



Center for Special Studies
Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center

News of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict February 1-15, 2006, Update

Verbal attacks by Hamas leadership... and Qassam rockets continue falling on Israeli population centers



Three wounded in a Qassam rocket attack on Kibbutz Carmia, one of them an infant (Photo: Reuters, Shai Shmuel).



Hamas leader Khaled Mashal delivering a vicious speech at Al-Murabit mosque in Damascus calling for the destruction of the State of Israel through violence and terrorism.

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Main Points

■ Three weeks after Hamas' sweeping victory in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections, the movement is trying to **maneuver between its extremist positions and the exigencies of political reality**. On the home front, Hamas faces the attempts of Palestinian chairman Abu Mazen to strengthen his authority to supervise legislation, security and the media. Outside the Palestinian Authority, Israel and the international community have signaled that they will not transfer funds (on which the PA is heavily dependent) to a Hamas government.

■ So far, Hamas has responded in two ways: for the Palestinians and Arab/Muslim world, they continue making it clear (in unprincipled anti-Israeli anti-American speeches) that they have no intention of changing their fundamental positions and that **using violence and terrorism to destroy Israel is and will remain their political cornerstone**. They are also conducting a campaign for political support and financial aid to replace the funds usually received from Israel and western countries.

■ At the same time, they have instituted a Mr. Nice Guy campaign aimed at **western countries** as a way to try to hide or play down their support and use of terrorism and their refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist. To that end they have proposed a long-term truce (on the condition that Israel cede to Hamas' demands) and wave the flag of "democracy" without

mentioning the movement's radical Islamic ideology. The invitation issued by the president of Russia marks a Hamas breakthrough in the international arena.

■ **On the ground** there have been no important changes in the extent of terrorist attacks. Prominent during the past two weeks were the stabbings in Petah Tikva, east of Tel Aviv (one dead and five wounded) and the Qassam rocket attack on Kibbutz Carmia in the western Negev (three wounded, one of them an infant). In the meantime, the Israeli security forces prevented mega-victim terrorist attacks, most prominently at the Gaza Strip Erez crossing point. Spokesmen for Fatah and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad again **stated their intention to continue and even escalate their terrorist-operative activities against Israel after the installation of the new Palestinian government, clearly in defiance of Hamas' attempt to be treated as a legitimate government in**

Main Events on the Ground

Mass stabbing attack in Petah Tikva

■ On the morning of February 5, 2006, a young Palestinian got into a taxi in Petah Tikva. During the ride he took out a knife and began stabbing the eight other passengers. He killed Kinneret Ben-Shalom, 53, from Petah Tikva, and five others were hospitalized with slight to moderately serious wounds. Passersby managed to overcome the terrorist and he was detained.

■ The terrorist was **Ahmad 'Othman Ahmad Kafina**, 22, single, born in Kuwait but living in the village of Sawiya near Nablus. Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades claimed responsibility for the attacks, but apparently it was the terrorist's **personal initiative**.



The taxi after the attack (Reuters)

Attempted attack at Erez crossing prevented

■ Two terrorist-operatives were killed during an **attempted suicide bombing attack** at the Erez crossing on February 1. A sudden decrease in the number of workers passing through the crossing aroused the suspicions of an Israeli officer working for the Joint Coordination and Liaison Headquarters at the crossing. An examination with Palestinian representatives of the body yielded uncertain results, and Israeli security forces in the area raised the alert level. Shortly thereafter two Palestinian suspects carrying weapons were identified. The security guards at the crossing opened fire and killed them. Explosive belts were found on their bodies. The Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) claimed responsibility for the attempted attack, **which manifestly harmed the interests of the Palestinian people, who need the crossing open to be able to go to work in Israel.**

Two terrorist-operatives detained on their way to carry out a suicide bombing attack

■ On the morning of February 3 two young Palestinians arrived at the Beit Iba checkpoint (northwest of Nablus). They aroused the suspicions of the soldiers on duty, who examined what they were carrying. The examination yielded two explosive belts ready for detonation, each one weighing about 7 kbs (15 lbs). The two Palestinians were detained for interrogation by the Israeli security forces. The PRC and Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades claimed responsibility for the attempted attack.

