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A rocky road ahead for Hamas

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31 January, 2006

THE ARTICLE

A rocky road ahead for Hamas

The European Union and United States have been swift to flex their financial muscle with Hamas, the newly elected power in Palestinian politics. The consequences for not complying with Western demands to renounce violence against Israel could be dire. German Chancellor Angela Merkel made it plain today that all funding for the Palestinian Authority (PA) would cease unless Hamas accepted the existence of its occupier and neighbor. The EU is the PA's largest donor with a per annum contribution in excess of \$606 million. US President George W. Bush quickly followed suit by warning he would cut aid worth \$400 million. The EU and US classify Hamas as a terrorist group, and its surprise election victory will pose problems for the stalled Middle East peace talks.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called on countries around the world to follow the lead of the USA and EU in ostracizing Hamas, unless it changed its ways. Rice declared that: "Hamas doesn't recognize Israel, advocates violence and refuses to be a responsible party to the peace process....The bedrock principle here is that we cannot have funding for an organization that holds those views just because it is in government." A bankrupt PA raises the very real possibility that it would be unable to pay its officials and police force, which would bring Palestine to its knees and result in a state of total anarchy. Ms. Rice will meet with her counterparts from the EU, Russia and the UN this week in talks aimed at quelling a potential geopolitical tinderbox from exploding.

WARM-UPS

1. PEACE: How important is a peaceful life to you? Is every day peaceful for you? In pairs / groups, talk about how lucky or unlucky you are to live in a peaceful country / neighborhood. What do you think life would be like where there is never any peace? How would your day be different if there was no peace in your country?

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Swiftness / flexing one's muscles / Hamas / Angela Merkel / neighbors / donors / cutting aid / Middle East peace talks / ostracism / bankruptcy / knees / anarchy

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. PREDICTION: Talk with your partner(s) about what you think the article will be about. Use the words in the "chat" section above to help you. Change partners and share and compare your predictions.

4. HEADLINES: In pairs / groups, talk about these "headlines". Develop the stories. How possible do you think it is that they might become real? What would be the consequences of the things in the headlines actually happening?

- a. Hamas to receive financial aid from Iran
- b. Civil war breaks out in Palestine
- c. Hamas leader wins Nobel Peace Prize
- d. Hamas leader invited for talks at the White House
- e. Palestine and Israel to sign a peace treaty
- f. Regional war threatens Middle East
- g. Palestinian Authority officially bankrupt
- h. China to bankroll Palestinian Authority

5. MUSCLE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "muscle". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. THE PLAYERS: What do each of the following people think about Hamas' election victory? Discuss this with your partner(s).

An unemployed Palestinian worker

US President George W. Bush

Interim Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert

An Al Jazeera TV journalist

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Senior Hamas figure Mahmoud Zahar

An average Israeli

You

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Many roads in Palestine were reduced to rubble at the weekend. T / F
- b. Hamas could face dire financial difficulties for not listening to the EU. T / F
- c. The EU is the Palestine Authority's largest financial donor. T / F
- d. The EU and US classify Hamas as a terror group. T / F
- e. Condoleezza Rice has urged countries to ostracize Hamas. T / F
- f. Condoleezza Rice said the US will not fund anyone that rocks the bed. T / F
- g. There is a real possibility that Palestine's police force will not be paid. T / F
- h. Ms. Rice wants to counter the parts played by the UN and Russia. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| a. flex | year |
| b. renounce | banishing |
| c. annum | derailed |
| d. pose | opposite numbers |
| e. stalled | present |
| f. ostracizing | powder keg |
| g. bedrock | exert |
| h. anarchy | core |
| i. counterparts | abandon |
| j. tinderbox | lawlessness |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| a. swift to flex | in ostracizing Hamas |
| b. not complying with Western demands | stalled Middle East peace talks |
| c. made it plain today that all funding | in excess of \$606 million |
| d. a per annum contribution | to the peace process |
| e. pose problems for the | geopolitical tinderbox |
| f. follow the lead of the USA and EU | to renounce violence |
| g. refuses to be a responsible party | result in a state of total anarchy |
| h. an organization that holds | for the PA would cease |
| i. bring Palestine to its knees and | their financial muscle |
| j. talks aimed at quelling a potential | those views |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

A rocky road ahead for Hamas

The European Union and United States have been _____ to flex their financial muscle with Hamas, the newly elected power in Palestinian politics. The consequences for not _____ with Western demands to _____ violence against Israel could be _____. German Chancellor Angela Merkel made it plain today that all funding for the Palestinian Authority (PA) would cease unless Hamas accepted the existence of its _____ and neighbor. The EU is the PA's largest donor with a per _____ contribution in excess of \$606 million. US President George W. Bush quickly _____ suit by warning he would cut aid worth \$400 million. The EU and US classify Hamas as a terrorist group, and its surprise election victory will _____ problems for the stalled Middle East peace talks.

occupier

renounce

pose

swift

followed

annum

complying

dire

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called on countries around the world to follow the _____ of the USA and EU in _____ Hamas, unless it changed its ways. Rice declared that: "Hamas doesn't recognize Israel, _____ violence and refuses to be a responsible party to the peace process....The bedrock _____ here is that we cannot have funding for an organization that holds those views just because it is in government." A bankrupt PA raises the very real possibility that it would be unable to pay its officials and police force, which would bring Palestine to its _____ and result in a state of total _____. Ms. Rice will meet with her counterparts from the EU, Russia and the UN this week in talks aimed at _____ a potential geopolitical _____ from exploding.

