



**The Meir Amit Intelligence  
and Terrorism Information**

## **News of Terrorism and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict**

**May 18-24, 2011**



**American President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meet on May 20 (Israeli Government Press Office, May 20, 2011).**

### **Overview**

- On the eve of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's arrival in the United States and during his visit, American President Barack Obama gave two speeches, one at the State Department and the other at a policy conference of AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobbying group. In the State Department speech he said that the borders of the State of Israel and the Palestinian state had to be based on the 1967 lines with "mutually agreed [territorial] swaps." At the AIPAC conference he clarified his position, saying that the final border would be based on the "new demographic realities" on the ground and the needs of both sides.
- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was critical of the first speech, mentioning previous commitments regarding the 1967 borders made to Israel by the United States and in the 2004 letter from President Bush. After the second speech Netanyahu expressed his appreciation to the American president, saying he was determined to find a way to renew the peace talks. On May 24 he was scheduled to speak before a joint session of Congress about his position on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

■ In their initial responses to President Obama's speech, spokesmen for the Palestinian Authority said that the Palestinian state had to be based on the 1967 borders and blamed Israel for freezing the negotiations. Hamas spokesmen, however, denounced Obama's speeches, saying they would not recognize Israel and that they adhered to the "resistance" [i.e., terrorism] and the so-called "right of return."

## **The Main Points of the Speeches and Remarks Made by American President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, and the Palestinian Reactions**

■ In speeches and remarks made on the eve of the Netanyahu's arrival in the United States and during his visit, both the president and Netanyahu clarified their positions regarding a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. On May 24 Netanyahu was scheduled to speak before a joint session of the United States Congress.

### **The President's First Speech**

■ American President Obama gave a speech to the State Department on May 19, the eve of Netanyahu's arrival in the United States. The following are the statements he made about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (White House website, May 19, 2011) (ITIC emphases throughout):

- He said that **the principle of two states for two peoples as the basis for a solution to the conflict** was accepted by the United States and the international community. He said that **"The international community is tired of an endless process that never produces an outcome."** The Palestinians, he said, "will never realize their independence by denying the right of Israel to exist."
- He noted the **United States' objection to the Palestinian's unilateral move in the United Nations, saying that it would not create an independent state.**
- He said the borders of the Palestinian state had to be **"based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps."** He added that its borders would be **Israel, Jordan and Egypt**; and that the Palestinians would have a "contiguous" state.
- As to **the security of the State of Israel**, he said that **the Palestinian state would be non-militarized.** Steps would have to be taken **"to prevent a resurgence of terrorism, to stop the infiltration of weapons, and to provide effective border security."**
- He briefly mentioned the issues of **Jerusalem and the refugees.** He said that **"moving forward now on the basis of territory and security provides a foundation to resolve [the issues of Jerusalem and the refugees] in a way that is**

**just and fair, and that respects the rights and aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians."**

- He said that the **reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas** "raises profound and legitimate questions for Israel: **How can one negotiate with a party that has shown itself unwilling to recognize your right to exist?"**

## **Benjamin Netanyahu's Response to Barack Obama's First Speech**

■ Benjamin Netanyahu responded to Barack Obama's first speech by noting America's 2004 commitments to Israel (i.e., President Bush's letter), according to which Israel would not be asked to withdraw to the 1967 lines. Those lines, Netanyahu said, are indefensible and leave large population concentrations of Israelis in Judea and Samaria, which would be beyond the borders of Israel. According to the same commitments, the Palestinian refugees would be settled outside the borders of the State of Israel (Israeli prime minister's website, May 19, 2011).

■ In addition, Netanyahu made it clear that **any agreement with the Palestinians had to include Palestinian recognition of the State of Israel and an end to all Palestinian demands on Israel**. He also said that Israel's security demanded that IDF soldiers be deployed along the Jordan River (Israeli prime minister's website, May 19; Haaretz, May 19 and 20, 2011).

