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08.23.19 Israel struck Iranian cargo of guided missiles at weapons depot in Iraq

Report: U.S. officials say Israel struck Iranian weapons depot in Iraq

New York Times says 'cargo of guided missiles' with a range of 125 miles' was destroyed in July 19 airstrike on base used by Revolutionary Guards to transfer arms to Syria
Ynet, Reuters|Published: 08.23.19, 10:15

Israel conducted at least one airstrike on a weapons depot in Iraq that American officials say was used by Iran to transfer weapons to Syria, the New York Times reported late Thursday.

A series of blasts in the past few weeks have hit weapon depots and bases belonging to paramilitary groups in Iraq, many of them backed by Israel's regional foe Iran.

The groups blamed the United States and Israel for the blasts on Wednesday.

The Times specifies a July 19 attack on a base near Baghdad that an unnamed "Middle East intelligence official" said was used by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards to move the weapons. The attack, which was reportedly launched from inside Iraq, destroyed "a cargo of guided missiles with a range of 125 miles."

The report said that an Iraqi military official confirmed a base was hit, killing three people – including one Iranian.

The NYT quoted a senior American official as saying that "Israel was pushing the limits" by striking targets in Iraq and that such action could result the U.S. Army having to leave its bases in the country.

The Iraqi government on Thursday avoided attributing the strikes to any country, with Iraqi national security adviser Falih al-Fayadh saying Baghdad did not wish to take sides in any conflict between Iran and other countries.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hinted Thursday of possible Israeli involvement in attacks against Iranian-linked targets in Iraq.

In an interview with Russian-language Israeli television Channel 9, broadcast on Thursday, Netanyahu was asked whether Israel would operate against Iranian targets in Iraq if needed, he said:

"We are operating - not just if needed, we are operating in many areas against a state that wants to annihilate us. Of course I gave the security forces a free hand and instructed them to do anything necessary to thwart Iran's plans."

Netanyahu did not directly name Iraq as one of those areas.

Israel says it has carried out hundreds of strikes in Syria, some of them against Iranian targets, to prevent Teheran from establishing a permanent military presence there and to stop advanced weapons reaching its proxies in the area.

Israeli officials suggested recently they viewed Iraq, whose main ally is Iran, as more of a threat than in recent years, but have not directly commented on the recent blasts at Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) sites in Iraq.

On Wednesday, the PMF, the umbrella grouping of Iraq's mostly Shi'ite Muslim paramilitary groups, said the United States had allowed four Israeli drones to enter the region accompanying U.S. forces and carry out missions on Iraqi territory.

The Pentagon denied involvement.

The U.S.-led coalition, in Iraq to fight remnants of the Islamic State group, dismissed the statement.

The Iranian Land Bridge from Tehran to Syria and Lebanon is Under Attack in Iraq



As tensions between Washington and Tehran increase, Iraq finds itself caught between neighboring Iran, whose regional influence has grown in recent years, and the United States.

Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi last week ordered all ammunition dumps belonging to the armed forces or paramilitary groups to be moved outside of cities.

Thursday's deal

08.22.19 Israel will stop collecting fuel taxes; Palestinians will collect funds directly
Palestinians to get half-billion dollars from Israel in new tax deal

A senior Palestinian Authority official and Fatah member says Israeli government has agreed to allow the Palestinians to collect \$60 million in monthly fuel taxes which Israel usually collects on PA's behalf

News Agencies|Published: 08.22.19, 19:07

Israel has agreed to allow the Palestinian Authority to collect at least half-billion dollars in tax money, which normally Israeli government collects on the Palestinians' behalf, in an effort to help relieve a burgeoning economic "crisis" constraining the West Bank, a senior PA official said Thursday.

Israel began this year withholding parts of some \$200 million in monthly tax transfers that the Palestinians give to families of people killed or imprisoned in fighting with the Jewish state. Israelis say the payments encourage violence, while the Palestinians say the

funds assist distressed families. In protest, they have refused to accept any funds from Israel.

Palestinian Civil Affairs Minister Hussein al-Sheikh, a senior Fatah member, said an "agreement was reached a few days ago with the Israeli side to transfer the tax money on oil and fuels which the Palestinian Authority bought in Israel, in the amount of around two billion shekels (\$568 million)."

