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**Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
at the Center for Special Studies (C.S.S)**

The battle for hearts and minds

The ongoing Israeli-Palestinian confrontation as a case study

By Dr. Reuven Erlich

Introduction: the terrorist campaign against Israel

✿ Although there is no universally accepted consensus as to what constitutes **terrorism**, it can be viewed as a means used in a political struggle, a means deliberately void of moral or legal restraints and which exploits a wide range of violent tactics to force various governments to change their policies. Unlike conventional battlefield warfare, **terrorism attacks civilians on their home ground** to achieve political, national, religious and other goals. Acts of terrorism are usually carried out by **terrorist organizations** which in many instances are supported, directly or indirectly, by various countries referred to as “**countries sponsoring terrorism.**”

✿ The international community has condemned terrorism, calling it **prohibited and unlawful**, a criminal act whose perpetrators should be severely punished. That is principally because its perpetrators **choose innocent civilian targets** to further their aims (as opposed to guerilla warfare, whose targets are primarily military and security personnel).¹

¹ The term *guerilla* (which means “little war” in Spanish) *warfare* was originally used to describe military actions carried out by irregular forces behind enemy lines, or by the local population against an occupying army. For the various definitions of terrorism, see Boaz Ganor, *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle: A Guide For Decision Makers*, Transaction Publishers, Somerset, New Jersey, 2005. See also the article (in Hebrew) by Amos Yadlin, “The problem of defining terrorism” (from the IDF radio’s broadcasts of university lectures for the course called Aspects of Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism, 2004).

✿ For the past four decades the **Palestinian terrorist organizations** have – with varying degrees of intensity -- been waging a terrorist campaign against the State of Israel. The last round, which began in late September 2000, **has been the longest and bloodiest to date**. So far **more than a thousand Israelis** have been killed, the **overwhelming majority** of them **civilians**. Moreover, the number of Israelis killed during the past five years is **greater** than the number killed by the Arab countries and the Palestinian terrorist organizations during the previous thirty-five.

✿ During the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian confrontation , **the Palestinian terrorist organizations have made extensive use of suicide bombing terrorism**. It was directed almost exclusively at the civilian population because it was considered the **principal and most effective means** of disrupting daily life in Israel. It was intended to attack Israel’s social and economic infrastructures and undermine the Israeli political leadership’s willingness to continue the confrontation and force it to make political concessions.

✿ The campaign has consisted of three battles: **the operational battle on the ground** between the Palestinian terrorist organizations and the Israeli security forces; **the political battle**, where support is sought by both sides from the international community and the Arab and Muslim nations; and **the battle for hearts and minds**, where both Israel and the Palestinian terrorist organizations use a wide variety of methods to present their positions to the relevant target audiences at home and abroad to win them over to their side.

All three battles are complementary and influence one another, and their successes and failures are interrelated. Below we will attempt to describe the **battles for hearts and minds** of both Israel and the Palestinian terrorist organizations.²

² A central area dealt with by the Special Information Bulletins of the [Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center](#).

What is the battle for hearts and minds, what are its goals and what are its weapons?

✿ The Palestinian terrorist campaign includes the battle for heart and minds, whose goal is to influence and perhaps even **shape**, directly or indirectly, the **ideas, opinions and attitudes** of the various participants in the conflict. Accordingly, the Palestinian terrorist organizations deal with **four areas**: the most important of them is **the Palestinian public; the other three are the Arab/Muslim world, the international community and to some extent even the Israel public.**

✿ **What is the way of defining the battle of hearts and minds?**³ The Hebrew expression has no exact English translation, but it can be best described as “**the battle for perception.**” Arabic, however, does have a parallel expression, and Hamas, the terrorist organization which leads the campaign, refers in its 1988 charter to the importance of spreading what they call “**Islamic consciousness**”⁴ (*al-wa’i al-islami*). The activity of nurturing and spreading Islamic consciousness (*‘amaliyyat al-taw’iyah*) appears in the charter as one of **Hamas’s main missions.**

✿ The **weapons** in the information campaign are **metaphorical.** The ammunition consists of the written word, speeches, TV clips, sermons in mosques, etc., but they can be just as lethal as live bullets.⁵ **They influence the motivation, willpower and determination to continue the campaign regardless of the difficulties and failures. The intelligent use of the aforementioned weapons adds firepower to the conventional weaponry used on the ground.**

³ The expression “hearts and minds” was first used by John Adams, second US president (1735-1826), who said that “the American Revolutionary War was **won not on the battlefield but in the hearts and minds of the American People.**” “Hearts and minds” means, according to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, “emotional and intellectual support, complete approval.” The battle for hearts and minds refers to a non-military struggle aimed at gaining that support and approval.

