



# Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update October 25, 2023

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On October 7, Hamas launched an unprovoked and unprecedented multi-pronged attack on Israel by land, air, and sea. Yesterday, JINSA held a [webinar](#) with JINSA President and CEO Michael Makovsky and JINSA Senior Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish about how affected communities in Israel's south are faring during the war. An update with the latest information and analysis about the war is below, which JINSA will regularly produce.

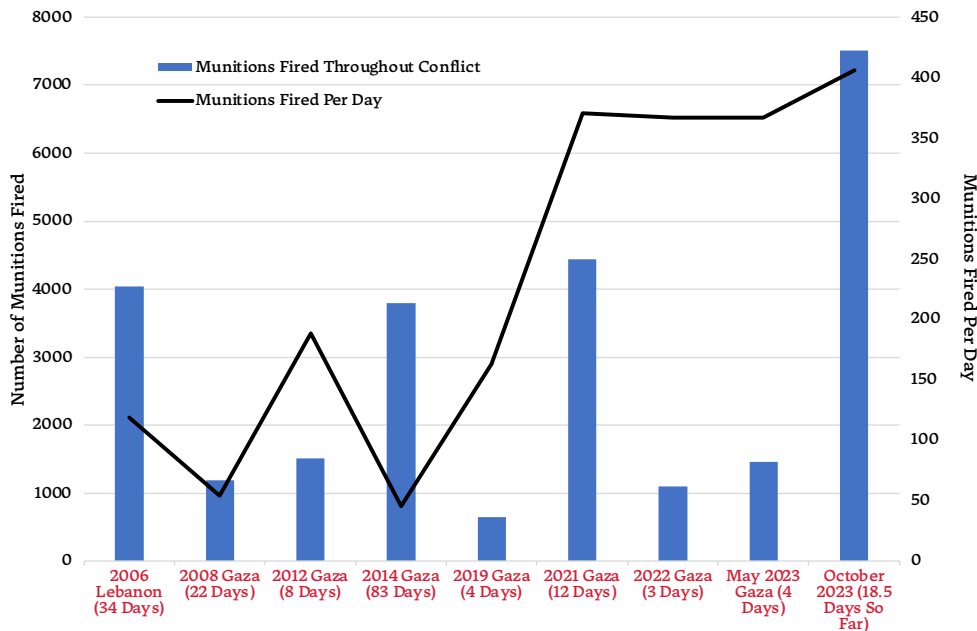
## Analysis

- With another attack against US forces in Iraq on October 24—at least the 13th attack on U.S. forces in the last week—it is increasingly clear that the Iranian regime wants to test and erode U.S. willingness to use military force and support Israel, as JINSA's Ari Cicurel [wrote](#) about the spate of attacks on October 23.
- Yesterday, [The Wall Street Journal](#) reported that Saudi Arabia intercepted, apparently for the first time, a missile fired by the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen that targeted Israel. This underscores the importance of and potential for developing regional integrated air defenses.
  - » As JINSA detailed in a [report](#) earlier this year, a U.S.-led regional integrated air and missile defense (IAMD) network would provide enhanced early-warning and interception capabilities.
- This Saudi missile interception and President Biden's October 24 phone call with Saudi Crown Prince and de-facto leader Mohammed bin Salman could indicate that Saudi Arabia still values the strategic logic of establishing diplomatic and security ties with Israel.
  - » Prospects for normalization have seemingly stalled since the start of the Israel-Gaza war, but Biden and bin Salman pledged, according to a White House [readout](#) of their call, to continue “building on the work that was already underway between Saudi Arabia and the United States over recent months,” an indication that Israel-Saudi normalization remains a shared objective.
- During a JINSA [webinar](#) yesterday, JINSA President and CEO Michael Makovsky spoke with JINSA Senior Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish, who described the IDF's pursuit of “two elements: One is to eliminate Hamas and the second is to create a buffer zone between [the] current events and the border in Gaza...We are talking here about a very clear buffer zone surrounding Gaza, but everything starts with eliminating Hamas.”
  - » According to Ayish, “due to the horrific effect of this attack on houses, on industry, on agriculture... the prime minister and the government decided to build immediately different mechanisms to rebuild kibbutzim and villages.... The government passed a special resolution with a special budget to establish that mechanism that has special

capabilities and authorities to come to immediate solutions... [because] we have to take care of those [Israelis] who were uprooted from their houses to give them an immediate solution for them and their families... they left those kibbutzim and villages without their personal belongings.”

