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RULING PALESTINE II: THE WEST BANK MODEL?

Middle East Report N°79 – 17 July 2008

International Crisis Group
WORKING TO PREVENT CONFLICT WORLDWIDE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In June 2007, as Hamas took control of Gaza and a new government was formed in the West Bank, observers ventured two scenarios. The West Bank might become a model, whose economic revival and improved relations with Israel and the wider world contrasted with Gaza's sorry fate; or, given continued occupation and the structural dysfunctionality of the Palestinian Authority (PA), it would see little progress. Both were wrong. Under Salam Fayyad's competent leadership, it has made gains, particularly in law and order.

But a model it is not. The advances are insufficient to persuade Israel to loosen the closure regime or halt military incursions deemed critical to its security. Absence of a functioning parliament and Palestinian security services' harsh tactics against Hamas sympathisers are inconsistent with accountable, transparent, legitimate governance. Israel and the PA should improve coordination; their international partners should prod them to do so, while giving significant financial aid. But ending the geographic division and restoring parliamentary democracy are critical for longer term stability.

Upon assuming office, Fayyad inherited a shattered, bankrupt and chaotic PA, a victim of Israeli actions, the international community's boycott of the Hamas-led and national unity governments and, notably, its own multiple transgressions. From the outset, more patronage mechanism than state, its security apparatus at the service of competing personal agendas, the PA was on the edge of collapse. Breaking with the past, Fayyad has emphasised self-reliance, seeking to restore domestic faith in the idea of statehood and project a different image to the outside world.

The first priority was to restore law and order, of which the Palestinians have seen remarkably little over the preceding years. It has been, incontestably, the government's principal achievement. Using a variety of means – amnesty understandings negotiated with Israel which promised normalcy for weary militants; co-optation of Fatah-affiliated militias; clan and family-based mediation and, in some cases, old-fashioned strong-arm methods – it has begun to turn the situation around. Perhaps most important has been the exhaustion of ordinary Palestinians, eager for the opportunity to resume their lives.

Urban public order has improved, and militia activity has decreased. The most striking examples are Nablus and Jenin, on which the PA has focused and where citizens are virtually unanimous in applauding its efforts. There is a legitimate debate about how hard Hamas has been hit and whether the current calm is a symptom of weakness or a function of self-restraint. But there is little doubt that the Islamists have had to hunker down.

The news on the economic front is not as good, though there is some positive movement. Several basic indicators in the West Bank – market activity in certain sectors, GDP poverty and unemployment – are pointing in the right direction. Fayyad has concentrated on righting the PA's fiscal condition, emphasising wage control, encouraging foreign investment, courting donors and reducing patronage.

But there is a natural ceiling to these security and economic improvements against which Fayyad may already be bumping. From the start, he has been in a race against time, hoping that the overall political context would catch up with his own steps so that one could support the other. That has not happened. The negotiations launched at Annapolis in November 2007 show few signs of life, with perhaps only Israeli Prime Minister Olmert and U.S. Secretary of State Rice (both at the end of their tenures) still believing in a breakthrough agreement in 2008. Israeli settlement activity is ongoing, further discrediting President Abbas and the process upon which he has staked his reputation. The Israeli defence establishment has virtually no faith in the PA's security performance, arguing there is a vast difference between a law-and-order and an effective counter-terrorism campaign, so insisting on continuing its own military activities in the West Bank, even, at night, in Nablus and Jenin. All of which is complicated by the realisation that, through rocket fire, Hamas has achieved a truce that, with peace offerings, Abbas has not.

The PA also has been involved in acts of torture and mistreatment of Hamas sympathisers, many of whom were picked up and detained without due process. There is ample reason to regret this on human rights grounds, but there are also other, long-term costs: perpetuating a culture of impunity, fuelling a cycle of revenge and radicalising a young generation of Islamist militants.

The PA, Israel and the donor community can and should take steps to ameliorate the security situation, everyday economic conditions and fiscal solvency. But as long as the unnatural division between the West Bank and Gaza endures, and democratic institutions are unable to function, it will be difficult both to plan for long-term, sustainable improvement and to seriously advance the peace process. Under current conditions, the West Bank can no more become a model than Gaza can be effectively governed. The imperative of Palestinian national reconciliation remains as urgent as ever.

A companion Crisis Group report previously described the situation in Gaza and the costs of disunity there too.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Palestinian Authority Leadership in Ramallah:

1. Enhance the security campaign in the West Bank by:
   (a) bolstering the Israeli amnesty for militants who disarm by expediting their rapid integration into the workforce, rebuilding their destroyed homes and providing adequate financial support;
   (b) supporting the extension of the amnesty understandings to all militants willing to accept their terms, regardless of political affiliation;
   (c) granting the Palestinian civilian police sole arrest authority;
   (d) defining the missions, roles and task of security agencies;
   (e) instructing the attorney general to investigate and, if warranted, prosecute cases of arbitrary detentions, torture and other human rights violations; and
   (f) replying in a complete and timely manner to inquiries from the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights.
2. Engage with Palestinian political groups and civil society organisations to broaden the government's political base by:
   (a) allowing charities and associations with ties to Hamas and other groups to operate in accordance with Palestinian law; and
   (b) releasing political activists not charged with a criminal offence and in particular expeditiously releasing those ordered freed by judges.
3. Take steps to promote reunification with Gaza, including through:
   (a) initiating a dialogue with Hamas on civil service restructuring in the West Bank and Gaza, aimed at reunifying the civil service under a single payroll and free from partisan influence;
   (b) encouraging PA civil servants and other public sector employees in Gaza to resume their duties; and
   (c) discussing modalities for reopening the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt.

To the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas):

4. Encourage its West Bank members to cooperate with President Abbas's and the Fayyad government's efforts to restore law and order.
5. Begin, as a step toward reconciliation, a dialogue with President Abbas and the Fayyad government over restructuring the civil service and reopening the Rafah crossing.

To the Government of Israel:

6. Facilitate the PA campaign to restore law and order in the West Bank by:
   (a) removing obstacles hindering the training, restructuring and equipment of PA security forces, inside and outside of the West Bank;
   (b) allowing PA security forces to take the lead in areas handed to its control, especially via increased intelligence sharing;
   (c) permitting the Palestinian security forces to deploy more widely in the West Bank, particularly in Hebron;
   (d) allowing the transport of accused criminals and the movement of witnesses, judges and other court personnel to improve the functioning of the court system;
   (e) establishing an orderly procedure, in cooperation with the PA, for releasing Palestinian prisoners;
   (f) bolstering the amnesty understandings by including militants who seek to participate in them, regardless of political affiliation, and

expeditiously pardoning militants who obey their spirit; and

(g) facilitating the movement of goods and people in coordination with the PA and the Quartet Special Envoy, Tony Blair.

7. Facilitate the PA's efforts to improve the economy and maintain its financial solvency by:

   (a) expeditiously granting visas and facilitating West Bank access for investors and experts;

   (b) ensuring a predictable flow of clearance revenues, providing complete and transparent accounting of transmitted sums and allowing a two-month grace period before deducting utility bills owed;

   (c) cooperating with the PA and donor states to establish a more efficient process for the approval of donor projects in Area C; and

   (d) implementing the package of measures announced in May 2008 and agreed upon by Israel and Tony Blair.

8. Abide by the Roadmap's call for a freeze on all settlement activity, including natural growth.

To the Donor Community:

9. Provide long-term financial commitments to the PA to enable medium-term planning and reduce its vulnerability to short-term budgetary shocks.

10. Earmark aid for the reintegration of former militants covered by the amnesty understandings.

11. Deliver expeditiously on financial pledges.

To the U.S. Government:

12. Unify the missions of Generals Dayton, Fraser and Jones into a single one, working with the EU and other relevant parties to coordinate security efforts and monitor actions by the PA and Israel in the West Bank.

To Members of the Quartet (U.S., EU, Russia and UN Secretary-General):

13. Pressure the PA to fulfil its security obligations, as defined by the Roadmap, and to do so according to international human rights norms.

14. Pressure the Government of Israel to respect its Roadmap obligations to freeze settlement expansion, remove outposts and facilitate movement.

Ramallah/Jerusalem/Brussels, 17 July 2008

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RULING PALESTINE II: THE WEST BANK MODEL?

I. INTRODUCTION

After Hamas seized power in the Gaza Strip in June 2007,[1] President Mahmoud Abbas dismissed Prime Minister Ismail Haniya's national unity government and appointed Salam Fayyad as head of an emergency cabinet. The shock of the Islamist takeover led many factions to rally behind the new prime minister, muting questions about the move's legality and the government's technocratic composition.[2] At the conclusion of the cabinet's 30-day emergency tenure,[3] Abbas invited Fayyad to form a new government. With more than 40 Islamist legislators sitting in Israeli jails, the Hamas-controlled Palestine Legislative Council (PLC) was unable to either endorse or reject it. As a result, one year later, Fayyad's original government still operates in a caretaking capacity, reliant on presidential decrees instead of PLC sanction. Abbas and his supporters, inside and outside Palestine, have turned a blind eye to legal and constitutional issues, hoping these will be outweighed by the government's achievements.

For Abbas as for Fayyad, the principal objective has been to turn the West Bank into a model by taking the initiative while working cooperatively with Israel and the international community. The strategy has two elements: rejuvenated governance under Prime Minster Fayyad and sustained diplomacy steered by President Abbas. If successfully executed, the logic goes, the strategy would win Palestinian hearts and minds, turning the West Bank into a showcase of, and motor for, political progress. Hamas's confrontational approach, in contrast, would be exposed as bankrupt. Neither the PA's positive response to Israel's ceasefire agreement with Hamas nor Abbas's stated intention to pursue reconciliation talks indicates a fundamental reconsideration of this strategy. With the ceasefire still fragile and Fatah's negotiations with Hamas slow to gather steam, Fayyad and Abbas are hewing to the course they have set.

When Fayyad assumed the premiership, he inherited a Palestinian Authority (PA) on the edge of collapse. Established in part as a patronage mechanism and never possessed of strong institutions, the PA had been weakened further by Israeli attacks over the course of the second intifada, conflicting agendas during the Hamas-led and national unity governments and the diversion of donor funding from the government to the president's office. Fayyad set out to reestablish internal order in the West Bank on a number of fronts, most notably security and public finance. Other aspects of governance – including civil service reform, service provision and legal reform – are no less crucial for restoring governmental authority in the long run, but today, security and economics remain the pillars of political stability and the most important dividends that Palestinians seek.

At bottom, Fayyad is trying to instil a sense that Palestinians can improve their lives, however modestly and incrementally, and mainly by their own actions. His agenda, after years of intifada and chaos, is to restore faith in government and the idea of the state, showing both the world and his own people that Palestinians can build effective institutions even under the constraints of occupation. His program is based on the idea that effective governance is first and foremost a national interest – and certainly preferable to chaotic competition between rival militias. He is banking on the expectation that Palestinian performance, principally on the security front, eventually will underscore the senselessness of many Israeli measures, convince Israel to loosen its grip and perhaps agree to political concessions and, should that not occur, encourage the international community to apply pressure to that end.

[1] Crisis Group analysed the situation resulting from that action in a companion Middle East Report N°73, *Ruling Palestine I: Gaza Under Hamas*, 13 March 2008.

[2] According to the Palestinian Basic Law, if the president dismisses the prime minister, the existing ministers continue to serve in a caretaking capacity until the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) approves a new government. With the PLC unable to meet, a constitutional debate has ensued about the president's rights and prerogatives. As scholar Nathan Brown concluded immediately after the seizure of power in Gaza, "Palestinian politics has now moved outside the few legal and constitutional channels that had survived" in the aftermath of the PLC elections. Nathan Brown, "What Can Abu Mazin Do? (June 15 Update)", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, at www.carnegieendowment.org/files/AbuMazinUpdateJune1507.pdf.

[3] The Palestinian Basic Law requires PLC approval to extend a state of emergency beyond 30 days.

To a certain extent, his calculations have been borne out: there is a growing sense in the international community that Fayyad is doing what he can and that Israel should do more to help.

But it is far too soon to tell whether the wager will succeed. Contrary evidence abounds. Within the West Bank, many Palestinians see Fayyad as technically adept but doubt whether his "nice guy approach" and "good behaviour"[4] will convince Israel to relax its security measures, let alone agree to the establishment of a viable state. Some go further and equate his approach with political passivity, fearing he will end up administering the West Bank on Israel's behalf. Time also is working against the prime minister: his agenda to rejuvenate governance is a long-term one; benefits may not materialise for a period during which popular frustration is likely to grow. Given the ongoing split with Hamas, tensions between the technocratic government and Fatah, governmental missteps and Israeli foot-dragging, popular opinion could shift – especially should the tentative Gaza ceasefire hold – to the Islamic movement, which continues to enjoy significant political support in the West Bank.

[4] Crisis Group interviews, civil society activist, Ramallah, 11 February 2008, and Fatah leader, Ramallah, 7 April 2008.

II. FAYYAD'S GOVERNMENT AND RESTORATION OF THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

A. THE PA'S SECURITY PLAN

Central authority in the West Bank gradually collapsed in the wake of the March-May 2002 Operation Defensive Shield, when Israel reoccupied most West Bank cities to end violent attacks and quell the second intifada. Israeli operations against basic institutions, movement restrictions, the de facto merging of security services, gangs and criminal elements, the international boycott of the PA during the Hamas and national unity governments and, more recently, the struggle between Fatah and Hamas left Salam Fayyad with an utterly broken pseudo-government when, in June 2007, he became prime minister. By then, security personnel were receiving only a fraction of their salaries, armed gangs held sway in major cities, government institutions faced repeated attacks, and interfactional tension was at its peak. Throughout this period, politicians barely reacted – or, when they did, they often promoted lawlessness as a way of enhancing their personal authority.[5]

To a large degree, that situation is being reversed. Urban public order has improved, and militia activity has decreased. There are multiple explanations, though one of the more oft-cited by outside observers – security structure reform – has been neither the central nor most important factor. Changes in that arena are still relatively modest, hardly a surprise given the enormity of the dysfunction, extent of destruction and limited time Fayyad has had to work.[6]

[5] On the breakdown of central authority during the second intifada and the structures that emerged in its place, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°32, *Who Governs the West Bank? Palestinian Administration under Israeli Occupation*, 28 September 2004.

[6] Crisis Group interview, international security official, Jerusalem, 20 February 2008. Most of the formal changes to the structure of the Palestinian forces occurred before the current government took charge. Formerly there were eleven security forces. Yasir Arafat issued a 2004 decree unifying these into three branches, though this had little impact, given his style of rule. The reorganisation took on more significance after Abbas's 2005 election. Today there are six, the precise authorities and mandates of which are defined in a complex mixture of presidential decrees, legislation and draft laws. The National Security Forces, atop the security hierarchy, are the closest the Palestinians have to a national army; General Intelligence mainly combats internal threats, in addition to engaging in limited external intelligence activities; Preven-

Of far greater import has been the leadership's political decision to enforce law and order and ordinary citizens' palpable fatigue with the reigning chaos, as well as the variously motivated decisions by militias – including Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (AMB), Hamas's Martyr 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades – to freeze or limit their operations. Most in the West Bank today agree with the graffiti artists in the village of Yasuf, near the West Bank city of Salfit: '"No' to security breakdown and to chaos. 'Yes' to the rule of law".[7]

Moreover, even prior to implementation of the government's security plan, Hamas's Gaza takeover and Fayyad's formation of a new government had helped set the stage for much-needed improvements. First, security personnel returned to work. West Bank governors estimate that before Fayyad formed his cabinet only 20 to 25 per cent of their security personnel reported for duty. Of these, many were administrative staff without substantive duties, and the rest were unarmed or otherwise ineffective.[8] The resumption of salary payments, made possible by the end of the international boycott of the PA, has been crucial in renewing attendance.[9]

Secondly, events in Gaza have instilled the security forces and political leadership with a renewed sense of purpose. Many attributed Fatah's defeat there to chaos within the security services and feared a repeat in the West Bank.[10] Overlapping security services continue to inhibit coordination, but standing against Hamas has helped bring together fractious and often competing branches. In Ramallah, the Officers' Committee – led by Diab al-'Ali of the National Security Forces – gathers representatives of all services. Within each West Bank governorate, operational plans are locally devised by a security committee headed by the governor and composed of local security officials.[11]

While legal and political ambiguities remain,[12] the prime minister and president have established a functional arrangement based on shared if not identical interests, cooperating more effectively than Arafat and Abbas in 2003[13] or Abbas and Ismail Haniya in 2006.[14] Abbas retains overall responsibility for appointing commanders but has delegated wide authority to Fayyad to set security priorities. A security commander said, "I've never met Abu Mazen [Abbas]. We deal with Salam Fayyad. This is very different from Arafat, who called

tive Security, which has a function similar to that of General Intelligence, was established during the Oslo era to suppress internal subversion; Civil Police protects law and order; Presidential Guard protects the president and engages in other tasks deemed crucial, such as deployments to Bethlehem and Jenin as part of the security campaign; Civil Defence assures civil protection and emergency services. See Asem Khalil, "The Legal Framework for Palestinian Security Sector Governance" in Roland Friedrich and Arnold Luethold (eds.), *Entry-Points to Palestinian Security Sector Reform* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2007), pp. 26-40. On the history of security sector reform, see, in addition to Friedrich and Luethold, op. cit., "Planning Considerations for International Involvement in the Palestinian Security Sector", Strategic Assessments Initiative/International Transition Assistance Group, 2005; and "Security Sector Reform in Palestine", undated paper prepared by the Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC) for the German Technical Cooperation's (GTZ) Sector Program, www.bicc.de/ssr_gtz/pdf/palestine.pdf

[7] Crisis Group staff observed the graffiti, January 2008.

[8] Crisis Group interviews, West Bank governors, February-March 2008. A former security chief reported that during much of the second intifada, his forces had "not a single bullet". Crisis Group interview, 19 May 2008.

[9] Under the national unity government, security personnel were sporadically paid a portion of their salaries, though less than civil government employees, who themselves were irregularly paid. Crisis Group interview, former security chief, 19 May 2008. One governor related that in November 2006 he sought to improve downtown traffic by renting commercial space for street vendors, many of whom were security personnel with no other way to support their families. As soon as the PA renewed salary payments to security personnel, the rented space emptied. Crisis Group interview, West Bank governor, 18 March 2008.

[10] A member of the Fatah committee that investigated events in Gaza estimated that 30 per cent of its security personnel were involved in crime, turning weapons against colleagues. Crisis Group interview, Fatah leader, Ramallah, 18 March 2008.

[11] Crisis Group interview, West Bank governors, January-March 2008.

[12] According to the Amended Basic Law (2003), the president is the commander-in-chief of the Palestinian forces (Article 38), whereas the cabinet (and, therefore, the prime minister) is "responsible for maintaining public order and internal security" (Article 69(7)). While decrees and legislation have repeatedly modified the security sector's structure, the bifurcation of the chain of command dates to 2002, when Yasir Arafat created the position of interior minister and gave the cabinet responsibility for the interior security organisations (Civil Police, Preventive Security and Civil Defence). The National Security Forces, General Intelligence and Presidential Guard remain under the direct control of the president.