Direct Qassam hit wounds three at Kibbutz Carmia

■ During the first two weeks of February the launching of Qassam rockets and mortar shells continued. During that time 38 Qassam rockets and mortar shells were fired from the Gaza Strip at western Negev population centers, a slight increase over the last two weeks of January. Six Qassam rockets also fell in Ashkelon's industrial zone. On February 3, 2006, a house in Kibbutz Carmia took a direct hit and three Israeli civilians were wounded, two of them seriously (one of them an infant).



The house in Kibbutz Carmia hit by a Qassam rocket, February 3 (Amir Cohen, Reuters).

■ IDF forces responded with artillery fire at the rocket-launching sites in the northern Gaza Strip. In addition, the Israeli Air Force attacked a number of targets in the Gaza Strip, including a building close to the city of Gaza which served as a training center for Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades terrorist-operatives and a planning and pre-attack meeting place, and vehicles carrying terrorist-operatives. The attacks killed a number of senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades terrorist-operatives who had been involved in rocket launchings and weaponry development.



The vehicles attacked by the Israeli Air Force (Palestinian TV, February 6).

Hezbollah attacks Israeli posts at Har Dov

■ On February 3 Hezbollah fired approximately 40 mortar shells and anti-tank missiles and also fired shots from assault rifles at Israeli posts in the Har Dov sector. One IDF soldier was slightly wounded. The IDF responded with artillery fire and the Israeli Air Force attacked five Hezbollah targets in the eastern sector.

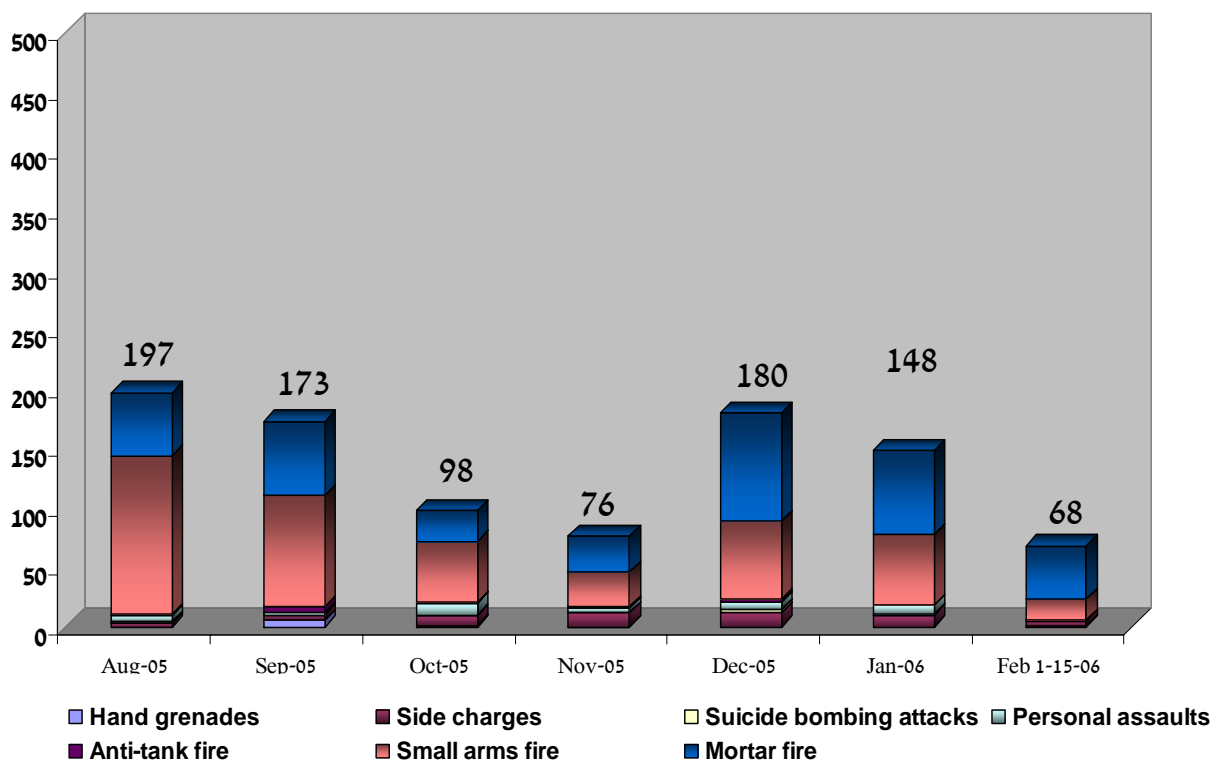
■ Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary-general, called the attack Hezbollah's "answer" to the killing of a Lebanese shepherd two days previously. Nasrallah even praised his organization's cooperation with the Lebanese government. The Lebanese prime minister was quick to deplore the death of the shepherd, thus giving official Lebanese government support and sanction to the Hezbollah attack.



