

## Heard on the Hill

**Senate Panel Approves Iran Sanctions Bill.** By a vote of 19-2, the Senate Banking Committee approved legislation that imposes tougher sanctions on Iran and authorizes state efforts to divest from international companies investing in Iran's energy sector. The Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act of 2008, introduced by Senate Banking Committee Chairman CHRISTOPHER DODD (D-CT) and Ranking Member RICHARD SHELBY (R-AL), includes major provisions from the Iran Counter-Proliferation Act (S. 970) and the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act (S. 1430). Similar bills passed the House last year. The new Senate bill closes loopholes in existing sanctions law and codifies the U.S. import and export bans on goods to and from Iran.



**House, Senate Panels Approve Aid to Israel.** The House Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations and the Senate Appropriations Committee approved \$2.38 billion in security assistance for Israel as part of the fiscal year 2009 foreign aid bill.

When combined with the \$170 million included in a recent supplemental appropriations bill, the security assistance package brings the total amount of aid to Israel for next year to \$2.55 billion. The new sum reflects the first year of a 10-year plan to gradually increase U.S. security assistance to Israel so that the Jewish state can counter growing threats in the Middle East.

Reps. NITA LOWEY (D-NY) and FRANK WOLF (R-VA) drafted the House bill and Sens. PATRICK LEAHY (D-VT) and JUDD GREGG (R-NH) drafted the Senate version. Sens. DANIEL INOUE (D-HI), BARBARA MIKULSKI (D-MD), MARY LANDRIEU (D-LA), FRANK LAUTENBERG (D-NJ), CHARLES SCHUMER (D-NY), SAM BROWNBACK (R-KS) and ARLEN SPECTER (R-PA) also played critical roles in advancing the bill through the Senate committee. •NER•

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Iran Stalls During Nuclear Talks**

**AIPAC Analysis:  
Examining UNIFIL's Mandate**

# NEAR EAST

## Report

JULY 16-31, 2008

**AIPAC'S BIWEEKLY ON AMERICAN  
MIDDLE EAST POLICY**

### EDITOR'S COMMENTS

#### A Culture of Life

If it wasn't clear why the overwhelming majority of Americans sympathize with Israel over its Arab neighbors, then events surrounding last week's Israel-Hizbullah prisoner swap should shed some light on the matter.

The supreme value of even a single human life has long guided Israeli policies and actions. On several occasions, the Jewish state has paid a very heavy price in prisoner exchanges in order to bring home a few captive Israelis.

Now, in exchange for the bodies of two abducted IDF soldiers—Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev—Israel freed a notorious murderer, Samir Kuntar, along with four other Lebanese prisoners and the remains of nearly 200 Lebanese and Palestinian terrorists. The two fallen soldiers were brought to proper burial in the presence of their grieving families.

Who is Samir Kuntar? In 1979, he sneaked into Israel from Lebanon, killed a young father, Danny Haran, then turned on his four-year-old daughter, Einat, and crushed her skull.

The contrast between Israeli and Arab reactions to the exchange was stark. While virtually all Israelis quiet...see *Editor's Comments cont'd on pg. 50*

## Show of Force

**IRAN BROADCASTS ITS ABILITY TO  
LAUNCH LONG-RANGE MISSILES**

As Iran's leaders boast of progress on their nuclear program, the regime in Tehran reminded the world this month that the Islamic Republic has a dangerous long-range missile arsenal.

On July 9 and 10, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps launched a series of long- and medium-range missiles capable of striking Israel and American forces across the Middle East. The most advanced weapon tested, the Shihab-3, can reach as far as southern and eastern Europe.

The televised display of force, which featured exaggerated Iranian statements claiming "thousands" of Shihab missiles and the alteration of missile-launch photos,



Photo by the Associated Press/Sepah News

**Iran test-fired long-range Shihab-3 missiles, which can reach Israel and U.S. forces in the Middle East.**

aimed to intimidate the United States and its allies as they continue to press Tehran to halt its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

The provocative launch was instead met with stinging rebukes from across the globe. "Iran's development of ballistic missiles is a violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions and completely inconsistent with Iran's obligations to the world," said White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe.

The French Foreign Ministry echoed the White House statement, warning that Iran's "missile tests can only reinforce the international community's concerns at a time when, in parallel, Iran is developing a nuclear program."

