Gaza City, witnesses say. The Hamas militants later attacked a house where they suspected Fateh gunmen were gathered.¹⁹²

* One member of Abbas' Presidential Guard is abducted overnight in Gaza, a Fateh security source said. Hamas says one of its supporters was shot by a Fateh security officer.¹⁹³

Saturday, 9 June: Five Palestinian militants from Gaza infiltrate Israel at Kissufim crossing. The attack on Israel was carried out jointly by Islamic Jihad and a unit of al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. One Palestinian gunman was killed.¹⁹⁴

10 am: An unidentified men detonated an explosive in front of the shop of 'Umar Khamis, in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. No casualties reported.

2 pm: Unidentified gunmen shoot repeatedly at citizen Sufian Mohammad, 35, in Beit Lahia. He is taken to Kamal Adwan hospital with serious injuries.

4:30 pm: Six Palestinian citizens, including policeman Ziyad Radi, 35, were injured in an armed confrontation in the northern Gaza Strip. ESF spokesperson Islam Shahwan reports that the force successfully raided the residence of drug dealers upon the request of the Palestinian police.

5:30 pm: Spokesperson Islam Shahwan says the ESF will do its best to support the mplementation of the Palestinian security plan, explaining that the ESF has received a formal invitation to take part in a joint force, which is to impose security and order in the Palestinian territories. ESF officials meet with Ismail Haniyeh, and Major General Sa'id Fannouna, who is in charge of implementing the security plan, to discuss the special arrangements for the plan.

¹⁹⁰ *Haaretz*, 7 June 2007.

¹⁹¹ *Haaretz*, 9 June 2007.

¹⁹² *Haaretz*, 9 June 2007.

¹⁹³ *Haaretz*, 9 June 2007.

¹⁹⁴ *Reuters*, 9 June 2007.

Evening: Two Palestinians are killed, 40 injured in renewed factional violence in the Tal as-Sultan area, west of Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip. Palestinian medical sources state that a field leader of the Hamas-affiliated Al Qassam Brigades, Ahmad Fuad, and a member of the PA national security, Mahmoud An-Nahhal, were killed and their bodies transported to Abu Yousef An Najjar Hospital. The confrontations erupted when the two factions attempted to implement an agreement to remove mounds of earth recently erected in the streets.¹⁹⁵

Overlapping/less specific description from Reuters/AP, 9 June 2007: Factional infighting increases; fiercest gun battles in weeks. Hamas accuses Fateh of firing from a house used as a Fateh base. Hamas reports local field commander Ahmed Abu Harb killed. Reports state that 30 (Reuters) to 59 (AP) casualties from back and forth skirmishes through the night.

Sunday 10 June: Presidential Guard Mohammed Sweirki, 25, is thrown off high-rise rooftop. The reported incident is well-documented and becomes a cause celebre for Fateh officials, who cite it as cause for Fateh militancy in the days ahead.

2. Fateh gunmen attack Imam (and Hamas supporter) Mohammed al-Rifati in his home, severely wounding him, kidnapping him. (*Observer* 6/17). Later his body was brought to a hospital.

3. Just before midnight, Hamas activist Hossam Abu Kainas is killed by being thrown from the 12th floor of a building in Gaza. In that same building four other Hamas men were shot and wounded. (*Observer* 6/17; (published in Jerusalem Post 6/12 and “Hamas fighters seize Fateh security headquarters” AP 6/12)

4. A fourth Palestinian, Mohammed Al Barba from the Al Qassam Brigades, dies of wounds sustained on 9 June at Tal as Sultan.¹⁹⁶

(Non-violent) Political Activity:

Four senior Fateh officials (from PFLP) meet with Egyptian mediators. Hamas did not attend, blaming the dangerous travel conditions.¹⁹⁷ After a further meeting with Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa, Fateh delegation head Mahir al-Tahir said the key to Palestinian unity is “to restore the esteem of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and rebuild it on democratic principles and also hold a Palestinian national council meeting to rectify the internal situation.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ *Ma'an News Agency*, 9 June 2007.

¹⁹⁶ *Ma'an News Agency*, 11 June 2007.

¹⁹⁷ *Observer*, 17 June 2007.

¹⁹⁸ “Palestinian PFLP official meets Arab League head in Cairo.” BBC News, 10 June 2007.

Monday 11 June: Killing spreads rapidly.

11:00 AM Call for ceasefire by PM Haniyeh in order for Gazan students to be able to attend their school examinations [seventh Hamas-Fateh truce in just over one month].¹⁹⁹

1. In Beit Lehia, Hamas gunmen lay siege to the house of Jamal Abu Al Jediyan, a top aid to Mohammad Dahlan, a senior Al-Aqsa militant, a senior Fateh official in northern Gaza. Al Jediyan was dragged outside and ‘executed’ – medics reported he was hit with 45 bullets. Al-Jediyan’s brother is also killed.²⁰⁰ BBC news reports Al-Jediyan killed by 41 shots in his hospital bed.²⁰¹ Hamas operative Muhammad Muhjez is killed outside home of Al Jediyan.

