

more like the Marxists of Germany in the '30s. They are always ready with a spin that transforms what looks like a worst case into an historic success. So the Shi'ites are in the process of establishing a theocracy in southern Iraq, the Kurdish nationalists in the north are preparing to secede, the Sunnis are turning their areas into havens for Osama's jihadists, and the whole of Mesopotamia may be on the verge of a civil war? Have faith in America's values and be idealistic about our vision. According to Bush, Iraq's struggles to forge a "democratic future" are comparable to the troubles the United States had while establishing its own constitutional government. Speaking from Philadelphia last December, Bush aimed to invoke the image of America's own Founding Fathers in support of Iraq's new political leaders. He didn't go as far as comparing Grand Ayatollah Sistani to Thomas Jefferson—but did come close. "Our Founders faced many difficult challenges. They learned from their mistakes and adjusted their approach," Bush said.

When Palestinian and Israeli officials frantically lobbied in Washington for the postponement of the parliamentary elections in the West Bank and Gaza, noting that polls pointed to a possible victory by Hamas, America's top democracy cheerleader, Condoleezza Rice, was dismissive of those Middle Eastern naysayers. "Holding free and fair Palestinian Legislative Council elections on January 25 represents a key step in the process of building a peaceful, democratic Palestinian state," Rice said in a Jan. 11 statement. "Development of a Palestinian democracy based on tolerance and liberty is a key element of the Roadmap," she insisted. You have to believe that if you build a democracy, they will come. And on Jan. 25, Hamas came. ■

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# Who Elected Hamas?

We did—with help from the Israelis and Fatah.

**By M.J. Rosenberg**

THE NIXON-CHINA analogy is growing stale. Every time an extremist takes power anywhere, the starry-eyed immediately trot out the "but it took Richard Nixon to go to China" example as evidence that the newest ideologue to win an election will pull a 180 once he's in office.

Using this logic, Hamas, now that it has been elected to lead the Palestinian legislature, is in a position both to make peace with Israel and to make it stick, something the more moderate Fatah could not do.

Unfortunately, the Nixon analogy probably doesn't apply here. Nixon was a pragmatist, not an extremist. Nor was his opposition to recognition of the People's Republic of China the centerpiece of his worldview. He did recognize China but only because he wanted to. At this point, there is no evidence whatsoever that the leaders of Hamas—in contrast to many of the people who voted for them—want normal relations with Israel. That does not mean they won't move toward a policy of peaceful coexistence, but if they do, it will not be by choice but because Hamas feels compelled by outside pressure or, more likely, internal necessity.

The bottom line is that there are very few silver linings in the Hamas victory. Striking, however, is the success of the election itself. International observers, led by the U.S. National Democratic Institute, deemed the election "free and fair." In its report following the election, NDI stated, "through the high turnout in these elections and in the 2005 Presiden-

tial election, as well as the notable participation in five rounds of municipal elections in the last year, Palestinians have clearly demonstrated a commitment to democratic elections." So much for the canard that Arabs are somehow inherently resistant to free voting.

On the other hand, the election results may put the lie to the Bush administration's view that democratic elections are, by definition, a good thing. Hamas, an organization best known for blowing up civilian buses, won fair and square, suggesting that sometimes elections, in and of themselves, can be problematic—especially if parties competing in them are not required to foreswear violence.

The other silver lining—one that still remains to be tested—is that Hamas can restore order to the West Bank and Gaza. The Bush administration and the Israelis have both repeatedly demanded that the Palestinian Authority dismantle the independent militias and confiscate their arms. That is likely to happen now, but it is not Hamas's arms that will be confiscated as the Americans and Israelis demanded. They will instead be the confiscators.

So how did this happen? Even Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice claims not to know, saying that her analysts somehow dropped the ball by not predicting the Hamas victory.

The fact is that it was eminently predictable and perhaps even inevitable in the sense that the actions of Fatah, the Americans, and the Israelis made it so.

First, Fatah. The Palestinians were tired of Fatah's corruption and cronyism.

