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Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update November 8, 2023

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](#). An update with the latest information and analysis about the war is below, which JINSA will regularly produce.

Analysis

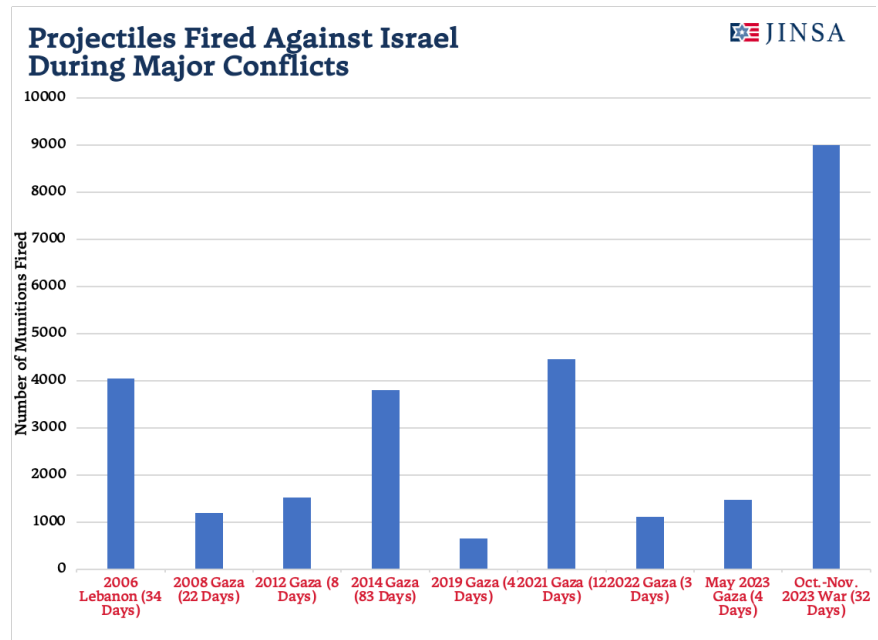
- On November 7, JINSA held a webinar, "[Hezbollah's Escalation Dilemma](#)," featuring John Hannah, JINSA's Randi & Charles Wax Senior Fellow; Hanin Ghaddar, Friedmann Senior Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy; IDF Lieutenant Colonel (Res.) Sarit Zehavi, founder and president of Alma; and Orna Mizrahi, senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS).
 - » Ghaddar argued Nasrallah's speech on November 3 was an admission that "I don't know what to do.' He wants to be part of the war, but he doesn't want to be part of the war." Ghaddar also claimed that Nasrallah's speech signaled "a complete isolation of Hamas ... they cannot really rely on the Iranians anymore" because Hezbollah's "job is to protect Iran and Iranian interests in the region while maintaining the 'resistance' retort."
 - » Mizrahi commented that the relationship between Hezbollah and Iran is less one-sided than is widely believed: "I think it's right that the decision is taken in Tehran, but it's not like an order to Hezbollah. And according to what we understand ... it's more cooperation, understanding, building together a strategy, than orders given in Tehran that Hezbollah is obeying."
 - » Zehavi noted that Hezbollah has been "picking the targets very carefully to damage the Israeli preparedness along the border," which she argued "is preparing for invasion ... this is exactly what Hamas did on the Gazan border."
 - She further emphasized the importance of U.S. deterrence, which she believes has significantly eroded due to messaging issues: "When Biden landed back in the United States ... somebody asked him [if the United States will get involved if Hezbollah escalates significantly] ... his answer was, 'I didn't say that.' So for me, as an Israeli, all this assistance is ... important... but it's not deterrence."
- As the war has proceeded, there has been a noticeable decline in the average number of rockets fired at Israel from Gaza per day, possibly indicating that terrorists in Gaza are

preserving their remaining arsenals for a long war and that the IDF has degraded their capacity and ability to fire from Gaza.

