

# ISRAEL

62nd SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**Statement by**  
**Ambassador Daniel Carmon**  
**Chargé d’Affaires, a.i.**

Agenda item 17  
“Situation in the Middle East”

United Nations, New York  
30 November 2007

*This statement is available on the internet at <http://www.israel-un.org>*

Mr. President,

The situation in the Middle East is rapidly changing. Though some previously embraced the misleading narrative that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the cause of instability in our region, the facts on the ground show precisely the opposite: that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the consequence of instability caused by the rising extremism which is sweeping our region.

The recent meeting in Annapolis highlighted the growing recognition and agreement that the real dangers to the region come directly from Islamic extremism and its champion Iran, who sponsors terrorism around the globe, tries to attain nuclear weapons, and relentlessly defies the will of the international community.

Indeed, the real situation in the Middle East was best articulated late last week by a Syrian Member of Parliament who said there is an (quote) “alliance stretching from Teheran to Gaza” (quote). Syria, today, continues to be the home of forces of extremism and instability, hosting the headquarters of Hamas and Islamic Jihad and others, and facilitating Hizbullah’s rearming in southern Lebanon.

Behind almost every conflict in the Middle East, we see the long arm and shadow of Iran. In Lebanon, Hizbullah – Iran’s terrorist organization proxy – foments domestic instability and political deadlock. In the Palestinian areas, Hamas fires rockets and carries out suicide bombings with money and support from Iran. In Iraq, the insurgents and terrorists are financed and trained by Iran.

Iran’s destabilizing activities are not restricted to our region. As we saw in the recent warrants issued by Interpol for the bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center of Buenos Aires in 1994, and in the bombing of the Israeli embassy there two years earlier in 1992, Iran has long funded and supported global terrorism. All the while, Iran’s campaign of Holocaust denial and calls for Israel’s destruction add rhetorical flair to its already murderous and bloody operations around the globe.

Mr. President,

The recognized urgency of the Iranian threat has enabled the assembling of a like-minded group of moderate Muslim and Arab states in the region. The gathering in Annapolis reflects the hope for peace and security in the region, and the Arab world’s fear of the ominous threat from Iran.

In order to secure the situation in our region, the international community must stand up and confront the enemies of peace. Otherwise, progress will never be made – no matter how much we yearn for peace, no matter what we are willing to sacrifice for it.

We have the tools to deal with the extremist threat. For Lebanon, Security Council resolution 1701 must be fully implemented to ensure the security and stability of the region. Hizbullah continues redeploying in south Lebanon, and its arsenal continues to

grow, as weapons are transferred across the Lebanese-Syrian border in violation of the arms embargo. For the Palestinian areas, the Road Map clearly states the obligations and responsibilities of each side, in particular with regard to dismantling the terrorist infrastructure and an end to incitement and violence.

The terrorists and extremists have shown their cards. They will not back down. But the international community cannot surrender. The extremists seek to strip us of our most valuable possessions: the freedoms we enjoy and the tolerance and mutual understanding we promote. The enemies of peace continue to hold in their perilous grasp our missing and captive sons, Gilad Shalit, Udi Goldwasser, and Eldad Regev. Israel – and all those committed to peace and freedom – longs for the day when our boys, Gilad, Eldad, and Udi, will be brought back to their families and to their home.

Mr. President,

The situation in our region leads us to two wholly contradictory conclusions. On one hand, never before in the history of our region has there been such potential for peace and harmony. And on the other hand, never before in the history of our region has there been such potential for instability and tragedy. The choice between these two very different fates can only be made by the people of our region and their leaders.

In Israel, last week, we celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to Jerusalem. This courageous, historic first visit by an Arab leader to Israel, and the speech he gave at the Israeli parliament, is to this day credited with changing the geopolitics of the entire Middle East, opening the path for peace between Israel and the Arab world, and shaping a new agenda of political relations in the region.

Sadat's courageous push for dialogue and common understanding was followed years later when King Hussein and Jordan traveled that same road to peace. Today, Israel, Egypt, and Jordan have collectively known more years of peace than of confrontation and conflict, years in which open dialogue and cooperative ventures have been possible.

Yesterday, my delegation addressed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, showing that while the tragic choices made by the Arab states could have been averted 60 years ago, the realities of today – that were seen in Annapolis – suggest that the time is ripe for an agreement to be reached between the parties. There is a commitment by our respective leaders, Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas, to the bilateral Israeli-Palestinian process, supported by the Coalition of Peace, the moderate Arab and Muslim states, and the international committee, who will do all that they can to bolster both of us.

History has shown the power and profound implications of the choices made by the leaders in our region. Let us hope for us, in our time too, the right choices are made, for the betterment of our region and for the betterment of our shared future.

Thank you, Mr. President.