

Ongoing Danger

IRAN HAS RAMPED UP ITS ATOMIC DRIVE IN
DEFIANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Iran has continued to expand its illicit nuclear program after rejecting the U.N. Security Council's Aug. 31 deadline for an end to its efforts to enrich uranium, a key step in assembling atomic arms.

Iran has formally inaugurated a new nuclear facility that can produce plutonium. Like uranium, plutonium can form the core of a nuclear weapon.

In another development, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recently reported that traces of highly enriched uranium were uncovered at a storage facility near Tehran. The disclosure is significant because it suggests that Iran could be running a clandestine atomic weapons program previously unknown to the IAEA.

Because it has rejected the Security Council's deadline, Iran is now subject to a broad range of diplomatic and economic sanctions under a resolution passed in July by the U.N. panel.

The United States is pushing for a swift vote for sanctions. If the Council cannot agree on a sanctions regime, Washington has made clear that it will work with its allies to impose penalties on Iran outside the context of the United Nations.

"There must be consequences for Iran's defiance," President Bush said as the Security Council's deadline passed, "and we must not allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon."

Iran has remained defiant in the face of sanctions. The Iranian parliament's most powerful committee has moved to bar IAEA inspectors from the Islamic Republic's nuclear facilities in the event that U.N. sanctions are imposed.

Meanwhile, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's incendiary statements have continued to intensify concern about Iran's atomic ambitions.

He recently threatened to make the United States and its allies "bow down" to Iran. •NER•

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NEAR EAST

Report

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AIPAC'S BIWEEKLY ON AMERICAN
MIDDLE EAST POLICY

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Lessons of 9/11

The fifth anniversary of the horrors of 9/11 is a fitting occasion for reflecting on the threat of radical Islamic terrorism—and what must be done to keep terrorists and their sponsors from acquiring nuclear weapons.

2006 has already proven a pivotal year for Islamic terrorists. The Lebanon war showed the dangers of allowing Hizballah to become the best-equipped terrorist group in history due to Iranian and Syrian support. Hizballah fired nearly one-third of its 15,000 short-range Katyusha rockets into Israel and fielded long-range Iranian-made Zelzal guided missiles, top-of-the-line Russian-made anti-tank missiles and unmanned aircraft loaded with explosives.

Earlier this year, Hamas' takeover of the Palestinian Authority gave the terrorist group control over an entire country. Hamas—which has a record of murdering hundreds of Israeli civilians and an anti-Semitic charter that calls for Israel's destruction—has disproved the notion that gaining power moderates radical organizations. The group continues to reject the international community's demands that it recognize Israel, honor previous Israeli-Palestinian peace
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Growing Threat

GAZA-BASED TERRORISM HAS INTENSIFIED
UNDER THE CONTROL OF HAMAS

With Israel's northern border still recovering from the war between Israel and Hizballah, officials in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem think that a similarly lethal threat could be emerging on the Jewish state's southern front.

The head of Israel's Shin Bet security service recently said that the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority (PA) has allowed Gaza to become a hotbed of terrorist activity that could soon rival Hizballah's stronghold in southern Lebanon.

Calling Gaza "the Garden of Eden of weapons smuggling," Yuval Diskin told members of the Israeli parliament that Palestinian terrorists had managed to sneak



Photo by the Associated Press

Shin Bet Chief Yuval Diskin said terrorists are smuggling large quantities of arms into Gaza.

into Gaza at least 15,000 guns, four million rounds of ammunition, 38 rockets, 15 tons of explosives and dozens of anti-tank missiles, amassing an arsenal to threaten nearby towns in southern Israel.

"Except for tanks and planes, they are smuggling everything," Diskin said, adding that the Palestinian terrorists' weapons trafficking is often facilitated by "bribed Egyptian police officers" charged with guarding the Gaza-Sinai border.

Southern Israel has already paid a price for the arms build-up. Gaza-based terror groups have launched hundreds of crude Qassam rockets into southern Israel this year, hitting towns such as Sderot. They have fired longer-range Katyushas at Ashkelon, a major Israeli industrial center.