## **The President's Speech to AIPAC**

■ In his speech to AIPAC, President Obama reiterated and clarified the principles of his solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (White House website, May 22, 2011) (ITIC emphasis throughout):

- **Regarding the 1967 borders**, the president explained what he meant by "mutually agreed swaps." He said "it means that the parties themselves – Israelis and Palestinians - – **will negotiate a border that is different than the one that existed on June 4, 1967. That's what mutually agreed-upon swaps means.**"
- **Regarding recognition of the State of Israel and the declaration of a Palestinian state**, he said that the existence of Israel "must not be a subject for debate" **and that the United States steadfastly opposed "any attempt to delegitimize the State of Israel."**

- He said that **"No vote at the United Nations will ever create an independent Palestinian state."** He called on the Palestinians to recognize Israel and said the United States would hold them "accountable for their actions and their rhetoric." However, he said **"the march to isolate Israel internationally – and the impulse of the Palestinians to abandon negotiations – will continue to gain momentum in the absence of a credible peace process and alternative."**

- He said that **America was firmly committed to Israel's security**, and would "maintain Israel's qualitative military edge." He also **called on Hamas to release abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.**

### Benjamin Netanyahu's Response to Barack Obama's AIPAC Speech

- Benjamin Netanyahu expressed his appreciation for US President Barack Obama's remarks at the AIPAC Policy Conference. He said, "I share the President's wish to promote peace and I appreciate his past and present efforts to achieve this goal. **I am determined to work with President Obama in order to find ways to resume the peace negotiations. Peace is a vital necessity for us all**" (ITIC emphasis) (Israeli Prime Minister's website, May 22, 2011).

### Palestinian Responses to Obama's Two Speeches



Left: Demonstrators at the traditional protest location of Bila'in on Friday, May 20. They hold signs calling on Obama to give up on AIPAC and employ a different [i.e., anti-Israeli] policy (Wafa News Agency, May 20, 2011). Right: Palestinians in Ramallah holding signs calling for the release of Palestinians [i.e., terrorists] imprisoned in Israel, prompted by Obama's May 19 speech (Hamas' Safa News Agency, May 19, 2011).

- Palestinian Authority spokesmen stated that **the Palestinian state had to be based on the 1967 borders, and blamed Israel for freezing the peace process.** Hamas spokesmen, however, denounced Obama's speeches, emphasizing that they would not recognize Israel, and called for adherence to "resistance" [i.e., terrorism] and the so-called "right of return."

■ **Initial statements from senior Palestinian Authority figures were the following:**

● **Saeb Erekat**, member of the PLO's executive committee, said that PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas would call an extraordinary meeting of the Palestinian leadership to discuss Obama's speeches. He said that **Mahmoud Abbas had praised Obama's remarks about the fundamental rights of the people of the Middle East**, such as the right to self determination, and said that "no people needs it more than the Palestinians" (Palestinian Authority TV, May 19 2011).

● **Nabil Abu Rudeina**, Palestinian spokesman, claimed that **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's opposition to an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders was "a blow to the American president's efforts."** He called on the United States to place responsibility for the deterioration of the peace process on Israeli shoulders. He said the Palestinians appreciated the efforts made by President Obama to renew the peace process (Wafa News Agency, May 19, 2011).

● **Nabil Shaath**, member of Fatah's central committee, complained that Obama "didn't lift a finger" to hinder Israel's policy of construction in the settlements, claiming that he "talks, but in nothing happens," and that what he says doesn't influence Israel. He also claimed that Obama had a "completely mistaken" view of the Palestinian cause (Al-Arabiya TV, May 19, 2011).

● **Yasser Abd Rabbo**, chairman of the PLO's executive committee, praised Obama's position, which included "a solution on the basis of the 1967 borders." **He said that the Palestinians "adhered to the 1967 borders" and that any change in them would be "a violation of international law"** (Palestinian Authority TV and Agence France-Presse, May 22, 2011).

■ **Senior Hamas figures said the following:**

● ] **Mahmoud al-Zahar, senior Hamas figure**, claimed Obama's AIPAC speech was "completely different" from his previous speech. **He claimed Obama had reneged on his statement about the 1967 borders as the basis for negotiations and that now the Palestinians were being required to relinquish extensive areas within those borders.** He refused to accept Obama's demand that Hamas recognize Israel, saying that **"recognition of Israel as a Jewish state denies Palestinian superiority and the right of return"** (BBC in Arabic, May 22, 2011).

● On another occasion Mahmoud al-Zahar said that **"Hamas is ready to recognize the 1967 borders"** but **"will not give up even one centimeter and will not recognize Israel."** He called on the Palestinians to join one another in the **"resistance"** [i.e., terrorism and violence] (Al-Alam TV, May 21, 2011).

