



Intelligence and Terrorism
Information Center Israel Intelligence
Heritage and Commemoration Center

News of the Israeli-Palestinian Confrontation

October 1-15, 2007

Rocket fire continues...



Fatah terrorist operatives firing rockets at Kibbutz Kerem Shalom (Al-Aqsa TV, October 7)

...and preparations speed up for the Annapolis meeting.



American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Abu Mazen in Ramallah (Thaher Ganaim for Reuters, October 15).

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Overview

- During the first half of October there was a **decrease** in the number of rockets and mortar shells fired at western Negev settlements. Conspicuous was the launching of a standard(122 mm) Grad rocket at the city of Netivot. The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorist activities in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip and prevented several terrorist attacks from being carried out.
- Israel, the Palestinians and the United States continued their dialogue in preparation for the Annapolis meeting. **Especially prominent was the broad gap between Israeli and Palestinian expectations:** Abu Mazen, interviewed by Palestinian TV, presented a comprehensive list of high expectations for solutions to the core issues of the conflict with Israel, despite his weakness and doubts regarding his ability to reach, ratify and realize an agreement. The Israelis seek to formulate a joint statement, general in nature, and to use the meeting to achieve support and backup for continued negotiations. The American secretary of state is visiting the Middle East in an attempt to bridge the Israeli and Palestinian positions.

Important Events

Decrease in rocket fire at the western Negev settlements

■ During the first two weeks of October there was a **decrease** in the number of rockets fired at western Negev settlements. Fifteen hits were identified as compared with 70 during September. There was also a **decrease** in the number of mortar shells fired at Israeli settlements and IDF forces. Forty-eight mortar shell hits were identified compared with 132 in September. Hamas continued to abstain from firing rockets but was responsible for most of the mortar attacks.



Fatah operatives launching rockets at Kibbutz Kerem Shalom (Al-Aqsa TV, October 7).

■ On October 7, for the first time since July 16, 2006, a rocket was fired at Netivot. The police sappers who examined its remains said it was apparently a standard 122 mm Grad rocket with a range of approximately 22 km (almost 14 miles). The Palestinian terrorist organizations do not usually employ such weapons. The last time a Grad was fired it fell near Kibbutz Brur Hayl (north of Sderot) in July 2006.

■ Fatah elements in the Gaza Strip claimed responsibility for the attacks, falsely stating that the rocket in question was a Hassan 1, which they had developed (Qudsnet Website, October 7). Hamas criticized the attack, claiming it provided Israel with the “pretext” for action in the Gaza Strip (Qudsnet Website, October 8).

Counterterrorist Activities

■ During the past two weeks Israeli counterterrorist activities continued and prevented several attempted attacks. In Judea and Samaria several dozen suspected terrorists were detained, weapons were seized and explosive devices were found. In the Gaza Strip launching sites were attacked, as were operatives on their way to fire rockets. The more important events were the following:

Gaza Strip

■ During the past two weeks the IDF operated near the security fence and within the Gaza Strip in the area around Beit Hanoun to prevent rocket and mortar fire into Israel territory:

✿ **October 13:** The Israeli Air Force struck a rocket-launching squad near Beit Hanoun while its members were firing rockets into Israel territory. One terrorist was killed and three wounded.

✿ **October 12:** A IDF force exposed seven Qassam rocket launchers on the outskirts of Beit Hanoun. The launchers were seized.

✿ **October 5:** An IDF force identified an armed terrorist operative near the security fence in the area of the central Gaza Strip. The terrorist opened fire and threw a hand grenade at the soldiers, who returned fire and killed him (IDF Spokesman, October 5).

■ **October 4:** The Israeli Air Force attacked a vehicle in the southern Gaza Strip carrying terrorists involved in firing rockets into Israeli territory (IDF Spokesman, October 4).

Judea and Samaria

■ The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorist activities throughout Judea and Samaria. Among the more important events were the following:

✿ **October 12:** An IDF action in Qalqilia revealed four gas bottles buried in the earth, a carbine, a homemade gun, ammunition and IDF-originated equipment. The weapons were seized and the gas bottles were detonated in a controlled explosion by the IDF (IDF Spokesman, October 12).



Bottled gas revealed by the IDF in Qalqilia (Photo courtesy of the IDF Spokesman October 12).