Last 24 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

- At least [9,000](#) rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired from Gaza during the war.
 - » Rockets struck a home in [Rishon Lezion](#) without causing casualties, and sirens [sounded](#) in Ashdod, Holit, Kissufim, Nir Yitzhak, Pri Gan, and Sufa, as well as other locations in southern Israel.
- The IDF announced on November 7 that a barrage of at least twenty rockets was [fired](#) at Israel from southern Lebanon.
 - » On November 7, Hezbollah also [fired](#) mortar shells and anti-tank missiles toward Israeli civilian and military targets.
- During an interview for a [New York Times article](#) published on November 8, Khalil al-Hayya, a member of Hamas’s top leadership body, claimed that Hamas needed to “change the entire equation and not just have a clash ... We succeeded in putting the Palestinian issue back on the table, and now no one in the region is experiencing calm.”
 - » Al-Hayya added, “[w]hat could change the equation was a great act, and without a doubt, it was known that the reaction to this great act would be big ... We had to tell people that the Palestinian cause would not die.”
 - » He further claimed that “Hamas’s goal is not to run Gaza and to bring it water and electricity and such ... Hamas, the Qassam and the resistance woke the world up from its deep sleep and showed that this issue must remain on the table ... This battle was not because we wanted fuel or laborers,” he added. “It did not seek to improve the situation in Gaza. This battle is to completely overthrow the situation.”
 - » In the *New York Times* story, Taher El-Nounou, a Hamas media adviser, said, “I hope that the state of war with Israel will become permanent on all the borders, and that the Arab world will stand with us.”
- In a November 7 [post](#) on X, the IDF shared video of weapons seized from Hamas terrorists who committed the October 7 massacre, which reportedly included 1,493 hand grenades and explosives, 760 RPGs, 427 explosive belts, 375 firearms, and 106 rockets and missiles.



IDF Operations

- The IDF continued to advance its ground operations in northern Gaza over the last 24 hours.
 - » IDF spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari [stated](#) on November 7 that the IDF is operating “on the ground deep inside Gaza City” and that Israel has destroyed over 100 Hamas tunnel shafts since its operations in Gaza began. Hagari [added](#) that the IDF has struck over 14,000 targets in the Gaza Strip and captured roughly 4,000 weapons.
 - » The IDF [reported](#) on November 7 that it had, through air, ground, and naval operations, secured a number of Hamas outposts and captured rocket launchers, anti-tank missiles, ammunition, and intelligence materials.
 - » The IDF further stated that it seized hundreds of rocket-propelled grenades, dozens of machine guns, surface-to-air missiles, and other munitions. The military also said that it located rocket launch pits near a mosque and neutralized a Hamas cell plotting an attack on IDF forces from a building next to al-Quds Hospital.
 - » On November 8, the IDF [said](#) that it killed Mohsen Abu Zina, head of Hamas’s weapons and industries.
- On November 7, the IDF [said](#) that it responded to rocket fire toward northern Israel from southern Lebanon with air strikes against Hezbollah sites.
- Overnight, Israel [arrested](#) three dozen wanted terrorists in the West Bank, including ten Hamas members.
 - » Since October 7, the IDF says it has arrested roughly 1,430 wanted Palestinians in the West Bank, including over 900 affiliated with Hamas.
- On November 8, while conducting security raids, IDF soldiers shot and [killed](#) a Palestinian man and injured two others in the West Bank village of Sa’ir after Palestinians threw rocks and Molotov cocktails at the soldiers.
- On November 8, the IDF [announced](#) on X that it was putting in place a four-hour window for Gazans to evacuate from northern Gaza.
 - » The announcement stated that Israel had established a “safe corridor” down Salah-al-din Road to southern Gaza, south of Wadi Gaza.
 - » The IDF later [extended](#) the window by an hour, urging Gazans, “for your safety, join the many thousands who headed to the southern Wadi Gaza area since the morning hours, seize the opportunity until three o’clock in the afternoon to protect yourselves and members of your families.”
- On November 7, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Defense Minister Gallant, and Minister Benny Gantz [delivered](#) speeches at the Kirya, the IDF’s military headquarters in Tel Aviv.
 - » Netanyahu praised the IDF’s advances in Gaza, saying “in the south, the war is moving forward with force that Hamas has never seen. Gaza City is surrounded. We are operating within it, we are deepening the pressure on Hamas every hour, every day.”
 - He stated that Israel is deepening the pressure on Hamas and that Hezbollah would be making “the greatest mistake of its life” if it opened up a full-on front against Israel.
 - Netanyahu also stated that thousands of terrorists have been killed in the war, both above ground and in tunnels, and that Israel has destroyed “countless” Hamas

command centers, positions, and tunnels, adding “ Hamas is discovering that we are reaching places they thought we would never reach.”