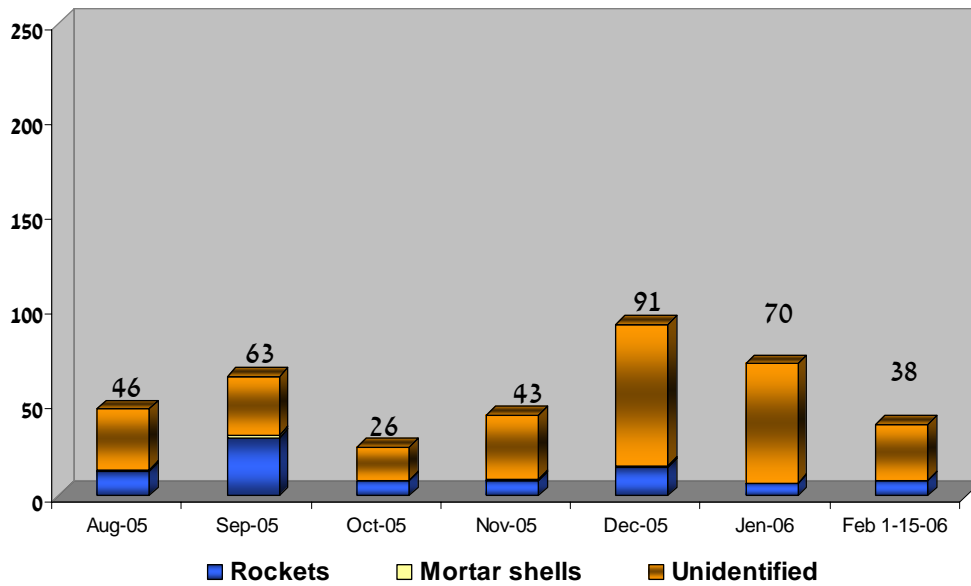
A terrorist organization defends Lebanon: Hezbollah attacks IDF posts (Al-Nahar TV, February 3)

Statistical Data

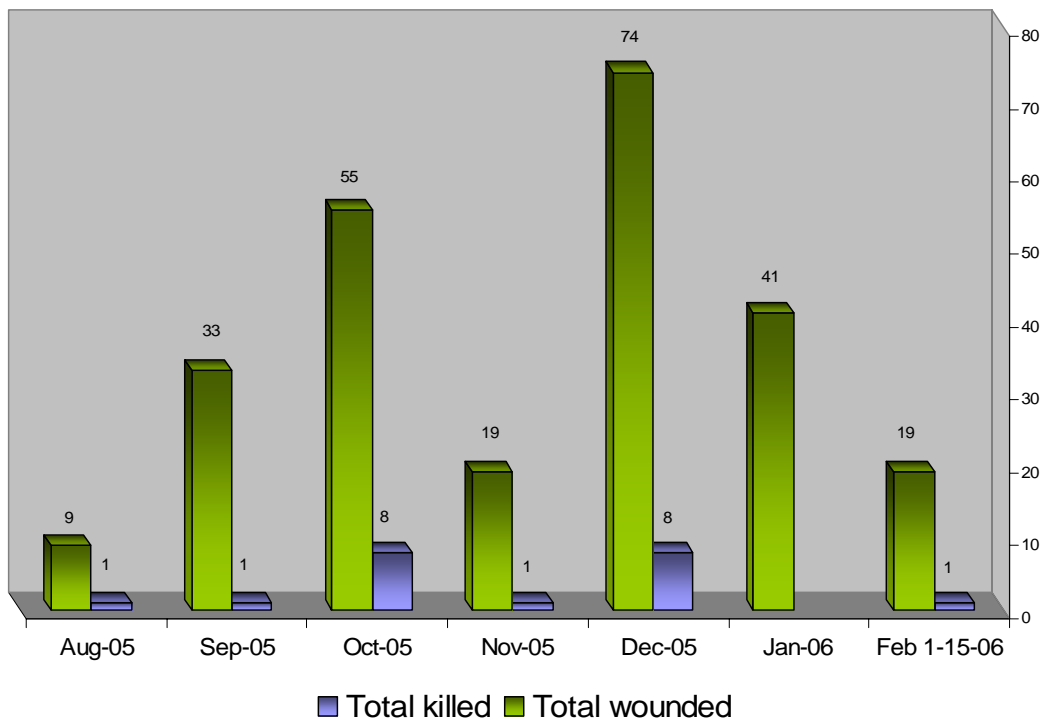
Monthly distribution of attacks since the disengagement



