

The week ending June 6, 2014

ISRAEL & THE PALESTINIANS

Hamas Opts for the Hezbollah Model

Israeli Journalist and Lafer International Fellow at The Washington Institute **Ehud Yaari** published a powerful policy analysis on the newly formed Hamas-Fatah unity government and its agenda.

On June 2, Hamas and Fatah formed a unity government in the Palestinian Authority after many months of reconciliation talks, with Hamas nominally dissolving its government in the Gaza Strip. The move represents the fruit of a long internal debate within the group's higher echelons regarding its future course. Rather than adhering to the seven-year-old strategy of prioritizing exclusive control of "Fortress Gaza" with no serious effort to heal the rift with Fatah in the West Bank, Hamas leaders have now changed tack toward a different program: transplanting the Hezbollah model from Lebanon to Palestine. For Hamas, this means integrating into the general political system while retaining independent, well-equipped armed forces and striving to maintain control of Gaza through its existing grip on local bureaucracy, its wide network of social institutions, and, of course, its 20,000 well-trained military cadres and security personnel. The group has recruited no less than 50,000 employees to the public sector since its June 2007 military takeover of the territory. At the same time, Hamas seems determined to exploit the reconciliation agreement as a means of resuscitating its political organization and clandestine terrorist activities in the West Bank. Outgoing Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh described the new formula best, declaring this week, "We leave the government but stay in power...We give up the chair but not the role we play."

To read the full policy analysis, please click [here](#).

IRAN

UN: Iran still developing ballistic missiles

[Haaretz](#) reports that despite apparently reducing illicit purchases that breach United Nations sanctions, Iran is pursuing development of ballistic missiles, according to a confidential UN report. News of the report comes as six world powers are negotiating with Tehran in Vienna to rein in its nuclear program. The high-stakes negotiations aim for a deal by a July 20 deadline to end a long stand-off that has raised the risk of a wider Middle East war. Tehran's often repeated view that missiles should not be part of the nuclear talks appears to enjoy the support of Russia, one of the six global powers. But a senior United States official made clear this week that Tehran's ballistic capabilities must be addressed in the negotiations, since UN Security Council resolutions on Iran say that "any missile capable of delivering a nuclear weapon must be dealt with." A ban on developing missiles suited to carrying a nuclear warhead is included in a 2010 Security

Council resolution, its fourth - and toughest - imposed on the Islamic Republic for defying council demands that it suspend uranium enrichment and other nuclear activities of potential use in bomb-making. Earlier this week, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei described as "stupid and idiotic" Western expectations that his country would curb its missile development. He decreed mass production of ballistic weapons, striking a defiant tone just before nuclear talks resumed on Wednesday in Vienna. The new report by the UN Panel of Experts, which was seen by Reuters, said Iran's overall attempts to illicitly procure materials for its banned nuclear and missile programs appear to have slowed down as it pursues negotiations with the world powers.

SYRIA

Iran claims victory with Assad's anticipated win in Syrian election

According to [The Washington Post](#), as Syrians went to the polls Tuesday, President Bashar al-Assad's chief ally, Iran, was trumpeting his anticipated reelection as a defeat for the United States. Top Iranian officials in recent days have issued a flurry of declarations celebrating not only the affirmation of Assad's continued hold on power that the election represents but also Iran's role in sustaining him. The United States has repeatedly dismissed the presidential election taking place Tuesday as a "parody" because the outcome is guaranteed by rules written by the Assad regime. There are no serious contenders challenging Assad's bid to be reelected for a third seven-year term in office, there will be no independent observers, and many parts of the country are either controlled by rebels or engulfed in fighting. Iran, however, dispatched a team of monitors Monday to observe the voting, part of an extensive effort to mirror failed U.S. policies in Syria with initiatives asserting ownership of the crisis. "Foreign powers should give up their illusions about fulfilling their personal desires and strategies through military methods in Syria," Iran's foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, told a Friends of Syria conference in Tehran over the weekend. The choice of name seemed intended as a deliberate jab at the U.S.-backed Friends of Syria alliance created to support the Syrian opposition. "They should admit that there is no way to solve the crisis of Syria other than the willpower of the Syrian people, which will be shown at the ballot box," Zarif told the gathering, reportedly attended by representatives of 30 countries friendly to Iran.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Rolling Stones: Chag Shavuot Sameach, Israel!

According to [Ynet News](#) despite the extreme heat Hebrew phrases won roars of approval from the audience as the Rolling Stones put on an energetic show. It was very hot at Tel Aviv's Yarkon Park, but The Rolling Stones' frontman Mick Jagger didn't stop moving like Jagger and showing off his Hebrew, as tens of thousands of fans danced and sang along. Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts, and Ronnie Wood took the stage at 21:15, for a two-hour concert, as part of their ON FIRE 14 European tour. "Good evening Tel Aviv, Chag Shavuot Sameach Israel," Jagger shouted in Hebrew at the beginning of the show, after singing the show opener "Start Me Up." "We're the Rolling Stones," Jagger said in broken Hebrew.