[13] "The practical impact of these reforms [under Arafat] was rather limited. Until his last day Arafat continued to exercise direct control over the Palestinian security sector….Arafat considered the PLO and later the PNA security sector crucial pillars of his rule, and he was very reluctant to yield any control over them". Asem Khalil in *Entry-Points to Palestinian Security Sector Reform*, op. cit., p. 34.

[14] On competition between Hamas and Fatah over the security forces, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°68, *After Gaza*, 2 August 2007.

virtually every day and got personally involved in every decision".[15]

Thirdly, and despite notable exceptions, Fatah backed the security plan. Such support proved crucial. Inflating his role somewhat, a senior Fatah leader claimed, "we handed Nablus to Fayyad on a silver platter".[16] But even an interior ministry official acknowledged that this political decision was the primary reason for overall West Bank security improvement, ahead of both his own forces' and Israel's actions.[17]

The PA's security campaign has several overlapping elements: checking Hamas and its armed wing, the Qassam Brigades; containing Fatah-allied militants through co-optation and amnesty; restoring public order by cracking down on criminals; and strengthening security forces through training, weapons procurement and security reform.

1. Checking Hamas and the Qassam Brigades

Immediately following Hamas's June 2007 takeover in Gaza, PA security forces, with the help of Fatah militias, undertook a wide-ranging offensive in the West Bank. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades turned in Hamas members and sympathisers and physically removed Hamas officials from government positions.[18] "Militias of the Hamas movement" and the "Executive Force" – a formidable policing organisation in Gaza seen as a potential threat in the West Bank – were outlawed, and the security forces pursued a campaign against armed Hamas elements.[19] They dismantled cells of the Qassam Brigades, though the group was never specifically designated as a target. Security services purged their ranks of suspected Islamists – especially in General Intelligence and Preventive Security – and jailed many.[20] As a sign of increased confidence, PA security forces no longer wear balaclavas, as they did in the security campaign's initial months, to conceal their identity when operating against Hamas.[21]

Between the declaration of the state of emergency on 14 June and 30 September 2007, Palestinian security forces arrested approximately 1,500 Hamas members and suspected sympathisers. The pace of the anti-Hamas campaign has since slackened. While estimates vary and numbers fluctuate, a Palestinian human rights organisation calculated in early June 2008 that the PA held some 112 Hamas prisoners.[22]

Some Israeli officials believe much of this is illusory and that Hamas could quickly take over the West Bank were the Israeli army (IDF) to withdraw.[23] A close adviser to the defence minister described the PA as "under chapter eleven – bankrupt. They lost Gaza, and the only reason they are holding on to the West Bank is our presence".[24] Even some PA officials – while

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[15] Crisis Group interview, security commander, Salfit, 23 January 2008.

[16] Crisis Group interview, senior Fatah leader, Ramallah, 18 March 2008.

[17] Crisis Group interview, Palestinian security official, Ramallah, 4 April 2008.

[18] In Nablus, for instance, Fatah militants removed the directors-general of the education and *awqaf* (literally, "pious endowments") ministries, replacing them with directors-general of their own choosing. In both instances, the Fayyad government subsequently removed these officials and installed new ones. Crisis Group interview, municipal official, Nablus, 2 September 2007. See also Crisis Group Report, *After Gaza*, op. cit.

[19] The presidential decree, issued on 16 June 2008, can be found at www.jmcc.org/goodgovern/07/eng/presidentdecrees07.htm #dec26jun. Hamas leaders vehemently denied there was ever an attempt to establish the Executive Force in the West Bank, explaining that the movement's leadership there rejected the option as unnecessary and provocative. Crisis Group interview, Hamas PLC representative, June 2008. Some Fatah and PA officials agreed: "The issue is not and never was the Executive Force. It is not a real danger, and focusing on it blinds us to real dangers like lack of development". Crisis Group interview, West Bank governor, February 2008. The spectre of the Executive Force hovered over the West Bank even before June 2007. A Preventive Security official claimed in 2006 that Hamas was trying to incubate a West Bank version of the Executive Force from Qassam Brigades cells but that the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades had disrupted this effort by attacking the cells in their infancy. Crisis Group interview, Preventive Security official, Ramallah, July 2006.

[20] An international security official said, "it was a harassment campaign plain and simple. The PA clamped down on Hamas before anyone came asking". Crisis Group interview, Jerusalem, 20 February 2008.

[21] Crisis Group interview, security commander, Salfit, 23 January 2008.

[22] Crisis Group interview, human rights workers, Ramallah, June 2008. Hamas sympathisers disputed any positive interpretation, arguing that the decrease in political arrests stems in part from the refusal of many to respond to summonses for fear of mistreatment. They also alleged that the overall number of arrests recently has increased as a result of the campaign to impose urban order in the West Bank. Crisis Group interviews, former detainee, Kubar; Hamas supporter, Jenin, June 2008.

[23] According to Major General Gadi Shamni, "without the massive IDF presence in the West Bank, Hamas would take over the institutions and apparatuses of the Palestinian Authority within days". *Jerusalem Post*, 26 February 2008. More recently an unnamed Israeli military source suggested the opposite. *Ha'aretz*, 27 May 2008.

[24] Crisis Group interview, adviser to defence minister, Tel Aviv, June 2008.

defending their accomplishments – admit that Israeli preventive actions are important in stopping attacks on Israelis.[25] Palestinian security officials, while far more sanguine about their capacity to retain control, acknowledge Hamas's remaining potential, arms caches and a hierarchical organisation that would allow for the rapid remobilisation of fighters.[26] Some suspect Hamas is stockpiling weapons in the West Bank; they mention in particular the northern region of Tubas, where arms allegedly are stored after being smuggled from Jordan. Weapons also are available on the Israeli black market, provided by settlers or criminal gangs who steal them from IDF depots.[27]

As for Hamas' own assessment, a West Bank leader of the movement says, "our capacities for the most part are unchanged. The effects of the PA's security campaign have been superficial".[28] Given the scope of PA actions, this assessment likely is exaggerated.[29] But so too are some of Israel's most alarming predictions, which belittle the vast differences between the West Bank and Gaza and Hamas's far greater power in the latter. Reliable information is difficult to obtain, since virtually everyone connected to the Qassam Brigades has gone underground. Overall, however, two things seem clear: Hamas suffered significant blows, but there is little reason to question its staying power and ability to quickly recoup given its continued support, deep social roots and external leadership.[30]

Debates about whether Hamas can or will take over the West Bank are, to some degree, beside the point. Israel has no immediate plan to leave and put Palestinian security services to the test. Nor is this purely a matter of military balance of power. The West Bank is more geographically and socially varied, thus rendering it more difficult for the Islamic movement to control than Gaza, where Hamas historically has enjoyed greater support.

More interesting is to understand why Hamas's reaction has been so subdued. Indeed, in the West Bank there have been few fire fights or casualties due to intra-Palestinian clashes. Explanations vary. Some, Israeli officials included, insist that the PA's campaign has been less than whole-hearted. A Palestinian interior ministry official did not dispute this interpretation, "The security forces for the most part don't go looking for trouble, and Hamas largely obeys the law. The two sides are respectful of each other".[31] PA security forces also have tended to operate in a less confrontational manner, working through local social structures such as clans.[32]

Hamas arguably also may have felt overpowered and eager not to provoke even greater repression in an arena far more hostile than Gaza. Political calculation almost certainly was part of the equation as well. As its leaders see it, they had little to gain by forcing an immediate confrontation and much to gain by waiting. "Not to respond is itself a response. We are restraining ourselves from a position of strength, not weakness, so as to avoid a conflict with the PA that would create chaos and weaken Hamas as a movement".[33] Convinced that Abbas's negotiations with Israel will lead nowhere, the economy will remain stagnant, and checkpoints will stay in place, Hamas appears to be banking on steady erosion in Fatah and PA support. In the words of a Hamas leader, when Abbas's negotiations with Olmert fail, "everyone will unite and return to resistance, including Fatah. 2009 will be a much better year for the resistance and much worse year for the occupation".[34]

Even if the more apocalyptic scenarios for a third intifada do not materialise – and, indeed, Palestinian exhaustion and the lack of credible leadership militate against it, despite the Hamas leader's words – economic

[25] Crisis Group interview, Preventive Security official, May 2008.
[26] Crisis Group interviews, West Bank governor, 11 February 2008, and international security official, 20 February 2008.
[27] Crisis Group interview, international security official, Jerusalem, 23 May 2006. A former Al-Aqsa militant confirmed the importance of Israeli suppliers, claiming it had been the main source of his weapons during the second intifada. Crisis Group interview, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade member, Jenin, 11 May 2008.
[28] Crisis Group interview, Hamas leader, 18 May 2008.
[29] Asked about the movement's strength, Hamas supporters questioned whether the movement still was in a position to launch a wide offensive. Crisis Group interviews, Hamas members, Kubar, 12 June 2008. That said, few had doubts about its continued ability to launch limited attacks, mentioning a small-scale retaliation against General Intelligence personnel in Kubar in response to the death in detention of one of its supporters. Ibid.
[30] "Assuming its capacities have been damaged, it would not be hard for the movement to find tens or hundreds of recruits for its military if it so wanted". Crisis Group interview, former Islamist cabinet minister, May 2008. A Preventive Security official backed this assessment: "We've hit them hard. But their leadership is outside, they have deep social roots, and despite our best efforts, they still have money. They are able to form new cadres". Crisis Group interview, Preventive Security official, May 2008.
[31] Crisis Group interview, interior ministry official, Ramallah, 12 June 2008.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Crisis Group interview, Hamas leader, 18 May 2008.
[34] Ibid.

distress could precipitate a return to disorder. A Fatah leader in Nablus said he feared the "chaos of hunger" more than the "chaos of intifada".[35]

2. Containing the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades

In accordance with Abbas's "one gun, one law, one authority" electoral slogan, the PA set out to remove the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (AMB) and their weapons from the streets. Although there have been occasional exceptions, especially early on, the goal was accomplished surprisingly quickly, a result of both government co-optation and the militants' acquiescence. The PA's approach from the start was relatively consensual. While Abbas officially banned the Brigades at the end of June, ten days after issuing a similar decree on the Executive Force and Hamas militias,[36] the government handled Fatah-affiliated militants mainly through individual, cooperative arrangements. Notably, many officials insisted that the PA's program did not entail permanent disavowal of armed resistance but rather an insistence on central control.[37] A West Bank governor said, "I respect [armed] resistance. But not just anybody gets to make the decision about when to start shooting".[38]

For the most part, militants affiliated with the AMB fell in line. Some purportedly did so out of respect for the political leadership and a desire to give negotiations with Israel a chance after years of fruitless fighting.[39] Perhaps most importantly, ordinary Palestinians were exhausted, eager for a return to normalcy and the opportunity to resume their lives. By ending their attacks, the militants were responding to a popular urge to create conditions for on-the-ground improvement.

Opinions differ as to the AMB's continued existence and operational capability. Some former fighters assert that, dissolution decree notwithstanding, their units' basic structure remains intact, their relations with the security services amicable, and, should negotiations with Israel fail, they retain the right and ability to resume armed operations.[40] But others take a different view, challenging the notion that the Brigades remain a relevant organisation. Zakaria Zubeida, one of their best-known leaders, said, "there is no such thing today as the Al-Aqsa Brigades. The fighters are in PA or Israeli jails, back to civilian life or dead".[41] As he put it, he chose to lay down his weapons because the political leadership had failed to devise a coherent strategy, without which armed action becomes armed action for its own sake:

> The political leadership is no longer covering the resistance, which needs political leaders to translate military actions into political language. There's no sense in a purely military strategy, all the more so when you have competing political agendas coming from Hamas and Fatah. You cannot have a military strategy when the political system is broken.[42]

The demobilisation process has been varied. In some instances, militants approached the government to negotiate an end to their armed activities; in others the PA took the initiative. In most cases, the government dispatched a delegation, including security chiefs, to cities and refugee camps. At large meetings, the chiefs appealed to the militants' civic and national duty and exhaustion, promising them a dignified life in return for laying down their weapons.[43] The delegations argued that President Abbas had decided to pursue negotiations, that chaos in Gaza had facilitated Hamas's takeover, and the same could occur in the West Bank. They also offered to help the militants normalise their lives, disrupted by years on the run.[44] This included rebuilding houses destroyed by the IDF, paying for their children's education and finding them work.

The government also agreed to overlook small crimes – a significant inducement given that many had been conducting criminal activity in the name of resistance – though not more serious ones such as extortion and murder.[45] Perhaps most important, the PA has tried to

[35] Crisis Group interview, Fatah leader, Nablus, 9 July 2008.
[36] An English version of the two presidential decrees is at www.jmcc.org/goodgovern/07/eng/presidentdecrees07.htm.
[37] Abbas himself stated, "I do not support a return to armed struggle at this point in time. But, at a later date, this could be an option for the Palestinian people". *Ha'aretz English Online*, 28 February 2008. Fayyad, even as he emphasised that "armed struggle" and "resistance" are not synonymous, dropped both terms from his government's platform. *Ynet*, 30 July 2007.
[38] Crisis Group interview, West Bank governor, 24 January 2008.
[39] Crisis Group interviews, amnestied AMB members, Jenin Camp, 11 May 2008.
[40] Crisis Group interviews, amnestied AMB members, Jenin Camp, 11 May 2008, and Nablus, 12 May 2008.
[41] Crisis Group interview, amnestied AMB leader Zakariya Zubeida, Jenin Camp, 11 May 2008.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Crisis Group interviews, amnestied AMB members, Jenin Camp, 11 May 2008, and Nablus, 12 May 2008.
[44] Many had spent years as wanted men and felt pressured by continuing Israeli raids. During the three-day Israeli incursion into Nablus in February, 71 men turned themselves in to Palestinian services seeking protection. Crisis Group interview, Israeli security expert, Tel Aviv, 25 March 2008, and senior Palestinian security official, Ramallah, 4 April 2008.
[45] Crisis Group interview, Interior Minister Abdel Razzak Al-Yahya, Ramallah, 27 March 2008. "Shop owners were

protect some men wanted by Israel through a series of amnesty understandings.

These understandings by and large have been successful,[46] though as detailed below they have been under pressure as a result of actions taken by Israel, the PA and the militants themselves. In principle, the formula is straightforward: wanted men give up their weapons, promise to refrain from future armed activity and in most cases serve a probationary residency period at a PA installation. In return, Israel removes their names from its wanted list. The amnesty aims to reduce attacks by offering militants a path from resistance to normal lives and has significantly lessened the presence of armed men in Palestinian cities.[47]

The amnesty program has had its share of troubles, however. Criteria have been applied to different groups in piecemeal fashion; wanted men have not always abided by the letter and sometimes the substance of the agreement; and Israel has targeted people despite their presence in the program. Thus far, four lists of wanted men have been passed between the PA and Israel, with different conditions for immunity from Israeli arrest. The first two were prepared by Israel, subsequent ones by the Palestinians.[48] Israel has pardoned a total of 343 militants, while the futures of 174 remain uncertain.

Of those pardoned, a small number were erased from Israel's wanted list immediately. The majority were required to spend a three-month period at a PA security facility, though they were allowed to sleep at home so long as they lived within the surrounding Area A, that is, the area ostensibly under Palestinian security control.[49] At the end of the three months, they were eligible for amnesty, though Israel reserved the right to renew the probation based on its security evaluation. In addition, Israel agreed to refrain from targeting a small number of militants it classified as "dangerous", but not to amnesty them, meaning they must indefinitely sit in prison full time.

All in all, by the end of Fayyad's 30-day emergency cabinet, most AMB members had retreated from the streets. This in turn facilitated the restoration of law and order, since the militia had been an important source of disruption. Once the wanted men had been accorded an honourable way out, it became possible to punish those who committed criminal acts in the name of the resistance, as well as anyone who continued to publicly display weapons.[50]

Key to the government's success has been removing the political cover enjoyed by many Brigades members and other local strongmen. In the past, senior PA security personnel reported receiving phone calls from high-ranking Fatah officials instructing them to release favoured gunmen.[51] Today, such forms of patronage have been attenuated, albeit not eliminated: the well-connected might enjoy a more comfortable room instead of a cramped cell; keep their mobile phones

being extorted left and right. Every guy with a gun claimed to belong the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades and demanded money in support of 'the resistance'. You couldn't say 'no'. Now that's over". Crisis Group interview, Jenin merchant, 18 May 2008.

[46] Crisis Group interviews, West Bank governors, January-March 2008; Israeli security expert, Tel Aviv, 25 March 2008; and Israeli security adviser, Tel Aviv, 24 March 2008.

[47] Crisis Group interviews, residents and security officials in Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarem, Salfit and Bethlehem, January-May 2008.

[48] The numbers of wanted men subject to the different conditions is difficult to determine since they change over time. The first list was given by Israel to the Fayyad government shortly after it was formed. It contained 38 names, all of whom were accorded amnesty within 48 hours. There was no period of compulsory residency in a PA installation, which helped convince other militants to participate. The second list was also provided by Israel, in July 2007. It contained 178 names, five of which were repeats from the first list. All but one, who could not be located, agreed to participate. The remaining 172 sold their weapons to the government and agreed to remain for 90 days in the local headquarters of the security agency that had employed them. If they lived in Area A, under Palestinian security control, they were allowed to go home at night. All agreed not to leave Area A, refrain from carrying weapons and forego contact with other militants. The PA interior ministry, not Israel, compiled the third and fourth lists, with 260 and 90 names respectively. Israel replied that 110 on the third list and 58 on the fourth were not wanted and imposed no conditions on them; for the rest, some are subject to the conditions extended to those on the second list, while others are supposed to sit in prison full time without a provisional endpoint for their incarceration. An interior ministry official told Crisis Group that the ministry had expected this open-ended incarceration would last approximately six months. Crisis Group interview, Palestinian security official involved in the amnesty negotiations with Israel, Ramallah, 4 April 2008.

[49] The 1995 Oslo II agreement divided the West Bank into three areas: Area A, where the PA controlled both security and civil affairs; Area B, where the PA enjoyed civil control, but Israel retained ultimate security authority; and Area C, where Israel controlled both security and civil matters. With Operation Defense Shield in 2002, Israel reoccupied most West Bank cities, putting an end in effect to the tripartite division and reestablishing its security control over the entirety of the territory.

[50] Crisis Group interview, senior West Bank police official, Ramallah, 26 November 2007.

[51] Crisis Group interview, National Security Forces officer, Ramallah, July 2006.

while in custody; and, several times running, find that their court dates have been postponed. But they do not enjoy the immunity from arrest or prosecution they once did.[52]

3. Security campaigns in Nablus and Jenin

In November 2007, the government began an intense security campaign in Nablus, arguably the West Bank's most chaotic city. Its goal was to visibly assert the government's presence, impress the public and bolster security forces' morale.[53] In doing so, Fayyad ignored the more cautious recommendations of the U.S. security coordinator (USSC), General Keith Dayton, who had advised the PA to spend 2007 on training and equipment procurement, followed by a January 2008 deployment in Jericho.[54] The campaign was expanded to Jenin in May 2008. The result is that the cities which once stood as archetypes of security dysfunction have come to exemplify progress against criminality.