⁴ In our understanding, “Islamic” refers to a person or organization reinterpreting Muslim religious precepts and traditions to transform Islam into a political ideology (also sometimes called “Islamist.”).

⁵ “The pen” as 19th century British statesman and author Lord Edward Bulwer-Lytton noted, “is mightier than the sword.”

❁ **Terrorist organizations** all over the globe, among them Al-Qaeda, understand the importance of the battle for hearts and minds and the uses of its weapons. However, for the Palestinian terrorist organizations, especially Hamas, battle for hearts and minds is of **supreme importance**. They view it as an important tool for influencing Palestinian public opinion (first priority), Arab public opinion (second priority) and international public opinion (third priority). In practical terms, they attempt use the battle for hearts and minds to solve two major problems related to their final goals and to the strategy for attaining them:

➤ The first is the method preferred by the Palestinian terrorist organizations to achieve their aims, that is, the use of **suicide bombing terrorism, whose only goal is to cause widespread, indiscriminate civilian carnage among the Israeli population (the so-called “Zionist enemy”)**. The suicide bombers’ battlefields are shopping malls, buses, restaurants and crowded streets. The international community **deplores** suicide bombing attacks and labels those who carry them out as terrorists. Suicide bombing terrorism has also been controversial within Palestinian society. In addition, **suicide committed for personal reasons** is forbidden by Islamic law, as will be discussed below.

➤ The second is the Palestinian terrorist organizations’ long-term strategic goals, that is, **the destruction of the State of Israel** (part of which is the across-the-board rejection of the concept of two states for two peoples) and **the establishment of a Palestinian state on the ruins**, even if there are temporary lulls in the fighting and truces along the way (according to Hamas, the Palestinian state will be run as a radical Islamic theocracy, similar in perception to the régime of the Islamic Revolution in Iran). The international community considers such goals unacceptable, and they are the subject of disagreement even within sectors of the Palestinian population as well as the Arab/Muslim world.

❁ The Palestinian terrorist organizations, led by Hamas, need to find a way to overcome the objections to what is generally perceived by the west and even by Palestinians as their **use of disputed and even unacceptable strategies to achieve unacceptable goals**. To do so, and to **legitimize their actions against Israel in the**

eyes of the world, they use all the weapons in their ideological arsenal to both inculcate the “validity” of their strategy at home and abroad, and, when necessary, to **hide or blur their true goals** and the terrorist methods they use to achieve them.

❁ **Specific words and terms** referring to the confrontation are powerful ammunition in the terrorist organizations’ arsenal (See below). They are used to **indoctrinate target audiences with the notion that terrorism** (including suicide bombing terrorism) **is legitimate, admirable, glorifies those who carry it out and turns them into role models**. They also use them to **downplay their long-term goals**, especially in front of western audiences, to delegitimize the Zionist movement, the existence of the State of Israel and the justness of its struggle. Sometimes they also exploit Muslim and Christian-European anti-Semitic myths, **to delegitimize the very existence of the Jewish people** (they often make no distinction between the State of Israel and the Jewish people).

❁ The following are two typical examples of how the Palestinian terrorist organizations misuse basic western and Arabic terms in the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation:

Example No. 1: Legitimizing terrorism by calling it “resistance”

❁ The basic term used by the Palestinian terrorist organizations and their supporters and sponsors is “**resistance**,” or, in Arabic, *muqawamah*. The term was borrowed from the **French “Résistance,”** the underground (“maquis”) that fought the Nazi invaders during the Second World War, to legitimize the so-called Palestinian “resistance” (i.e., terrorist attacks), by presenting it as the response of a conquered people to the occupation. The implied comparison **ignores** the fact that the French Résistance attacked the Nazi occupation, that is, German soldiers, military installations, etc., and not innocent civilians, men, women, children and the aged. In addition, the French Résistance wanted to expel the Germans from France and regain its independence, not destroy German and establish a French state on the ruins. **The methods and goals of the French Résistance were completely different from those of the Palestinian terrorist organizations, which have flattered themselves by appropriating the French term.**

❁ The Arabic word *muqawamah*, “resistance,” is a secular term which **does not appear** in classical Muslim sources and apparently came into the language only during the 1930s. It has been adopted by **all the Palestinian terrorist organizations**, especially Hamas, and by **Hezbollah in Lebanon**. For example, “Hamas” is an acronym for “Islamic resistance movement,”⁶ and the organization’s weapons (and those of the other terrorist organizations) are referred to as “**resistance weapons**,” while the culture of glorifying suicide bombers is called “**the culture of resistance**.” Hamas’ recent (January 2006) strategy during and after elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council called for the **continuation of the “resistance.”** In southern Lebanon, Hamas terrorist attacks are called “**the Islamic resistance**” (and not the “Lebanese resistance”) and the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament calls itself the faction “**faithful to the resistance.**”

⁶ The absence of the word “Palestinian” or the expression “Palestine liberation” is not a matter of chance. The goals of the “Islamic resistance movement” in both Palestinian and Lebanon, **go far beyond national-territorial boundaries.**

Using the term “resistance” (*muqawamah*) to market the continuation of anti-Israeli terrorist attacks: a tactic in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections

“Resistance,” i.e., terrorism,
“Symbol of the [Islamic] nation’s
honor...”



