

Heard on the Hill

Senate passes appropriations for U.S.-Israel defense programs. The Senate approved funding for joint U.S.-Israel military cooperation by passing the annual Defense Appropriations bill 97-0. Funding for key aspects of the U.S.-Israel cooperative military relationship remained strong under the leadership of Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman TED STEVENS (R-AK) and Ranking Member DANIEL INOUE (D-HI). The bill provides \$143.6 million for the Arrow Missile defense program—among the world’s most advanced ballistic missile shields—with \$70 million earmarked for co-production, as well as funding for a host of other programs vital to strategic cooperation between the United States and Israel.



House members back Red Cross membership for Magen David Adom. Led by Reps. GARY ACKERMAN (D-NY) and HENRY WAXMAN (D-CA), 34 congressmen sent a letter to Switzerland urging its help in securing a neutral symbol for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement that can be used by Magen David Adom (MDA), Israel’s emergency medical service. MDA currently does not enjoy the benefits of full membership in the movement due to its use of the Red Star of David.



Bolton and House members talk U.N. reform. John Bolton, the United States’ ambassador to the United Nations, recently testified before the House International Relations Committee on U.N. reform efforts. Ranking Member TOM LANTOS (D-CA) declared that “U.N. diplomacy must change permanently,” castigating the U.N. for its treatment of Israel and the United States but expressing confidence in Kofi Annan’s desire for improvement. Rep. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN (R-FL), chairwoman of the panel’s Middle East Subcommittee, blasted the U.N. Development Program’s funding of Palestinian propaganda. •NER•

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NEAR EAST

Report

OCTOBER 17, 2005

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

EDITOR’S COMMENTS

Rhetoric Versus Reality

There is no issue on which all members of the Arab League are as unanimous as support for the Palestinian cause. Their support has mainly been expressed through countless official pro-Palestinian and anti-Israeli statements by the League itself and by its individual member states and through anti-Israel diplomatic initiatives at the United Nations and elsewhere.

Yet now that the Arab states are in a position to make a real contribution to the emergence of a viable Palestinian state through financial support for the Palestinian Authority (PA), they are nowhere to be seen. Despite their unimaginable windfall from stratospheric oil prices, Arab countries’ financial aid to the PA has been derisively low.

A typical official Arab statement in support of the Palestinians is provided on the Saudi Foreign Ministry website, which describes support for the Palestinians as “an Arab and Islamic duty.”

Thanks to rapidly rising oil prices, Saudi Arabia last year took in \$20 billion more than in 2003. Yet all it gave the PA was \$92 million—less than one ...see *Editor’s Comments cont’d on pg. 78*

Twin Threats

**IRAN AND SYRIA DRAW U.S. FIRE FOR THEIR
CONTINUING SUPPORT OF TERRORISM**

In a major public address outlining the objectives of the global war on terrorism, President Bush this month denounced Iran and Syria for “helping and enabling” terror groups across the Middle East.

Bush accused Damascus and Tehran of sheltering terrorist organizations, adding that the two nations “share the goal of hurting America and moderate Muslim governments.”

Drawing “no distinction between those who commit acts of terror and those who support and harbor them,” Bush warned the two countries to end their support for terrorist acts in Iraq, Israel and elsewhere.



Photo by Reuters

President Bush recently blasted Iran and Syria for supporting terrorists who are targeting American servicemen in Iraq.

Iran and Syria sponsor Hizballah, a Lebanon-based terrorist group that is responsible for killing hundreds of Americans, Europeans and Israelis since the 1980s. Tehran has long supported Hizballah with money, training and weapons that have been used to destabilize the Israel-Lebanon border as well as American and international efforts to rebuild Iraq.

Iran and Syria’s support for Iraqi terrorism has been the basis of recent international complaints against the two nations.

