

MORTARS FROM A GAZA SCHOOL YARD:
UNRWA Operations
within a Terrorist Entity

UNRWA in Gaza

June through early November 2007

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The Center for Near East Policy Research

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Recent developments
regarding UNRWA in Gaza

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Introduction

At the beginning of November, Col. Nir Press, of the IDF's Gaza Coordination and Liaison Administration, registered a complain with UNRWA regarding terrorists use of an UNRWA school in Beit Hanoun on October 31 for shooting of mortars. The IDF has aerial photos from an unmanned vehicle that showed the terrorists shooting from the school. Israel did not fire at the school in return.¹

John Ging responded² that the masked terrorists had gained entry into the school after threatening the life of the guard.

Karen AbuZayd, however, told the press a different story: She said that all teachers and students and the one guard employed at the school had been moved out following an Israeli incursion into the area.

According to her, UNRWA only discovered militants had been inside after seeing television footage a week ago.

"This is a problem when we're not there, what happens to our schools."

She does not explain what happened to the guard whose life was threatened.

UN Secretary-General Ki Moon is sufficiently concerned about this incident to have now ordered an investigation.

This particular incident has not occurred in isolation, however, and must be set into fuller context.

Background:

Before September 2005

UNRWRA and terrorism in Gaza

The connections of UNRWA refugee camps in Gaza to terrorism – and specifically to Hamas – date back well beyond recent events.

The genesis of radicalism in the UNRWA camps was traced by this author in March 2003.³ A state of indefinite, stateless limbo, the impression that Israel was denying them their “inalienable right to return,”⁴ and unsatisfactory living conditions all promoted anger and a move to a radical stance. Added to this was (and is) an educational system that in Gaza, as well as in Judea and Samaria, utilizes Palestinian Authority textbooks that promote jihad and deny the legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish state.

Evidence of radicalism in the UNRWA camps was apparent – but largely ignored – for some years:

A full ten years ago, UNRWA schools were seen decorated with Hamas graffiti and a map of a Palestine that ran from the river to the sea, covered with pictures of machine guns.⁵

An UNRWA food distribution center in Beach Camp, Gaza, was reported to be “decorated with murals of exploding Israeli boats and burning jeeps.” At a nearby boys elementary school “posters glorifying suicide bombers” were stripped from classroom walls.⁶

IDF Colonel (ret.) Yoni Figchel, a former military governor in the territories, gave testimony in 2002 to the fact that UNRWA employees were members of Hamas.⁷

By 2003, it was clear that “the UNRWA camps have become centers of terrorist activities. It is often in the camps that terrorists are recruited, trained, and dispatched, and weapons manufactured; camps (and UNRWA facilities) are utilized for hiding terrorists and weapons. Camps provide a safe haven for terrorists from outside, while residents of the camps themselves are involved in terrorist activities.”⁸

Hamas activity in UNRWA schools and on UNRWA school property
Hamas and related groups were able to promote their ideology in UNRWA schools in Gaza well before Hamas had political control in the area.

In the summer of 2000, UNRWA schools were used for military training for 25,000 Palestinian Arab youngsters; children, ages eight to 16, were trained in the preparation of Molotov cocktails and roadside bombs. “A common theme in the camps was preparation for armed conflict: ‘slitting the throats of Israelis’ is one of the children’s exercises at these camps.”⁹

On July 6, 2001, the Hamas movement convened a conference in a school in the UNRWA Jabalya refugee camps in Gaza, with the participation of the school’s administration, teachers and hundreds of students. Saheil Alhinadi, representing the teaching sector on behalf of UNRWA, praised Hamas student activists who carried out suicide attacks against Israel.¹⁰

A memorial ceremony for Sheikh Yassin – who had headed Hamas and was killed by Israel – was held at the UNRWA boys’ school in the UNRWA Balata refugee camp on April 3, 2004. Veiled operatives held mock Kassam rockets; the families of “martyrs” were given gifts and certificates of gratitude.¹¹

The UNRWA union for teachers has been controlled by Hamas for over 10 years; Islamist nationalist representatives to the union council in Gaza have consistently won its

elections and in recent years have controlled the executive committee.¹² The overwhelming predominance of Hamas-affiliated individuals within the population of teachers hired by UNRWA has been particularly troubling because of their influence on generations of refugee children (i.e., descendants of refugees registered by UNRWA).