The message: reform at home and terrorism abroad. “One hand builds, the other resists.”



Hamas posters distributed before the Palestinian Legislative Council elections. The one on the left shows a masked gunman and bullets arranged to form the number 6, Hamas’ number in the elections. The upper inscription reads “Resistance [*al-muqawamah*], symbol of the [Islamic] nation’s honor and the secret of its glory and victory.” The poster on the right reads “One hand builds, the other resists,” with the Temple Mount compound (*haram al-sharif*) in the background and the Dome of the Rock in the center (Pictures from the Hamas Internet site).

❁ To sum up, the Palestinian terrorist organizations and Hezbollah use the term “resistance” to **sanitize their terrorist attacks** and to represent them as “legitimate resistance” to the “occupation.” However, in Arabic the term has **wider connotations of generally resisting an enemy emotionally, socially, culturally, economically and politically**. Thus aggressive terrorist activity, whose goal is the destruction of the State of Israel, is camouflaged by the extensive use of a word with **positive connotations** for the west, while for Arabs and Muslims **its significance is completely different**.

Example No. 2: Legitimizing suicide bombing attacks by calling them *istishhad*, “a martyr’s death for the sake of Allah.”

✿ To overcome the problems posed by Islamic law forbidding suicide because of personal distress, Hamas and the other Palestinian terrorist organizations adopted the Islamic term *istishhad*, which means **the death of a martyr (male or female) for the sake of Allah**. The terrorist who chooses to commit such an act of his (or her) own free will does not commit *intihar*, suicide for reasons of personal distress, but rather **sacrifices his (or her) life for a higher purpose, one which has religious Islamic sanctity**. Such purposes are meant to please Allah and to be rewarded with benefits granted to the suicide bomber and his family after his death. The benefits include absolution for the suicide bomber’s sins, paradise, 72 black-eyed virgins, life after death in the presence of Allah, Muhammad and the righteous Muslims, and recommendations (*shafa’ah*) for 70 of the suicide bomber’s relatives so they might also reach paradise.

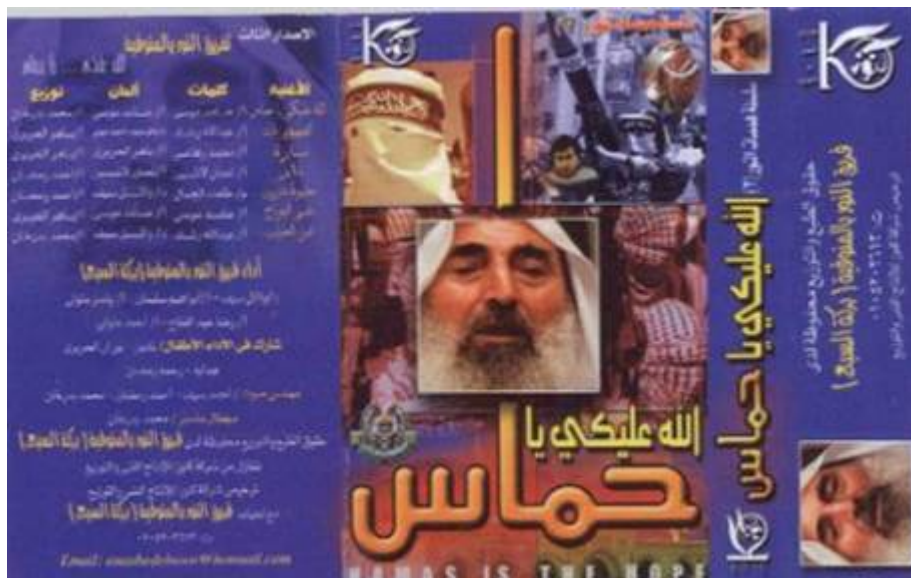
✿ During the ongoing violent Israeli-Palestinian confrontation, Hamas and the other terrorist organizations have waged a battle for hearts and minds targeting the Palestinian public, especially Palestinian youth. **Its purpose is to legitimize suicide bombing terrorism** and to recruit suicide bombers. The campaign has been carried out in the mosques, educational institutions, mass media and the Palestinian street. Its efforts were rewarded with **an important operative victory**: suicide bombing terrorism, which until the current confrontation was in dispute within Palestinian society, **moved into the center of Palestinian consensus** and made it simpler for the Palestinian terrorist organizations **to recruit suicide bombers**, most of them well educated, and to convince them to sacrifice their lives by dying the deaths of martyrs for the sake of Allah.

