

## Escape from Gaza or Voluntary Transfer?

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Forget everything you've read about the "Great Escape" from Gaza. It's thoroughly misleading, most probably cooked up in an Israeli think tank as way to rid Palestine of its indigenous people. Here's an excerpt from the Israeli newspaper Arutz Sheva which explains the real motive behind the incident:

"MK (Israeli Knesset member) Aryeh Eldad is hailing the Arab exodus to Egypt as proof that voluntary transfer is indeed an option."

"The Israeli left continues to claim that there is no such thing as voluntary transfer, and simply ignores reality," Eldad said. (Arutz Sheva)

So the fleeing Palestinians just walked into a trap. Now they've been banished to Egypt by their own volition. Will they be allowed to return? We'll see.

The media has played a predictable role in the Gaza fiasco, trying to make it look like Hamas' "terrorist masterminds" struck a major blow against Israel. It's just a way of diverting attention from Israel's role in the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Here's the way Ha'aretz summed it up:

"Hamas chalked up a real coup. Not only did the organization demonstrate once again that it is a disciplined, determined entity, and an opponent that is exponentially more sophisticated than the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Israel, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority are now forced to find a new joint border control arrangement, one that will probably depend on the good graces of Hamas....The Hamas action yesterday was anything but spontaneous. It was another stage in the campaign that began in Gaza's night of darkness on Sunday. As Gaza was plunged into widely televised blackness, Palestinian children armed with candles were brought out on a protest march and organized into prime-time demonstrations in support of the Egyptian and Jordanian branches of the Muslim Brotherhood." ("Gaza border breach shows Israel Hamas is in charge, Ha'aretz)

Nonsense. Israel is not the victim any more than Palestinian children are "armed" with candles. The candles are a symbol of hope; something that is sadly lacking under Israeli rule. The truth is that Israel was getting battered in the media for cutting off food, water, energy and medical supplies to 1.5 million civilians (some of whom died in the hospital when the power was turned off on their respirators) so they looked for a way to do an about-face without appearing weak. Ha'aretz would like us to believe that our sympathy for starving women and children is the result of the propaganda we've seen in the "Palestinian-owned" media.

What a laugh; the “Palestinian-owned” media.

Hamas poses no threat to Israel and it controls nothing; certainly not the border. They’ve even suspended all suicide attacks since they won democratic elections a year and a half ago. But that is not enough for Israel whose goal is to extinguish any trace of Arab solidarity or Palestinian nationalism. Nearly all of the 4,000 articles now appearing on Google News follow this same absurd narrative about ‘clever terrorists’ who’ve out-foxed Israel and liberated their people. It’s just another way of concealing the criminal brutality of the 60 year long occupation. In truth, Hamas probably had nothing to do with the destruction of the wall. It’s just part of Israel’s plans to exile more Palestinians.

According to the article in Arutz Sheva, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak decided to follow orders from Hamas’ chief Khaled Mashall and “ignore Israeli calls to close the border. Mashaal seemed to indicate that Hamas was asserting sovereignty over northern Sinai, calling upon the Arab world to take advantage of the Islamist group’s new stronghold to provide aid directly without Israeli interference.”

Now, that’s a stretch. In other words, US puppet Hosni Mubarak—who gets \$2 billion a year in aid from the United States—has suddenly decided to take orders from the head of a group that is on the State Dept’s list of terrorist organizations so that he can fulfill his obligations as a “loyal Arab”?

Ridiculous.

Besides, Hamas has no interest in northern Sinai or any other territorial ambitions. Its only purpose is to resist Israeli occupation.

So far an estimated 350,000 residents of Gaza have fled across the border since Wednesday. The Egyptian police have done nothing to stop them from entering the country. “A significant number have remained in Egypt...traveling south to Egyptian population centers.”

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported on 1-24-08 that:

“Israeli officials proposed that Egypt take over responsibility for sustaining the Gaza Strip.

Israeli media quoted members of the Olmert government as saying Thursday that, after Palestinians overran the Gaza-Egypt border, there was an opportunity to demand that Cairo take care of the needs of the coastal territory.

“We need to understand that when Gaza is open to the other side, we lose responsibility for it. So we want to disengage from it,” Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilnai told Army Radio. “We are responsible as long as there is no alternative.” (JTA)

Are we expected to believe that in the last 24 hours Israel decided willy-nilly to relinquish control over parts of the Gaza Strip? Israel has devoted a considerable amount of time to building settlements in a way that removes any possibility of creating a contiguous Palestinian state. It is highly unlikely that their plans for Gaza are taken any less seriously. In fact, we are probably seeing a manifestation of those plans right now via the expulsion of 350,000 Palestinians.

The Jerusalem Post’s Yaakov Katz clarifies how the destruction of the border wall serves

Israel's long-term policy objectives:

"Without even knowing it, Egypt helped Israel on Wednesday to complete the disengagement from the Gaza Strip. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said he opened the crossing for Gazans since they were "starving due to the Israeli siege," what he did proved to the world that his country is perfectly capable of caring for the Palestinians when it comes to food and medical care.

Wednesday's events and particularly Mubarak's decision to open a floodgate into his country for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, demonstrated that there are alternatives to Israel when it comes to being Gaza's provider. " (Jerusalem Post)

That says it all, doesn't it? The Palestinians are regarded as a mere nuisance and a drain on Israeli resources. Now that the wall has conveniently been knocked down, the problem appears to be solved.

Hamas had nothing to do with blowing up the wall. And if they did, they were just unwitting accomplices in Israel's masterplan to drive more Palestinians off the land and to absolve themselves of any responsibility for the ones that remain.

This is just another grim chapter in Bush's "New Middle East".

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