

## Growing Threat

HAMAS IS STOCKPILING ARMS AND TURNING UP ITS ANTI-ISRAEL RHETORIC

Hamas' leadership says the terrorist group is preparing for war as it continues to smuggle weapons into Gaza and fire rockets into Israel.

"We have completed our preparations to teach the Zionist enemy a lesson that he, with Allah's help, will never forget," said Hamas spokesman Abu Ubaida. "This attack will become a nightmare that will haunt the Zionists everywhere.... Our fighters are already lying in wait to ambush the enemy."

Ubaida's threat comes in the wake of increasing violence between members of Hamas and the rival Fatah faction, who are locked in an increasingly bitter and bloody struggle for power in the Palestinian Authority (PA).

The Hamas-led PA continues to reject international requirements to recognize Israel, end violence and accept previous agreements.

The government "won't meet the international Quartet's demands...and will continue resistance," said PA Foreign Minister Mahmoud Zahar.

Israeli intelligence officials say the internecine Palestinian violence has spurred rising lawlessness and anarchy in Gaza, which in turn has facilitated the weapons smuggling and rocket attacks.

In the past four months, Palestinians have fired more than 400 rockets into Israel, while the Israeli army has discovered 15 tunnels used to smuggle weapons from Egypt into Gaza.

Israeli security officials have noticed an increase in the sophistication of the weapons Hamas and other terrorist groups have managed to sneak into Gaza. The head of the Israel Defense Forces' intelligence branch told the Israeli Cabinet that Hamas' arsenal now includes advanced anti-tank weapons and even surface-to-air missiles. •NER•

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Israeli Journalist Ehud Ya'ari

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Iran and North Korea's Defiance

# NEAR EAST

## Report

OCTOBER 23, 2006

AIPAC'S BIWEEKLY ON AMERICAN  
MIDDLE EAST POLICY

### EDITOR'S COMMENTS

#### Damascus Danger

A senior intelligence officer recently warned the Israeli Cabinet that Syria is directly involved in smuggling large quantities of arms and explosives to Hizballah in Lebanon. This blatant violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701 is a reminder that the Syrian regime is playing the most dangerous role of any Middle Eastern government except nuclear-minded Iran.

For years, Iranian arms have made their way to Hizballah via Damascus' airport. During the recent war, Israel discovered Syria had also provided Hizballah with arms from its own arsenal, including longer-range rockets that hit Haifa and advanced Russian anti-tank missiles that destroyed Israeli tanks and killed their crews. President Bashar Assad expressed unbridled admiration for Hizballah and derided Arab leaders as "half men" for not backing the terrorist army during its war with Israel.

After the fighting ended, Assad promised U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan that Syria would abide by the Security Council-mandated international arms embargo on Hizballah. Syria's breach of that pledge, coupled with its statement that it would view ...see *Editor's Comments cont'd on pg. 72*

## Working Together

LAWMAKERS STRONGLY BACKED U.S.-ISRAEL HOMELAND-SECURITY COOPERATION

The House has unanimously passed a bill opening new opportunities for the United States and Israel to strengthen their joint homeland security efforts.

The Promoting Antiterrorism Capabilities Through International Cooperation Act creates an office in the Homeland Security Department to develop and share counterterrorism technology and strategies with U.S. allies, including Israel.

The bill was led by House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Peter King (R-NY) and Ranking Member Bennie Thompson (D-MS) and Emergency Preparedness and Science and Technology



Photo by the Associated Press

Israeli Internal Security Minister Avi Dichter has lent counterterrorism advice to U.S. officials.

Subcommittee Chairman Dave Reichert (R-WA) and Ranking Member Bill Pascrell Jr. (D-NJ).

The act authorizes private American and Israeli companies to receive federal funding to jointly research and commercialize security products, offers grants to scientists from U.S. and Israeli universities known for high-tech ingenuity and provides funding for quasi-governmental collaboration between federally funded laboratories and their Israeli counterparts to develop technologies such as improved explosive detection systems.

