

The State Department's Palestinian Fantasies

by A.J. Caschetta



In spite of recent [polls indicating](#) that ordinary Palestinians increasingly recognize that Israel is here to stay, the rejectionist Palestinian leadership remains the most formidable obstacle to a peace agreement with the Jewish state. But running a close second place is the US State Department, where unfounded faith in Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority (PA) remains unshaken.

The State Department's Palestinian fantasies are on display in its congressionally-mandated [annual report](#) on international terrorism released in July. Abbas's PA "continued its counterterrorism efforts in the West Bank where Hamas,

Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine remained present,” according to the report. Abbas is portrayed as a benign leader with an expressed “commitment to nonviolence, recognition of the State of Israel, and pursuit of an independent Palestinian state through peaceful means.”

The report applauds the PA for taking “significant steps during President Abbas’ tenure (2005 to date) to ensure that official institutions in the West Bank under its control do not create or disseminate content that incites violence.” And it asserts that “explicit calls for violence against Israelis, direct exhortations against Jews, and categorical denials by the PA of the possibility of peace with Israel are rare and the leadership does not generally tolerate it.”

So much is wrong with this incredible assessment of the PA’s 2016 activities that either the judgment or the competence of its authors must be questioned.

To begin, claiming that the PA doesn’t tolerate calls for violence requires overlooking the entire [PA educational system](#), which exists to incite violence against Israelis. As then-Senator Hillary Clinton [observed correctly](#) in 2007, the PA’s textbooks “do not give Palestinian children an education; they give them an indoctrination...[which] profoundly poisons the[ir] minds.” When the school term ends, PA [summer camps](#) keep the children’s skills sharp.

Where formal education ends, cultural inculcation takes over. The State Department somehow failed to notice that 2016 was a banner year for the PA’s [multi-media incitement](#), beginning in January with a [music video](#) released on the PA’s Awdah TV directing Palestinians to “Besiege them [Israelis] in all their neighborhoods, Drown them in a sea of blood, Kill them as you wish.”

On Facebook, Fatah and the PA [began 2016](#) honoring “martyrs”

who die killing Israelis and [ended 2016](#) honoring the “10th anniversary of the death of the Martyr Saddam Hussein.” More of the same occupies the rest of the year’s social media activity. The State Department dismisses this briskly: “In practice, however, some instances of incitement took place via official media There were also some instances of inflammatory rhetoric and the posting of political cartoons glorifying violence on official Fatah Facebook pages.” In truth, there is little else on those pages.

In praising Abbas’ “commitment to fight terrorism” and believing him when he “said he was against all forms of terrorist activity,” the State Department falls for what [Khaled Abu Toameh calls](#) the PA’s “double game: on the one hand...telling the world that it wants peace and coexistence with Israel; on the other hand...continuing to incite Palestinians against Israel, and driving some to take guns and knives and set out to murder Jews.”

The State Department document emphasizes “the perception that the Israeli government was changing the status quo on the Haram Al Sharif/Temple Mount” as one of the “[c]ontinued drivers of violence” among Palestinians. But it fails to recognize that [Abbas himself](#) is the author of the lies that Israel is changing the status of the Temple Mount, [plotting](#) to destroy the Al-Aqsa mosque, and carrying out “extrajudicial executions of [Palestinian] youth and children.” After whipping up a frenzy of humiliation and revenge, Abbas reveled in the violence he fomented, ghoulishly celebrating [on Palestinian television](#): “We welcome every of drop of blood spilled in Jerusalem. This is pure blood, clean blood, blood on its way to Allah.”

The State Department analysts who laud Abbas’ acceptance of a “two-state solution” overlook his [September 2016 speech](#) to the UN where he reached back to the Balfour Declaration, demanding Britain apologize for giving “the land of Palestine to another people.”

Gross incompetence aside, the only logical explanation for the State Department's inaccurate and misleading report is that its authors still believe, as Barack Obama put it in a [2013 speech in Jerusalem](#), that Israel has "a true partner in President Abbas." He was wrong then. So is the State Department now.

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