Yet another way in which the youth attending UNRWA schools in Gaza were influenced was via a group called the Islamic Bloc – which was ideologically connected to Hamas and operated within its framework. Dedicated to the “Islamization” of the “Palestinian issue” and the necessity of liberating all of the land of “Palestine,” the Bloc was charged by Hamas with furthering the goal of Hamas within the schools, in order to prepare the next generation for the liberation of Palestine.¹³

The Bloc sponsored events such as the following:¹⁴

In the UNRWA Nuseirat Camp in Gaza, a newsletter was published and distributed in the schools. A march was organized to promote identification with the “martyr” Muhammad el-Babli, who was active in Hamas and had been killed in a terrorist incident. Visits were arranged to the homes of “martyrs.”

In the UNRWA Maghazi Camp in Gaza, movies were shown dealing with jihad were shown to students. A “jihad” newsletter was distributed in two boys’ schools; it honored the memory of someone killed by the IDF.

In the UNRWA Bereij Camp in Gaza, an Islamic Bloc preacher gave a session to students on how to bring people closer to Islam; the presentation honored two Hamas founders in prison in Israel. A culture day was organized at two schools; the emphasis was placed on the importance of becoming martyrs.

UNRWA Responsibility

When this information is examined now, with hindsight and in light of all that has occurred in the last two years, it is impossible not to be struck by the fact of UNRWA’s responsibility to these events. The connection of Hamas activity in Gaza in earlier years – in particular activity in the schools – to what subsequently transpired is all too apparent.

UNRWA for the most part turned a blind eye during the years the Hamas strength was building in Gaza. UNRWA’s unvarying position in recent years has been that it is not in control of the camps, but only its facilities, and that, as it does not have a police force, cannot monitor what is being done.

This is a severely insufficient answer. What we are looking at here is promotion of a Hamas – Islamist/jihadist – ideology within the schools run by UNRWA. We are looking at influential teaching personnel for the UNRWA schools in Gaza who were formally affiliated with the Islamic Bloc. And we are looking at events run by and for Hamas, celebrating martyrs and jihad, done on UNRWA school premises in Gaza and in some instances involving UNRWA-hired teaching staff.

At a bare minimum, it is not unreasonable to expect that UNRWA might have established a rule that prohibited the employment of teachers who were affiliated with Islamist organizations. And another rule that no event celebrating “martyrdom” or jihad be permitted on UNRWA school premises.

One suspects that there was a tendency to keep the situation quiet in part out of fear that international awareness of what transpired in UNRWA facilities might reduce donations.

But there was undoubtedly something else going on. UNRWA had generated a catch-22 situation for itself. As described above, a good percentage of the refugees registered with UNRWA had become radicalized because of their (UNRWA-supported) situation. But, with very few exceptions, it is refugees who were -- and are -- employed by UNRWA,¹⁵ which did not see fit to prohibit their open affiliation with "political" groups. UNRWA was immersed in a climate of radical ideology and, taking the path of least resistance, allowed this situation to persist.

Thus it was that Col. Fighel explained (emphasis added): "As long as UNRWA employees are members of Fatah, Hamas or PFLP they are going to pursue the interests of their party within the framework of their job...Who's going to check up on them to see that they don't? UNRWA? They are UNRWA."¹⁶

And so it was, as well, that former Secretary General Peter Hansen caused a flap when he admitted with candor in an October 2004 interview with the Canadian Broadcast Corporation that "Oh, I am sure that there are Hamas members on the UNRWA payroll, and I don't see that as a crime...Hamas as a political organization does not mean that every member is a militant, and we do not do political vetting and exclude people from one persuasion as against another." "

Teachers employed by UNRWA who were affiliated with Hamas, in the words of Col Fighel, "pursued the interests of their party within the framework of their jobs." Youngsters were educated to an Islamist ideology under the very nose of UNRWA.

Unquestionably the most famous (infamous) of teachers who taught in the UNRWA schools in Gaza is Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, founder of Hamas, who worked as a teacher from 1967 to 1984.¹⁷

Yet another well known Hamas personage, Saeed Siam¹⁸, taught in UNRWA schools in Gaza. A teacher from 1980 to 2003, he was active in the UNRWA union, heading the Teachers Sector Committee for seven years.¹⁹

Financial support for terrorists

UNRWA at this juncture most certainly is providing funds to some of the terrorists in Gaza, who are registered refugees and perhaps live in the UNRWA camps. UNRWA has no policy of checking on the affiliations of recipients and does not keep records on their activities.²⁰

Background:

September – December 2005

In August and early September 2005, the Israeli government pulled out of Gaza – removing all Jewish communities and redeploying the IDF.