2. Hamas kills Yasir Ghassub Bakr of (Fateh) General Intelligence.²⁰² An 18-year-old named Saddam Muhammad and one unidentified man were also brought to Shifa hospital and reported dead.²⁰³

3. Two are killed in Fateh/Hamas clashes at Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. *The Guardian* (6/12) reports the hospital came under attack by the Fateh-affiliated Bakr clan. *Jerusalem Post* reports that one victim was identified as Mazen Ajour, a commander of al-Qassam Brigades.²⁰⁴ *Ma’an News* reports that Al-Qassam Brigades have accused Fateh militants of killing Ajour in Shati' refugee camp in Gaza City.²⁰⁵

4. ESF and Fateh-affiliated al-Masri clan clash at Beit Hanoun Hospital. Eid Mahmoud al-Masri, his son Ibrahim, and his nephew Faraj are killed. (Miftah.org; Observer 6/17). The fourth victim of this clash was Basil Daoud Al-Qafarna, 25, who worked in the Palestinian interior ministry's Executive Force.²⁰⁶

5. Armed clash at Abu Yussef Najjar hospital in Rafah.²⁰⁷

6. Arsonists set the house of Hamas member Mahmoud Ashour on fire.²⁰⁸

¹⁹⁹ BBC Monitoring Middle East, 11 June 2007 (Ma’an); BBC, 12 June 2007.

²⁰⁰ “17 killed in factional fighting in Gaza.” AP, 12 June 2007.

²⁰¹ “President warns of Hamas coup.” BBC, 12 June 2007.

²⁰² Miftah.org; *Jerusalem Post*, 12 June 2007; BBC Monitoring Middle East, 11 June 2007 (Ma’an).

²⁰³ BBC Monitoring, 11 June 2007 (Ma’an).

²⁰⁴ Miftah.org; *Jerusalem Post*, 12 June 2007.

²⁰⁵ BBC Monitoring, 11 June 2007 (Ma’an).

²⁰⁶ BBC Monitoring, 11 June 2007 (Ma’an).

²⁰⁷ “The Gaza Strip Situation Report.” Ministry of Health, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 13 June 2007. Available at http://www.nera.org/OCHA.OPT_report.html.

²⁰⁸ BBC Monitoring, 11 June 2007 (Ma’an).

(Evening – 6pm): Fateh Spokesman Tawfiq Abu-Khusa announces that Fateh is prepared to announce a one-sided cease-fire and to work with all factions to consolidate this position.

8. Overnight in Gaza City, fighting ensues in the al-Shati refugee camp and the al-Maqqousi housing project.²⁰⁹

Day toll: 12 killed.²¹⁰

12 June: Hamas gains upper hand in Gaza, Fateh retaliates in West Bank.

Threats:

* [Late 11 June] Fateh spokesperson Abu 'Uday told *Ma'an* exclusively via telephone, "Our warning to Hamas starts before Monday midnight and ends Tuesday at 11:00 pm."

* In response, the Interior Ministry's Executive Force declares a state of emergency: "We will pursue anybody who attacks the force or incites against the force." Hamas issued a 2:00pm (1100 GMT) deadline for fighters to evacuate Fateh posts. Hamas begins attacking these posts after the deadline expires.²¹¹

* In response to an Hamas ultimatum, the Fateh movement threatens to withdraw from the Hamas-led unity government at approx. 4pm (according to *Ma'an*). "The central committee will hold an emergency meeting to take a definitive decision regarding it remaining in government and the legislative council (parliament)," said Fateh spokesman Ahmed Abdelrahman.²¹²

Early morning:

* Rocket-propelled grenade fired at home of PM Haniyeh;

* Four mortar shells fired at Abbas' Presidential Compound in Gaza City.

* 'Umar Nabhan Rantisi, 20, and nephew of the well-known late Hamas leader, Abdul Aziz Rantisi (killed by Israeli airstrike in 2003), is found dead. Umar was kidnapped on 11 June.

Noon: (*Ma'an*) Palestinian medical sources named the following dead due to clashes over the past 24 hours:

²⁰⁹ Miftah.org.

²¹⁰ *Ma'an*, 11 June 2007; *Telegraph*, 15 June 2007.

²¹¹ BBC Monitoring Middle East. 12 June 2007 (*Ma'an*).

²¹² *People's Daily Online*. 13 June 2007.

Yasser Bakir, 27; Saddam Bakir, 18; Basil Kafarna, 25; 'Eid Al-Masri, 56, and his sons Faraj Al-Masri, 23, and Ibrahim 'Eid Al-Masri, 21; Muhammad Mihjiz, 20; Muhammad Dahdouh, 21; Mazen 'Ajouz, 30; Jamal Abu Al-Jidyan, 45, and his brother Majid Abu Al-Jidyan, 33; Ms. Rayah Mihsin, 75; Ms. Sara Mihsin, 15; Ms. Dalal Mihsin, 19; Jamal Rabi', 13; 'Umar Rantisi, 20; and Mousa Abu Zeinah, 40.