Under **Thursday's deal**, the Palestinians say **Israel will stop collecting** about \$60 million in **monthly fuel taxes** and **allow the Palestinians to collect the funds directly**.

"The transfer will have positive economic repercussions, but it will not solve the problem between the Palestinian Authority and Israel," said Al-Sheikh, referring to the dispute regarding the payment of stipends to the families of Palestinians who committed attacks against Israel.

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayeh says the additional revenue will ease a financial crisis and allow him to slightly increase civil servants' partial salary payments, which have been significantly cut since last February.

Israel has also reportedly agreed to temporarily exempt Arabs in the West Bank from paying taxes on fuel, in order to stimulate the local economy, according to Israeli public broadcaster, KAN.

Israel in February decided to withhold some \$10 million a month from revenues of some \$190 million per month it collects on the PA's behalf, triggering Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to say he would accept either all or nothing.

i24NEWS contributed to this report

08.21.19 Trump doubles down: Vote for Democrats is vote against Israel

Trump doubles down: Vote for Democrats is vote against Israel

President hits back after accusations of using anti-Semitic trope alleging Jews have dual loyalty during his attacks on Muslim congresswomen Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar; comments earn condemnation from Jewish groups across spectrum; Rivlin calls Pelosi to stress bipartisan nature of ties

Reuters|Published: **08.21.19** , 20:35

U.S. President Donald Trump beat back criticism of his comments accusing American Jews who vote for Democrats of "great disloyalty" and went a step further on Wednesday, saying any vote for a Democrat is a vote against Israel.

"I think that if you vote for a Democrat you are very, very disloyal to Israel and to the Jewish people," Trump told reporters as he left the White House.

The Republican president drew outrage on Tuesday from Democratic presidential candidates and U.S. Jewish groups after accusing American Jews who vote for Democrats of "great disloyalty."

Critics said Trump's comments echoed an anti-Semitic trope accusing American Jews of dual loyalties to the United States and Israel.

Trump initially responded on Twitter on Wednesday by quoting a conservative columnist as saying American Jews "don't know what they're doing." The Republican president thanked the commentator, Wayne Allyn Root, who likened Trump to the "king of Israel" and said Israelis "love him like he is the second coming of God."

The comments about Israel followed Trump's attacks on a group of first-term Democrats in Congress, U.S. Representatives Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib, who were denied entry to Israel last week after Trump pressured the government.

"Where has the Democratic Party gone? Where have they gone where they're defending these two people over the state of Israel? And I think any Jewish people that vote for a Democrat, I think it shows either a total lack of knowledge or great disloyalty," Trump said on Tuesday, without specifying what or who they were being disloyal to.

Those remarks sparked a swift backlash.

"My message to Trump: I am a proud Jewish person and I have no concerns about voting Democratic," Senator Bernie Sanders, a leader in the race for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination and an independent, wrote in a Twitter post late on Tuesday.

My message to Trump: I am a proud Jewish person and I have no concerns about voting Democratic.

Former Vice President Joe Biden, the current front-runner to challenge Trump in November 2020, called the president's comments "insulting and inexcusable" and urged him to stop dividing Americans.

"The Jewish people don't need to prove their loyalty to you, @realDonaldTrump - or to anyone else," said Democratic candidate Beto O'Rourke, a former U.S. congressman from Texas who has called Trump a racist over his immigration rhetoric.

The Jewish people don't need to prove their loyalty to you, @realDonaldTrump—or to anyone else.

American Jews lean Democratic. Roughly 70 percent of American Jews have typically supported Democratic candidates in recent U.S. presidential elections.

J Street, a liberal lobbying group based in Washington, was among the many U.S. Jewish organizations that expressed outrage or alarm at Trump's comments.

"It is dangerous and shameful for President Trump to attack the large majority of the American Jewish community as unintelligent and 'disloyal,'" the group said on Tuesday.

Said Anti-Defamation League leader Jonathan Greenblatt, "It's unclear who @POTUS is claiming Jews would be 'disloyal' to, but charges of disloyalty have long been used to attack Jews."

The **American Jewish Committee called Trump's comments "shockingly divisive."**

"American Jews - like all Americans - have a range of political views and policy priorities. His assessment of their knowledge or "loyalty," based on their party preference, is inappropriate, unwelcome, and downright dangerous," said committee Chief Executive David Harris.