The PA mobilised and deployed some 300 National Security Forces personnel to back the Nablus police. As with the Jenin campaign, Nablus security forces first targeted unregistered or stolen cars in response to local complaints that they constituted the biggest annoyance. Often driven at excessive speeds, lacking insurance and used to commit crimes, the cars typified the reigning lack of accountability.[55] Similarly, the public display of weapons in streets or at weddings gradually was curbed. Security forces sought to regulate the use of urban space, removing unlicensed sidewalk vendors, smoothing traffic flow, tidying up storefront displays and quieting loudspeakers in the marketplace. The government also moved against criminal gangs engaged in murder, extortion and large-scale theft.

In Nablus, the government focused on community policing and public order rather than on AMB militants guilty of serious crimes who refused to surrender and, on occasion, publicly displayed weapons. It preferred a consensual route even when confronted with non-compliance[56] and in any event lacked proper counter-insurgency capacity.[57]

The security campaign was more extensive in Jenin. In addition to enforcing urban order, the PA targeted villages in the surrounding countryside in an attempt to "clean out" criminals and militants.[58] In doing so, it met with greater Israeli cooperation than in Nablus.[59] Though the local Palestinian security commander still must coordinate with Israel 24 hours in advance, Israel has not turned down his requests; he has even mounted operations on the west side of the Separation Barrier.[60] Criminals and militants reportedly left the

[52] Crisis Group interview, Fatah activist, Nablus, 25 December 2007. In February 2008, the PA arrested a well-connected refugee from Al-'Amari Camp near Ramallah. Within hours, Fatah leaders interceded with the police for his release. When that failed, his allies smashed traffic lights in the heart of the city in a show of force, also to no avail. Crisis Group interview, interior ministry official, Ramallah, 2 April 2008.

[53] Crisis Group interview, interior ministry official, Ramallah, 18 January 2008.

[54] Crisis Group interview, international security official, Jerusalem, 20 February 2008.

[55] Crisis Group interviews, Nablus residents, November-December 2007, and Jenin residents, May 2008. While some Jenin residents expressed willingness to give up unregistered cars in the interest of public order, others who used them to transport commercial goods and agricultural produce were far less happy about the crackdown. Crisis Group interview, Jenin merchants, 12 May 2008. A security official in a village near Jenin reported he was "inundated" with pleas to intercede to recover cars. "With economic conditions so bad, people can't afford to get another, legal car. How are they supposed to work and live?" Crisis Group interview, security official, Jenin, May 2008.

[56] A PA official explained that when armed AMB members appeared on the street in Nablus in December, local authorities agreed not to arrest them in exchange for a promise by militants not to repeat the display. Crisis Group interview, Nablus, January 2008.

[57] High-ranking Palestinian commanders had originally planned to target the militias, especially the AMB, but lower ranking officers were sceptical of their ability to do so and focused more on community policing. Crisis Group interview, international security official, Ramallah, February 2008. On some occasions when PA forces moved against recalcitrant militants, Israel disrupted operations, ordering Palestinian forces to retreat in the midst of multi-day operations in Balata camp or the Old City of Nablus. Some Israeli officials justify the continuing raids on the basis of the PA's weakness and lack of counter-terrorism capability, while Palestinians accuse Israel of purposely disrupting their operations. Crisis Group interview, adviser to Defence Minister Barak, Tel Aviv, December 2008; Israeli National Security Council official, Jerusalem, February 2008; Palestinian security officials, Ramallah and Jenin, January-May 2008; and international security officials, February and May 2008.

[58] Crisis Group interview, senior interior ministry official, 4 April 2008, and Qadura Musa, governor of Jenin, Jenin, 18 May 2008.

[59] Israel had long been more receptive to Palestinian security efforts in Jenin than in Nablus. The Jenin region has fewer settlements, and the Separation Barrier is completed, whereas in Nablus, there is greater possibility of friction between Palestinian security services and settlers. An international security official also speculated that the personalities of local Israeli commanders for Jenin and Nablus played a role. Crisis Group interview, international security official, Jerusalem, 23 May 2008.

[60] Crisis Group interview, interior ministry official, Ramallah, 12 June 2008.

region, seeking refuge in areas still under full Israeli control.[61] Several people were wounded when the PA pushed into the Islamic Jihad stronghold of Qabatiya near Jenin to impose order.[62] Altogether, the PA successfully established a permanent presence in the town,[63] though it has not pursued Islamic Jihad aggressively.[64]

Whereas the Nablus campaign was limited to the city itself, the Jenin operations were more geographically extensive and consequently produced superior results. A security commander explained that, when the campaign was launched, "people in my village were talking about forcibly resisting the government" but upon seeing the PA move into Qabatiya and Jenin Camp (known as a lawless AMB stronghold), "they realised they could not".[65]

Virtually without exception, the Nablus and Jenin residents with whom Crisis Group spoke were enthusiastic about the improvements.[66] Individuals and civic associations have purchased media advertisements to thank the government for its actions.[67] Interestingly, those praising the government include members of Hamas: "My wife and kids can walk downtown without men parading around with guns and harassing them. Who wouldn't be happy about that"?[68] Indeed Islamist leaders uniformly voiced support for the law-and-order campaign, though they distinguished the push for public order from the campaign against Hamas,[69] something some doubted the government's ability or willingness to do.[70]

While the effects of the security campaign have been felt most strongly in these two cities, there has been a spillover effect in other West Bank areas, especially in the north.[71] As order was reestablished in Nablus, National Security Forces were transferred to adjoining cities, including Tubas, Tulkarem, Qalqiliya, Salfit and villages in the surrounding countryside. There, they joined local forces on short missions to arrest criminals and seize weapons.[72] These forces subsequently were sent to Jordan for additional training, but local commanders report that the confidence of ordinary forces has grown as well.[73] Bethlehem has also seen two discrete surges – one in December 2007 before Christmas and New Year celebrations, the other before the May 2008 investment conference – that have produced results.[74]

Efforts in the southern West Bank, particularly Hebron, have been less far-reaching. This is in part because Israel has forbidden the deployment of additional police, due to the Jewish presence in Hebron, two Palestinian requests notwithstanding.[75] But even should the deployment be approved, the heavier role

[61] Crisis Group interview, international security official, Jerusalem, 23 May 2008.
[62] An Islamic Jihad spokesman claimed that PA security had clashed with the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, not Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades. The PA subsequently surrounded the house of local Islamic Jihad political leader 'Abd al-Fattah Hizimiya. After two weeks of negotiations between the Islamic Jihad leadership in Gaza and security chiefs in the West Bank, Hizimiya agreed to turn himself in to the PA for 24 hours only, though he ultimately was kept for longer. Another high-level mediation ensued, and he was released three weeks later. Crisis Group interview, Da'ud Shihab, Islamic Jihad spokesman, Gaza City, 17 June 2008.
[63] Crisis Group interview, Qadura Musa, governor of Jenin, Jenin, 19 May 2008.
[64] Da'ud Shihab claimed that Hizimiyya was the only Islamic Jihad member detained, a claim supported by a journalist from Jenin with ties to Islamic Jihad, whereas the Palestinian security forces claimed that six surrendered. Crisis Group interviews, Da'ud Shihab, Islamic Jihad spokesman, Gaza City, 17 June 2008; journalist, Jenin, 16 June 2008; and Palestinian security official, Ramallah, 30 June 2008. But as an international security official commented, "one, two or ten, the number is very small". Crisis Group telephone interview, international security official, June 2008.
[65] Crisis Group interview, security commander, Jenin, May 2008.
[66] Crisis Group staff have conducted numerous interviews with Nablus and Jenin residents since the security campaigns began in the two cities in November 2007 and May 2008 respectively.
[67] See, eg, *Al-Ayyam*, 19 May 2008.
[68] Crisis Group interview, Hamas supporter, Nablus, 26 November 2007. Islamists complained not about the government's imposition of order but rather about it not having been imposed uniformly. From his storefront perch in Jenin centre, an Islamist vendor commented: "I can see who the security forces target and who they don't, and I can assure you there is political edge to it". Crisis Group interview, Jenin, 11 May 2008.
[69] Crisis Group interview, municipal official, Nablus, 23 January 2008, and former Islamist minister, December 2007. The Islamic Jihad spokesman, Da'ud Shihab, also expressed support for "public order". Crisis Group interview, Gaza City, 17 June 2008.
[70] Crisis Group interview, Hamas PLC member, June 2008.
[71] Crisis Group interviews, Tulkarem residents, 18 March 2008; Qalqiliya residents, 24 November 2007; and Salfit residents, 23 January 2008.
[72] Crisis Group interview, Interior Minister Abdel Razzak Al-Yahya, Ramallah, 27 March 2008.
[73] Crisis Group interviews, security commanders, Salfit, 18 September 2007 and 23 January 2008.
[74] Crisis Group interview, interior ministry official, Ramallah, July 2008.
[75] Crisis Group interview, General Diab Al-'Ali, National Security Forces commander, Ramallah, June 2008.

of clans and families will complicate the PA effort.[76] Despite a crackdown against stolen cars and unlicensed street merchants and notwithstanding several protracted gun battles with criminals,[77] security activity in the south has mainly focused on courting families and undertaking undercover intelligence work to break up Hamas and Islamic Jihad cells.[78] But this has not been enough either to rein in Hamas or reassert central authority; indeed, senior government officials believe that the PA's already tenuous control of Hebron is slipping.[79]

4. Strengthening security forces

From the broader perspective of security reform, the government's most important gain from militia restraint has been time. The PA hopes to use it to gradually reintegrate AMB militants into civilian life, weaken Hamas and Islamic Jihad and bolster the security forces' capability. This is being carried out with the assistance of General Dayton, as well as the EU Police Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support (EUPOL COPPS).

Of the various elements, the most publicised have been the train-and-equip missions aimed at forming a new generation of security personnel. The USSC sponsored a $25-million program for elements of both the National Security Forces and Presidential Guard in Jordan, with a new training course set to begin within months. The former's Second Special Battalion will receive further training in Jericho before being deployed in the West Bank in August 2008;[80] the Presidential Guard already has been dispatched to Jenin, whose residents profess to being impressed by their smart uniforms and professional behaviour.[81] The EU office has trained over 600 public order police from among the ranks of the civil police, with a full complement of 800 from around the West Bank scheduled to complete courses in Jericho by July.[82] The civil police, with their reputation for relative political neutrality, have won the appreciation of many in the West Bank.[83]

Still, the training has prompted mixed reviews. A career military officer, who observed the Second Special Battalion's final exercises, acknowledged flaws in the program but offered an overall positive assessment: "The fundamental soldiering skills are there: we were quite impressed with the forces' tactical abilities, fitness and dedication".[84] In contrast, a former U.S. monitor publicly criticised the lack of equipment, educational materials and quality of instruction.[85] One of the most problematic aspects has been the slow and uneven supply of equipment. The U.S. is providing vehicles for newly trained battalions, but other items, such as radios and military dogs, still have not ar-

[76] Crisis Group interview, Interior Minister Abdel Razzak Al-Yahya, Ramallah, 27 March 2008.

[77] Relocating unlicensed street merchants in Hebron was especially tricky in political terms since many had already been displaced from H2, the Israeli-controlled part of the city. Khalid al-'Usayleh, the mayor, described a six-month negotiation process with the powerful street merchant "lobbies". While central authorities in Ramallah described the policing campaign in Hebron as relatively subdued in comparison with that in the north, Al-'Usayleh testified to "two or three" multi-hour gun battles with criminal gangs, followed by arrest and trial, that deterred others. Crisis Group interviews, ibid and Hebron, 7 February 2008.

[78] Crisis Group interview, Interior Minister Abdel Razzak Al-Yahya, Ramallah, 27 March 2008.

[79] Crisis Group interviews, interior ministry official, Ramallah, 4 April 2008; international security official, Jerusalem, 21 April 2008. 350 Presidential Guard members were deployed during December 2007 in Bethlehem but were withdrawn after the Christmas celebrations.

[80] General Dayton's long-term security agenda envisions five such crack battalions, but the immediate plan is for three, based in the north, central and southern West Bank. The Second Battalion will be based in Jericho and deployed around the West Bank as needed. Dayton has secured funding to train a second battalion and is hopeful for the third; the fourth and fifth would have to funded by the PA or donors. The five new battalions largely would replace the current National Security Forces in the West Bank. Crisis Group interview, international security official, Jerusalem, 23 May 2008.

[81] Crisis Group interview, interior ministry official, Ramallah, 12 June 2008.

[82] European experts trained Palestinian instructors, who today lead the course with continued EU advice. 50-70 police officers participate in each twelve-day session. The primary focus is handling "mass disturbances" without excessive force, since "the public always evaluates police on that basis". The skills officers learn are useful in daily policing as well, so the course enhances overall capacity. The EU program has also provided equipment to the Palestinian police, ranging from A4 paper to vehicles and other non-lethal equipment. Crisis Group interview, José Vericat, EUPOL COPPS press officer, Ramallah, 19 June 2008.

[83] Crisis Group interviews, Jenin, Ramallah, Bethlehem residents, June 2008. Public appreciation is widespread albeit not universal. In Nablus, Fatah activists complained about police aggression. Crisis Group interview, Fatah activist, Nablus, 11 May 2008. Police themselves have said, "nobody messes with us now, because they know we will thrash them". Crisis Group interview, Palestinian security expert, Ramallah, June 2008.

[84] Crisis Group interview, international security official, Jerusalem, 23 May 2008.

[85] *International Herald Tribune*, 19 May 2008. See also *The Washington Post*, 15 March 2008. *Ha'aretz* offered a more positive take, 6 April 2008.

rived.[86] In addition, Israel has objected to items – such as body armour and surveillance equipment – it deems could limit the efficacy of its forces in the event of confrontation with PA elements, as occurred during the second intifada.[87] All in all, PA security forces appear to be inadequately equipped and, at times, have had to rely on the black market for weapons and ammunition.[88]

Train-and-equip is but one dimension and, arguably, not the most important. PA security services traditionally have suffered from fragmentation, rivalries, overlap and lack of coordination, with different branches serving the interests of individual commanders.[89] The USSC has established a Strategic Planning Department within the interior ministry to overcome these problems, which has spearheaded the preparation of three documents to improve coordination and guide security sector development.[90] In the words of an official, "there is more of an appetite within the services for change. After Gaza, the senior leadership realised there was a problem that needed to be fixed. They just didn't know how to do it".[91]

But the hard work is only beginning. The security services' basic mode of operation and structure have yet to change,[92] including in the two semi-success stories of Nablus and Jenin.[93] In particular, the quality of the senior leadership is a concern, not only to their Israeli counterparts and international observers but also to younger Palestinian officers.[94] An ambitious accelerated retirement effort, aimed in part at facilitating the hiring of new, more qualified staff, has met with mixed results. Some 4,000 to 5,000 personnel have retired, including about half the National Security Forces' area commanders, and lower ranks have thinned out.

[86] Crisis Group interview, international security official, Jerusalem, 23 May 2008.

[87] In addition, a shipment of 1,000 weapons, purchased by the PA, is awaiting Israeli approval to enter the West Bank from Jordan. Crisis Group interview, international security official, June 2008.

[88] Crisis Group interview, international security expert, Jerusalem, 21 February 2008. For instance, the National Security Forces reportedly have only one weapon for three to four men and five or six vehicles for every 300-person battalion, Crisis Group interview, international security expert, Jerusalem, 23 May 2008, while many rural police stations – often "poorly equipped satellite stations with very little capacity to respond" – have no vehicles whatsoever. Crisis Group interview, interior ministry official, Ramallah, 12 June 2008. That said, PA security commanders emphasise that they have more ammunition than formerly, a fact attributed partly to PA supply and partly to weapons and ammunition confiscated from Hamas and criminal gangs. Crisis Group interview, security commander, Salfit, 23 January 2008.

[89] The donor community has contributed to the overlap by funding specific security branches rather than the interior ministry, which they generally have viewed as weak. The PA also faces the challenge of solidifying control over security forces' finances. Fayyad still has to negotiate budgets with each service individually rather than the sector as a whole. This promotes functional overlap while inflating costs, especially given the relatively lax fiscal oversight exercised by the government over the security as opposed to the civilian side.

[90] These are the Palestinian Security Plan, a three-year strategic vision; a performance measurement system, that is, benchmarks against which the security forces will evaluate their performance; and a transformational plan to achieve these goals. All were unveiled at the 24 June 2008 Berlin Conference in Support of Palestinian Civil Security and the Rule of Law, which raised $242 million to support Palestinian law-and-order programs over three years. While pleased with the pledges, Kerian McManus, director of the interior ministry's Transformation Program, said, "what happens on the ground in the next three months is more important than what happened in Berlin". Crisis Group interview, Ramallah, June 2008.

[91] Crisis Group interview, interior ministry official, Ramallah, 12 June 2008.

[92] Functional duplication between Preventive Security and General Intelligence is of particular concern. Palestinians are not infrequently arrested twice for the same crime and approached by both agencies to serve as informants; indeed, they compete with each other to arrest suspects, especially Islamists. Crisis Group interviews, Preventive Security official, May 2008, and Islamist leader, May 2008. There is a wide recognition that the work of these agencies needs to be streamlined, but personal rivalries – "everyone wants to keep his chair and privileges that come with sitting in it" – have prevented this. Crisis Group interview, Preventive Security official, May 2008. Nor has these services' modus operandi changed. The Jenin security plan called for both to remain in the background and gave the civilian police sole arrest power. But this broke down as the two services pushed back against marginalisation and renewed arrests. Crisis Group interview, Jenin residents, June 2008. The interior ministry has also pushed back, preparing legislation granting the police sole arrest power. Crisis Group telephone interview, ministry official, 25 June 2008.

[93] An Israeli general, while praising specific operations, lamented the lack of an overall security plan, describing the security campaign thus far as a series of discrete actions. Others agreed with his assessments. Crisis Group interviews, Tel Aviv, 21 May 2008; Palestinian security officials, Jenin and Ramallah, 18 May and 20 May 2008; and international security official, Jerusalem, 23 May 2008.

[94] The Strategic Planning Department is preparing a senior commanders course to focus on the next generation of leaders, but the government's ability to fundamentally reshape the security forces has not yet been demonstrated: "Fayyad cannot get inside the mechanism. He gives general direction and sets priorities, but he needs the security agencies to implement his agenda. He cannot fight against that which he is so reliant upon". Crisis Group interviews, PA security official, Jenin, 18 May 2008.