✿ **October 11:** The IDF detained **'Issa Muhammad Jawarish** in Bethlehem, a high-ranking Hamas member active in the West Bank (IDF Spokesman, October 12).

✿ **October 11:** The IDF operating in Jenin killed **Muhammad Mustafa Abu Srour**, Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade commander of the city. He had been involved in planning attacks on the IDF in the region (IDF Spokesman, October 12).

✿ **October 10:** The IDF operating in Nablus opened fire at two Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade operatives. One was Safwan Qandil, a high-

ranking Fatah operative. According to the Palestinians, both were killed (Palestinian media, October 10).

The Israeli security forces detained two Fatah operatives who were involved in an attack at the Erez Crossing.

■ On August 25, 2007, two terrorists from the northern Gaza Strip infiltrated Israeli territory by climbing over the security fence. They had intended to carry out a mass-casualty attack in the settlement of Netiv Ha'asara.¹ During the attempted attack two soldiers were wounded. The security forces killed the two terrorists and detained two others who helped them infiltrate into Israel.



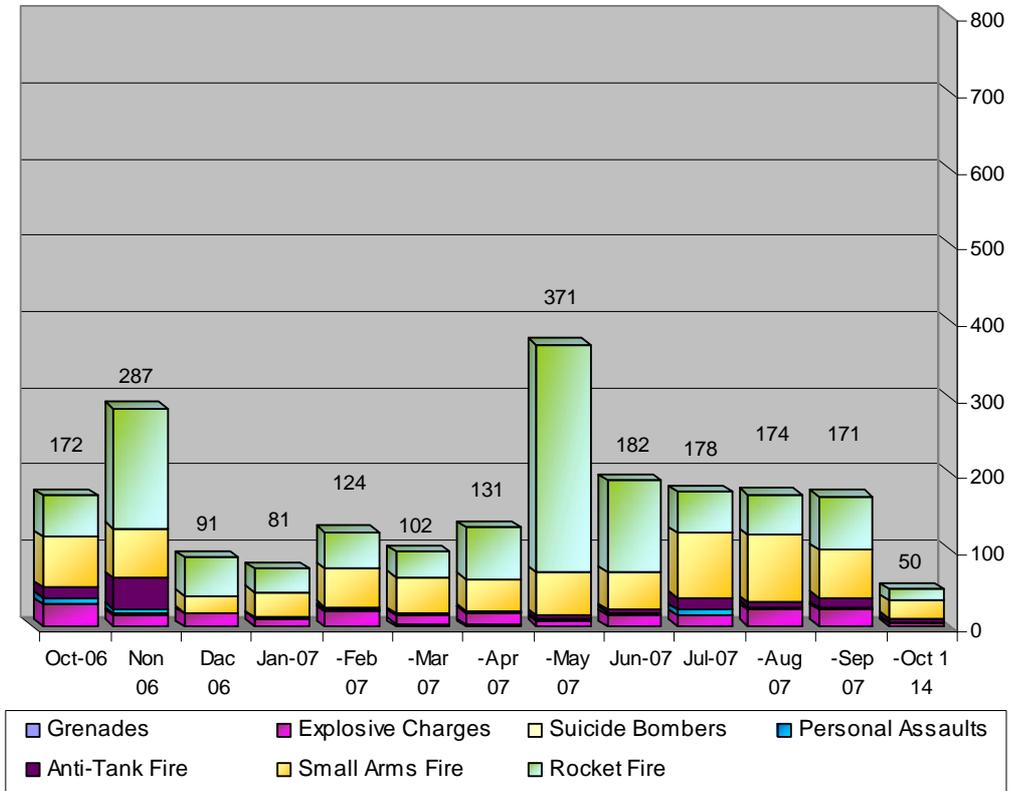
The knotted rope used by the two terrorist operatives to infiltrate Israeli territory.

■ It was recently revealed that the two detainees are both 20, residents of the Jabaliya refugee camp and members of Fatah's terrorist operative wing. During interrogation both admitted that a number of months before the attack they had scouted along the Gaza Strip border to find a convenient location to cross the security fence. On the day of the attack they led the two terrorist organizations to the fence and helped them cross it using a rope ladder which had been prepared in advance.