While the test revealed little new information about Iran's burgeoning missile program, it served to validate concerns that Iran is proceeding aggressively with the...see *Show of Force cont'd on pg. 50*

# Diplomatic Offensive

THE UNITED STATES SENDS A HIGH-LEVEL DIPLOMAT TO EUROPE TO PARTICIPATE IN NUCLEAR TALKS WITH IRAN, BUT THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC INSISTS THAT IT WILL NEVER END ITS EFFORTS TO DEVELOP A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY

As Iran presses ahead with its illicit nuclear program, the Bush administration has agreed to pursue a new, two-staged diplomatic proposal, drafted by E.U. foreign policy chief Javier Solana, to persuade Iran to halt its uranium enrichment activity.

In the first phase of the plan, which is slated to last six weeks, Iran could continue to enrich uranium, but could not expand its efforts beyond current levels. During this time, the two sides would work to hash out the contours of future negotiations over Iran's nuclear program. The next phase would require Iran, as a prerequisite, to halt all nuclear work.

## Diplomats Say Iran is Not Serious

To demonstrate its sincerity in reaching a diplomatic solution, the United States sent Undersecretary of State William Burns to a meeting in Geneva to discuss Solana's proposal with Iranian negotiators. Burns was



Photo by the Associated Press  
**Chief Iranian negotiator Saeed Jalili stalled during the nuclear talks.**

the highest-ranking American diplomat to meet with Iranian officials since relations were severed nearly three decades ago when 52 American diplomats were held hostage during the 444-day occupation of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran.

After the meeting, Burns reported to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who later told the media that, instead of a coherent answer to Solana's proposal, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili delivered a "meandering" monologue full of irrelevant "small talk about culture" that appeared to annoy many of the others present at the table in Geneva.

"We expected to hear an answer from the Iranians but, as has been the case so many times with the Iranians, what came through was not serious," Rice said. "It's time for the Iranians to give a serious answer."

"They can't go and stall and make small talk about culture, they have to make a decision," she said. "People are tired of the Iranians and their stalling tactics."



Photo by the Associated Press

**French energy giant Total said that it would not develop a major gas field in Iran at this time.**

## Iranian Defiance Spurs International Backlash

Iran's refusal to meet U.N. Security Council demands that it stop its atomic work has been met with increased international sanctions and isolation.

French energy giant Total said this month that it would not develop a major natural gas project in the country's South Pars gas field at this time—a significant blow to Iranian hopes for Western investment in its energy sector. In announcing the decision, which made Total the latest European major to delay its plans to invest in Iran, CEO Christophe de Margerie cited the growing international isolation of the Iranian regime over its illicit nuclear program.

Samuel Ciszuk, a Middle East energy expert, called Total's decision "a death blow" for Iran's liquid natural gas ambitions, as the country would be unable to attract adequate investment and knowledge for such complex projects. Unlike Total, companies from Russia and China that do invest in Iran lack the required technical capability to advance Iran's liquefied natural gas ambitions.

Iran's banking system has also taken a hit. Following America's lead, the European Union has imposed sanctions on Bank Mellī, Iran's largest bank, for facilitating numerous purchases of sensitive materials for Iran's nuclear and missile programs. The bank has reportedly lost a third of its total assets in the past two years.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Treasury Department earlier this month sanctioned

four Iranian firms and four individuals with ties to Tehran's nuclear and missile programs. The move freezes any of the firms' financial assets found in the United States and prohibits Americans from doing business with them.

Despite record high oil prices, Iran's economy continues to struggle under the pressure of sanctions and the lack of foreign investment. Last fiscal year, Iran's deficit climbed to more than \$10 billion, and inflation in the country has spiked to 25 percent.

## Time is of the Essence

Although Iran is feeling the impact of sanctions and international diplomatic pressure, the Islamic Republic is still rapidly pressing ahead with its efforts to develop a nuclear weapons capability.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad brushed aside U.S. diplomatic overtures, vowing that his country



Photo by the Associated Press  
**IAEA chief ElBaradei said Iran could have a nuclear capability soon.**

would not yield in its drive for a nuclear weapons capability. "You are mistaken if you think you can force this nation to back down with sanctions, threats and pressure," he said.