Afternoon: Fighting intensifies.

* Hamas begins siege on National Security Forces in the Abasan al-Kabirah area in eastern Khan Younis.²¹³ Eventually Hamas declares the area a “closed military zone.”²¹⁴

* Hamas attacks NSF (Civil Administration) HQ in Beit Lehia/Jabaliya. 3 wounded.²¹⁵ “Fateh commanders complained they were not given clear orders by Abbas to fight back and that they had no central command. Fateh's strongman in Gaza, Mohammed Dahlan, has spent the last few weeks in Cairo because of a knee injury. Other leading Fateh officials left Gaza for the West Bank after previous rounds of bloodshed: “There's a difference between leading on the ground and leading by mobile phone,” police Col. Nasser Khaldi said of Dahlan's absence. “Hamas is just taking over our positions. There are no orders.”²¹⁶

* Over 200 gunmen raid the northern Gaza home of Fateh-bloc PLC member Nabil Sha'ath, according to Sha'ath's escort, Hani Rawwagh.²¹⁷

* Al-Qassam Brigades take five strategic points in Khan Younis. Ninety Fateh members surrender.²¹⁸

* By mid-afternoon, Hamas controls most of Northern Gaza as well as Central Gaza, including Maghati, Brej, and Nuseirat refugee camps.²¹⁹

* Hamas besieges Fateh spokesman Maher Miqdad in Gaza City.²²⁰

* Fateh-allied radio stations Voice of Palestine is attacked, Al Hurriya, and Al Shabab are closed in fear of attack. VOA continues operation from Ramallah.²²¹

²¹³ BBC Monitoring Middle East, 12 June 2007 (*Wafa* website).

²¹⁴ Miftah.org

²¹⁵ BBC Monitoring Middle East, 12 June 2007 (*Wafa* website).

²¹⁶ “Hamas fighters seize Fateh security headquarters.” *AP*, 12 June 2007.

²¹⁷ Ma'an, 12 June 2007.

²¹⁸ Miftah.org.

²¹⁹ Miftah.org; *Observer*, 17 June 2007; OCHA Report, 13 June 2007.

²²⁰ Miftah.org.

²²¹ *Dow Jones International News*, 14 June 2007.

* Deputy Minister of Transport Saidi Tamimi (Hamas) is taken from his Ramallah office by gunmen believed to be affiliated to Fateh.²²² In two other Ramallah incidents, four Hamas activists are abducted by gunmen.²²³

* Abbas calls for forces to value “national interests over personal ones” while Haniyeh urges an “end to fighting.”²²⁴

* Fateh central committee holds meeting in Ramallah deciding to suspend the National Unity Government.²²⁵

Wednesday 13 June: Hamas consolidates its position.

1. Hamas overpowers resistance at Maher Miqdad’s house in Gaza City.²²⁶

* Hamas takes over the Awdah building (a tall apartment complex in Gaza where many Fateh leaders lived). At least eight Fateh men are killed defending the complex. Fateh leader Maher Miqdad and his family flee.²²⁷

2. Hamas defeats the Fateh-controlled National Security Forces in northern Gaza.²²⁸

* Hamas burns the main police station and surrounds the main national security headquarters building: “Al Saraya.”²²⁹ “The headquarters of the Fateh-allied security forces in northern Gaza, a key prize for Hamas, was taken by the Islamic militants after several hours of battle. Some 200 Hamas fighters had fired mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns at the compound, where some 500 Fateh loyalists were holed up and returned fire. Thirty-five jeeploads of Fateh fighters were sent as reinforcements. After nightfall, Hamas seized control, said a Hamas commander, Wael al-Shakra.”²³⁰

3. Hamas controls Gaza’s main north-south road, destroying a Fateh outpost.²³¹

4. The bomb underneath the Preventive Security Service HQ in Khan Younis is detonated. Specifics: 220-metre tunnel dug beneath the building. The bomb was

²²² BBC, 12 June 2007; OHCA Report, 13 June 2007.

²²³ OHCA Report, 13 June 2007.

²²⁴ Miftah.org.

²²⁵ BBC, 12 June 2007.

²²⁶ Miftah.org.

²²⁷ “ Hamas Seizes Broad Control in Gaza Strip .” *New York Times*, 14 June 2007.

²²⁸ Miftah.org.

²²⁹ *New York Times*, 14 June 2007.

²³⁰ “ Hamas fighters seize Fateh security headquarters .” *AP*, 12 June 2007.