quelling

advocates

anarchy

knees

lead

tinderbox

principle

ostracizing

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

A rocky road ahead for Hamas

The European Union and United States have been swift to _____ their financial _____ with Hamas, the newly elected power in Palestinian politics. The consequences for not complying with Western demands to renounce violence against Israel could be _____. German Chancellor Angela Merkel made it plain today that all funding for the Palestinian Authority (PA) would _____ unless Hamas accepted the existence of its occupier and neighbor. The EU is the PA's largest donor with a per _____ contribution in excess of \$606 million. US President George W. Bush quickly followed _____ by warning he would cut aid worth \$400 million. The EU and US classify Hamas as a terrorist group, and its surprise election victory will pose problems for the _____ Middle East peace talks.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called on countries around the world to follow the _____ of the USA and EU in _____ Hamas, unless it changed its ways. Rice declared that: "Hamas doesn't recognize Israel, _____ violence and refuses to be a responsible party to the peace process....The _____ principle here is that we cannot have funding for an organization that holds those views just because it is in government." A bankrupt PA raises the very real possibility that it would be unable to pay its officials and police force, which would bring Palestine to its _____ and result in a state of total _____. Ms. Rice will meet with her counterparts from the EU, Russia and the UN this week in talks aimed at _____ a potential geopolitical tinderbox from exploding.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'financial'** and **'muscle'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "PALESTINE" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about Palestine and Hamas.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| • swift | • lead |
| • demands | • recognize |
| • plain | • views |
| • annum | • real |
| • suit | • knees |
| • pose | • tinderbox |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of Hamas' victory?
- c. How do you think Hamas heading the Palestinian Authority will reshape Middle Eastern politics?
- d. What do you think the average person in the Palestinian street thinks of the EU's threat to cancel aid to the Palestinian Authority?
- e. Do you think the EU and US should / will cut humanitarian aid to the Palestinians?
- f. Do you think Palestine's neighbors are happy with the rise of Hamas?
- g. What would happen in Palestine if anarchy broke out?
- h. What is your country's view on Hamas?
- i. Do you think Condoleezza Rice's ostracism of Hamas is helpful?
- j. What do you think are the chances of Hamas towing the line?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you agree with Condoleezza Rice?
- d. What do you think would happen if the Palestinian Authority became bankrupt?
- e. What do you think will happen to the Road Map for Peace?
- f. Do you think it is likely the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority will receive funding from its Arab neighbors?
- g. How do you think the world would react if Hamas received aid from Iran?
- h. How much of a geopolitical tinderbox do you think Palestine is?
- i. Do you think the world should give Hamas a chance?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

THE PLAYERS: Look at the list of “players” in the Middle East and the peace process. In pairs / groups, role play conversations between any two of these people:

- An unemployed Palestinian worker
- US President George W. Bush
- Interim Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert
- An Al Jazeera TV journalist
- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
- Senior Hamas figure Mahmoud Zahar
- An average Israeli

The conversations should be about:

- (1) The Hamas victory
- (2) Israel
- (3) Each other
- (4) The other “players” in the list
- (5) Peace

After you have finished your mini role plays, change partners and discuss what you said in your roles. How much of what you said do you believe in?

How different do you think real conversations between the “players” might be?

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Hamas. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. HEADLINE: Choose one of the headlines from those on page 3. Write the newspaper article that supports the headline. Read your report to your partner(s) in your next class. Did you all write about similar things?

4. A DAY IN THE LIFE: You live in Palestine. What are your thoughts on what is happening in the world today? Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone have similar days and thoughts?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F b. F c. T d. T e. F f. F g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. flex	exert
b. renounce	abandon
c. annum	year
d. pose	present
e. stalled	derailed
f. ostracizing	banishing
g. bedrock	core
h. anarchy	lawlessness
i. counterparts	opposite numbers
j. tinderbox	powder keg

PHRASE MATCH:

a. swift to flex	their financial muscle
b. not complying with Western demands	to renounce violence
c. made it plain today that all funding	for the PA would cease
d. a per annum contribution	in excess of \$606 million
e. pose problems for the	stalled Middle East peace talks
f. follow the lead of the USA and EU	in ostracizing Hamas
g. refuses to be a responsible party	to the peace process
h. an organization that holds	those views
i. bring Palestine to its knees and	result in a state of total anarchy
j. talks aimed at quelling a potential	geopolitical tinderbox

GAP FILL:

A rocky road ahead for Hamas

The European Union and United States have been **swift** to flex their financial muscle with Hamas, the newly elected power in Palestinian politics. The consequences for not **complying** with Western demands to **renounce** violence against Israel could be **dire**. German Chancellor Angela Merkel made it plain today that all funding for the Palestinian Authority (PA) would cease unless Hamas accepted the existence of its **occupier** and neighbor. The EU is the PA's largest donor with a per **annum** contribution in excess of \$606 million. US President George W. Bush quickly **followed** suit by warning he would cut aid worth \$400 million. The EU and US classify Hamas as a terrorist group, and its surprise election victory will **pose** problems for the stalled Middle East peace talks.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called on countries around the world to follow the **lead** of the USA and EU in **ostracizing** Hamas, unless it changed its ways. Rice declared that: "Hamas doesn't recognize Israel, **advocates** violence and refuses to be a responsible party to the peace process....The bedrock **principle** here is that we cannot have funding for an organization that holds those views just because it is in government." A bankrupt PA raises the very real possibility that it would be unable to pay its officials and police force, which would bring Palestine to its **knees** and result in a state of total **anarchy**. Ms. Rice will meet with her counterparts from the EU, Russia and the UN this week in talks aimed at **quelling** a potential geopolitical **tinderbox** from exploding.