Ahmadinejad's statement comes on the heels of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Mohamed ElBaradei's warning that with Iran's current nuclear capabilities, the country would need "six months to one year" in order to produce one atomic bomb. "It would need this period to produce a weapon, and to obtain highly enriched uranium in sufficient quantities for a single nuclear weapon," ElBaradei said.

In addition, the IAEA has presented evidence that Iran has conducted studies on how to modify its Shihab-3 missile in order to accommodate a nuclear warhead. Tehran recently tested these long-range missiles, which can strike Israel, U.S. forces in the region and parts of Europe.

In light of Iran's progress, the urgency of stopping Tehran's nuclear program remains more imminent than ever. •NER•

## Reexamination Needed

TWO YEARS AFTER HIZBALLAH'S WAR AGAINST ISRAEL, THE UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON (UNIFIL) NEEDS A STRENGTHENED MANDATE IN ORDER TO OVERSEE THE TERRORIST ARMY'S DISARMAMENT

Under UNIFIL's watch, Hizballah has succeeded in rebuilding its military capabilities, stockpiling some 40,000 rockets and missiles—three times more than what the terrorist army had before its summer 2006 war against Israel.

U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the war, authorizes UNIFIL to “take all necessary action... to ensure that its area of operations is not utilized for hostile activities of any kind,” but UNIFIL has repeatedly failed to assert its authority.

### UNIFIL Retreats When Confronted

UNIFIL's subpar performance has not gone unnoticed by top U.N. officials. In a recent report, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon cited multiple occasions where the U.N. troops avoided exercising their mandate when challenged by Hizballah fighters.

On the night of March 30, the report said, U.N. troops on patrol stopped a truck carrying weapons but let it pass after gunmen threatened the U.N. troops.

And on May 12, while UNIFIL was operating according to its mandate by photographing suspicious in-ground cable lines, Lebanese civilians began throwing stones and blocking UNIFIL's path. Rather than defend its actions, UNIFIL agreed to discard the photographs.

Without mentioning Hizballah by name, the report also admitted that the group operates south of the Litani River in “flagrant and serious violation of Resolution 1701.”

### Israel Concerned Over U.N. Mandate

Hizballah has set up positions inside Shi'ite urban areas in southern Lebanon where UNIFIL cannot operate freely without being accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). Lebanese soldiers often alert Hizballah ahead of UNIFIL inspections, according to a senior IDF officer.

“The LAF is two-thirds Shi'ite and will not challenge Hizballah,” the officer told *The Jerusalem Post*. But despite the disappointment with UNIFIL, the officer said Israel preferred that the force remain in Lebanon. “The IDF has not given up on UNIFIL. The alternative without them is much worse, but we still expect that the force does more.”

During a recent cabinet meeting, Israeli intelligence sources noted that Hizballah has some 2,500 non-uniformed fighters entrenched throughout southern Lebanon and has stockpiled thousands of rockets aimed directly at the Jewish state.

“Israel will not be able to accept the ongoing and growing undercutting of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701, which is

not being implemented, and the continued smuggling of all types of weapons into Lebanon, upsetting the balance along Israel's northern border,” Defense Minister Ehud Barak said. Such a significant arms buildup would not have been possible were UNIFIL forces fulfilling their duties under Resolution 1701.

### UNIFIL Can Play Greater Role

Israeli officials have expressed their concerns to Italian and French officials over Hizballah's rearmament. These two E.U. countries, along with Germany, contribute the largest number of troops to UNIFIL.

“We now have an opportunity to disarm Hizballah, and we must not lose it,” Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni told her Italian counterpart, Franco Frattini. “If we do not do it now, it will be much more difficult later on.”

UNIFIL monitors along the Lebanese-Syrian border could play a significant role in stemming the flow of rockets and other deadly arms to Hizballah. In addition, a concerted and more determined UNIFIL presence in all areas south of the Litani River and expanded operations in Hizballah strongholds to the north are essential if the U.N. force is to deal effectively with Hizballah's continued violations of Resolution 1701. •NER•

## AN UNDERPERFORMING FORCE

FOR U.N. TROOPS TO PLAY AN EFFECTIVE ROLE IN LEBANON, THEY SHOULD...

# UNIFIL

### MONITOR INFRASTRUCTURE

When confronted, UNIFIL has discarded photographic evidence of Hizballah's illicit communications network.