The United States is considering increasing economic pressure on Syria in response to evidence that Damascus is harboring terrorists targeting American troops in Iraq. Describing routes that terrorists take through ...see *Twin Threats cont’d on pg. 78*

The Commission and Its Critics

EFFORTS ARE AFOOT AT THE UNITED NATIONS TO REFORM THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, WHICH HAS BEEN CRITICIZED FOR SINGLING OUT ISRAEL FOR HARSH CRITICISM WHILE GIVING COVER TO TYRANTS

Last December, a so-named High-level Panel of international statesmen issued a report that criticized the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in the most scathing terms ever directed at a U.N. organ by an impartial body.

The 16-member panel, appointed by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and headed by Thailand's former prime minister, criticized the commission for its "eroding credibility" and "legitimacy deficit," which

THE U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION HAS HAD ITS "LEGITIMACY" QUESTIONED

casts "doubt on the overall reputation of the United Nations."

Consequently, Annan has proposed to replace the commission with a more credible Human Rights Council. This long-overdue proposal ought to be adopted and implemented without delay.

The Human Rights Commission is Dominated by Human Rights Violators

It was the Commission's membership that was found to be especially egregious.

The High-level Panel disclosed that, in recent years, states sought to be chosen members "not to strengthen human rights but to protect themselves against criticism or to criticize others." In this way, "double standards in human rights concerns" were maintained with the result that the commission "cannot be credible."

Among the commission's 53 members are Sudan, the practitioner of genocide in Darfur, feudal Saudi Arabia with its infamous suppression of women's rights and politically repressive Cuba. Indeed, only 16 commission members can be designated "free" countries, while the rest are either "partly free" or "not free," according to the human rights group Freedom House.

This sort of membership enabled Libya to be elected the commission's chairman in 2003 by a vote of 33 to 3.

Israel is Routinely Harassed by the Human Rights Commission

The commission's "double standards" and

"credibility deficit" are especially evident in its treatment of Israel.

Twenty-five percent of its resolutions on human rights violations over the last 40 years have targeted Israel—approximately five per year. When the commission met in Geneva last spring, it adopted a resolution condemning the use of force by Israel against Palestinians without mentioning suicide bombings or other Palestinian violence against Israelis.

So hostile was the verbiage in Geneva that the American representative, former Sen. Rudy Boschwitz, asked commission members "to lower the decibel level" of their assault. He noted that discussions had regrettably not focused on Israel's plans to withdraw from Gaza and its positive talks with the new leadership of the Palestinian Authority.

The Israeli observer at the commission, Itzhak Levanon, commented that notwithstanding these significant developments on the ground, nothing had changed within the panel. Its "credibility on issues related to Israel and the Middle East [is] at an all-time low," he said.

Sweeping Reform of the Human Rights Panel Has Been Proposed

While the commission was denouncing Israel and even preparing further condemnations of the Jewish state for its 2006 agenda, Annan announced plans to eliminate it altogether, replacing it with a smaller Human Rights Council whose members "should undertake and abide by the highest human rights standards."

Drawing upon the High-level Panel's report, Annan emphasized that the commission's purpose had been "increasingly undermined by its declining credibility," which throws "a shadow on the reputation of the United Nations as a whole."

The new council's members, he proposed, would be elected by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly. This would enable democratic members of the Assembly to veto aspirants to the commission whose human rights credentials are questionable.

The council's status would be elevated to that of a standing body meeting in continuing session instead of the current six-

week period.

Annan saw the council as a body to evaluate, on a rotating basis, the human rights practices of all U.N. members and to address emerging human rights crises.

Reform of the Human Rights Commission Enjoys Broad Support

The proposal has received the support of most U.N. members. Those opposed are



Photo by Reuters

A panel selected by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, shown here, has recommended eliminating the Commission on Human Rights.

mostly countries with poor human rights records fearing that a real U.N. human rights body would call them to account. Their opposition has thus far thwarted the creation of the council. The issue has been deferred for further discussion among Assembly members.

Should the procedure of a required two-thirds majority vote for council membership ultimately be deleted, it would eviscerate Annan's proposal.

