

New Year, Old Problems

✖ Missiles are fired from Gaza into southern Israel. Iran is steadily marching toward the production of nuclear weapons. And Hezbollah and Hamas are smuggling and stockpiling arms. Welcome to 2010. This may be a new year, but Israel's problems remain largely the same as last year's, and the year before.

The persistence of Israel's problems can tempt us toward two equally troubling reactions. The first reaction is to grow weary. There are no quick fixes in Israel. No easy answers. Who knew that standing with Israel would be so hard and take so long?

The response, of course, is that we're still novices. Israel has faced such threats for more than 61 years, since before the state was even created. The names of her enemies may have changed over time, but the threat of military and terrorist attacks are a constant. The Israelis have learned to persevere—and even prosper—in the face of such endless conflict. We who seek to stand with Israel need to do likewise. We must pray that peace will come tomorrow. But we also must be prepared for a long struggle.

The fact is that peace will come only when Israel's enemies truly understand that Israel is here to stay and can never be destroyed. Yet so many of her enemies think not in terms of years or even decades, but centuries. Israel, they claim, will go the way of the crusader kingdom in Jerusalem, which lasted “only” 120 years. In short, Israel's enemies take the long view. So must we.

A second reaction to the long-term nature of this conflict, which is equally dangerous, is to grow complacent. Despite all the dire warnings, all the threats, Israel is thriving. Hamas is surrounded and Iran is still without nuclear weapons. No

worries, though. No need to respond to news accounts or action alerts. The Middle East is all sound and fury, but deep down the noise signifies nothing.

Such a view, of course, overlooks the miracle of Israel's survival. And it fails to recognize the larger, quite ominous trends. Israel survives not through inertia, but by constant vigilance. And some threats are growing alarmingly more dangerous by the day. No, Iran is not yet nuclear. But it is far closer to achieving this goal than ever before. Back in 2006, Hezbollah could not strike Tel Aviv with its missiles. Today it can.

We dare not take Israel's existence for granted. We must take the long view. But we must understand that these will not be years of treading water. Our efforts will feel more like swimming against the tide just to stay in place.

So welcome to 2010. We promise no easy answers or quick fixes. We promise only that you can play a role in the ongoing miracle that is Israel. Peace will come when Israel's enemies understand that they cannot destroy her. When millions of Christians across this country openly dedicate themselves to Israel's survival, it sends a powerful message that Israel is indeed here to stay. We have an important role to play. And we dare not grow weary in well doing.