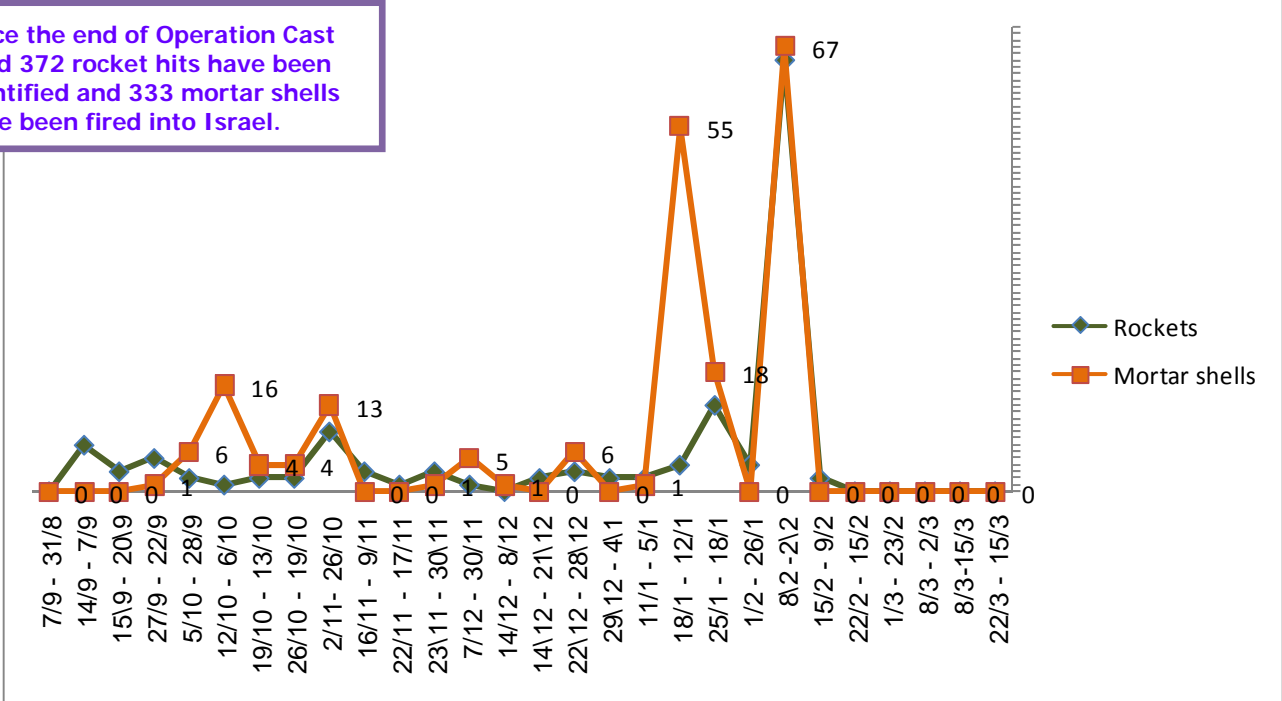
- **Ismail Radwan, senior Hamas figure**, claimed Obama had nothing new to say and he was "throwing sand in the Palestinians' eyes" regarding the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. **He complained that Obama did not mention the so-called "right of return" or the Palestinians' other "rights"** (Al-Quds TV and Agence France-Presse, May 19, 2011).
- **Salah al-Bardawil, senior Hamas figure**, claimed that Obama's speech was "**sweeping, unacceptable interference in an internal Palestinian matter**" and that its objective was to tear Palestinian society apart "to satisfy the Zionist entity." He called on the Palestinians to close ranks with the "Islamic Arab nation" against Israel and the United States (Safa News Agency, May 22, 2011).
- **Sami Abu Zuhri, Hamas spokesman**, said that **Hamas would not recognize the "Israeli occupation" and that Obama would fail if he tried to convince Hamas to do so**. He added that abducted IDF soldier Gilad Shalit would not be released before the Palestinians prisoners, and said Obama was biased because he ignored thousands of Palestinian prisoners (Xinhua website, May 23, 2011).
- **Khalil al-Hayeh, chairman of the Hamas faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council**, claimed that Obama's speech proved that the negotiations with Israel would not lead anywhere, and **called on the Palestinians to unite around the option of "resistance"** [i.e., violence and terrorism] (website of Hamas' change and reform faction, May 23, 2011).

