



Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update October 27, 2023

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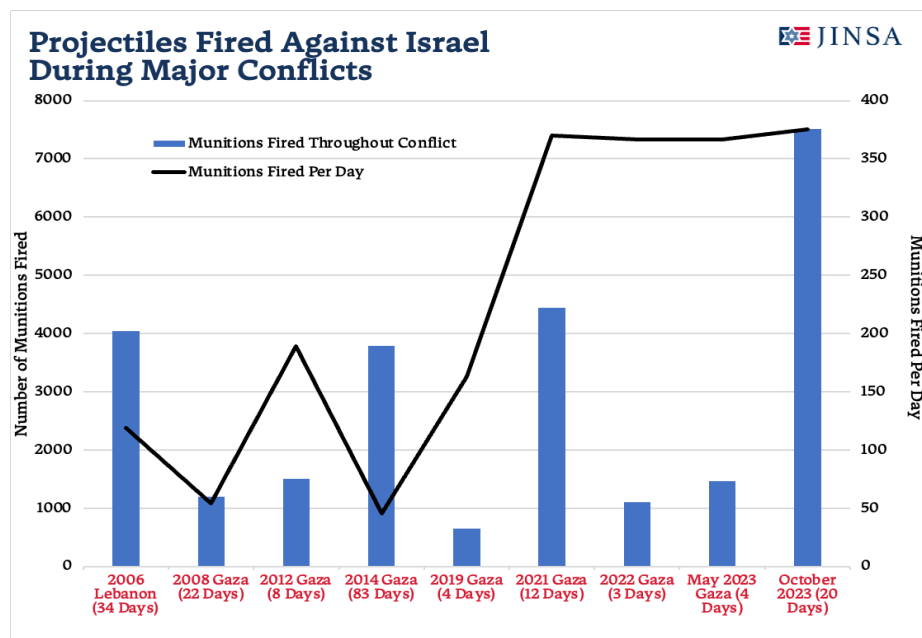
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On October 7, Hamas launched an unprovoked and unprecedented multi-pronged attack on Israel by land, air, and sea. JINSA has launched a webpage dedicated to its commentary, webinars, and media coverage about [Israel At War](#). Yesterday, JINSA held a [webinar](#) to provide an update about the ongoing war with JINSA Vice President for Policy Blaise Misztal, JINSA Distinguished Fellow IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, and JINSA Senior Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish. An update with the latest information and analysis about the war is below, which JINSA will regularly produce.

Last 24 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

- At least [7,512](#) rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired from Gaza during the war.
 - » [Rockets struck](#) Petah Tikva and Tel Aviv, and sirens [sounded](#) in Ashdod, Ashkelon, Bnei Brak, Holon, Rishon Letzion, Rehovot, Ein HaShlosha, Kerem Shalom, Gush Dan, Lod, and Tel Aviv, as well as other locations in southern Israel.



IDF Operations

- The IDF stated that it [launched](#) strikes on over 250 targets in Gaza in the last 24 hours.

