

## Violence in Middle East

Contributed by Scott Eliss  
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The Middle East- what now? There doesn't seem to be any real negotiations occurring between Israel and the Palestinians in the framework of the Annapolis Bush imitative. For good reason as a mini-war is taking place on Israel's southern border. There were those that highly recommended Israel's policy of disengagement from the Gaza Strip in hopes this would strengthen more moderates like the present head of the Fatah Abu Mazen. The additional economic hardships that residents of Gaza were to suffer was supposed to strengthen the better off authority and drive people back to support Fatah.. All these theories have not panned out as the Hamas is not only popular but successful somewhat in fulfilling promises to improve economic conditions in the strip. The latest border breach has helped the hamas gain credibility as problem solvers for diminished supplies of basic commodities. These basic staples were in dire need in the strip and have been addressed somewhat. The possibility that the Hamas will hand over the strip to the Fatah and ostensibly reunite the authority seems remote at best. This was to be a basic precondition for any renewed peace talks. The defacto Hamas State is the real Palestinian state that people have been talking about with many manifestations of a viable state. It has defined and continuous borders. It has a army and police force under one command despite some smaller less organized splinter groups. It has the ability thru the new border crossing with Egypt to bring supplies into the strip. These developments may herald the defacto irrelevance of the Fatah movement. Many military analysts claim that there would be no Fatah if the Israeli army would not be in the West bank. In addition Israel's ability to move militarily into the strip may have been hindered by Egyptian unofficial backing of the Hamas. That move might be seen as a move on the Egyptian army which Israel is unlikely to do.

What now?

Who knows.