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Facts & Logic About the Middle East

October 4, 2022



When Hamas seizes power in the West Bank, how will the Two-State Solution survive?

Dear Friend of FLAME:

Those who blithely advocate a “two-state solution” between Israel and the Palestinians invariably avoid addressing many seemingly intractable obstacles facing such a resolution to the conflict.

The facts that current Palestinian dictatorships are harshly authoritarian and corrupt—and their economies functionally bankrupt—seem to matter little. Two-state proponents rarely offer solutions to these huge problems.

The facts that neither Hamas in Gaza nor the Palestinian Authority (PA) in Ramallah have ever agreed to accept the Jewish state or live with it in peace following an actual peace agreement likewise receive little encouraging commentary from two-staters.

But perhaps the greatest factor preventing two peaceful states—certainly from Israel’s standpoint—is the likely imminent seizure by Hamas of the Palestinian Authority-controlled territory in Judea and Samaria (aka, the West Bank).

Certainly, the frailty of 87-year-old Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas fuels fear of a collapse of the Palestinian political order—if it can be called that—creating a power vacuum.

While Abbas has finally named a would-be successor in case of his demise—Hussein al Sheikh, whom Abbas appointed new secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)—al Sheikh’s transition to the presidency is not guaranteed.

In fact, in a recent interview, al Sheikh insists only an election can settle the succession question. However, polls show that in an election held today Hamas strongman Ismail Haniyeh would most surely defeat Mahmoud Abbas. We can assume he would also easily defeat little-known Abbas *apparatchiks* like al Sheikh.

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YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH...

Democracy Thrives in Israel

A new report ranks the Jewish state as one of the world's strongest, most equitable democracies—despite baseless falsehoods about its oppression of Palestinians

While countless voices bemoan the political, economic, and social challenges facing Israel, the Jewish state's record of freedom, justice, and equity is unparalleled. In fact, the Jewish state is consistently ranked as one of the world's most successful democracies.

What are the facts?

Israel's democratic record is well-documented. In the 2021 Democracy Index, Israel was ranked 10th in the world, ahead of the United States, Spain, Italy, and 19 other nations. The index ranks countries according to 10 criteria, covering each nation's performance according to its electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political participation, political culture, and civil liberties.

Israel's 2021 ranking shows consistent improvement in its democratic processes

compared with the first survey in 2008, when the Jewish state ranked only 47. In the current report, Israel was ranked for the first time as a top party in today's ruling government coalition.

No surprise, since Israel's robust democracy has a vibrant electoral tradition, stable governing institutions, high political participation among its citizens, a vigorous, even business political culture, and broad, equal civil liberties for all its citizens.

Unfortunately, even as Israel's democracy improved in the past year, the EU's record for democracy globally steadily deteriorated. This was due to the EU's policies, causing an unprecedented withdrawal of civil liberties, including a large increase in state power over large areas of public and personal life.

In contrast to Israel news Middle Eastern reporting, the highest ranking of which was Tunisia, reaching only 70th place, and the rest of the world, including the "Arab Spring," the territory of Palestine was ranked as an "authoritarian" regime in 2021.

Like all countries in the index, Israel's performance in the EU's evaluation was based on the health and performance of democratic institutions among its citizens.

While critics often unfairly blame Israel for a lack of democratic freedoms in Judea and Samaria ("the West Bank") and Gaza, they ignore the fact that the Oslo Accords gave governance responsibilities of Palestinians in those territories directly to their respective dictatorships—the Palestinian Authority and Hamas.

Unfortunately, neither of these Palestinian governments holds regular elections, respects basic civil liberties, or demonstrates any commitment to democratic values.

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Al Sheikh also admits that the political situation in Palestinian-controlled areas is unstable and dangerous for PA politicians, noting that their limited power is only ensured by willingness to cooperate with Israel. In other words, Israel is propping up their regime.

At the same time, Israel has seen a marked increase in terrorist activity by Hamas in Judea and Samaria. Following the arrest of a terror cell of seven Hamas militants several weeks ago, Israel's Shin Bet security service said, "these arrests and investigations reveal, once again, the efforts of Hamas operatives from the Gaza strip and abroad to destabilize the West Bank and incite violence."

Of course, the threat of a Hamas takeover of West Bank territory has deep, bitter roots in Palestinian history. Shortly after Hamas won Palestinian elections in 2006—beating Abbas's Fatah party—it seized control of Gaza and expelled all Fatah members.

Fatah's relationship with Hamas over 16 long years has generally been angry and violent, and many attempts at reconciliation have failed. While Fatah brands itself to gullible Western diplomats as the "reasonable" Palestinians, Hamas views Fatah as weak, and it unapologetically supports violent jihad to destroy the Jewish state.

