November 11, 2013 – Hamas Vows to Continue Digging Terror Tunnels

On November 8, 2013 Arutz Sheva reported a Hamas spokesman vowing to continue to dig terror tunnels and encourage terror attacks. In addition, Arutz Sheva carried this report regarding the exhumation and testing of Yasser Arafat’s remains in an attempt to confirm his cause of death in 2004.

Senior Palestinian Authority (PA) and Fatah leader Jibril Rajoub has appeared on PA TV and accused the US of being behind former PA Chairman Yasser Arafat's supposed 'poisoning' by Israel. "It's obvious that Israel wasn't alone," said Rajoub in an interview aired last week, adding "the US was there. That fool known as [George] Bush took away Yasser Arafat's protection and gave [Israeli Prime Minister Ariel] Sharon the green light to liquidate Yasser Arafat."

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Despite medical testimony that Arafat died in 2004 of AIDS, recent investigations begun November 2012 found a "moderate" possibility of polonium poisoning. The inconclusive early results were quickly jumped upon as the PA declared Israel was the "only suspect" in Arafat’s "assassination.” Furthermore, the PA Minister of Religious Affairs previously on PA TV claimed “Jews poisoned Arafat like they poisoned Islam's prophet Mohammed.”

However, in contrast to the early accusations against Israel and the new accusation of the US, there have been other theories. Fahmi Shabane, former intelligence officer in the PA, suggested that PA leaders including PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas were in fact behind the "murder."\(^1\)

The BBC reported the conclusions of the independent agencies analyzing the possibility that Arafat was poisoned with polonium-210. The Swiss team concluded that the results “moderately support(ed)” the theory. The Russian examiners stated that their examination “did not give sufficient evidence” of polonium as the cause of death. Arafat’s widow did not accuse anyone one and stated that her husband had many enemies around the world.\(^2\)

November 24, 2013 – Geneva interim agreement on Iranian nuclear program

On 24 November 2013, an interim agreement was signed between Iran and the P5+1 countries in Geneva, Switzerland. It consists of a short-term freeze of portions of Iran's nuclear program in exchange for decreased economic sanctions on Iran, as the countries work towards a long-term agreement.\(^3\)

Following is an excerpt from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's remarks today in the Knesset:

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\(^1\) http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/174314#.UpUq18TZ9Ac

\(^2\) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24863138

\(^3\) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_interim_agreement_on_Iranian_nuclear_program
"I would be happy if I could join those voices around the world that are praising the Geneva agreement. It is true that the international pressure which we applied was partly successful and has led to a better result than what was originally planned but this is still a bad deal. It reduces the pressure on Iran without receiving anything tangible in return and the Iranians who laughed all the way to the bank are themselves saying that this deal has saved them.

I spoke last night with US President Barack Obama. We agreed that an Israeli team led by National Security Adviser Yossi Cohen will leave soon for the US to discuss the permanent agreement with Iran. That agreement must lead to one result: The dismantling of Iran's military nuclear capability. I remind you that only last week, during the talks, the leaders of Iran repeated their commitment to destroy the State of Israel, and I reiterate here today my commitment, as Prime Minister of Israel, to prevent them from achieving the ability to do so."4

July 8, 2014 - Operation Protective Edge

Operation Protective Edge
(http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/talking/89_protective.html)

What Provoked the Recent Escalation in Violence?

Since Israel evacuated every settler and soldier from the Gaza Strip seven years ago in hopes of stimulating the peace process, it has been attacked by terrorists. Thousands of deadly rockets and mortars were fired into southern Israel, causing deaths, injuries, and creating a constant state of fear and anxiety among nearly one million Israelis within rocket range.

This barrage finally created such a threat to the security of Israeli citizens that Israel launched Operation Cast Lead in 2008 to degrade Hamas' ability to engage in terror. For five years, terrorist attacks continued sporadically before increasing dramatically in 2012. More than 1,300 rockets were fired into Israel, provoking the killing of Hamas Military Commander Ahmad Jabari on November 14 and eventually Operation "Pillar of Defense". In the summer of 2014 violence between Israelis and Palestinians escalated with the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli and one Palestinian teenagers. Hamas greatly increased rocket fire, including a reported 131 launches between July 7th and 8th. Even on July 7th Israel was seeking a ceasefire and de-escalation, as confirmed by Arabic daily Al-Hayat. This led to the third Gaza operation in five years, titled "Operation Protective Edge."

What are Israel's Objectives for Operation Protective Edge?