## Projectiles Fired Against Israel During Major Conflicts

JINSA



## Last 24 Hours

### Attacks Against Israel

- At least [7,512](#) rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired from Gaza during the war.
  - » Sirens sounded in Ashkelon, Zikim, Karmiya, and Kissufim, as well as other locations in southern Israel. Sirens also sounded in Daliyat al-Karmel and Kerem Maharal, south of Haifa, but it is not clear if those attacks came from Gaza or Lebanon.
  - » A long-range rocket fired from Gaza toward Haifa [exploded](#) in mid-air, causing no reported injuries. Hamas claimed to have launched an R160 missile, which has a range of 160 kilometers.
  - » Hamas claimed to target [Eilat](#), Israel’s southernmost city, but there were no sirens or reports of damage, although residents there reported hearing an explosion.
- On October 24, the IDF said that the Israeli Navy [killed](#) eight Hamas divers who attempted to invade Israel by sea. IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#) that the terrorists attempted to enter the sea via a tunnel.

- Terrorists in southern Lebanon fired several anti-tank missiles toward Israel in the last 24 hours.
  - » On October 24, an anti-tank missile [targeted](#) an IDF tank on the Lebanese border near the Israeli community of Avivim, causing no injuries.
  - » Also on October 24, terrorists [fired](#) two anti-tank missiles from Lebanon toward the Shtula and the Manara areas.
- On October 24, the IDF [said](#) that two projectiles fired from Syria toward northern Israel landed in open areas. Sirens sounded in the northern Israeli communities of Neot Golan, Bnei Yehuda, and Givat Yoav.

### *IDF Operations*

- The IDF stated that it launched strikes on approximately [400](#) targets in Gaza in the last 24 hours.
  - » On October 25, the IDF said an Israeli airstrike [killed](#) the commander of Hamas's North Khan Younis Battalion, Taysir Mubasher. According to the IDF, Mubasher, who previously headed Hamas naval forces, was responsible for the deadly 2002 attack on the Atzmona pre-military academy in Gush Katif and Hamas's 2014 infiltration through Zikim beach into Israel.
  - » On October 24, an Israeli airstrike [struck](#) the compound from which the Hamas divers attempted to infiltrate Israel.
- On October 24, the IDF said that it [foiled](#) several attacks by Hezbollah terrorists in southern Lebanon.
  - » The IDF conducted a drone strike against a Hezbollah cell in Lebanon that was preparing to launch rockets at the northern Israeli city of Bar'am.
  - » Another Israeli drone strike destroyed Hezbollah weapons near the Mount Dov area.
  - » The IDF launched attacks on two cells in southern Lebanon that were firing mortars and anti-tank missiles at Israeli positions near the border. The IDF also shelled the area with mortars.
  - » The IDF struck terrorists in southern Lebanon who were preparing to launch a missile attack near Kibbutz Yiftah.
- The IDF [responded](#) to the two rockets launched toward northern Israel from Syria with artillery fire.
- On October 24, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi [said](#), "Israel is in the midst of a war that was launched by the Hamas terror group. [Hamas] already regrets it," and "we've prepared for this. The IDF and the Southern Command have prepared quality offensive plans to achieve the goals of the war."
  - » He added, "the IDF is ready for the [ground] maneuver, and we will make a decision with the political echelon regarding the shape and timing of the next stage," but "tactical and even strategic considerations" are delaying a ground incursion.
  - » However, he reassured listeners that "we are making use of every minute to be even more prepared," and "every minute that passes on the other side, we strike the enemy

even more. Killing terrorists, destroying infrastructure, collecting more intelligence for the next stage.”

- » Halevi further said that Hamas leadership and its subordinates would “pay the price,” recommended that Hamas treat its hostages “with respect,” and clarified that “the IDF is fighting Hamas, it is not fighting Gaza’s populace. The IDF wants the residents of Gaza to come through this war as unharmed as possible.”
- The IDF [detained](#) fifty-eight members of Hamas in the West Bank overnight and released footage of an airstrike against gunmen in the Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank.

