

MEMMO

April 11, 2008

Israel Taking Positive Steps Despite Constant Terrorism

Despite attacks against its citizens, Israel continues to take steps to bolster Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas and facilitate humanitarian assistance. Palestinian terrorists continue to launch rocket and other attacks from Gaza and are building up their military capabilities for a wider conflict with Israel. At the same time, the Palestinian Authority has failed to take effective action against the terrorist infrastructure in the West Bank. Accordingly, Israel has been required to take increased measures to defend its population.

Despite the risks involved, Israel is facilitating humanitarian assistance to Gaza and bolstering the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank.

- Israel continues to allow the delivery of food, medicines and energy supplies to Gaza despite repeated attacks on those helping to facilitate such humanitarian efforts.
- On April 9, Palestinian terrorists shelled and stormed the only oil-energy supply line serving Gaza, killing two Israeli civilians working in the fuel terminal, which delivers each week more than 3 million liters of gasoline and industrial fuel for the Gaza City power station.
- Israel continues to allow patients to leave Gaza for medical treatment in the Jewish state, with more than 14,000 people having entered Israel since 2006. Would-be suicide bombers have used fake medical information in attempts to enter Israel and carry out attacks.
- In the West Bank, Israel has removed several dozen unmanned roadblocks and checkpoints designed to hamper the movement of terrorists.
- Israel has agreed to transfer vehicles, weapons and other equipment to the Palestinian Authority despite past circumstances where such equipment has been used to carry out attacks on Israelis.
- In an effort to help the West Bank economy, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said on April 10 that he would ask the government to issue 5,000 new permits for Palestinians to work in Israel. Israel also has agreed to facilitate the Bethlehem Economic Conference for Investors in May.



Palestinian terrorists killed two Israeli civilian workers at the only depot supplying fuel to Palestinians in Gaza.

Hamas continues to carry out attacks from Gaza and is building up its infrastructure for future conflict with Israel.

- Palestinian terrorists have fired more than 1,100 rockets and mortars into Israel in 2008, including longer-range, Iranian-supplied rockets that put more than 250,000 Israelis living in southern cities, such as Ashkelon, within striking range.
- A new report by the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (ITTC) in Israel says Hamas has more than 20,000 armed fighters organized in semi-military formations under improved command and control. Many of these fighters are being sent for training in Iran and Syria.
- The report also says that Hamas is preparing for a large-scale battle with Israel, building underground bunkers similar to those used by Hizballah during the 2006 war in Lebanon, and planting improvised explosive devices on roads the IDF might use during an operation in Gaza.
- Hamas, according to the report, also has acquired at least 80 tons of explosives since last summer. In addition to the explosives, Hamas continues to smuggle in advanced weaponry including advanced propellants, shoulder-fired RPG anti-tank missiles and anti-aircraft missiles.

At the same time, the Palestinian Authority has failed to take sustained and effective action against the terrorists in the West Bank.

- The PA has thus far failed to take sustained action to confront terrorism and dismantle the terrorist infrastructure throughout the West Bank, focusing instead on more limited issues of law and order.
- In late February, Israeli security forces detained four wanted terrorist operatives who were supposed to be in the custody of the Palestinian security services, but were allowed to move freely in the city and make preparations for a planned terrorist attack.
- The Roadmap's first phase requires the PA to "begin sustained, targeted, and effective operations aimed at confronting all those engaged in terror and dismantlement of terrorist capabilities and infrastructure."
- In addition to action against terror groups, the Roadmap requires the PA to "arrest, disrupt, and restrain individuals and groups conducting and planning violent attacks on Israelis anywhere" and specifically calls for the "confiscation of illegal weapons" from the terrorist groups.

Israel has been forced to take action to defend its citizens in the face of continued terrorist attacks.

- Israel has shown extreme restraint in the face of ongoing rocket and other terrorist attacks. However, like every other sovereign nation, Israel has the right and duty to defend its citizens.
- Israel's military response in Gaza has been carefully calibrated to reduce rocket fire and ensure the safety of Israeli citizens while at the same time making every effort to limit Palestinian civilian casualties.
- Israel's actions have targeted Hamas operation centers, Palestinian rocket-launching devices and vehicles carrying Qassam rockets and armed terrorists. Terrorists have deliberately launched rockets from densely populated areas in order to complicate Israel's efforts to respond.
- The PA's failure to launch a sustained effort to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure in the West Bank has forced Israel to continue its security presence in the area to prevent attacks against it.