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Reisser, Wesley J (NEA/IPA)

From: Shampaine, Nicole D  
Sent: Wednesday, April 04, 2007 6:24 PM  
To: NEA-Staff-Assistants-DL  
Cc: NEA-IPA-DL  
Subject: Welcome Home (CONFIDENTIAL)

IPA

~~(C)~~ Islamic University of Gaza: Following press criticism of USAID support for the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) (and al-Quds) and a Congressional request that USAID's Inspector General investigate due of Hamas' ties to IUG (which USAID had incidentally already requested), USAID and State held discussions with ConGen Jerusalem and the WB/G Mission to assess USAID assistance to IUG. USAID staff briefed Jim Kunder today and he intends to discuss it with Tobias soon. He would like a policy decision to be made in Washington regarding how to proceed with IUG, recognizing the impact of how we address this issue on USAID programming with other universities.

current scholarships for three moderate IUG professors and one Fulbright student -- the [ ] who are studying in the U.S.; this is USAID's only program associated with IUG. [Note: In the past, USAID has provided in-kind assistance directly to IUG (e.g. to its library). [ ]

While not explicitly stated in its cable (Jerusalem 00594) on the issue [ ]

Cable referenced above:

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JERUSALEM 00594

CXJER:

ACTION: AID  
INFO: PD POL ECON CG DPO

DISSEMINATION: AID  
CHARGE: PROG

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir  
( ) Release (X) Excise ( ) Deny (X) Declassify in part  
Date 8/17/07 Exemption D1, D5, D6

APPROVED: CG: JWALLES  
DRAFTED: PD: EGEELAN  
CLEARED: PD: MSCHWEITZER-BLUHM,

USAID: HSUMKA, ECON: ASCHEDLBAUER, PD: JLAPENN, DPO: TDUFFY

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Defendants'  
Exhibit  
D-1094  
3:04-CR-240

D1  
D5  
D1  
D6  
D1  
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OO RUEHC RUEHAM RUEHEG RUEHTV  
DE RUEHJM #0594/01 0891509  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 301509Z MAR 07  
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7105  
INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 7484  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 4126  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 2798

BT

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 01 OF 03 JERUSALEM 000594

NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD, R, ECA, USAID

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/13/2017

TAGS: IS, KPAL, KPAO, KWBG, PGOV

SUBJECT: ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY IN GAZA - BETWEEN TECHNOCRATS  
AND RELIGION

REF: 06 JERUSALEM 4735

Classified By: Consul General Jacob Waller, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

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Summary  
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1. (S) The recent, vigorous debate about the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) in the American press and Congress has prompted Post to review IUG's history and its history of relations with the USG. An examination of IUG's management, academic goals, and student population gives a portrait of a university that has strong ties to Islamists, but also of an independent university seeking to maintain the highest academic standards. Post's detailed research into the university and key leaders revealed the presence of a significant number of Hamas members on the Board of Trustees and the Academic Council. [

] END SUMMARY.

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Origins of the IUG  
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2. (S) Founded in 1978 by a Founders Board approved by then-PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and with permission from the Israeli government, IUG is the largest traditional university in the West Bank and Gaza. Considered by Palestinians of all political persuasions to be one of the top three Palestinian institutions of higher education, IUG is internationally respected for its strong science programs, particularly its School of Engineering. A review of the 20 members of the Founders Board revealed that two currently have ties to HAMAS. According to [

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] the university was formed out of pre-existing colleges of Arabic and Islamic Studies, linked to the Islamic Council, which was then a non-violent Islamic movement. [ ] noted that beginning in the early 1980s the then conservative and Islamic IUG was "invaded" by

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graduates from U.S. and European universities, who founded the Science, Engineering and IT departments. Under the leadership of former IUG President Mohammad Shbear, who recruited these Western-educated faculty members, the new academic leadership had a vision of turning IUG into a world class university. In the following years, these professors created a technocratic ethos within the university, centered in the Schools of Science, Engineering, and IT, as well as the English Department. According to [ ] more conservative elements dominate the Islamic Studies and Shariah schools, as well as the Arabic Department. [ ] said that today there is a "hidden conflict" between the technocratic and the Islamic currents within the university.

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Governing Structures  
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3. [ ] the university is run by the University Council, consisting of 20 members, including the President, Vice President, and various Deans and heads of departments. The Founders Board now only fills an honorary role, while the Board of Trustees is charged with appointing the President, conducting fundraising for large-scale infrastructure projects, and contributing to the "vision and direction" of the university. Board members are not academics, but rather businessmen and prominent local figures, [ ]

4. (c) Out of the list of eleven current Board members that Post obtained, 6 are known members of Hamas, [ ]

Ten former members of the Board also held positions in the Palestinian government headed by Hamas that was installed after the 2006 PLC elections. They included Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, former Ministers of Interior, Health and Public Works.

