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Why Should the U.S. Fund the Terrorist Group Hamas?

Congress now sends nearly a billion tax dollars annually to the Hamas-linked Palestinian Authority: Is this a smart use of U.S. foreign aid?

The Palestinian Authority's ruling party Fatah recently announced it has "reconciled" with the Islamic terror group Hamas to form a unity government. The Palestinian Authority currently receives some \$600 million in direct annual U.S. aid, plus an additional \$225 million in annual U.S. funding through the United Nations. Since it is against U.S. law to fund terrorist organizations, the U.S. Congress should immediately stop the flow of American tax dollars to the Palestinian Authority.

What are the facts?

In May 2011, in an effort to circumvent peace negotiations with Israel, the Palestinian Authority (P.A.) inked a deal to merge with Hamas. This sudden reconciliation enables the P.A., now representing both the West Bank and Gaza, to present the illusion of a viable, unified governing body to the United Nations in order to obtain the U.N.'s unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state. Because Hamas is an avowed enemy of the United States and because the U.S. and Israel believe direct negotiations with the P.A. represent the only sustainable path to peace, both nations oppose such a move in the U.N.

Hamas, headquartered in Gaza, with a political leadership office in Damascus, Syria, was founded in 1987 as an arm of Egypt's Islamist Muslim Brotherhood. In 1999 the U.S. State Department put Hamas on its list of foreign terrorist organizations. No wonder: According to its own charter, Hamas is dedicated to creating an Islamic state in all of Palestine, destroying the state of Israel and exterminating Jews. Because of its long history of attacking civilians through bombings, kidnapping and rocket attacks, Hamas is also considered a terrorist organization by Canada, the European Union, Israel and Japan.

Hamas' funding comes primarily from Iran, Saudi Arabian benefactors and Palestinian expatriates. Palestinian refugees and their descendants in Gaza also receive hundreds of millions of dollars from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Now, with Hamas' recent agreement to unite with Fatah, the terrorist group will have influence over and access to billions of dollars more in aid from the U.S., the European Union and dozens of individual donor nations.

Hamas rules the people of Gaza with a brutal, totalitarian hand. Since Hamas violently seized control of Gaza in 2007, it has permitted no elections and allows no freedom of press, religion or speech. Palestinian women in Gaza are repressed according to strict Islamic custom. More than half of Gazan women report having been victims of physical violence, and

half of all murders in Gaza are "honor killings" of women. Homosexuality is illegal in Gaza, and Christians are often harassed. Against all international law, kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit has been held incommunicado by Hamas for five years with no access to the Red Cross.

Hamas opposes the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Hamas stands openly by its goal to conquer every inch of Palestine, cleanse it of Jews, and establish a fundamentalist Islamic caliphate. Since Israel's withdrawal of security forces

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U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

and residents from Gaza in 2005, Hamas has fired more than 8,800 missiles on Israeli cities and civilians. Just a few months ago, the group's rocket attack on an Israeli school bus

killed a 16-year-old boy. Above all, Hamas refuses to accept the state of Israel and condemns any efforts to negotiate peace—a complete repudiation of the efforts of the United States and the Quartet on the Middle East (consisting of the United Nations, the European Union, Russia and the U.S.) to resolve the decades-long dispute between Arabs and Israelis. Senior Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zahar recently confirmed that "Our program does not include negotiations with Israel or recognizing it."

Time to stop U.S. aid to terrorists. In April, 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated, "We will not deal with nor in any way fund a Palestinian government that includes Hamas unless and until Hamas has renounced violence, recognized Israel and agreed to follow the previous obligations of the Palestinian Authority." In July, 2011, both houses of Congress overwhelmingly passed resolutions that threaten withdrawal of aid from the Palestinian Authority if it persists in efforts to circumvent direct negotiations with Israel by turning to the United Nations for recognition—which it continues to pursue aggressively—and if the Palestinian Authority shares power with Hamas. In fact, annual U.S. foreign operations appropriations bills expressly forbid funding for "assistance to Hamas or any entity effectively controlled by Hamas or any power-sharing government of which Hamas is a member."

It's clear that the Palestinian Authority, by forming an alliance with the terrorist group Hamas, abandoning peace talks with Israel, and taking its case for statehood unilaterally to the United Nations, has no respect for the interests of the United States in the Middle East. In this time of financial crisis and soaring budget deficits, should we spend 825 million American tax dollars annually supporting the Palestinian Authority, now allied with an avowed enemy of peace, the U.S. and the state of Israel?

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Facts and Logic About the Middle East
P.O. Box 590359 ■ San Francisco, CA 94159
Gerardo Joffe, President

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