

# Broad Consensus to Rebuild Gaza Without Rearming Hamas

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Brief Analysis

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**As the United States and its partners figure out how to rebuild Gaza without replenishing Hamas's military capabilities, which brought on the destruction in the first place, they can draw on broad international consensus and past agreements.**

One of the greatest conceptual barriers impeding U.S. efforts to achieve lasting peace is the Israeli fear that, should its forces withdraw fully from the West Bank, terrorist groups would fill the vacuum, and rockets would soon rain down from the hills overlooking Israel's low-lying population centers. The latest war in Gaza, during which rockets fell incessantly on Israeli cities, demonstrated that this fear is well founded. Therefore, finding a way to prevent Hamas from reconstituting its long-range arsenal is crucial to any broader peacemaking efforts. As the world shifts its attention to reconstruction in Gaza, it has a unique opportunity to do just that. Accordingly, the United States should lead an international and regional effort to establish a new control regime on Gaza's border with Egypt and interdict arms shipments on the high seas.

## INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS

On August 6, President Obama asked whether the parties could "find a formula in which Israel has greater assurance that Gaza will not be a launching pad for further attacks, perhaps more dangerous attacks as technology develops," even as the Palestinians are given "some prospects for an opening of Gaza so that they do not feel walled off and incapable of pursuing basic prosperity." Surprisingly, twenty-eight European Union foreign ministers offered stronger words on the conflict in a July 22 joint statement: "The EU calls on Hamas to immediately put an end to these acts and to renounce violence. All terrorist groups in Gaza must disarm."

The EU reiterated its position today, calling for ceasefire terms that would "end the threat to Israel posed by Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza as demonstrated by rocket attacks and tunnel construction." The statement also noted Europe's "readiness to contribute" to an international mechanism that would, among other things, "prevent illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition to the Gaza Strip." These statements go beyond the president's framing of the problem, establishing a basic formula in which rebuilding Gaza is premised on disarming Hamas and other

militant factions there.

## EXISTING AGREEMENTS

The 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access (AMA) negotiated by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is a good launching point for instituting a regime to prevent the smuggling of dangerous technologies from Egypt into Gaza. As that agreement specifies, the Palestinian Authority should oversee the movement of goods through the Rafah crossing under the supervision of EU inspectors. The AMA could be bolstered by adding a role for highly professional armed forces from Arab and European states. Empowering such a multinational force would take advantage of the current alignment of interests between Israel, the United States, and moderate Arab governments while also drawing in Europeans. In this way, Rafah could supplement the professionally managed Israeli crossing at Kerem Shalom, which admits large volumes of humanitarian goods daily.

As for opening Gaza's maritime access, no progress can be made on this front without an effective mechanism to prevent arms smuggling by sea. Of particular concern are Iranian weapons, since Israel has intercepted several ships attempting to carry such arms to Gaza. On August 4, Mohsen Rezaii, a senior advisor to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, boasted that "Palestinian resistance missiles are the blessings of Iran's transfer of technology." In 2010, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1929, a Chapter 7 -- and therefore binding -- resolution that provides for the interdiction of arms shipments from Iran by reaffirming relevant provisions in Resolution 1737. Given that many of Gaza's rockets and rocket components originate in Iran, the United States should lead the way in interdicting the shipment of such technologies by invoking its jurisdiction under Resolution 1929. Multilateral efforts to deny Iran its sea route to Hamas are necessary for making good on international calls to disarm terrorist groups in Gaza.

## CONCLUSION

Hamas will not give up its weapons willingly -- the latest fighting showed that it clings to its rockets more dearly than to the lives of its citizens. The international community is determined to relieve suffering in Gaza, and statements such as the recent EU declarations indicate that it is also determined to prevent Hamas from rearming. Fortunately, existing instruments can be strengthened to achieve both objectives -- there is no need to start from scratch.

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