²³¹ Miftah.org; *Telegraph* 15 June 2007.

reportedly 1 ton. Five PSS security personnel are killed.²³²

* “ Hamas militants surrounded a security headquarters and warned everyone inside to leave or they would blow it up, witnesses said. The building was then destroyed by a bomb planted in a tunnel underneath it, said Ali Qaisi, a presidential guard spokesman. An Associated Press reporter saw defeated Fateh fighters streaming out of the building after turning over their weapons to Hamas militants.”²³³

* Khalil Fagrawi, 37, was at the Khan Younis preventive security headquarters when Hamas rigged it with explosives and blew up the premises. Shot and wounded seriously in the head, he was buried under the rubble and has been left bedridden ever since.²³⁴

* Fateh militants surrender, approx 40 flee Rafah crossing to Egypt.²³⁵

* Charles Levinson: “ Even [this] climactic battle was little more than a symbolic stand by only around 30 remaining soldiers, [Fateh] fighters said. Everyone else had long since jumped ship. They put on civilian clothes, dropped their weapons and scampered home. Some soldiers were dragged away from the trenches by frantic mothers who had heard Hamas’ threats to kill any fighters who didn’t surrender.”²³⁶

Officials’ Actions:

* Abbas speaks by telephone to Khaled Meshaal. They fail to agree to a ceasefire.²³⁷

* Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhrik offers a conditional cease-fire under which the interior minister (currently PM Haniyeh) would command all of the Palestinian security services: “[Egyptian mediators] received the proposal and promised to present it to Abbas. The ball is now in [his] court. Hamas does not set impossible conditions, and if there are serious intentions to resolve the crisis, we will be ready to reciprocate.”²³⁸ Abu Zuhrik further states: “There is no political goal behind this but to defend our movement and force these security groups to behave. Hamas did not initiate these attacks, but it was pushed to do so to end

²³² *Observer*, 17 June 2007; *Telegraph*, 15 June 2007.

²³³ *AP*, 14 June 2007.

²³⁴ “Gaza defeat breeds hatred and revenge.” *AFP*, 22 June 2007.

²³⁵ *Telegraph*, 15 June 2007. *Reuters*, 13 June 2007.

²³⁶ Levinson, Charles. Post from 19 June 2007 at <http://www.conflictblotter.com/>.

²³⁷ “ Hamas takes upper hand in Gaza struggle.” *The Guardian*, 13 June 2007.

²³⁸ “At least 30 killed as Palestinian infighting rages out of control...” *Daily Star* Beirut, 14 June 2007.

crimes by the factions inside Fateh who favor a coup.”²³⁹

* Israeli analyst of Palestinian affairs Danny Rubinstein: “The primary reason for the break-up is the fact that Fateh has refused to fully share the Palestinian Authority’s mechanism of power with its rival Hamas.”²⁴⁰

* Western diplomats say some 18,000 police, who technically fall under the jurisdiction of the Hamas-led Interior Ministry but are dominated by Fateh members, appear to be sitting out the fighting.²⁴¹

Thursday 14 June: Hamas claims “liberation” of Gaza.

1. Hamas completes occupation of PSS HQ in Gaza City: the main symbol of Dahlan’s authority in Gaza Strip.

* “The bodies of seven Hamas members were found in the basement of the Preventive Security Service headquarters.”²⁴²

* Hamas renames the neighborhood “Tel al-Islam” (it was previously “Tel al-Hawa.”). Islam.”

* TV broadcast from inside the compound showcase a display of weapons seized from inside the building, as well as jeeps, mortar shells and bulletproof vests.²⁴³

* Hamas leaders report that they have obtained Fateh intelligence stashes from the Preventive Security Force HQ, the Palestinian Authority intelligence headquarters (nicknamed ‘Il Safina’ or ‘the ship’), and from a nearby satellite-intelligence office (nicknamed ‘Il Mashtal’ or ‘the nursery’). “All three sites were long under the sway of...Mohammad Dahlan, who first became an important CIA ally in Gaza in 1996. At the time, then-CIA director George Tenet began working openly with Mr. Dahlan and other Palestinian officials to build up security services aimed at combating the rise of Hamas and like-minded extremist groups that rejected the Oslo peace accords.”²⁴⁴

2. Hamas executes Fateh member Samih al-Madhoun (aka “the hammer”) in Nuseirat.²⁴⁵

²³⁹ “Hamas Seizes Broad Control in Gaza Strip.” *New York Times*, 14 June 2007.

²⁴⁰ *New York Times*, 14 June 2007.

²⁴¹ *Reuters*, 13 June 2007.

²⁴² *AP* (Ramallah), 16 June 2007.

²⁴³ “Hamas: We’ll execute Fateh leaders.” *Ynet*, 14 June 2007.

²⁴⁴ Simpson, Cam and Neil King, Jr. “Hamas Victory in Gaza brings arms, secrets.” *The Wall Street Journal*, 30 July 2007.

²⁴⁵ Miftah.org.

3. Fateh kills Hamas member Anis al-Sullus in Nablus.²⁴⁶ Fighting in Nablus as Hamas members are rounded up by Fateh forces.²⁴⁷
4. Fateh members ransack the offices of Hamas politicians in Nablus, four of whom surrender.²⁴⁸
5. Fateh reportedly blows up their positions in Gaza City and retreats to avoid the humiliation of surrender.²⁴⁹
6. Late afternoon: Hamas seizes control of the Rafah Crossing.²⁵⁰ The border crossing houses the local headquarters of national security, Palestinian intelligence, police and preventive security.²⁵¹
7. The leader of Fateh's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade in Gaza is reportedly executed.²⁵²
8. Fateh's "last stand" and surrender at Gaza City seafront presidential compound. This last stand is comprised of members of the Presidential Guard, on the retreat.