Absent the IDF, the level of violence within Gaza began to ratchet up considerably; a good percentage of it centered in or emanated from the UNRWA refugee camps.

On September 23, 2005, in the course of a major Hamas rally in the UNRWA Jabaliya camp, there was an accident that caused the death of 19 Palestinians and injured some 85 more. Apparently this occurred when rockets being carried on a truck for purposes of a parade exploded.

The very next day, in response to a barrage of Kassam rocket attacks coming from Gaza, the IDF did a series of strikes on rocket storage and manufacturing sites. One of these was the Jabaliya camp.

On September 28, 2005, Israel targeted a structure used by the PFLP terrorists in the UNRWA Bureij camp.

In October 2005, Hamas leader Nizar Rayyan, situated in the Jabaliya camp, bragged that Hamas was manufacturing its own mortars and launchers.²¹

On November 1, 2005, Israel targeted a vehicle inside the Jabaliya camp that was carrying camp resident Hassan Mad'hun, a terrorist with Al Aksa Brigades who also cooperated with Hamas. He was responsible for launching rockets at Israel in the weeks before his assassination, as well as planning and initiating suicide bombing attacks.²²

On December 6, 2005, UPI reported that an Hezbollah representative was meeting with Palestinians Abu Mahujayn, Shehada Jawahr and Khaled Safayn, who lead Palestinian militias in the Bureij refugee camp.

Leading to the Current Situation January 2006 – May 2007

In January 2006, Hamas won a sweeping electoral victory in PA legislative elections and by March a Hamas-dominated government had been established – which was followed by a unity government in March 2007. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, chosen as prime minister, grew up in the UNRWA Beach refugee camp in Gaza and attended UNRWA schools.

Terrorism continued to emanate from the UNRWA camps
The violence emanating from Gaza – in good part from the UNRWA refugee camps – persisted during this period. The attacks became more deadly as the power and accuracy of the Kassams was increased and for the first time, in March 2006, Katyushas, both more accurate and more powerful, were launched.

Additionally, on June 25, 2006, IDF Corporal Gilad Shalit was kidnapped by terrorists associated with Hamas who tunneled into Israel near Kerem Shalom. Israel intelligence first placed him in the UNRWA Khan Younis refugee camp.²³

Repeatedly during this period there were Israeli operations into the camps, in an effort to take terrorists and destroy weapons caches or launching sites – as well as in order to locate Shalit. Other reports of terrorist activity within the camps surfaced as well.

In May 2006, Jihadists were reported moving into the camp at Khan Younis in south Gaza.²⁴

In June 2006, Israel did an air strike in the Jabaliya camp in an effort to take out members of the Al Aksa Brigades, Fatah's terrorist wing.²⁵ Additionally, Israel took out the Hamas security headquarters located in this camp.²⁶

Also in June, Israel killed Jamal Abu Samhadana, a security chief for Hamas. A resident of the UNRWA Rafah refugee camp, he was mourned by a huge outpouring of the population there.²⁷

Israel entered UNRWA Mughazi refugee camp in central Gaza, in July 2006,²⁸ killing at least three Hamas militants.

In October 2006, a Gazan refugee camp resident affiliated with Hamas died while assisting in the digging of a tunnel between Gaza and Israel.²⁹

In April 2007, rumored reports surfaced regarding the release of specific Palestinian prisoners to be released in exchange for corporal Shalit. One of those mentioned was Yehya al-Sinwar, of the Khan Younis refugee camp, who had founded the first Hamas military unit in 1988.³⁰

In May 2007, the UNRWA Nuseirat refugee camp was identified as a site for launching Kassam rockets and a weapons storage facility was targeted there by the IDF.³¹

Humanitarian issues

By early May 2006, the international community, responding to Hamas control of the PA government, began to seriously implement a freeze on assistance to the PA.

At this point a proposal emerged, supported in several quarters, that would have assigned to UNRWA a much expanded role as a relief agency through which emergency relief funds might be distributed to the Palestinian population at large. UNRWA itself, however, expressed reluctance to assume this role out of fear of seeing its resources overwhelmed. Its first priority, representatives insisted, would be the refugees.³² But while UNRWA's position is that it tends to refugees, information has been previously secured indicating that some Palestinians who are not refugees but are in need also receive relief from UNRWA.³³

At the same time that UNRWA demurred with regard to an expanded role, the agency sounded the alarm regarding the need for increased international donations. In June 2006, UNRWA announced that an additional 90,000 refugees were being provided with emergency food assistance. Most were said to be government (i.e., PA) workers who had received no pay since March.³⁴ This fact – that Palestinians working for the PA government are still considered to be “refugees” – highlights the illogic of the system under which UNRWA operates.