✿ A clear example of the success of the battle for hearts and minds is the **suicide bomber culture which has flourished in Palestinian society during the current confrontation** -- glorified, magnified and turned into a cult. The suicide bombers and those who dispatched them become **role models**, and their families achieve high

social status (and receive generous stipends from the Palestinian Authority, the Arab/Muslim countries and Islamic funds and foundations abroad).

❁ Suicide bombing terrorism has **spread** throughout the Arab/Muslim world and western world and has been used considerably in Iraq and other countries, such as Turkey, Morocco, Indonesia, Chechnya, Britain and Spain. The cult of suicide bombers and their dispatchers has been disseminated through books, songs, television, movies, newspaper articles and religious Islamic edicts (*fatwas*). **It has turned suicide bombers and those who plan and organize suicide bombing attacks (i.e., Yehia Ayyash, “the engineer”)** into role models within Palestinian society and sometimes even beyond.

Glorifying Hamas' suicide bombing terrorism in the Arab world



The cover for an audio cassette of songs distributed in Egypt by a group called Fariq al-Nour. It contains songs of praise for Hamas, suicide bombers and suicide bombing attacks. The fourth song is called “On the soil of Netanya and Tel Aviv, fire, fire...,” and the lyrics are “with an explosive belt or rocks we will turn what you built into a heap of ruins.” Many such cassettes are distributed in Egypt and throughout the Arab/Muslim world.

The war for the hearts and minds of the younger generation: Turning a suicide bomber and his dispatcher into role models



Terrorists are role models for the younger generation: ‘**Abd al-Rahman Hammad** (center), who planned the suicide bombing attack at the Dolphinarium in Tel Aviv (June 2001). **Sa’id Hassan Hutri** (left), who carried it out. The picture and dedication beneath it hang over the entrance to the **Filisteen Elementary School in Qalqilya** (Photographed by the IDF, January 2003). It should be noted that in 2005 Hamas was successful in the municipal elections in Qalqilya and it can only be expected that it will continue to foster the suicide bomber culture.

The battle for hearts and minds: the Hamas movement as a case study

✿ **Hamas** is a movement whose **ideology is radical-Islamic**. It is the **Palestinian offspring of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood**, which identifies with all Muslims in distress, has called for the spread of the message of Islam over the world, and favors the campaign for global jihad. On January 25, 2006, Hamas won an impressive victory in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections without abandoning its stated aim of the **destruction of the State of Israel** and the **use of terrorism** (which they call “resistance”) as a means of achieving that aim.



A poster which appeared on Hamas’s Internet site. It illustrates the connection between the Muslim Brotherhood and the importance of the battle for hearts and minds. Hassan al-Bana, Muslim Brotherhood founder, appears at the top with Ahmad Yassin (right) and ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Rantisi (left). Below is movement’s slogan: “*Da’wah* [religious-political indoctrination], *Fikrah* [thought, idea, attitude], *shahadah* [death as a martyr for the sake of Allah].”

✿ It should be noted that Hamas is the terrorist organization which has carried out the **greatest number of suicide bombing attacks** and has done much to develop suicide bombing terrorism. **It carried out the first one at Mehola in the Jordan Valley** (April 16, 1993), and throughout the 1990s planned, organized and carried out a series of such attacks to **sabotage the Oslo accords**. Between 2000 and 2004 **it was responsible for 40% of all the suicide bombing attacks**, and Hamas’s terrorist-operative wing, the Izzedine al-Qassam Battalions, was responsible for **almost half of the deaths of Israelis killed in terrorist attacks: 482 out of 1084**.

✿ The Hamas charter (**published 1988**) stresses the importance of the **dissemination of the [radical] Islamic perception**, which the movement regards as its primary mission. According to the charter, that must occur in **three arenas: the**

Palestinian, the Arab and the Islamic (Article 15).⁷ According to the charter, the duty of religious and cultural figures, educators, media personnel and the general educated public is to carry out the mission. Hamas puts a special emphasis on education, and the charter calls for fundamental changes in the educational systems in the PA-administered territories (see below) with the aim of **indoctrinating the younger generation with “Islamic religious-political education” (da’wah) in the spirit of Hamas’s radical Islamic ideology**, which originated with the Muslim Brotherhood.