The sponsors applauded the bill—which still awaits action by the Senate—as a vital step in improving America's ability to combat terrorism. "The time has come," King said, "for us to break down artificial barriers, ...see *Working Together cont'd on pg. 72*

# NER INTERVIEWS

EHUD YA'ARI, ISRAELI JOURNALIST AND EXPERT ON PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS

Near East Report recently discussed developments in the West Bank and Gaza with Ehud Ya'ari, a longtime Israeli journalist renowned for his insight into Palestinian politics and society. Excerpts of the conversation follow. A full transcript of the interview will appear on AIPAC's website at [www.aipac.org](http://www.aipac.org).



Ehud Ya'ari is one of Israel's most distinguished journalists.

**Near East Report: How would you characterize the situation on the ground in Gaza?**

**Ehud Ya'ari:** My net assessment of the picture is not too bright. The bottom line is that it is very difficult, bordering on impossible, to predict that Fatah [the political faction of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas] can recover from its January election defeat at the hands of Hamas. I personally do not see a scenario in which Fatah retakes control of the Gaza Strip. The situation is different in the West Bank, where Fatah has some degree of superiority over Hamas, and it would be in Israel's interest to make sure that this difference between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is maintained.

**NER: Why is there a difference between Hamas' power in Gaza and the West Bank?**

**EY:** There is a difference because Israel mounted Operation Defensive Shield in 2002 in the West Bank, and Hamas has

been unable ever since to regroup, re-arm and, more importantly, create militia units. They remain distributed in cells. They have political power in the West Bank, too, but it doesn't translate into guns or actual forces that they can deploy in case of skirmishes with Fatah. So Fatah has the upper hand in the West Bank, and it's due to the repercussions and the outcome of Operation Defensive Shield.

We did not have a similar operation in the Gaza Strip for a variety of reasons, and therefore in Gaza, Hamas was capable of bringing in huge quantities of weapons and standard explosives.

**NER: From where do the terrorist groups in Gaza get their weapons?**

**EY:** The weapons coming into Gaza are smuggled freely by a system of tunnels through the Sinai Peninsula. The Egyptian forces there do close to nothing in order to curb the flow. We are talking about quantities in excess of 20 tons of standard explosives. The difference in impact between homemade explosives and standard explosives is huge, by the way.

So, Hizballah, Iran, and Hamas members abroad are able to smuggle weapons and explosives into Gaza from a variety of sources, from Iran and Hizballah and remnants of Muslim groups that fought the civil war in the former Republic of Yugoslavia.

**NER: Do you think that the Palestinians will eventually use the arms that they are amassing in Gaza against Israel?**

**EY:** Yes. As they say in theater, the guns that you see in the first act will shoot in the last act.

**NER: Could you elaborate on the ties between Hizballah and Palestinian terrorist groups?**

**EY:** Hizballah is a major supplier of arms into the Gaza Strip, firstly to the Islamic Jihad but also in a major way to Hamas. It is also in many ways the number one financier of terrorist factions and activities both in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

There are serious constraints to the cooperation between Hamas and Iran because of the overall state of competition between the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood and the Shiite Muslim organizations, including Hizballah. However, this rivalry does not prevent Hizballah and the Palestinian groups from maintaining a very significant

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degree of cooperation and a system of support. I'm sure that Hamas is doing their best not to become a proxy of Iran like Hizballah or Islamic Jihad. At the same time, though, they find that Iran is the most trustworthy supporter and supplier that they can have, whether directly or through Hizballah.

It should be noted that the Hamas interior minister, Said Siam, recently concluded a deal for Iran to train the Palestinian police and Hamas units. A similar deal was concluded by the same Mr. Siam and the Syrian government in Damascus two days later.

**NER: Do you think that Israel will have to fight terrorists in Gaza as it did in the West Bank during Operation Defensive Shield?**

**EY:** I am personally convinced that Israel, whether we like it or not, will have no choice but to opt at some point for a military operation in Gaza. The amount and quality of arms in Gaza will shortly become a major threat to Israel once the Palestinian terrorist groups stop firing the crude, homemade Qassam rockets that they are currently firing and begin launching anti-tank weapons, for example, against Israeli civilian traffic on the highways and roads outside the Gaza Strip.

