THREATS TO ISRAEL:
IRANIAN REGIONAL AGGRESSION
The Iranian regime prioritizes regional aggression and attacking Israel over the welfare of its own people. The regime spends an inordinate amount of money on furthering its nuclear project, promoting terrorism and destabilizing countries throughout the region.

In Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Gaza, Iranian forces and terrorist proxies are attempting to surround Israel with increasingly advanced weaponry, preparing for the next large-scale conflict against the Jewish state.

Israel has already been forced to act to prevent highly sophisticated weaponry from reaching terrorist adversaries along its borders.

**AMERICA’S RESPONSE**

The United States must continue to support Israel’s right to self-defense and ensure the Jewish state has the means to protect itself. Additionally, the U.S. must continue to push back against Iran’s efforts to destabilize the region, including by increasing the economic pressure on Tehran to limit the resources available to the regime to continue its aggression.
Iran's Land Bridge

Iran is trying to entrench itself across the Middle East and provide advanced weapons to its terrorist proxies to attack Israel. To do this, Iran is working to permanently consolidate a land bridge linking Iran—through Iraq, Syria and Lebanon—to Israel’s borders. Today, it is already using the land bridge to shuttle military equipment and terrorists to Israel’s northern border.
LEBANON

Hezbollah is a terrorist organization dedicated to Israel’s destruction. It receives around $800 million annually from Iran. It already possesses advanced weapons designed to inflict significant damage across Israel, and Iran is dramatically enhancing Hezbollah’s capabilities. Hezbollah entrenches its fighters and weapons in civilian areas in Lebanon, protecting its terrorist infrastructure at the risk of countless Lebanese lives.

GAZA STRIP

Hamas is an Iranian-backed Palestinian terrorist organization that controls the Gaza Strip and openly seeks the destruction of Israel. Hamas diverts international assistance from the people of Gaza to build its terrorist infrastructure—prioritizing destroying Israel over providing for the basic needs of its own people. Hamas, together with groups like Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), is holding Gaza’s Palestinians hostage—using them as human shields and impeding economic development in the Strip.

POLITICAL AND MILITARY ENTRACEMENT

- With Iran’s help, Hezbollah has become the most important political player in Lebanon with a military arsenal stronger than many sovereign states. Hezbollah and its allies control Lebanon’s government.
- Hezbollah uses Iranian funding to turn Lebanon’s cities and towns into urban military compounds, controlling 45,000 troops and an arsenal of some 150,000 rockets and missiles.
- At least one out of every four houses in southern Lebanon reportedly hosts a Hezbollah facility. Hezbollah uses mosques, hospitals, homes and schools to shield its weapons and terrorist infrastructure.

EXPLOITING AND DESTABILIZING

- Iran views Hamas as a proxy and seeks to use the terrorist organization to achieve its ultimate goal of destroying Israel.
- Iran and Hamas work together to prevent Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation.
- In recent years, Tehran has increased its financial and military support to Gaza, contributing an estimated $140 million per year to terrorist groups including Hamas and PIJ.

TARGETING CIVILIANS

- Iran provides Hamas much-needed financial, military and moral support to launch thousands of rockets and mortars at Israel. Hamas and other terror groups in Gaza have launched roughly 15,000 rockets and mortars at Israel since 2005. The group currently maintains an arsenal of roughly 10,000 rockets, some capable of striking major Israeli population centers.
- Hamas digs dozens of cross-border attack tunnels to attack and kidnap Israeli civilians. Since 2017, Israel has destroyed 16 terror tunnels that crossed into Israeli territory.
- In the past few years, Hamas has launched thousands of flying incendiary devices into Israel, burning more than 10,000 acres of Israeli farms, parks and nature reserves.

PRECISION-GUIDED MISSILES

- Iran is providing Hezbollah with technology to build precision-guided missile (PGM) factories in Lebanon to produce new missiles and add precision-guidance systems to its existing stockpiles.
- These PGMs could cripple Israeli society by precisely targeting any strategic site in Israel, including its international airport, power plants, water facilities and military installations. Hezbollah’s leaders have explicitly threatened to target such strategic sites.
- It is untenable for Israel to allow Hezbollah to possess these advanced weapons. It is increasingly likely that Israel will be forced to take additional military action to prevent these weapons from reaching Hezbollah.