But the number of senior-level retirees has fallen short of expectations,[95] notwithstanding continued pressure from younger officers.[96] Nor is it clear that the government will long be able to afford the generous retirement benefits.[97]

The PA also has sought to improve infrastructure by building new headquarters, barracks, prisons and courthouses. But much of this effort remains in its infancy.[98] The state of prisons in particular is inadequate.[99] Detainees and criminals considered particularly dangerous are sent to Jericho, yet as the number of Hamas detainees multiplied, criminals were released to make space.[100] PA officials in Nablus cite lack of room and insufficient judicial capacity as a key shortcoming of their security campaign, complaining of a revolving door in which criminals are prematurely released after weeks of investigative work.[101]

B. SECURITY CHALLENGES

1. Israeli security operations in the West Bank

Although Israeli officials differ significantly among themselves in their assessment of Palestinian security performance,[102] virtually all agree that its counter-insurgency work is insufficient and that, as a consequence, Israel must continue to arrest those planning attacks; maintain deterrence by settling past scores with militants;[103] build and protect a network of informants within Palestinians cities;[104] create uncertainty among militants through periodic incursions;[105] and restrict the movement of Palestinian within the West Bank, especially in locations where the Separation Barrier is not complete.[106] While some criticise the aggressiveness and timing of specific IDF actions, no credible official advocates ceding overall security responsibility to the Palestinians at this time. Asked whether Defence Minister Ehud Barak was putting unreasonable obstacles before the Palestinians, several security officials responded with an emphatic "yes"

[95] Only two high-ranking Preventive Security officers have retired; the only top-level commander to do so was former West Bank police chief Major General Kemal al-Shaykh. Despite the fact that he was beyond the mandatory retirement age of 60, Mahmoud Abbas had to personally intervene to force him out. Crisis Group interview, Preventive Security official, May 2008.

[96] Crisis Group interview, retired security official, May 2008.

[97] To secure the retirements, Fayyad had to agree to more generous terms than he had initially sought. In effect, security chiefs won this battle, achieving higher compensation terms. The old pension law provided for a promotion with retirement at 80 per cent of salary, whereas Fayyad wanted to award 70 per cent of the average of the last three to five years' salary. When the security chiefs rejected that, Fayyad agreed that the old system would remain in effect until 31 March 2008, after which the new system supposedly took hold. In practice, however, the government has needed to be even more generous to move officers out, offering many a promotion and retirement at full salary. Senior security officials have kept the car and drivers they enjoyed on active service. Crisis Group interview, retired security commander, May 2008. An interior ministry official was sceptical the government would be able to reduce compensation terms in the near future. "Giving a deadline was just a scare tactic to get people to retire". Crisis Group interview, Jerusalem, 18 April 2008. The government will have difficulty reducing benefits since the retired chiefs retain significant influence with active forces. A recently retired commander explained: "The current commanders of security forces in several major cities were my subordinates and remain loyal to me. If the government tries to short-change me, they will intercede. We can still spoil many things, even from the outside". Crisis Group interview, May 2008.

[98] Security headquarters around the West Bank have been cleaned but reconstruction has yet to begin. Work on a new compound for the freshly trained National Security forces has just begun in Jericho. In Jericho, a new courthouse is almost completed, and another is under construction in Jenin. Crisis Group interview, interior ministry official, Ramallah, 12 June 2008.

[99] In the West Bank, there are six officially designated prisons and two detention centres, though many do not meet minimal standards. The "prison" in Bethlehem, for instance, is a small, windowless basement that holds twenty men; the overflow is relegated to caves in the hills surrounding the city. Crisis Group interview, Preventive Security official, Ramallah, 25 June 2008. Only the prisons in Jericho, Ramallah and the partially destroyed Junayd compound in Nablus are worthy of the name. Crisis Group interview, security commander, Tulkarem, 18 March 2008.

[100] Crisis Group interviews, senior interior ministry official, 2 April 2008, and international security official, Jerusalem, 6 December 2007.

[101] Crisis Group interview, PA official, Nablus, January 2008.

[102] Some judge that Fayyad's government has made progress – albeit limited – and that after several years of rebuilding and a massive, third-party led effort, Palestinian security forces might be able to make a meaningful contribution toward Israeli security. Crisis Group interview, senior Israeli security official, Tel Aviv, 24 March 2008. In contrast, others see only confirmation of their darkest predictions, that Israeli forces will have to remain in the West Bank for a very long time. Crisis Group interview, Israeli National Security Council official, Jerusalem, 24 March 2008.

[103] Crisis Group interview, former adviser to defence minister, Tel Aviv, 25 March 2008.

[104] "The General Security Services [with chief responsibility for gathering intelligence] will fight any attempt to limit incursions tooth and nail". Crisis Group interview, Israeli reserve officer and security planner, Tel Aviv, 25 March 2008.

[105] Ibid.

[106] *Ha'aretz English Online*, 6 April 2008.

but immediately qualified this by referring to the risk-averse military culture.

An Israeli officer said, "we are fighting a winning formula that has succeeded, for the most part, in stopping terrorism in Israel. Nobody wants to experiment with change on their watch".[107] Another security expert commented:

> During the Oslo era, the IDF stayed out of Palestinian cites because the prevailing operational mindset said you stay out. Now, after all that has occurred, the operational mindset says you go in. Something major will need to happen to change that.[108]

The concern is understandable. While, as seen, militia strength is difficult to assess, in September 2007 the IDF estimated there were 80,000 illegal weapons in the West Bank.[109] Even if that figure is considerably inflated,[110] there is little doubt that it dwarfs the "many hundreds" of weapons that have been confiscated thus far by the security services, a number that includes Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades weapons as well.[111] The end result has been an awkward, de facto division of labour: even in the cities where Palestinians ostensibly exercise security control – Nablus and Jenin – they only patrol by day, then cede the streets to Israeli operations between midnight and six in the morning. The situation has led some Palestinians to sarcastically evoke a "part-time occupation".[112] In some instances, Israeli forces enter these and other West Bank cities during daylight hours as well.[113]

Palestinian security personnel complain that nightly curfews interfere with their work, since criminals can move and the situation on the ground changes.[114] But their real grievance with the incursions relates to damage to their credibility. When Israel orders a Palestinian security commander off the street, "it is humiliating and completely undermines our authority".[115] What is a professional problem for security personnel translates into a political problem for Abbas and Fayyad, as each incursion portrays the PA as powerless to protect its citizens from external assault.[116] That said, the raids also augment PA control, since they chase militants into its security forces' arms.

Further undermining PA credibility is the Israeli campaign, launched in early July 2008, against businesses and institutions believed to be affiliated with Hamas. Israel previously had carried out similar measures in other areas of the West Bank, but the scope of its activities in Nablus is considerably greater. It has targeted tens of private businesses, health clinics, charities, orphanages and soup kitchens in addition to the municipality, which is nominally Hamas-controlled. Local residents and officials complain that the measures are directed not only against the Islamist movement but also the city's population more generally, and claim that at least some of those targeted have no affiliation with Hamas, much less with violent activity. The city had grudgingly resigned itself to Israel's frequent incursions and the continuing closure, but the wider social and economic damage caused by this

[107] Crisis Group interview, Israeli officer and security consultant, Tel Aviv, 25 March 2008.
[108] Crisis Group interview, Israeli analyst Tel Aviv, 25 March 2008.
[109] *Jerusalem Post*, 4 September 2007.
[110] Several Palestinian officials admitted to having no idea how many illegal weapons were in the West Bank. Two international security officials agreed such an assessment was extremely difficult, although one ventured they probably were in the "tens of thousands". Crisis Group interviews, Preventive Security official, Ramallah, 5 December 2008; senior security official, Ramallah, 4 April 2008; international security official, Jerusalem, 20 February 2008; and telephone interview, international security official, 6 April 2008.
[111] The number is well below 1,000. Crisis Group interviews, Palestinian security commander, Salfit, January 2008; Interior Minister Abdel Razzak Al-Yahya, Ramallah, 27 March 2008; and interior ministry official, 12 June 2008.
[112] Crisis Group interview, Palestinian analyst, February 2008.
[113] During a three-day February 2008 operation in Nablus, Israel ordered Palestinian police off the streets; after the Hamas-claimed suicide bombing in early February in the southern Israeli city of Dimona, Israel ordered Hebron police off the street for twelve days; in Tulkarem, the governor claimed that Israeli troops regularly move into the city in the middle of the day, screaming at Palestinian security forces to vacate the street. Crisis Group interviews, Jamal al-Muhaysen, governor of Nablus, February 2008; Talal Dweikat, governor of Tulkarem, 18 March 2008; and Husayn al-'Araj, governor of Hebron, February 2008.
[114] Crisis Group interview, police commander, Nablus, 26 November 2007.
[115] Crisis Group interview, local security commander, Tulkarem, 18 March 2008.
[116] The killing of Islamic Jihad (and former Fatah) activist Muhammad Shehadeh in Bethlehem, along with three others, provoked a particularly sharp reaction. Shehadeh was well liked, had strong ties to the Christian community and was viewed positively by the local population, though his history of violent attacks and proclaimed support for Hizbollah and Islamic Jihad made him an obvious Israeli target. After he was killed, a spontaneous strike shut down the city for two days. The funeral attracted 60,000 people, one third of Bethlehem's population. Crisis Group interview, Bethlehem Governor Salah Ta'amari, Bethlehem, March 2008. In a remark echoed by many, a resident asked: "Where were the security services and their guns when Muhammad Shehadah was killed? Why don't they protect Palestinians? Why do they point their guns only at us? On whose behalf are the security forces working?" Crisis Group interview, 23 March 2008.

campaign is raising ever more profound doubts about the government's ability to protect its welfare.[117]

Palestinian forces are restricted in other ways, too. Where Israel retains overall security control, they must coordinate with the IDF to mount operations and even to move. When coordination is forthcoming, it tends to be time consuming, although, notably in Jenin, it has improved in recent months.[118] When PA security forces pass through areas that Israel deems sensitive, the IDF escorts them, leading to an awkward arrival that diminishes the image of power and self-reliance that the Palestinian government seeks to project.[119] Israel has rejected Palestinian requests for better coordination and intelligence sharing.[120] A Knesset member and former defence official explained that the type of security cooperation that existed during Oslo's heyday era has not returned:

> I don't expect the PA security forces to defend Israel. They are not the IDF. We don't consider them a layer in the protection of Israelis. If we give PA security forces too much information about our operations, it sometimes gets passed to the terrorists.[121]

Many Palestinian security officials urge better intelligence sharing, but that alone will not smooth PA-Israeli security cooperation. In several instances, PA security forces have arrested fugitives named by Israel, yet Palestinian judges subsequently released them for lack of evidence. Disagreement over what to do after the arrest takes place has plagued cooperation. An international security official said, "what Israel really wants is for the PA to turn over the detainees, since it does not really care about the lack of evidence. But the PA insists, at least in the case of men wanted by Israel, that 'pillow talk' is not enough to hold somebody".[122]

Movement restrictions imposed by Israel also further enfeeble the already deficient PA criminal justice system. There is a backlog of over 50,000 cases around the West Bank, a number that has grown since Fayyad took office.[123] Efforts to accelerate case work are unlikely to succeed if accused criminals, police, judges and witnesses are barred from moving around the West Bank.[124] Similar restrictions hamper the enforcement of court orders. While the situation has improved in areas under Palestinian security control, bolstering the public image of the justice system,[125] many criminals around the West Bank still take refuge in Area C, where the PA's authority does not extend.[126] An official in the Attorney General's office says, "We cannot show people that they can obtain justice through the PA, which damages our ability to regain their trust".[127] A justice ministry official acknowledged that, were he to face a serious issue, he would be reluctant to work through the PA, doubting its ability to protect him in the long term and conclusively resolve the matter.[128]

The PA itself – including security heads and the president's office – at times solicits local clan leaders to mediate conflicts, deeming them more effective. A Hamas PLC member familiar with one such negotiation explained: "When you deal with the PA, there is no single clear source of authority. The courts fight with the security services, and the security services fight with each other. But when the clans say that a matter is settled, it is settled".[129]

2. The amnesty understandings

Israeli and Palestinian security officials unanimously concluded that the amnesty understandings have been a key factor in today's relative calm.[130] Still, these have not been without their serious hitches and controversy. The PA, Israeli government and the militants themselves all bear responsibility.

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[117] Crisis Group interviews, political activists, former charity directors and PA officials, Nablus, 10 July 2008. See also Crisis Group Middle East Report N°213, *Islamic Social Welfare Activism In The Occupied Palestinian Territories: A Legitimate Target?*, 2 April 2003.

[118] Crisis Group interview, Qadura Musa, governor of Jenin, 19 May 2008.

[119] Crisis Group interview, Nablus resident, May 2008.

[120] Crisis Group interview, General Diab al-'Ali, National Security Forces commander, Ramallah, June 2008.

[121] Crisis Group interview, former Israeli defence official, Herzliya, 24 June 2008.

[122] Crisis Group interview, international security official, Jerusalem, 7 July 2008.

[123] Crisis Group interview, human rights director, Ramallah, 29 June 2008.

[124] In Jenin, where movement has improved, Palestinian officials report an exponential rise in the number of enforced judgments and completed criminal investigations. Crisis Group interview, Palestinian prosecutor, Ramallah, 11 June 2008.

[125] Crisis Group interviews, Palestinian attorneys, Ramallah, March and June 2008.

[126] Governor of Jenin, Qadura Musa, cited improved coordination with Israel and the consequent ability of PA security forces to arrest more widely as a key achievement of the security campaign. Crisis Group interview, Jenin, 13 May 2008.

[127] Crisis Group interview, Palestinian prosecutor, Ramallah, 11 June 2008.

[128] Crisis Group interview, justice ministry official, Ramallah, 9 June 2008.

[129] Crisis Group interview, Hamas PLC member, June 2008.

[130] Crisis Group interviews, former and current IDF and General Security Service officials, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 24-26 March 2008, 11 May 2008; and PA governors and security officials, January-May 2008.

Israel has arrested 33 men whose names were on the lists, including both some on probation and some who had been amnestied; it has killed an additional nine.[131] In at least one case, Israeli forces seized a man from a PA compound in which he was being sheltered;[132] in another, a militant on probation was killed 300 metres from the Military Intelligence compound in Nablus, as he left to go home for the evening.[133] Such instances undermine confidence in the PA's ability to protect wanted men and have prompted some to flee.[134] In addition, Israel repeatedly has renewed the three-month probation of 119 militants[135] – some for the fourth time – leading them to feel that temporary probation has become open-ended incarceration.[136]

The resulting sense of hopelessness is undermining the faith of both those on probation and the security officials who supervise them,[137] but Israel justifies the repeated extensions by pointing to violations by militants, such as planning attacks, carrying weapons and having contact with other wanted men. Palestinian officials dispute most of the specific charges – claming that whenever Israel passes information, they investigate and find no breaches[138] – though they concede Israel could have intelligence information to which they are not privy. In all cases, they urge Israel to allow them to deal with the violators.[139] Despite the high importance Israeli officials accord to the amnesty agreements, they do not see a "complete consensus" among Palestinians to stop attacks and so, in the words of a former security official, must deal with a "continuous stream of terror warnings".[140]

Israel also has refused to include some men on the amnesty lists. Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades members insist that all their colleagues would accept the amnesty conditions, and anyone carrying a weapon today does so out of self-protection.[141] Whether or not that is the case, Israel has refused to extend the amnesty program to some who have sought participation.[142] Israeli security officials counter that a small but troublesome number refuse to lay down their arms.[143] They caution against making too much of the rejections, arguing that these cases concern a narrow range of high-priority militants who present current threats; emphasise the deterrent value of clearing particularly odious past accounts; and point out that many amnesty rejects

[131] Crisis Group interview, interior ministry official, Ramallah, 30 June 2009.
[132] In late March 2008, Israeli forces raided the Civil Defence compound in Ramallah and seized a man on probation. Crisis Group interview, Palestinian security official, Ramallah, 4 April 2008.
[133] Israel charges that he was planning an attack on its citizens. See www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ct_270208e.pdf. An official at the Palestinian interior ministry disputed this and condemned Israel's refusal to coordinate its operation. He said that on other occasions, when Israel had informed the Palestinian security forces probationers were suspected of planning attacks, we "arrested and investigated and always found the accusations baseless. But in this case, we received no warning". Crisis Group interview, Palestinian security official, Ramallah, 4 April 2008.
[134] After the killing outside the Military Intelligence compound, two other men on probation inside fled, fearing Israeli assault. Crisis Group interview, interior ministry official, Ramallah, 4 April 2008.
[135] In addition, 55 wanted men remain classified as "dangerous" and thus indefinitely incarcerated in a PA prison. Crisis Group interview, PA security official, Ramallah, 30 June 2008.
[136] Crisis Group interview, amnestied Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades' member, Jenin, 11 May 2008.
[137] Crisis Group interviews, amnestied Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades' members, Jenin and Nablus, 11 and 12 May 2008; and PA security official, Ramallah 30 June 2008.
[138] For instance, they question whether it is consistent with the spirit of the amnesty understandings for Israel to target an amnestied militant for contact with a wanted man who initiated the call. Crisis Group interview, Palestinian security official, Ramallah, 4 April 2008.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Crisis Group interview, former General Security Service official, Herzliya, 11 May 2008. A Preventive Security official acknowledged that there were real threats against Israel but suspects Israeli numbers are inflated. "Every joke or disgruntled statement becomes a threat. I understand why: when it comes to security, you need to take everything seriously. But when you do so, you overestimate the real threat level". Crisis Group interview, Preventive Security official, May 2008.
[141] Crisis Group interview, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade members, Jenin and Nablus, 11 and 12 May 2008.
[142] Muhammad Shehadah had requested to be added to the amnesty list multiple times. The morning he was killed, he sat in the office of the Bethlehem governor who called the interior minister to discuss his case. They spoke about the possibility of sheltering Shehadah in the governorate building but, mistrustful of Israel, refused to do so before obtaining formal approval. The governor told Crisis Group that at the time, he had been working on behalf of seven others whom Israel has not accepted into the program. Crisis Group interview, Salah Ta'amari, governor of Bethlehem, 23 March 2008. An amnestied Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades militant from Nablus added another example: His brother had been trying "for months" to get on the list but Israel refused, tracked down him in the Balata refugee camp and, according to a family member witness, assassinated him after he had been wounded and tried to surrender. Crisis Group interview, Nablus, 12 May 2008. This killing may have set the stage for the escalation of tensions; Israel subsequently killed another militant it charged with plotting a revenge attack for the Balata killing.
[143] Crisis Group interview, Israeli security expert, Tel Aviv, 25 March 2008.

are not in fact wanted men but rather status-seekers.[144] A PA interior ministry official agrees that some rejected by Israel are in fact criminals trying to pass themselves off as national heroes and thereby wrest a pardon for their offences; the risk, he says, is that "when Palestinians get confused, Israel loses trust in them".[145]

The PA has not fulfilled its own promises to help formerly wanted men normalise their lives. Many militants complain that pledges to rebuild homes and provide education and jobs have not been kept. The foremost issue is employment: one participant in the amnesty understandings said, "1,050 NIS [some $300] per month is nothing. How I am supposed to support a wife and two kids on that? I smoke that much".[146] Former fighters, he continued, are "choking" on poverty in PA compounds. "We sacrificed for our country, and this is how they treat us. Those who fought honourably are sinking economically". He admitted to not sitting in a compound as stipulated by the amnesty understanding but added, "I can't get a job and work regularly or the Israelis will kill me. If the PA doesn't support us, there will eventually be a reaction. I'm thinking about other ways to get money, and I have to admit, they are not wholesome".