The United States, which has been in the forefront of the battle for U.N. reform and the replacement of the commission, is not pessimistic about the final outcome. Annan himself believes the council will be created by March of next year.

How the negotiations end will be a test of determined diplomacy by the United States and the other members of the U.N.'s "democratic caucus."—William Korey

Korey is the former director of International Policy Research for B'nai B'rith and the author of NGOs and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (St. Martin's Press, 1998).

Holding Iran Accountable

IRAN'S QUEST FOR NUCLEAR ARMS HAS DRAWN UNPRECEDENTED CONDEMNATION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY, INDICATING A GROWING AWARENESS OF THE THREAT POSED BY TEHRAN'S ATOMIC PROGRAMS

The international community took an unprecedented stand against Iran's illicit atomic programs last month as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) adopted a resolution declaring Tehran in non-compliance with its nuclear non-proliferation obligations.

The vote by a decisive majority of the IAEA's Board of Governors opens the way for referral of the issue to the U.N. Security Council, which could impose sanctions on Iran to slow its pursuit of nuclear arms.

Iran has made no move to shut down its numerous atomic facilities in the weeks since the IAEA decision, instead threatening U.S. allies and vowing to continue its nuclear work.

The IAEA has Denounced Iran for its Illicit Atomic Work

The IAEA resolution against Iran's nuclear program was an historic rebuke of Tehran, marking the first time that a broad majority of the agency's board members voted to recognize Iran's violations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The measure stipulates that unless the IAEA's concerns are satisfactorily addressed, the board may send the issue at a future date to the Security Council for possible sanctions against Iran.

While the United States and its European allies had wanted Iran's nuclear file to be sent immediately to the council, the

IAEA resolution's overwhelming passage nevertheless offered a strong warning to Iran.

Only one nation, Venezuela, voted against the resolution, and Iran could not even convince Russia or China, both of which have strong economic ties to Tehran, to oppose it. Instead, they abstained.

Significantly, support for the resolution was spearheaded by Britain, France and Germany, the three nations known as the EU-3 that had led efforts to convince Iran to give up its nuclear programs through diplomacy. Those attempts ended in August, when Tehran rejected a package of economic incentives and security guarantees from the EU-3 and resumed sensitive nuclear work.

Iran is Continuing its Nuclear Programs in Defiance of the World

While the possibility that Iran is undertaking secret atomic work makes the full extent of its nuclear programs uncertain, the Islamic Republic is openly conducting a range of sensitive nuclear operations in defiance of the international community.

Iran made headlines in August by breaking off talks with the Europeans and restarting efforts at a plant near the city of Isfahan to convert uranium ore into the gas needed for enrichment, a key step in assembling atomic arms.

According to the IAEA, Iran has since produced seven tons of the gas, a quantity that a former U.N. inspector said would be

enough for one nuclear weapon.

Iran is also improving its ability to develop nuclear weapons with plutonium. Reactors under construction at Arak and Bushehr would produce enough of the material to make several nuclear bombs per year.

Meanwhile, American officials have expressed concern about reports that Iran's military is playing a greater role in supervising the country's atomic work.

"It stands to reason that the one logical conclusion of a military involvement in a nuclear program is they are trying to build a nuclear weapon," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said.

Anti-U.S. Rhetoric Accompanies Iran's Nuclear Ambitions

Iran has supplemented its pursuit of nuclear weapons with threats against the United States, its allies and interests.

For instance, Iran's president has offered to share nuclear material and know-how with other Islamic states.

Meanwhile, President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair both recently blamed Iran for facilitating terrorism in Iraq.

Iran's belligerence has helped to boost support against its nuclear programs, as was demonstrated by the IAEA resolution.

Whether this coalition will prove strong enough to bring Iran to the Security Council is a question likely to be confronted at the IAEA's next meeting in November. •NER•

TROUBLE AHEAD?

STEPS IRAN HAS THREATENED TO TAKE AGAINST U.S. INTERESTS

BLOCKING ATOMIC INSPECTORS



Iran said it may stop international officials from visiting suspected nuclear sites.

