

For years, I have been a religiously observing follower of an Israeli Arab writer called Khaled Abu Toameh. The man contributes to different conservative media outlets that due suit my political views as an American Jew and a passionate republican. Lately, in the last few years, Abu Toameh became the sweet heart of the conservative pro-Israel camp I subscribe too. Described by some as a truth-teller and a source of Palestinians news you won't read in the main stream media. Many describe him as "the real deal" who is very pro-Israel. Nonetheless, as I am learning Arabic now, I googled his articles in Arabic and found one interview he had in 2009 with a renowned Arab paper called AlSharq AlAwsat. What I found there left me puzzled and mesmerized. At first, I thought it was Google, then so I took it to two different native Arab speakers, one a colleague and the other my student. Both gave me a translation that has raised up my puzzle-meter about Abu Toameh and left me in shock for days. Below are the literal translations of the most of Abu Toameh's interview, which could be found here in Arabic: <http://archive.aawsat.com/leader.asp?section=3&article=529746&issueno=11202#.WQ0Wn-UrLIU>

Does he want to save the "Palestinian Cause"?

In the interview, he says: "Unless this struggle [between Fattah and Hamas] ends, it will destroy the entire Palestinian cause"

Hamas bloody takeover of Gaza "Wasn't a Coup" but "A public revolution"!

Abu Toameh says: "What happened in Gaza between Hamas and the PA was not a coup as some would like to portray it. All members of the people have revolted against members of the PA and they ran away".

Well, Abu Toameh himself has written extensive articles in conservative sites detailing Hamas atrocities, why does he choose to minimize the bloody and ruthless atrocities Hamas committed during its takeover of Gaza. Mr. Abu Toameh, if you believe throwing people off buildings, and shooting them in the knees to chop off their legs was "a public revolution", then you do have a problem. And let me tell you here, the Israeli and American sites you publish your work in do not share your revolutionary views of Hamas.

Kidnapped Soldier Gave Israel An Excuse to Kill Palestinians And Destroy Gaza?

When you read Abu Toameh's work in American and Israeli publications, he portrays Hamas as the devil himself. Nonetheless, in the interview he seems to offer his strategic expertise to Hamas. He says: "Instead of ruling, Hamas continued with operations against Israel. It kidnapped the soldier [Gilad Shaleet] and gave Israel an excuse, more than 2000 Palestinians were killed and Gaza was destroyed because of the soldier".

really? Israel was just looking for an excuse to attack Gaza? How come you've never shared this view in English in any of your articles?

Then, he adds: "Hamas cannot be a government and a resistance [movement] at the same time, instead of putting the effort and building Gaza, it focused on the rockets".

I am not sure I understand you here Abu Toameh, you are putting "resistance" as an option. Why couldn't you have said Hamas must not attack Israel at all? Or is the problem for you that they cannot manage both; building Gaza and killing Israelis?

Settlements A Bad Thing?

On the settlements, Abu Toameh starts his comment nicely, he says: "Let's assume Israel removes the settlements tomorrow, will Hamas embrace Fattah, what do the settlements and the wall has to do with Palestinians' differences, whenever we ask PA officials about their relaxation in executing reforms, or on keeping the corrupts, the answer: The settlements..."

This is nice. But wait until you read his second comment on the matter: “As for the wall, which was not there before, Hamas insisted on carrying out suicide missions, it got busy with the missions and the Israelis carried on expanding settlements and building the wall and created a new reality”

What I don't understand here, is Abu Toameh equating terrorist attacks to building settlements? He may not have meant that, but looking at what he writes in English, his tone is completely different.

Abu Toameh's Peace Plan: Priceless

Behold: “Abu Taomeh says the PA and Hamas do not look long term, if they did, they would have demanded sovereignty over the soil while keeping the settlements [in place] on the condition that the PA treats the settlers the way Israel treats its Arabs inside.”

Mr. Abu Taomeh, the settlements are built on Israeli soil. This is our land, and we don't need you to dictate to us what we do with our land. Also, do you want the Israeli settlers to be held hostages by the PA? and then to be treated on the conditions of how Arabs in Israeli are treated? Is that possibly the insurance policy for your future as an Arab in Israel?