Over the subsequent months reports came from within UNRWA of an emergency so severe that its services might have to be terminated. At the same time, announcements were made of pledges of assistance from several nations.

UNRWA vulnerability

As chaos increased within Gaza, UNRWA found itself in a position of increased precariousness. On March 17, 2007, shots were fired at the convoy of John Ging, UNRWA Director of Operations in Gaza. This was thought to be an assassination

attempt by radical militants: Ging was unharmed but his vehicle was hit by 11 bullets. On March 22, it was reported that an UNRWA vehicle was hijacked.

By the end of March, in light of the above, the UN decided to cut back on the UNRWA international staff stationed in the Gaza Strip.³⁵ Rather than looking to an increase in operations, just the reverse was occurring.

On May 6, Islamic radical gunmen opened fire at an UNRWA elementary school in Rafah during a sports day celebration because they disapproved of what was going on. A bodyguard was killed and eight others, including two children, were wounded; a vehicle was destroyed. This was a well organized event with some 70 radicals, likely connected to al-Qaida involved.³⁶

At various times during May, UNRWA teaching staff was instructed to either cut their day short or remain at home because of potential risks. UNRWA compounds were physically reinforced to add additional protection.³⁷

In an ironic state of affairs, the very agency that had looked the other way with regard to terrorist activity within its bailiwick and had proved itself to be a major support for and defender of the Palestinians in Gaza now found itself the target of violence, so that its ability to function was severely curtailed. This situation was exacerbated in good part by the internecine violence between various Palestinian groups.

A bias in statements

It has been the case repeatedly over the years that UNRWA top personnel, in expressing concern about Palestinian hardship, avoid mention of the cause of that hardship – the actions of terrorists – and focus instead on Israel. What is more, it is not uncommon for the statements to contain distortions of facts. That pattern persisted during the period under discussion here:

On June 21, 2006, Commissioner-General Karen AbuZayd, responding to the accidental death of two Palestinian children in the course of an Israeli air raid in northern Gaza, said, "I was extremely saddened to learn of these tragedies, so soon after the killings on Gaza beach."³⁸

However, the "killings on Gaza beach" – an incident in which seven people were killed as they picnicked in an explosion on a Gaza beach– had been shown, a full week before AbuZayd made her statement, to not be the result of Israeli action.³⁹ What is more, she made no mention of the reason why the Israelis were conducting the raid – Palestinian launching of Kassams or shooting of mortars.

On July 12, 2006, in an interview with Haaretz, AbuZayd said, "The children see like everyone else what is going on around them. I'm afraid that they will be the ones who lead the third intifada...Our teachers and consultants have invested a huge effort in instilling the values of peace. I believe that the sophisticated tools we have given the children will last, and they will overcome this crisis."⁴⁰ In light of the fact of Hamas teachers instructing in the UNRWA classrooms in Gaza, the Islamic Bloc programs permitted in the schools, and the use of PA educational material that includes maps without Israel and promotes jihad, the suggestion that UNRWA has educated for peace is more than a little startling.

An on-going UNRWA complaint has been the IDF practice of closing crossings into Gaza, which inhibits the agency's ability to move in goods and supplies. This is particularly the case with the Karni Crossing. IDF soldiers have been killed in attacks at this site in the past, and Israel has found it necessary to close this crossing when there has been warning of an imminent attack – a not infrequent occurrence. UNRWA, however, has declined to utilize alternate crossing sites made available by the IDF, claiming that this would require a re-packaging of supplies – palletizing – that is prohibitively expensive.⁴¹ The choice thus made by UNRWA in these instances is to allow potential recipients of its goods to go without, even in instances when the possibility to get at least some supplies in does exist.

The Present Situation: June through mid-November 2007

In June, the violence between Fatah and Hamas in Gaza escalated into civil war. After five days of battle, Hamas routed Fatah – which withdrew to Judea and Samaria – and took over control of Gaza on June 15, 2007. PA President Mahmoud Abbas disbanded the unity government and appointed a caretaker government to govern in Judea and Samaria, which Hamas called illegitimate.

While there has in recent weeks been unofficial or secret contact between Hamas and Fatah, as this is written the situation remains status quo. To a considerable degree, Hamas has been under siege, as Israel and the Western powers have attempted to strengthen an allegedly “moderate” Fatah.