Monthly distribution of mortar fire



Monthly distribution of Israeli casualties



Israeli security force prevention activities

Senior PIJ terrorist-operative killed in Nablus

■ On February 7 the Israeli security forces killed **Ahmad Suliman Farid Raddad**, 32, a senior PIJ terrorist-operative from Tulkarm. He was active in the Tulkarm region and involved in the planning and carrying out of terrorist attacks. An IDF soldier sustained moderate wounds in the crossfire and an officer was slightly wounded.

Detained in Hebron: terrorists responsible for shooting attacks killing six Israelis.

■ During Israeli security force operations in January a group of five terrorist-operatives was detained in Hebron. The group, which was affiliated with Hamas, was responsible for **seven shooting attacks in the Mt. Hebron area** in 2005 (during the so-called “lull in the fighting”) **in which six Israelis were killed and eight wounded.**

Fatah and PIJ terrorist-operatives: The attacks will continue and even escalate after a Hamas government is formed

■ Recently there has been a rise in the number of provocative statements issued by terrorist-operatives, who claim that attacks will continue and even escalate when a Hamas government is formed. Prominent were the comments from Fatah, whose defeat in the recent elections caused much agitation and frustration among its supporters, and from the PIJ, the organization during 2005 carried out the greatest number of suicide bombing attacks. The statements may reflect a trend among the organizations’ operatives **to challenge Hamas** (which continues its policy of restrained attacks) to return it to full activity on the terrorist front against Israel.

■ For example, **Nasser Muhammad Ibrahim Khattib (Abu ‘Aziz)**, a leader of the Fatah terrorist-operative infrastructure in Nablus, said that his operatives would continue attacking Israel **to frustrate any step taken by a Hamas government:** “They [Hamas]

caused the failure of the plans of president [sic] Yasser Arafat and those of Fatah. Now we will bring about the failure of their plans” (Al-Quds Al-Arabi, February 14).

■ Other statements in the same spirit have been made by various terrorist-operatives. **Muhammad Hijazi**, a leading Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades terrorist-operative, said that the results of the election changed nothing and that his organization was in favor of **continuing the attacks against Israel** (Al-Nabat, February 1). **Abu al-Saa’id**, commander of the PRC in the northern Gaza Strip, said that his organization was working energetically to **broaden the scope of its terrorist activities** (Paltoday Internet site, February 2). **Khaled al-Batsh**, a PIJ leader, said that after the elections greater efforts should be made to increase the number of terrorist attacks against Israel (Al-‘Alam TV, February 1; Al-Jazeera TV, February 8).

Israeli policy following the Hamas victory

■ In view of the convening of the new Palestinian Legislative Council and the predicted composition of the Hamas government, the Israeli Foreign and Defense Ministries have been meeting to formulate policy which will provide a response to the new situation. The decisions will be presented to acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert for approval in the near future.

■ The following are the positions which will most likely be taken by Israel (according to the Israeli media):

✿ Israel **will not negotiate with a government headed by Hamas** and will reduce its dealing with the Palestinian Authority to the absolute minimum.¹

✿ Israel intends to **delegitimize the new Hamas-controlled PA government** on the grounds that it is a government run by a terrorist organization.

✿ Israel will **freeze the payment** of tax and customs funds (currently \$54 million) to the Hamas-controlled PA and will act to prevent funds from abroad from reaching the PA.

✿ Israel **will not object to the transfer of international humanitarian aid necessary for the continuation of daily Palestinian life** if it comes from international organizations which will not spill it into Hamas' coffers.