✿ Throughout its existence, Hamas has been extremely active in spreading and fostering its radical Islamic perception of the world, working **in four focal areas of Palestinian life**:

➔ **Educational institutions**

✿ **For Hamas**, influenced by its parent organization, the Muslim Brotherhood, which stresses religious-political education (*da’wah*), **such education is central**. Hamas is very active among the younger generation of Palestinians, from kindergarten through elementary and high school to university. It influences **teachers**, has its own educational institutions and distributes **school supplies** for free. **Books, booklets and posters** are distributed by Hamas and Hamas-affiliated **youth and student organizations**. **Summer camps**, which include Islamic indoctrination, are also sponsored by the movement as part of its informal educational system.

✿ Worthy of special mention is **Hamas’ student organization, Al-Kutlah Al-Islamiyyah**, which is very active in the universities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. One of its main mission is enlisting students into its ranks and dispatching them to carry out suicide bombing attacks. In fact, between 2000-2003, the height of suicide bombing terrorism, about 22% of the suicide bombers were **educated at universities** in the PA-administered territories.

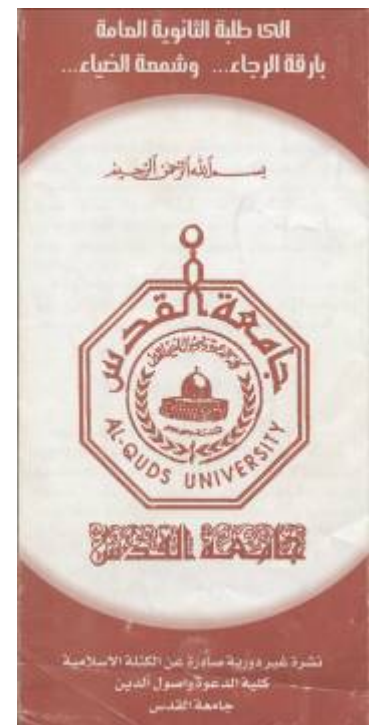
⁷ Hamas also campaigns in the international and internal Israeli arenas, although that is not mentioned in the charter. The translation and analysis of the charter appears on our Website (February 8, 2006) and will shortly appear in English as well.

☀ **Hamas has used an intensive information campaign in its various educational institutions to nurture a new generation of movement activists, both male and female, indoctrinated with its ethos, religiously devout and adhering to its radical Islamic ideology, and ready to eventually sacrifice their lives in terrorist (mainly suicide bombing) attacks.**



Incitement to violence, killing, terrorism and launching a holy war to annihilate Israel, as demonstrated in the 2001 graduation ceremony of pre-school children in Gaza, controlled by the Hamas-affiliated Islamic Association

Indoctrinating high school students intending to continue their studies at a university



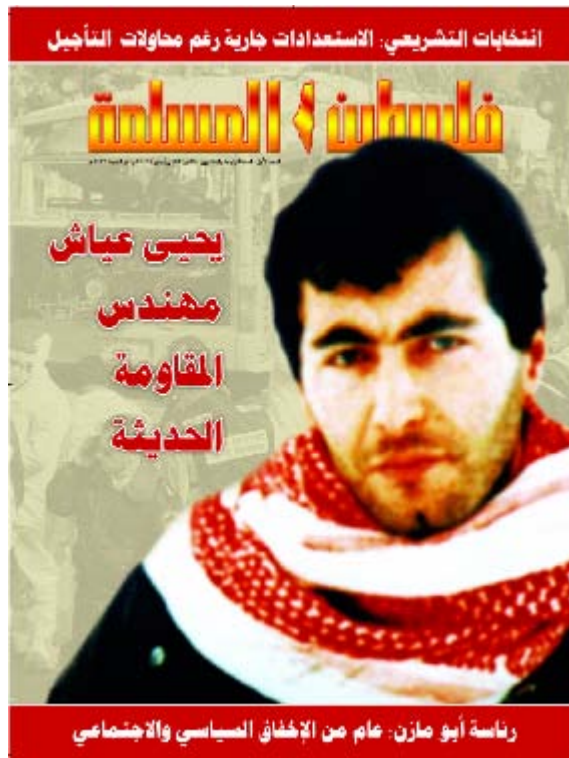
A flyer distributed by the Islamic Block (Hamas’s student movement) at Al-Quds University in Abu Dis (east Jerusalem), the School for *Da’wah* [Islamic missionary indoctrination] and the Tenets of [the Muslim] Religion. It was given to high school students who wanted to continue their education, and explained that they should view themselves as **emissaries of the ideas of radical Islam**, thus making them ideologically ready to join the Hamas ranks. According to the flyer, the School for *Da’wah* and the Tenets of [the Muslim] Religion at Al-Quds University is the “cradle of the propagandists who successfully spread Allah’s message to the four corners of the earth.” It boasts of its graduates and notes that they have become “leaders, preachers and jihad warriors,” and represents as role models a series of Hamas leaders, graduates of the school, some of them senior terrorist-operatives who were killed or detained by Israel.