### *Casualties and Hostages*

- Over 1,400 people in Israel have [been killed](#) and another 4,629 have been injured in the war.
  - » According to the IDF’s latest press release, 307 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
  - » Numerous foreign nationals have been killed in the war, including at least thirty-two [American](#) nationals, twenty-four [Thai](#) nationals, twenty-one [French](#) nationals, seventeen [British](#) nationals, ten [Nepalese](#) nationals, seven [Argentinian](#) nationals, sixteen [Russian](#) nationals, four [Romanian](#) nationals, four [Chinese](#) nationals, three [Brazilian](#) nationals, three [Belarusian](#) nationals, three [Chilean](#) nationals, three [Philippines](#) nationals, two [Ukrainian](#) nationals, two [Peruvian](#) nationals, five [Canadian](#) nationals, a [Cambodian](#) national, a [Colombian](#) national, an [Irish](#) national, an [Italian](#) national, a [Spanish](#) national, a [Swiss](#) national, a [Turkish](#) national, and an [Austrian](#) national.
- According to unverified figures from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry, [6,546](#) people have been killed in Gaza and 17,439 have been injured during the war.
- According to the Palestinian Authority-controlled Ministry of Health, [102](#) Palestinians have been killed, and an additional approximately [1,836](#) have been wounded in the West Bank.
- The IDF [claims](#) that it has killed at least 1,500 infiltrators from Gaza since the start of the war.
- According to the IDF’s latest press release, the families of [222](#) individuals have been notified that their loved ones were taken hostage.
- Several Israeli commentators [criticized](#) the decision to allow recently released hostage Yocheved Lifshitz to speak to the press, arguing that her description of the supposedly kind treatment she experienced at the hands of Hamas—who still may be holding her husband as a hostage—could have been managed by the Israeli government better and served the terrorist group’s propaganda goals.
- Foreign nationals also remain missing, including at least eleven [American](#) nationals, nine [French](#) nationals, fifteen [Argentinian](#) nationals, nine [Ukrainian](#) nationals, eight [Russian](#) nationals, three [Canadian](#) nationals, three [Philippines](#) nationals, two [Austrian](#) nationals, three [Italian](#) nationals, two [Paraguayan](#) nationals, five [Peruvian](#) nationals, two [Sri Lankan](#) nationals, two [Tanzanian](#) nationals, a [Chilean](#) national, an [Azeri](#) national, and a [Nepalese](#) national.
  - » At least eight [German](#) nationals, seventeen [Thai](#) nationals, four [Portuguese](#) nationals, two [Italian](#) nationals, and two [Mexican](#) nationals have been taken hostage by Hamas.

- Tzachi Hanegbi, the head of Israel's National Security Council, [posted](#) on X that he is “pleased to say that Qatar is becoming an essential party and stakeholder in the facilitation of humanitarian solutions.”
  - » Conversely, former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett [argued](#) on X that “[t]he government of Israel is making a grave moral and practical mistake. Qatar is not a crucial partner for humanitarian and diplomatic activities. Qatar is the enemy itself.” He further wrote, “Israel’s stated goal is to destroy Hamas. Qatar’s goal is the exact opposite: saving Hamas.”

### *Iranian Involvement*

- Pentagon Press Secretary Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder [told](#) reporters at a press conference on October 24 that there have been ten attacks in Iraq and three in Syria against U.S. forces over the past week.
  - » On October 24, two rockets almost certainly fired by Iran-backed groups [struck](#) the Ain al-Asad airbase in western Iraq that hosts U.S. and other personnel.
  - » Biden administration officials also [revealed](#) on October 24 that at least twenty-four U.S. troops have been hurt in the spate of attacks by Iran-backed groups in Iraq and Syria over the past week, including one attack at the al-Tanf Garrison on October 18 that caused injuries to twenty personnel.
- Reporting from [The Wall Street Journal](#) on October 24 indicated that Saudi Arabia intercepted one of the five missiles that the Houthis [launched](#) on October 19 toward Israel. The report also indicated that, in addition to the five missiles, the Houthis also launched thirty drones, double the earlier reporting of [fifteen drones](#).
  - » The Pentagon specified on October 24 that the missiles that the Houthis launched have a more than 2,000-kilometer range and can reach Israel.
- Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, Hamas’s deputy leader Saleh al-Arouri, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad’s leader Ziad al-Nakhleh met on October 25 and [released](#) a statement saying that they agreed on next steps to achieve “a real victory for the resistance in Gaza and Palestine” and halt Israel’s “treacherous and brutal aggression against our oppressed and steadfast people in Gaza and the West Bank.”