Like other nations, Israel maintains its right to self-defense against threats to its civilian population. According to IDF Spokesperson Lt. Col. Peter Lerner, the IDF's goal is to stop

the terror Israel’s citizens face on a daily basis. Israel also seeks to prevent tunnels from being built into Israel and hinder Hamas' ability to make violence against Israel's civilian population. Thousands of reserve troops have been mobilized, but Israelis do not want to initiate a ground operation in Gaza, and have done everything possible to avoid one. The magnitude of the danger to millions of Israelis, however, may leave Israel with no other choice. Israel has said that the operation will end when Hamas stops its rocket fire.

OPERATION PROTECTIVE EDGE
By BEN HARTMAN
Jerusalem Post, 08/28/2014

50 days of Israel's Gaza operation, Protective Edge – by the numbers

For 50 days of war, the home front and soldiers on the front lines were battered by thousands of rockets and mortar shells, as armed groups in Gaza fired 4,564 projectiles at Israel.

This statistic is one of several released by the IDF as the fighting ended on Tuesday night.

According to the army, 3,659 rocket and mortar impact sites were found – counting those fired on IDF soldiers in Gaza. Of those that struck in Israel, 224 hit built-up areas. A further 735 were shot down by the Iron Dome missile defense system. Also, the IDF said that there were 197 “failed launchings” – projectiles that never left the Gaza Strip or that did not launch at all.

During the war 70 people were killed on the Israeli side, including 64 soldiers. Gaza health officials said more than 2,100 people were killed in Strip in the fighting and many thousands more were wounded.

The Office of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), the body responsible for running the Israeli border crossings with Gaza, said that since the operation began on July 8, 959 tons of medicine and medical supplies have entered the Strip through the crossings, and that 5,359 trucks carrying goods entered through the Kerem Shalom crossing.

The crossing and Kibbutz Kerem Shalom were targeted by mortars and rockets throughout the war.

A total of 82,201 IDF reservists were called up during the war. Throughout the fighting, 64 soldiers were killed and 469 were wounded.

During the operation, the IDF struck some 5,226 targets in Gaza, including 1,814 targets linked to rocket firing, 109 weapons depots, and 85 weapon-making facilities. The army also attacked 312 houses belonging to people who were involved in terrorism, according
to the IDF. The air force also carried out 840 strikes to support ground forces, and 192 attacks on Hamas military or training sites.

The destruction of Hamas attack tunnels was a central goal of the operation, and the IDF said that 32, everyone it identified, were eliminated.

According to Magen David Adom, there were 842 Israeli casualties during the fighting. Six civilians were killed by rocket or mortar strikes and 36 were wounded by shrapnel, including 10 who were seriously injured, 6 who were moderately injured, and 20 who sustained light injuries.

MDA added that another 33 people were hurt by flying glass, and that 18 people were hurt in traffic accidents that occurred when rocket warning sirens sounded, including one person who was seriously injured. Also, 159 people were injured while running for bomb shelters, and 581 were treated for shock. In addition, nine people were killed in three terrorist attacks in Israel.

**December 31, 2014 – Israel hails highest immigration figure in a decade**

AFP, December 31, 2014 1:51 PM

Jerusalem (AFP) - The number of Jews moving to Israel leapt in 2014 to its highest figure in a decade, with Western Europe leading the way, the immigration ministry said Wednesday.

Immigration hit a 10-year high, with the arrival of some 26,500 new residents, according to a joint statement with the Jewish Agency, a quasi-governmental organisation tasked with encouraging Jews to move to Israel.

This marks a significant 32 percent increase over last year's approximately 20,000 immigrants, the statement said.

This "was a year of record-breaking aliyah," Jewish Agency chairman Natan Sharansky said, using the Hebrew word for immigration to Israel.

It "also saw a historic shift: for the first time in Israel's history, the number of immigrants who came to Israel from the free world is greater than that of immigrants fleeing countries in distress."

For the first time ever, France provided the biggest number, as more than 6,600 Jews moved to Israel. That was nearly twice the 3,400 who arrived in 2013.

Overall, immigration from Western Europe increased 88 percent, with the arrival of some 8,640 people, compared with 4,600 a year earlier.
Some 620 arrived from Britain, compared with 520 a year earlier, and the number from Italy doubled to 340. Around 240 arrived from Belgium, a slight decrease, and the number from Germany remained stable, at approximately 120. Immigration from former Soviet Union countries saw a 50 percent increase, with the arrival of some 11,430 people, compared with 7,610 in 2013.

That was largely driven by an exodus from conflict-wracked Ukraine, where the number surged 190 percent to 5,840.

More than half of all people moving to Israel in 2014 were under 35, among them 5,300 children and some 8,200 adults aged between 18-34.

Tel Aviv was the city which received the highest number of immigrants, at around 3,000. It was followed by the northern coastal city of Netanya and then Jerusalem.