✦ The printed word and the electronic media

✿ Hamas publishes **newspapers and journals** in the PA-administered territories and abroad (for example, *Filisteen Al-Muslima* [“Muslim Palestine”], distributed from Britain and *Al-Rissalah* [“The Mission”], distributed from the Gaza Strip), it has a **radio station** (Sawt Al-Aqsa [“The Voice Al-Aqsa”], in Gaza), **research centers** (for example, Al-Mustaqbal [“The Future”] in the Gaza Strip) and **approximately 20 main**

Internet sites in seven languages. It recently started its own television channel (**Al-Aqsa TV**, inspired by Hezbollah's **Al-Manar TV**) which has begun experimental broadcasts.

Glorifying the suicide bomber



A picture of **Yehia 'Ayyash** as it appeared on the January 2006 cover of Hamas' magazine *Filisteen Al-Muslima*, distributed from Britain. The caption reads, "**Yehia 'Ayyash, the engineer of the modern resistance.**" 'Ayyash, who planned, organized and dispatched suicide bombers, was responsible for **the murder of 54 Israelis and the wounding of 430** and was turned by Hamas into a role model for Palestinian society and the Arab/Muslim world.

✿ In addition, Hamas is provided with a respectable pulpit by the **Arab satellite TV channels** (**Al-Jazeera TV** and **Al-Arabiya TV**) and sometimes even by **western media**, which frequently **interviews its senior operatives** in the PA-administered territories and Damascus. Hamas also frequently gives its own one-sided, manipulative "information" to Arab and western TV channels and written and electronic media.



Sending Hamas's messages to the Arab/Muslim world: Ismail Haniyeh, senior Hamas official, speaking into Arab media microphones during a press conference in Gaza.

✦ “Charitable societies”

☀ Hamas, like other Islamic organizations throughout the Arab/Muslim world, has a **broad infrastructure of “charitable societies”** and other social institutions which are well-grounded in Palestinian society. The infrastructure is **under Hamas control** even if it is officially subordinate to the PA. The infrastructure is known as the *da'wah*, an Islamic term meaning “**religious-political education, propaganda and Islamic missionary indoctrination.**” The “charitable societies” aid the local population with matters related to education, religion and various social issues.

☀ While dealing with social issues, the Hamas “charitable societies” also **support the movement’s terrorist-operative infrastructure** (providing aid to the imprisoned, the wounded and the families of *shaheeds*). In addition, they take an active part in the **battle for the hearts and minds of the Palestinian people**, a fact that has been proved several times over by the documents and other material captured by the IDF.⁸ They do that by distributing propaganda materials (posters, flyers, books, etc.) and by providing aid for the focal areas of the campaign (Hamas-controlled mosques, educational institutions and student organizations).

⁸ Much information about the activities of the charitable societies can be found on our Internet site.

“Charity” and terrorism



Sheikh Hamid al-Bitawi, Hamas religious leader and **chairman of the Islamic “charitable society” Al-Tadhamun** in Nablus, who was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council in the recent elections as a Hamas candidate. He is seen here carrying a gun at a rally in Nablus to commemorate Mahmoud Madani [a senior Hamas terrorist-operative who died in a targeted killing in February 2001] (Picture from the Internet site of the Hamas student union at Al-Najah University, February 22, 2001).

✦ The mosques

☀ During the ongoing Palestinian terrorism campaign **hundreds of mosques** in the PA-administered territories have become **centers of hate propaganda and incitement to violence against Israel** (a situation which exists throughout the Arab/Muslim world). Many mosques are controlled by Hamas, even if they are officially subordinate to the PA. The militant sermons heard by the large audiences of worshippers are full of propaganda directed against Israel, the PA, the Jewish people, the United States and the western world and its values in general.

☀ The sermons are delivered by Muslim clerics with strong rhetorical skills and their message is further disseminated by posters and flyers hung in the mosques or distributed to worshippers along with video and audio cassettes. Palestinian media broadcast some of the sermons live, making them accessible to an even wider audience. Under Abu Mazen, at least before the Hamas victory, there was a decrease in the exposure the such sermons on PA controlled TV and radio.

Hate propaganda found in Hamas-controlled Al-'Ein mosque in El-Bireh



A flyer found in Al-'Ein mosque, perhaps originally hung on a bulletin board. It contains **defamatory material, a mixture of anti-Semitism and anti-American hate propaganda**. The Jews are represented as having crucified the Palestinians as they “crucified Jesus.” President Bush is presented as the progeny of the anti-Christ (the false Christian Messiah) for having “sworn loyalty” to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.