The Republican Jewish Committee sided with Trump, saying, "President Trump is right, it shows a great deal of disloyalty to oneself to defend a party that protects/emboldens people that hate you for your religion."

Trump is popular in Israel. He delighted many Israelis - while appalling other world powers - by recognizing Jerusalem as their capital, moving the U.S. Embassy there, withdrawing from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights.

The office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which has particularly close ties with the Trump administration, declined to comment on his remarks.

President Reuven Rivlin wrote on Twitter that he had spoken with House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the top U.S. elected Democrat, about strong U.S.-Israel relations he said were "not dependent on the links with either party."

I spoke today with @SpeakerPelosi about the importance of strong US-Israel relations and I thanked her for her commitment. The link between us is between peoples, based on historical ties, deep, strong friendships and shared values, not dependent on the links with either party

Trump has for weeks been attacking Tlaib and Omar, accusing them of hostility to Israel and anti-Semitism. He repeated his attacks on Tlaib on Wednesday, accusing her on Twitter of wanting to cut off aid to Israel, a U.S. ally that has long enjoyed bipartisan support.

In February, Omar, who along with Tlaib supports a boycott of Israel over its policies toward the Palestinians, said U.S. Jews have divided loyalties. She apologized for those remarks after being widely condemned by many in her own party.

Most Democrats disagree with Tlaib and Omar's views on Israel, but Trump's attacks on them have rallied support for the two within their party.

08.21.19 Report: Israel attacked missile warehouses in Iraq with U.S., Russia approval
Report: Israel attacked in Iraq with U.S., Russia approval

The Arabic-language newspaper Asharq al-Awsat says Israel attacked positions of Iran-backed militias north of Baghdad including missile warehouses of the Revolutionary Guards after Israel reached 'understandings' with Washington and Moscow

Daniel Salami|Published: 08.21.19 , 10:23

Israel has attacked Iranian targets in Iraq at least three times in the past few weeks as part of "understandings" reached with the United States and Russia, the London-based, Arabic-language Asharq al-Awsat newspaper reported Wednesday.

According to the report, which cites Western diplomatic sources, the strikes targeted missile warehouses of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. It was one of a series of explosions in recent weeks at weapons depots, bases or positions belonging to Iran-backed military groups in the country.

The sources said that Russia and the U.S. have agreed that Israel's actions in Iraq and Syria are vital "in ensuring Israel's security," and - according to the understandings - the officials in Jerusalem are not obliged to claim the attacks in order not to escalate the already volatile situation in the region.

On Tuesday, several explosions rocked the military positions held by the Popular Mobilization Forces - a state-sponsored umbrella military organization which includes Iran-backed militias - near Balad air base north of Baghdad.

Balad base hosts U.S. forces and contractors and is located about 80 kilometers (50 miles) north of Baghdad. A PMF group backed by Iran is stationed nearby.

The military official said the intended target of the blasts was the group's position near the base. The paramilitary source said his group's weapons depot was specifically targeted by an aerial bombardment.

Iraq's Defense Minister Najah al-Shammari visited the site shortly after the incident, telling Iraqi state television that fires resulting from the blast had been put out and that some military personnel had suffered minor injuries.

Witnesses said the explosions caused stored rockets to fly into nearby farmland and into Balad base itself, and residents in the area fled their homes fearing rockets might land on them.

Sky News Arabia reported that at least 50 missiles had exploded at the warehouses that were targeted in the strikes.

Some analysts have suggested the strikes might have been carried out by Israel, which last year signaled that it could attack suspected Iranian military assets in Iraq, as it has done with scores of air strikes in Syria.

“Iraq’s air defenses have very high capability, but one thing they couldn’t detect is an advanced Israeli air attack,” said Baghdad-based security analyst Hisham al-Hashimi, who advises the government.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the attacks on Tuesday evening shortly before his return flight from Ukraine’s capital of Kiev. “There are major security challenges which are explained in the report I received a few minutes ago,” he said, adding that he receives intelligence reports on a daily basis.

