

## Conference Call with Uzi Rubin

**David Harris:** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. At least one rocket was fired last night, further than ever before from Gaza, towards the northern Israeli city Hadera. To try to get an understanding of the Gazan arsenal, we've asked Uzi Rubin to join us this morning. He is the president of the Rubicon Defense Consultancy and was director of Israel's Missile Defense Organization in the Ministry of Defense. First, let's get your opening thoughts, Uzi Rubin, and then we'll take some of the questions.

**Uzi Rubin:** Well, good morning everyone. What we are seeing here in action is what was accurately predicted by our intelligence. During the time between Pillar of Defense and today, the Hamas and the Jihad in Gaza increased and improved their arsenals. And we are talking about three, basically three families of rockets. The homemade small short-range ones that are used to a range of 10, or 12, or maybe a little more kilometers. And they are really homemade in workshops in Gaza -- usually quite crude manufacturing. But we have known them since almost 14 years ago. The second family is the factory-made Grad rockets, 122 mm with a range of about 40 km, which are being used in great quantities against the further cities like Be'er Sheva and Ashdod. And we saw yesterday some fierce battles between them and Iron Dome. And the last, the third family is the [inaudible], what they call the strategic ones. The one type of rocket is four-inch, 200 mm, called, they call it M-75. I think it has no pilots. It's a rocket probably designed for the Gaza factions. And it ranges anywhere between 50, 75 and 80 km. And that is the one that were fired at Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Now we knew, and there was enough hints, that they have long-range stuff, but it was not clear exactly what that long-range stuff was. It now seems from the single example that was in Hadera that we see in the news, that this is the Syrian 302 mm rocket with a range of about 150-160 km potential range. Why it hit only up to Hadera, I don't know. Maybe they missed. Maybe they miss a lot. Also you have to remember that Gaza Strip is a long piece of territory and the question is: Where did they fire it from? The south end is about 60 km from the north end, so that would make the difference. So, these are the three families. Beyond that, they have mortar bombs, which are tactical weapons for infantry fighting which they are using in order to spoil our concentrations on Gaza and to harass the nearby settlements. I think I will conclude my opening remarks at that point and I will take questions.

**David Harris:** Thank you very much, I think you covered a lot of the questions in your opening, but I will run through them anyway. To what extent has Hamas been able to smuggle in those new weapons since, since 2012? To what extent has it been able to improve its arsenal and how has it done that? I mean, you talked about the groups.

**Uzi Rubin:** Well, obviously, during the reign, rule, of Islamic Jihad -- Islamic Brotherhood in Egypt, relations between Egyptian government of the time and Hamas were very good. They were actually fraternal ideological brothers, and they were an organization about Hamas' Islamic Brotherhood. So, it would stand to reason that tunnels hummed with activity and what was smuggled was probably not only rockets, but raw materials and even machinery. I'm just guessing, I have no information of that. But actually, it was an open route, a two-way route. Now since the military took over again in Egypt as far as I know, this route is closed down and they have great difficulty in obtaining more supplies and rockets through the tunnels. So what they have is an arsenal that they manage to accumulate during the time between Pillar of Defense and the closing of the tunnels recently. That is quite a lot of time, they could manage to bring in a lot of stuff. And that explains the increase of ranges. (phone rings) I got another phone call, OK, I shut it off.

**David Harris:** Okay, let me carry on. Just very quickly, if you could just list: What are the countries of origin of the rockets that are smuggled into Gaza?

**Uzi Rubin:** Well, it's Iran, but you have the 302 mm rocket that is manufactured, the only country that manufactures it is Syria. So we saw what happened with the Klos-C. The route is that they are imported, not imported, transferred from Syria to Iran and from Iran, somehow, to sea routes or perhaps to Port Sudan and then overland to the Sinai and from there to the tunnels.

**David Harris:** How sophisticated are the rockets that are made inside the Gaza Strip?

**Uzi Rubin:** Well, the new ones, the longer-range ones, the M-75, as I understand [are] well-made, well-made. It's either they smuggled machinery into Gaza or they are smuggling the components of those rockets, or have smuggled the components of those rockets and assembled them inside Gaza. I cannot say, I don't know. But the quality seems to be of the 75, 80-km rockets or what they call M-75 seems to be good, like almost factory-like. But this is quality. Remember, we are talking about a form [inaudible], very simple weapons. They are not sophisticated, they are simply rockets. And what they have is range and warhead, but not accuracy.

**David Harris:** You mentioned mortar bombs in passing, and you're saying that they're used just locally. Is there an argument that says right now that the IDF is pinning back the rocket fire into populated areas in Gaza, and as a result, mortars are not being used as much because they can't be fired so close to the nearest army positions and local Israeli villages?

**Uzi Rubin:** No, I wouldn't know about that, that's tactical. I'm a rocket man, not an infantry fighting man, I really don't know about that.

**David Harris:** Okay, and, on Iron Dome, why is it only fired at a limited number of rockets?

**Uzi Rubin:** Because it selects its targets -- hold on I need to shut up someone here [speaking in Hebrew, says he's in another conversation so needs to shut off his phone] -- well, Iron Dome works selectively, you don't engage any target in the air, you only engage targets that are going to penetrate what you define "defended area." And [inaudible] is something which we don't disclose. This is set up by each battery according to the instructions and it could be wider or narrower depending on what's the objectives and priorities of the air defense command. If they get the instruction from the high command of what to defend and what to let go. So the rockets, Iron Dome will engage only those rockets that aim to penetrate or are calculated to go to penetrate into the defended area. And this it's doing successfully, very, very successfully. You saw the results yesterday, you saw the result this morning in the Dan area.

**David Harris:** And final question: Is there any chance that Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the others will ever run out of rockets?

**Uzi Rubin:** Yes, obviously, they have. As I say, the tunnels are closed. Every rocket that they fire is a rocket they cannot fire again, and it seems to me from the pattern of the firing that they are saving on ammunition. They don't fire all what they have and not fast enough; they are preparing for a long campaign and because of that, to my surprise, the rate of fire to up to now, [inaudible] yesterday, is less than what they fired during Pillar of Fire on an average day-- Pillar of Defense, excuse me, on an average day.

**David Harris:** Okay, Uzi Rubin is president of Rubicon Defense Consultancy and was director of Israel's Missile Defense Organization. Thanks to you, and thanks all for joining us.

**Uzi Rubin:** Thank you, bye.