

2/4/06

Hamas
By
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The recent Palestinian election giving the Islamic terrorist group **Hamas** a 70% majority has prompted many naysayers to say that this proves democracy cannot and will not work in Muslim nations... that those of the Islamic faith cannot handle such freedom. Those on the left have used the results to reinforce their feelings that President Bush 's vision to spread democracy and freedom throughout the world is misguided, saying that he is looking at the world through rose colored glasses and any such efforts should be abandoned. To me that's akin to the ignorant, racist statements of the last two centuries attesting that blacks were incapable of reading, writing, or even thinking coherently, much less quarterbacking an NFL team.

It is no wonder Hamas won such a landslide victory following decades of the corruption and incompetency of **Yasser Arafat's** self-serving regime Fatah. Hamas, founded in 1987, used this time to establish welfare and social service programs for the citizens of the occupied Palestinian territories including the building of schools and hospitals, while furthering their withering suicide bombing attacks on Israel. The name, **Hamas**, is the Arab equivalent of "*enthusiasm, zeal, fire, and ardor*," which appeals to the people because of their desire to improve their stagnant situation of deprivation and unemployment.

(Possibly as high as 40%)

President Bush, when asked for his thoughts on the surprise election results, said *"I like the competition of ideas. I like people who have to go out and say, 'Vote for me, and here's what I'm going to do.' There's something healthy about a system that does that. And so the elections yesterday were very interesting."* He also was quick to say that the victory for Hamas did not change his views of Hamas nor his statement of not doing business with them without some change in their ideological stance, specifically the destruction of Israel. *"I don't see how you can be a partner in peace if you advocate the destruction of a country as part of your platform," Mr. Bush said. "And I know you can't be a partner in peace if... your party has got an armed wing."*

The European nations and the United States have indicated their financial aid to the Palestinian Authority of roughly \$1 Billion per year, representing over half of the Palestinian budget, will be withheld if Hamas continues its refusal to recognize Israel as a country, and its goal of total eradication of Israel.

If Hamas had ideas of receiving financial aid from its Arab neighbors to replace Western money they were nipped in the bud this week when Egypt and Jordan insisted that Hamas "**must**" renounce violence, recognize Israel's legitimacy and confirm existing agreements between Israel and the Palestinians if it wants to form the next Palestinian government. Mahmoud Abbas, the current President of the

Palestinian Authority has indicated he will not officially ask Hamas to form a new government for several months, in hopes that Hamas will give in to demands placed before them. Saudi Arabia and Qatar have come through with \$33 Million to the Palestinian government to help pay salaries for 137,000 government employees, including 60,000 members of the Palestinian security force. If past history is any indicator of Muslim countries responding to help Hamas with money, they should not be holding their breath. In all of the recent natural disasters that have befallen many Islamic nations, monetary aid has come primarily from non-Islamic nations with Muslim contributions, at best, scant.

In my opinion, the support Hamas is enjoying from the Palestinian people is like the age old story of a young waitress in a small, dirt water town, depressed with everything about it, and becomes enamored with a stranger passing through from the outside, who agrees to take her with him when he leaves in return for a few favors from her. She leaves, with dreams of the big city and a brand new life in front of her, but after he has had his way with her she finds herself dumped on the side of the road in a far worse condition than before. Hamas, with their view toward Israel and the world, can offer the Palestinians nothing but change, but change for change's sake is not necessarily a good thing, which they will discover. They will find they are only a tool to be used not to benefit themselves or their country, but the evil, murderous desires of Hamas... continued bloodshed of innocent Israelis and condemnation from the civilized world.

The Palestinians, like people everywhere, want freedom from oppression of any kind and this new found ability to vote their leaders in and out of office will serve them well once they learn how to use it wisely. **Vive la Democracy!!** May it continue to spread throughout the world and may we continue to be an agent of its dissemination.

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