

MEMO

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Hamas Building Up Terrorist Infrastructure in Gaza

Since Hamas violently took control of Gaza in June, the terrorist group has intensified its rocket attacks into Israel and smuggling of arms through tunnels under the border between Egypt and Gaza. The terrorist group also continues to build up its terrorist infrastructure and military capabilities in preparation for future attacks. Israel, which continues to facilitate the flow of humanitarian goods into Gaza, has demonstrated tremendous restraint in the face of continuing attacks, but may be forced to take additional steps to protect its citizens.

Hamas and other terrorists in Gaza continue to launch daily attacks on Israel.

- Since Hamas' takeover of Gaza in June, terrorists have fired nearly 1,000 rockets and mortars into Israel. On October 29, terrorists in northern Gaza were caught on video using a school as a launching pad for attacks.
- Beyond the crude Qassam rockets that are fired indiscriminately at Israel and have a range of 5 to 7 miles, Hamas is using more sophisticated weaponry. On Oct. 7, terrorists fired a Katyusha rocket at Netivot, a town in southern Israel nearly seven miles from the border with



Hamas and other terrorists continue to fire rockets into Israel on a daily basis.

- Terrorists have launched dozens of mortar attacks at crossing points along the Gaza-Israel border that are used to facilitate the transfer of humanitarian supplies from Israel into Gaza.

Hamas is increasing its smuggling of weapons into Gaza and developing its military capabilities at an unprecedented rate.

- The head of the Israeli army's Gaza Division, Brig.-General Moshe Tamir, said Hamas is developing a complex military infrastructure by "trying to establish a bunker system as well as fortified rocket-launching and surveillance positions along the security fence with the Gaza Strip."
- Hamas has smuggled 70 tons of explosives into the Gaza Strip since it seized control in June, Yuval Diskin, chief of Israel's Shin Bet security agency, recently told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.
- Israeli security officials have reported that Hamas has at least 15,000 full-time fighters, many of them trained in Iran and Syria. Israeli soldiers were quoted in a recent *Ha'aretz* article as saying

that the Hamas fighters they encountered in Gaza were well trained and outfitted with the latest technology, including night vision equipment.

- Thirteen tunnels between Egypt and Gaza were found by the Israeli army during maneuvers in late October and early November. In addition to weapons and goods smuggling, these tunnels have been used to send Hamas members to Iran for military training.

Iran continues to support Hamas' terrorist activities in Gaza.

- In designating Iran's state-owned Bank Saderat as a supporter of terrorism last month, the Treasury Department said the bank has transferred millions of dollars to Hamas. Hizballah also has used the bank to send millions of dollars to the terrorist group.
- Hamas continues to send hundreds of terrorists to Iran to receive advanced military training in preparation for a future conflict against Israel. At the end of October, more than 80 Hamas members who received military training in Iran were let into Gaza through Egypt.
- During a meeting this summer in Damascus with Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad vowed "to keep up the support" for Hamas, senior Hamas official Izzat al-Rishq told Reuters.

Israel has demonstrated tremendous restraint in the face of persistent attacks and allowed humanitarian efforts in Gaza to continue.

- Despite continued mortar attacks from Gaza, Israel continues to allow essential humanitarian supplies to enter the territory. An average of 74 truckloads of supplies entered Gaza per day in October.
- Anthony Dalziel of the International Red Cross recently told *The New York Times* that the group has no trouble importing medicine. When Palestinian Health Ministry officials said Gaza hospitals were running low on anesthetics, Israel transferred 151 nitrous oxide gas balloons to the Shifa Hospital less than 24 hours later.
- When terrorists in Gaza began using metal pipes for rockets instead of their intended purpose to repair the sewage system, Israel worked with the World Bank to provide plastic pipes, which met the repair needs but posed no danger to Israel.
- Like every other sovereign nation, Israel has the right and duty to defend its citizens from terrorist attacks. Israel has demonstrated extreme restraint in the face of ongoing rocket attacks, but may be forced to take additional actions to reduce rocket fire and ensure the safety of its citizens.