This is definitely something that can happen, and it can happen within a very short period of time. •NER•

# Important Precedent

## THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S ENFORCEMENT OF SANCTIONS AGAINST NORTH KOREA IN THE WAKE OF ITS ATOMIC TEST COULD SIGNAL ITS RESOLVE IN CONFRONTING IRAN'S ONGOING PURSUIT OF NUCLEAR ARMS

The international community's enforcement of U.N. Security Council sanctions on North Korea for its recent nuclear test could have far-reaching implications for similar efforts to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Many analysts believe that a lack of global resolve in strongly enforcing the North Korean sanctions will lead Tehran—which has pursued similar tactics in its standoff with the international community while maintaining military ties with Pyongyang—to conclude that it too can continue to flout U.N. demands with impunity.

China's announcement that it will not inspect vessels going in and out of North Korea as called for in the resolution and Chinese and Russian hesitancy to support coercive measures against Iran highlight challenges to keeping a unified front against these twin threats.

### Iran Has Followed North Korea's Defiant Tactics

In 1993, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed what Western intelligence long suspected: North Korea had secretly built a nuclear program during the course of many years in violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Ten years later, the IAEA reached the same conclusion about Iran.

To avoid an otherwise mandatory referral to the Security Council, Pyongyang concluded the "Agreed Framework" with Washington in 1994, committing to freeze its sensitive nuclear activities in exchange for a host of incentives. Likewise, Tehran reached the "Paris Agreement" with Britain, France and Germany (the EU-3) in 2004, similarly pledging to suspend its nuclear work during negotiations over a longer-term agreement.

Despite its commitment, North Korea built up a covert uranium enrichment program and restarted plutonium reprocessing activities. Pyongyang then withdrew from the NPT in 2003, a move Iranian leaders have repeatedly threatened.

Although North Korea was reported to the U.N. Security Council in 2003, no action was taken and Pyongyang was ultimately offered further incentives during multilateral talks, which included the United States.

Like North Korea, Iran violated its

own agreement.

Tehran officially broke the terms of the Paris Agreement when it rejected a far-reaching European offer and restarted uranium conversion activities in August 2005. Iran then began enriching uranium in January 2006, despite IAEA demands that Tehran suspend these activities.

Iran was initially reported to the Security Council for its recalcitrance, but, like North Korea, avoided sanctions and was instead also rewarded with a new incentives package, this one from the EU-3 and United States, which included potential energy, economic and security cooperation. However, it rejected even this deal.

### North Korea and Iran are Suspected of Nuclear Cooperation

As worrisome as the similar tactics employed by these regimes is their apparent cooperation in missile and suspected nuclear development.

North Korea has a long history of weapons proliferation, including the sale of its Nodong ballistic missile, which Iran adapted into the Shihab-3, a missile capable of striking U.S. troops and Israel.

In addition, reports have suggested that North Korea also provided Iran with nuclear know-how, helped Iran construct underground bunkers to protect nuclear facilities and may have considered sending nuclear material to Iran, as U.S. intelligence believes Pyongyang did for Libya.

### North Korea and Iran Are Testing the U.N. Security Council

Analysts say the North Korean and Iranian standoffs represent major tests for the Security Council. If the world body effectively implements the North Korean sanctions and any resolution against Iran, it will demonstrate that there are real consequences for violating the NPT, breaking international agreements and proliferating weapons.

Failure to act, however, risks emboldening a North Korean leader who has threatened to destroy Seoul with a "sea of fire" and an Iranian leader who has called for Israel to be "wiped off the map."

Avoiding such outcomes will be at the forefront of U.S. diplomacy. •NER•

## STEPPING STONES

AID NORTH KOREA HAS GIVEN IRAN'S EFFORTS TO OBTAIN ATOMIC ARMS

### MISSILES

North Korea sold Iran the missile Tehran developed into the Shihab-3, which can hit U.S. troops, Israel and parts of Europe with nuclear warheads.



