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## Iranian leader: Wipe out Israel

Thursday, October 27, 2005 Posted: 0727 GMT (1527 HKT)

**TEHRAN, Iran (CNN) -- Iran's new president has repeated a remark from a former ayatollah that Israel should be "wiped out from the map," insisting that a new series of attacks will destroy the Jewish state, and lashing out at Muslim countries and leaders that acknowledge Israel.**

The remarks by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad -- reported by Islamic Republic News Agency -- coincide with a month-long protest against Israel called "World without Zionism" and with the approach of Jerusalem Day.

World without Zionism is a nationwide event the planners intend to hold annually, and Ahmadinejad made the remarks during a meeting with protesting students at the Interior Ministry.

Ahmadinejad quoted a remark from Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of Iran's Islamic revolution, who said that Israel "must be wiped out from the map of the world."

The president then said: "And God willing, with the force of God behind it, we shall soon experience a world without the United States and Zionism," according to a quote published by IRNA.

The Jewish state has diplomatic relations with major Muslim countries such as Egypt, Jordan and Turkey, and the Gaza disengagement has improved ties between Israel and some other Muslim nations and leaders.

But Ahmadinejad said the "new wave of confrontations generated in Palestine and the growing turmoil in the Islamic world would in no time wipe Israel away," according to paraphrased statements in the IRNA report.

He also described Israel's disengagement from Gaza as a "trick" meant to make "Islamic states acknowledge the Zionist regime of Israel," according to the report.

The United States and Israel are sowing "discord among warring forces in Palestine and other parts of the Islamic world," the report paraphrased Ahmadinejad as saying.

In the process, such attempts were forcing Muslim nations to normalize relations with Israel, he said.

Ahmadinejad is quoted as saying, "Anybody who recognizes Israel will burn in the fire of the Islamic nation's fury."

Ahmadinejad's comments prompted the French foreign minister to summon the Iranian



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

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ambassador to Paris for an explanation. France is one of the European countries that has been involved in negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program.

French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy said he learned about Ahmadinejad's comments from news reports that indicate the Iranian president called for Israel's destruction and said the conflict in the Middle East would result in a fight between Jews and Muslims.

"If these comments are correct, they are unacceptable. I greatly condemn them and have asked for the Iranian ambassador in Paris to be summoned to the Foreign Ministry to demand explanations," Douste-Blazy said.

"For France, the right for Israel to exist should not be contested. This state was created by a decision of the U.N. General Assembly. International law applies to all. The question of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be used as a pretext to put into question the fundamental right for Israel to exist."

One top Iranian religious leader, Ayatollah Nori Hamadani, said in a written statement it is incumbent upon Muslims to wrest Palestine from the Israelis.

He urged Iranians to protest on Friday -- which is Jerusalem Day, commemorated by Iranians to honor Jerusalem, where Israel has established its capital, and renew their support for an establishment of a Palestinian state.

*Journalist Shirzad Bozorghmehr contributed to this report*

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