EXPANDING REACH

- Since taking over the Gaza Strip in a violent coup, Hamas has also attempted to overthrow the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank.
- Hamas continues to establish terrorist cells in the West Bank, from which it can attack Israeli civilians from multiple fronts while further destabilizing the West Bank.
- Infighting between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, and Hamas’ persistent escalation of terrorism, continues to hinder Israeli, American and international efforts to assist Gaza’s residents.
A Third Front

- Tehran is attempting to entrench a covert force and military infrastructure along Israel’s border with Syria.
- Iran hopes to convert this theater into a third major front to complement Hezbollah’s positions in southern Lebanon and Hamas’ in Gaza. It hopes that Iranian forces and terrorist militias will be able to attack Israel from southern Syria in a future war.
- In July 2018, the Assad regime, supported by Iranian-backed militias, seized control of the Syrian Golan Heights from anti-regime rebels, establishing an Iranian presence near Israel’s border with Syria.

Long-term Build Up

- Iran already has significant military infrastructure in Syria, including approximately 40 military bases, airfields, advanced air defense systems, and production and storage facilities.
- Iran commands tens of thousands of foreign fighters in Syria. These forces not only allow Iran to establish its military positions across the country but also build public support for Iran in Syria.

Launching Point of Aggression

- Iran has leveraged its position in Syria to directly attack Israel at least seven times in the past two years.
- In February 2018, Iran launched an armed drone into Israel—marking the first time Iran had ever directly attacked the Jewish state. In May 2018, Iran also fired 32 rockets toward Israel.
- In August 2019, Iran was preparing to launch explosive-laden “suicide drones” into Israel. Fortunately, Israel acted to preempt the attack prior to its final execution.

Syria

Since it entered the Syrian Civil War, Iran has laid the foundation for a long-term presence in Syria. Tehran has infiltrated Damascus’ military, economy and civil society in an effort to create a permanent dependence on Iran. Syria is a key component of Iran’s land bridge to Hezbollah in Lebanon and to Israel’s northern border in the Golan Heights.

Infiltration of Iraq

- Tehran controls well-financed and well-armed Shia proxies in Iraq—called Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs)—which operate autonomously from the Iraqi military.
- Iran’s goal is to use its state-within-a-state—similar to Hezbollah in Lebanon—as a stepping stone to obtain nearly full control of the Iraqi government.
- Iran invests $150 million annually to control PMUs. These militias total about 50,000 fighters that operate freely in Iraq.

Missile Arsenal

- Over the past year, Iran has shipped its Iraqi militias dozens of highly accurate short- and medium-range guided ballistic missiles that can reach all of Israel if deployed in western Iraq.
- Tehran has also reportedly restarted missile production in several PMU-controlled Iraqi facilities and has trained Iraqi proxies on how to produce and operate these missiles.

Threatening American Interests

- Iran’s Shia militias in Iraq have killed hundreds of U.S. military personnel and, over the past six months, have killed an estimated 500 peaceful anti-Iran Iraqi civilian demonstrators.
- In the past year, Iranian-backed militias targeted the now-shuttered U.S. Consulate in Basra, killed a U.S. contractor, fired missiles at U.S.-owned oil facilities, and assaulted the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.
- Iran’s meddling has exacerbated Iraq’s sectarian tensions, hindered internal Iraqi political reconciliation, empowered ISIS, and tightened Tehran’s control over the government in Baghdad.

Iraq

Directly and through proxies, Iran has established itself as the dominant political and military player in Iraq. Tehran has worked for years to permeate a wide array of institutions in Iraq, including political, security, economic and religious institutions. Iranian forces and proxies have directly attacked American forces and are a key stumbling block to internal Iraqi political reconciliation.
The Iranian people are being held hostage by a regime that prioritizes regional aggression over the well-being of its own people. Increased sanctions help reduce Iran's ability to fund terrorism in the region and around the world.