- » Regarding the prospect of a ceasefire, Netanyahu stressed that “there will not be a ceasefire without the return of our kidnapped.”
- » Warning Hezbollah and Hamas regarding attacks from Lebanon, Netanyahu said Israel would not accept either group operating from Lebanon “harming our communities and our citizens. We will respond with heavy fire to any of their attacks against us.”
- » Gallant claimed that IDF troops are operating “in the heart” of Gaza City and have entered terrorist strongholds “from all directions, in perfect coordination with maritime and aerial forces,” and are “tightening the noose” around Hamas.
- » Gallant expressed that “humanitarian pauses, to me, means first and foremost the [return of the] captives held by the savages. There will be no humanitarian pauses without [the return of] the hostages.”
- » Minister Gantz called the conflict a “multi-front war” and argued that “the focus is Gaza, but we are fighting on defense and on offense both in the north and elsewhere.”
- On November 8, the Israeli Knesset passed a [law](#) making it illegal to watch pro-terrorist content if the manner in which the viewer consumes it indicates an identification with the terrorist organizations mentioned in the law, namely Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. The law will remain valid for two years, and conviction can lead to a maximum sentence of up to one year of imprisonment.

Casualties and Hostages

- Nearly 1,600 people in Israel have been [killed](#), and another 7,262 have been [injured](#) in the war, including 342 currently hospitalized and fifty-one in serious condition.
 - » 350 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - 32 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
 - The IDF announced that a soldier in the Israeli Air Force’s elite Shaldag unit was [killed](#) in the northern Gaza Strip on November 8.
 - The IDF stated on November 8 that three soldiers were seriously [wounded](#) during fighting in northern Gaza.
 - » Numerous foreign nationals have been killed in the war, including at least 32 [American](#) nationals, 34 [Thai](#) nationals, 21 [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, [10,569](#) people have been killed in Gaza, and 26,475 have been [injured](#) during the war.
- On October 25, President Biden [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, 163 people have been [killed](#), and an additional approximately 2,300 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 240 individuals have been notified that their loved ones were [taken hostage](#).
 - » According to a November 7 [Axios](#) report citing Israeli officials, Hamas is holding around 180 hostages, Palestinian Islamic Jihad is holding 40 hostages, and other factions affiliated with both groups are holding about 20 hostages.
- Foreign nationals also remain missing, including at least 11 [American](#) nationals, 9 [French](#) nationals, 15 [Argentinian](#) nationals, 9 [Ukrainian](#) nationals, 8 [Russian](#) 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 8 [German](#) nationals, 23 [Thai](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 3 [British](#) nationals, 3 [Romanian](#), 2 [Italian](#) nationals, and 2 [Mexican](#) nationals have been taken hostage.
- Hamas [claimed](#) on November 7 that it was prepared to release twelve foreign nationals it is holding hostage but is unable to do so because of Israeli combat operations.

Iranian Involvement and Response

- On November 7, pro-Hezbollah Lebanese parliamentarian Ali Fayyad [threatened](#) that Hezbollah would respond “double” to any Israeli operation that results in civilian deaths.
 - » Fayyad stated, “the resistance will respond double to any aggression that targets civilians and that “[Hezbollah] hasn't yet shown all its weight.”

U.S. and International Response

- The foreign ministers of the G7, which includes the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom, [convened](#) on November 7 in Tokyo to discuss the war in Israel, among other issues.
 - » A readout from the meeting [stated](#) that the countries “unequivocally condemn the terror attacks by Hamas and others across Israel that began on October 7, 2023, as well as ongoing missile attacks against Israel. We emphasize Israel’s right to defend itself and its people, in accordance with international law, as it seeks to prevent a recurrence.”
 - » The readout further stated that “all parties must allow unimpeded humanitarian support for civilians, including food, water, medical care, fuel, and shelter, and access for humanitarian workers. We support humanitarian pauses and 2 corridors to facilitate urgently needed assistance, civilian movement, and the release of hostages.”
 - » The readout’s discussion of the war concluded, “G7 members are committed to working closely with partners to prepare sustainable long-term solutions for Gaza and a return to a broader peace process in line with the internationally agreed parameters. We underscore that a two-state solution, which envisions Israel and a viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace, security, and mutual recognition, remains the only path to a just, lasting, and secure peace.”