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NER INTERVIEWS

LIOR WEINBERG, RESIDENT OF AN ISRAELI TOWN TARGETED BY HIZBALLAH

Lior Weinberg is a lifelong resident of Metulla, a town of about 2,000 people near Israel's northern border that Hizballah repeatedly struck with rockets during its latest round of attacks on the Jewish state. Near East Report recently



Photo courtesy of Lior Weinberg

Lior Weinberg stayed in Metulla, a town in northern Israel, throughout Hizballah rocket attacks.

interviewed Weinberg to gauge the impact of the terrorist attacks on him, his family and the other citizens of his hometown.

NER: Describe your experience during the recent conflict between Israel and Hizballah.

Lior Weinberg: It's been hell. We evacuated the women and children from our town. I have three children—a 9-year-old and 5-year-old twins—and they and my wife were evacuated to Tel Aviv to stay with my wife's family.

All the men had to stay here in Metulla. There were a few reasons for this. One of them is because we are farmers here, and we have to work in the fields. We farm fruits—peaches, apples, apricots and so on—and now is the season in which we pick the fruit. The fields that we work all year, we can't just leave abruptly and go away.

The second reason is that if we were not here, Hizballah would be here. You hold the border with your body. And you help the army, also.

NER: What level of day-to-day danger did the residents of your town face during the war?

LW: It was like being in the war, living here. A rocket landed five or 10 feet away from me one day when I was in the fields. A lot of people told me that I was crazy for being out working, but I had to make a living.

My house has a bomb shelter, and I slept in it at night for the past month. A few of my neighbors' houses were hit. Fortunately, my house had nothing more than some broken glass.

The worst day was the last day [before the U.N. cease-fire took effect]. Hizballah wanted to make a show of how strong they were. So they fired everything—the rockets, the missiles, the machine guns—at us all day long. It was like rain. You couldn't go out of the shelter all day. It was a difficult time, but we survived it, and we hope that it won't be back again.

NER: Are you optimistic that the future will be peaceful?

LW: Things are uncertain now because so many questions are unanswered in southern Lebanon. My wife and children came back to Metulla two or three days after the cease-fire took effect, and most people have come back. But it's unclear whether the cease-fire will hold, it's unclear whether the Lebanese army will deploy to the south and it's unclear how the U.N. force [charged with helping the Lebanese army disarm Hizballah] will fit in to the situation in Lebanon.

NER: What price do you think Israelis are willing to pay for peace along the northern border?

LW: There is no one in the world except for all of the terrorists and the fundamentalists—the crazy people—who doesn't want to live in peace. Most people want peace. But you can't have peace at any cost. Israelis cannot agree to everything that Hizballah wants.

If Israel withdraws from the Shebaa

farms—which is the reason Hizballah says it is attacking us now—they are just going to come up with other excuses to attack us. Hizballah doesn't want the Jewish people here, in any part of the land of Israel.

So we have to make sure that the Lebanese government controls its country

"IT'S BEEN HELL," SAID ISRAELI LIOR WEINBERG, WHO STAYED IN HIS HOMETOWN OF METULLA AS HIZBALLAH POUNDED IT AND OTHER ISRAELI TOWNS WITH ROCKETS. "IT WAS LIKE BEING IN THE WAR, LIVING HERE."

and stops Hizballah from attacking us. If they do that—if the Lebanese army takes control of southern Lebanon, where Hizballah is now—maybe peace will happen.

NER: What precautions do you and other residents of Metulla have to take against Hizballah even in peacetime?

LW: It is very frightening sometimes. We have to have a bomb shelter in our home. My house is only a few meters from the border with Lebanon, so we even have to be careful about allowing our children outside to play in the yard.

NER: How have you and other Israelis been able to endure such a constant threat of attack?

LW: We have nowhere else to go. This is where I was born. My parents came to Israel from Europe 55 or 60 years ago after World War II. Most of my family was killed by the Nazis. This is where the Jews should be; this is our land. If we leave here, where are we going to go? This is our last place.