A poster commemorating Ramez Fahmi Izz al-Din Abu Salim, the student who **carried out the suicide bombing attack at Café Hillel in Jerusalem on September 9, 2003**. Other posters and documents were found in the mosque preaching hatred and inciting terrorist attacks against Israel, the Jewish people, the United States and the west in general, and presenting Hamas terrorists as role models.

❁ **What has Hamas achieved with the battle for hearts and minds?** As far as the **internal Palestinian** sphere is concerned, its **achievements** have been **impressive in three areas: socially and politically** it acquired **vast public support** which enabled it to win the Palestinian Legislative Council elections, wresting victory from Fatah and the PA leadership. With regard to its **operational capabilities**, it established a large cadre of terrorist-operatives, well equipped and well disciplined, its members

coming from the universities, mosques and Palestinian street. Within the sphere of education, the most important in Hamas's view, the movement succeeded in raising a generation of cadres imbued with radical Islamic consciousness and awareness, full of hatred for the State of Israel and the west.

❁ **In the other areas, Hamas achievements have been limited:**

✦ In the **Arab/Muslim world** they have managed to rally support chiefly from **Iran and Syria**, two terrorism-sponsoring countries, and from radical Islamic foundations and organizations operating in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States and European and other countries. However, countries such as **Jordan and Egypt**, where opposition from the Islamic Muslim Brotherhood presents a danger to the régimes, keep their distance from Hamas while trying (especially Egypt) to influence it to respond more positively to existing circumstances.

✦ **Internationally**, Hamas has made no headway in its efforts to soften the United States' **hard-line attitudes and policies** against it, and is still on its list of terrorist organizations. The European Union (EU), as a matter of principle, opposes Hamas's strategic goals and its use of terrorism – and to a lesser extent, its propaganda. The EU demands that Hamas change its position, although in the past it took a softer tone, distinguishing between Hamas's political organization and the Izzedine al-Qassam Battalions, Hamas's terrorist-operative wing, which is on its list of terrorist organizations, and enabling special envoys to hold unofficial meetings with Hamas elements behind closed door.

✦ Now that Hamas has won the Palestinian Legislative Council elections, it has begun an influence directed at the United States, Europe and even Israel. Its goal is to disguise its true extremist positions and to soften the negative stance the world has taken against it.⁹

⁹ After the elections, Hamas leaders issued a series of moderate statements aimed at Europeans, Americans and even Israelis. The statements hid or toned down the movement's fundamental Islamic extremism and attempted to show a "pragmatic" aspect by a conditioned agreement to a *hudna* (cease-fire).

✿ Hamas' success in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections, and the fact that it will probably dominate the new government, will **upgrade its capabilities in the information campaign**. The limitations imposed on Hamas by the former PA are **liable to weaken** and possibly **disappear**. Not only will it be able to strengthen its *da'wah* within Palestinian society, it will also be able to make greater use of the PA establishment's media (television, radio, newspapers), to exploit its official social apparatus (educational, religious, health, welfare and security services) and perhaps even to lay its hands on PA funds, which will enable it to extend its influence with the man in the street and spread its radical Islamic worldview.

Waging the battle for hearts and minds: Israel's response

✿ In conclusion, just as the PA was **totally ineffective and helpless** in its war against terrorism, it showed itself to be equally ineffective against the battle for hearts and minds waged by Hamas and the other terrorist organizations within Palestinian society. Hamas has an almost free hand with the universities, mosques and "charitable societies," three focal areas of activity officially subordinate to the PA. Israel therefore has no choice but to continue to cope with the terrorist organizations alone, without a Palestinian partner, even though Israel and the PA theoretically had a common interest to tackle Hamas in the battle for hearts and minds.

✿ It would seem that the governments of Israel, the United States and even some European countries have **internalized the lessons of the past** and are more aware of the dangers posed by **incitement to violence and terrorism**. The American road map of April 30, 2003, expressed that awareness by stating that the Palestinians' first step would be cooperating with the Israel to put an end to **violence, incitement to violence, terrorism and hate propaganda**. On January 24, 2006, acting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert again stated the need to put an end to Palestinian incitement to violence against Israel in the context of the PA's commitment to implementing the road map.

✿ The term “incitement” is used in President Bush’s road map and by acting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in the context of the terrorist organizations’ capabilities to influence public opinion. However, it is **weak and narrow** as it relates to the media. It is not sufficient to demand that blatant incitement to acts of violence no longer be broadcast by the radio and television stations and published in newspapers belonging to the PA and the Palestinian terrorist organizations.