Much of what we are now seeing is a continuation or expansion of previous patterns.

Increased terrorism

Launching of rockets and shooting of mortars has greatly increased during this period. Of considerable concern to Israel is the smuggling, permitted by Egypt, of weapons and materiel into Gaza, the manufacture of weapons, and the stockpiling.

Political statement and misstatement

In a reversal of previous UNRWA position that largely held Israel responsible for closing of the crossings into Gaza, John Ging said in July, in response to terrorist shelling of crossings, "It is very clear the responsibility lies with the Palestinians."⁴²

By the beginning of August, Ging was again criticizing Israel, when he condemned Israeli entry into an UNRWA school in Gaza. "This is a violation of our property and we expect the IDF to halt any operation that places in danger our staff and which damages our installations," he said.⁴³ However, Israeli forces arrested two of the school guards during this operation, which certainly would seem to have had a legitimate focus. Ging does not address this aspect of the situation at all.

Karen AbuZayd, in a September interview with Akiva Eldar of Haaretz, stated, "Even Hamas people talk about the two-state solution and the Israeli state. They've accepted that."⁴⁴ This major misrepresentation of the reality⁴⁵ is a key to AbuZayd's sympathies.

AbuZayd, in the interview, also said that growing numbers of the refugees in Gaza seek emergency assistance from UNRWA because of the difficult situation. "Their distress," however, "neither minimizes their support of Hamas nor dispels their ambitions to

return to the homes they abandoned 60 years ago.” And here she reflects a reality on the ground. One that UNRWA accepts.

Humanitarian issues

In the course of the Fatah-Hamas fighting, which occasionally bordered on UNRWA facilities, 18 medical clinics and three food distribution centers were forced to temporarily close.⁴⁶ After two UNRWA workers were killed and two others wounded, UNRWA announced that except for emergency food distribution and essential medical services, its operations would be temporarily suspended. Once Hamas was fully in control and there was expectation of decreased violence, UNRWA announced full resumption of services by June 17.⁴⁷

An on-going focus in the weeks and months that followed was the closing of crossings from Israel into Gaza, which according to UNRWA generated a humanitarian crisis situation.

According to Shlomo Dror, IDF, Civil Administration in Gaza,⁴⁸ there is sufficient food in Gaza; Israel permits enough to be brought in so that there will be adequate supplies if there is subsequently a backlog because of the closing of crossings: supplies for various foods range from enough for two weeks to three months. Other non-governmental programs, such as the World Food Program, are supplying assistance, as well.

There are also sufficient medical supplies. Palestinians are being brought to Israel for medical care, with 80% of requests approved. There has been adequate electricity (about which more below) and water, as well.

Dror reports that Hamas is ruling by terror and that UNRWA is afraid and will not criticize.

There has been some dispute with regard to what constitutes basic humanitarian needs. UNRWA acknowledges that Israel has been bringing in food and medical supplies but registered distress about the failure to allow in building materials, or paper and books for the UNRWA schools. Israel, says Dror, increased the amount of these materials permitted in after a request from the PA. Israeli concern has been that UNRWA will turn these materials over to Hamas. While Israel has no desire to allow Palestinians in Gaza to suffer in basic ways, neither is there a willingness to make it easier for Hamas to function: this requires walking a fine line.

UNRWA has expressed concern that the achievement levels of students in Gaza has fallen drastically; it has instituted some remedial programs for core subjects such as math.

As to the issue of electricity and other fuel: As of September 19, Israel officially declared Gaza to be a hostile territory. The intent is to curtail delivery of electric power and fuel in response to Kassam attacks. The proposed action is currently being examined by the attorney general regarding its legality; there has been declared intent by Israel to do it in such a way that there will be no humanitarian suffering.

¹ *The Jerusalem Post*, November 7, 2007.

² *Ibid.*

³ Arlene Kushner, "UNRWA: A Report," The Center for Near East Policy Research, March 2003. See: <http://israelbehindthenews.com/Reports/UNWRAReport.pdf>.

⁴ While in fact no such "right" exists in international law.

⁵ Shawn Cohen, "The Refugees Dilemma: A Day in the UNRWA Arab Refugee Camps," *Washington Jewish Week*, July 23, 1997.

⁶ Charles Radin, "UN Role in Palestinian Camps in Dispute," *The Boston Globe*, July 8, 2002.

⁷ Interviewed by Allison Kaplan Sommer in "UNRWA on Trial," *Reform Judaism Magazine*, Winter 2002, p. 42.