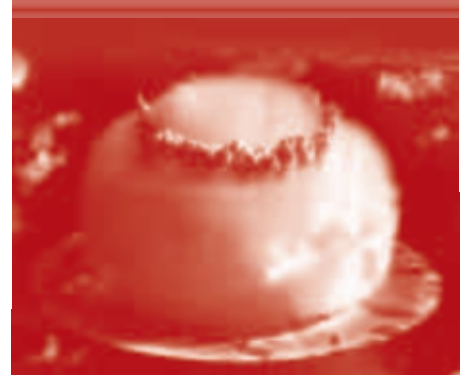
### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

North Korean scientists reportedly provided nuclear know-how to Iranian counterparts.



### NUCLEAR BUNKERS

According to news reports, North Korea advised Iran on building underground tunnels to protect nuclear facilities.



the stationing of international forces along its border with Lebanon as "a hostile stance toward Syria," make a mockery of the international community's determination to prevent Hizballah from rearming.

Meanwhile, Damascus continues to serve as a safe haven for the heads of all major Palestinian terrorist groups, despite Assad's pledge to the United States that they would be removed from the Syrian capital. Assad has openly hosted meetings of top terrorists, including a summit last January in which both Hamas leader Khaled Mashal and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad participated.

While Ahmadinejad has vowed to "wipe Israel off the map," Assad has warned that "if peace is not achieved" in the Middle East according to the terms Syria has dictated, "then war is the natural future in the region and Syria will be the first party concerned in the matter."

Syria's misdeeds have affected others beside Israel. Top Syrian officials have been implicated in the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. Jordan has accused Damascus of attempting to smuggle terrorists and weapons into its territory and American soldiers have had to face jihadists crossing into Iraq from Syria.

Led by the United States, the international community must make clear to Damascus that it will bear serious consequences if it carries on with its reckless conduct. •NER•

## Strategic Asset

### TWO MIDDLE EAST EXPERTS DETAIL THE WAYS IN WHICH THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP PROTECTS THE UNITED STATES' INTERESTS IN THE REGION

The alliance between the United States and Israel, although cemented by shared democratic values, is underpinned by geo-strategic realities, according to two prominent Middle East scholars.

Martin Kramer, a Senior Fellow at the Israel-based Shalem Center and the Wexler-Fromer Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, writes that "a compelling realist argument can be made for viewing Israel as an asset to the West."

Kramer says that strong American support for Israel guarantees U.S. influence and helps keep the peace in the eastern Mediterranean region. He argues that because Arab leaders know they cannot hope to militarily defeat an Israel strongly backed by the United States, there has not been a general Arab-Israeli war since 1973.

Because Israel is a strong and reliable military ally, the United States has been able to maintain order in the area without the commitment of any force. By contrast,

because America does not have a strong ally like Israel in the Persian Gulf region, the United States must actually deploy its own forces at a tremendous cost.

Efraim Inbar, a professor of political science at Bar-Ilan University and the director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, writes that "the major challenges to U.S. diplomacy in the post-Cold War era—threats to the free flow of oil, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and Islamic terrorists—originate in the Middle East." Thus, Israel, a country in the region that welcomes U.S. primacy in international affairs, is a natural strategic ally.

Inbar states: "There is no other state in the Middle East where an American airplane can count with certainty on being welcomed in the near future." U.S.-Israel cooperation on security matters has only increased since the 9/11 attacks, Inbar notes, and Israel is also an important source of military technology. •NER•

### Working Together....cont'd from pg. 69

artificial walls, and use the commonality of our cultures, of our traditions, of our beliefs, and use the benefit of our technological expertise to form a common bond as we go forward to defeat international terrorism."

Thompson expressed similar sentiments. "The different challenges faced by our many friends around the world have resulted in new approaches that the United States should

leverage to protect our citizens," he said.

Homeland security cooperation has constituted a central feature of the U.S.-Israel relationship following 9/11. Israeli Internal Security Minister Avi Dichter recently visited the United States to share his counterterrorism expertise with top law enforcement officials including Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff and National Security Adviser Steven Hadley. •NER•

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