- » The IDF announced on October 27 that it had conducted strikes on Hamas targets using fighter aircraft, drones, and ground troops and had [eliminated](#) a number of command and control centers and anti-tank missile launchers.
 - These ground troops [included](#) infantry, armor, and engineering personnel who entered Gaza, conducted operations for several hours before returning to Israel, according to the IDF.
- » The IDF announced on October 26 and October 27 that it killed:
 - [Shadi Barud](#), deputy head of Hamas’s Intelligence Directorate and, along with Hamas’s Gaza chief Yahya Sinwar, one of the two [orchestrators](#) who planned the October 7 attacks.
 - [Hassan al-Abdullah](#), Commander of Hamas’s Northern Khan Yunis Rockets Array.
 - [Rifaat Abbas](#), Battalion Commander of Hamas’s Daraj Tuffah Battalion.
 - [Ibrahim Jadba](#), Deputy Battalion Commander of Hamas’s Daraj Tuffah Battalion.
 - [Tarek Maarouf](#), Combat Support Commander of Hamas’s Daraj Tuffah Battalion.
 - [Madmath Mubashar](#), Commander of Hamas’s Western Khan Yunis Battalion.
- On October 25, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant argued in a [speech](#) that “what will happen in the next 75 years depends largely on the achievements in this battle.” Gallant noted that the IDF “is hitting bunkers, tunnels, communications, terrorists and their commanders ... The war is precise, lethal and powerful. It is our duty to win this war. That’s the unwritten contract between the security establishment and the citizens. It is my duty as the defense minister to lead so that we win the battle, and the citizens can live here in peace and quiet.”
 - » Gallant also foreshadowed that “additional stages in the war will also come, we are creating the conditions for them and we will carry them out. I am determined ... to ensure the State of Israel is victorious over this tough and evil enemy — over this epitome of evil.”
- The IDF [confirmed](#) that it killed Ayser Mohammad Al-Amer, a field commander in the Palestinian Islamic Jihad’s Jenin wing, during clashes in the West Bank overnight, and it also detained 17 members of the Hamas terror group, as well as 19 other wanted Palestinians.
- Since the war began on October 7, Israel has arrested roughly 1,030 Palestinians in the West Bank, including approximately 670 affiliated with Hamas, according to the IDF.

Casualties and Hostages

- Over [1,400](#) people in Israel have been killed, and another 4,629 have been [injured](#) in the war.
 - » On October 27, two people were [injured](#) when a rocket struck a Tel Aviv apartment building.
 - Hamas took [credit](#) for the rocket strike, stating on the messaging app Telegram that it had “renewed bombing Tel Aviv in response to Zionist massacres against civilians.”
 - » [309](#) Israeli soldiers have been killed.

- » Numerous foreign nationals have been killed in the war, including at least 32 [American](#) nationals, 24 [Thai](#) nationals, 35 [French](#) nationals, 17 [British](#) nationals, 10 [Nepalese](#) nationals, 7 [Argentinian](#) nationals, 16 [Russian](#) nationals, 4 [Romanian](#) nationals, 4 [Chinese](#) nationals, 3 [Brazilian](#) nationals, 3 [Belarusian](#) nationals, 3 [Chilean](#) nationals, 3 [Philippines](#) nationals, 2 [Ukrainian](#) nationals, 2 [Peruvian](#) nationals, 5 [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, at least 7,028 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza and at least 18,484 have been injured during the war.
 - » President Biden, on October 25, [cautioned](#) against trusting Gaza Health Ministry casualty figures, stating: “I have no notion that the Palestinians are telling the truth about how many people are killed ... I have no confidence in the number that the Palestinians are using.”
- According to the Palestinian Authority-run Palestinian Ministry of Health, over 110 people have been [killed](#) and an additional over 1,900 people 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, the families of [224](#) individuals have been notified that their loved ones were taken hostage.
- Foreign nationals also remain missing, including at least 9 [Ukrainian](#) nationals, 3 [Canadian](#) nationals, 3 [Philippines](#) nationals, 2 [Austrian](#) nationals, 3 [Italian](#) nationals, 2 [Paraguayan](#) nationals, 5 [Peruvian](#) nationals, 2 [Sri Lankan](#) nationals, 2 [Tanzanian](#) nationals, a [Chilean](#) national, an [Azeri](#) national, and a [Nepalese](#) national.
 - » At least 12 [German](#) nationals, 17 [Thai](#) nationals, 15 [Argentinian](#) nationals, 12 [American](#) nationals, 6 [Russian](#) nationals, 6 [French](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 2 [Italian](#) nationals, and 2 [Mexican](#) nationals have been taken hostage.
- Israeli settlers from the West Bank town of Rimonim were [injured](#), including one seriously, during clashes with Palestinians on a farm near Rimonim.

