

July 24, 2002

One Month Since the  
Bush Middle East Speech

Are the Palestinian Arabs Fulfilling  
President Bush's Conditions for Statehood?

A report by the  
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## **The Bush Plan**

On June 24, 2002, President Bush set forth the conditions that the Palestinian Arabs must fulfill in order to merit U.S. support for the creation of a Palestinian Arab state. Among the major obligations are that the Palestinian Arabs must "dismantle the terrorist infrastructure," "end incitement," "elect new leaders not compromised by terror," and unequivocally embrace democracy and free market economics.

This report analyzes Palestinian Arab actions during the first month following President Bush's speech, June 24-July 24, 2002.

### **I. "Dismantle the Terrorist Infrastructure"**

**What They Must Do:** President Bush said that the Palestinian Arabs must "engage in a sustained fight against the terrorists and dismantle their infrastructure." Those terms were previously defined in the Oslo and Wye accords as including arresting and imprisoning terrorists; shutting down bomb factories; seizing terrorists' weapons; extraditing terrorists to Israel; punishing factions of the PLO that engage in terrorism; and outlawing terrorist groups.

#### **What They Did During the First Month After the Speech:**

The Chief of Staff of the Israeli Army, Lt.Gen. Shaul Mofaz, said on Israel Television on July 3: "The Palestinian Authority does not carry out any activity to foil terror. The foremost use of the funds collected by the Palestinian Authority from around the world is for terror activity."

A. **No Terrorists Arrested:** There were no reports of terrorists being arrested or imprisoned. On the contrary, Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, whom the Palestinian Authority (PA) had claimed to have placed in "house arrest" a week earlier, openly took part in a Hamas rally in Gaza on June 28. Yassin told reporters, "I was informed of no house arrest order. I went out of my house, behaving normally, and no one stopped me."<sup>1</sup> The Washington Post reported: "Palestinian police monitoring the demonstration made no attempt to detain Yassin." It would have been impossible for the police not to notice him, as photos from the rally show the sheikh, garbed in his distinctive white robes, being driven slowly around the rally in an automobile surrounded by his entourage of armed followers.<sup>2</sup> Among those featured at the rally was a 10 year-old boy dressed as a suicide bomber.<sup>3</sup>

B. **No Terrorists Extradited:** The PA continued to ignore Israel's 45 requests for the extradition of terrorists.

C. **No Terror Groups Outlawed:** The PA did not outlaw Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Fatah, or any other terrorist groups.

D. **No Terrorists' Weapons Seized:** There were no reports of the PA seizing terrorists' weapons. By contrast, Israeli forces in Hebron seized 5,000 of the terrorists' weapons in late June, and in Shechem (Nablus) on July 7, Israeli soldiers seized an arms cache consisting of 300 pipe bombs, 20 gas containers, crates of firebombs, and quantities of explosive powder.

E. **No Closure of Bomb Factories:** There were no reports of the PA shutting down any bomb factories. By contrast, Israeli forces in Hebron discovered a bomb factory containing several explosive belts ready to be mounted on suicide bombers. By contrast, the Israeli Army uncovered and destroyed bomb factories in Ramallah and Shechem (Nablus) on July 6; in Hirbat-A-Tira on July 7; in Khan Yunis on July 14; and in Dir al Balah on July 17.

F. **No Punishing of PLO Terror Factions:** There were no reports of the PLO leadership punishing PLO factions that are engaged in terrorism, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).

G. **New Terrorist Attacks:** Throughout the first month since the Bush speech, Israeli forces were engaged in "Operation Determined Stand," resulting in a sharp decrease in terrorist attacks. Nevertheless, there were at least 103 terrorist attacks, in which 16 people were murdered and 87 wounded.

## II. "End Incitement"

**What They Must Do:** President Bush stated that the Palestinian Arabs must "end incitement to violence in official media and publicly denounce homicide bombings."

### **What They Did During the First Month After the Speech:**

\* **New Video Glorifies 'Martyrdom':** On June 27, a new video debuted on PA Television. It features an actor portraying a Palestinian Arab man who is captured during an attempted attack on Israelis. As Israelis prepare to kill him, he is greeted by a large group of beautiful young Arab women (actresses) who smile alluringly and beckon to him. He is then shown smiling in paradise while the women caress him. The video is

being aired "in the afternoon for maximum viewing by Palestinian children."<sup>4</sup>

\* **PA Sheikh Threatens U.S.:** In a sermon broadcast on PA Television on June 28, a prominent clergyman, Ahmed Abdul Razek, declared: "A divine blow will be dealt soon to the U.S. and Israel, by Allah's will. The believers will rejoice with Allah's victory."<sup>5</sup>