- » During the summit, the United Kingdom’s Foreign Secretary James Cleverly [said](#) that while Israel will inherit security control over Gaza in the short term, “as soon as practicable, a move towards a peace-loving Palestinian leadership is the most desired outcome.”
- » Addressing Iran’s malign activities, the readout stated, “we call on Iran to refrain from providing support for Hamas and taking further actions that destabilize the Middle East, including support for Lebanese Hezbollah and other non-state actors, and to use its influence with those groups to de-escalate regional tensions.”
- » The readout also expressed the foreign ministers’ “grave concerns” about Iran’s ballistic missile program, weapons transfers to non-state actors, support for Russia’s war against Ukraine, interference with freedom of navigation in the Arabian Gulf, human rights in Iran, and Iranian targeting of journalists and dissidents living abroad.
- At a press availability on November 8 during the G7 meetings, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [presented](#) what the Biden administration envisions for a post-war Gaza, arguing that there can be a “transition period” but that Israel should not occupy Gaza because “the only way to ensure this never happens again is to set the conditions for durable peace and security.”
 - » Blinken described the elements of a post-war Gaza as “no forcible displacement of Palestinians from Gaza – not now, not after the war. No use of Gaza as a platform for terrorism or other violent attacks. No reoccupation of Gaza after the conflict ends. No attempt to blockade or besiege Gaza. No reduction in the territory of Gaza. We must also ensure no terrorist threats can emanate from the West Bank.”
 - » Blinken argued that in Gaza there should be “Palestinian governance, Gaza unified with the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority ... And it must include a sustained mechanism for reconstruction in Gaza, and a pathway to Israelis and Palestinians living side by side in states of their own, with equal measures of security, freedom, opportunity, and dignity.”
- *Bloomberg* [reported](#) on November 7, citing U.S. officials, that the White House’s \$14 billion aid request for Israel includes funds to manufacture at most 100 more Iron Dome launchers and at least 14,000 Tamir interceptors, which would more than double the number of Iron Dome launchers currently deployed.
 - » The Pentagon confirmed to *Bloomberg* that of the \$14 billion requested, \$4 billion is for munitions procurement, \$3 billion for Iron Dome, and \$1 billion for the David’s Sling air defense system.
 - » The request also reportedly includes a provision that would waive an annual \$200 million limit on the value of gear placed in the U.S. regional war reserve located in Israel, also known as WRSA-I.
- On November 7, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 234 in favor and 188 against, with four abstentions, to [censure](#) Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) for comments she made about the war.
 - » The resolution [stated](#) that Tlaib had claimed the October 7 attack on Israel by Hamas was a justified “resistance” to “the apartheid state.”
 - » The resolution also stated that Tlaib had “knowingly spread the false narrative that Israel intentionally bombed the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital on October 17 after United States intelligence, Israeli intelligence, and President Biden assessed with high confidence that Israel did not cause the explosion.”

- » The resolution also alleged that Tlaib had published a video on social media on November 3 that contained the phrase “from the river to the sea” and that Tlaib later referred to the phrase as “an aspirational call for freedom, human rights, and peaceful coexistence.”
 - The resolution noted that the phrase “from the river to the sea” is widely recognized as a “call to violence to destroy the state of Israel and its people to replace it with a Palestinian state extending from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.”
- *Axios* [reported](#) on November 7, citing U.S. and Israeli officials, that President Biden asked Prime Minister Netanyahu to agree to a three-day pause in fighting to allow for hostages to be released as part of a deal being negotiated by the two countries along with Qatar.
 - » Hamas would reportedly release between ten and fifteen hostages and use the three-day pause to verify all hostages’ identities and release their names.
 - » *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on November 7, citing senior U.S. and Israeli sources, that Israel rejected U.S. urging for humanitarian pauses in Gaza unless Hamas begins to release hostages.
- On November 7, senior adviser to President Biden Amos Hochstein [visited](#) Beirut amid relatively low-level violence between Israel and terrorist groups in Lebanon, including Hezbollah, since October 7.
 - » Hochstein met with Lebanon’s caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, among others.
 - » During a press conference, Hochstein said, “the United States does not want to see conflict in Gaza escalating and expanding into Lebanon,” and “restoring calm along the southern border is of utmost importance to the United States and it should be the highest priority for both Lebanon and Israel.”
 - » The U.S. embassy in Lebanon [posted](#) further details about the visit on X, noting that Hochstein “conveyed that the United States cares deeply for Lebanon and its people during this difficult time” and “heard the concerns of Lebanese officials and informed them of what the United States is doing to address them.” and “reiterated that the United States does not want to see the conflict in Gaza spread” regionally.
- On November 7, the United Nations Security Council [held](#) more than two hours of closed-door deliberations on a resolution on the Israel-Hamas war but failed to agree on a resolution.
 - » According to Robert A. Wood, Alternate Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, the deadlock [stems](#) from disagreements on language for the resolution, namely whether the resolution would call for “humanitarian ceasefires” or, as the United States and its allies have endorsed, “humanitarian pauses.”
- Israeli President Isaac Herzog [spoke](#) by phone with U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris on November 7.
 - » According to a [readout](#), Vice President Harris expressed support for Israel’s right to self-defense and emphasized the importance of protecting civilians in Gaza.
 - » President Herzog responded that Israel is committed to supplying humanitarian aid to Gaza, that Israel abides by international humanitarian law, and that Hamas operates from deep within Gazan civilian sites.