Foreign aid was siphoned off into the pockets of warlords and political hacks. Government payrolls were packed with Fatah loyalists who not only did nothing but were expected to do nothing. With its reputation for incorruptibility and its efficiency in providing social services, Hamas was a natural alternative despite its commitment to Islamic fundamentalism—not especially popular in mostly secular Palestine. Voting for Hamas was simply a way to vote “no” to Fatah.

Second, the United States. Perhaps Palestinians would have forgiven Fatah’s sleaziness if it had eased the burden of the Israeli occupation. Palestinians thought that the death of Yasir Arafat and the election of Mahmoud Abbas a year ago would lead the United States to push Israel to ease up on them. It didn’t happen. The Bush administration said the right things but, with the notable and significant exceptions of successfully

the PLO. Prior to Yitzhak Rabin’s election in 1992 and the Oslo agreement, successive Likud governments preferred any alternative to Arafat and his organization, largely because they were not interested in negotiating with the Palestinians at all and the Islamicists—unlike the PLO—were not interested in negotiating with them either. But their biggest contribution to the Hamas victory was more recent. After boycotting Yasir Arafat since his election in 2001, it was assumed that the Sharon government would be more forthcoming with his moderate and democratically elected successor who, after all, ended the *intifada*. It wasn’t. Sharon refused to negotiate with Abbas and simply ignored Israel’s responsibilities under the roadmap (freezing settlement expansion, for one). Other than calling Abbas a “partner,” Sharon treated him no differently than Arafat, and the Americans

Palestinians cite as being a major source of their misery. That was last year. This year, an election year, should see even more examples of the kind of pandering that only makes a bad situation worse.

But the Bush administration is not running for anything in 2006 and, as a second-term president, George W. Bush need not succumb to political pressure. That means he should give far more weight to what Hamas does and less to what it says. The Israelis, most notably Minister of Defense Shaul Mofaz, say that Hamas has behaved “responsibly” since the election. In fact, Hamas has clamped down on terrorism against Israelis since the Palestinian ceasefire was agreed to last January.

The administration’s primary goal should be to encourage Hamas, using all the means at its disposal, to maintain the ceasefire. Both because of our commitment to the security of Israel and our opposition to the use of terrorism, the United States cannot be expected to deal with a Hamas that either perpetrates or supports terror. At the same time, we do not want to come down so hard on Hamas—by cutting off all aid to the Palestinian people, for instance—that we push them into an even tighter embrace by Iran and Syria. People in Israel or the United States who argue for policies that would increase Palestinian suffering as a means of paying them back for voting Hamas will only make terrorism, and a renewed *intifada*, not only possible but likely.

If played right, it is possible—although just barely—that the Hamas takeover will not be deleterious to U.S. interests or to Israel’s either. At this point, the president’s “wait and see” approach is exactly right. ■

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## LAST YEAR, AFTER THE PRESIDENT OFFERED THE PALESTINIANS \$200 MILLION IN AID, CONGRESS TOOK \$50 MILLION OUT OF THAT PACKAGE AND GAVE IT TO ISRAEL.

getting the route of the separation barrier altered to ease Palestinian movement and the Gaza border crossings agreement, the U.S. pretty much let Prime Minister Sharon do whatever he wanted. Rightly supporting Sharon’s Gaza withdrawal, we couldn’t even get Sharon to negotiate its terms with Abbas. He insisted that Israel would do it without consulting the Palestinians. Accordingly, Abbas and Fatah got no credit for Gaza withdrawal while Hamas was credited for producing the unilateral pullout by force of its arms.

Third, the Israelis. They are the last people who should be surprised by the Hamas victory. In fact, in the 1980s Hamas—and previous incarnations of Islamic resistance—were quietly supported by the Israelis as alternatives to

didn’t press him. He ended violence and got almost nothing in return. To Palestinians, Abbas looked like a dupe.