\* **Toddler Dressed as Suicide Bomber:** In a disturbing new example of the extent to which support for violence has permeated Palestinian Arab culture, Israeli forces searching an Arab home in Hebron discovered a photo of a toddler dressed as a suicide bomber. Some Palestinian Arab spokesmen claimed that the photo was fake, but the child's cousin and uncle told reporters it was authentic.<sup>6</sup> PA cabinet minister Ghassan Khatib said Israel released the photo "to tell the world that the Palestinians are teaching their children how to hate Israel and how to act against Israel and I just want to say that is correct."<sup>7</sup>

\* **Anti-Bush Rally:** On the eve of America's Independence day, July 4, the PA organized a mass rally against "American meddling." Official PA Television broadcast coverage of the rally, focusing on a poster which showed President Bush's name dripping with blood, next to a skull-and-crossbones, with the words "The American people deserve a president better than Bush." The PA Television announcer said: "The American administration's attempts to meddle in the Palestinian people's internal affairs, to impose its conditions on the Palestinian leadership and the attempt to depose the leader, Yasir Arafat, caused thousands to rally in a giant mass procession expressing total rejection of this meddling."<sup>8</sup>

\* **"America the Deceiver":** On July 4, PA Television broadcast an hour-long film which included scenes of Palestinian Arabs accusing the United States of "fraud and deceit" and rejecting U.S. food packages, saying, "Tell the Deceiver: the people will die of hunger [rather than] live in humiliation."<sup>9</sup>

\* **"America Carried Out the 9/11 Attacks":** The PA representative in Dubai, Saleem Abu Sultan, told the Gulf News that the United States itself organized the September 11 terrorist attacks: "America plans things and knows what it exactly wants from a certain area. They always plan, like they planned the case of the recent September 11 attacks and blamed Bin Laden and the Muslims."<sup>10</sup>

\* **Paying Bombers' Families:** On July 18, the PA held a public ceremony to honor suicide bombers, at which PA Cabinet Minister Imad Faluji personally distributed checks from Iraq, for thousands of dollars, to families of the bombers. At the end of the ceremony, PA officials led the audience in chants of "Death to Bush, Death to Bush."<sup>11</sup>

\* **Appeal for "Jihad":** On July 19, PA Television and PA Radio both broadcast a sermon from Sheikh Ijlin Mosque in Gaza, delivered by Sheikh Ahmad Abd al-Raziq, in which he said that "Allah has afflicted us," but it would not have happened "had Muslims carried out Allah's orders for jihad, and not listened to this empty talk about peace."<sup>12</sup>

### **III. "Elect New Leaders Not Compromised by Terror"**

**What They Must Do:** President Bush stated that the Palestinian Arabs must hold "fair multiparty elections by the end of the year, with national elections to follow," in which they "elect new leaders, leaders not compromised by terror."

**What They Did During During the First Month After the Speech:** Yasir Arafat and other PA officials unequivocally rejected President Bush's call for new Palestinian Arab leadership. Arafat said: "This is what my people will decide. They are the only ones who can determine this."<sup>13</sup> The PLO's Palestine National Council issued a statement expressing its "full, unconditional support and solidarity" with Arafat.<sup>14</sup>

The PA announced that it will hold elections for chairman of the PA and members of the Palestinian Legislative Council in January 2003, if Israel withdraws from various parts of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza.<sup>15</sup> It remains to be seen whether those elections, if held, will be free and fair, as President Bush has urged, or will be marred by ballot-stuffing and intimidation of voters and potential non-PLO candidates, as were the last PA elections, in 1996.

### **IV. "Build Democracy Based on Tolerance and Liberty"**

**What They Must Do:** President Bush said that the Palestinian Arabs must "build a practicing democracy based on tolerance and liberty," with "a new constitution" and "a truly independent judiciary. He said they must "confront corruption," and "the Palestinian parliament should have the full authority of a legislative body." They must implement "market economics," and create "a vibrant economy where honest enterprise is encouraged by honest government." In addition, there must be "an externally supervised effort to rebuild and reform the Palestinian security services" with "clear lines of authority and accountability and a unified chain of command."

#### **What They Did During the First Month After the Speech:**

On June 26, the PA announced that it planned to initiate a 100-day plan of reforms in various aspects of its governing process and structure.<sup>16</sup> Whether those reforms will be meaningful and lead to true democracy, as President Bush has urged, remains to be seen.

The PA security services initiated no reforms to prevent its members from engaging in terrorism. On the contrary, there were many indications that the PA security services continue to be involved in terrorism even after President Bush's speech. When Israeli forces entered Hebron and Ramallah in pursuit of terrorists on June 25, PA police officers in both cities, instead of helping to capture the terrorists, opened fire on the Israelis.<sup>17</sup> Israeli forces in Hebron discovered hundreds of explosive charges in the offices of the PA General Intelligence and the PA Preventive Security Service.<sup>18</sup>

In early July, Arafat fired Jibril Rajoub, chief of the PA Preventive Security Force in Judea-Samaria; Ghazi Jabali, the PA Chief of Police; and Mahmoud Abu Marzouk, the civil defense chief. However, Jabali was then offered the position of Adviser on Police Affairs to Arafat, and Rajoub was offered the position of governor of Jenin, while the current governor of Jenin, Zuhair Manasra, was offered Rajoub's job.