## Important Terrorism Events in Israel's South

■ This past week no rocket or mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory. **Since April 18 no rocket or mortar shell has fallen in Israeli territory.**

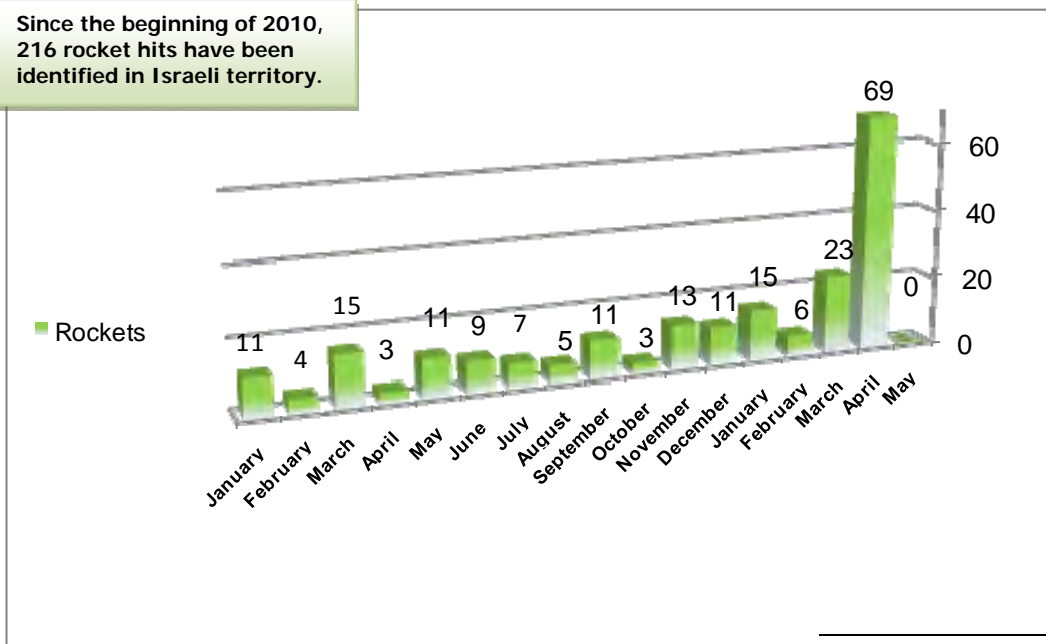
### Rockets and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory<sup>1</sup>

Since the end of Operation Cast Lead 372 rocket hits have been identified and 333 mortar shells have been fired into Israel.



### Rocket Fire - Monthly Distribution

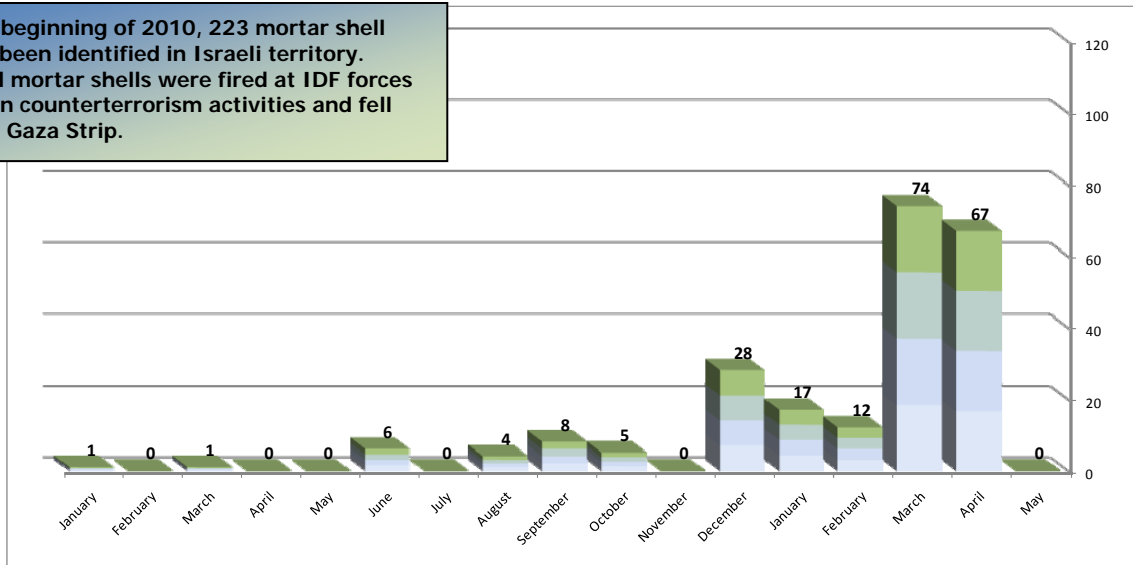
Since the beginning of 2010, 216 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.



<sup>1</sup> The statistics do not include the rockets and mortar shells which fell inside the Gaza Strip.

## Mortar Shell Fire - Monthly Distribution

Since the beginning of 2010, 223 mortar shell hits have been identified in Israeli territory. Additional mortar shells were fired at IDF forces engaged in counterterrorism activities and fell inside the Gaza Strip.



