

MEMO

March 25, 2011

Iranian Weapons, Nuclear Smuggling Must be Stopped

Israeli naval forces last week intercepted 50 tons of Iranian arms headed for Hamas and other Iranian-backed terrorist groups in Gaza. Terrorists in the coastal region have launched more than 140 mortars and rockets into Israel since January, and more than 80 since Sunday. This weapons-smuggling incident highlights Iran's ongoing violations of repeated U.N. Security Council resolutions. The United States should impose sanctions on companies that facilitate Iran's weapons dealing, which undermines peace efforts and is destabilizing the region.

Iran is violating U.N. Security Council resolutions by exporting arms to Hamas and Hizballah through an elaborate smuggling network.

- Israeli naval forces in the Mediterranean stopped the *Victoria*—a cargo vessel operated by France's CMA-CGM headed to Egypt. The ship was carrying more than [50 tons of Iranian weapons](#), including [3,000 mortar shells](#) and 67,000 AK-47 rounds.
- The cargo, which was intended to be smuggled from Egypt into Gaza, also included six [Nasr-1 anti-ship missiles](#) and two radar systems.
- The Nasr-1—based on the Chinese C-704 missile—has a range of 20 miles. Employing the Nasr-1 would represent a dramatic upgrade of Hamas' capabilities and would jeopardize Israeli cargo ships, pipelines and offshore drilling rigs.
- In the past two years, Israeli and international authorities have intercepted at least five cargo vessels carrying Iranian weapons shipments for terrorist groups in the Middle East and Africa.
- Turkey is now a major transit point for Iranian shipments to Hamas and Hizballah. While Ankara recently stopped two cargo flights carrying weapons en route to Syria (it only confiscated weapons from one), the U.S. Treasury was forced to sanction the Turkish-Iranian Jafari smuggling network after Turkey failed to shut it down.
- In February, British Special Forces in Afghanistan confiscated a significant shipment of Iranian rockets intended for the Taliban. NATO's Senior Civilian Representative Mark Sedwill stated that these weapons represented “a step-change in the lethal impact of weaponry” from Iran.
- Iran also smuggles weapons to Hamas via Somalia, Sudan and Egypt through underground tunnels in the Sinai. On March 13, Egyptian security officials intercepted five trucks near the Sudanese border carrying large quantities of mortars, rocket propelled grenades, rifles and explosives.



Israeli naval forces confiscated an Iranian shipment of weapons to Hamas containing advanced, game-changing weaponry.

Iranian weapons shipments are a clear violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions and international maritime law.

- UN Security Council Resolution 1860, passed in January 2009, calls on all states to prevent illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition to the Gaza Strip, which is controlled by Hamas.
- U.N. Security Council Resolution 1747, passed in March 2007, prohibits Iran from supplying, selling or transferring, directly or indirectly, any arms or related materiel. The resolution also required all countries to prohibit the procurement or transfer of Iranian weapons shipments.
- U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701, passed in August 2006, requires all nations, including Iran, to take the necessary measures to prevent the sale or supply of arms to any entity in Lebanon except as authorized by the Lebanese government.
- Iranian arms shipments, including the mislabeling of cargo and falsification of cargo manifests, are also violations of the International Maritime Organization's Conventions and professional standards.

Iran also utilizes its smuggling networks to acquire vital equipment for its illicit nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

- Since September 2010, Malaysian, South Korean and Singaporean officials have seized shipments of nuclear- and missile-related goods en route to Iran in violation of Security Council resolutions.
- In December, South Korean authorities intercepted more than 400 suspicious tubes—with potential uses in nuclear facilities—aboard a jet cargo at the Seoul airport. In September, aluminum powder that can be used for rockets was intercepted aboard a ship in Singapore harbor.
- Customs officials in the United Arab Emirates seized 10 containers of North Korean-manufactured weapons aboard a CMA-CGM-operated ship bound for Iran in July 2009. The weapons included parts for a North Korean intermediate range ballistic missile.
- State Department Special Advisor for Nonproliferation Robert Einhorn [expressed concern](#) earlier this month about the “transfer of proliferation-sensitive equipment and materials to Iran by Chinese companies.” U.S. officials had [previously accused](#) China of providing restricted technology to Iran.

The United States and the international community must enforce U.N. Security Council resolutions targeting Iran's illicit exports and imports.

- The continued failure of the U.N. Security Council to enforce sanctions on Iran activities and impose penalties raises serious questions about its credibility and effectiveness.
- The U.N. Security Council must name and hold accountable those countries, companies and individuals that knowingly violate prohibitions on Iranian arms exports and nuclear imports, including banning the ships of those companies from U.S. ports.
- Given Iran's repeated violation of international maritime law and U.N. sanctions, foreign shipping companies should discontinue service to Iranian ports and cease carriage of Iranian cargo.
- Countries must implement strict cargo screening procedures to prevent themselves from becoming a weapons proliferation hub. The United States should implement stricter import standards from those countries that fail to enforce U.N. Security Council sanctions.
- The United States should investigate French shipping company CMA-GGM, after three of its vessels were found carrying cargo in violation of U.N. sanctions.