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ISRAEL

Hamas and the "Two-State Solution"

News reports that Hamas will agree to the "two-state solution" actually show an effort to protect Hamas and improve its political standing.

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EXPERTS

By Elliott Abrams
Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies

A Jerusalem Post story on February 13 makes the breathless claim, to quote the headline, that "Hamas could join PA in new Gaza government, support two-state solution."

The sourcing is convoluted and weak to say the least: A Qatari source conveyed to this "news" to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, according to a Tuesday report from Sky News Arabia, that cited "a Palestinian source in Ramallah."

But assume that it's accurate. What exactly has Hamas perhaps agreed to?

According to the Jerusalem Post story, three conditions must be fulfilled first: an end to the war in Gaza with a "political horizon" for a two-state solution, a "technocratic" government in Gaza, and Hamas membership in the PLO.

In plainer English, if Hamas is permitted to survive and thrive in Gaza (because Israel is forbidden to attack it) and Hamas is legitimized and empowered by joining the PLO (which has been its goal for decades), Hamas would support establishing a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders.

Anything missing here?

To begin with, think back to the "three Quartet Principles" espoused by the United States, United Nations, Russia, and the EU twenty years ago: nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements. In what Qatar has conveyed now, there is no Hamas commitment to end violence and terror; there is no requirement that Hamas recognize Israel and abandon its efforts to undermine or destroy that nation; and there is no demand that Hamas respect the Oslo Accords or any other prior agreement into which the PLO has entered.

So Hamas would actually be agreeing to nothing except joining the PLO—a long-sought victory. Its "agreement" to respect a technocratic government in Gaza is an agreement to allow Hamas to terrorize its inhabitants in perpetuity and a way of avoiding a government that might actually displace Hamas politically.

Is anyone dumb enough to see this as a victory for peace? No, but there are those who will understand it is a victory for Hamas and be willing to call it peace.
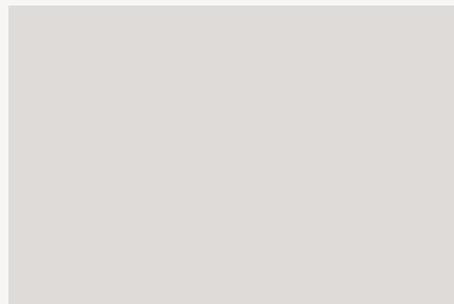
Back in 2006, after Hamas won the Palestinian parliamentary election, several Europeans nations plus Russia tried to get Hamas to say the magic words required by the three Quartet principles. Hamas would not do so then, and it will not do so now. It will not agree to abandon terror, reco(   )rael, or respect previous agreements. And because Hamas will not do

that, the sort of agreement the Qataris are apparently seeking is a fraud meant to protect Hamas. This is no "solution," except for Hamas; it is meant to end the Israeli attacks and improve Hamas's political position by putting it in the PLO. This would be sold as "progress toward peace" and as a "political horizon." In fact it demands less of Hamas than the Quartet did two decades ago. It is progress and a better horizon only for Hamas.
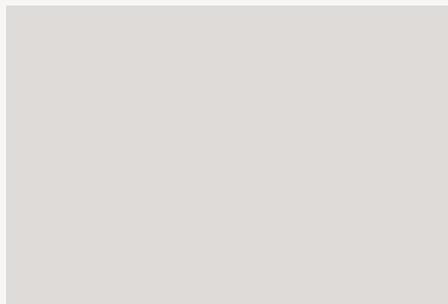
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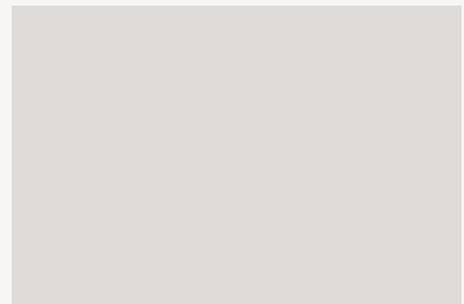
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