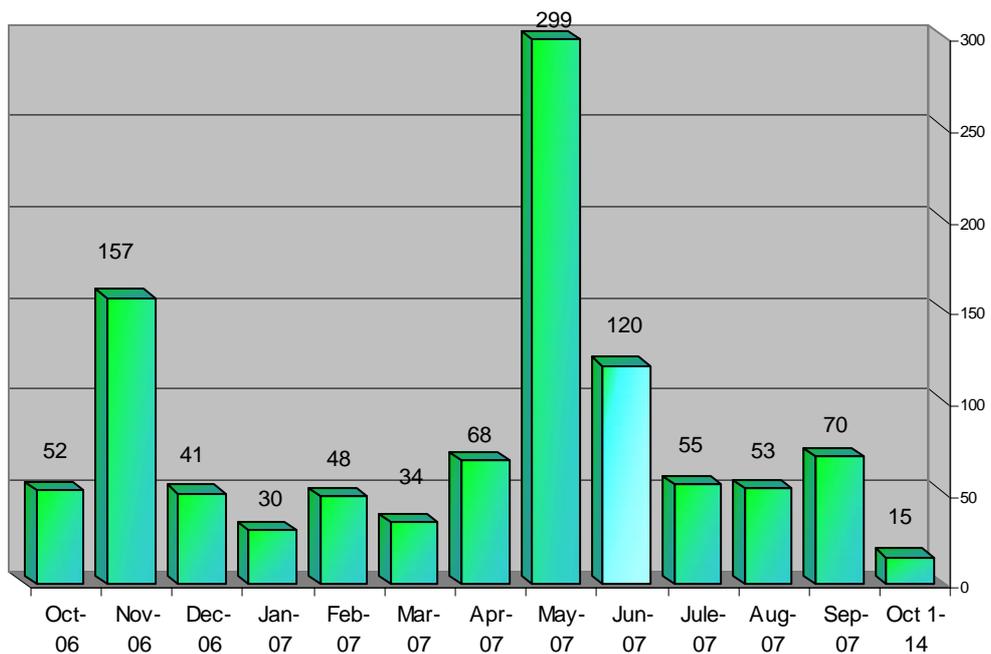
¹ For further information see our August 27, 2007 Bulletin entitled "On the morning of August 25 two terrorist operatives infiltrated Israeli territory from the northern Gaza Strip by climbing over the security fence," at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ct_270807e.pdf and http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/ct_270807e.htm.

