

MEMMO

May 12, 2010

Press Syria Now to End Destructive Policies

As America seeks to engage Syria, Damascus has deepened its links with terrorists and stonewalled international efforts to investigate its illicit nuclear program. Syria is supplying Hizballah with increasingly sophisticated weaponry, including advanced missiles. With Syrian actions dramatically increasing the chances for an outbreak of violence in the near future, the United States should complement its dialogue effort with stepped-up sanctions to persuade Damascus to abandon its destructive path.

Syria is supplying the terrorist organization Hizballah with increasingly sophisticated weapons.

- U.S. officials have raised concerns about the quantity and quality of Syria's weapons shipments to Hizballah. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates recently said that Iran and Syria are transferring weapons of "ever-increasing capability" to Hizballah, which has "far more rockets and missiles than most governments."
- In October, according to press reports, Syria provided Hizballah with M-600 rockets, which have a range of 155 miles, putting virtually the entire Israeli population within Hizballah's rocket range.
- In recent weeks, top Israeli and American officials, including Israeli President Shimon Peres, have accused Syria of supplying Hizballah with Scud missiles capable of hitting all of Israel, even from north of the Litani River.
- The threat of Scud missiles is just the "tip of the iceberg," according to Brig. Gen. Yossi Baidatz, head of the Israel Defense Forces' Military Intelligence research division. Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren said recently that Syria and Iran have also provided Hizballah with 60,000 shorter-range rockets.
- The State Department has summoned the Syrian ambassador or charge d'affaires four times in the past two months to protest Damascus' "provocative behavior." Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warned that "transferring weapons to these terrorists – especially longer-range missiles" has "a profoundly destabilizing effect on the region."



Syrian and Iran are working closely to arm Hizballah in Lebanon.

Syria undermines the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and provides support for Palestinian and other terrorists throughout the region.

- Syria is actively encouraging the Palestinian Authority (PA) to return to violence. At the Arab League Summit in March, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad urged PA President Mahmoud Abbas to back away from peace talks and resume violence against Israel.

- Syria, a U.S.-designated sponsor of terror for three decades, provides “political and material support” to Hizballah, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. It permits Hamas to train terrorist fighters on Syrian soil, and allows Palestinian terrorist groups to maintain their headquarters in Damascus, according to the State Department’s annual report on terrorism.
- Hamas terrorists have received training from Syrian units in the use and manufacture of short- and mid-range Grad rockets and Improvised Explosive Devices, according to an interview with a senior Hamas terrorist in the London *Sunday Times*. Israeli court documents reveal that Hamas commanders have also received training from the Syrian armored corps in anti-tank operations.
- Syria provides support for Iraqi insurgents who seek to undermine the government and U.S. efforts in Iraq. In his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Ambassador-designate Robert Ford stated that despite the drop in the number of insurgents crossing from Syria, the Syrian regime “hosts networks ... who work to undermine the Iraqi state.”

Syria refuses to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and is continuing its unconventional weapons program.

- Syria has repeatedly blocked IAEA inspectors from carrying out their inquiry into the nuclear reactor site at Dair Alzour, which Israel reportedly destroyed in September 2007.
- As an unclassified 2009 Central Intelligence Agency report to Congress on weapons of mass destruction stated, “The covert nature of the program, the characteristics of the reactor,” and Syrian efforts to cover up the incident are “inconsistent” with a peaceful nuclear program.
- Israeli intelligence believes, according to press reports, that Syria spends almost \$1 billion annually on weapons of mass destruction and maintains one of the largest stockpiles of chemical weapons in the region. The CIA report stated that Syria can deploy these chemical weapons using its arsenal of Scud missiles.

The United States and the international community must press Syria to end its support for terrorism and pursuit of weapons of mass destruction.

- On May 4, President Obama renewed U.S. sanctions on Syria. Another set of executive orders underpinning the sanctions are set to expire in July. The United States should renew these sanctions as well and move to implement additional measures as authorized under the Syria Accountability Act if Syria continues its support for terrorism.
- The international community should hold Syria accountable for violating U.N. Security Council Resolution 1747’s ban on the export and transshipment of Iranian weapons.
- The United States and the international community must strengthen U.N. troops and prevent Syria and Hizballah from continuing to violate U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701, which calls for the disarmament of all terrorist groups in Lebanon.
- The international community must press Syria to fully cooperate with IAEA inspectors and to detail all of its nuclear activity. If Syria continues to obstruct inspectors, the IAEA should refer the matter to the U.N. Security Council for further action.