Iranian weapons in Gaza

22 Nov 2012

Upper floors of apartment building in Rishon Lezion hit by a Fajr 5 rocket (Photo: Reuters)

In light of the events in Gaza, senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) officials recently admitted for the first time that the weapons in their possession originate from Iran, as did Hamas.

In view of these declarations, official Iran is finding it difficult to continue issuing sweeping denials of these reports and using "creative" formulations in order to evade an explicit admission on the matter. However, semi-official senior sources are admitting that their country is aiding the Palestinian organizations both militarily and financially.

The comments by the Hizbullah Secretary-General, praising the role of Iran and Syria in arming the various concerns in Gaza with a diverse range of rockets and weaponry, should be viewed in this context.

Statements:

Hamas

• Khaled Mashal, Chairman of the Hamas Political Bureau, on Wednesday (21 Nov.) thanked Iran for its role in arming and funding the residents of the Gaza Strip, which is ruled by Hamas.

At a press conference in Cairo, shortly before the announcement of a ceasefire agreement between Israel and the Palestinian factions in Gaza, Mashal said that he is grateful for the Iranian role in aiding Gaza, despite their disagreements on the subject of Syria, "for we stand alongside the peoples." He emphasized that Iran had a role in this aid, thanking Iran for "arms and funding."

[21 Nov. 2012, Sharq al-Awsat and Reuters]
PIJ

• The Secretary-General of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Ramadan Shalah: "Even if there is a difference of opinion with Iran concerning what is going on in Syria, I do not think that between us and Iran, as resistance, there is any difference of opinion pertaining to what is happening in Palestine or concerning the aggression against the Gaza Strip:. On this matter we are one hundred percent in agreement with Iran.

Iran has given us all the support, the arms that serve the resistance - all the world knows that its principal source is Iran, or weaponry that has arrived with Iranian financing… weapons that have reached the Strip arrived via Egypt of today or of former times, and this will continue for the future too… weapons must be supplied to the "resistance", it is unthinkable that only Iran should supply it with weapons."
[20 Nov. 2012, al Jazeera]

• The Deputy Secretary-General of the PIJ, Ziad al-Nakhalah refers to Fajr 5 long-range missiles, which brought about the victory, "from our brothers in Iran." He relates that "these weapons are excellent Iranian weapons" and thanks the Iranians for "the great sacrifices that they made in order that these weapons would get to the Gaza Strip."
[19 Nov. 2012, Palestine al-Alyoum television channel]

• The PIJ spokesman, Daud Shihad: "It is no secret that we say that the military assistance that was provided to the Palestinian resistance, from A to Z, from a rifle round to a rocket, is assistance from the Islamic republic, Iranian assistance. This is a matter that we must state, and it is very proper that we say this, expressly."
[19 Nov. 2012, al-Mwaydeen channel]

• "The members of the resistance are making great efforts to strengthen their capability, and this finds expression in the high quality weaponry in their possession. Here one should note that this weaponry is definitely Iranian weaponry. I wish to take this opportunity to thank our brothers in Iran for the great sacrifice they have made in order to transfer these weapons to the Gaza Strip, in order to protect the Palestinian people."
[18 Nov. 2012, Pal Today television channel]

Iran

• In an exceptional statement, the Parliamentary Speaker of the Iranian Majles, Ali Larijani, declared (Nov. 21) that the Iranian aid that it is providing them is both military and financial. [21 Nov. 2012, Majles website]. "'We are proud to announce our support for the Palestinians and for Hamas, and we proudly state that we will support the Palestinian people even in the most severe circumstances,' he said. Iran was 'honored to have aided the Palestinian people, both in material terms and militarily,' the speaker said."
[21 Nov. 2012, Jerusalem Post]
Earlier (20 Nov.), Larijani praised the capability of the Hamas rockets which, so he claims, overcome the capabilities of the Iron Dome systems and noted that "all [the Palestinian "resistance"] are children of Khomeini and that the 'Zionist regime' should "be aware that the combat and weaponry power are merely the tip of the iceberg of Iran's capabilities."
[20 Nov. 2012, Iranian Television]

When the spokesman of the Iranian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Mehman Ferset, was asked (20 Nov.) as regards reports that Iran is supplying Fajr 5 missiles to the Palestinian organizations, he answered evasively, saying that military experts should be asked which country manufactured those missiles.
[20 Nov. 2012, Teheran Times].

**Hizbullah**

Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah, in an Ashura speech (19 Nov.), urged the Arab states to arm Gaza and admitted the role of Iran and Syria in arming the factions in Gaza with a diverse range of rockets and weapons. The following are the relevant quotes:

"How did this weaponry reach Gaza? How did Fajr 5 reach Gaza? How did the Grad rockets reach Gaza? How did the anti-tank missiles reach Gaza? The Kornet missiles and so forth. And how did anti-aircraft missiles reach Gaza? Who sent them? Who transported them? … Here we must once more refer, unceremoniously, to the role of Iran and Syria in this matter… the true challenge, the true guarantees and the true Islam is that the Arab states will have the courage to transfer weaponry today, before tomorrow, to Gaza… today the Israelis are betting on the missile stores of the Palestinian resistance being emptied out, and the greatest obligation is to open the border and transfer additional missiles to the Palestinian resistance in Gaza. … The Islamic Republic, together with Syria and Hizbullah, will not abandon Gaza…"
[19 Nov. 2012, al-Manar television]