He contrasted the PA's lack of support with Hizbollah's purported respect for its fighters; ominously, while denying that he would ever take money from the Lebanese movement, he warned that others might.[147] Other militants, while concurring that the government has not fulfilled its promises, were more understanding: "Salam Fayyad is doing the best he can. The government has limited means".[148]

Finally, some of the men covered by the amnesty understandings have violated their conditions. Crisis Group spoke with one in Jenin Camp, outside the PA compound in which he was supposed to be sitting:

> If Israel accuses me of plotting an attack, Abu Mazen should defend me and say "no, we are jointly following a political path". Instead, Israel and the PA tell me to sit like a dog in prison, but I will never give up my freedom. Let Israel come and try to get me. They know I will not go easily.[149]

On several occasions, prisoners in Nablus have walked out en masse, protesting jail conditions or other abuses at the hands of the security services.[150] The flight of twelve at the end of April 2008 provoked worry in Nablus that the days of chaos could return; tires burned in the streets of Balata Camp, the governor was attacked and his car firebombed, while escaped Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades militants killed Palestinian security forces in the Old City.[151] The atmosphere has since quieted, but the incident demonstrates that even a small number of dissenters could undermine months of progress, especially insofar as they provoke Israeli incursions.

Despite these tensions, the amnesty understandings are holding. While Fatah activists emphasised that "wanted men are like a family" and speculated that "they protect each other",[152] this has not been the case in practice. In part, this is because, as a former fighter explained, "we are weak and Israel is strong".[153] But even more so, the understandings are said to be holding due to a combination of exhaustion and political loyalty. In the words of an Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade militant, "Israel has killed many of my family and friends, including my brother after they refused him

[144] Crisis Group interviews, former Israeli security official still active in government service, Herzliya, 11 May; and Israeli security adviser, Tel Aviv, 25 March 2008.
[145] Crisis Group interview, PA interior ministry official, Ramallah, 30 June 2008.
[146] Crisis Group interview, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade member, West Bank, May 2008.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Crisis Group interview, amnestied Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades members, Nablus, 12 May 2008.
[149] Crisis Group interview, amnestied Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade members, Jenin, 11 May 2008.
[150] The men demanded better food and more comfortable conditions, "but they get the same food and conditions as our soldiers get. Arafat spoiled them by giving them money to keep them quiet. That era is over". Crisis Group interview, Palestinian security official, Ramallah, 18 April 2008. Nablus prisoner complaints increased in the wake of the killing outside the Military Intelligence compound, after which the security services clamped down on prisoner movements to prevent a reoccurrence. Crisis Group interview, Fatah activist, Nablus, 9 April 2008. In March, wanted men incarcerated in Junayd Prison quarrelled with guards and broke through a door within the prisoner block; a guard, disregarding standing orders, opened fire; and twelve prisoners fled. Crisis Group interviews, Fatah activist, Nablus, 9 April 2008; and interior ministry official, Ramallah, 4 April 2008.
[151] A former Nablus police officer described the attack on the governor as an attempted kidnapping. A militant who had escaped during the March prison break fired on the governor's car, pulled him from the vehicle and struck him. With the help of his guards, the governor fled to a nearby building. Palestinian security services extracted him a short time later. Crisis Group interview, former police officer, Nablus, 12 May 2008.
[152] Crisis Group interview, Fatah activist, Nablus, 2 September 2007.
[153] Crisis Group interview, Zakariya Zubeida, Jenin Camp, 11 May 2008.

amnesty, but I am committed to Abu Mazen's political program. This is the price fighters pay when the leadership decides to negotiate".[154]

3. The political context

Particularly when contrasted to years of paralysis, the PA security achievements are worthy of note. That said, they remain highly vulnerable and reversible, a function as much of political context as of practical steps. Most achievements have related to restoring normal civic life, the imposition of law and order being far more noticeable than any so-called counter-terrorism campaign. Therein lies a fundamental problem for the PA: its successes, real as they may be, are not of the type that Israel is likely to judge as enhancing its security and therefore not of a kind likely to prompt a reduction in its security footprint. This, in turn, makes it more difficult for the PA to justify harsher measures.

The militias' relative restraint, while skilfully encouraged by the government, so far largely is self-imposed. That certainly is the case of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, but even the relative inactivity of the Qassam Brigades, which the government has targeted more aggressively, flows in part at least from political calculation. Israel and the U.S., the two principal outside judges of PA efforts, have taken notice. Both have expressed relative dissatisfaction with its counter-terrorism efforts, with General William Fraser – the U.S. monitor of the Roadmap – pointing out that the PA is not pursuing the full "chain of prevention", which includes arrests, interrogations, pursuit of additional operatives and trials. Instead of working to extirpate entire networks, he concluded, PA security forces are seeking to "contain" terrorism by preventing specific attacks and weakening Hamas.[155]

An Israeli general concurred: "We were never able to stop every attack and do not expect that the PA would be able to do so. But when there is an attack, the PA must make arrests and launch an investigation, since if they don't, the message is clear: that Abbas can live with it".[156]

A former official of Israel's General Security Service offered a broader view:

> It all starts with the political context and strength of the leadership. The Palestinian leadership today is very weak. In the 1990s, there was strong cooperation between Israel and the PA on the ground. We worked very closely with security chiefs, who acted seriously against terrorism, since they knew it was in their interest. With the second intifada, cooperation collapsed and despite the recent improvements, this seriousness of cooperation has not returned. Even though some of the same people are involved, they don't have the same political backup as they did under Arafat. You can't confront your own people without that.[157]

A former Palestinian policeman echoed this sentiment in describing the calculation made by former colleagues who remain active: "People who work in the security services read the same political map everyone else does. Negotiations aren't going anywhere, the situation on the ground is worse than ever, and people are talking about the end of the PA. In this context you cannot go after your own".[158] A PA security commander who negotiated the entry of wanted men into the amnesty program added: "Right now the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades are riding the wave, but it's not clear how long it will last. If the PA does not make political progress, they will go back to what they were doing before".[159]

Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade members themselves are divided as to what it would take for them to return to armed resistance. They agreed that the current truce would come to an end only when a "political decision" to do so was taken, but there was no consensus among them about what such a decision would entail nor how it would be conveyed. While some members insisted that only the leadership – and a unified Palestinian leadership at that – could restart armed struggle, other members saw a lower bar: "We evaluate the

[154] Crisis Group interview, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades members, Nablus 12 May 2008.
[155] *Ha'aretz*, 26 March 2008. A senior Palestinian commander confirmed this assessment in part: "We have dissolved the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades and prohibited people from parading about in public with weapons. These are important counter-terrorism accomplishments. But beyond that, we simply don't have the intelligence capabilities that Israel does". Crisis Group interview, senior Palestinian commander, June 2008.
[156] Crisis Group interview, Israeli general, Tel Aviv, 21 May 2008. Regarding Jenin, an IDF officer said, "PA forces in the city are not combating the terrorists. They are taking action to enforce law and order, but they are doing nothing about terror, which has grown in the past month since they deployed in Jenin". *Jerusalem Post*, 15 June 2008.
[157] Crisis Group interview, former General Security Service official, Herzliya, 11 May 2008.
[158] Crisis Group interview, former Palestinian policeman, Nablus, 12 May 2008.
[159] Crisis Group interview, PA security commander, May 2008.

mood on the street. When people are fed up from the lack of change, we will act".[160]

Should that day come, some argued it might not be so easy to stop them, since at least some AMB members are still intertwined with the security structure. Asked if the security services would pose an obstacle, a Brigade member said, "I am the security services! So are my brothers, relatives, friends".[161] While they claim to have given up their guns, "weapons are easy to come by". So too is funding: although PA leaders have cut off the money that used to come "by indirect channels", there are other sources, mainly wealthy Palestinian business people who consider such donations to be their contribution to armed resistance.[162]

These words may well be self-serving; given the overall exhaustion and disorganisation among Palestinian militants, resuming armed operations likely would not be as automatic as turning on a switch. This certainly was the view of a PA official: "Let them talk. They have nothing left but hot air".[163] Still, even officials realised they cannot afford to ignore the political and economic paralysis: "You can impose security by force for a time. We are in that period now. But if in another three months there is no change on the ground, only God knows what will come".[164]

There also is the question of the regional environment. Some PA officials fear that outside actors are meddling in the West Bank, thereby reducing their ability to ensure quiet. According to the Jenin governor, Iran and Hizbollah are "playing chess"[165] on the Palestinian political field, funding and encouraging attacks. While PA officials might have an incentive to mention this as a reason for their lack of full control, other data pointing to external activity exists.[166] In the main, Brigades members proclaimed their loyalty to their national leaders and cause, declaring they would forcibly deter anyone selling their services to a foreign power.[167] But all admit that current levels of poverty open the field to outside manipulation.[168]

C. SURVIVAL ECONOMICS

Together with security, the PA has focused on economic progress.[169] There are several important bright spots: marginally greater market activity, at least for basic necessities;[170] a rise in land prices, especially in Ramallah;[171] growth in the construction sector, which is relatively immune to movement restrictions, as well

[160] Crisis Group interviews, amnestied AMB members, Nablus, 12 May 2008.
[161] One clarified that the amnesty agreement prevents him from being an official employee, but he claims to report to work daily to prepare field instructions for Preventive Security forces. Another claimed that the instructions to employ him came from the "very top" of the Preventive Security hierarchy. Crisis Group interview, AMB members, Nablus, 11 May 2008.
[162] Crisis Group interviews, AMB members, Nablus and Jenin, 11 and 12 May 2008.
[163] Crisis Group interview, Qadura Musa, governor of Jenin, 19 May 2008.
[164] Ibid.
[165] The phrase is Qadura Musa's, ibid. A former Israeli intelligence official had a similar evaluation. Crisis Group interview, Herzliya, 11 May 2008.
[166] For instance, an amnestied AMB member claimed to have received money (some $3,000) from Hizbollah, and a former prisoner reported that while in jail, he had witnessed Brigades members, one of whom had received payment from Hizbollah, discussing how to obtain financial support from the Lebanese movement. Crisis Group interviews, amnestied AMB member, Nablus, 12 May 2008; and former prisoner in Israeli jails, May 2008.
[167] Crisis Group interviews, amnestied AMB members, Nablus and Jenin, 11 and 12 May 2008.
[168] Qadura Musa added: "It doesn't just open the AMB to Hizbollah; it opens the entire Palestinian street to Hizbollah. It's not a question of ideology; it's a question of poverty. We have large numbers of unemployed, and it's only a matter of time until someone gives them the wrong kind of work". Trying to head this off, he explained, the finance ministry is paying 210 small factories in Jenin $200 per month for six months to reopen, "so people don't blow themselves up". Musa has a special interest in nurturing an environment in which people cannot be bought off: he claims that Hizbollah-funded militants have called for his assassination because he is leading the Jenin security campaign. Crisis Group interview, Qadura Musa, 19 May 2008.
[169] Crisis Group interview, Fayyad adviser, Jerusalem, May 2008.
[170] Many merchants who sell basic necessities reported that business has improved since public sector salaries resumed, but local producers who rely on consumers with disposable income were more pessimistic. Crisis Group interviews, Jenin, Nablus, Bethlehem and Ramallah, April-June 2008. The merchants attributed market weakness primarily to movement restrictions, but also to political instability and increasing prices. The consumer price index rose by 12 per cent between May 2007 and May 2008. Press release, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 12 June 2008. The falling value of the dollar has also played a role, albeit a lesser one, especially in Ramallah, where donor support, valued in dollars, is concentrated. Crisis Group interview, furniture importer, Ramallah, April 2008.
[171] Economists attribute the rise to the dollar's falling value and migration within the West Bank to Ramallah, in addition to the increase in construction. Crisis Group interviews, Palestinian economist, April 2008, and international aid official, May 2008.

as tourism; growing bank deposits;[172] increased investor interest;[173] rising GDP;[174] and improving social indicators, such as for poverty and unemployment.[175] In late May 2008 the Bethlehem Investment Conference, which attracted 1,500 participants and generated significant media attention, culminated in the announcement of $1.4 billion in deals.[176] The conference brought in more people and financial pledges than the government had predicted and, in this sense, was an undeniable success. While the full economic impact likely will not be felt any time soon, it had strong educational and informative value. Sam Bahour, a Palestinian entrepreneur, commented:

> It showcased the investment opportunities that Palestine has to offer and highlighted the complications of doing business here. The more investors we have, the more political allies we will have. The conference holds out the potential of mobilising groups with a vested interest in ending the occupation, so that they can realise maximum returns on their investments.[177]

All that said, genuine and sustainable economic recovery apparently is not on the horizon. The World Bank's May 2008 report concluded that fundamental economic dynamics had not changed.[178] While a focus on general indicators may obscure improvement in specific sectors and regions, such as construction in Ramallah and tourism in Bethlehem, economists and finance officials attribute most of the positive movement to salary payments and the restoration of public order. A Palestinian economist commented: "At best, you can say that the situation in the West Bank is not quite as bad".[179]

The core problem, economists agree, is movement restrictions.[180] The UN's May 2008 closure report indicated that despite the removal of certain roadblocks and checkpoints, the closure regime in fact "slightly deteriorated".[181] Israel has since removed additional obstacles – a total of 100 by its count[182] – but given that many of these are of relatively minor importance, PA and international agencies are shifting to a "quality over quantity" standard for measuring relaxations in movement. Some Palestinian and international officials report that Israel has indicated a general willingness to cooperate on movement issues, though it has avoided "systematic" or "categorical" changes.[183]

[172] Crisis Group interview, international aid official, Jerusalem, 31 March 2008. Bank deposits remained high in the West Bank and Gaza even when economic indicators dropped precipitously during the second intifada. Bank deposits, therefore, should not be taken as an indication of incipient economic growth. Crisis Group interviews, international aid official, May 2008, and Palestinian economist, April 2008.

[173] Crisis Group interview, senior international aid official, Tel Aviv, 19 February 2008. The director of a microfinance project said many of his borrowers were turning their first profit in years. Crisis Group interview, Jerusalem, May 2008.

[174] Palestinian GDP increased by 10.8 per cent between the fourth quarters of 2006 and 2007, but the high rate of population growth means that the increase in per capita GDP is lower; eg, during the fourth quarter of 2007 per capita GDP increased by 1.5 per cent over the third quarter of 2007. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) does not disaggregate the West Bank from the Gaza Strip in its GDP calculations; it distinguishes between the West Bank and Gaza for household income and household consumption, but 2007 figures are not yet available. Crisis Group interview, Loay Shabaneh, president, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Ramallah, 2 April 2008.

[175] Overall, the numbers are down since mid-2007, albeit with regional and seasonal fluctuations that render measurements difficult over the short life of the Fayyad government. Ibid; and Crisis Group interview, Palestinian economist, Ramallah, 1 April 2008.

[176] Many of the deals had been agreed previously and announced at the conference. Crisis Group interview, Palestinian economists, Ramallah, May 2008.

[177] Crisis Group interview, Sam Bahour, Palestinian entrepreneur, Ramallah, May 2008. An aid official who followed the conference preparations reported that Israel granted visas to "a surprisingly high percentage" of international investors, including Arab investors. "It shows that when the spotlight is on, Israel can facilitate access and reduce the harassment of West Bank visitors". Crisis Group telephone interview, June 2008.

[178] "Implementing the Palestinian Reform and Development Agenda", World Bank, 2 May 2008.

[179] Crisis Group interviews, Palestinian economists and international aid officials, Ramallah and Jerusalem, April and May 2008.

[180] "With the full amount of anticipated aid but no changes in the movement and access restrictions, total real growth will continue to be negative, averaging around -2 per cent, during the period 2008-2012". "Investing in Palestinian Economic Reform and Development. Report for the Pledging Conference. Paris December 17th 2007", p. 19. Palestinian academics, the World Bank and the IMF all arrived at the same conclusion.

[181] "OCHA Closure Update", Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, May 2008, www.ochaopt.org/documents/UpdateMay2008.pdf. An international security official said that his organisation had verified OCHA's assessment and found it accurate. Crisis Group interview, Jerusalem, May 2008.

[182] IDF press release, 21 June 2008.

[183] Crisis Group interviews, PA official, May 2008; international official, Jerusalem, May 2008. Currently, a considerable amount of traffic passes into Israel via an unknown number of unofficial crossings. However, Israel is in the process of forcing all traffic to entire via official crossing points, of which there are five, with a sixth planned. Palestinian and international economists are hard-pressed to calculate expected effects, but they disagree with Israel's claim

Instead, improvements have been piecemeal, awarded on an exceptional basis in response to specific requests, mainly from Quartet Envoy Tony Blair.[184]

As with many other issues Blair has championed – for instance, the entry of pipes into Gaza and the export of agricultural products from Gaza – he has wrested one-time exceptions, which Israel has insisted not be considered precedents and in certain cases not even publicised.[185] At a 13 May 2008 press conference, Blair announced a series of measures, to which Israel had agreed, relating to access and movement, construction in Area C[186] and economic and social development – including attributing frequencies for a prospective second Palestinian mobile telephone network,[187] extending the opening hours at the Allenby Bridge and moving forward with West Bank industrial parks. However, implementation of these measures has been slow and partial at best, denying the Palestinian leadership and Blair himself the demonstrable achievements needed to convince a sceptical population that broader improvement is possible.[188] So far, Blair arguably has been more successful with fundraising, including the Paris and Bethlehem conferences, where his reputation and contacts helped generate unprecedented sums.

As a result of limitations on the economic front, Fayyad's government has pursued a strategy that seeks to minimise reliance on Israeli cooperation.

1. Donor funding and public finance

According to a PA official, public sector salaries, which the Fayyad government has paid every month since it was established, are "the only safety net the economy has right now".[189] Fayyad's chief priority has thus been to right his government's fiscal ship. The task has not been easy, insofar as he inherited institutions that had degraded under the weight of the international boycott of the Hamas-led and national unity governments, as well as nearly $1 billion in salary debt to public sector employees plus arrears to the private sector and banks. His task has been further complicated by the split between the West Bank and

that the official crossings will be sufficient. Crisis Group telephone interviews, economists, July 2008.

[184] In his capacity as Quartet Special Envoy, the former UK prime minister has taken the lead in negotiating the removal of roadblocks, though U.S. Secretary of State Rice's visits have also been an important catalyst for movement. Crisis Group interview, international aid official, Jerusalem, May 2008. The Quartet, responsible for shepherding Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, is composed of the EU, Russia, the UN Secretary-General and the U.S.

[185] Crisis Group interviews, international aid officials, Jerusalem, February and May 2008; Western diplomat, Jerusalem, May 2008. The diplomat added that Israel insists on keeping cooperation informal, since codifying a relaxation of rules could be exploited by Palestinians seeking to launch attacks. For instance, granting preferred access to certain companies could turn them into targets for infiltration.

[186] Adding to the delays, donors are increasingly seeking guarantees from Israel that their projects will be protected, especially in Area C, where Israel retains security control. This is because Israeli military actions in the past have damaged aid-funded infrastructure. Crisis Group interviews, Israeli security and economic consultant, Tel Aviv, March 2008; and international aid official, Jerusalem, July 2008.

[187] Israel has still not released the frequencies for the Wataniya telephone network. In addition, it is insisting that the PA and Wataniya revise the licensing agreement to remove all references to Gaza, a market loss to which Wataniya has refused to accede. As a result, Wataniya has yet to transfer its initial payment of $100 million to the PA, the first installment of the $354 million licensing fee. Crisis Group telephone interview, international official, July 2008.