We have to protect our land, our houses and our families, even in places like Metulla that get attacked all the time. In fact, it's especially important to stay in and defend the places that get attacked all the time. •NER•

Securing the Peace

THE U.N. CEASE-FIRE THAT ENDED THE LEBANON WAR WAS DESIGNED TO GUARD AGAINST HIZBALLAH ATTACKS ON ISRAEL, BUT LEBANON MUST FULLY COMPLY WITH THE MEASURE FOR THE TERRORIST ARMY'S THREAT TO BE MINIMIZED

While U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701 calls for the disarmament of Hizballah and prohibits the terrorist network's state sponsors from re-supplying its arsenal, the international community faces formidable obstacles to implementing those demands on the ground in Lebanon.

As a result, doubt surrounds one of the Resolution 1701's main goals—the reduction of Hizballah's threat to Israel—nearly a month after the group fired the last of more than 4,000 rockets at Israeli towns.

The resolution's effectiveness depends greatly on the leadership of the United States, which can use its diplomatic power to ensure the full implementation of the measure.

Security Council Resolution 1701 Aims to Reduce Hizballah's Threat to Israel

After more than two decades in which Hizballah has used southern Lebanon as a base for its attacks on Israel, Resolution 1701 aims to eradicate the terrorist group's "state within a state" for the sake of Israel's security and Lebanon's political stability.

Resolution 1701 reiterates an earlier Security Council resolution that called for all Lebanese militias including Hizballah to be fully disarmed.

It also states that the Lebanese government is the only authority within the country

that can receive weapons from outside, establishing an embargo against the thousands of rockets and other weapons that Hizballah receives annually from Iran and Syria.

The resolution expands UNIFIL—a U.N. force already in Lebanon—from 2,000 to as many as 15,000 troops and orders it to work with the Lebanese army to police areas of the country in which Hizballah conducts terrorist activities.

In particular, it requires UNIFIL and the Lebanese army to deploy in southern Lebanon to prevent Hizballah from reoccupying its former positions in the area, and it authorizes the Lebanese government to ask UNIFIL to deploy along the Syrian border to help block Hizballah arms smuggling.

The resolution also demands the unconditional release of two Israeli soldiers kidnapped in a July 12 Hizballah raid on Israeli territory, the incident that sparked the recent conflict between Israel and the terror group.

Lebanon Has Yet to Fully Carry its Obligations Under Resolution 1701

Indications are growing that the Lebanese government is shying away from implementing key provisions of Resolution 1701.

Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora has reportedly agreed to allow Hizballah to keep its weapons so long as they remain out of sight—a clear violation

of the resolution's intent.

Only a third of the 15,000 Lebanese Army forces committed by the government have been deployed in southern Lebanon, and the government also has declined to invite international forces to assist its troops in monitoring the Lebanese-Syrian border, the area used to smuggle weapons from Iran and Syria to Hizballah.

Meanwhile, Hizballah is continuing to defy the Security Council's call for the unconditional release of the kidnapped Israeli soldiers. Mohammed Fneish, a Hizballah cabinet minister, recently said: "There will be no unconditional release. This is not possible."

The United States Can Help Ensure Resolution 1701's Enforcement

The United States can back up Resolution 1701 by exerting its influence on behalf of enforcing the resolution's provisions.

In addition to pressing Lebanon to ask for international assistance in policing its borders, the United States has the power to bring the full force of sanctions to bear against Syria—including those called for in the Syrian Accountability Act—so long as Damascus continues to funnel weapons to Hizballah in violation of Resolution 1701.

Hizballah's disarmament is unlikely to occur absent such leadership from the most powerful country in the world. •NER•

CLEAR REQUIREMENTS

U.N. DEMANDS REQUIRING ENFORCEMENT IN LEBANON



ARMS EMBARGO

Iran and Syria must end arms shipments to Hizballah, and Lebanon's military must oversee the blockade at all points of entry.



DISARMAMENT

Assisted by the U.N., the government of Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora must disarm Hizballah.