Reuters contributed to this report

08.20.19 Hamas to Israel: Let Qatari aid into Gaza or face renewed violence

Hamas to Israel: Let Qatari aid into Gaza or face renewed violence

Senior source in terrorist group tells Lebanese newspaper that the organization may not be able to contain independent attempts to cross the border if Israel does not allow financial assistance into coastal enclave Hamas rules

Eyal Arbid|Published: 08.20.19 , 12:23

A senior Hamas source has warned that if Israel does not allow the resumption of monthly monetary aid from Qatar and increase the electricity supply to the Gaza Strip by the end of the week, it will face an escalation in violence, Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar reported Tuesday.

In a statement published in the newspaper, the Hamas source said that the organization has renewed its call for Egyptian, Qatari and United Nations mediators to put pressure on Israel to implement these demands as soon as possible, due to the situation in the Gaza Strip "heating up." He warned that the organization may not be able to contain independent attempts to cross the border.

The Hamas statement came ahead of the expected arrival of Qatari envoy Mohammed al-Emadi in the Gaza Strip via Israel this coming weekend, bringing with him millions of dollars in monetary aid and diesel to operate the overstretched Gaza power plant.

There have been several attempts by armed Palestinians to enter Israel from Gaza in the past few weeks. Most recently, IDF forces shot dead three Palestinian gunmen overnight Saturday near the border fence in the north of the Gaza Strip.

The incident came soon after three rockets were launched from Gaza at the Israeli city of Sderot and other communities near the Gaza border. Unofficial sources in Gaza said that the terrorists were members of the Islamic Jihad movement. The rocket fire was followed by IDF strikes on Gaza, which Hamas said was an Israeli attempt to distract from recent "courageous" terror attacks on Israelis in the West Bank.

A week earlier, the IDF said it foiled a major pre-dawn terror attack in the area of the Gaza border, blaming Hamas for the attempted infiltration by four Palestinians who were carrying Kalashnikov rifles, hand grenades and rocket-propelled grenade launchers.

The most serious incident was a failed infiltration attempt by Hamas operative Hani Abu Salah on August 1, in which three IDF soldiers were wounded.

On Friday, some 5,600 Palestinians protested along the Gaza border with Israel as part of the weekly "March of Return" demonstrations. The protesters threw stun grenades at the fence, and some even approached it. IDF troops used crowd dispersal methods to repel the protesters.

Qatar has in recent years funneled hundreds of millions of dollars into relief projects in Hamas-controlled Gaza, which it views as helping stave off privation and fighting with Israel.

The intervention is approved by Israel but has gone largely unacknowledged by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who, along with U.S.-allied Arab leaders, has cold-shouldered Doha for its ties to Iran and Islamist groups like Hamas.

In June, a Qatari technical delegation met with the Israel Electric Corporation in Tel Aviv and in Gaza with energy officials to discuss Doha's offer to pay for the completion of a new Gaza electricity line. Al-Emadi has previously spoken of Qatar's willingness to take part in the project, whose cost he put at around \$60 million.

Beside averting some of Gaza's chronic blackouts, an improved electricity supply would also help power sewage pumps and prevent water contamination plaguing two million Palestinians.

Reuters contributed to this report

08.20.19 U.S. scraps West Bank education & culture conference over Palestinian protests
U.S. scraps West Bank conference over Palestinian protests

The conference initiated by the U.S Embassy in Jerusalem, set to bring together alumni of U.S. educational and cultural programs was canceled after Palestinians deem it an attempt to circumvent boycott of U.S. administration

Associated Press|Published: 08.20.19 , 09:34

The U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem on Monday was forced to postpone a conference it organized in the West Bank city of Ramallah after Palestinian officials and factions called for a boycott and threatened to organize protests.

The Palestinians cut all ties with the U.S. after it recognized disputed Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in 2017, and view the Trump administration as unfairly biased following a series of actions seen as hostile to their aspirations for an independent state.

The embassy had organized a conference this week to bring together alumni of U.S. educational and cultural programs, including dozens of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip who received permission from Israel to attend.

The territory has been under an Israeli-Egyptian blockade since the Islamic militant group Hamas seized power there in 2007.

The Palestinian leadership viewed the conference as an attempt to circumvent **its boycott of the U.S. administration.**

"We are aware of recent statements regarding a planned event for alumni of U.S. educational and cultural programs," the U.S. Embassy said. "In order to avoid the Palestinian participants being put in a difficult situation, we have decided to postpone the event for now."

It said this and other events "are designed to create opportunities for exchange and dialogue between Americans and Palestinians at the grassroots level."