[188] Public scepticism has been heightened by the fact that in some instances where accomplishments have been announced, Israel has constrained implementation. For instance, access to Jenin for Palestinian citizens of Israel – granted on an exceptional basis, since Israel citizens remain barred by IDF order from Area A – remains limited to 500-1,000 daily. Moreover, they are not allowed to enter in cars or return with more than a "small amount" of hand-carried goods. Upon return, they are subject to security questioning. Crisis Group telephone interview, Israeli customs official, Governor of Jenin, 1 July 2008. Jenin Governor Qadura Musa disputed these numbers, claiming that no more than 100-150 Palestinian citizens of Israel have been allowed to cross on any given day. Crisis Group telephone interview, 1 July 2008. Israeli constraints, according to an adviser to the planning minister, "gut" the economic significance of the move. "In 2000, every Saturday 20,000 cars and 80,000 Arabs crossed into Jenin, plus more from among Israel's Christian population on Sunday". Crisis Group interview, Ramallah, May 2008. A Jenin resident whose family lives in Israel, explaining that his relatives had yet to visit, said, "Coming here under these conditions is an act of solidarity". Crisis Group interview, Jenin, June 2008.

[189] Crisis Group interview, adviser to the planning minister, Ramallah, May 2008. The payment of June salaries was delayed because Israel subtracted $70 million more from clearance revenues than expected. Crisis Group telephone interview, international aid official, 1 July 2008. The move was in retaliation for Fayyad's letter to the EU and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, urging them not to upgrade their relations with Israel. *Ha'aretz*, 10 June 2008. As a result, Palestinian merchants reported a sharp drop in expected market activity; when salaries eventually were paid, market activity increased. Crisis Group interviews, Ramallah, Jenin and Bethlehem, June 2008. Jenin Governor Qadura Musa downplayed the ability of salaries to carry the economy: "The payment of salaries moves the market a few days a month. That's it". Crisis Group interview.

Gaza, which has deterred Arab states from contributing as much budget support as in previous years.[190] In order to stabilise the budget and attract donor funds, the Fayyad government set out to control the wage bill, upgrade financial management and curb "net lending" – that is, money deducted from PA clearance revenues to cover utility bills, issued by Israeli providers, that Palestinian municipalities cannot or do not pay.[191]

To inspire donor confidence, the PA set about producing the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP), a summary of which was presented, to widespread praise, at the December 2007 pledging conference in Paris.[192] Shifting the focus from emergency aid to development, it laid out a full-scale recovery plan. In reality, it was a rite of passage with no real expectation of short-term implementation. A planning ministry adviser said, "the donors assigned us homework in order to satisfy their technicians and their legislatures, so we jumped through the hoops. If you want a real, long-term plan for development, give us the money we need to stabilise the situation and come back in eighteen months".[193] In the event, the government did its homework well. In Paris, donors pledged $7.7 billion over three years, considerably more than the $5.6 billion the PA had requested.

To stretch these dollars and maintain financial stability, Fayyad has tried to contain the wage bill, reducing government rolls in the West Bank and Gaza by about 39,000 employees, including most of the 20,000 employees hired from 1 January 2006 and members of the Gaza-based Executive Force, as well as security personnel deemed to have been improperly hired at earlier dates.[194] The PA also froze hiring (except in the health and education sectors, jointly limited to 3,000 new employees for the year) and general salaries over the coming three years, although it granted a 1.5 per cent civil service pay increase.[195] To track spending and convince donors their money is being put to good use, the PA is implementing a three-year plan to upgrade its financial management system. Its progress so far has met with IMF approval,[196] though international aid officials emphasise that more work must be done to bring the PA up to international standards.[197]

Despite these wage control measures and donor support, the government is already facing financial challenges. To pay July 2008 salaries, the government approached banks for loans.[198] 2008 pledges totalled just over $1 billion in budget support, short of the $1.4 billion target.[199] As a result, Fayyad urged donors at the May London Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee meeting to shift development aid to budget support. Kuwait so far is

[190] Crisis Group interview, international aid official, Jerusalem, 20 June 2008.

[191] For a progress report, see "Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework for the West Bank and Gaza: First Review of Progress", IMF, 2 May 2008.

[192] Crisis Group interview, UN official, 7 December 2007.

[193] Crisis Group interview, planning minister adviser, 5 December 2007.

[194] Crisis Group interview, finance ministry official, 8 April 2008. Trimming the employment rolls has not yet translated into the restructuring needed to reduce numbers even further. An official at the General Personnel Council (GPC) explained he would like to see farther-reaching structural change such that "we have the proper number of employees, not a number determined by political considerations". But the government is concerned about embarking on such an overhaul without alternatives for those laid off. "If I send them home today, unemployment will increase, which will create political instability, which will create a bigger problem for this government than donors who think the wage bill is too large". In the meantime, the GPC has augmented oversight of employees by training administrative inspectors and placing them in ministries in cooperation with their internal inspectors to verify that employees drawing salaries actually work. Crisis Group interview, Ramallah, 31 March 2008. Government employees who had grown accustomed to light schedules initially saw this scheme as intrusive, but many have come to accept it as part of the return to order. Crisis Group interview, culture ministry employee, Ramallah, 19 April 2008. With most of the lay-offs concentrated in Gaza, the Fayyad government has avoided sharp fallout from the redundancies in the West Bank.

[195] A finance ministry official estimated this number was accurate "plus or minus 10 per cent. Contract employees hired by Hamas; salaries paid solely for social remuneration; employees who live abroad; and security personnel added to the roles in 2004: many of these have been removed from the payroll, but not all. Our computer systems are not precise enough to have this all sorted out". Crisis Group interview, Ramallah, 6 April 2008.

[196] "Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework for the West Bank and Gaza: First Review of Progress", op. cit.

[197] Crisis Group interview, international aid official, Jerusalem, April 2008.

[198] Crisis Group telephone interview, international aid official, 1 July 2008.

[199] The total shortfall likely will be $600-$700 million. As part of a labour settlement with the teachers and public employees unions, Fayyad agreed to repay back salaries by October 2008, which will increase the annual shortfall by $200 million. In addition, the security pension packages are unexpectedly large, and social allowance transfers have increased. Further compromising the government's financial position is the dollar's falling value; with salaries set in new Israeli shekels, the dollar's decline since the pledging conference will cost the government $200 million for the year. Crisis Group interview, Fayyad adviser, Jerusalem, May 2008.

the only country to have responded to the call, shifting $80 million.[200]

The other major stress on financial solvency is net lending. The PA had long assisted municipalities in need, but such lending rapidly accelerated in recent years and today represents a significant budgetary burden. The lending arrangement is not consensual: Israel subtracts the value of the utility bills from the clearance revenues it collects on behalf of the PA before transferring them to the Authority, without ever issuing a bill.[201] With net lending budgeted at $400 million for 2008, these de facto social subsidies constitute the second biggest government expenditure after the wage bill. A Fayyad adviser said, "The government should decide who it pays money to. Individuals don't get to allocate government resources, but that's what they're doing when they refuse to pay their bills".[202]

In order to help ensure municipalities' ability to pay their own bills, Fayyad's government designed a "certificate of payment" requirement for obtaining certain government services.[203] While many agreed that the government has a legitimate interest in ending the "culture of non-payment",[204] this provoked a storm of protest from people who, given their precarious economic condition, had come to see utility subsidies as a crucial entitlement.[205] Even many who supported the initiative attacked the way in which it was implemented.[206] Public protests, which the unions joined on behalf of civil servants, put the government on the defensive; in late March the Palestinian Supreme Court stayed the denial of government services to those who failed to pay utility bills and only recently reinstated the certificate of payment.

Chastened, the government shifted its emphasis to collecting "from those who can pay but do not".[207] PA officials feel their collection efforts have succeeded despite the court's intervention,[208] although a lack of data hinders precise calculations.[209]

[200] Crisis Group interview, international aid official, Jerusalem, May 2008. He added: "Right now the donors are playing a game of chicken", trying to make the case why another donor should carry the burden. That said, the Kuwaiti money has yet to arrive, highlighting the difficulty the Fayyad government is having attracting Gulf funding. Crisis Group interview, international aid official, Jerusalem, July 2008.

[201] Each month, Israel deducts payments for monthly utility usage, as well as an agreed, amortised amount toward accumulated debt. Sometimes Israel subtracts more than the agreed amount, as in June, when it deducted an extra $70 million. This unpredictability, as well as the lack of transparent information, complicates record keeping and financial forecasting. Crisis Group interviews, Fayyad adviser, Jerusalem, May 2008, and international aid official, Jerusalem, July 2008. Recently, the Nablus municipality tried to pay an electric bill, only to be informed that the amount owed had already been deducted from PA clearance revenues. Such precipitous action constitutes a disincentive for municipalities to pay their bills themselves. A two-month grace period before the sums are deducted would be helpful in this regard, though the Israeli Electric Company has resisted any change that would increase its financial liabilities. Crisis Group telephone interview, international aid official, 12 July 2008.

[202] Crisis Group interview, Fayyad adviser Jamal Zakout, Ramallah, 14 February 2008.

[203] In the original plan, Palestinians would have been required to obtain the certificate from their municipality every three months or face various penalties, including inability to obtain a car registration, a driver's license and VAT refunds as well as, possibly, the garnishing of wages from public sector employees. Ibid.

[204] "People have three cell phones but claim they can't pay their utilities. Of course the government needs to do this". Crisis Group interview, former Islamist cabinet minister, 13 February 2008. A Nablus resident echoes the thought: "People expect everything for free. It's part of a culture of corruption and dependence". Crisis Group interview, Nablus resident, January 2008.

[205] In order to reduce opposition, the government negotiated with committees in the West Bank's 26 refugee camps. In exchange for their agreement to pay bills and abide by its decisions, the government agreed to provide a pre-paid meter for each house; a 3,000 NIS (about $900) electricity credit for those without an electricity debt; a limit on monthly payments for existing debts to 50 NIS; free electricity for the children of those killed by Israel, families of prisoners, the disabled and certain social welfare cases; and to upgrade the camps' electricity infrastructure. Crisis Group interview, Fayyad adviser Jamal Zakout, Ramallah, 14 February 2008. It was less specific about how it would help in urban centres, where it faced sharper opposition. Despite the deal, many in the camps continue to refuse to pay. Crisis Group interview, municipal official, Nablus, May 2008.

[206] People criticised the government for imposing a financial burden on those least able to carry it, asking why it did not start with big companies with large debts. Many municipal officials, who in general support the initiative, were happy neither to be on the front lines, forced to deal with disgruntled consumers, nor to be held accountable for paying their municipalities' debts to the electric companies. Crisis Group interviews, Nablus and Hebron municipal officials, February 2008.

[207] The government will provide funds to municipalities to cover bills of the poor, establish a committee to approve exemptions for hardship cases and set up a behind-the-scenes computerised system to relieve the consumer's burden. Crisis Group interview, Fayyad adviser Jamal Zakout, Ramallah, 10 April 2008.

[208] Utility payment rates had already increased by 20 to 30 per cent in early 2008, and $10 million was being collected monthly to repay outstanding debts. Crisis Group interviews, Nablus municipal official, 23 January 2008; Khalid Al-

Government officials maintain that the strikes over back salaries and the certificate of payment are fundamentally political, accusing certain Fatah stalwarts of stirring up worker discontent in order to obtain cabinet seats.[210] PLC members allied with the strikers, in contrast, claim that they stepped in only when the government threatened the unions.[211] Regardless of the strikes' motivation, they and other pressures have aggravated the financing gap, which will need to be closed if public sector workers are to be paid.

2. Community micro-projects

Since the road to economic recovery is hampered by movement and access restrictions, the Fayyad government has initiated "micro-projects" aimed at community improvement. Ideas for the projects – of which 600 are planned and 150 have been completed – are locally generated to respond to specific concerns.[212] Projects are designed to minimise the need for Israeli approval, though advisers to the planning minister maintain that this burden remains onerous, especially for projects in Area C, where Israel retain full control.[213]

The projects are part community development, part campaign-style politics. Priorities are based on local meetings led by Fayyad, attended by 200-300 people in larger cities and 50 in smaller places, followed by meals and walk-abouts. One of the prime minister's advisers explains: "They are a vehicle for interaction, to achieve maximum exposure. Fayyad wants to get out and hear the people, to hear their problems. He keeps his security away and takes risks, since he is intent on talking".[214] The projects have been well received locally, where residents appreciate the attention to their concerns and the importance of "actually seeing something happen on the ground".[215] While broader effect has been limited,[216] they are nevertheless an important asset for a government commonly perceived as distant.[217]

`Usayli, Hebron Mayor, 7 February 2008; and Fayyad adviser, February 2008. Many municipalities run their own version of the certificate of responsibility, denying new utility service or building permits to those with outstanding utility debts. Crisis Group interview, Nablus municipal official, Nablus, May 2008.

[209] In May, PA officials forecast that annual net lending would come in under the budgeted amount. Crisis Group interview, Fayyad adviser, Jerusalem, May 2008. International aid officials, however, questioned the forecast's accuracy. Crisis Group email communication, 30 May 2008.

[210] Crisis Group interviews, Fayyad advisors, Ramallah, February, April and May 2008.

[211] Crisis Group interview, Azzam al-Ahmad, head of the Fatah parliamentary bloc, Ramallah, 17 April 2008.

[212] Crisis Group interview, Fayyad adviser, Jerusalem, May 2008. The projects, most of which cost about $20,000, vary widely, in line with local needs. Examples include adding rooms to schools, paving dirt roads, replacing a generator with a connection to the electricity grid and extending an irrigation canal. A few have higher price tags, increasing average cost to $132,000.

[213] Crisis Group interviews, advisers to the planning minister, Ramallah, May 2008.

[214] Crisis Group interview, Fayyad adviser, Jerusalem, May 2008.

[215] Crisis Group telephone interview, community leader, Jenin Camp, May 2008.

[216] Several civil society activists and a municipal employee told Crisis Group they had no idea what had been implemented and where. Crisis Group interviews, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Nablus, May 2008.

[217] Given that Fayyad's party holds only two seats in the PLC, this sentiment is not unfounded. Moreover, many civil society activists felt excluded from the PRDP process: the document submitted to the Paris donors conference was in English and not translated into Arabic until later, leaving limited avenues for community input. Crisis Group interview, NGO director, Ramallah, May 2008. This sentiment extends beyond the government to the entire Ramallah-based PA: "The Muqata'a [the PA headquarters in Ramallah] used to be 'the people's house' under Arafat. Anybody could go in and meet him. Now it feels like a compound, a base for military and political elites. We don't have access". Crisis Group interview, NGO worker, Bethlehem, May 2008.

III. INTERNAL DISSENT

Formed against the backdrop of what it considered Hamas's "coup", the new government moved quickly to constrain not only the Qassam Brigades but also the Islamist movement more broadly, pursuing its activists and proscribing its political activities. As a result, Hamas leaders who have been arrested neither by the PA nor by Israel have confined themselves to behind-the-scenes politics. While the Fayyad government has a far better relationship with Fatah, there, too, it has encountered difficulties.

A. DEALING WITH HAMAS

The PA security services have targeted not only militants but also many suspected of sympathy or affiliation with the Islamist movement. Crisis Group spoke with municipal councillors, students, preachers and ordinary Palestinians who had been held for several days before being released.[218] A Nablus municipal official whose son had been detained said, "arrest is becoming a rite of passage".[219] The detentions aim to deter Hamas from harming Fatah members in Gaza; send the message that it will be contained in the West Bank; pressure its West Bank leadership to distance itself from its Gaza and outside counterparts; and, possibly, foster tensions within the movement.[220] The pressure has had an effect. Senior Hamas leaders acknowledge that the movement has absorbed a harsh blow in the West Bank, though they insist its popularity will ultimately be increased by the PA's measures and perceived collaboration with Israel.[221]

For Hamas members, the arrests conjure memories of 1996, when the PA launched an aggressive campaign against the Islamist movement in the wake of bus-bombings in Israel. Some claim the current situation involves a larger number of arrests and tighter cooperation with Israel.[222] Many arrested and released by the PA are quickly rearrested by Israel and vice-versa.[223] Anger is further fuelled by instances of torture, in the worst instances resulting in severe injury or even death. A resident of the village of Kubar, near Ramallah, detained by PA General Intelligence in February 2008 for over two weeks, claimed that security personnel suspended him from his wrists, which had been bound behind his back; beat him with pipes on his head, body, hands and soles of feet; jumped on his stomach; forced him to disrobe; and confined him, during wintertime, in an unheated cell in a centimetre of standing water. By the end of his ordeal, he allegedly had lost seventeen kilos.[224] He claimed to have witnessed similar measures inflicted on his neighbour, Shaykh Majd Barghouti, who died in custody.[225]

A Hamas PLC member asserted that he recently visited a released detainee who had been beaten so badly that he could neither walk nor talk.[226] Crisis Group spoke with other detainees who alleged other types of abuse, including beatings and confinement in cells barely large enough to accommodate a person.[227] As a result, an Islamist leader asserted, "the PA

[218] Crisis Group interviews, Nablus, August, September, December 2007 and February 2008.
[219] Crisis Group interview, Nablus municipal official, Nablus, 28 August 2007.
[220] Crisis Group interviews, presidential adviser, Ramallah, 19 August 2008; former cabinet minister, Ramallah, 31 December 2008; and former Islamist cabinet minister, February 2008.
[221] Crisis Group interviews, senior Hamas leaders, Gaza City, 3-4 June 2008, and Ramallah, May 2008. Hamas sympathisers agreed with this assessment. Crisis Group interviews, Jenin, 16 June 2008.
[222] Crisis Group interviews, Hamas member, Jenin, June 2008.
[223] Crisis Group spoke with several detainees who had been arrested by both Israel and the PA. Crisis Group interviews, Ramallah, Kubar and Jenin, June 2008. A human rights fieldworker estimated a "very high percentage – perhaps 90 per cent" – were arrested by both. Crisis Group interview, Jenin, June 2008. An Islamist leader described a Hamas prisoner, released by Israel, who arrived home late at night, to be awoken by PA security forces and rearrested in early morning. "He got home so late nobody knew he was here. How did the PA know to arrest him?" Crisis Group interview, ex-cabinet minister, May 2008. National Security Forces commander Diab al-'Ali lamented Israeli arrests of so many Hamas members or sympathisers immediately after release by the PA as "part of Israel's attempt to ruin our reputation and security campaign". Crisis Group interview, Ramallah, June 2008. Some in Fatah also complained about the perception of collaboration. After Israel killed an escaped AMB prisoner in Balata Camp a week after he had attacked the Nablus governor, a Fatah-affiliated ex-policeman said, "You cannot convince me the timing was a coincidence. Israel protects those who cooperate". Crisis Group interview, Fatah activist, Nablus, May 2008.
[224] When the villager returned home and his mother saw the extent of his wounds, she had a heart attack and died. Scars on his wrists were visible to Crisis Group. Crisis Group interview, detainee, Kubar, June 2008.
[225] An unofficial translation of a report by PLC members on Barghouti's death can be found at www.unitedagainsttorture.org/more.asp?NewsID=39.
[226] Crisis Group interview, Hamas PLC member, June 2008.
[227] A youth was imprisoned in the so-called "refrigerator" for four days, allowed out only to use the bathroom and pray; he alleged that others in neighbouring cells had been kept this way for a month. Crisis Group interview, Jenin, June 2008. Some detainees claimed that personal connections could lead to lighter treatment. A Jenin merchant said, "I am one of the

risks radicalising a generation. Our young people are starting to talk against some of the senior leaders. They say, 'You are not in prison. You have not been tortured. Why should we listen to you?'"[228]

Detainees often report not being accused of a specific crime, confronted instead with general allegations such as having ties to the Executive Force, weapons possession, electoral activity on behalf of Hamas, money laundering or contact with the movement's Gaza leadership.[229] One released detainee, who previously had been arrested on three occasions by Israel, said:

> When Israelis interrogate you, they focus on specifics, but the PA didn't seem to have any specific information about me and never presented any proof that I had done anything wrong. In fact, several of the things they interrogated me about – running in the municipal elections and weapons possession – are not even illegal. The arrests are not about crime or illegality. They are pressuring people to isolate Hamas from its political environment and support base.[230]

Likewise, detainees suspected of Hamas ties typically are either charged after the legally mandated time frame or not charged at all.[231] Frustrated by the lack of legal process, some families have given up on hiring attorneys to assist their imprisoned relatives. The father of a detainee asked: "Why should I waste my money? Attorneys can't do anything. The PA refuses to talk with them. There is no law in the West Bank".[232] Security services have been known to ignore judicial orders, and a West Bank governor acknowledged that "security agencies only bring suspects to court under pressure", which he personally exerted in several instances.[233]

There are tentative signs of improvement. Former detainees explained that the security agencies have had to calibrate their behaviour in the wake of Barghouti's death and the outcry to which it gave rise.[234] Human rights experts estimate that the number of arrests has decreased over the past year, as has the severity of treatment.[235] And a human rights activist said cases of unheeded judicial orders were becoming increasingly rare.[236] Nobody, however, has yet to be charged for arbitrary arrest, mistreatment, or torture – even in the Barghouti case. Moreover, a representative of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights, the PA ombudsman, reported that while the PA often responds to his inquiries, the answers are frequently unsatisfactory and do not indicate that it carried out an investigation. "The attorney general is responsible for investigating and prosecuting these crimes. If he did it just a couple times, abuses would likely decrease".[237]

The government also has targeted organisations suspected of Hamas ties. After Abbas promulgated a new law regulating non-governmental organisations and charities, the interior ministry ordered the dissolution of some 150 – predominantly, but not solely, tied to Hamas – claiming they had not followed proper procedures.[238] Not everyone in Fatah agreed with this approach; one leader lamented: "We should be building

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lucky ones. I have a friend in General Intelligence so the physical and psychological abuse was relatively light". Crisis Group interview, June 2008.

