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AIPAC URGES CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION TO SUPPORT ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO SELF DEFENSE

AIPAC urges Congress and the Administration to stand firmly with Israel as it strives to defend itself against a renewed assault by Hamas terrorists.

"AIPAC is outraged that the U.N. Security Council failed to recognize Israel's right to self-defense in its statement on Sunday, a right enshrined in the U.N.'s founding charter," said AIPAC President David Victor. "Moving forward, we urge the administration to stand with Israel at the United Nations as it acts to defend itself in the face of continued violence from Hamas terrorists in the Gaza Strip. It is important that we never equate Israeli defensive measures with Hamas terrorism."

"We applaud the bipartisan coalition of American leaders who have stood up in support of Israel's right to defend its citizens, a clear sign of the strong ties between the United States and Israel," Victor added.

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) was one of the first members of Congress to speak out in support of the Jewish state's right to protect its citizens: "...when Israel is attacked, the United States must continue to stand strongly with its friend and democratic ally." House Republican Whip Eric Cantor (R-VA) rebuked Hamas for its continued attacks and said the terrorist group "has once again demonstrated its willingness to murder innocent Israelis and Palestinian civilians to achieve their political goals."

In addition, David Axelrod, senior advisor to President-elect Barack Obama, reiterated statements made by the then-senator during a July visit to Sderot, that Israel has a right to defend itself and "when bombs are ... raining down on your citizens, it is—it's obviously unacceptable."

Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip in 2005 in an effort to reduce violence and lay the groundwork for a future Palestinian state. Since then, the Iranian-backed Hamas has wrested control of the territory from Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in a violent coup, kidnapped an Israeli soldier in a cross-border raid and has overseen a major military buildup, acquiring weapons that now threaten a quarter-million Israelis.

Since Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, Palestinian terrorists have fired more than 6,300 rockets and mortars at the Jewish state, killing a dozen Israelis and wounding countless others. Even after an Egyptian-brokered "period of calm" was put in place between Israel and Hamas, rocket fire continued. In recent weeks alone, Hamas has fired some 600 rockets and mortars at Israeli civilians—as many as 80 in a single day—destroying Israeli homes and infrastructure, and claiming three Israeli lives.

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