"This event in particular is intended to give alumni of all ages and backgrounds from Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza an opportunity to network with each other and to engage in leadership and capacity building activities," it said.

The **Trump administration** is at work on a long-awaited peace plan, but **has not endorsed a two-state solution to the conflict.** The Palestinians have already dismissed the plan, saying it is certain to be slanted toward Israel.

Representatives of several Palestinian factions held a press conference Monday at the hotel where the meeting was to have taken place.

Spokesman Isam Baker told The Associated Press that the Palestine Liberation Organization, an umbrella group, had reached out to the hotel management and the invitees asking them to boycott the meeting.

"Most of the invitees and the hotel administration agreed with us that the invitation has political implications and it is not innocent," he said.

"The U.S. administration, which has cut off all aid to our people, shut down our office in Washington and placed huge pressure on our leadership to accept a pro-Israel political

plan will not do any good for our people," he said. "Therefore, we are boycotting any activities it organizes."

The U.S. cut more than \$200 million in development aid to the Palestinians last year, gutting several long-running programs.

A statement released Sunday by the "national and Islamic forces of the Ramallah governorate" said they were determined to thwart the conference, calling it an attempt to "break the will of the Palestinian people." It said they planned to organize a "mass popular event to prevent this activity by all available means," calling for a sit-in and marches.

The youth wing of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party also called for a boycott. It vowed to "exercise all forms of legal and popular pressure to express rejection of this conference being held on occupied Palestinian land."

It also called for an "apology" from the hotel.

08.20.19 Israel will help Palestinians leave Gaza, if they have new country to go to
Source: Israel will help Palestinians leave Gaza, if they have new country to go to
Official says Gazans could even depart from Israeli airports, subject been raised in cabinet meetings but no nation willing to take them in; PM says he is 'advancing a broad campaign in Gaza' in wake of recent tensions
Itamar Eichner |Published: 08.20.19 , 08:04
KIEV, Ukraine - Israel is ready to open the border crossings from Gaza and is even ready to allow Gazans to fly out of its territory so long as there are countries that will absorb them, a government source said Monday.

"Israel is even willing to arrange transportation for them, at least to one of the airports in the Negev (Desert) and arrange for them to travel out of the country," the source said.

According to the official, this issue has been brought up several times to the Cabinet.

"Attempts have been made with certain nations (to persuade them to accept them) but they have not succeeded," the source said.

He said that 35,000 Palestinians voluntarily left the Gaza Strip last year without the aid of Israel.

"They are being held hostage in Gaza," he said. "Today countries are not raising the humanitarian situation in Gaza."

Israel has for years kept its border with the Hamas-run Gaza Strip closed and guarded and has imposed a land, sea and air blockade of the coastal enclave, arguing that it needs to prevent terrorist groups from smuggling in weapons.

Meanwhile, the tensions between Israel and the Gaza Strip continue following the recent violence, which saw both rocket strikes on Israel and retaliatory attacks as well as several attempted armed infiltrations into Israel.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is visiting Ukraine, on Monday addressed the likelihood of a fresh military operation in Gaza.

"I am advancing a broad campaign in Gaza. I cannot tell you what we are doing and what preparations we have made and how much we are preparing, but some of our critics know too well that we are doing things that we have not done before and that we are ready for action," the prime minister said.

"On the other hand, I am not hiding my objective of maintaining quiet and security on the Gaza front," he said|.

"To say that we have no deterrence is nonsense, because Hamas is issuing fatwas (religious Islamic rulings) against terrorist attacks. We are preparing for a broad campaign. If that happens and it may, you will see exactly what it is. It will be different than before."

Netanyahu also denied reports that he has earmarked Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. Ron Dermer and Mossad chief Yossi Cohen as possible successors in the Likud party.

"I am not appointing an heir, and I did not say anything of the sort. It is the public who decides who the prime minister is," he said.

He denied allegations that the visit to Ukraine was planned out of electoral considerations ahead of the September 17 vote, and part of his efforts to win over the votes of immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

"The visit was decided after the April elections and before the repeat elections," Netanyahu said.