Iranian Involvement and Response

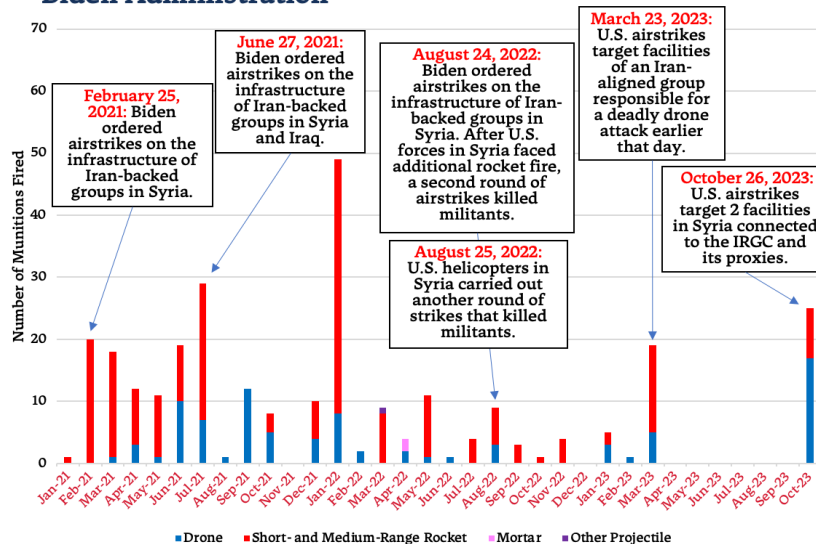
- On October 27, a drone [struck](#) a building next to a hospital, injuring six people, in Taba, Egypt, which is on the border with Israel. Another projectile fell near an electricity plant in Nuweiba about 70 km from the Egypt-Israel border. IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [claimed](#) they originated from “the Red Sea area,” an apparent reference to the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen.
 - » The Houthis had recently fired 5 cruise missiles and 30 drones through the Red Sea toward Israel that were neutralized by the U.S. *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyer USS *Carney* and Saudi Arabia.
- On October 27, rockets reportedly targeted U.S. forces at the Ain al-Asad base in Iraq and the Green Village facility near the al-Omar oil field in Syria. The attack was [possibly](#) conducted by Iran-backed militia.
- On October 26, Iran-backed militia [claimed](#) to have fired rocket attacks targeted U.S. forces at the Ain al-Asad and Erbil bases in Iraq and a facility in Shadadi, Syria.

- On October 26, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian [said](#) in an address to the United Nations General Assembly on the Middle East that if Israel’s operations against Hamas continue, the United States would not be spared.
 - » Amir-Abdollahian stated “I say frankly to the American statesmen, who are now managing the genocide in Palestine, that we do not welcome (an) expansion of the war in the region. But if the genocide in Gaza continues, they will not be spared from this fire.”
 - » Amir-Abdollahian added that Iran does not welcome an expansion of the war in the region and that Iran is ready to “play its part” in humanitarian efforts.
- At an October 26 press briefing, White House spokesperson John Kirby [announced](#) that President Biden had sent a message to the Ayatollah Khamenei warning Iran against further attacks on U.S. forces in the region.
 - » Kirby stated that “there was a direct message relayed” without providing any further details.
 - » Mohammad Jamshidi, a top aide to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, said on October 26 that “the US messages were neither directed to the leader of the Islamic Revolution nor were they anything but requests from the Iranian side. If Biden thinks he has warned Iran, he should ask his team to show him the text of the messages.”
- The IDF [announced](#) on October 26, while displaying weapons recovered from southern Israel that were used in the October 7 attacks to media outlets, that a large part of the weapons cache was Iranian-sourced or North Korean-sourced.
 - » According to the IDF, many of the mortar rounds used in the attack were made in Iran, and between five and ten percent of all weapons recovered from the attack sites were Iranian-made.
 - » The IDF added that an additional ten percent of weapons seized were from North Korea, including rocket-propelled grenades.
- On October 25, Iranian-linked militias [launched](#) projectiles at a U.S. base in Kharab al-Jir in northeast Syria and al-Asad base in western Iraq. No injuries were reported, according to *The Guardian*.

