



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on March 5, 2014

Israel Seizes Ship Carrying Rockets From Iran to Gaza

The Israeli Navy intercepted and boarded a cargo ship in international waters in the Red Sea on March 5, seizing a shipment that included Syrian-made M-302 rockets that the ship picked up in Iran. The ship was destined for Sudan, from which the rockets would presumably be moved by land across Egypt's Sinai Peninsula to Gaza.



The ship, KLOS-C, a general cargo vessel registered in Panama, was sailing off the coasts of Sudan and Eritrea, more than 1,000 miles south of Israel, when it was boarded, Israeli Defense Forces spokesman Lt. Col. Peter Lerner told reporters.

The Associated Press cited Lerner's statement that the M-302 rockets have a range of up to 100 miles, and if based in Gaza would put nearly all of Israel in their range — greatly improving the capabilities of Gaza militants. At present, the militants can reach only about 50 miles into Israel with their domestically produced M-75 missiles. Lerner noted that the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah used M-302s in a 2006 war against Israel.

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Gaza has been ruled since 2007 by Hamas, the more militant faction of the Palestinian National Authority that took control of the narrow strip of land from Fatah. Fatah claims authority over Gaza but controls only the West Bank area of Palestine. Hamas is recognized as a terrorist organization by most Western countries.

An article in the *Jerusalem Post* on March 5 quoted a statement from Taher al-Nono, identified as an adviser to Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, who said of the ship's seizure: "This is a new Israeli lie aimed to justify and prolong the blockade of Gaza." The Hamas statement also called the Israeli announcement of the seizure a "silly joke."

"Full Disclosure," the Israeli intelligence operation that uncovered the details of the shipment, involved months of intelligence gathering, explained Lerner. Israeli intelligence learned that the shipment originated in Syria and was then flown to Iran. The rockets were loaded onto the KLOS-C in the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas on the Persian Gulf. The IDF spokesman said the Iranians tried to "obscure their tracks" by shipping first via Iraq, where the ship picked up cement, and then by sea to Sudan.

The Israelis do not regard the ship's crew as suspects, since they were apparently unaware of the nature of the cargo. The vessel is being brought to the port of Eilat, at Israel's southernmost point on the Gulf of Aqaba, the northern terminus of the Red Sea. Once docked, the crew will be released and the shipment unloaded.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is visiting the United States this week, made the following statement from California when he heard the news:

At a time when it talks with the world powers, at a time when Iran is smiling and saying all sorts of



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pleasantries, that same Iran is sending lethal weapons to terror organizations and it is doing it with an elaborate network of covert global operations with the aim of streaming rockets, missiles and other lethal weapons to harm innocent civilians. This is the real Iran and that country must not be able to have a nuclear weapon.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported that after the interception of the KLOS-C, Netanyahu reportedly spoke with Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon, Chief of Staff Benny Gantz, and Mossad chief Tamir Pardo and praised them for the successful mission.

Yaalon said the weapons headed for Gaza were “strategically important.”

“Iran trains, funds and arms terror groups in the region and around the world and its failed attempts to transfer the arms that were discovered this morning is more proof of that,” said the defense minister.

The day before the seizure of the KLOS-C — and one day after he met with President Obama — Prime Minister Netanyahu addressed the American Israel Public Affairs Committee’s (AIPAC) annual policy conference at the Washington, D.C., Convention Center. The AIPAC describes itself as “America’s Pro-Israel Lobby.”

Though he also spoke about the Palestinians and Syria, Netanyahu used a considerable part of his 3,780-word speech to talk about Iran. Among his comments:

Did you ever hear about Iran sending a humanitarian delegation overseas? No? You missed that memo? You know why? You know why you haven’t heard anything about that? Because the only thing that Iran sends abroad are rockets, terrorists and missiles to murder, maim and menace the innocent.

And what the Iranian people — or rather, what the Iranian regime does abroad is similar to what they do to their own people. They execute hundreds of political prisoners, they throw thousands more into their jails, and they repress millions in a brutal theocracy.

If you want to understand the moral divide that separates Israel from its enemies, just listen to Hassan Nasrallah, the head of Hezbollah, Iran’s terror proxy in Lebanon. He said this. He said: Iran and Hezbollah love death and Israel loves life.

And that’s why Iran and Hezbollah will win and Israel will lose.

Netanyahu also warned that Iran’s program to build ICBMs poses a threat to the United States:

So why does it continue to build ICBMs, intercontinental ballistic missiles, whose only purpose is to carry nuclear warheads?

See, unlike Scud missiles, that are limited to a range of a few hundred miles, ICBMs can cross vast oceans. And they can strike, right now or very soon, the Eastern seaboard of the United States — Washington — and very soon after that, everywhere else in the United States, up to L.A.

And the important point to make is this: Iran’s missiles can already reach Israel, so those ICBMs that they’re building, they’re not intended for us. You remember that beer commercial, “this Bud’s for you”? Well, when you see Iran building ICBMs, just remember, America, that Scud’s for you.

Addressing the prospects for reaching a peace agreement with the Palestinians, Netanyahu made a soberly realistic prediction: “If we reach an agreement, as I hope, with the Palestinians, I don’t delude myself. That peace will most certainly come under attack — constant attack by Hezbollah, Hamas, al-Qaida and others.”



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He also noted that foreign peacekeeping forces “keep the peace only when there is peace.” Though he did not name who the peacekeeping forces have been — or might be in the future — peacekeeping forces are almost always under the control of the UN or one of its agencies.

Netanyahu summed up this particular portion of his speech with a very perceptive observation: “But when they’re subjected to repeated attacks, those forces eventually go home. So as long as the peace is under assault, the only force that can be relied on to defend the peace and defend Israel is the force defending its own home — the Israeli Army, the brave soldiers of the IDF.”

The prime minister’s statement bears repeating: Only Israel’s own forces can be relied upon to defend Israel. A nation that relies on an outside force to defend it has gone a long way toward abandoning its own sovereignty. So long as Israel relies on U.S. aid for its defense, its fate will not be its own, because aid always comes with strings attached. Furthermore, at the same time the United States sends aid to Israel, it also sends large amounts to nations where militant Islamic elements — many of them supported by Iran — have had strong influences, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Egypt. It would serve Israel better if the United States would suspend all aid to foreign nations, including Israel and the many nations in the Middle East that have little love for the Jewish state.

Such a policy would not only be smart, it would be faithful to our Constitution as well.

Photo of rocket seized aboard KLOS-C by Israeli Navy: AP Images

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