* "As they gave up compound after compound to advancing Hamas forces, weary Fateh fighters loyal to PA President Abbas fall back toward the seaside presidential compound in Gaza to make their last stand. They set up .50-caliber machine guns and unloaded crates of ammunition, certain that it would be their last stand: "This is all there is for us," said a special forces officer who called himself Abu Hassan as he oversaw the stacking of ammunition. "We will not surrender. They will execute us." But there was no last stand. "Instead, Fateh leaders fled the Gaza Strip by boat and on foot, leaving lower-level fighters feeling betrayed." Mohammad Dahlan "nowhere to be found [in Gaza] during the final showdown."²⁵³

Numbers:²⁵⁴

100-plus Palestinians have been killed in five days of fighting. Est. 600 Gazans, including 100 Fateh security men, have attempted escape into Israel by the Erez

²⁴⁶ Miftah.org.

²⁴⁷ *Telegraph*, 15 June 2007.

²⁴⁸ Miftah.org.

²⁴⁹ Miftah.org.

²⁵⁰ BBC, 16 June 2007.

²⁵¹ "Hamas tightens grip on Gaza." *Al Jazeera*, 14 June 2007.

²⁵² *Telegraph*, 15 June 2007.

²⁵³ Nissenbaum, Dion. "Fateh's last stand: collapse or conspiracy?" *McClatchy Newspapers*, 20 June 2007. Available at <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/world/story/17136.html>.

²⁵⁴ BBC, 15 June 2007; Miftah.org).

crossing (northern Gaza).

Approximately 2500 Palestinians in Rafah and Al Arish try to escape from the south of Gaza.

Overnight: There is a reported telephone call, from Abu Mazen to Dahlan, telling him to stay in Egypt. Even so, he said, the government would stay intact.²⁵⁵

15 June: Mahmoud Abbas declares state of emergency and dissolves the National Unity Government.²⁵⁶ Abbas and Dahlan meet with senior U.S. diplomats.²⁵⁷ Abbas appoints independent lawmaker Salam Fayyad to serve as prime minister of an emergency government.²⁵⁸

Khaled Meshal, of the Damascus-based head of Hamas' political bureau, upholds legitimacy of President Abbas: "Abbas has legitimacy," Meshal said, "There's no one who would question or doubt that, he is an elected president, and we will cooperate with him for the sake of national interest." Ahmed Abdel Rahman, an Abbas adviser, rejects Meshal's gesture. "There will be no dialogue with coup seekers, masked men and murderers," he says.²⁵⁹

Ismail Haniyeh (Hamas PM sacked by Abbas) calls for a new round of negotiations with Fateh leadership, and urges calm from his militias. Hamas releases ten senior Fateh officials captured during the height of the clashes.²⁶⁰ Usamah Hamdan reports that General Kamal Sheikh, general command for the police, asked the policemen in Gaza to stay at home, off the streets. If they did so they would continue to draw a salary, if they insisted on doing their job they would be taken to a courts marshal.²⁶¹

Hamas forces shoot and kill Captain Salama Barbakh, a Preventive Security Services officer and father of three, at a checkpoint. Hamas accused Barbakh of killing one of its men, Wasfi Shahwan, more than a year ago when security forces and Fateh loyalists first clashed with the newly empowered Islamists following the Jan. 2006 elections.²⁶²

16 June: * Mohammad Dahlan is brought to Ramallah. This was unexpected, according to Abu Mazen aid Ghraith al-Omari. Dahlan was reported to have been in Cairo (receiving treatment for a knee injury) during the height of the Gaza

²⁵⁵ Usamah Hamdan interview, 19 June 2007.

²⁵⁶ "Abbas sacks Hamas-led government." BBC, 15 June 2007.

²⁵⁷ *Observer*, 17 June 2007.

²⁵⁸ Chronology, *Reuters AlertNet*.

²⁵⁹ *Haaretz*, 15 June 2007.

²⁶⁰ "Fateh defiant on West Bank as Hamas takes Gaza." *Guardian*, 15 June 2007.

²⁶¹ Usamah Hamdan interview, 19 June 2007.

²⁶² "Gaza defeat breeds hatred and revenge." *AFP*, 22 June 2007.

conflict, and then in Taba.²⁶³

* The United States says it will lift a ban on aid to the new Palestinian emergency government.²⁶⁴

* The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades loots the Hamas governed parliament in Ramallah.²⁶⁵

17 June: A new 13-member emergency cabinet is sworn in in Ramallah. This is a unilateral move by Abbas, rebuffing Hamas' Kahled Meshal's call for a meeting as well as the Arab League foreign ministers' appeal for multilateral dialogue.²⁶⁶ Mohamad Dahlan is re-appointed to the newly formed National Security Council.²⁶⁷ Salam Fayyad is appointed Prime Minister.

