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THE TRUTH ABOUT HAMAS: IT HAS ACCEPTED THE TWO STATE SOLUTION OFFICIALLY SINCE 2004

Founded: 1987 by Sheik Yassin and Dr. Rantisi. Israel supported its founding as an alternative to the PLO. The Charter called for the liberation of all of Palestine in which Muslims, Christians and Jews would flourish under an Islamic government. The Military Branch, Izzadeen Qassam was created in 1992.

In 1995 Dr. Ellen Rosser met with Sheik Yassin and gave him the proposal on Jerusalem, which has Jerusalem belonging to God and governed by the religious leaders of the three Abrahamic religions and being the capital of both Israel and Palestine though belonging to neither. The proposal also has the Judeo-Christian-Islamic Council governing Jerusalem giving the Jews the right to rebuild the Temple of King Solomon at the north end of the Temple Mount. Sheik Yassin had "no objections."

During the Second Intifada Izzadeen Qassam did conduct suicide bombings, but in June 2004 Sheik Yassin stated that Hamas would end armed resistance in exchange for a Palestinian State in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. Israel assassinated Sheik Yassin and Dr. Rantisi in 2004.

From August 2004, Hamas observed a unilateral ceasefire with Israel.

In 2005 Hamas in its election campaign did not call for an end of Israel but instead called for an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

In 2005 Hamas signed the Cairo Declaration of 2005 and the National Reconciliation Document, which, as interpreted by Haniyeh and Maschaal, means that Hamas "fully respects" the previous agreements between the Palestinians and Israel.

In February, 2006, Khaled Mashaal said: "(Hamas) cannot oppose the unified Arab stance expressed in the resolution passed by the Arab League summit. That resolution, approved in Beirut, speaks of recognizing Israel and normalizing relations with it in exchange for a full withdrawal and a solution to the refugee problem".

Hamas won the election and continued to observe the unilateral ceasefire until Israel, responding to rocket fire from the small parties (not Hamas) attacked Gaza in June 2006 killing 220 civilians. The Popular Resistance Committee, including Izzadeen Quassm, then captured Gilad Shalit to exchange for Palestinian prisoners.

In 2006, Prime Minister Haniyeh of Hamas wrote to Pres. George Bush offering a 20 year ceasefire with Israel during which there could be an exchange of ambassadors, in other words, official recognition of Israel..

In early 2006 in Gaza, Hamas (and the small parties who were shooting the Qassam rockets – Islamic Jihad, PFLP, DFLP and Al Aqsa's Martyrs' Brigade), agreed to participate in a workshop and large march under the banner: Two Peoples, Two States, One Peace. (The Fatah-Hamas conflict prevented the workshop and march from being held.)

On June 8, 2008, Israel and Hamas agreed upon a ceasefire. Hamas thereafter prevented the small parties in Gaza from launching Qassam rockets into Israel, although a few groups or individuals evaded the Hamas checkpoints to launch occasional rockets.

In November 4, 2008, the ceasefire ended when Israel attacked inside Gaza to destroy a tunnel that went into Israel. The small parties then began shooting rockets into Israel again.

On December 27-28, Israel attacked Gaza to stop the rocket fire. During Operation Cast Lead, 894 civilians were killed, including 280 under age 18. Perhaps 277 Hamas policemen and militants were killed.

Israel and Hamas are negotiating another ceasefire.

CONCLUSION: Hamas has been offering peace to Israel since before it was elected. It renounced violence in action, which is more important than words, through unilateral ceasefires and the negotiated ceasefires with Israel, it “fully respects” previous agreements, it accepts the Arab Initiative, and Haniyeh offered an exchange of ambassadors, surely an official recognition of Israel.

In other words, Hamas has more than met the conditions of the Quartet and should be accepted as a viable peace partner.