Statistical Data

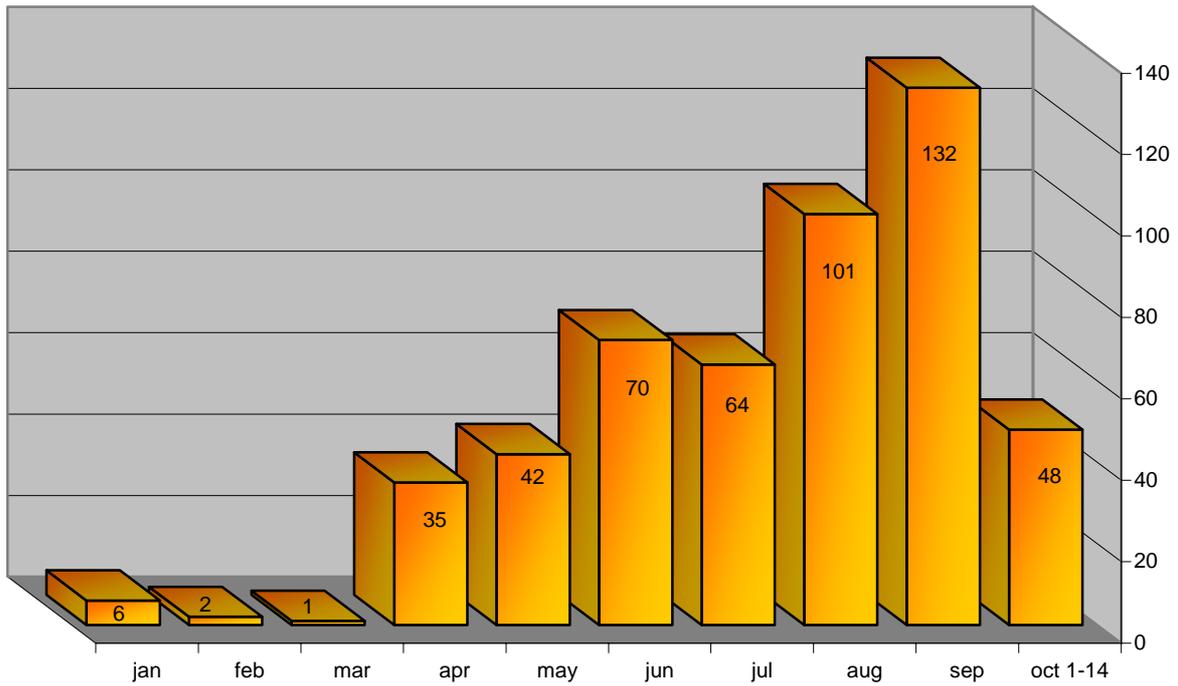
Monthly distribution of attacks



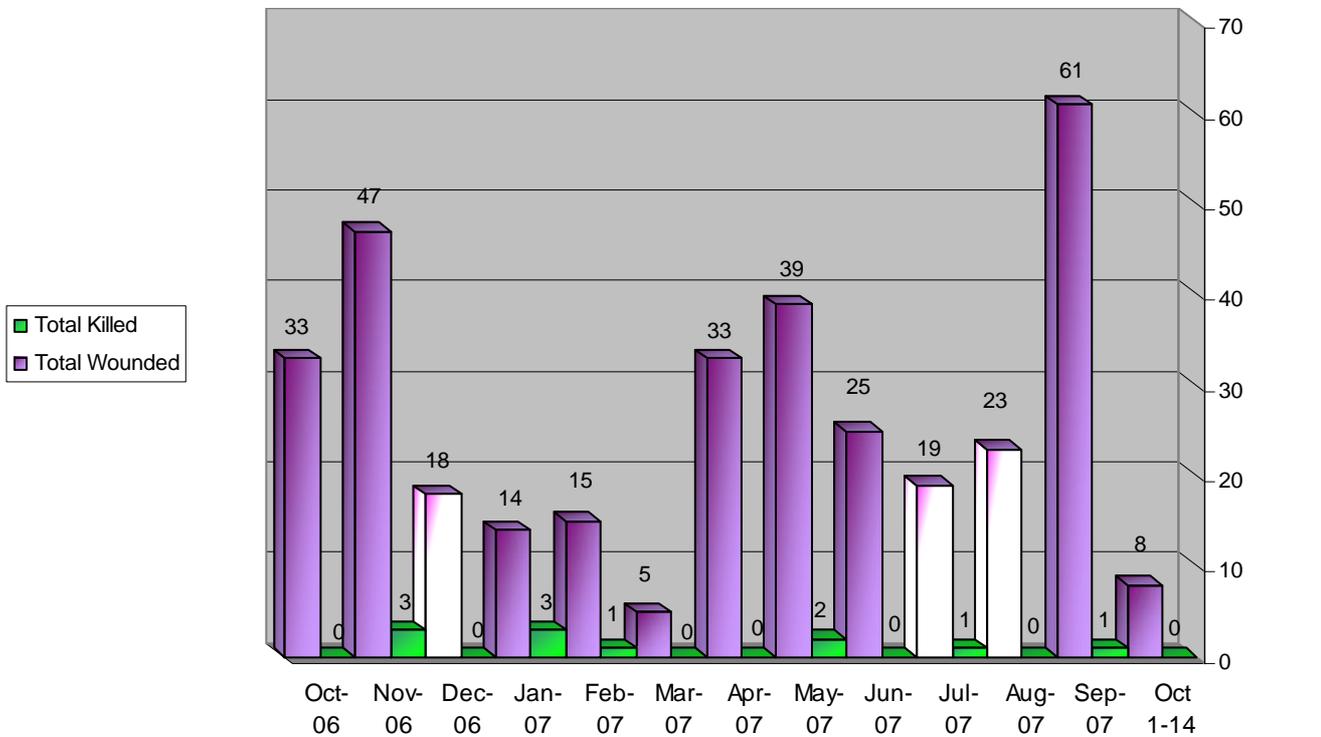
Monthly distribution of identified rocket hits



Monthly distribution of identified mortar shell hits²



Monthly distribution of Israeli casualties



² A new graph which will appear from now on.