### *U.S. and International Response*

- An October 24 readout of a call between President Biden and Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman [said](#) that “the President affirmed that the United States fully supports the defense of U.S. partners facing terrorist threats, whether from state or non-state actors.”
  - » The readout also said that the two leaders discussed efforts to keep the war from spreading regionally, the need for humanitarian aid in Gaza, the release of hostages that Hamas abducted on October 7, and “affirmed the importance of working towards a sustainable peace between Israelis and Palestinians as soon as the crisis subsides, building on the work that was already underway between Saudi Arabia and the United States over recent months.”

- The Palestinian Red Crescent, an aid agency, [stated](#) that eight aid trucks containing water, food, and medicine entered into the Gaza Strip on October 24 from Egypt. By [contrast](#), no fuel has entered the Gaza Strip.
- On October 24, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) debated resolutions about the Israel-Gaza war.
  - » The United States introduced a UNSC resolution condemning Hamas and calling for it to release hostages. As JINSA previously [noted](#), the resolution, according to *Reuters*, *Axios*, and other sources, had included a warning to Iran not to fund terrorist organizations, but the resolution’s final draft contained no such wording.
    - According to *Fox News*, citing a spokesperson from the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, language directly related to Iran was [removed](#) at the strong urging of Russia.
    - The resolution reportedly [includes](#) “strong language that applies directly to Iran, including calls to suppress financing of Hamas, to prevent the export of arms and [resources] to Hamas, and language on Iran-backed Hezbollah ceasing its cross border attacks.”
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [admonished](#) other world leaders during the United Nations Security Council ministerial gathering: “it must be asked: Where’s the outrage [at Hamas’s terrorist attack]? Where’s the revulsion? Where’s the rejection? Where’s the explicit condemnation of these horrors?”
  - » Blinken implored leaders to work assiduously to secure the release of the hostages that Hamas abducted on October 7 and insisted that if Iran or its proxies attack U.S. personnel, “we will defend our people. We will defend our security swiftly and decisively.”
  - » Blinken further urged the council members to “act as if the security and stability of the entire region and beyond is on the line because it is” and to “redouble our collective effort” toward a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
  - » Blinken insisted, “nothing would be a greater victory for Hamas, than allowing its brutality to send us down the path of terrorism and nihilism. We must not let it. Hamas does not get to choose for us” and endorsed a more “normalized” region.
- Russia introduced its own UNSC resolution condemning the violence, but it did not name Hamas. The UNSC rejected the resolution.
  - » China, the United Arab Emirates, Mozambique, and Gabon voted for Russia’s resolution, while the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Japan voted against it, and seven others abstained.
  - » Russia’s UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia [said](#) that Russia does not support the United States’ resolution draft and supports an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.
- UN Secretary General António Guterres [claimed](#) at the meeting that “it is important to also recognize the attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum.”
  - » Guterres elaborated, “the Palestinian people have been subjected to fifty-six years of suffocating occupation. They have seen their land steadily devoured by settlements and plagued by violence; their economy stifled; their people displaced and their homes demolished. Their hopes for a political solution to their plight have been vanishing.”