ENRICHING URANIUM



Iran has threatened to resume enrichment of uranium, a key step in assembling atomic arms.

PROLIFERATING NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY



Iran's president has offered atomic know-how and materials to other Islamic countries.

CUTTING OIL EXPORTS



Iran suggested it may reduce oil shipments to countries that don't acquiesce in its nuclear ambitions.

ATTACKING U.S. ALLIES



Iran has said it will teach Israel "a lesson it will never forget" and is accused of harboring terrorists attacking troops in Iraq.

half of one percent of its windfall. Incredibly, this meager contribution was far larger than those of all other Arab states combined, which amounted to a mere \$15 million. The total of \$107 million fell far short of the Arab states' \$999 million in pledges for 2004.

So far this year, the Arab contributions are still extremely low, particularly when compared with the oil countries' surging revenues. The United Arab Emirates has pledged \$100 million for housing projects in Gaza, of which \$55 million has been delivered. All other Arab countries combined paid \$144 million. By comparison, the Gulf countries are expected to earn nearly \$300 billion this year.

The Arab states' tightfistedness toward the Palestinians has not gone unnoticed. PA Finance Minister Salam Fayyad complained about the Arab states' "abstention....to implement their [financial] obligations." It is even more noticeable that the United States, which is constantly vilified by the Palestinians and their Arab brethren, has provided the Palestinians with more funding than all of the Arab states combined.

It behooves the United States—and other Western donors—to press the Arab governments to translate their stated support for the Palestinians into real financial aid that would help relieve their economic misery and put them on the road to viable statehood. •NER•

New Ambassador

KNOWN FOR STANDING AGAINST HIZBALLAH IN LEBANON, RICHARD JONES IS NOW REPRESENTING THE UNITED STATES IN ISRAEL

The United States' new ambassador to Israel, Richard Jones, is a seasoned Middle East hand who's not reticent about expressing American support for Israel or standing up to the terrorist groups targeting its citizens.

While his primary diplomatic focus prior to arriving in Israel in September had been with Arab states, Jones recently lauded Israel as "a staunch ally and reliable friend in the global war on terror," and said that America's "commitment to Israel's security is unwavering."

Jones previously served as U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon, where he gained a first-hand perspective of Hizballah, the Lebanese terror group that has been responsible for the deaths of more Americans than any terrorist organization except al-Qaeda. His tough public stand against the group earned him the respect of world leaders but also personal threats from Hizballah.

At his confirmation hearing before

the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Jones said that while in Lebanon, "the person calling for my head was Hassan Nasrallah, the head of Hizballah, so I am not shy on taking on terror organizations."

Today, Jones said he recognizes the need for the Palestinians to combat terrorism and has already shown his willingness to support Israel's battle to protect itself.

Shortly after Jones assumed his duties in Tel Aviv, the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas fired a torrent of rockets into Israel from Gaza. The ambassador immediately endorsed Israel's subsequent action against Hamas, remarking "we all know that the terrorists are trying to provoke Israel at a very sensitive time, and we understand exactly what the government's position is and the response it has taken."

Jones expects to be called on repeatedly in the coming months as the United States and Israel work together to urge the Palestinians to end such attacks. •NER•

... *Twin Threats cont'd from pg. 75*

Syrian territory to Iraq, a senior administration official said "the Syrians have to get serious about shutting down these pipelines."

British Prime Minister Tony Blair has accused Iran of providing the technical know-how to help Iraqi insurgents make more advanced bombs for attacks on British troops. Evidence suggests that Iraqi terrorists are training in Iran before crossing over the

border into Iraq.

In his speech, Bush warned that the stakes for stopping state support of terrorism are high. If allowed to achieve greater economic and military power, Bush said, state-backed terrorists would try "to develop weapons of mass destruction, to destroy Israel, to intimidate Europe, to assault the American people and to blackmail our government into isolation." •NER•

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