The Gaza Strip Crossings

■ On October 9 a team headed by Deputy Minister Matan Vilnai decided to prevent any and all merchandise from leaving the Gaza Strip. It was the implementation of the cabinet decision to impose sanctions following its categorization of the Gaza Strip as a hostile territory. It was also decided that only raw materials necessary for immediate humanitarian requirements would be allowed in.³ As far as Gaza Strip residents' leaving was concerned, only 100-200 will be permitted into Israel per week, and only for urgent humanitarian reasons. It was also decided to close the Sufa Crossing and that only the Kerem Shalom Crossing would be used (*Ma'ariv*, October 10).

■ In effect, the crossings have recently been **only partially operative**. Between 50 and 60 trucks enter every day carrying goods for humanitarian purposes only. **Operating the crossings has been severely hampered by the continual mortar shell fire and advance warnings of attacks, especially Hamas attacks.**

Preparations for the Annapolis meeting



The conference seen through Hamas eyes (Flesteen, October 6).

³ On October 7 at a government meeting, Israeli Security Agency head Yuval Diskin reported that 80% of the raw materials used in the production of rockets reach the Gaza Strip from Israel (*Ma'ariv*, October 10).

Israeli and Palestinian expectations

■ On October 8 the Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams met for the first time since the series of six meetings held over the last four months between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority Chairman Abu Mazen. The Palestinian team is headed by Abu Alaa', and at the October 14 government meeting Foreign Minister Tsipi Livni was appointed to head the Israeli team.

■ **From Palestinian perspective, the objective of the negotiations is to formulate a “statement of principles,” both general and detailed,** for a solution to the core problems of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (borders, Jerusalem, the refugees, the settlements, water and security). The Palestinians have high expectations despite Abu Mazen's weakness and the many doubts about the Palestinian ability to reach, ratify and realize an agreement. In the meantime, until the meeting, the Palestinians want to enlarge the extent of the Israeli goodwill gestures regarding the ongoing relevant issues to strengthen the status of Abu Mazen's government and to achieve the greatest possible legitimacy from Palestinian public opinion.

■ **The Israelis, on the other hand, seek to formulate a joint statement, general in nature, and to use the meeting to achieve support for continued negotiations.** On October 8, in the speech that opened the Knesset winter session, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said the following about the Annapolis meeting: “The November meeting is not a conference which will replace bilateral, direct negotiations between us and the Palestinians. This meeting is intended to provide backing and encouragement and create a comprehensive umbrella of support for the direct process between us and them.” (Prime Minister's Website).

The American Secretary of State's visit

■ On October 14 American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice arrived in Israel for a four-day visit to try to narrow the gaps between the Israeli and

Palestinian positions and speed up the process of making a joint statement before the Annapolis meeting. On October 14, in a news briefing before she left for Israel, **she tried to lower expectations**, saying that she did not expect a breakthrough which would lead to a joint paper dealing with the core issues (Reuters, October 14). On her first day in Israel she met with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and other government ministers. On October 15 she met with Abu Mazen and members of the Palestinian negotiating team.

■ With Rice's arrival in the region, Palestinian minister of information Riyad al-Maliki called upon the United States to exert pressure on Israel "at least until it commits to formulating a document [of principles] and keeping to a time table once the negotiations begin." Al-Maliki added that Rice would not force concessions on the Palestinians because "there is nothing the Palestinians will concede" (Al-Arabiya TV, October 14).

Doubts over the Palestinians' ability to fulfill their commitments

■ The Israeli government deliberated its preparations for Annapolis at a meeting held on October 7. According to a report in *Ha'aretz* (Barak Ravid, October 8), Military Intelligence chief Amos Yadlin and ISA head Yuval Diskin were **pessimistic** about PA chairman Abu Mazen's ability to control events and implement any agreement reached. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert praised Abu Mazen and said that for "the first time there is a Palestinian leadership that wants to reach a two-state solution and that recognizes Israel as a Jewish state." He agreed that the Palestinian would have implementation difficulties and that "Israel therefore will do nothing on the ground before the Palestinians pass the first test of the road map, that is, a battle against terrorism, disbanding the terrorist organizations and stopping the spread of hate propaganda."⁴

■ According to a different *Ha'aretz* report (Amos Harel, October 11), IDF intelligence expressed doubts regarding the PA's ability to take responsibility for

⁴ Translated from the Hebrew edition of *Ha'aretz*, October 8.

the cities in the West Bank. Military intelligence is of the opinion that the Palestinians want to use the Annapolis meeting to extract immediate gains while their commitments to Israel, first of which is the battle against terrorism, will be postponed or not implemented as demanded. Military intelligence is also of the opinion that Abu Mazen and his staff show no signs of initiative when it comes to security and practical ability to take additional responsibility.