Salam Fayyad "is a highly intelligent economist and former World Bank official who lived for most of his adult life in the United States. He served as the representative for the International Monetary Fund to the Palestine Authority before briefly becoming its finance minister in 2005 in a belated effort by Abbas to clean up the Fateh government's chronic corruption.

Fayyad then formed a small centrist party with scholar and human-rights activist Hanan Ashrawi to challenge both Fateh and Hamas in last year's parliamentary election, but their slate received only 2.4 percent of the vote. Though a sincere nationalist and reformer, Fayyad's close ties to the United States and international financial institutions, coupled with his poor electoral performance, raises questions regarding his legitimacy in the eyes of most Palestinians."²⁶⁸

Marwan Barghouti issues a statement backing President Abbas, but calls for major reforms within Fateh, including the sacking of senior commanders that bear responsibility for the conflict in Gaza --- presumably referring to figures such as Dahlan.²⁶⁹

18 June: Through a phone call from Secretary Rice to newly appointed PM Fayyad, the United States lifts its aid embargo on the Palestinian government, saying it will contribute 40 million dollars in immediate humanitarian aid to assist Palestinians in the West Bank and in Gaza. The money is to be distributed

²⁶³ *The Age*, 23 June 2007; Usamah Hamdan interview, 19 June 2007.

²⁶⁴ Chronology, *Reuters AlertNet*.

²⁶⁵ Miftah.org.

²⁶⁶ Chronology, Reuters AlertNet; "Abbas decisions deepen Palestinian political crisis." *Irish Times*, 18 June 2007.

²⁶⁷ *The Guardian*, 19 June 2007.

²⁶⁸ Zunes, Stephen. *Asia Times Online*, 30 June 2007.

²⁶⁹ "Middle East Crisis: Washington rallies behind Abbas with end to Palestinian boycott." *The Guardian*, 19 June 2007.

through UNRWA. The EU also promises to lift its boycott, pledging its support to the new emergency government of Abbas.²⁷⁰

19 June: Ehud Olmert meets U.S. President George W. Bush in Washington and the two pledge to bolster Abbas.

20 June: * Israel and the new Palestinian government open formal contacts.

* Abbas, in a speech to the PLO executive committee, calls for all West Bank militias to disarm.

“He has already begun taking strong steps against Hamas and its Ezzedine al Qassam militia in the West Bank, but he is almost certain to face insurmountable obstacles when he tries to move against the equally troublesome Fateh-linked militias such as the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and its offshoots.”²⁷¹

22 June: Abbas dismisses Rashid Abu Shabak, who served as head of Preventative Security Services since his appointment by Abbas on April 28, 2005.²⁷² Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli opposition leader, traveled this week to Washington and New York. He met with US Vice President Dick Cheney on 21 June, urging the addition of Jordanian troops to help secure the West Bank from the Hamas threat. He argues that it is important to support the government of Abbas, but through regional (ie. Arab) participation. Netanyahu also met with Sen. Hillary Clinton and former senator Fred Thompson.²⁷³

23 June (Sat.): Anti-Hamas violence in West Bank is worse in the north, despite stronger Hamas presence and influence in Hebron (the south). Charles Levinson reports that he was “repeatedly told that the south has remained calm while Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarem, etc have burned, because Hebron’s family/clan system is much stronger than the north’s, and is thus able to maintain order far more effectively.”

Faiz al Tirawi, an Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades leader in Nablus, and the cousin of Palestinian intel chief Tawfiq al Tirawi, all but admits to burning down an Islamic women’s center (Markaz al Jathoor, or the Roots Center) in Nablus. He also boasts that Al-Aqsa, previously troubled by internal divisions, is renewed in their determination post-Gaza.²⁷⁴

Missing Links blog²⁷⁵ reports: “Egyptian paper: Documents show Dahlan was

²⁷⁰ *The Guardian*, 19 June 2007.

²⁷¹ Post on Charles Levinson’s blog “Conflict Blotter”, 25 June 2007.

²⁷² BBC, 22 June 2007.

²⁷³ “Netanyahu wants Jordanian troops deployed in West Bank.” *Jerusalem Post*, 22 June 2007.

²⁷⁴ Post on Levinson blog “Conflict Blotter”, 23 June 2007.

²⁷⁵ Missing Links blog available at: http://arablinks.blogspot.com/2007_06_01_archive.html.

working with Al Qaeda with the idea of blaming trouble on Hamas.” All the reported intelligence casts Dahlan as an individual working to undermine Egypt’s security. According to a Lebanese paper, Egyptian Intel Secretary Omar Suleiman called PM Haniya later the same day to ask him to ease up as all the revelations could embarrass Egypt. The gist is that there may be Egyptian support for a Palestinian Unity Gov, despite Mubarak’s adherence to the American party line.