✿ Israel will continue to demand that Abu Mazen **respect his commitments regarding the road map and disarm the various terrorist organizations** (despite the fact that Israel is aware that under the new circumstances, he is virtually incapable of doing so).

¹ According to Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, February 5, Major General Yosef Mishlav, coordinator for the PA-administered territories, prepared a map of the communications channels between Israel and the PA in preparation for the deliberations about which ones will remain open.

The Internal Palestinian Arena

The new Palestinian Legislative Council convenes and calls upon Hamas to form the new government

■ On February 18, the new Palestinian Legislative Council was slated to hold its first meeting. Hamas chose **Dr. ‘Aziz Salem Murtadha al-Dwaik** from Hebron as its candidate for the position of chairman. Al-Dwaik is a senior Hamas operative who was imprisoned by Israel and expelled to Lebanon. He holds a doctorate in regional planning and architecture from the University of Pennsylvania. He lectures at Al-Najah University in Nablus and is in favor of enforcing Islam on Palestinian society “as an ideology and way of life” (Ramatan News Agency, February 15).

■ When the Council is convened, PA chairman Abu Mazen is expected to announce the basic policies of the new government and to call upon Hamas to form it. **‘Aatef ‘Adwan**, one of the Hamas Council members, claimed that Hamas would form the government within 72 hours and that it would keep the most important portfolios in its own hands, including Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs and “Information” (Al-‘Alam, February 15).

The power struggle between Abu Mazen and Hamas

■ In the internal Palestinian political arena the power struggle between Hamas and Abu Mazen continues. It has intensified because of the steps Abu Mazen took to strengthen the PA chairman’s status, as follows:

❁ At the outgoing Council’s last meeting on February 13, a proposed law was ratified to establish a constitutional court. Its members are to be nominated by the PA chairman, Abu Mazen. The court will have the power to rule on differences of opinion between Abu Mazen and the (Hamas-controlled) Legislative Council, and laws passed by the Council cannot be rescinded. The decision was made with the knowledge that Abu Mazen planned to put the Palestinian security forces under his control, **which led Hamas to criticize him strongly**, its spokesmen describing it as a preemptive strike designed to invalidate the desires of the Palestinian people evinced by the elections.

✿ The Internet newspaper Dunia Al-Watan reported that an official in Abu Mazen’s office authorized items which appeared in the Israeli media stating that he had signed a presidential [sic] order **making the Palestinian broadcasting authority and the information networks subject to his office**, taking them out of the Ministry of Information. In addition, Dunia Al-Watan reported that Abu Mazen had ordered authority over the Palestinian News Agency Wafa be returned to the PLO.

✿ Farhat Ass’ad, Hamas spokesman in the West Bank, stated that the decisions of the outgoing Palestinian Legislative Council **were invalid**, since Hamas would never agree to the PA chairman’s being the source of legal authority or the appointer of the Chief Justice and judges (Agence France-Presse, February 13). Hamas issued an announcement rejecting every measure that it said would sabotage the political and security authority of the next government even before it had been formed (Hamas Internet site, February 4).

Hamas’s plans for the post-government formation period

■ In various interviews, senior Hamas officials indicated their intentions for the period following the forming of the government:

✿ [**They would impose their authority on the gunmen and put an end to anarchy**: Khaled Mashal, head of the political bureau, again raised the issue of uniting all those who bore arms within the PA into a **national army** (Al Mushahid al-Siyasi, February 5). Mahmoud Al-Zahar said that Hamas was currently preparing a program to stop the “weapons anarchy” in the Gaza Strip resulting from the vast amounts of weapons in the hands of extended families and clans (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, February 9). However, he noted that Hamas would not give up its own weapons and that it would “**cut off the hand stretched to take the weapon of the resistance**” (Al-Rai Al-‘Aam, Kuwait, February 14).

✿ **The PA educational system would be exploited for Hamas’ ideological indoctrination.** Mahmoud al-Zahar noted that they would “turn every facet of life into resistance [i.e., chiefly indoctrinating violence and terrorism]. Education will deal with the culture of resistance. We will not tell them that Palestine is a state whose coastline runs from Rafah to Khan Yunis. We will tell them that it runs from Rafah in the south to Ras al-Nakura [Rosh Hanikra, Israel’s northern seacoast border with Lebanon] in the north, and that Palestine’s western border is the [Mediterranean] sea and its eastern border the [Jordan] river...” (Al-Rai Al-‘Aam, Kuwait, February 14).

