

PRESS RELEASE

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AIPAC APPLAUDS ADMINISTRATION, CONGRESSIONAL STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO SELF-DEFENSE

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) strongly supports President Bush's comments in his [weekly radio address](#) backing Israel's quest for peace and its right to self-defense against [Hamas'](#) vicious terrorism.

AIPAC applauds the [numerous statements](#) by the Bush administration and the bipartisan leadership of Congress standing by America's democratic ally Israel, which is defending its citizens from an [Iranian-backed terrorist group](#) that rejects peace and works for Israel's destruction.

AIPAC stands with President-elect Barack Obama who [stated so clearly](#) when he visited Sderot last year, "If somebody was sending rockets into my house, where my two daughters sleep at night, I'm going to do everything in my power to stop that. And I would expect Israelis to do the same thing."

In addition to his support for Israel's right to self-defense, President Bush has made clear that any durable, sustainable outcome requires an end to [Hamas' terror attacks](#) and weapons smuggling. "Another one-way ceasefire that leads to rocket attacks on Israel is not acceptable. And promises from Hamas will not suffice -- there must be monitoring mechanisms in place to help ensure that smuggling of weapons to terrorist groups in Gaza comes to an end."

Israel has exercised great restraint and patience as its citizens have been exposed to withering bombardment by Hamas terrorists over the past seven years. And in its targeted response, Israel is going to great length to strike the terrorists while sparing their hostages, the Palestinians of Gaza who seek peace, and with whom Israel seeks peace.

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Below is the text of the President's radio address [as released](#) by the White House:

January 2, 2009

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Over the past week, I have been monitoring the situation in the Middle East closely with the members of my national security team. Secretary Rice is actively engaged in diplomacy. And I've been in contact with leaders throughout the region -- including the King of Saudi Arabia, the King of Jordan, the President of Egypt, the President and Prime Minister of the Palestinian Territories, and the Prime Minister of Israel.

This recent outburst of violence was instigated by Hamas -- a Palestinian terrorist group supported by Iran and Syria that calls for Israel's destruction. Eighteen months ago, Hamas took over the Gaza Strip in a coup, and since then has imported thousands of guns and rockets and mortars. Egypt brokered a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel, but Hamas routinely violated that ceasefire by launching rockets into Israel. On December 19th, Hamas announced an end to the ceasefire and soon unleashed a barrage of rockets and mortars that deliberately targeted innocent Israelis -- an act of terror that is opposed by the legitimate leader of the Palestinian people, President Abbas.

In response to these attacks on their people, the leaders of Israel have launched military operations on Hamas positions in Gaza. As a part of their strategy, Hamas terrorists often hide within the civilian population, which puts innocent Palestinians at risk. Regrettably, Palestinian civilians have been killed in recent days.

The United States is deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation facing the Palestinian people. Since Hamas's violent takeover in the summer of 2007, living conditions have worsened for Palestinians in Gaza. By spending its resources on rocket launchers instead of roads and schools, Hamas has demonstrated that it has no intention of serving the Palestinian people. America has helped by providing tens of millions of dollars in humanitarian aid, and this week we contributed an additional \$85 million through the United Nations. We have consistently called on all in the region to ensure that assistance reaches those in need. And as I told President Mubarak, America appreciates the role Egypt has played in facilitating the delivery of relief supplies in recent days.

In addition to reducing humanitarian suffering, all nations must work toward a lasting end to the violence in the Holy Land, and a return to the path of peace. The United States is leading diplomatic efforts to achieve a meaningful ceasefire that is fully respected. Another one-way ceasefire that leads to rocket attacks on Israel is not acceptable. And promises from Hamas will not suffice -- there must be monitoring mechanisms in place to help ensure that smuggling of weapons to terrorist groups in Gaza comes to an end. I urge all parties to pressure Hamas to turn away from terror, and to support legitimate Palestinian leaders working for peace.

In the days ahead, the United States will stay closely engaged with our partners in the region, in Europe, and in the international community. My Administration will continue to keep the President-elect and his team informed. And America's objectives in the Middle East will remain clear: We seek security and peace for our allies, the free people of Israel. For the Palestinian people, we seek a peaceful and democratic Palestinian state that serves its citizens and respects its neighbors. For all in the region, we seek an end to terror. And we seek an enduring peace based on justice, dignity, and human rights for every person in every nation of the Middle East.

Thank you for listening.

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