⁸ UNRWA: A Report, op. cit., p. 31.

⁹ John F. Burns, "Palestinian Summer Camps Offers the Games of War," *The New York Times*, August 3, 2000, p.1.

¹⁰ From the website of the Israeli prime minister.

¹¹ www.palestine-info.info/arabic/palestoday/dailynews/2004/apr04/2_4/details5.htm.

¹² Arlene Kushner, "UNRWA: Links to Terrorism," The Center for Near East Policy Research, October 2004. See: <http://israelbehindthenews.com/pdf/UNRWA.pdf>.

¹³ Interview with Ahmed Casiso, Islamic Bloc supervisor of 20 summer camps for 3,000 junior high and high school students run in 2004, found on www.alkotla.net/details.asp?id=219.

¹⁴ See "UNRWA: Links to Terrorism," op. cit., p. 25-26 for further details and website sources for each item.

¹⁵ Of some roughly 24,000 people employed by UNRWA, all but about 100 "internationals" at top management levels are Palestinians, the vast majority of these registered by UNRWA as refugees. This hiring practice runs contrary to the normative hiring practice for social service or humanitarian organizations, which is to avoid hiring from within the population being serviced.

¹⁶ "UNRWA on Trial," op. cit.

¹⁷ Access to Palestine website: <http://www.multaqa.org/access/persons.php?c=a>.

¹⁸ Siam was Interior Minister in the PA Unity Government and established a 3,000 man security force in Gaza that Abbas called illegal.

¹⁹ Jerusalem Media and Communications Center.

²⁰ See Arlene Kushner, "UNRWA: Links to Terrorism," 2004 for details on this.
<http://israelbehindthenews.com/pdf/UNRWA.pdf>

²¹ <http://www.weaponsurvey.com/missilesrockets.htm>.

²² <http://www.weaponsurvey.com/newsarchive/november05.htm>.

²³ CNN, June 29, 2006.

²⁴ *The New York Times*, May 21, 2006.

²⁵ From a UN document at <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL>.

²⁶ Patterns of Global Terrorism: Israel 2006 Overview

²⁷ Fox News, June 8, 2006.

²⁸ *The Boston Globe*, July 19, 2006.

²⁹ Real Israel, News, October 2006 archive.

³⁰ Reuters, April 9, 2007.

³¹ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

³² Relief Web, May 22, 2006

³³ Dr. Emanuel Marx, who met in February 2004 with Sami Mshasha, head of UNRWA's Jerusalem Public Information Office, learned that since September 2000 UNRWA had stopped requiring that those in need in Gaza or Judea and Samaria present their ID cards.

³⁴ BBC, June 18, 2006

³⁵ Haaretz, March 28, 2007.

³⁶ Khaled Abu Toameh, *The Jerusalem Post*, May 6, 2007.

³⁷ Mid East Newslines, May 18, 2007.

³⁸ UNRWA press release, June 21, 2006.

³⁹ A three day investigation by the IDF that took into consideration the timing, the angles of shooting, and the nature of the shrapnel led to this conclusion. "IDF not responsible for Gaza blast," *The Jerusalem Post*, June 13, 2006.

⁴⁰ *Haaretz*, July 12, 2006.

⁴¹ Phone interview with Shlomo Dror, IDF, Civil Administration in Gaza, September 2006.

⁴² *The Jerusalem Post*, July 8, 2007.

⁴³ AHN Meda, August 3, 2007.

⁴⁴ *Haaretz*, September 18, 2007.

⁴⁵ Hamas is boycotting the anticipated conference at Annapolis because of its opposition and has declared intent to sabotage it.

Ismail Haniyeh, former PA prime minister, of Hamas, warned the PA government, "Don't fall into the trap of the coming conference." AP, October 12, 2007.

In July 2007, with regard to the conference, Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri accused Bush of outlining "a plot to launch a crusade against the Palestinian people." *Haaretz*, July 17, 2007.

Ismail Haniyeh, when he was still prime minister of the PA, had made the Hamas position clear: "We will never recognize the usurper Zionist government and will continue our jihad-like movement until the liberation of Jerusalem." *Guardian Unlimited*, December 8, 2006.

Khaled Mashaal, political head of Hamas, expressed the same sentiment from Damascus: "Hamas will not surrender ... and will not recognize Israel." *The Washington Post*, October 12, 2006.

⁴⁶ BBS News, June 12, 2007.

⁴⁷ Web Relief, June 15, 2007.

⁴⁸ September 2007 interview.