HIZBALLAH-FREE ZONE

Armed members of Hizballah cannot operate in southern Lebanon—the location of bases the group used to attack Israel.



HOSTAGE RELEASE

Hizballah has to unconditionally free the two Israeli soldiers it kidnapped in an unprovoked July 12 attack on Israeli territory.



INTERNATIONAL FORCE

An expanded U.N. force in Lebanon must help the Lebanese army disarm Hizballah and enforce all other elements of the cease-fire.

agreements and halt terrorism. It has facilitated, rather than prevented, ongoing terrorism against Israelis.

Meanwhile, the main backer of both Hizballah and Hamas—Iran—is openly defying the world by pursuing the capability to develop nuclear weapons. Not only has Iran ignored a U.N. Security Council resolution demanding that it halt the enrichment of uranium—a key step in assembling atomic arms—it announced the opening of a new nuclear facility and actually increased its enrichment activities.

These troubling developments demand firm resolve and bold action from our leadership. The United States must lead the international community in insisting on the implementation of U.N. resolutions demanding the disarmament of Hizballah and the cut-off of weapons to the group.

While arms smuggling and terrorism continue in the Palestinian territories, the United States must ensure that while humanitarian aid is permitted to reach the Palestinian people, no U.S. funds will be provided to a Palestinian government led by a terrorist group.

And the United States must press the Security Council to immediately implement serious sanctions on Iran to ensure that the world's top state sponsor of terrorism is not allowed to develop the world's most devastating weapons.

The legacy of 9/11 is the loss we still feel today; its lesson is that the terrorist threat is real and must be confronted. •NER•

Engaging the Campus

PRO-ISRAEL STUDENTS HAVE PREPARED FOR A CHALLENGING YEAR AHEAD AT AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

More than 350 individually selected pro-Israel student activists gathered in Washington this summer for AIPAC's ninth Schusterman Advocacy Institute Saban National Political Leadership Training Seminar. The event took place amidst a rapidly changing situation in the Middle East certain to impact this fall's campus environment.

Days before the Saban Seminar began, the program was totally reconfigured in anticipation of challenges that students will face on campus. Saban participants were presented with three new AIPAC campus initiatives: Responding to the Current Middle East Crisis, Campaign '06 Involvement and Expanding Israel Studies Opportunities. Pro-Israel students will proactively begin the academic year equipped with an action plan that has the potential to improve the campus environment and influence future policymakers.

AIPAC professionals facilitated skill workshops in which campus activists explored effective ways to operate on campus and within the American political process.

In responding to the current Middle East crisis, students will reinforce community efforts to secure Israel's right to defend itself by harnessing the political support of campus leaders who understand the value of the U.S.-Israel alliance. Confronted with an anti-Israel student government association resolution, pro-Israel students at UCLA have produced a statement supporting Israel's position signed jointly by the campus leaders of College Democrats and Republicans.

In Campaign '06, pro-Israel students are encouraged to make an impact beyond the campus through participation in the electoral campaigns of their choice. Students will maximize their involvement in the electoral process by recruiting campaign volunteers, leading voter registration efforts and getting out the vote on Election Day.

Following up on pro-Israel students' success last year in eliminating Israel study-abroad barriers, activists will now look to increase Israel studies opportunities where none were previously offered. •NER•

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In June, terrorists tunneled into Israel from Gaza, kidnapping Israeli Cpl. Gilad Shalit. Shalit is still being held in Gaza.


Israel, which completely withdrew from Gaza last summer, has responded to the wave of terrorism from the strip with limited military operations designed to win Shalit's release and degrade terrorists' ability to fire rockets from Gaza at Israeli towns.

Often, the soldiers uncover further evidence of planned terrorist attacks. For instance, Israeli military units recently found a massive tunnel dug from a private home toward the Karni checkpoint, apparently for an attack on the main cargo crossing between Israel and Gaza. Diskin says Israel knows of 20 tunnels under construction, "some for smuggling and some for the purpose of terror attacks." •NER•

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