

NEWS

# Source: PA smuggling anti-tank arms

By STEVE RODAN and ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

The Palestinian Authority is smuggling Katyusha rockets, anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles, all in preparation for a future conflict with Israel, a senior Israeli security source said yesterday.

The source said, however, that the PA is not using the newly constructed jetty at the Gaza fishing port to bring in weapons.

"The PA has ambitions to buy weapons that are not allowed under the Oslo agreements," the source said. "They're trying to get anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons. There's no problem getting these things." The source

said the PA has numerous options to buy cheap rockets and missiles. These include Russia and eastern Europe.

Smuggling the weapons into PA-controlled areas is not difficult either, the source said. Anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, such as the Sagger, are small missiles that can fit into a suitcase. They are then brought into Gaza either via fishing boat from the Mediterranean or from the Sinai through a maze of tunnels from the Egyptian side.

Weapons can also be smuggled into PA territory in the cars of senior Palestinian officials, whose vehicles are exempt from Israeli searches, the source said.

In contrast to the assertion of several ministers, including Ariel Sharon, the source said the ships spotted near the Gaza jetty have not unloaded any cargo. "This jetty is political," the source said.

Although the source would not estimate the amount of weapons being smuggled into PA-controlled areas, he said the aim of the authority is not to amass enough weapons to try to defeat Israel in war.

Instead, the source said, the PA seeks to upgrade its military capability so that Palestinian forces could destroy at least several tanks in any IDF entry into Gaza or West Bank cities. The source said the propaganda

value of Palestinians immobilizing or destroying Israeli tanks would be tremendous.

"This would give it a political victory," the source said. "It would be like the Tet offensive [by North Vietnam against the US in 1968]."

The source said that security cooperation between Israel and the PA in the aftermath of the capture of a Hamas squad in Tzurif continues to be inadequate. He said Palestinian and Israeli security officers still meet, but PA representatives have not been sufficiently cooperative.

"The cooperation remains very limited and specific," the source said.

# Small-arms simulator a hit with IAF

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

In America, people pay to line up and play video games in which you shoot assorted criminals, terrorists, and enemy soldiers. In Israel, the government pays you - provided you are lucky enough to be called for IAF reserve duty.

The air force yesterday revealed its newest simulator, a NIS 1 million, small-arms video machine where reservists hone their marksmanship skills by blasting away at moving targets on a large screen.