24 June: * Israeli cabinet meeting in preparation for summit: “Director of Military Intelligence Maj. Gen. Amos Yadlin and GSS Director Yuval Diskin said Fateh could also lose control of the West Bank to Hamas. ‘Contrary to what you may think, Fateh is not soundly based in Judea and Samaria at all. The Fateh agencies are fragmented and riven with dissent and there is no hierarchy between them,’ Diskin said at the cabinet meeting.”²⁷⁶

* The rival clans Deraui and Dagmouh clash in Gaza in the Dagmouh neighborhood of Sabra, reported to be the location of hostage Alan Johnston. The Derauis were attacking to avenge the death of two sons killed by Dagmouh men, but it is believed that they were also acting in concert with the wishes of Hamas, who intend to increase the pressure on the kidnappers.²⁷⁷

* Later that evening the Dagmouh clan released a video (the second since Johnston’s capture) showing the hostage with explosives strapped to his body; perhaps a signal of increased desperation and/or renewed determination.²⁷⁸

25 June (Monday): Summit in Sharm el-Sheik. Prime Minister Olmert pledges to release 250 Fateh prisoners to support and reinforce the newly formed Palestinian government. Mahmoud Abbas requests the release of Marwan Barghouti.²⁷⁹

26 June (Tuesday): A Quartet meeting in Jerusalem picks Tony Blair as new envoy.

* Hamas spokesperson Fawzy Barhoom links Mohammad Dahlan to Dagmouh clan and the kidnapping of Alan Johnson. “Barhoom said Dahlan had promised the Dagmouh clan millions of dollars and weapons if they continue to hold the reporter, in order to deny Hamas the public-relations coup of securing his release. “It may take more time,” he said, “because of this criminal group.”²⁸⁰

²⁷⁶ *Maariv*, 25 June 2007 cited by “Conflict Blotter” post on 26 June 2007.

²⁷⁷ Miftah.org, 26 June 2007.

²⁷⁸ Video available at

http://news.bbc.co.uk/player/nol/newsid_6710000/newsid_6710900/6710955.stm?bw=bb&mp=w m.

²⁷⁹ “Israel pledges to ease life in W. Bank, summit triggers string of diplomatic meetings.” *AP*, 26 June 2007.

²⁸⁰ “Isolated Hamas slams Mideast summit.” *Toronto Star*, 26 June 2007.

* Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak eases rhetoric regarding Hamas-Fateh conflict, stressing the importance of reconciliation (on Egyptian state-TV appearance).²⁸¹ The statement demonstrates an Egyptian inclination to support another attempt at a national unity government for Palestine.

(Note: Egyptian weekly *Al-Osboa* (6/30/2007) reports that Hamas had passed along to Egyptian security officials intelligence showing that leaders of the Preventive Security and Fateh were involved in schemes against Egypt. According to this report, the leader had given Israel information about Egyptian security and political dynamics, gained in a meeting with Egyptian officials in Cairo. The report claims that Hamas revealed this information to Egyptian security, who passed it to the Egyptian administration, and this could explain Egypt's shift in policy towards supporting Hamas in a Palestinian National Unity government.²⁸²

* Late: Abbas formalizes earlier policy of outlawing armed groups outside of the PA security forces. This includes the Hamas militia, also the Fateh-associated Al Aqsa Maryrs' Brigades.

27 June: * Night: Israeli offensives kill at least ten Palestinians in Gaza in the deadliest violence since the Hamas takeover.²⁸³

* Haim Malka, deputy director of the Middle East Program at CSIS in Washington suggests that Barghouti may be the best person to bridge the gap between Fateh and Hamas.²⁸⁴

28 June: *Maariv* reports that Prime Minister Olmert is considering asking for the release of Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard (held in the U.S.) in exchange for the release of Palestinian (Fateh) leader Marwan Barghouti. This is not the first time Barghouti's release has been discussed, or rumoured. Pollard is considered a bargaining chip for the release of Palestinian prisoners (Dennis Ross to Clinton in book about Wye negotiations).²⁸⁵ The Australian Broadcasting Corporation also reports that several Israeli ministers and the Egyptian president Mubarak have backed the idea of Barghouti's release.²⁸⁶

Hani al Hassan appears on Al Jazeera interview stating that the war in Gaza was

²⁸¹ "Competing Visions for Palestinians." *Christian Science Monitor*, 27 June 2007.

²⁸² . translation of Al Osboa: "More on the Intelligence-Bonanza." Missing Links blog, 5 July 2007.

²⁸³ "Abbas pushes for release of Fateh leader." Australian Broadcasting Corporation Transcripts, 28 June 2007.

²⁸⁴ "Backing Abbas in West Bank, US Isolates Hamas." VOA Press Release, 27 June 2007.

²⁸⁵ "Report: Israel to Release Terrorist if US Frees Pollard." Israel Faxx, *World Net Daily*, 28 June 2007.

