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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared Thursday that a new agreement between rival Palestinian factions Hamas and Fatah is "killing peace," even as U. S. Secretary of State John Kerry voiced hope that talks could be salvaged. The Israeli leader spoke with Fox News shortly after the Israeli government cut off Mideast peace talks. The Israelis halted negotiations over the announcement that terror group Hamas and Fatah would seek reconciliation. In an interview with Fox News' Bret Baier, Netanyahu stated that peace talks are "essentially buried" if Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas forges ahead with the agreement. "It's a blow to Israel; it's a blow to peace," he said. "It's a terrible blow to the Palestinian people, because they must choose, too, whether they want to go forward or go backward. Yesterday, with the pact with Hamas, the Palestinian people went, took a huge step backward, away from peace, away from a good future for themselves." The grim comments seemed at odds with the tone taken in Washington by Kerry. He said the U. S., even now, isn't ready to write off Mideast peace negotiations. "There is always a way forward," Kerry told reporters in brief remarks at the State Department. He noted Israeli and Palestinian leaders need to make necessary compromises, without which peace "becomes very elusive."

But the "blow" to peace talks comes ahead of an April 29 deadline, and Netanyahu described the Fatah-Hamas unity agreement as a deal-breaker. The pact is undoubtedly a major setback for Kerry, who tried anew to restart the peace process after taking the reins at the State Department. "If [Abbas] continues with the pact with Hamas, he's essentially buried it," Netanyahu told Fox News, calling Hamas "one of the preeminent terrorist organizations

of our time." The Hamas-Fatah unity plan is meant to end a seven-year rift between the rival factions. But Israel objects to any participation in Palestinian politics by Hamas, an Islamic militant group sworn to Israel's destruction. The group has killed hundreds of Israelis in suicide bombings and other attacks over the past two decades. Netanyahu, in the interview with Fox News, stressed that history when asked about Palestinian statements that he is using the pact as an excuse to back out of peace talks. " They can do intellectual somersaults from here to eternity, but it doesn't change the fact that they chose to make a pact with the people committed to our destruction, and that doesn't square away with peace," Netanyahu said. He said Hamas has " not relented one bit on their terror activities." Over the last month, both sides in the troubled talks have each taken unhelpful steps and caused setbacks that have signaled an impending collapse of the negotiations. That has forced Kerry to divert focus from crises across the world, including in Ukraine and Syria, in his quest to shepherd through a Mideast peace agreement that has foiled U. S. diplomats for years. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Kerry spoke privately with Abbas and expressed his disapproval of the plans to create a reconciliation government with Hamas, which is considered a terrorist organization by the U. S., European Union and other nations.

Analysis: Although the media purports to give factual, unbiased presentations of specific events, it is often colored by predispositions. Certain cultural lenses usually shape these biases, be they political, religious or ethnic. In their coverage of negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian, Fox News exhibits many of these. They portray the Palestinian as Arabic

Muslim others, and offer a slanted presentation on what is holding up peace in the Middle East. The referenced Fox News article about stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace talks uses slanted language and pointed quotes that demonstrate a clearly biased stance. The article makes this clear early on, beginning its account with a colorful quote that describes Palestine as “killing” peace. By using an adjective that clearly connotes violence in the context of peace negotiations, the Palestinian side is painted as a hindrance to peace. The article continues throughout to casually label Hamas as a “terror” group, and an Islamic militant group that participates in suicide bombings. According to the article, the Palestinian people are therefore endorsing a terror group as their representative in peace talks, and for this reason Israel is breaking off peace talks.

The article implicitly endorses the pro-Israel platform that has become synonymous and foundational to much of American politics, particularly the conservative wing of the Republican Party. Furthermore, it is biased toward Islam, equating the Palestinian cause with that of a terrorist organization who uses tactics such as suicide bombing. The article could be accused of pandering to American conservative constituencies by standing with a Judeo-Christian nation against an Arabic Islamic people. It does this by presenting the Palestinian cause as represented by a group, Hamas that would evoke certain memories in an American reader’s mind. The only representative given of the Palestinian cause is described as an “Islamic extremist” group who are “terrorists” that use “suicide bombing” as a tactic against non-Muslims. In this way, Islam and the Arabic Palestinians are caricatured in a way that post-9/11 Americans could empathize.

The article seeks to influence opinions rather than merely give facts because it only gives one side of the stalled negotiations. Rather than attempt to understand why the Palestinians support Hamas, or what Hamas has to offer the Palestinian cause, it is dismissive by using descriptors like terrorist and images of violence, like suicide bombing. It only gives statistics about Israeli deaths, and not Palestinian deaths. It only says that Hamas and Palestinian are acting against peace, rather than giving any voice to the Palestinian perspective.

The Israeli-Palestinian issue is an often-charged subject. While opinions grounded in facts are beneficial to the discussion, one-sided presentations that demonize one side are an example of a biased understanding of Arabs and Muslims in the Middle East. Just as an Israeli killing a Palestinian child could be rendered a terrorist, it would be a more rounded discussion if Fox News situated the relative nature of what terrorism is and to whom.

Works Cited

“ Netanyahu: Middle East peace talks ‘ essentially buried’ if Hamas-Fatah deal stands.” April 24, 2014. Retrieved, May 15th, 2014, from <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2014/04/24/netanyahu-hamas-fatah-deal-blow-to-peace>.