Abu Mazen's high expectations

■ Abu Mazen, who was encouraged by his meetings with President Bush and regional and international leaders, publicly demonstrated a **high level of expectations** from the Annapolis meeting, seeking comprehensive solutions for all the core issues of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, similar to the Oslo agreements. In an interview with Palestinian TV on October 10 he detailed his expectations from the meeting:

✿ **The meeting's objectives:** For Abu Mazen, the objective of the meeting is to lay the foundation for an agreement concerning the **six core issues**: Jerusalem, refugees, borders, settlements, water and security.

✿ **Source of authority for the meeting:** The road map contains all the international sources of authority, which include UN Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 1397, President Bush's "vision," the Mitchell and Tenet reports and the Arab initiative.

✿ **Time table:** The meeting is to define a time table for "serious negotiations" which will lead to the permanent status agreement and a peace treaty.⁵

■ **The establishment of an independent Palestinian state:** The Palestinians demand the establish of an independent Palestinian state according

⁵ Palestinian information minister Riyad al-Maliki said that the Palestinians expected negotiations to last no longer than six months (Al-Hayat, October 5).

to the 1967 borders side by side with the State of Israel, with the possibility of minor border changes.⁶ Its capital would be East Jerusalem, while the capital of Israel would be West Jerusalem. The independent Palestinian state would include the West Bank and Gaza Strip and its area would be **6,205 square kilometers** (3,855 square miles, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the size of Connecticut).⁷ It would have full sovereignty over its territory, water and water sources, air space, natural resources and everything contained therein.

✿ **The refugee problem:** The refugee problem had to be solved by the Arab initiative, which stated that “a just and agreed solution for the refugees [would be found] according to [UN Security Council] Resolution 194.”⁸

✿ **Ratification of the agreement:** Any agreement reached with Israel would be subject to a referendum “of the entire Palestinian people” (that is, including the Palestinians refugees living in the Arab countries) **or** of the Palestinian National Council.⁹

■ **Syrian and Lebanese participation in the meeting:** Abu Mazen said it was important for Syria and Lebanon to participate because they had “occupied territories” which were included in the Arab initiative, which for him was one of the sources of authority for the meeting. However, he added that in practical terms their participation depended on them and on the International Quartet.

⁶ After an interview with “Abu Mazen aides” quoted by the AP in Ramallah on October 10. They stated that in discussions recently held with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Abu Mazen agreed to the exchange of territories (of identical size) with Israel and suggested about 2% of the West Bank. They claimed that Ehud Olmert wanted between 6% and 8% of the West Bank. Abu Alaa’ said that every border adjustment had to be made on “a mutual basis so that they would be equal in value and extent” (Al-Jazeera TV, October 11).

⁷ Abu Alaa’ said that the Palestinian state had to have territorial continuity by means of a secure road under Palestinian control which would connect the Gaza Strip to the West Bank (Al-Jazeera TV, October 11).

⁸ For further information see our April 6, 2007 Bulletin entitled “Reaffirmation of the Arab peace initiative by the Riyadh summit meeting (First summary and appraisal),” at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/riyadh_e0307.htm and http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/riyadh_e0307.pdf.

⁹ **Both alternatives are extremely problematical and perhaps even impossible to carry out.** It is doubtful whether the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip and countries such as Jordan would permit a referendum to be held. Even if they did, it is more than likely that the majority of Palestinian refugees would not support an agreement which did not fulfill their expectations, the first of which is their return to the State of Israel. As far as the Palestinian National Council is concerned, it is paralyzed because all the PLO’s institutions are paralyzed, and in any event Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad do not recognize its authority.

✿ **Coordination with the Arab states:** Such coordination, said Abu Mazen, would be carried out through an Arab League “follow-up committee.”¹⁰ Such coordination was important because the Palestinian core issues had implications for the Arab states as well. The refugees were a concern for Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq; the rights to the water of the Jordan River were an issue in common for Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the Palestinians and Israel; the Dead Sea was bordered by three countries and the issue of the territorial waters of the Gaza Strip was a common interest. “We have to go deeply into detail on all those issues,” said Abu Mazen.