■ **Hamas intends to take over the PLO:** Khaled Mashal said that Hamas’s next step in “Palestine’s spring cleaning” would be the attempt to take over PLO and to reconstruct it “on new political and organizational foundations,” while strengthening ties between Palestinians inside the PA-administered territories and those “outside” (Al-Mushahid Al-Siyasi, February 8).

Anarchy continues

■ On the eve of the formation of the new government, signs of anarchy continue in the PA-administered territories. Gunmen continued attacking PA institutions (the Ministry of Finance, the offices of the Palestinian satellite TV station in Ramallah and others), particularly in protest at not having received their salaries. Most striking was the abduction of Husam al-Masri, the military attaché of the Egyptian delegation in the Gaza Strip, by Fatah operatives on February 9. Eventually he was freed unharmed.



Abu Tha’ir, Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades spokesman, deploring the abduction of the Egyptian diplomat (Al-‘Alam TV, February 10).

The PA releases terrorist-operatives

■ The PA released 20 terrorist-operatives belonging the PIJ in custody at the jail in Jericho, apparently as part of a previous agreement. The PA's general prosecutor excused their release by saying that they had been detained without the authorization of the prosecutor's office, and noted that it had been coordinated with Abu Mazen (Palmedia Internet site, February 14).

■ The PIJ operatives had been detained after the suicide bombing attack in Netanya on December 5, 2005. Their release, effected on the eve of transferring rule to Hamas, illustrates once again that the PA takes no effective steps against those who carry out terrorist attacks, including deadly suicide bombing attacks directed against Israeli civilians and condemned by the international community

The international arena: official Russian invitation for Hamas

■ During a press conference held on February 9, Russian president Vladimir Putin announced that Russia was in contact with Hamas and was planning to invite the movement leadership to visit Moscow in the near future. He noted that Hamas had won in democratic elections and that the decisions of the Palestinian people had to be respected. He added that a solution had to be found that would satisfy both Hamas and the international community.

■ **Ismail Haniyeh**, head of the Hamas faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council and one of the top-ranking movement officials, main candidate for the post of prime minister, rushed to accept Russia's invitation in principle if it was issued officially (Reuters, February 9). Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** confirmed that a Hamas delegation was planning to visit Russia at the end of February, and noted that he did not think that Russia would impose conditions on Hamas. On the other hand, Alexander Klugin, Russian emissary to the Middle East, said that during the meeting with the Hamas leadership

Russia would attempt to put forward the principles the Quartet had agreed on, two of which were recognition of the right of the State of Israel to exist and an end to terrorism against it (AP Moscow, February 10).

■ Hamas's quick acceptance of Putin's invitation reflects purely pragmatic considerations, the main one of which is exploiting the opportunity to end its isolation and break into the international arena. However, in principle and in ideology Hamas is hostile to the Russian régime because it (Hamas) identifies with the Chechen separatists (viewing them as part of the global jihad) and with their terrorist practices.² Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri, when asked about the organization's connections with the Chechens, denied that such connections existed and claimed that Hamas did not interfere with the internal affairs of other countries. However, when asked whether Hamas supported the Chechens in principle, **he refused to answer** (Reuters Jerusalem, February 13).



Israel (the stereotype Jew of anti-Semitic cartoons) is blocking the outstretched hands of Putin to Hamas (Al-Mustaqbal, February 11).

² For further information see our Special Bulletin [“Russian president invites Hamas to Moscow.”](#)

A Hamas delegation visits Arab/Muslim states to enlist political and financial support

■ A delegation of senior Hamas officials from “inside” and “outside” the PA-administered territories, headed by Khaled Mashal, is currently making the rounds of the Arab/Muslim countries. They began with a visit to Syrian president Bashar Assad and continued to Egypt, Qatar and Sudan. They are expected to reach Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran and perhaps additional countries.

■ Goals of the visits are to enlist support for Hamas and calm fears of the possible repercussions of its victory. Another, especially of the visits to Saudi Arabia and Iran, is to find a source of funding to replace the money the PA has received from Israel and the west, should the establishment of a Hamas government lead to the freezing of payments. A “Palestinian source” told the Arabic daily newspaper Al-Hayat on January 30 that the delegation would try to raise \$500 million to pay the PA’s budget and that Hamas would channel the money into the needs of the Palestinian people and fighting corruption. In our assessment, it would seem that the expectations of continuing massive financial aid from the Arab/Muslim world are somewhat exaggerated.