U.S. and International Response

- Overnight, the United States “conducted self-defense strikes on two facilities in eastern Syria used by Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and affiliated groups,” in response to the spate of Iran-backed attacks against U.S. military forces that began on October 17, according to a [statement](#) from Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin.
 - » Austin’s statement described the U.S. strikes as “narrowly-tailored strikes in self-defense were intended solely to protect and defend U.S. personnel in Iraq and Syria.”
 - » Austin drew a redline against any further Iran-backed attacks: “Iran wants to hide its hand and deny its role in these attacks against our forces. We will not let them. If attacks by Iran’s proxies against U.S. forces continue, we will not hesitate to take further necessary measures to protect our people.”
 - » These latest U.S. airstrikes mark the fifth round of U.S. strikes against Iran-backed forces.

Iranian-linked Munitions Targeting U.S. Service Members and Defense Contractors During the Biden Administration



- » On October 26, before the U.S. airstrikes, White House spokesperson John Kirby [stated](#) at a press briefing in response to a question about U.S. retaliation against Iranian-backed attacks on U.S. troops that the U.S. would respond in a “time of our choosing and a manner of our choosing.”
- On October 27, the U.S. Treasury Department [issued](#) a second round of sanctions on Hamas since the war began that included targeting a Hamas official in Iran and members of the IRGC. The individuals and entities that the Treasury Department sanctioned are:
 - » Khaled Qaddoum, a Jordanian national and longtime Hamas member who lives in Tehran serving as Hamas’s representative to Iran;
 - » Ali Ahmad Faizullahi, an Iran-based commander of the Saberin Special Forces Brigade of the IRGC Ground Force, which deployed to Syria, trained Hamas and Hezbollah, and was involved in suppression of protests in Iran;
 - » The Gaza-based and PIJ-affiliated Al-Ansar Charity Association (Al-Ansar), through which the already designated Iranian Bonyad Shahid, also known as the Martyrs Foundation, had been funneling money; and
 - » Nasser Al Sheikh Ali (Al Sheikh Ali), the director of Al-Ansar.
- The White House [announced](#) that Biden administration officials are meeting with new Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) on October 26 to discuss the administration’s funding request for the wars in Ukraine and Israel.
- The Pentagon [announced](#) on October 26 that an additional 900 U.S. troops are either en route to the Middle East or are already there in order to boost air defenses for U.S. personnel, following a spate of twelve attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq and four such attacks on U.S. troops in Syria in the past week alone.
 - » Pentagon spokesperson Brig. Gen. Patrick Ryder stated that 21 U.S. troops have suffered injuries, mostly traumatic brain injuries.
- Senators Roger Marshall (R-KS), J.D. Vance (R-OH), Mike Lee (R-UT), and Ted Cruz (R-TX) [introduced](#) a standalone bill for Israel aid, separating Israel security assistance out from

the larger \$106 billion Biden administration funding proposal that also includes greater funding for Ukraine.