²⁸⁶ Australian Broadcasting Corporation Transcripts, 28 June 2007.

between Hamas and select Fateh officials that were working with America and Israel.²⁸⁷

1 July: Israel transfers 118 million dollars as first installment of customs duties denied to Hamas-led Palestinian governments. Information minister Riyad al-Malki stresses that employees working for Hamas would not be recipients of this money. Saeb Erakat calculated this figure to be less than 20 percent of the taxes Israel owes Palestine. The amount is also just under the figure estimated to be the Palestinian government monthly salary budget. Employees of the Hamas-led government have received only partial salaries since March of 2006.²⁸⁸

“Alhaj Ali and Ahmed Doleh, an assistant to the interior minister in the Hamas-led government dismissed by Abbas, were arrested by Abbas's men in Nablus on Monday. Alhaj Ali was freed two hours later but Doleh remains in custody.”²⁸⁹

2 July: Hamas arrests spokesman of Army of Islam, Abu Khatab al-Maqdisi. Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri reports that the arrest was made while Al-Maqdisi trying to fire on members of a Hamas-allied security force. Abu Zuhri maintains this arrest is unrelated to the kidnapping of Alan Johnston, believed to be held by al-Maqdisi's organization. The Army of Islam says that al-Maqdisi was arrested while returning from morning prayers. Fateh spokesmen threaten to reveal damaging documents about Hamas if al-Maqdisi is not released.²⁹⁰

3 July: Hamas steps up pressure around compound holding Alan Johnston.

4 July: Alan Johnston is released. The BBC reporter cites 14 June as a turning point in his captivity, crediting Hamas' control of Gaza with his release. Johnston makes phone call to Hamas' Khaled Meshaal, thanking him for the efforts of his organization.²⁹¹

* Civil servants receive first full salaries in over 15 months. Hamas affiliates are excluded from this payment.²⁹²

5 July : Eleven Palestinian militants (including nine from Hamas) are killed by an Israeli incursion into central Gaza, near the Bureij and Maghazi refugee camps. Both Hamas' Ismail Haniya and Fateh official Hazem Abu Shanab condemn the Israeli attacks and urge the Palestinians to continue their fighting in self-defense. However, Fateh and Hamas are in disagreement over the official days of the weekend. 400 Fateh civil servants were prevented from entering their offices on

²⁸⁷ “Abbas advisor says Hamas fighting collaborators.” *Ynet*, 28 June 2007.

²⁸⁸ “Palestinians to pay staff with cash unlocked by Israel.” *AFP*, 2 July 2007.

²⁸⁹ “Hamas pressed by Israel and Palestinians in W.Bank.” *Reuters*, 6 July 2007.

²⁹⁰ “Hamas Makes Arrest in Reporter's Case.” *Washington Post*, 2 July 2007.

²⁹¹ “Freed BBC Reporter Recounts Long Ordeal in Gaza.” *Washington Post*, 5 July 2007.

²⁹² “11 Militants Killed in Gaza Clashes.” *AP*, 6 July 2007.

Thursday 5 July, as Hamas has declared the weekend to be Thursday-Friday.²⁹³

6 July: “The Preventive Security building [in Nablus] was plastered with posters depicting top Fateh militant Samih al-Madhoun, who was killed by Hamas after last month's fighting in Gaza, and of a Hamas gunman stepping on a picture of late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.”

Akram al-Rajoub, who heads the Fateh-dominated Preventive Security service in Nablus (pop. 200,000): “Nablus has become the focus in Fateh's campaign against Hamas in the West Bank.”²⁹⁴

8 July: Militants from Islamic Jihad are killed by Israeli forces outside Jenin, three other Palestinians are arrested. The Israeli army says its undercover operation returned fire to a car of four militants.²⁹⁵

9 July: A Palestinian human rights group reveals Abbas issued a decree that allows military judges to give rulings on charges against civilians accused of harming ‘public safety.’²⁹⁶

10 July: In Western Gaza City, ESF and Al-Qassam Brigades storm the house of Maj. Gen. Amin Al Hindi, the former director of General Intelligence and member of Fateh’s Revolutionary Council.²⁹⁷

11 July: Mahmoud Abbas meets with David Welch.

* Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) session suspended due to lack of quorum. Only 41 members attended. 45 are absent. 67 are needed for a quorum. According to PLC Fateh bloc leader Azzam al-Ahmad, Hamas closed the PLC in Gaza and banned the Fateh members from entering. Hamas PLC bloc spokesman Salah Bardawil says his group boycotted the session because, since Israel’s arrest of 42 Hamas-affiliated members, the council operations are “illegal.”²⁹⁸

²⁹³ AP, 6 July 2007.

²⁹⁴ “Hamas pressed by Israel and Palestinians in W.Bank.” *Reuters*, 6 July 2007.

²⁹⁵ “Israeli forces kill Palestinian militant in W.Bank.” *Reuters*, 9 July 2007.

²⁹⁶ “Worries about Palestinian democracy climb as Abbas strengthens role of military courts.” *McClatchy Newspapers*, 9 July 2007.

²⁹⁷ “Hamas forces storm the house of former Gaza intelligence chief.” BBC Monitoring Middle East, 11 July 2007 (*Ma’an*).

²⁹⁸ “‘Hamas prevents Gaza MPs from entering Legislative Council’ – Fateh.” BBC Monitoring Middle East, 11 July 2007 (*Ma’an*).

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