***MINI PROFILE OF RAY HANANIA***

Ray Hanania is an award winning Palestinian American writer. He covered Chicago City Hall from 1976 until 1992 for the Daily Southtown and the Chicago Sun-Times. He launched his own political consulting firm Urban Strategies Group in 1992. Hanania provides analysis of Chicagoland, Illinois and national issues for the Southwest News-Herald Newspaper and analysis of Middle East issues for the Saudi Gazette. Hanania has managed the election campaigns of more than 60 candidates for public office from Chicago aldermen and cook county commissioner to statewide and congressional offices. He currently manages media for 13 municipal governments and elected officials.

Hanania has been an activist for Palestinian rights since the 1970s serving on the Arab American Congress for Palestine, the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and as national president of the Palestinian American Congress. He performs standup comedy for Arab and non-Arab groups, in English, across the country and around the world from Jerusalem to Dubai, Beirut and Ramallah.

Hanania believes that the biggest challenge Palestinians face is the growing extremism not just among religious fanatics but also secular rejectionists. Hanania believes that forcing Israel to accept a Palestinian State with its own boundaries will eventually lead to peaceful relations that will result in the merging of both Israel and Palestine into one confederation where all citizens are treated equally regardless of religion. Hanania believes that Israel’s extremists are strengthened by the failure of the peace process and are engaged in a sophisticated and deliberate strategy to rid history Palestine of all of its Christian and Muslim Arab inhabitants.

His views are not popular, especially among activists who reject peace based on compromise with Israel, but Hanania counters that the rejections, religious and secular, have failed to achieve any real goals and the only rights that Palestinians have today have come through negotiated peace from leaders like the late President Yasir Arafat, with whom Hanania served as a consultant on American public perceptions during the peace process.

Hanania is also the author of several books including the groundbreaking memoir “I’m Glad I Look Like a Terrorist: Growing up Arab in America.” It is the first book that tells the story of Palestinian and Arab life in America and in the biased anti-Arab mainstream American news media.