- » The readout further stated that President Herzog conveyed his appreciation for U.S. backing of Israel, underscored Israel's focus on the return of hostages, and stated that there could be no ceasefire without the return of hostages.
- » The two also spoke about their shared concern about the global rise of antisemitism.
- On November 7, U.S. National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby [argued](#), "I heard this word 'genocide' tossed around. Hamas actually does have genocidal intentions against the people of Israel. They'd like to see it wiped off the map. They've said so on purpose. That's what's at stake here."
 - » Kirby [replied](#) "yes" in response to a question about whether the United States is concerned about Palestinians killed in the West Bank by both Israeli security forces and local settlers and the over 1,300 Palestinians detained by Israel since October 7.
- On November 7, State Department spokesman Vedant Patel [stated](#) at a press conference that the United States opposes Israel taking control of the Gaza Strip.
 - » Patel stated, "our viewpoint is that Palestinians must be at the forefront of those decisions and Gaza is Palestinian land and it will remain Palestinian land. And generally speaking, we do not support reoccupation of Gaza, and neither does Israel."
- CIA Director William Burns [met](#) with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Cairo on November 7 to discuss the war.
 - » President el-Sisi called for a ceasefire and "unfettered flow of humanitarian aid" into the Gaza Strip, according to an Egyptian readout.
 - » According to the *Middle East Eye*, Egyptian officials warned Burns that Israel's aim of [ousting](#) Hamas from power was "unrealistic."
- On November 7, Israeli media outlets [reported](#) that Thailand is in talks with Iran and Qatar to secure the release of twenty-three Thai nationals being held hostage in the Gaza Strip.
- Prime Minister Netanyahu [spoke](#) by phone with French President Emmanuel Macron on November 7. According to a readout, Netanyahu updated Macron on the latest developments in the war and thanked him for his support.
- Senator John Fetterman (D-PA) [covered](#) the walls of his Washington, D.C. congressional office with posters of the hostages captured by Hamas on October 7 and posted on X that "they will stay up until every single person is safely returned home."
- London's Metropolitan Police Commissioner Mike Rawley [claimed](#) that he is powerless to stop a pro-Palestinian protest from taking place on November 11, which coincides with Armistice Day, the commemoration of war dead that marks the anniversary of the cessation of hostilities on the Western Front of World War I. Instead, Armistice Day ceremonies will only take place on November 12.
- Antisemitic incidents and attacks have continued worldwide.
 - » On November 7, a synagogue and a Jewish community center in Montreal, Canada, were [targeted](#) in attempted firebomb attacks.
 - » On November 7, a Kosher restaurant in Houston, Texas was [broken into and vandalized](#).
 - » On November 6, the University of Pennsylvania [alerted](#) the FBI that its faculty received antisemitic emails "threatening violence" against its Jewish community.

Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel at War

- Webinar: [Hezbollah's Escalation Dilemma](#), with John Hannah, JINSA's Randi & Charles Wax Senior Fellow; Hanin Ghaddar, Friedmann Senior Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy; IDF Lieutenant Colonel (Res.) Sarit Zehavi, founder and president of Alma; and Orna Mizrahi, senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), November 7, 2023
- Yoni Tobin, "[U.S. Aid to Gaza Almost Certain to End Up in Hamas Hands](#)," November 6, 2023
- Thomas Trask and Jacob Olidort, "[The Case for Upgrading Israel's 'Major Non-NATO Ally' Status](#)," RealClearDefense, November 6, 2023
- Webinar: [Not Ataturk's Republic: Erdogan's Response to Hamas and Israel](#) with JINSA's VP for Policy Blaise Misztal, Counselor at JINSA's Gemunder Center for Defense and Strategy Ambassador Eric Edelman, and member of the JINSA Eastern Mediterranean Policy Project Alan Makovsky, November 3, 2023
- Jacob Olidort, "[In Speech, Nasrallah Explains Hezbollah's Role in War with Israel](#)," November 3, 2023
- Zac Schildcrout, "[Houthi Attacks Highlight Need for Developing Regional Integrated Air Defenses](#)," November 3, 2023
- Jonathan Ruhe, "[Deterrence Through Strength](#)," The Dispatch, November 2, 2023
- Webinar: [Gaza Update](#) with JINSA President and CEO Dr. Michael Makovsky, JINSA Distinguished Fellow IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, and JINSA Senior Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish, November 2, 2023
- Matt Kenney, "[Emergency Supplemental Funding for Israel – The Current State of Play](#)," November 1, 2023
- Dr. Michael Makovsky, [Appearance](#) on Live Now Fox, November 1, 2023