- » Guterres further said, “the grievances of the Palestinian people cannot justify the appalling attacks by Hamas. And those appalling attacks cannot justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.”
- » In response, Israel’s ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan called the comments “shocking,” and Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen canceled a planned meeting with Guterres, whom Israeli minister Benny Gantz called a “terror apologist.”
  - Erdan added that Guterres’s remarks were “completely disconnected from the reality in our region” and “constitute a justification for terrorism and murder.” Erdan also later called for Guterres to [resign](#) on X.
  - Erdan told Israel’s [Army radio](#), “Due to [Guterres’s] remarks [Israel] will refuse to issue visas to UN representatives.... We have already refused a visa for Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths.... The time has come to teach them a lesson.”
  - Gantz said on X, “dark are the days when the United Nations Secretary-General condones terror,” and “absolutely nothing can justify the slaughter of innocent civilians. Now is the time to stand on the right side of history, or be judged by it. Terror apologists cannot speak on behalf of the world.”
- » During the meeting, Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen [asked](#), “what is a proportionate response for killing of babies, for rape (of) women and burn them, for beheading a child? How can you agree to a cease-fire with someone who swore to kill and destroy your own existence?”
  - Cohen [played](#) an audio clip of a Hamas terrorist using a slain victim’s cell phone to call his parents and brag about his murders during the October 7 attack. The terrorist stated that he is proud that he killed ten Jews.
  - Cohen endorsed “a total destruction to the last one of the Hamas” and referred to the terrorist group as “the new Nazis,” insisting that destruction of the organization is Israel’s right and duty.
  - Cohen urged “the civilized world” to support Israel’s fight against Hamas, warned that Hamas violence “will be at everyone’s doorstep,” and said that Qatar can influence the fate of hostages in Gaza abducted by Hamas.
- » By contrast, Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki [said](#), “we are here today to stop the killing, to stop ... the ongoing massacres being deliberately and systematically and savagely perpetrated by Israel, the occupying power, against the Palestinian civilian population,” and “over 2 million Palestinians are on a survival mission every day, every night.”
  - He added that “only peace” can protect Israel.
  - He further added, “for those actively engaged to avoid an even greater humanitarian catastrophe and regional spillover, it must be clear that this can only be achieved by putting an immediate end to the Israeli war launched against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.”
- » Iran’s UN Ambassador Amir Iravani [denied](#) that Iran is to blame for the October 7 massacre and urged a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

- Iravani blamed the United States’ “unwavering support” for Israel for the war and claimed that U.S. military support for Israel “made the U.S. complicit in the brutal massacre of innocent Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.”
- He offered support for Hamas, insisting that “resistance groups like Hamas” can legally engage in self-defense per the UN Charter.
- » Jordan’s Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi [insisted](#) that Israel is “razing Gaza to the ground...without any deterrent.” He also urged a ceasefire and denounced alleged collective punishment against Palestinians.
- On October 24, National Security Council (NSC) spokesperson John Kirby [clarified](#) that while the Biden administration opposes a ceasefire, “humanitarian pauses are tools... for temporary periods of time. That is not the same as saying a ceasefire.”
- In anticipation of more attacks by Iran-backed groups against U.S. personnel in the Middle East, the Pentagon [deployed](#) the New Jersey Air National Guard’s 119th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron to the region.
  - » During a Pentagon [press briefing](#), Brig. Gen. Patrick Ryder said, “what we are seeing is the prospect for more significant escalation against US forces and personnel across the region in the very near term coming from Iranian proxy forces and ultimately from Iran,” and the United States will defend its personnel if necessary.
- Brig. Gen. Patrick Ryder also [specified](#) that the Terminal High Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) battery transiting to the Middle East is coming from Fort Bliss, and the Patriot batteries from across Fort Liberty, North Carolina, and Fort Sill, Oklahoma.
- After facing criticism for her response during a press conference on October 23 in which she answered a question about antisemitism by addressing the prevalence of Islamophobia, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre [clarified](#) on October 24, “to be clear: the President and our team are very concerned about a rise in antisemitism, especially after the horrific Hamas terrorist attack in Israel.”
  - » Jean-Pierre followed up during an October 24 press conference, “when Jews are targeted because of their beliefs, or their identity, when Israel is singled out because of anti-Jewish hatred, that is antisemitism, and that is unacceptable. There’s no place for antisemitism full stop, period.”
    - Originally on October 23, Jean-Pierre [responded](#) to a question about antisemitism by saying, “ok, we have not seen any credible threats. I know there’s been, always, questions about credible threats. And so, just want to make sure that that’s out there. But, look, Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim have endured a disproportionate number of hate-fueled attacks.”
    - She added that President Biden “understands that many of our Muslim, Arab Americans and Palestinian American loved ones and neighbors are worried about the hate being directed at their communities.”
    - She also said that Homeland Security is prioritizing “prevention and disruption of any emerging threats that could harm the Jewish, the Muslim, Arab Americans or any other communities.”



