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MEMO

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Israel Taking Defensive Action in Gaza and Lebanon to Rescue Soldiers, Halt Rocket Fire and Deter Further Attacks

Following separate Hamas and Hizballah attacks involving the kidnapping and killing of Israeli soldiers, Israel is exerting its right to defend itself by carrying out operations inside Gaza and southern Lebanon. Israel's responses to these acts of war are designed to secure the release of its soldiers, end ongoing rocket attacks against its major cities by terrorist groups and deter further attacks on its citizens.

The kidnapping and killing of Israeli soldiers by Hamas and Hizballah represent clear acts of war.

- The killing of Israeli soldiers and the kidnapping of Cpl. Gilad Shalit by Hamas and other groups were acts of war. The Palestinian attack came after Israel turned over the entire Gaza Strip to the Palestinian Authority (PA) in a bold step for peace.
- The killing of Israeli soldiers and the seizing of two more soldiers as hostages by Hizballah in northern Israel were also unprovoked acts of war. This strike took place following Israel's full withdrawal from Lebanon—a move that was applauded by the international community and fully certified by the U.N. Security Council.

Israel continues to be threatened by ongoing terrorism and rocket attacks emanating from areas to its north and south.

- Hizballah has launched dozens of unprovoked attacks since Israel withdrew from Lebanon in 2000, including the firing of hundreds of rockets and mortars at civilian areas and the kidnapping and killing of Israeli soldiers.
- During the past few weeks, Hizballah has fired more than 2,000 mortars, rockets and missiles into northern Israel, hitting homes, hospitals and businesses.
- Hizballah currently has more than 10,000 Iranian and Syrian supplied rockets and longer-range missiles capable of hitting most of the country, including Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.
- Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups have fired more than 1,000 Qassam rockets into Israel since Israel withdrew from Gaza.
- An additional 150,000 Israeli citizens and numerous strategic facilities are now within range of upgraded versions of the Qassam rocket capable of reaching the Israeli city Ashkelon.

Israel must provide for the safety of its citizens by securing the release of soldiers kidnapped from Israeli territory and defending against ongoing attacks.

- Like the United States and other sovereign nations, Israel has the right and duty to defend itself from attacks that represent clear acts of war—such as the killing and kidnapping of its citizens and ongoing rocket attacks.

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Israel Taking Defensive... *continued*

- Israel's actions are being carefully calibrated and are aimed at securing the release of its soldiers and degrading the abilities of Hamas and Hizballah to threaten its citizens with ongoing barrages of rockets.

Hizballah is a U.S.-designated terrorist organization fully backed by the Iranian and Syrian regimes.

- Hizballah, a U.S.-designated terrorist group, is sponsored by Syria and Iran, which provide an estimated \$100 million per year as well as weaponry that is sent from Tehran through Damascus.
- Hizballah has killed more Americans than any other terrorist group except al-Qaeda. Hizballah killed 257 Americans in the 1983 bombings of the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut and killed 19 American servicemen in the 1996 bombing of Khobar Towers, a U.S. military housing complex in Saudi Arabia.
- Rather than disarming Hizballah, as required by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559, Lebanon has simultaneously allowed the terrorist group to maintain its arsenal while serving in the Lebanese parliament and government.

The Hamas-led Palestinian Authority continues to advocate and participate in violence against Israelis and to reject Israel's right to exist.

- PA Interior Minister Sayeed Seyam has directed the government's security forces to fight Israeli soldiers who have entered Gaza to rescue Shalit and prevent attacks on Israel. Seyam, a member of Hamas, said it was the "moral, national and religious duty" to do so.
- Hamas' leadership in Syria continues to promote violence against Israel. Senior Hamas official Mousa Mohammed Abu Marzook told the German magazine Der Spiegel that "no matter what, the violence will not stop."
- Hamas continues to deny Israel's right to exist—a position spelled out in the group's founding charter and repeatedly echoed by its spokesmen and leaders.

Israel is continuing to take steps to ensure that the Palestinian people will not face a humanitarian crisis.

- Despite the constant terrorist threats against the border crossings between Gaza and Israel, Israel is continuing to allow food and medical supplies to be transferred from Israel into Gaza.
- More than 1,000 trucks of food and medical supplies entered Gaza in July. Israel also transferred into Gaza millions of liters of diesel fuel to run water pumps and electrical generators for Gaza hospitals.
- Matthias Burchard, a U.N. spokesman, said the Israeli steps have "in our view averted for now a possible humanitarian catastrophe." The International Committee of the Red Cross recently reported that it had the supplies it needed, saying: "The Israeli authorities are allowing us to bring in the supplies we ask to."