- *The Washington Post* [reported](#) on October 25, citing four diplomatic sources, that the United States and Qatar had agreed that Qatar would revisit its close relationship with Hamas at a recent meeting in Doha, Qatar between U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.
 - » Details were unclear as to what the revisiting would look like, but a number of senior Hamas leaders including Khaled Meshaal and Ismail Haniyeh own homes in Qatar.
 - » Secretary of State Blinken [stated](#) during a speech in Doha, Qatar on October 13 that “there can be no more business as usual with Hamas.”
- During a press briefing on October 26, in response to a question about whether President Biden’s comments on distrusting Gazan casualty figures and that innocent people inevitably die in war were “insensitive,” White House spokesperson John Kirby stated that he [does not credit](#) the Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry’s casualty figures and that he also expects civilian casualties will rise due to Hamas’s interference with humanitarian evacuations from northern Gaza.
 - » Kirby said, “what’s harsh is dropping in on a music festival and slaughtering a bunch of young people just trying to enjoy an afternoon. I could go on and on. That’s what’s harsh. That is what’s harsh and being honest about the fact that there have been civilian casualties and that there likely will be more is being honest, because that’s what war is. It’s brutal. It’s ugly. It’s messy. I’ve said that before. The President also said that yesterday. Doesn’t mean we have to like it. And it doesn’t mean that we’re dismissing any one of those casualties - each and every one is a tragedy in its own right.”
 - » Kirby added, “it would be helpful if Hamas would let [Gazans] leave ... We know that there are thousands waiting to leave Gaza writ large and Hamas is preventing them from doing it. That is what is harsh.”
- On October 26, President Biden held an [unpublicized](#) meeting with Muslim American leaders, who argued that the president has not shown enough support to Palestinians and Muslim Americans.
- On October 26, the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait [issued](#) a security alert stating that all embassy activity on U.S. bases in Kuwait would be limited to essential events only, after receiving threats from the Iran-linked Awiyyat al-Waad al-Haq (AWH).
 - » AWH has claimed responsibility for drone attacks on the Burj Khalifa skyscraper in Dubai in February 2022 and the Saudi royal palace in Riyadh in January 2021.
- The Russian Foreign Ministry [announced](#) that Mousa Abu Marzouk, a senior member of Hamas’s political bureau, and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani visited Moscow on October 26. The two men met with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov and reportedly discussed the hostage situation in Gaza.
- China’s foreign aid organization, the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), [announced](#) on October 26 that it would provide roughly \$2.05 million in aid to an unspecified entity in the Gaza Strip. The agency previously had stated that it would soon be providing aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).
- The leaders of twenty-seven European Union countries met on October 26 in Brussels to [discuss](#) the ongoing war.

- » The leaders of the twenty-seven countries [issued](#) a statement after the meeting affirming their collective support for “pauses for humanitarian needs” and their “gravest concern for the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza,” adding that they would work “to protect civilians, provide assistance and facilitate access to food, water, medical care, fuel and shelter.”
- Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides [announced](#) on October 26 that Cyprus is ready to act as a humanitarian aid hub for the Gaza Strip.
 - » Christodoulides told reporters in Brussels that he raised with other European leaders the prospect of a “humanitarian aid corridor” linking Cyprus’ main port of Limassol to Gaza and said he discussed the idea with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi.
- A *Washington Post* [report](#), using triangulated videos and other data, supported Israel’s claim that a misfired Palestinian rocket, not an Israeli airstrike, caused the blast at al-Ahli hospital on October 17.
 - » Similar investigations by [The Wall Street Journal](#), [CNN](#), and the [Associated Press](#), all support Israel’s claim that the projectile that struck the hospital was fired from inside the Gaza Strip.

Analysis

- The [spate](#) of attacks against U.S. service members in Iraq and Syria over the past week indicate that the Iranian regime is trying to gauge U.S. support for Israel and willingness to use force against threats to the Jewish state and U.S. troops in the region, as Ari Cicurel argued in this [JINSA NatSec Brief](#) about the attacks this past week
 - » The extent of the damage and casualties that the U.S. strikes caused remains unclear, but the U.S. Defense Department statement noted that the facilities were used by the IRGC, whereas previous statements about previous strikes had [described](#) targets as the facilities of “groups affiliated with the IRGC.”
 - » Relying upon limited airstrikes, including strikes explicitly avoiding Iranian assets, are intended to limit escalation and have not deterred the Iranian regime or its proxies, who have launched over 100 attacks on U.S. forces since 2021.
 - » The regime’s willingness to attack U.S. personnel stems in part from the limited and inconsistent use of U.S. military force against Iran-linked threats.
 - While Biden ordered airstrikes against Iran-backed groups in [Syria in February 2021](#), [Iraq and Syria in June 2021](#), and [Syria in August 2022](#), U.S. force was calibrated to “limit the risks of escalation and minimize casualties” and Iran’s proxies continued to target U.S. and partner forces in between each of these U.S. airstrikes.
 - Unlike in the previous cases, the [U.S. airstrikes on March 23](#) — after a drone attack from an Iran-backed group killed an American contractor and wounded six other Americans — were not initially limited to avoid killing militants, with eight Iranian-aligned individuals reportedly being killed in the operation.
 - While no Iran-backed groups had targeted U.S. service members since March, even the more forceful U.S. airstrikes then have not established long-term deterrence.
- The projectile [strikes](#) against two Egyptian towns on October 27 that the IDF has indicated were likely conducted by the Houthis in Yemen, following a week after the Iran-backed