- When asked about anti-Israel protests on college campuses, Jean-Pierre said that while she did not want to address specific incidents, “a peaceful protest is really part of our democracy, for folks to be able to express their feelings.”
- » She added during her [clarification](#) on October 24 that “this is important to the President, it’s important to me personally and to everyone in the administration, following the Hamas terror attacks in Israel, which were the deadliest for Jews since the Holocaust. The president has been consistent and clear: We must all do our part and forcefully speak out against antisemitism and we must ensure that there is no place for hate in America — not against Jews, not against Muslims, not against Arab Americans, not against Palestinian Americans, not against anyone.”
- On October 25, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan [claimed](#), “Hamas is not a terrorist organization, it is a group of mujahideen defending their lands.” He also argued that Israel “can view Hamas as a terrorist organization along with the West. The West owes [Israel] a lot. But Turkey does not owe [Israel] anything.”
  - » Erdogan also noted that Turkey “had a project to go to Israel, but it was canceled, we will not go.”
- The Pentagon recently sent Lt. Gen. James Glynn, USMC, and several other officers to Israel to [advise](#) Israel on its operation in Gaza. Glynn, who currently serves as the deputy commandant for manpower and reserve affairs of the Marine Corps, previously headed U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command.
  - » The delegation of U.S. military officers has experience combating ISIS, including in Mosul, a dense urban environment similar to what the IDF ground forces will face in Gaza.
  - » The U.S. officers will not be directing operations but will provide the IDF with military advice. Glynn is not expected to remain in Israel for the duration of Israel’s impending ground operation.
- In addition to the Tamir interceptors for the Iron Dome short-range air defense system that the United States has already delivered, the Pentagon plans to [send](#) two Iron Dome batteries to Israel.
  - » At the request of Congress, the U.S. Army acquired two Iron Dome batteries from Israel, a system manufactured by Israeli defense firm Rafael and co-developed by RTX. However, the Army has not integrated them with its other air defenses due to interoperability challenges and does not plan to purchase additional systems.
    - On the other hand, with different integration requirements than the Army, the Marine Corps has been able to [adapt](#) the Iron Dome system to [integrate](#) with its Medium-Range Intercept Capability (MRIC) program.
- On October 24, German police [arrested](#) a suspect on suspicion that he planned to carry out a vehicle-ramming attack against pro-Israel demonstrators.
  - » The suspect allegedly viewed online jihadist material and searched for the locations of pro-Israel gatherings.

## Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel At War

- Webinar: [The View from Israel's South](#) with JINSA President and CEO Michael Makovsky and JINSA Senior Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish, October 24, 2023
- LTC Geoffrey Corn (ret.), [Israel-Hamas and the Law of Armed Conflict](#), October 24, 2023
- Gabriel Noronha [Quoted](#) in *Jewish News Syndicate*, October 24, 2023
- GEN Philip Breedlove [Appearance](#) on *Fox News*, October 24, 2023
- JINSA Research [Cited](#) in *The Times of London*, October 24, 2023
- Blaise Misztal [Quoted](#) in *The Daily Signal*, October 24, 2023
- Jonathan Ruhe, [Rebuilding U.S. Deterrence to Counter Iran-led Escalation](#), October 23, 2023
- Ari Cicurel, [Iran-Backed Attacks Risk Escalating Israel-Hamas Conflict](#), October 23, 2023
- Blaise Misztal [Quoted](#) in *The Daily Signal*, October 23, 2023
- LTC Geoffrey Corn (ret.) [Appearance](#) on *LiveNow Fox*, October 23, 2023
- Blaise Misztal and Jacob Olidort, "[The Case for a Counter-Iran Coalition](#)," *The National Interest*, October 20
- LTC Geoffrey Corn (ret.), "[The Fallacy of Equality of Condemnation](#)," *Smerconish*, October 20, 2023