\*\* Rocket and mortar shell hits identified in Israeli territory, not the Gaza Strip.

\* As of May 24, 2011

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### The Crossings

■ This past week between 249 and 279 trucks carrying merchandise entered the Gaza Strip every day. (Website of the Israeli government coordinator for the territories, May 24, 2011).

## The Political and Propaganda Campaign against Israel

### The Palestinian Authority Chairman's Op-Ed Piece in the New York Times

■ Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, wrote an op-ed piece for the New York Times while visiting the United States. In it he said that the Palestinians were "prepared for statehood" and would continue to seek recognition among the nations of the world. Some of his statements were the following (New York Times, May 17, 2011):

- **This coming September the Palestinians will ask the UN General Assembly to recognize a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders and to admit it to the United Nations.** According to Mahmoud Abbas, the appeal is important because it



would pave the way for the internationalization of the conflict as a legal matter, not only a political one. That would make it possible for the Palestinians to conduct negotiations with Israel as a member of the UN whose territory was occupied by another member. In addition, **it would enable the Palestinians to act against Israel in the International Court, the UN and human rights organizations.**

- According to Mahmoud Abbas, negotiations remain the Palestinians' first choice. However, they are determined to appeal to the international community for help in achieving a "just solution" to the conflict. As soon as the UN recognizes the Palestinian state, **it will be ready to negotiate with Israel for a solution to all the aspects of the conflict, including a "just solution" to the problem of the Palestinian refugees.**

- According to Mahmoud Abbas, **the 1947 UN partition plan divided** the Palestinian "homeland" into two states. He claimed that after the UN resolution, "Zionist forces" expelled Palestinian Arabs to ensure a Jewish majority in the Jewish state, thus **forcing the Arab countries to start a war with Israel.** [Note: His remarks were a **gross distortion of history**, intended to blame Israel for the massive Arab states' invasion of its territory.]

### **Call for More Protests following Nakba Day**

- The Palestinians and elements within the Arab countries encouraged by the events of Nakba Day are currently representing them as **a new tactic in the campaign to achieve their goals against Israel. There have been specific calls for protests to be held on or around June 6 to mark "Naksa Day"** (the defeat of the Arabs in the Six Day War in 1967).

- **Fatah: Nabil Shaath**, member of Fatah's executive committee, said **that the Nakba Day marches were "only a hint of what is to come."** The Associated Press reported from Ramallah that pro-Palestinian activists **plan to use the social networks to organize mass marches to Israel's borders and challenge the IDF soldiers, causing them to open fire** (AP, May 17, 2011).

- **Hamas: Ismail Haniya**, head of the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, said the Nakba Day events proved that young Palestinians were applying the reconciliation agreement and uniting against Israel. He claimed that in the future **"millions" would take to the streets to liberate Palestine "peacefully" and liberate the region from "Israeli occupation and terrorism"** (alresalah.net website, May 16, 2011). **Ali Barakeh, Hamas representative in Lebanon**, said that **Hamas would support any Palestinian or Arab effort to confront Israel.**

However, he added that active Hamas participation in future marches would require coordination with the countries from which they departed (Radio Nur, May 21, 2011).

- **Syria:** Calls were issued on Facebook for **various marches and demonstrations** along the Israeli border. Some of the calls may have originated with the Syrian regime (Facebook, May 16 and 22, 2011).

- **Jordan:** Jordanian anti-Israeli demonstrations have apparently **joined the general protests continuing throughout the Hashemite Kingdom:** On Friday, May 20, about 100 Jordanians demonstrated in front of the Israeli embassy , and about 1,000 joined the "Jerusalem Liberation" march organized by the Islamic Movement in Jordan (Al-Jazeera TV, May 20, 2011).

## Global Jihad

### The Army of Islam Designated as a Terrorist Organization by the United States

- A spokesman for the American State Department announced that the **Army of Islam had been designated as a terrorist organization by the United States**. According to the announcement, the Army of Islam is a Palestinian organization affiliated with the global jihad whose operatives, among other things, fired rockets at Israel from Egyptian territory, carried out terrorist activities in Egypt, abducted two Fox News correspondents and the British journalist Alan Johnston. In addition, it said, the organization integrates global jihad Salafist ideology with the traditional model of the armed Palestinian campaign. The organization collaborates with Hamas and is currently attempting to develop closer contacts with Al-Qaeda (American State Department website, May 20, 2011).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For further information about the Army of Islam, see the February 2, 2011 ITIC bulletin, [Exporting terrorism and subversion from the Gaza Strip](#)