At this point, it is impossible to know what is likely to happen. The Bush administration’s response and particularly the president’s own words have been relatively restrained. Congress, of course, will follow its usual course of Palestinian-bashing.

It is worth noting that it was Congress that did everything in its power to prevent Bush from taking actions that might have strengthened Abbas *vis-à-vis* Hamas. Last year, for instance, after the president offered the Palestinians \$200 million in aid, Congress took \$50 million out of that package and gave it to Israel to spend on new and improved checkpoints, the same checkpoints that

# Cesar Chavez, Minuteman

The UFW leader was no friend to illegal immigration—until he became an ethnic figurehead.

By Steve Sailer

IN CALIFORNIA, only three birthdays are official state holidays: Jesus Christ's, Martin Luther King's, and Cesar Chavez's. Beatification as a secular saint, though, isn't always good for the soul. A recent four-part exposé by reporter Miriam Pawel in the *Los Angeles Times* revealed how the labor leader turned revered ethnic icon descended into paranoia, megalomania, and general crack-pottery in the 15 years before his death in 1993.

Today, his United Farm Workers functions less as a union—it represents only 2 percent of the California agricultural workforce—than as a lucrative Latino-pride fundraising machine providing sinecures for a dozen Chavez relatives. Pawel writes, "Chavez's heirs run a web of tax-exempt organizations that exploit his legacy and invoke the harsh lives of farm workers to raise millions of dollars in public and private money. The money does little to improve the lives of California farm workers, who still struggle with the most basic health and housing needs and try to get by on seasonal, minimum-wage jobs."

From 1965 to 1981, the UFW succeeded in raising wages significantly for stoop laborers in California. Since then, their pay has fallen, and they've lost most of the fringe benefits they had won. Today, most make less than \$10,000 per year. Hundreds were discovered near Salinas living in caves, a mass indignity that even that town's most famous son,

John Steinbeck, barely anticipated in *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Unfortunately, in focusing on gossip about the personal foibles of Chavez and his successors, the *LA Times* series completely ignored the politically incorrect paradox of who was most responsible for wiping out the gains Mexican-American farm workers had achieved through strikes and consumer boycotts: illegal immigrants from Mexico.

Tectonic shifts in demographics made possible both the rise of the UFW after Congress ended the *bracero* guest-worker program in 1964 and the union's fall following the explosion in illegal immigration.

Chavez was a more interesting figure than either the plaster idol worshipped in the public schools or the celebrity control-freak denigrated in the *LA Times*. Chavez embodied both the old class politics and the new identity politics. Out of this duality grew the fundamental conflict of his life. What was more important, *la causa* or *la raza*? The UFW union or the Mexican race? This irresolvable contradiction culminated in the terrible ironies of his tragic later years and the uselessness of the UFW ever since.

During his prime, Chavez, a third-generation American citizen from Yuma, Arizona and Navy veteran, was an American labor leader fighting against the importation of strikebreakers from Mexico. But as power and praise went

to his head, his image morphed into that of a Mexican mestizo racial emblem, the patron saint of the *reconquista* of *Alta California* by *la raza*.

In 2006, we automatically assume that America's self-appointed Latino leaders—the politicians, campaign consultants, media mouthpieces, and identity-politics warriors—favor ever more immigration. Their influence and income flow from their claim to represent vast numbers of Hispanics, so the more warm bodies they can get across the border, the larger will be the ethnic quotas upon which their careers are based. But the union leader who is honestly battling for the welfare of his members—as opposed to the boss merely attempting to maximize the number of dues-paying workers—wants less competition for them.

Chavez's essential problem was straight out of Econ 101, the law of supply and demand. He needed to limit the supply of labor in order to drive up wages. Just as American Federation of Labor founder Samuel Gompers, himself a Jewish immigrant, was one of the most influential voices calling for the successful immigration-restriction law of 1924, Chavez, during his effectual years, was a ferocious opponent of illegal immigration.

His success stemmed from the long-term decline in the farm labor supply. According to agricultural economist Philip L. Martin of the University of