08.19.19 Palestinian intelligence warns of possible violent uprising in West Bank
Palestinian intelligence warns of possible violent uprising in West Bank

A report seen exclusively by Ynet and Yedioth Ahronoth warns the dire political situation in the West Bank combined with PA leadership's policies have yielded no political gain, while Hamas and its use of violent resistance is perceived as more politically and economically effective

Elior Levy|Published: **08.19.19** , 12:53

A Palestinian intelligence warns of a possible deterioration of security situation in the West Bank which may lead to another breakout of violent uprising and destabilize the Palestinian Authority, if the political and economic stagnation continues, according to a report seen exclusively by Ynet and its sister publication Yedioth Ahronoth.

The report was submitted to the PA days before the murder of 18-year-old soldier Dvir Sorek by Palestinian terrorists on August 8 and accurately anticipated the string of terror attacks and attempted attacks in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

The report singles out Palestinians in their mid-twenties, enraged by their situation who see no hope for change in the near future and are therefore most dangerous as potential precipitators of violent resistance.

The authors of the report based their conclusions on interviews conducted with young Palestinians in the West Bank, interrogations of detainees, surveillance of this sector of the population by security authorities and the observation of their social media activity.

The conclusions reached by the intelligence services indicate there will be an **increase in shooting incidents and the use of explosive devices**, imitating successful attacks that have occurred over the past year resulting in Israeli civilian deaths.

Accessibility to weapons, the report notes, is not a problem due to the **thriving illegal weapon market in the West Bank**. It also warns that Hamas is constantly trying to **enlist terrorists to carry out attacks**, directed by its leadership in Gaza and abroad.

An all-out eruption of civilian protests and violence is also anticipated, caused by the dire financial conditions and inspired by the weekly March of Return border protests in the Gaza Strip.

The PA's policy of cooperation with Israel is not seen by Palestinians as having yielded any political benefit. Hamas's violent resistance, however, is perceived by the Palestinian population as much more beneficial in terms of the lifting of the Gaza blockade and an influx of funds into the impoverished Strip.

The Fatah movement also appears to be undergoing a process of radicalization and calls for the renewal of violent resistance are gaining strength, compounded by the inciteful words of Israeli politicians conducting what has turned out to be the longest election campaign in Israel's history.

Finally the report notes that the families of PA officials, those charged with containing opposition from within the West Bank, are at the forefront of the potential escalation in violence, primarily because their incomes have been hurt by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's refusal to accept tax revenue until Israel transfers all funds to Ramallah including those withheld because of stipends to terrorists and their families.

08.19.19 Parts of peace plan may publish before Israel elections & release after elections
Trump says he will likely release Mideast peace plan after Israel elections

U.S. President added that some parts of the plan, which already kicked-off at the Bahrain summit with promises of a \$50 billion investment plan in the Mideastern sphere, could be published before the September 17 elections

Reuters, Ynet|Published: 08.19.19 , 09:38

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Sunday he would likely wait until after Israel's Sept. 17 elections to release a peace plan for the region that was designed by White House senior adviser Jared Kushner.

However, Trump added that parts of the plan could be published before the elections.

Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, is the main architect of a proposed economic development plan for the Palestinians, Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon that is designed to create peace in the region.

In June, the first stage of Trump's peace plan was launched at the Bahrain international economic conference, announcing a \$50 billion in investments in the Palestinian sphere as the first stage of the plan.

Neither Israeli nor Palestinian governments attended the curtain-raising event in the Bahraini capital, Manama, and Palestinians deemed the plan as an "economy first" approach doomed to fail.

"I think we all have to recognize that if there ever is a deal, it's not going to be along the lines of the Arab Peace Initiative. It will be somewhere between the Arab Peace Initiative and between the Israeli position," Kushner told Al Jazeera in an interview in June, careful not to expose the guidelines of the actual plan.

In early June, U.S. ambassador David Friedman told the New York Times that, "under certain circumstances, I think Israel has the right to retain some, but unlikely all, of the West Bank," possibly implying to the content of Trump's peace plan, sometimes referred to as "the Deal of the Century."

Trump has already executed several moves that prove his commitment to the Israeli government's interests; in March, he met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House Monday evening and signed a decree recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

Earlier in his term, in May 2018, Trump fulfilled his promise to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and moved the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

The relocation of the embassy from Tel Aviv has infuriated the Palestinians, who seek East Jerusalem as a future capital.