Opposition to the meeting

■ Hamas and the PIJ are strongly opposed to the Annapolis meeting, which they represent as meant to harm the Palestinian cause, give a “gift” to Israel in the form of the normalization of relations with the Arab countries and to harness the Arabs to American policy regarding Iraq and Iran. Hamas spokesmen made it clear the movement intended to oppose the meeting, whether politically and through the media or by carrying out terrorist attacks. While Abu Mazen hopes that if the meeting succeeds it will help him in his struggle with Hamas, Hamas expects that if the meeting fails it will strengthen the movement’s position in the internal Palestinian arena and enable formal talks to be held between Hamas and Abu Mazen on Hamas’ terms.¹¹

■ Hamas and the other Palestinian terrorist organizations had the following to say about stepping up terrorist attacks if the meeting succeeded:

✿ **Khaled Mashaal**, chief of Hamas’ political bureau in Damascus said in Mecca on October 8 that “the resistance [i.e., violence and terrorism] is our

¹⁰ Palestinian information minister Riyad al-Maliki said that Abu Mazen had agreed with Arab League secretary Omar Moussa that a limited committee would follow the negotiations, and it would meet after every round of talks (*Al-Hayat*, October 5).

¹¹ PLO negotiating team head Saeb Erekat claimed that after the final status agreement was achieved “Hamas would fall without a single shot being fired.” However, he also said that if an agreement were not reached, the fate of the West Bank might be in danger (Israeli TV Channel 10, October 11).

strategy for the liberation of Palestine,” and added that “**we are therefore planning a new round of resistance**”(Okaz, October 9). The headline of the October 10 issue of Hamas’ daily newspaper *Felesteen* quoted Khaled Mashaal as saying “The enemy is knocking at our door to negotiate with us and we refuse, **and are planning a new round of resistance.**”

✿ **Khalil al-Hayah**, a high-ranking Hamas member, said he expected the Annapolis meeting to fail, noting that the “problem of Palestine” would only be solved through the “resistance” (i.e., violence and terrorism). He expected, he said, that after the meeting failed the Palestinian public would be convinced that negotiations brought only catastrophes and that it had to prepare for the continuation of the “resistance.” He also said that the Gaza Strip had “become the stronghold of the resistance” and called upon the “resistance” organizations (i.e., the Palestinian terrorist organizations) **to carry out attacks in the West Bank** (Al-Aqsa TV, October 6).

✿ **Abu Ubeida**, Hamas/ Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades spokesman, denied the reports in Israeli media that Hamas was planning to sabotage the Annapolis meeting through the use of suicide bombing attacks. He added that the “resistance” (i.e., terrorism) was not dependent on “international or regional conspiracies” but on “the existence of the occupation.” He said that “**no international meeting will succeed in tying our hands or preventing us from carrying out our duties in resisting and attacking the oppressive, occupying enemy**” (Hamas/ Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades Website, October 14).

✿ **Mustafa al-Sawaf** wrote an editorial in the September 29 issue of the Hamas newspaper *Felesteen* entitled “Abu Mazen can agree or refuse, **the third intifada is on the way.**” He wrote that the second intifada had faded somewhat, but that if the American-Israeli plan were adopted at the Annapolis meeting “**the Palestinian people will have no option except a third intifada...** It will not target only the [Israeli] occupation but also President Abu Mazen and his group, who might agree to the

American plan... **Let everyone beware the coming intifada**, which will be stronger and more violent than its predecessor...”

✿ **Khaled al-Batash**, a high-ranking PIJ official, said that no result achieved by the Annapolis meeting would bind his organization. He noted that the PIJ would continue its terrorist attacks (“resistance”) even if a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders was agreed upon at the meeting. In his view, “all Palestine is under the occupation, not only the territories occupied since 1967” (*Al-Quds al-Arabi*, October 3).

