

## The Khaled Abu Toameh You Don't See

For a few years now, I have been following Khaled Abu Toameh, an Israeli/Arab writer. This author contributes to many different conservative media outlets, outlets that suit my political views as an American Jew and passionate Republican.

In the last few years, Abu Toameh has become the sweetheart of the conservative pro-Israel camp that I identify with. This got me interested in his writings, so I rolled up my sleeves and did some digging to find out more about him.

Described by some as a “truth-teller” and quality Palestinian news “that you won't find in the main stream media”, Abu Toameh appears to be the “real deal who is solidly pro-Israel”.

But is he?

A few months ago, I would have answered this question with an unmistakable “yes”, but after finding an interview he's made, I am not sure what would my answer be. One thing I have thought of though is this: Abu Toameh seems to say one thing in Arabic, while when convenient, says something else in English.

As a curious soul who is currently learning Arabic, I started Googling Toameh's Arabic articles, biography and videos and found a 2009 interview he conducted with AlSharq AlAwsat, a renowned Arab newspaper. What I found after reading that article and comparing it in both Arabic and English, has left me puzzled, somewhat mesmerized and clearly concerned.

At first, I honestly thought that Google's translator tools were not working properly, so I decided to take the material to some friends of mine, both of whom are native Arab speakers (One was a colleague, while the other is my student). Both men gave me a translation that raised my “puzzle-meter” and left me curious, shocked and disappointed for what seemed like days.

Here is the above mentioned article in Arabic:

<http://archive.aawsat.com/leader.asp?section=3&article=529746&issueno=11202#.WQ0Wn-UrLIU>

And I urge all readers to take it to their Arab-speaking friends to confirm the honesty of the translations below. If you don't know any Arab-speaking person, just use Google Translate, though not the most accurate, it could give you an idea.

After reading this article in Arabic, and then in English, a series of tuff, hard-hitting questions and comments arise. The questions revolve around the following 4 basic questions I am using to help analyze the questions.

- Is the statement true?
- What does the statement mean?
- Who does the statement help?
- Why would make the statement if he is dedicated to the Palestinian cause?

Here are the main questions and points of the above-mentioned article in English:

### **Does Toameh want to save the “Palestinian Cause?”**

In the interview, he states: “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!”**

Toameh said: “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”.

### **Why pen articles for conservative websites minimizing Hamas atrocities?**

Why does Toameh choose to minimize the bloody and ruthless atrocities Hamas committed during its ruthless takeover of Gaza in 2006? If I had the chance to interview him, I would ask if he believes that throwing people off buildings, shooting opponent’s in the knees or chopping off their legs qualifies as “a public revolution?”

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

When Abu Toameh’s work appears in Western publications, he clearly portrays Hamas as the devil reincarnate. Nonetheless, in the above referenced interview, Toameh appears to “waffle” on the Hamas question by saying: “Instead of ruling, Hamas continued with operations against Israel. It kidnapped the soldier [Gilad Shaleet] and gave Israel an excuse [To go to war], in which more than 2000 Palestinians were killed and Gaza was destroyed because of the soldier”.

Really Toameh, Israel was just looking for an excuse to attack Gaza? No sir, Israel has done everything to avoid the war.

And that is when it struck me – could Toameh be saying different things in different languages? With that in the back of my mind, I would ask him this: how come he’s never shared these view in any of the articles published in English?

### **The Hamas government and resistance model**

Toameh believes: “ 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 where Abu Toameh is on this one, and wonder why he cites “resistance” as an option? Why couldn’t he have simply said that Hamas must not attack Israel at all?

To me it appears that he is saying that Hamas is so incompetent that they cannot manage both building Gaza and killing Jews or Israelis.

### **Settlements A Bad Thing?**

Touching on the settlements, Abu Toameh starts out nicely: “Let’s assume Israel removes the settlements tomorrow, will Hamas embrace Fattah? He goes further and asks, “what do the settlements and wall have to do with Palestinians’ differences?”

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, (and) it got busy with the missions (while Israel) carried on expanding settlements, building the wall and creating a new reality.”

What confuses me here is this: Abu Toameh appears to be equating terrorist attacks to building settlements. How can that be?

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**

According to Abu Taomeh, the PA and Hamas do not look long term, (and) 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, I want to personally remind you that 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, if you are on our side, do you want the Israeli settlers to be held hostages by the PA? If you are on Israel’s side, then why add the comments about being treated the same way Israeli Arabs are treated?

Did you lob that grenade out there as a possible insurance policy for your future as an Arab in Israel? Or maybe you just meant the settlers should be treated fairly by PA the way Israel treats its Arabs? If so, how does this add up to you always reporting the PA is a human rights abuser and a torture fortress? Again, you’ve never expressed that “settlers under PA control” idea in your English writings. How come?

## **Freedom of Speech**

Abu Taomeh, in western countries (including Israel), freedom of speech is sacred. Nonetheless, I want to ask you this: why do you never make these comments in English? Personally, I doubt that you would ever share these questionable opinions with the readers of the conservative and Zionist publications you write for. For the record, your views may be welcomed by J St., but not the conservative Zionist crowd who has been hosting your speaking engagements in Europe.

## **If Jews felt serious peace, they'll evacuate the settlers themselves**

Toameh adds: "Abbas is determined not to keep any Israelis in the West Bank and Israel responds: If so, we're not keeping any Arabs inside Israel!" He then explains, "that the Jewish people-if they feel peace is serious- would evacuate the settlers by themselves." He adds that more than 70% of Israelis 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".

Toameh, you are 100% wrong, Jews are not willing to give up the settlements. I understand that the interview was in 2009 and its now 2017, but you must accept that settlers are not an obstacle to peace. In fact, most conservative and Zionist Americans believe the settlements are a necessity and a legitimate part of Israel. Toameh, let me ask you this: why won't you write in English what you actually think of the settlements, and why are you tying "serious peace" to "evacuating the settlements"?

## **Toameh blames Israel for not making peace with Hamas because not recognizing Israel is OK**

The interviewer wrote: "I told him: But Israel insists on Hamas recognizing it and so does the West?" To this, Toameh responded: "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, am I reading this correctly, you are alleging that the Israeli Government is not serious about peace? This is not true, and your English writings do not share this point of view. In fact, in English, 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 And Hamas, by talking to Hamas!**

He says: "America must demand from Fattah 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 organization and doesn't want peace. How do you explain the fact that your views are different when written 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."

Abu Toameh, I have read a lot of your material, and I have never seen you voice this in English, nor do I believe that your conservative Zionist fans would ever agree to your apparent Israeli suicide recipe for the Golan.

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

The 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 Fattah wake up, if anything 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 it, Jerusalem has been the Jewish capital for 3,000 years. We are natives not intruders, and those who have a problem with us filling our own capital are racists and anti-Semites. And the icing on the cake is this: under Jewish rule, Jerusalem is free, prospering and not 'finished' as you claim.

Mr Toameh, these conflicting concepts question your neutrality and professionalism, as well as political affiliation and dedication to peace. To me, its as if you are presenting not just myths, but facts. The problem is, we don't know which is which because there is no consistency. As a dedicated reader – I respectfully urge you to clean up your act and answer these questions for your readers.