✿ **Profound internal reforms must be demanded and instituted to neutralize Hamas’s capabilities in the battle for hearts and minds, i.e., the influence of the “charitable societies,” the educational system, the mosques and the media.** The social functions performed by Hamas’s “charitable societies” should be transferred directly to the PA (on condition that the PA itself is not controlled by Hamas), and **the educational institutions, student organizations and mosques controlled by the terrorist organizations must be subjected to close scrutiny and regular inspection.**¹⁰

✿ However, in practical terms, in view of Hamas’s victory in the recent elections, it is difficult to expect that its capabilities (and of the other terrorist organizations) in the battle for hearts and minds will be neutralized. The opposite is true: **Hamas can be expected to become stronger and upgrade its capabilities if they incorporate the PA’s communications capabilities.** In view of that, Israel, the United States and the western countries should boycott Hamas, prevent it from spreading its propaganda, and at the same time exert pressure on the PA, even though Hamas is expected to be at the center of power, and demand it carry out the necessary internal reforms.

✿ **At the same time that pressure continues to be exerted on the PA, the hate propaganda and incitement to violence appearing in the media should be countered and prevented. There are several ways to do that:**

¹⁰ The Hamas activities in the mosques and universities were in fact inspected by the PA at the end of the 1990s, before the outbreak of the current violent Israeli-Palestinian confrontation.

✦ **By spreading exact, reliable information about the terrorist organizations, their activities and goals, and exposing their real ideology and revealing how they are supported by various organizations and countries. Such information will reveal their true goals regarding Israel and the west, and expose the countries and organizations sponsoring them.** The information must use the **correct terminology and call terrorism and terrorists by their real names,**¹¹ rejecting the misleading terms and inferences that hide the identities of the terrorists or even legitimize terrorism and ignore its true goals.

✦ **By using political and legal means to prevent countries and international companies from supporting the terrorist organizations' media infrastructure** (and if necessary, to initiate such legislation). The restrictions imposed on Al-Manar TV by France, the United States and other countries were a **step in the right direction** which should be followed up by the international satellite companies. **Terrorist organization publications should be banned** in western countries (such as the British-distributed *Filisteen Al-Muslima*), and **Internet service providers should no longer allow terrorist organization sites** (both Palestinian terrorist organizations and those of organizations belonging to the global jihad).

✦ **By eliminating, or at least limiting, the opportunities given by the western media to the terrorist organizations and their leaders to spread their hate propaganda.** The terrorist organizations, whose avowed aim is to do as much harm as possible to Israel (and to the west and western culture), use the western media to spread their messages of hate for Israel and the Jewish people, and make terrorism acceptable by exploiting the free speech characteristic of the west. Western countries and the Arab/Muslim countries harmed by terrorism should defend themselves from the terrorist organizations and use legislative, law enforcement and other measures to prevent or minimize the dissemination

¹¹ Despite the fact that Hamas' actions against Israeli civilians fall into the category of terrorist acts, the European media do not call it a terrorist organization. In Britain it is referred to by the *London Times* as an "Islamist radical group" and by the *Guardian* as an "Islamist militant group;" some British media call them "Palestinian gunmen." The French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and Swiss media use "Islamic movement" or similar terms.

of incitement to hatred and terrorism while still allowing for freedom of expression.



The Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center and its role in the battle for hearts and minds

❖ **The Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (ITIC)** at the **Center for Special Studies (C.S.S.)** deals with the researching, gathering, processing and distributing of exact, reliable information about Palestinian terrorism, its goals, information campaign and ideology, the countries sponsoring it, the global jihad which serves as its inspiration and the entities funding it. The ITIC's activities demand an enormous amount of knowledge and expertise regarding terrorism, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Arab world and the Arabic language, Islam and the radical Islamic organizations' worldview and global activities. The Center's publications focus special attention of **Hamas** as the most prominent Palestinian terrorist organization.

❖ The information is disseminated through **Special Information Bulletins**, which are timely and thorough and trace the activities of Palestinian terrorism and its sponsors. The Bulletins appear on the ITIC's Internet site in **five languages** (Hebrew, English, Arabic, French and Russian) and are read by an **extremely diversified audience** (the site has more than 125,000 visits a month and the number is continually increasing.)

www.terrorism-info.org.il



❁ The ITIC operates a display and archive of captured Palestinian documents and other materials, and a library and computerized information center dedicated to terrorism, counter-terrorism and intelligence. The display includes weapons, explosive belts, posters, various original documents and additional materials which illustrate **how the suicide bomber culture was formed, fostered and spread within Palestinian society** during the current ongoing violent Israeli-Palestinian confrontation.

Display



and Library



✿ The products of the ITIC's information can be used free of charge by decision makers, government officials, institutions, organizations, experts and the general public. The ITIC cooperates with experts in terrorism and similar information centers in Israel and around the world, and **would be glad to deepen such cooperation.**