[228] Crisis Group interview, former Islamist cabinet minister, May 2008.

[229] Crisis Group interview, former detainees, Kubar and Jenin, June 2008.

[230] Crisis Group interview, former detainee, Jenin 2008.

[231] Crisis Group interview, human rights fieldworker, Ramallah, June 2008. By law, the security services can hold a detainee for 24 hours before bringing charges. A prosecutor can extend the detention by an additional 48 hours, after which the detainee must be brought to court. Crisis Group interview, human rights activist, Ramallah, 29 June 2008.

[232] Crisis Group interview, father of detainee, Jenin, June 2008.

[233] Crisis Group interview, West Bank governor, February 2008. In one instance, a judge ordered the release, for lack of evidence, of twelve Hamas members accused of membership in the Executive Force and had to compel recalcitrant security services, who initially refused, to carry out the order. Crisis Group interviews, West Bank governor, February 2008, and human rights director, 21 February 2008.

[234] Kubar villagers arrested since Barghouti died reported they were not beaten with pipes, though they were forced into painful positions. Crisis Group interview, Kubar residents, 12 June 2008.

[235] Crisis Group interview, human rights director, Ramallah, June 2008. In 2007, the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights, the PA ombudsman, received 491 complaints of torture and mistreatment, the vast majority after the Gaza takeover; so far in 2008, it has received 45 to 50 in the West Bank. Crisis Group interview, Commission representative, Ramallah, June 2008.

[236] Crisis Group interview, human rights director, 21 February 2008.

[237] Crisis Group interview, Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights representative, Ramallah, June 2008

[238] Several legal experts, including some of Abbas's advisers, consider the new law suspect, so the government has not relied on it in court. A presidential legal adviser explained that it was illegal since there was already a law regulating NGOs and stipulating conditions for their closure. The PA could thus not argue the new law was "urgently" needed, as required by the Basic Law. Crisis Group interview, former PLC member and Abbas legal adviser, Ramallah, April 2008. As a result, only a few of the 150 organisations have been closed by legal means. But since the new law has not been officially rescinded, watchdog groups and Islamist leaders both assert, the security services continue to invoke it when raiding Hamas-linked organisations

a better social network ourselves, not going after institutions that help people when times are so desperate".[239] But as a result, Islamist leaders claimed that few of their associations were still allowed to operate.[240] According to one, "they've closed everything: sports leagues, media outfits, charitable associations".[241] Since then, Israel has launched its own campaign, suggesting either that the PA's efforts might have been less than comprehensive or that Israel chose to close some businesses and charities with no link to the Islamist movement, including some tied to the PA.[242] Whatever the case, Israel's campaign has further eroded West Bankers' faith in the PA's ability to protect them.[243]

The PA campaign has extended to mosques. Shortly after its formation, Fayyad's government began to apply previously unenforced laws restricting sermons to licensed preachers – who must be PA employees – and barring politicised sermons.[244] Previously, preachers typically stepped aside so that others, including Hamas representatives, could deliver sermons.[245] The PA cracked down on violators and arrested those speaking in Hamas's name.[246] Arguing that preaching can be the most dangerous form of Islamist activity, a governor arrested two imams – and subsequently rearrested one – who spoke against Christians in a Friday sermon: "They are more dangerous than the gunmen. If gunmen try to shoot me, I'll shoot them first. But preachers poison the minds of children".[247]

According to both Islamist leaders and watchdog groups, Hamas government employees and suspected sympathisers occasionally have been compelled to resign because of their political views, though such instances are said to have diminished. Islamist leaders cite examples of applicants who have been denied PA jobs and PA employees who have been summoned for interrogation and demoted.[248] A former PLC member, currently head of a watchdog organisation, confirmed this, adding that immediately after the Gaza takeover, in a handful of cases PA employees suspected of Hamas affiliation were physically barred from their offices, then dismissed for failure to report to work.[249]

The government also reinstated the obligation for prospective employees to obtain a "certificate of good conduct" from the security services.[250] Since coming to power in April 2006, Hamas had disregarded this practice insofar as the certificates had been issued by the Fatah-dominated Preventive Security and General Intelligence security agencies.[251] While a 23 March 2008 order by the deputy interior minister specified that vetting is not required for all PA employees,[252] the minister himself told Crisis Group that all employees must receive a certificate of good conduct.[253] Some

[239] Crisis Group interview, Fatah leader, Nablus, 8 July 2008.
[240] Crisis Group interviews, senior Hamas leaders, Gaza City, 4-5 June 2008; West Bank Hamas leader, Ramallah, May 2008; and former Hamas cabinet minister, May 2008.
[241] Crisis Group interview, Hamas leader, Ramallah, May 2008. A former Hamas cabinet minister added that he had witnessed PA security forces cleaning out the office of an Islamist association in his city: "They took everything including the furniture. The office was literally empty when they finished". Crisis Group interview, May 2008.
[242] PA-linked institutions affected in Nablus include a ministry of social affairs office; two health clinics run by a charitable organisation whose board had been appointed by the PA in Ramallah; and the Nablus municipality – which, while nominally controlled by Hamas, is run with substantial Fatah input and is an organ of the PA's local affairs ministry. Crisis Group interviews, current and former members of charitable associations, Nablus, 10 July 2008. Reacting to the Israeli measures, a senior Hamas leader commented: "Israel and the PA have tried this tactic before, and it backfired. They closed Hamas charities and put their heads in prison, and when they get out they were leaders. Some today are PLC members". Crisis Group interview, Gaza City, July 2008.
[243] Crisis Group interviews, Nablus residents, 10 July 2008.
[244] Crisis Group interview, senior interior ministry official, Ramallah, 2 April 2008.
[245] Crisis Group interview, Palestinian attorney, Ramallah, 8 June 2008.
[246] Crisis Group spoke with a preacher who was interrogated for two days over a mosque sermon. Crisis Group interview, Nablus, 1 November 2007.
[247] Crisis Group interview, West Bank governor, 11 February 2008.
[248] In one case, a school principal was told that if he resigned and returned to normal teaching, he would be released from prison. In another case, the results of a civil service examination were overturned and the exam rescheduled without informing a candidates with known or suspected ties to Hamas. Crisis Group interview, former Islamist cabinet minister, February 2008.
[249] Crisis Group interview, former PLC representative and NGO director, Ramallah, 16 April 2008. Not all cases are politically motivated. A human rights activist remarked: "There's not only a political struggle going on in the West Bank; there's also an administrative one". Some PA employees reportedly have charged Hamas affiliation for personal revenge or to clear space for promotion. Purely political dismissals are said to have dropped in recent months. Crisis Group interview, human rights worker, Ramallah, 10 June 2008.
[250] The institutional security division within the interior ministry grants this certificate, with input from the equivalent Preventive Security and General Intelligence divisions.
[251] Crisis Group interview, Palestinian security sector researcher and human rights expert, Ramallah, 22 January 2008.
[252] A copy of the deputy minister's order was provided to Crisis Group.
[253] He emphasised there was no political litmus test for employment, and the certificate was only meant to weed out "political agents" who could subvert the PA. Crisis Group

compared this practice to standard anti-terrorist vetting procedures.[254] Still, given the breadth of support for Hamas, political considerations in all likelihood play a role.[255]

The government has not proscribed Hamas as a political movement, although some statements by Fatah political leaders and actions of security personnel can at times create that impression. In the words of a West Bank governor, "Hamas is not illegal, but all its activities, including political activities and distributing literature, are absolutely forbidden".[256] During an interrogation conducted jointly by General Intelligence and Preventive Security, a Hamas municipal councillor reportedly was told: "There is no longer any such thing as Hamas".[257] Hamas members have been arrested for openly speaking in support of the Islamist movement.[258]

This has created an atmosphere of fear among Hamas supporters, many of whom avoid admitting they back the movement, calling themselves "independent" instead. "I'm scared that I won't get a travel permit if I say that I'm with Hamas", said a woman living near Nablus.[259] Others avoid going to mosque on a daily basis, limiting themselves to Friday prayers which, given their communal nature, are seen as more neutral.[260] Some sympathisers refuse to speak with organisations with which they are unfamiliar, pollsters included. "You never know where the information is going", said a municipal employee in Qalqiliya.[261] Another municipal official, in conversation with Crisis Group, refused to discuss his history of party affiliation: "Are you trying to get me arrested?"[262]

B. MANAGING FATAH

Fayyad's government has enjoyed a complex relationship with Fatah, part cooperative, part competitive. The movement as a whole provides outside support and legitimacy to the government, though certain Fatah elements have opposed its agenda and composition. Over the course of his year in power, Fayyad has made inroads even with these latter elements, due to his technical competence and critical role in garnering international support. Indeed, many movement stalwarts who want Fatah to enter the government have expressed a willingness to work under his stewardship, albeit within the framework of a modified cabinet – though as of late, even the demand to change ministers has softened.

When Fayyad first established his government – purportedly as a temporary solution to the Gaza crisis – many in Fatah saw an opportunity to rebuild their movement, while the prime minister brought in external resources and carried the burden of governance.[263] Even so, some protested the cabinet's technocratic composition on the grounds that only participation of the factions, including Fatah, could effectively counter Hamas's takeover.[264] Personal motivation, namely the desire to return to positions of authority, also likely played a part. Several times over the first six months of the government, certain Fatah heavyweights unsuccessfully sought to depose Fayyad.[265]

interview, Interior Minister Abdel Razzak Al-Yahya, Ramallah, 27 March 2008.

[254] Crisis Group interview, justice ministry adviser, Ramallah, 16 April 2008.

[255] Crisis Group interview, Palestinian journalist Hossam Ezzedine, Ramallah, 19 March 2008.

[256] Crisis Group interview, West Bank governor, 23 January 2008.

[257] He was held for one day and one night for speaking in a mosque in Hamas's name. Crisis Group interview, Nablus municipal council member, Nablus, 1 November 2007.

[258] Crisis Group interview, former Islamist cabinet minister, 29 September 2007.

[259] Crisis Group interview, college student, Hawara, 13 February 2008.

[260] Crisis Group interview, Palestinian merchant, Nablus, 13 February 2008.

[261] Crisis Group interview, municipal employee, Qalqilya, 16 February 2008. "True or not, many people think that the intelligence agencies can match poll responses to particular people. And given the fact that people are being fired on the basis of political ideas, that's dangerous". Crisis Group interview, former Islamist cabinet minister, October 2007. Phone polling, which according to a prominent Palestinian pollster has advantages in the occupied territories, may increase such suspicions. Crisis Group interview, Ramallah, 22 November 2007.

[262] Crisis Group interview, West Bank municipal official, February 2008.

[263] Crisis Group interviews, Fatah Revolutionary Council members, July-December 2007.

[264] "Politics is the art of mobilisation. Fayyad isn't doing that. He thinks that if we behave ourselves, if we act nicely, Israel will voluntarily concede. But that's not the real world. You need to create pressure". Crisis Group interview, senior Fatah leader, Ramallah, 7 April 2008.

[265] The explicit campaign to remove Fayyad – including high-level delegations to Abbas – quieted after the successful Paris pledging conference in December 2007. But softer provocations, such as the strikes of February, March and April 2008 and, more recently, the establishment of PLC oversight committees, have continued. Crisis Group interviews, ex-cabinet ministers and Palestinian political analysts, Ramallah, December 2007-May 2008.

But as the first anniversary of the takeover approached, with no end in sight for Hamas's Gaza rule, Fayyad's government no longer seems so temporary. As a result, voices within Fatah calling for a cabinet reshuffle have grown louder, as has pressure on President Abbas to that effect. As one leader explained, Fatah is in a lose-lose situation: "If Fayyad fails, Fatah loses since it is supporting the government. But if the government succeeds, the reward will accrue to Fayyad and the ministers, not Fatah as a movement".[266]

The Fatah leadership has invoked several arguments in favour of a cabinet change. First is the feeling that the government is working against not only Hamas but also Fatah, trying to build an alternative path that would displace both the Islamist and mainstream secular nationalist currents. Assertions by ministers that they are combating "Fatah corruption" led Azzam al-Ahmad, head of the Fatah parliamentary bloc, to claim: "Those who want to raise a new party on the remains of Fatah and Hamas are more dangerous than Hamas".[267]

Secondly, some complain of the government's high-handed behaviour. In the words of a Fatah Revolutionary Council member, "we support this government, but we are not going to bow down before it. Sometimes it thinks it can do whatever it wants because it has international support. The certificate of payment, cutting jobs, and police state tactics: it has taken things too far".[268] Several senior government officials complained about being left in the dark, commenting that they have no idea what the prime minister's strategy is.[269]

Thirdly, critics claimed the cabinet is not up to the task. It is sparsely staffed, with 24 portfolios distributed among only fourteen ministers. A former minister said, "I can tell you from experience that when you hold more than one portfolio, you neglect something. For a month or so it's not a big deal, but after that, the ministries suffer".[270] The capacity of some current ministers also is challenged. A former official said about his erstwhile ministry, "it suffered greatly under Hamas, but even more painful is watching what's happened since".[271]

The cabinet was formed quickly, with many of Fayyad's first choices declining, because they doubted its longevity and resented the speed with which he demanded a response.[272] As a result, although many praise the bravery and commitment of Fayyad's ministers to accept portfolios "while Fatah members were being thrown off buildings in Gaza",[273] a former official argued that the prime minister had assembled "junior assistants that he calls ministers";[274] another official said early cabinet meetings were tantamount to Fayyad-led "tutorials" on how to run a ministry.[275] Even the more competent ministers have seen their ability to govern hamstrung by their technocratic status and to manage hemmed in by a still Fatah-dominated civil service.[276]

In reality, the dissatisfaction essentially boils down to a political tug-of-war between Fayyad and a once quasi-hegemonic movement that aspires to recapture its former role. The contest has taken diverse forms. The Fatah-affiliated unions of health workers, education workers and government employees repeatedly have struck to demand faster payment of back salaries, increased transportation subsidies, regularisation of the status of teachers whose hiring has not been finalised and an end to the certificate of payment. To all these demands, the government has offered a simple response: with the government struggling just to pay salaries, it cannot increase payments.[277]

The strikes speak to social distress and the government's inability to substantively improve material conditions but also clearly have a political tinge. A culture ministry employee said that a Hamas-led government "could have doubled our salaries, and we still would have

[266] Crisis Group interview, Fatah leader and Fayyad government official, Ramallah, 10 April 2008.
[267] Crisis Group interview, Azzam al-Ahmad, Ramallah, 17 April 2008.
[268] Crisis Group interview, Fatah Revolutionary Council member, Ramallah, 6 February 2008.
[269] Crisis Group interview, senior PA official, Ramallah , 18 March 2008.
[270] Crisis Group interview, former cabinet minister, Ramallah, 31 December 2008.
[271] Crisis Group interview, former Palestinian official, Ramallah, 6 April 2008.
[272] Crisis Group interviews, senior Fatah leader, Ramallah, 22 January 2008 and 7 April 2008, and Palestinian official, Ramallah, 10 February 2008.
[273] Crisis Group interview, presidential adviser, Ramallah, 10 June 2008.
[274] Crisis Group interview, former official, Ramallah, 6 April 2008.
[275] Crisis Group interview, Palestinian official, Ramallah, 10 April 2008.
[276] An international health official praised the health minister's technical abilities while lamenting his lack of political capital, pointing to instances when his decisions were overturned by subordinates with greater standing inside Fatah. Crisis Group interview, Jerusalem, 5 February 2008.
[277] Crisis Group interview, Fayyad adviser, Ramallah, 10 April 2008.

struck", whereas in the initial months of the Fayyad government, "it could halve our salaries, and we still wouldn't strike".[278] Indeed, the head of the Fatah parliamentary bloc admitted that it established and used the Fatah-dominated Union of Workers in Government Service to destabilise the Hamas-led PA.[279] But over the past months, the same union has targeted Fayyad.

None of this means the government will be reshuffled in the face of Fayyad's and, for now at least, Abbas's objections. Adjusting the cabinet would be simple neither in process nor consequence. Should Fatah formally enter the government, the formation of a new cabinet would require agreement on a new platform and ministers. Should Fayyad simply agree to add new ministers, those from Fatah would likely require the approval of its Central Committee – the movement's supreme executive organ – which, since Arafat's death, has been asked to sanction all Fatah ministerial appointments. One senior Fatah leader, otherwise sympathetic to the idea of improving the quality of the government, fears that initiating this process could "wind up opening a Pandora's box".[280] Abbas already is walking a fine line between Fayyad and Fatah; should Fayyad be presented with names he deems unacceptable, he could turn them down or threaten to resign. Even assuming these difficulties were resolved, any move to replace the caretaking government would be of dubious legality in the absence of PLC approval.