Experts on Palestinian relations, such as Col. (res.) Grisha Yakubovich, a senior fellow at the MirYam Institute, believe that Hamas is making a play to win over Palestinian hearts and minds in Judea and Samaria by criticizing Fatah for ineffective diplomacy and fruitless negotiations.

Yakubovich believes the Palestinian street sees Hamas laying the ground for "a repeat of their 2007 takeover of Gaza—this time in Judea and Samaria."

Suffice it to say, Hamas's attacks on Israel in recent years from its Gaza stronghold, on the southernmost borders of Israel, has kept the Jewish state on edge—both militarily and in terms of world opinion.

But now—imagining terrorist Hamas in control of large sections of Judea and Samaria, directly on long stretches of central Israel's eastern border, including those of its capital, Jerusalem—would raise the stakes dramatically.

Let's not forget, either, that global terror giant Iran is one of Hamas greatest funders.

While President Biden and his diplomats may give incessant lip service to a two-state solution, they're surely not about to send U.S. troops to defend the Palestinian Authority from a Hamas takeover. Abbas's Fatah cronies will be summarily abandoned by their Western "friends."

In fact, clearly Israel would by far be the most highly motivated—*life-or-death* motivated—to stop such a *coup d'etat*.

In this case, Israel would have the ugly choice of fighting and crushing such a Hamas *putsch* at the moment it is launched . . . or beginning its defense *after* Hamas sets up its missile launchers just a few miles from Israel's heartland,

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where some six million of its 9.5 million people live.

It short, a Hamas seizure of large parts of Judea and Samaria would be a disaster for Israel—and for the world. Remember, Hamas’s charter explicitly calls for the murder of Jews and destruction of the Jewish state. The myth of the peace-loving Palestinians would be quashed, possibly forever.

With Hamas on its eastern borders, Israel would be put on a constant—day in, day out—war footing. Missiles, including those aimed at Israel’s Ben Gurion Airport, would be a daily threat all year long. Hamas terrorists would be able to infiltrate and commit daily murders in Israel’s heartland.

Israel’s defense against such Palestinian terror in its backyard would inevitably assume the bloody, fiery horrors of a ground war.

How is the two-state solution looking so far under this scenario? Since a Hamas takeover of Palestinian-controlled territory seems entirely likely—far more likely than Russia’s recent attack on Ukraine did—it would be nice to hear two-state advocates explain how they can defend their proposal under these circumstances.

Please point out to friends, family, elected representatives—and in letters to the editor—that those who advocate a two-state solution must first explain how a Hamas takeover will be prevented. If the coup can’t be prevented, how do they see two states being achieved between Israel and the designated terror group Hamas?

Above all, emphasize, that “the two-state solution” can’t just be a political fantasy. This is real life. These are murderous enemies of Israel . . . and of all who love peace and freedom. If you advocate a two-state solution, you owe the world real-life answers.

I hope you’ll also take a minute, while you have this material front and center, to forward this message to friends, visit FLAME’s lively [Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below. It describes FLAME’s new *hasbarah* campaign —“Democracy Thrives in Israel”—which exposes false claims that Israel deprives Arab Israeli citizens and Palestinian Arabs of their rights.

Best regards,

James Sinkinson, President
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. Despite Israel’s guarantee of civil liberties and equal treatment for all its citizens—including two million Arab Israelis—Israel is still falsely accused of being an apartheid state. Despite Israel and the Palestinians agreeing that the Palestinian Authority will administer its own civil affairs, including elections, Israel is accused of violating human rights because Palestinians can’t vote in Israeli elections. I think you’ll agree that truth is the only antidote to this lie. FLAME’s new *hasbarah* message—called “[Democracy Thrives in Israel](#)” publicizes a new, independent “Democracy Index” in which Israel is named the world’s

23rd most successful democracy—ahead of the United States, Italy, Spain and 139 other nations. This new editorial message also clarifies that Palestinians' repression is due overwhelmingly to their two ruling dictatorships. (Palestinians are ranked #109 in the Democracy Index—as “authoritarian.”) I hope you'll review this convincing, fact-based editorial, which is scheduled to run nationwide in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *New York Post*, *Miami Herald*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Los Angeles Times* and *San Jose Mercury News*. This piece will also be sent to all members of Congress, Vice President Harris and President Biden. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to support us. Remember: FLAME's powerful ability to influence public opinion—and U.S. support of Israel—comes from individuals like you, one by one. I hope you'll consider giving a [donation](#) now, as you're able—with \$500, \$250, \$100, or even \$18. (Remember, your donation to FLAME is tax deductible.) To donate online, just go to [donate now](#). Now, more than ever, we need your support to ensure that the American people, the U.S. Congress and President Biden stay committed to fighting antisemitic actions by individuals, politicians and commercial companies.

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