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**Palestinian ploy would push Israel to the edge of destruction**  
**By Lawrence J. Haas**

The Palestinian push for U.N. recognition of statehood comes amid signs that Palestinians are discarding the notion of living in peace with Israel, which will require the United States to veto any proposal that reaches the Security Council in order to protect its key Middle East ally.

Arguing for U.N. recognition, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas wrote in a May 17 *New York Times* op-ed, “The State of Palestine intends to be a peace-loving nation, committed to human rights, democracy, the rule of law and the principles of the United Nations Charter.”

Really? Abbas refuses to negotiate the thorny issues of borders and security guarantees with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. That makes their resolution impossible and violates the mandate of every major agreement between Israel and the Palestinians at least since the early 1990s, each of which called for negotiations to resolve remaining issues between the parties.

Moreover, Abbas refuses to recognize Israel as a Jewish state — the *raison d’etre* of its founding — or tamp down expectations among Palestinians that they will achieve a full “right of return” of Palestinian refugees, to which Israel will never agree because it would make Jews a minority in their own state.

Nor has Abbas reined in the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades of his own Fatah Party, which claimed responsibility for the grisly March 11 slaughter of a family in the settlement of Itamar, including a 3-month-old baby.

To be sure, Abbas’ government has worked with Israel to improve significantly security in Israel and the West Bank, while PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad has spearheaded efforts to build the thriving West Bank economy that has grown dramatically in recent years, expanded opportunity and raised living standards.

But the PA controls only the West Bank. The Palestinian territory of Gaza is run by the terrorist group Hamas, which remains dedicated to Israel’s destruction and recently stepped up attacks on its sworn enemy.

So far this year, Hamas and its terrorist allies have launched more than 130 mortar and rocket attacks from Gaza into major population centers in Israel, including the cities of Beersheva and Ashdod. Hamas also has expanded its attacks on Israeli soldiers who patrol the border with Gaza.

In early May, Israel's navy stopped a cargo ship that was headed to Egypt, with more than 50 tons of Iranian weapons that would be smuggled into Gaza — 2,500 mortar shells, 67,000 AK-47 rounds, two radar systems, and six Nasr-1 anti-ship cruise missiles, the latter of which would have greatly increased the risk to Israeli ships.

Making matters worse, Fatah's recent power-sharing agreement with Hamas gives the latter a partner role in governing a future Palestine, boosting the chances that such a state could become a haven for terrorism while further constraining any Palestinian efforts to pursue negotiations with Israel.

“Our plan does not involve negotiations with Israel or recognizing it,” Mahmoud Zahar, a top Hamas leader, said as the agreement was announced. “It will be impossible for an interim government to take part in the peace process.”

U.N. ratification of a statehood declaration would give Palestinians a global go-ahead to carve out a state along Israel's 1967 borders — even though all sides know a viable solution would require border adjustments that allow Israel to incorporate major West Bank settlements and compensate the Palestinians with other land.

U.N. ratification also would leave Israel isolated, paving the way for international criticism every time Jerusalem took legitimate steps to defend itself and its people, especially those who reside outside the 1967 borders.

President Obama seems to understand the problem. In his May 19 address on the region, he called any U.N. ratification a “symbolic action” and said the Fatah-Hamas pact “raises profound and legitimate questions for Israel.”

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