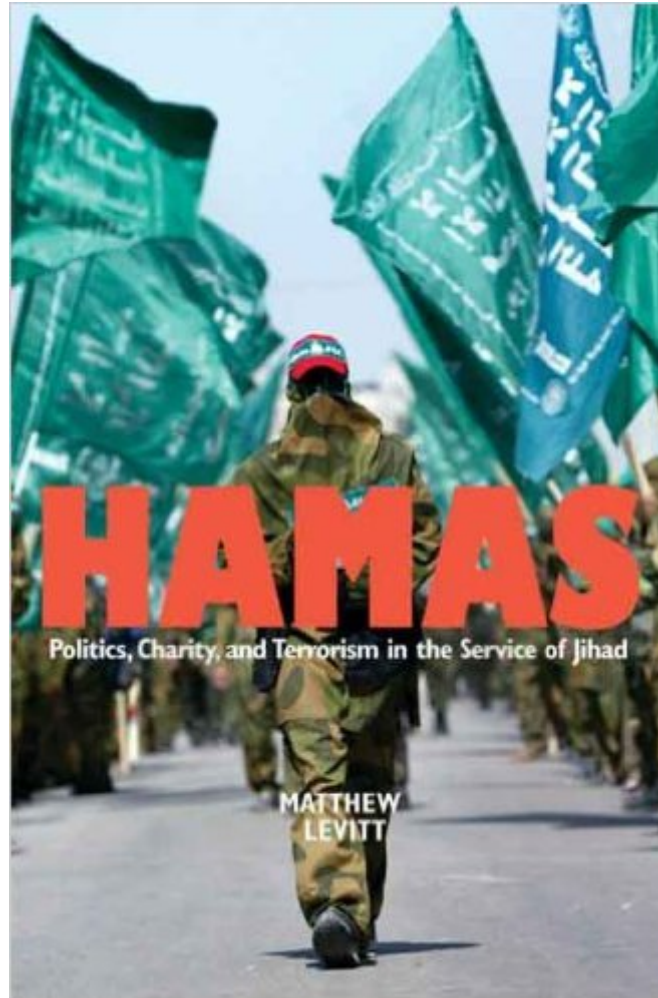


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Hamas: Politics, Charity, And Terrorism In The Service Of Jihad



Synopsis

How does a group that operates terror cells and espouses violence become a ruling political party? How is the world to understand and respond to Hamas, the militant Islamist organization that Palestinian voters brought to power in the stunning election of January 2006? This important book provides the most fully researched assessment of Hamas ever written. Matthew Levitt, a counterterrorism expert with extensive field experience in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, draws aside the veil of legitimacy behind which Hamas hides. He presents concrete, detailed evidence from an extensive array of international intelligence materials, including recently declassified CIA, FBI, and Department of Homeland Security reports. Levitt demolishes the notion that Hamas's military, political, and social wings are distinct from one another and catalogues the alarming extent to which the organization's political and social welfare leaders support terror. He exposes Hamas as a unitary organization committed to a militant Islamist ideology, urges the international community to take heed, and offers well-considered ideas for countering the significant threat Hamas poses.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Did anyone at Yale University Press actually review this manuscript? Or does the Washington Institute for Near East Peace send junk to YUP and say here publish this? Matthew Levitt's book is a series of amateur disasters: exclusive reliance on highly suspect evidence, misrepresentation of some of the sources, primitive arguments which do not address any debate, poorly written, and apparently no one at Yale checked his citations or Arabic transliterations because they are

hilariously bad. Levitt practices the kind of social science found only inside the beltway. It helps explain why the American government consistently pursues destructive policies in the Middle East. Here is how it goes: start with your conclusion first, select evidence that fits conclusion, glorify the evidence because it was classified at one point, and for god's sake conclude with policy. Levitt wants to justify the status quo policy isolating the Palestinian government headed by HAMAS, albeit with an insane twist. To do this, he first backtracks by creating a debate in the academic literature that does not exist. Levitt wants the reader to believe that academics and experts "continue to subscribe to the shallow argument that terrorist groups maintain distinct social, political, and militant wings." (p.6) Who argues this? No cite is ever given. Against this straw man, Levitt advances his own myth; HAMAS is an unchanging monolith. Once we buy this then HAMAS is either completely bad or completely good (can't shade monoliths). Guess which one Levitt chooses? And then it's just a skip to conclude no negotiation with HAMAS, rather we need to replace it. Levitt seems uninformed that scholars view HAMAS and similar organizations (Tamil Tigers, ANC, etc.) as having interrelated parts.

Matthew Levitt takes no prisoners. His starting point is terrorism is terrorism is terrorism. In the context of the Middle East many will argue the toss - that he ignores decades of Palestinian frustration and suffering; that the tactics adopted by Hamas could be from today's update of the manual written by Jewish fighters who carved out the state of Israel; that Washington and Jerusalem's new-found urge to do business with the more secular Fatah movement ignores the historic reality that Hamas' late arrival on the Palestinian scene is proof of so much past failure; that desperation produces more desperation. But for all that, Levitt's exhaustive 324-page HAMAS: Politics, Charity and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad is engrossing, particularly on how Hamas is perceived from the intelligence bunkers of the US and Israel. Its layers of detail, drawn from a mountain of official documents, is as revealing of Hamas as it is of the attempts to thwart its rise - without bravely or deliberately confronting the root causes of the Middle East crisis. Levitt has gone the Izzy (I.F.) Stone route - trawling thousands of documents, many of them on the public record, for a back-story that gels with the post 9/11 mindset that resistance equals terrorism and that resistance movements, somehow, should grow up. But a reader does not have to don a white or black hat to be fascinated by what he draws from the Israeli records of the interrogation of Hamas captives; from documents captured from the Palestinian security agencies and other institutions; and from his revealing analysis of the Hamas global money trail - particularly in the US. An FBI counterterrorism analyst before his appointment as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and

Analysis at the U.S.

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