08.18.19 Jordan summons Israeli ambassador to cease Temple Mount visits

Jordan summons Israeli ambassador over holy site clashes

Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan last week, stated Israel should push to change the status quo at the Temple Mount prompting Jordanian condemnation and a warning that Israel must cease its attempt to change the historical status

Ynet and Associated Press|Published: 08.18.19 , 18:33

Jordan has summoned Israel's ambassador to protest "Israeli violations" at a Jerusalem holy site sacred to Muslims and Jews.

Jordan's Foreign Ministry said Sunday that Amman delivered a "decisive letter" to the ambassador, including a call "to immediately cease all Israeli violations and all Israeli attempts to change the historical, legal status" at the site.

In an earlier meeting with the ambassadors from the European Union, Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi stressed the urgency of effective international steps that must be taken against Israel's actions saying "these violations & others seeking to change status quo in Holy Sites violate Int'l law, deepen tensions."

Muslim worshippers clashed with Israeli police last week at the site, known as the Temple Mount to Jews and the Noble Sanctuary to Muslims. Palestinians were protesting a visit by hundreds of Israelis to the flashpoint site on a day in which Muslim and Jewish holidays coincided.

In a rare occurrence this year, both the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, which translates as the "Festival of the Sacrifice" and the Jewish holiday of "Tisha Be' Av" which marks the destruction of the two Jewish temples that were situated on Temple Mount and destroyed centuries ago, fell on the same days.

Last week Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan last week, stated Israel should push to change the status quo at the Temple Mount.

Jordan says the site is a "place of worship for Muslims only."

The Status quo has been in place since 1967, in the immediate aftermath of the Six Day War and formalizes the mosques compound as a Muslim shrine while Jews and Christians can visit it.

The hilltop shrine is managed by an Islamic trust under Jordanian stewardship.

08.18.19 Tense weekend on Gaza border moves leaders to promote attacks on terrorists
Netanyahu slammed by political leaders after tense weekend on Gaza border

With a month to go until the elections, a host of prominent politicians go on the offensive, calling the prime minister 'weak' after 2 rocket attacks and an infiltration attempt within 24 hours; 'Deterrence against Hamas hasn't been eroded, it's been erased,' says Gantz
Ynet reporters|Published: 08.18.19, 15:47

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who also holds the defense portfolio, faces growing criticism over his handling of the security situation in southern Israel. A host of prominent Israeli politician went on the offensive Sunday, attacking Netanyahu after a tense weekend on the Gaza border, with just a month to go until the September 17 elections.

Palestinian militants in Gaza fired at least four rockets into the southern city of Sderot within 24 hours over the weekend, with three projectiles being intercepted by the Iron Dome defense system.

In addition, medical sources in the enclave said Sunday that three Palestinians, who according to Israeli military were trying to infiltrate the border with Israel, were killed by IDF fire and another was left seriously wounded.

Former Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman was among the first to come out against the prime minister. "He is an excellent presenter but a weak leader who lacks leadership and is incapable of making decisions in times of crisis," wrote the Yisrael Beytenu chairman on his Facebook page.

"Again, we are faced with the unbridled behavior of the prime minister, who is currently on his way to the Ukraine to film an election propaganda, while the residents of the south are being held hostage," Liberman added.

Blue and White Chairman Benny Gantz joined in on the criticism when he visited the Israeli communities bordering the Strip on Sunday morning. "The deterrence hasn't been eroded, it's been erased," said the former IDF chief.

"We will defeat Hamas militarily, we'll bring quiet to the residents of the south, and will not allow this to spill over into the West Bank."

Gantz's fellow Blue and White party member and another former IDF chief of staff, Gaby Ashkenazi, said the prime minister is "only preoccupied with himself."

"The prime minister is weak, only preoccupied with himself and just wants quiet ahead of the elections," said Ashkenazi. "This situation has been dragging on for over a decade. It's incomprehensible that residents have to run to bomb shelters while they're eating dinner. It's not just a strategic issue, it's every country's basic duty to protect its residents."

Finally, Former Education Minister Naftali Bennett visited the scene of Saturday's car-ramping attack in Gush Etzion in the West Bank that wounded two Israeli youths.

"We will back the prime minister in any military action that needs to be done, but we must turn the situation on its head," said the Yamina party member. "We need to move on to a policy of persistent attacks, chasing after the terror leaders. They have to start fearing for their lives."