■ On the political-propaganda front the following was said:

✿ **The Saudis and Egyptians were called upon not to attend the meeting:** Hamas government prime minister Ismail Haniya claimed that the Annapolis meeting sought to normalize relations between Israel and the Arab world, especially relations with Saudi Arabia. He added that Hamas would appeal to the Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and demand that they reexamine every decision relating to their participation in the meeting (*Felesteen*, October 6). Haniya also called upon the Arab countries not to normalize relations with Israel (*Al-Aqsa TV*, October 12).

✿ **Initiative to hold an opposition meeting in Damascus:** Hamas is organizing a meeting in Damascus of the terrorist organizations opposing the Annapolis meeting. It is expected to be held at approximately the same time. Osama Hamdan, Hamas representative in Lebanon, said that the meeting would be attended by several organizations, including Hamas, the PIJ, the Popular Front-General Command (Ahmad Jibril’s organization), the Arab Liberation Front, Fatah/Intifada and the Democratic Palestinian Party (*Islamonline*, October 10). The meeting’s objective, said Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri, would be to ratify the “rights” of the Palestinians, including their “rights” to Jerusalem, and to oppose any attempt to harm those “rights” (*Agence France Presse*, October 7).

The Internal Palestinian Arena

Hamas and Abu Mazen continue establishing their control in the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria

- Hamas has recently strengthened its rule more completely over the Gaza Strip. One step was to complete the unification of the Executive Force with the Palestinian police. The police chief in Gaza City announced that in a few days an announcement would be issued regarding the establishment of a unified police command (Al-Risala, October 11). Hamas' alternative justice system is under construction and seven judges have been sworn in. Ismail Haniya's government has even begun paying the salaries of security service members and employees in the public sector.
- In Judea and Samaria Abu Mazen plans to announce that Force 17 will join the Presidential Guard as part of the reorganization of the PA's security forces (Ma'an News Agency, October 13).



The Haniya government's courthouse opens in Gaza (Al-Jazeera in English, October 7).

Violent clashes continue in the Gaza Strip

- Clashes between Hamas and Fatah continued in the Gaza Strip. There were also sporadic clashes between Hamas and PIJ elements and Hamas and the Popular Resistance Committees as well. Hamas sources in the Gaza Strip accused Fatah of targeting Hamas with a series of side charges. Fatah accused Hamas of

detonating an explosive device in front of the home of a high-ranking Fatah official and of continuing to arrest Fatah activists.

■ The more prominent incidents were the following:

✿ **Khan Yunis:** An explosive device was placed in the car of a Hamas terrorist operative. It is not known if there were casualties (Ma'an News Agency, October 11).

✿ **Gaza City:** An explosive device was laid in the western part of the city by operatives affiliated with Fatah. It targeted the Executive Force's coast guard and resulted in the deaths of four Palestinians. Hamas spokesmen initially claimed that the Israeli Air Force was responsible but later admitted that the explosion was part of the internal Palestinian confrontation (Hamas news Websites, October 2).



After the attack on the coast guard (Al-Aqsa TV, October 2).

Security force activities in the West Bank

■ Palestinian security force actions against individuals and institutions affiliated with Hamas continue in the West Bank. Events in two focal points were prominent:

✿ **Nablus:** The commander of general intelligence in Nablus said that his organization had confiscated weapons, explosive devices and explosives

from elements affiliated with Hamas (Nablus TV Website, October 11), and that Hamas operatives had been detained. The security forces also raided an Islamic elementary school for boys belonging to the Al-Tadhamun charitable society in Refidia (Nablus) and confiscated equipment (Palestine-info Website, October 11). Students belonging to Hamas at Al-Najah University protested that their student union at the university (the Islamic Block) was being persecuted and that it had been forbidden to hold activities on campus.

✿ **Qalqilia:** Two Hamas operatives were killed in clashes with security forces. A curfew was declared in part of the city (Al-Aqsa TV, October 13).

■ The Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr, which ends the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, was exploited by the terrorist organizations to make conciliatory statements and to call for an end to mutual incitement and confrontations. A number of mutual goodwill gestures were also made, including an announcement from the governor of the Nablus region regarding the release of 25 Hamas security prisoners. Hamas operatives were released in several other cities as well. In the Gaza Strip, the interior ministry of Ismail Haniya's government decided to allow Fatah members in Gaza to gather and pray in the open air (Palestine-info Website, October 13; Wafa News Agency, October 12). The holiday prayers in the Gaza Strip were mostly conducted peacefully, without disturbances or exceptional incidents.