group launched five cruise missiles and thirty drones toward Israel, are further evidence that the Iranian regime and its proxies have established a “ring of fire” around Israel, U.S. military forces and that deterrence against Tehran has failed.

- During a JINSA [webinar](#) yesterday moderated by JINSA Vice President for Policy Blaise Misztal, JINSA Distinguished Fellow IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror noted that “in the south, the readiness of the forces is very high. The spirit of the units is very strong, and they are more than waiting for the order to go in [to Gaza]. Everyone understands that it'll be a very long war. Today, I argued with someone who's younger than me but more active in the issues as to whether it'll end in three months or six months.”
 - » Amidror argued that the question Israel faces is "can we survive in the Middle East? [Addressing] this has two tiers. One is to secure the security of the people living in the south, and for that we will have a perimeter probably in the surrounding area of Gaza ... and we will destroy the military capability of Hamas. But it's also about the future deterrence, and for that we need a clear victory. And the signature of the victory should be very clearly seen."
 - » When discussing the possibility of hostage negotiations, Amidror argued that "the relations between Hamas and Iran are such that a decision on the hostages will be taken in Qatar ... and the decision will also be made in the Gaza Strip. I believe that Hamas understands that hostages aged 3 months and elderly people aged 80 years old are a burden and not [an asset] ... In Israel I don't think there's an appetite for a prisoner exchange ... Even Erdogan who is very pro-Hamas ... I don't think he can have an influence because he doesn't have the leverage."
 - » JINSA Senior Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish noted during the webinar that “for the first time, you have something like 300,000 Israelis evacuating their homes, living in hotels in the north and the south. We should be very careful and humble about the current situation and the last skirmishes."
 - » Ayish also argued that Israel has still been slow to release information, as exemplified by the fact that the al-Ahli hospital explosion was the “first time that the IDF spokesman spoke about the fact that Hamas is launching rockets and ten percent of its rockets are landing in Gaza. Of 7,500 rockets, 750 rockets fell into Gaza ... It took us some time to refute claims about the hospital bombing. We shared the intelligence and facts with the world."

Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel At War

- Webinar: [Gaza Update](#) with JINSA Vice President for Policy Blaise Misztal, JINSA Distinguished Fellow IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, and JINSA Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish, October 26, 2023
- John Hannah and Blaise Misztal, “[Israel-Hamas war: It’s not too late to salvage peace with Saudi Arabia](#),” *The Jerusalem Post*, October 26, 2023
- Gabriel Noronha [Testimony](#) before the House Financial Services Committee, “Understanding the Iranian Regime’s Access to Money Around the World and How They Use It to Support Terrorism,” October 26, 2023
- Gabriel Noronha [Testimony](#) before the House Financial Services, “How America and Its Allies Can Stop Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran from Evading Sanctions and Financing Terror,” October 25, 2023

- Jonathan Ruhe [Quoted](#) in *The Cipher Brief*, October 25, 2023
- John Hannah [Appearance](#) on *Fox News*, October 24, 2023
- 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