



Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare

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The Election of President Mahmoud Abbas - a Mandate for Peace or Continued Terror?

Mahmoud Abbas' decisive victory in the January 9, 2005, Palestinian election symbolizes a new beginning for the Palestinian people. Mahmoud Abbas, as the chosen leader of the Palestinian people, must be willing to crack-down on terrorism and move in the direction of peace. Abbas must not embrace the legacy of Arafat's corrupt terrorist regime. Over the course of the campaign, his anti-Israel message routinely pandered to the Palestinian terrorists who attack Israeli civilians. Abbas' untested promises of peace to the West must be judged by his militant comments to supporters in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian people have mandated a change, but will it be away from terror? As the successor to Arafat, Abbas has in the past embraced Arafat's violent rhetoric and seemingly supports his platform. Abbas' statements and actions paint a deeply troubling portrait of a leader who may very well continue the corrupt terror oriented policies of Yasser Arafat. Mahmoud Abbas, as the chosen leader of the Palestinian people, must be willing to turn from the terrorist actions of the past.

Abbas - Terrorist Conspirator as Palestinian Leader?

On November 11, 2004, Abbas succeeded Yasser Arafat as chairman of the PLO. As a co-founder with Arafat of the al-Fattah group in 1957 and top-aide to Arafat in the PLO, he supported Palestinian terror campaigns. His political education was one rooted in Arafat's leadership of violence and terrorism. Mahmoud Abbas' own words and actions expose an individual who openly consorts with terrorists and those who seek the death of innocent Israeli civilians.

- *During a recent rally, Abbas was hoisted to the shoulders of Al Aqse Martyrs Brigade terrorists as they chanted his praise.*
- *To loud applause at a rally on January 1, 2005, Abbas pledged to remain faithful to late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's legacy, saying, "We will not stop until we achieve victory through the establishment of the Palestinian state, the dream that began with your brother, the martyr Yasser Arafat."*
- *As reported by the New York Post in March of 2003, Abbas declared in an Arabic interview that, "the Intifada must continue." He added that, "the Palestinian people have a right to use all means at their disposal to protect their existence."*

Moderate Terrorist Leadership?

Abbas is widely perceived as being more moderate than his predecessor, especially when he speaks to the West of his commitment to peace. In reality, the actions, words, and true political platform of Abbas at home in the Gaza Strip and West Bank show a man sympathetic to terrorists and Arafat's legacy. His politics could lead to destruction, unrest, and failed negotiations as the Palestinian terrorist attacks continue to kill innocent Israelis.

- *On December 12, 2004, once safe in the Gaza Strip and surrounded by Fatah supporters, Abbas, like Arafat, called on the Palestinian people to, "continue the struggle...to raise the Palestinian flag on the walls of Jerusalem, the capital of our independent Palestinian state."*
 - *Addressing the Palestinian Parliament on November 23, 2004, Abbas demanded "Right of Return" for Palestinian refugees and their descendants to Israel. He remarked, "We will not rest until the right of our people to return is granted." This policy that would mean the end of an Israeli controlled Jerusalem and an end to any negotiations.*
 - *On January 1, 2005, echoing Arafat's infamous pledge spelling the destruction of Israel, Abbas told the cheering crowd, "Today we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the revolution begun by Abu Ammar," referring to Arafat. "We will continue until a Palestinian boy and girl place a Palestinian flag over the walls and minarets of Jerusalem," illustrating again his commitment to terrorism and conflict instead of negotiations.*
 - *Arafat's policies seem to be the platform of Palestinian Presidential candidate Mahmoud Abbas. He has said, "The struggle against the Zionist enemy will continue until the establishment of an independent Palestinian state." Islamic radical terrorist groups including Hizbullah and Hamas are infamous for referring to Israel as "the Zionist enemy."*
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Victory Speech - a Path to Peace or Continued Violence?

Mahmoud Abbas, in a landslide victory on Sunday, succeeded Yasser Arafat and secured a strong mandate for the future. Will this be a mandate of cooperation with Israel and the end of Arafat's corrupt policies or continued bloodshed? Let us not forget, the legacy of Yasser Arafat was that of a man who used terrorism to accomplish what he could not through negotiation. We cannot be like others who were surprised when terrorist bombers started attacking innocent Israeli civilians under Arafat's leadership. The world was fooled once. We cannot afford to fail again. Mahmoud Abbas must be held accountable for his words and his actions for peace to come.

- *"We offer this victory to the soul of the brother martyr Yasser Arafat and to all Palestinians," said Abbas in his presidential victory speech on January 9, 2004.*