Operationally, bringing in Fatah could present its own challenges. Cabinet members would likely be politically stronger, diminishing Fayyad's control. Finally, many fear that creating a factional coalition in the West Bank opposite the Hamas government in Gaza would transform a de facto geographic split into an official factional one, therefore consecrating division of the national movement.

As a result of these obstacles, even before Abbas's 4 June 2008 announcement that he will pursue reconciliation talks with Hamas (however unlikely they are to proceed seriously, let alone succeed, in the short term), most in Fatah had already muted their demands to reshuffle the cabinet. Reconciliation talks would only further postpone steps to bring Fatah in. But should the discussions fail, Fayyad and Fatah once again will confront these questions.

[278] Crisis Group interview, PA employee, Ramallah, August 2007.
[279] Crisis Group interview, Azzam al-Ahmad, Ramallah, 17 April 2008.
[280] Crisis Group interview, Fatah leader, Ramallah, 7 April 2008.

C. "THIS ISN'T THE RIGHT TIME TO PROTEST"

Fayyad's government was established on an emergency basis, in the context of conflict with Hamas and concern in Ramallah about the Islamists' broader intentions. This created a permissive atmosphere for the aggressive pursuit of Islamists and repression of dissent. Ensuring calm after the Gaza clashes and ending the chaos that had reigned for years has won the Fayyad government support, but the focus on security has a political downside, generating fears of a more autocratic rule.[281] Such complaints are hardly surprising among Hamas supporters,[282] but they extend to others, including parliamentarians and civil society activists.[283]

Some of the problems stem from lack of accountability and transparency brought on by the paralysis of the PLC, which has enabled the president to rule by decree, without parliamentary approval.[284] Among these was the decision to grant military courts jurisdiction over civilians, a practice that has survived the expiration of the state of emergency.[285] Likewise, in November 2007 the president granted formal arrest power to the Preventive Security Organisation.[286]

[281] Crisis Group interview, civil society activists, Ramallah, March 2008.
[282] A Hamas sympathiser repeated a widely heard refrain when he said, "It's General Dayton, not Abbas or Fayyad, who rules the West Bank". Crisis Group interview, Jenin, 11 May 2008.
[283] Crisis Group interview, civil society activist, Ramallah, May 2008. Even some Fatah members cautioned that aggressive PA behaviour "increases the distance of the government from the people". Crisis Group interviews, Fatah Revolutionary Council member, Ramallah, March 2008. A Fatah sympathiser offered a similar assessment. Crisis Group interview, Jenin, June 2008.
[284] Some decrees and laws provoked particular consternation. In addition to the law giving military jurisdiction over civilians, a presidential legal adviser cited the money laundering and election laws and the law allowing expedited closing of NGOs. Crisis Group interview, Ramallah, April 2008. But legal experts agree the government's legislative agenda thus far has been relatively restrained. Ibid.; Crisis Group interview, Ghassan Feramand, director, Bir Zeit Institute of Law, Ramallah, 16 April 2008.
[285] Crisis Group interview, former PLC member and presidential adviser, Ramallah, 16 April 2008. A Palestinian attorney and human rights activist echoed this concern. "There is no legal basis for these arrests. They invoke a defunct draft decree to generate the appearance of legitimacy". Crisis Group interview, human rights worker, Ramallah, 21 February 2008.
[286] General Intelligence already enjoyed arrest rights under earlier legislation. The head of the EU training program for the civil police said, "the civil police should do the arrests. That's transparent and accountable". Reuters, 20 June 2008.

The security forces' expanded powers have raised particular concerns. Mamduh al-'Aker, the head of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights, the national human rights watchdog, has gone so far as to evoke the PA's "militarisation" and assert that the "state of lawlessness had shifted to a sort of a security state, a police state", in both Gaza and the West Bank.[287] To many, the security services' response to protests surrounding the 27 November 2007 Annapolis conference remains a seminal event.[288] Police fired tear gas, beat marchers, including PLC members, and killed a protestor in Hebron. In January 2008, the aggressive behaviour continued, when Palestinians rallied against U.S. President Bush's visit. Explaining this approach, an international security official said, "if a young guy is not well trained, and you give him an AK-47 and a baton, what do you think he is going to do with them"?[289]

The PA tightly controls public demonstrations and bans displays of Hamas symbols. Funerals are more fluid, and Hamas flags fluttered during protests of Israel's late February 2008 incursion into Gaza; still, security forces rapidly moved to prevent any recurrence, with chiefs threatening harsh action.[290] In the words of a governor, many security officers "think in terms of attacking and arresting. More than a small number of people in the security services have shady histories. Now they are trying to purify themselves by being overzealous in their jobs".[291] An interior ministry official acknowledged the basic right to demonstrate but added that given the presence of troublemakers and provocateurs, "some security officials believe this isn't the right time to protest in public".[292]

Human rights activists acknowledged that abuses have lessened over time[293] and that those occurring in Gaza are more serious.[294] Importantly, they said that the PA – concerned about its image[295] – has proved somewhat responsive to their complaints, claiming their interventions have resulted in family access to prisoners, attorney visits and prisoner releases.[296] For their part, security officials insisted that human rights are a priority, pointing in particular to government-initiated training sessions.[297]

[287] Reuters, 27 May 2008. Other human rights activists called this an exaggeration. Crisis Group interview, Ramallah, June 2008.

[288] When Crisis Group asked a range of politicians and civil society activists about the possibilities for popular mobilisation, all referred to Annapolis as a defining moment, discounting the possibility of planned demonstrations critical of government policy. Crisis Group interview, PLC members and officials, Ramallah and Nablus, January-March 2008.

[289] Crisis Group interview, international security official, 1 February 2008. The government is now training its personnel in non-lethal crowd control with EU help. It also is working with some political factions to establish clearer procedures for demonstrations. Crisis Group interview, interior ministry official, Ramallah, 11 April 2008.

[290] When a police chief told a governor four men were organising a march in defiance of a ban, the governor replied, in the presence of Crisis Group staff: "Break those four heads of unrest". Crisis Group interview, West Bank governor, February 2008.

[291] Crisis Group interview, West Bank governor, February 2008.

[292] Crisis Group interview, interior ministry official, Ramallah, 2 April 2008. Security officials seek to prevent "disturbances of public order", which at times are equated with dissent. Forbidding a protest against the certificate of payment, a governor said, "there will be no demonstrations in the centre of town. I don't want anyone to think that the situation is not calm here. If anyone wants to complain, they can come here to my office or talk to the prime minister". Crisis Group interview, West Bank governor, February 2008. According to a television producer, Palestine TV cancelled a show on government treatment of the media in Gaza and the West Bank mid-way through its airing and banned a show on corruption. Crisis Group interview, Ramallah, March 2008.

[293] Crisis Group interviews, human rights workers, Ramallah, June 2008.

[294] Ibid. An Islamist leader in the West Bank and ex-cabinet minister objected: "Am I supposed to be impressed when Hamas is the measuring stick for respect for human rights?" Crisis Group interview, former Islamist cabinet minister, February 2008.

[295] "There is an NGO and civil society culture in the West Bank that is constantly monitoring the government. The security services have told me repeatedly that they will resolve the issue I'm raising so long as nobody talks to the media". Crisis Group interview, human rights worker, 21 February 2008.

[296] Crisis Group interview, human rights fieldworkers, June 2008.

[297] Crisis Group interview, security commanders, Salfit, 23 January 2008; Nablus, 24 January 2008.

IV. CONCLUSION

Many government officials feel relatively upbeat about what they have achieved in the past year and their sense of accomplishment is not without justification. The security situation has improved markedly, and Fayyad himself has gained credibility as prime minister. PA salaries lubricate the economy, and the community development micro-projects have been well received. While the overall economic situation remains grim, the government is planting the seeds for growth. The distance travelled in twelve months, in short, is impressive.

Still, one year after the establishment of Fayyad's government, the West Bank model has yet to prove itself. Palestinian public opinion is characterised by a gap between appreciation for security improvements and despair over the next steps, economic and political. Security achievements in Nablus were already becoming yesterday's news even before they were overshadowed by Israel's recent campaign, and PA officials in Jenin fear a repetition.[298] The government has kept its promises modest, in line with the restrictions it faces under occupation, but Palestinians want to see more. What was supposed to be the "West Bank model" has become the "Jenin model", limited in size and accomplishment.

In the past month, Fayyad's incremental progress has slowed, suggesting that he may be hitting the ceiling of what can be accomplished in the absence of a more conducive political environment and greater Israeli cooperation. On the Israeli side, scepticism regarding the PA's security potential remains great, and the conviction that only the IDF can preserve stability is firm, especially within the military. For its part, Palestinian cynicism about Israeli intentions also has been rising. A presidential adviser who not long ago expressed some optimism commented:

> A couple of months ago, [Israeli Defence Minister] Barak acknowledged that the PA had notched security achievements in Jenin and Nablus, even though he thought they were insufficient. But in the last month, Israeli arrests and raids in the West Bank increased, then came the Israeli campaign in Nablus. Israel does not want a partner. It is spoiling progress across the board, including security, economics and negotiations.[299]

To evoke, as some Palestinians do, a third intifada may be exagerated and premature. But there are risks, nonetheless. The decline in attacks has resulted from a combination of Israeli military operations and Palestinian self-restraint; should the latter erode, one could witness a rapid escalation. The Gaza ceasefire appears a more productive model and its extenstion to the West Bank would shore up the shaky calm in Gaza, since militants there regularly invoke violence in the West Bank as a pretext to violate their commitment; that said, the lack of strong, central authority in the West Bank, combined with the presence of Israeli settlers, checkpoints and enclaves formed by the Separation Barrier, complicates this task. At a minimum, measures should be taken to shore up Abbas's and Fayyad's credibility. As negotiations over Corporal Shalit's release continue, the regular release of prisoners to the PA would be a step in this direction.

Of equal importance, new mechanisms for ensuring and monitoring security cooperation in the West Bank are needed. The rules of the game have changed at least twice since the Oslo accords: once with Operation Defensive Shield, when Israel reoccupied most West Bank cities, and again when Abbas and Fayyad sought to reform and reorganise PA security forces. Israeli-Palestinian security arrangements have failed to keep pace with these changes. While there admittedly is now a proliferation of actors in the security realm (Israeli and Palestinian, but also U.S. – through Generals Dayton, Jones and Fraser – and European, through the EUPOL COPPS program), none enjoys overall responsibility.[300]

[298] Crisis Group interviews, Nablus municipal official, 12 May 2008; and Jenin governorate official, 11 May 2008.

[299] Crisis Group telephone interview, Abbas adviser, 12 July 2008.

[300] General Keith Dayton is charged with supporting PA security reform, General James Jones with designing the security architecture of a two-state settlement and General William Fraser with monitoring Roadmap compliance. In practice, the generals' activities sometimes have strayed from their official responsibilities. Fraser's current mission involves monitoring, but he reports directly to the U.S. Secretary of State, reportedly does not share his conclusions with other security officials in the region and looks at only a part of the security puzzle. His monitoring is periodic and does include permanent field staff. The PA, Israeli, EU, and U.S. "focal points" – assigned at the Berlin conference with the task of facilitating the smooth implementation of proposed projects – could also take on a central role, though the precise function of the group has not been defined. Crisis Group interview, international security official, Jerusalem, 9 July 2008.

Moreover, while limited Israeli-PA cooperation has returned, there exists no effective forum for jointly addressing complaints, much less a field-based, on-the-ground monitoring mechanism for assessing whether the PA is meeting its security obligations and whether Israeli incursions are justified. This is an area where the U.S. – possibly in partnership with others, including the EU, Jordan and Egypt – could play a more active role. To increase effectiveness, the three U.S. generals' missions should be unified into a single body that coordinates security efforts by Americans and other relevant parties and that monitors both Palestinian and Israeli actions in the West Bank.

There is a broader point. Without reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas, and without reintegration of the West Bank and Gaza, any Palestinian successes – and any move in the peace process – are likely to prove pyrrhic. As the first of this two-part series illustrated, without support from the PA as a whole and the end of Gaza's current isolation, Hamas's efforts there will face severe constraints. Likewise, it is difficult to contemplate an effective institution-building exercise by the PA or the conduct of meaningful negotiations with Israel so long as the territorial and political divisions endure.

Reversing this split undoubtedly will be a long and arduous task. But as initial steps, Fatah and Hamas could improve the atmosphere and advance the welfare of Palestinians in both territories by initiating reconciliation talks; abiding by the Gaza ceasefire; encouraging PA public sector employees in Gaza to resume their duties; and starting a dialogue on restructuring the civil service aimed at reunifying it under a single payroll, free from partisan influence and working cooperatively toward the opening of the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt (which both Israel and Egypt insist must have Ramallah's involvement and approval).

These efforts should not wait. In the words of a Palestinian analyst, even if Fayyad's government succeeds in implementing its program, and the more the "Jenin model" is generalised throughout the West Bank, "the more difficult it will become to reintegrate the West Bank with Gaza".[301] With their respective governments firmly entrenched, the relative balance of success and failure in the two territories is of only marginal importance, since no mechanism exists to pit one model against the other (eg, elections) and effectuate a change in power to the benefit of the preferred one. Instead, the occupied territories are witnessing the emergence of two distinct models of governance, each of which can boast its share of achievements and lament its numerous disappointments.

Hamas is reshaping the security, judicial and municipal spheres in Gaza; the Fayyad government is putting its own stamp on governance in the West Bank. Their divergent evolutionary paths can only create complications down the road, leading the Palestinian analyst to ponder whether "even if they wanted to, they will be able to make up?"[302]

Ramallah/Jerusalem/Brussels, 17 July 2008

[301] Crisis Group interview, Yezid Sayigh, Jerusalem, 25 June 2008.

[302] Ibid.

APPENDIX A

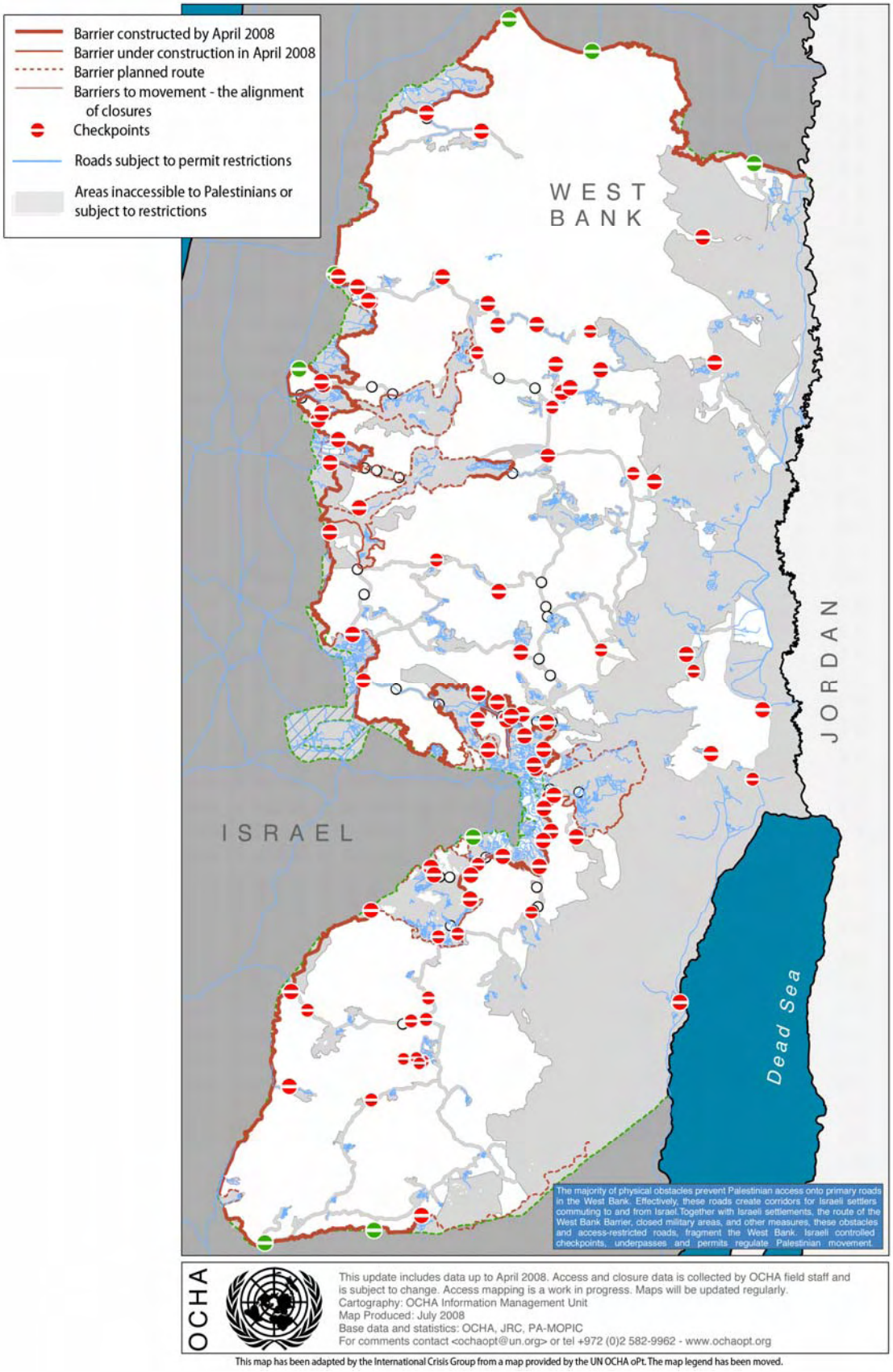
MAP OF ISRAEL

Map No. 3584 Rev. 2 UNITED NATIONS
January 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

APPENDIX B

MAP OF THE WEST BANK



This map has been adapted by the International Crisis Group from a map provided by the UN OCHA oPt. The map legend has been moved.

APPENDIX C

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 135 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a twelve-page monthly bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in all the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers are distributed widely by email and printed copy to officials in foreign ministries and international organisations and made available simultaneously on the website, www.crisisgroup.org. Crisis Group works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The Crisis Group Board – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring the reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. Crisis Group is co-chaired by the former European Commissioner for External Relations Christopher Patten and former U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering. Its President and Chief Executive since January 2000 has been former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.

Crisis Group's international headquarters are in Brussels, with advocacy offices in Washington DC (where it is based as a legal entity), New York, London and Moscow. The organisation currently operates eleven regional offices (in Bishkek, Bogotá, Cairo, Dakar, Islamabad, Istanbul, Jakarta, Nairobi, Pristina, Seoul and Tbilisi) and has local field representation in sixteen additional locations (Abuja, Baku, Bangkok, Beirut, Belgrade, Colombo, Damascus, Dili, Dushanbe, Jerusalem, Kabul, Kathmandu, Kinshasa, Port-au-Prince, Pretoria and Tehran). Crisis Group currently covers some 60 areas of actual or potential conflict across four continents. In Africa, this includes Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe; in Asia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kashmir, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar/Burma, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Phillipines, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; in Europe, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Kosovo, Serbia and Turkey; in the Middle East, the whole region from North Africa to Iran; and in Latin America, Colombia, the rest of the Andean region and Haiti.

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