The Hamas delegation arriving in Sudan (Al-Jazeera TV, February 14)

- In practical terms, Ismail Haniyeh said the following:
 - ❁ At a rally held in Beit Lahiya, he said that “an [unnamed] Arab state” was willing to transfer \$100 million to pay PA salaries and to cover the Palestinian government’s debt (Radio Al-Aqsa, February 3).

✿ An interviewer for Al-Quds asked Haniyeh if it was true that Iran had promised to cover the PA's economic debt and pay the civil servants' salaries. He answered that Iran would probably provide [financial] support for the Palestinian people but did not say that he actually had a specific offer in hand from Iran (Al-Quds, February 4).

Hamas hypocrisy: extremism vs. a Mr. Nice Guy campaign

Hamas leaders continue their unbridled attacks and extremist statements when dealing with the Arab/Muslim world, while waging a Mr. Nice Guy campaign aimed at audiences in the west

■ Senior Hamas officials, especially political bureau chief Khaled Mashal and his second in command, Musa Abu Marzuq, continued making extremist statements when the target audiences were Arabs and Muslims. **They stressed the illegitimacy of the State of Israel and Hamas' intention to use terrorism and violence to destroy it.** It was also their way of "suggesting" that the Arab countries join the Muslims because they were the winning side.

■ Prominent in that context was a speech given by Khaled Mashal at Al-Murabit mosque in Damascus before an audience which accompanied his statements with cries of "**death to Israel.**" In his Islamic-oriented speech, he repeated Hamas's radical stance towards Israel, the Jewish people, the United States and the west. The main points were:³

✿ According to the prophet Muhammad, Allah promised the Muslims victory over the Jews and "Zionists" on the soil of "Palestine." That prophecy was now coming to pass with the Hamas victory in the [Palestinian Legislative Council] elections. Mashal claimed he expected Israel to be defeated in Palestine, the United States in

³ During his visit to Sudan, Khaled Mashal gave another speech in which he claimed that Israel is not legitimate and that it would not enjoy security and political legitimacy in the future (Al-Jazeera TV Khartoum, February 14)

Iraq, and that “the nation of Muhammad would be victorious in Palestine and Iraq and on all Arab and Muslim soil.”

✿ The western countries should apologize to the nation of Islam before it was too late: **“Tomorrow our nation will be on the throne of the world... tomorrow we will rule the world.** Apologize today, before repentance will be of no avail.” Mashal said that western countries had to repair their relations with the Arab/Muslim nation and “to contact the winners, not the losers.”

✿ “Before Israel dies, it must be humiliated...” Hamas would “defeat Israel’s psychology and security” before it defeated Israel on the ground. Mashal claimed that in their hearts the Arab leaders wanted “the Palestinian resistance to be victorious and Palestine to be liberated,” even if today they were too polite to say so and too diplomatic because they feared the Americans.

✿ Hamas preferred “charity donations from clean hands” to millions coming from countries which contributed to “the pockets of those who received benefits and of the security forces.” Under Hamas the Palestinian people would learn to make do with what it had. “We will sow what we eat, make what we wear and rely upon ourselves.”

✿ Hamas had no fear of the German chancellor’s threat-accompanied demand that Hamas recognize Israel, and had its own political agenda, “speaking with a difference voice and using different tools.” Hamas would not agree to recognize Israel or cede the “right to resist” [i.e., the continuation of violence and terrorism] and “the weapons of resistance.” The Palestinian people had made Hamas responsible for “liberating” Palestine, returning Jerusalem, liberating the 9,000 prisoners, male and female, and returning the five and a half million refugees torn from their Palestinian homeland.