5. (c) The University Council, led by University President Kamalain Shaath, is responsible for all academic and administrative issues. Of the 22 individuals serving on the Council, seven are members of Hamas. An additional eight are considered to be affiliated with Hamas, though not members.

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Financing  
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6. [ ] student tuition and fees cover 80 percent of the university's administrative costs. [ ]

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confirmed this figure, adding the university earns additional money from fees paid for services rendered by various

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academic units, particularly its School of Engineering, which is involved in almost all significant building projects in the Gaza Strip. [ ] Infrastructure projects are financed through soft loans from institutions such as the Islamic Bank in Saudi Arabia, which tend to be 25 year loans, with low interest rates, and with a 5 to 7 year grace period. [ ] many buildings on the IUG campus are named after well known princes from Saudi Arabia and the UAE, who have donated money for their construction. The Science and Technology building on the IUG campus, finished in 2002, was named after Prince Turki Ben Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia. [ ] Arab, Islamic and European NGOs have financed infrastructure, as has INTEL, which began construction of an IT incubator in 2006. An information sheet provided to ConGen by IUG cites donations from the Emir of Qatar, Japanese International Cooperation Agency, the Welfare Association (a Palestinian NGO based in Europe), and the World Bank. [ ] the World Bank ran an audit of the university and had no concerns.

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 Faculty and Student Bodies  
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7. (C) Approximately 600 professors and 400 administrative staff work for the IUG. [ ] recruiting of faculty at IUG is done in a professional manner. The university tends to discriminate against graduates of Arab universities, especially from Egypt and Sudan. [ ] in favor of graduates from US universities (12% according to IUG), the UK (13%) and European universities. [ ]

[ ] insisted all political factions were represented among faculty, workers and students. Sixteen IUG professors (twelve of whom are Hamas) were elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in the January 2006 election. Of the sixteen, six (including 3 Hamas members) served as ministers in the March 2006 Hamas government, while another served as Chief of the Cabinet.

8. (C) IUG has approximately 20,000 students, making it the second largest traditional university in the West Bank or Gaza. Sixty percent of students are female and form a majority of the students in the English and Medical Services Departments. [ ] students are admitted to the university based solely on their grades, and called admission very selective. [ ] the Engineering School requires a 90% secondary school average.

[ ] many of the Fatah leaders in Gaza, along with other members of the non-Islamist local elite, send their children to study at IUG, as it is considered the best academic institution. [ ] many IUG graduates are working or studying in the US, Europe, and the UK, and that many win prestigious

international scholarships.

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Student Government  
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9. (S) [ ] Students are not allowed to run for the Student Government as representatives of political parties. Candidates run as individuals, even though their affiliations are generally known. Students affiliated with Hamas currently hold all Student Council seats under a winner-take-all electoral system. [ ] no political parties have official representation on campus, and no political symbols are allowed on campus. [ ] knows many people who transfer from other schools in Gaza to IUG, even though they are not Islamists or even religious, because it is the only place they can really concentrate on their studies instead of politics. [ ] said many IUG students support Hamas, but that many others oppose it, and that, as at all Palestinian universities, political recruiting does take place on the IUG campus. [ ] added however, that most professors are not involved in politics and students are free to ignore the political debate if they choose. [ ] characterized the campus as a place where a diversity of political views exist on campus and many students are independent.

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USG Involvement with IUG  
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10. (S) Over the years, IUG has enthusiastically approached USAID and the Consulate General (and the Embassy prior to November 2005) to find areas for cooperation and assistance. University leaders routinely spoke about their desire to bring IUG students in contact with Americans and American academics. From 2002 through 2006, USAID provided approximately \$134,455 in assistance that included scholarships for 49 students, in-kind assistance such as computers and reference resources, and research grants. IUG and associated institutions were vetted by USAID a minimum of five times between 2002 and 2006 while USAID provided assistance to it. (Individuals who received USG grants were also vetted.) USAID vetted the university according to procedures in place at the time. As appropriate, the University signed USAID's Anti-Terrorism Certification. Given these measures, past was, and remains, confident none of USAID's assistance has gone to individuals or organizations engaged in terrorism.

11. (S) As a result of the questions raised in the press and Congress, post undertook additional research into IUG, which produced the information contained here. [ ]

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[ a significant number of members of the Board and Council are associated with Hamas (results presented in paras 4 and 5). ]

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12. (X) At present, ongoing USG programming related to IUG consists of three IUG faculty members on USAID-funded faculty development scholarships at U.S. universities and one IUG Fulbright lecturer completing her program in the U.S. All four individuals were thoroughly vetted before being selected for study in the U.S. Post is re-vetting these individuals, but, barring any new derogatory information, we plan to continue their scholarship programs.

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