The Washington Post reported, "It is not clear whether [Rajoub] was fired as part of an internal power struggle, or if he was removed from office as part of an overall effort to reform the authority's security services, as Arafat has stated."<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the New York Times reported that "the clash [between Arafat and those whom he fired] appeared to have more to do with political rivalry than reform."<sup>20</sup> On July 9, Israeli government spokesman Ra'anana Gissin described the firings as an attempt by Arafat to "remove his opponents" under the cover of "the illusion of reform."<sup>21</sup>

On July 10, Arafat announced the appointment of Mohammed Dahlan as his National Security Adviser. Until earlier this year, Dahlan had served as Security Chief in Gaza, and masterminded numerous terrorist attacks, including the November 2000 bombing of a schoolbus in which two Israelis (one the husband of a U.S. citizen) were murdered and four were permanently crippled, one of them a U.S. citizen.

The PA continues to claim that it is in the process of implementing what it describes as a "100-day reform plan," but experts doubt that the reforms will be genuine. Robert Satloff of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy said of the plan: "While it offers promising elements of change, the plan is only likely to strengthen the unacceptable status quo."<sup>22</sup>

#### **IV. Conclusion**

During the first month following President Bush's speech, the Palestinian Arabs failed to fulfill any of the conditions that the president set forth as prerequisites for

U.S. support for the creation of a Palestinian Arab state.

Surprisingly, however, President Bush said on July 8: "I believe some progress is being made toward the institutions that I talked about that are necessary for a Palestinian state to emerge, which will give us all confidence in its ability to fight off terrorist

activities."<sup>23</sup>

On July 9, presidential spokesman Ari Fleischer said that President Bush telephoned Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon "to press his call for Israel to reciprocate for recent Palestinian reform efforts."<sup>24</sup> On July 11, the U.S. ambassador to Israel, Daniel Kurtzer, met with Sharon "to urge him to 'create an atmosphere' in which Palestinian reform could proceed."<sup>25</sup>

On July 18, Jordanian Foreign Minister Marwan Muasher said after a meeting between President Bush and a group of Arab foreign ministers that "Bush said five times during the meeting that he is committed to the establishment of a Palestinian state within three years." He made no mention of any statements by the president requiring Palestinian Arab compliance with his June 24 conditions as a prerequisite for statehood, nor did the White House issue any statement to clarify that the president insists on such prerequisites.<sup>26</sup>

On July 20, the State Department issued a report assessing recent Palestinian Arab terrorism, which concluded that "there is no specific evidence that these groups carried out specific attacks with the prior approval and encouragement of the PLO and PA leaderships." <sup>27</sup>

**These recent statements by President Bush and the State Department create the unfortunate impression that the administration's primary goal is not to genuinely and definitively transform the attitudes and actions of the Palestinian Arabs toward Israel, but to claim "progress" even in the absence of evidence of progress, so that a Palestinian Arab state can be established within the shortest time possible.**

1 New York Times, June 29, 2002.

2 Washington Post, June 29, 2002.

3 Washington Times, June 28, 2002.

4 Media Line/Prof.Michael Widlanski, Hebrew University, June 27, 2002.

5 Palestinian Media Watch, June 30, 2002.

6 Reuters, June 28, 2002; New York Times, June 29, 2002.

7 New York Times, June 29, 2002.

8 Translation courtesy of Palestinian Media Watch.

9 Translation courtesy of Palestinian Media Watch.

10 Jewish Telegraphic Agency, July 15, 2002.

11 Middle East Newslite, July 19, 2002.

12 FBIS, July 21, 2002.

13 Washington Post, June 26, 2002.

14 Washington Post, July 3, 2002.

15 New York Times, June 27, 2002.

16 New York Times, June 27, 2002.

- 17 New York Times, June 27, 2002; Israel Radio, June 26, 2002.
  - 18 IDF Spokesman, June 30, 2002.
  - 19 Washington Post, July 7, 2002.
  - 20 New York Times, July 8, 2002.
  - 21 Washington Times, July 10, 2002.
  - 22 Middle East Newslines, July 9, 2002.
  - 23 Washington Post, July 9, 2002.
  - 24 Washington Post, July 10, 2002.
  - 25 New York Times, July 12, 2002.
  - 26 Jerusalem Post, July 21, 2002.
  - 27 Jerusalem Post, July 21, 2002.
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