Khaled Mashal at Al-Mubarit mosque in Damascus; in the background is a picture of Hamas founder, sheikh Ahmad Yassin (Al-Quds, February 4)

The Mr. Nice Guy campaign

■ As opposed to the above, Hamas initiated a Mr. Nice Guy campaign for western ears. Senior Hamas officials tried to hide or blur their support of terrorism, their goal of destroying the State of Israel and their desire to force a radical Islamic régime on the residents of the PA, and to trumpet slogans which are more acceptable to the west and give Hamas a more positive image. For example:

- ✿ On February 2, Ismail Haniyeh told Fox News that he was prepared to accept a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, and noted that in return Hamas would grant Israel a hudna [*truce*] of at least 10 years.
- ✿ On February 5, Khaled Mashal, who in Damascus defamed Germany and its Chancellor, told *Der Spiegel* that Hamas would behave pragmatically and honor the agreements signed by the PA without compromising Palestinian interests (Agence France-Presse, February 5).
- ✿ On February 4, Mahmoud al-Zahar told the Italian *Il Giornale* that if Israel did not attack Hamas, the truce would last for a long time. On February 8, Khaled Mashal told BBC television that Hamas would consider a long-term truce but only after Israel retreated and solved the problem of the refugees who were expelled in 1948.

✿ On January 31, Musa Abu Marzuq told *The Washington Post* that Hamas valued democracy, pluralism and raising the status of women, in an obvious attempt to improve Hamas' image in American public opinion.⁴

The Danish cartoon riots spread to the Palestinian Authority

■ In cities in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip there were **protest demonstrations, some of them violent**, against the legations of the European Union countries. Some of the demonstrations were spontaneous and some were organized by Muslim clerics and terrorist organizations. They were part of the **wave of violent demonstrations** sweeping through Muslim countries in the Middle East and among Muslim communities and countries throughout the world to protest the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten's* (and later others') publication of cartoons seen by Muslims as offensive to Islam and the prophet Muhammad:

✿ **At the beginning of February there were protest demonstrations and processions in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank in Nablus, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Tulkarm, Hebron, Jerusalem and elsewhere.** Some of them were held near offices of the European Union and the legations of Denmark, France and Germany. Thousands of Palestinians participated, burned Danish and EU flags and vandalized equipment and vehicles. In some instances groups of armed terrorists joined the demonstrations. In Rafah, for example, armed gunmen fired shots at pictures of the Danish foreign minister and burned the Danish flag.

✿ In **Hebron** thousands demonstrated and were particularly violent. On February 8, rocks and Molotov cocktails were thrown at the headquarters of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH) and equipment and vehicles were vandalized. The Palestinian security forces did not manage to control the rioting demonstrators and the IDF was forced to intervene to prevent a further deterioration of the situation and physical harm to the 60 or so observers there at the time. In the

⁴ On the other hand, in Cairo he called for the destruction of the State of Israel and noted that after Palestine was "liberated," the new Palestinian state erected on the ruins of Israel would allow the Jews to live as Palestinian citizens (AP Cairo, February 7).

wake of the demonstrations the atmosphere in Hebron has remained tense, and the observers have left the city in fear of possible physical harm.

A virtual threat against European countries and Israel in a cartoon in a Hamas publication



The inscription reads: “The nation of Muhammad [i.e., all Muslims] will settle accounts with you, enemies of civilization and humanity.” The cartoon shows a bloody dagger piercing the flags of several European countries (Denmark at the top) and Israel (at the bottom). It appeared in *Minbar al-Islah*, a Hamas publication issued for the first time before the recent municipal elections, and was printed in a special supplement devoted to cartoons considered offensive to the prophet Muhammad (February 8).

■ In the PA-administered territories the atmosphere toward foreigners was tense and their physical safety was threatened, for example by various Islamic groups in Hebron and Nablus. It was also reported that an attack occurred in a hotel in Nablus where foreign guests stay and that a German citizen suspected of being Danish was abducted on February 2 and released a few hours later.



The abducted German is released (Al-Jazeera TV, February 3)

■ In the mosques in the PA-administered territories, which are traditionally centers for incitement against Israel and the west, the clerics called upon Islamic countries to take diplomatic measures against western countries. Some of them even encouraged popular expressions of rage and revenge against those who disseminated the cartoons. Prominent among them was the sermon delivered in what Agence France-Presse called “the principal mosque in Gaza” (apparently the Sheikh Zayed Mosque), which demanded the **beheading** of such individuals (Agence France-Presse, February 3). Flyers were issued calling for the boycott of Danish goods and for all foreign nationals to leave the PA-administered territories.



A flyer calling for the boycott of Danish and Norwegian goods (from a Palestinian Islamic Jihad Internet site, February 9, 2006)