Abu Taomeh, in both Israel and US, freedom of speech is held sacred. Nonetheless, what disturbs me the most is you never sound off these views in English. And I doubt you would ever share such opinions with the conservative and Zionist publications you write for. Your views could be welcomed by JStreet but not the conservative Zionist crowd who have been hosting you all over Europe. Do you share these views with those when they invite you for speaking tour for example?

If Jews Felt Serious Peace, They'll Evacuate the Settlers Themselves

He says: “Mahmoud Abbas is determined not to keep any Israelis in the West Bank, Israel responds: If so, we're not keeping any Arabs inside Israel! Then he explains, that the Jewish people-if they feel peace is serious- they would evacuate the settlers by themselves. More than 70% of the Israeli people supports the two-state solution, not because they love Palestinians, but because they want to push Palestinians behind the wall. The Israelis are willing to give the West Bank to the Palestinians as well as the settlements and parts of Jerusalem, but the wall shall remain”.

No, you're wrong, Jews are not willing to give up the settlements, I understand this interview was in 2009 but you must accept that settlers are not an obstacle to peace. Most conservative and Zionist Americans believe in the settlements as a necessity and a legitimate part of Israel. Why won't you write in English what you actually think of the settlements? Why are you tying “serious peace” to “evacuating the settlements”?

Hamas not recognizing Israel is not a problem, blames Israeli Government for not making peace with Hamas

The interviewer wrote: “I told him: But Israel insists on Hamas recognizing it and so does the West? He responds: It is the comedy of mutual recognition. Will Hamas lack of recognition of Israel drive Israel out of existence? If the Israeli government was serious about peace it would have said to Hamas: You don't recognize me and I don't recognize you, let's exchange some sort of security arrangements, a truce, and some agreements, what these two words mean: Mutual recognition”

Khaled, you are alleging the Israeli Government is not serious about peace. You know this is not true and your writing in English don't share this view. In fact, you always say Hamas is the reason there isn't peace. Which stance is your true one, the one in Arabic or in English?

America Must Support Reconciliation Between Fatah And Hamas, and...Talk to Hamas!
He says: "America must demand from Fatah and Hamas to stop fighting one another first, and if there is in Hamas whoever wanted to negotiate with it, she must accept"

Khaled, for almost a decade you have been telling us how Hamas is terrorist and doesn't want peace. How do you explain your views to be different in Arabic?

Israel should give the Golan Heights to Syria?

The interviewer wrote: "He sees peace between Israel and Syria as possible with Israel withdrawing from most of the Golan, and achieving security agreements in it"

Abu Toameh, I have been following you for years and never saw you ever voicing this in English, nor do I believe you conservative Zionist fans like myself would ever agree to your Israeli suicide recipe for the Golan's.

Jerusalem Is "Finished"; East Jerusalem's Majority Is Jewish

Interviewer concludes with a final paragraph: "He highlights that Israel won't return to its 1967 border: 'there is a consequence between the right and the left, they are willing to withdraw from 90% of the West Bank' As for naturalization [of Palestinian refugees] he says there is no other solution. Where will the Palestinians in Arab countries return to? Most of Gaza's population are refugees, The West Bank is all villages, settlements, and military bases, it doesn't have space. He doesn't see any improvement as time is an advantage for Israel and not the Palestinians: 'We fight one another, while the [Israeli] bulldozers are working, the wall stands, the settlements will remain, Jerusalem is finished, the majority of the of East Jerusalem's population is Jewish. And When Hamas and Fatah wake up, if anything is of the land is left, then they could set on the negotiations table with Israel,'"

So, Mr. Abu Toameh, you consider Jerusalem finished because the majority of the population in East Jerusalem are Jews? In case you did not know sir, this was our capital 3,000 years ago. We are natives not intruders, and those who have a problem with us filling our own capital are racists and anti-Semites. Also, with us, Jerusalem is prospering and not 'finished' as you claim.