### PATROL THE SYRIAN-LEBANESE BORDER

Rockets and other dangerous weapons are regularly transferred from Syria to Hizballah in Lebanon, but UNIFIL's mandate does not allow its troops to stop the shipments.

### OBSERVE AREAS NORTH OF THE LITANI RIVER

UNIFIL's mandate should be expanded to allow its forces to patrol Hizballah strongholds north of the Litani River, where the terrorist army has missiles that can strike major Israeli population centers with ease.

### CONFRONT ARMED PERSONNEL

Despite being authorized by Resolution 1701 to “take all necessary action...to ensure that its area of operations is not utilized for hostile activities of any kind,” UNIFIL troops on patrol in southern Lebanon reported that they backed down from stopping an arms shipment after being threatened at gunpoint.

ly grieved with the families of the two soldiers, tens of thousands of Lebanese wildly celebrated Kuntar's release, chanting, "Samir! Samir! Samir!"

Equally joyous celebrations were triggered in the Palestinian territories by Israel's release of the remains of Dalal Mughrabi, who in 1978 led the deadliest terrorist attack in Israel's history—a bus hijacking in which 37 civilians were murdered.

"True, elsewhere there are celebrations," eulogized Israeli President Shimon Peres. "But if the heavens asked me to which people I would rather belong, the people in mourning over the deaths of two of its soldiers or the people rejoicing in the return of a craven murderer whose mark of Cain can never be erased, then the answer is clear."

Equally revealing of attitudes among Israel's neighbors was a just-released Brookings Institution Arab public opinion poll, which found that the most admired figures among the Arab public are Hizballah leader Hassan Nasrallah, Syrian President Bashar Assad and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Directly or indirectly, all three have American and Israeli blood on their hands.

Israelis cherish life above all else and honor their fallen soldiers, while their neighbors in the Arab and Muslim world elevate murderers as celebrities and idolize leaders who trample human rights. Is it any wonder, then, that the American people overwhelmingly stand with Israel? •NER•

## Partners in Prevention

**TO COMBAT AIDS IN AFRICA, ISRAELI DOCTORS TEACH SWAZI SURGEONS HOW TO PERFORM A JEWISH TRADITION THAT IS THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD**

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently said that male circumcision, if affordable and widely available, could prevent more than five million HIV infections over the next two decades. Who better to turn to for expertise in the practice than doctors from the Jewish state?

Hoping to stave off the spread of the virus that has plagued Africa for decades, Israeli doctors have been traveling to the continent to train local physicians in the procedure, which has been shown to reduce the risk of contracting AIDS by as much as 60 percent in males.

"Israel is the only country with such experience in mass adult-male circumcision, and it can respond to a very important humanitarian challenge," Inon Schenker, an Israeli AIDS specialist, told *The Chicago Tribune*. He was recalling Israel's experience after the fall of the Soviet Union, when some 80,000 men were circumcised as they made their way to the Jewish state.

The *Tribune* recounted the most recent

journey of Israeli surgeons to Swaziland. The small African nation of just over one million people is burdened by the world's highest HIV infection rate, estimated at nearly 30 percent. The country has set the goal of circumcising all of its 200,000 sexually active men over the next five years, but lacks surgeons with the proper expertise.

With support from Hadassah Medical Organization, Schenker launched Operation Abraham last year, which has sent three delegations of Israeli surgeons to teach circumcision in Swaziland. (Abraham was, of course, the first Jew to take up the practice.) The surgeons have trained 10 local Swazi doctors in adult male circumcision and two others in the procedure on newborn babies.

Dr. Eitan Gross, a pediatric surgeon from Hadassah who served as the project's medical director, told the *Tribune* that working with the Swazi doctors and nurses was a "moving experience.... You had a sense that you were doing something groundbreaking, and they were very grateful." •NER•

### Show of Force....cont'd from pg. 47

development and upgrade of a wide range of rockets and missiles.

"I personally believe, based on what I've seen, that right now Iran has the ability to reach most of Europe. And they just haven't demonstrated it yet," Lt.-Gen. Henry Obering, the Pentagon's missile defense chief, said following the test.

In the last few months, the Iranians

have unveiled plans for a number of long-range missiles, based on Russian and North Korean designs, all with the capability of delivering a nuclear warhead.

Furthermore, concerns continue to mount over Iran's work on an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capable of reaching American shores. U.S. intelligence assesses this development to be a possibility some time within the next decade. •NER•

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