

MEMMO

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Israel Facing Mounting Storm

Israel today is facing a host of growing threats: 124 rockets from Gaza in the last four days; mortar fire from Syria; and continuing attacks from Sinai. At the same time, the Palestinian leadership refuses to negotiate with Israel while Iran crudely threatens the Jewish state and advances its nuclear weapons program. At this critical moment, it is vitally important for American leaders to unequivocally support Israel's right to exist in peace and security and its current operations to defend its citizens.



Israel is facing a dramatic increase in attacks along three borders, and weapons buildups elsewhere.

- Since Saturday, terrorists in Gaza have launched 124 rockets. Since the beginning of the year, terrorists in Gaza have struck Israel with nearly 800 rocket attacks. In response, Israel is carrying out targeted operations against Hamas leaders and long-range rocket launching sites, which put 1 million Israelis under the threat of attack.
- For the first time since the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Syrian army fire has endangered Israelis. Mortar shells have landed near a farm and bullets hit an Israeli patrol jeep. While attributed to the civil war in Syria, such attacks are serious violations of the armistice and could lead to wider conflict.
- Israel must also contend with increased dangers from Sinai, which has experienced a marked uptick in lawlessness, an increased presence of global jihadist groups and a dramatic increase in the number and types of sophisticated weaponry.
- During the past year and a half, eight Israelis have been killed in cross-border attacks emanating from Sinai. Four rockets were fired into Israel from Sinai on Nov. 14.

- In Lebanon, Hizballah has amassed more than 60,000 long- and short-range rockets and missiles—10 times what it had during the 2006 war with Israel—while Syria and Iran have 3,500 missiles aimed at Israel, the IDF’s Military Intelligence research section told the Knesset earlier this year.

PLO Chairman Mahmoud Abbas refuses to negotiate with Israel. Instead, he is seeking “statehood” at the U.N. General Assembly.

- Abbas continues to refuse to sit down at the negotiating table with Israel despite repeated efforts by Israel to condition the environment for talks, including helping the Palestinian economy and removing barriers to Palestinian travel in the West Bank.
- Instead of negotiating, Abbas insists he will push forward on Nov. 29 with an effort to garner nonmember state observer status at the U.N. General Assembly, and subsequently, use this recognition to attack Israel in international legal fora.
- Such efforts at the United Nations only serve to undermine Israel’s confidence in the PLO as a legitimate partner for peace and could cause a further breakdown in relations between the parties, making it even more difficult to resume negotiations in the future.
- President Obama has described the Palestinian bid for statehood recognition at the United Nations as a “counterproductive” measure and a “distraction” that would impede efforts to create a Palestinian state living in peace with Israel.
- Abbas reportedly rebuffed a personal request by Obama this past weekend urging him to withdraw his request for nonmember state observer status at the General Assembly.

Iran continues to threaten the existence of Israel and aggressively advance its nuclear capabilities.

- Iran continues to advance its nuclear program in violation of multiple mandatory U.N. Security Council resolutions. The number of centrifuges installed at its Fordow enrichment site doubled from May to August and its stockpile of low-enriched uranium could, if further enriched, produce the cores for six nuclear weapons.
- The International Atomic Energy Agency’s (IAEA) latest report contained new information showing Iran carried out activities related to the development of a nuclear explosive device.
- Iran has a global terrorist reach and undermines U.S. peace efforts through its support of terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hizballah. At the same time, Iran is providing lethal support, including weapons and personnel, to the Assad regime’s brutal campaign of violence in Syria.
- Echoing a previous call to “wipe Israel off the map,” Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad recently stated, “Anyone who loves freedom and justice must strive for the annihilation of the Zionist regime in order to pave the way for world justice and freedom.”

It is vitally important for the United States to strongly support Israel’s legitimacy and right to defend its citizens.

- It is a critical time now for the United States to reassert its support for its ally Israel, including its right to live in peace and to defend itself. No other country in the world faces daily rocket attacks against its civilians, nor would any other country tolerate such violence.
- The United States should continue efforts to ensure that Israel has the necessary resources to meet the growing threats and chaos in the region.
- The United States should also continue its efforts to persuade the Palestinians to turn away from the United Nations and toward direct negotiations with Israel.