THE HAMAS SURPRISE ATTACK, ISRAEL’S RESPONSE, AND RISKS OF ESCALATION

Robert A. Pape
Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago
Director, Chicago Project on Security and Threats (CPOST)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With Israel within hours of launching a major ground offensive to completely destroy Hamas militarily and politically, it is important to show the US and world why this will lead to massive escalation beyond Gaza, particularly in the West Bank and in Israeli cities.

This escalation is important, because this escalation inside Israel will likely be the trigger for wider escalation with Hezbollah and the region.

The slides start by clarifying that terrorist groups like Hamas always seek to win through exactly this strategy -- gruesome civilian attacks that provoke the democracy to escalate with ground forces that massively increase recruitment for the terrorist group.

Exactly this pattern happened when:

1. Israel invaded Southern Lebanon with 78,000 combat troops in June 1982 – which caused creation of Hezbollah in the first place.

2. Israel’s heavy military occupation of Gaza and the West Bank from the early 1990s to 2005 -- which caused waves of suicide terrorist attacks until the IDF left.

3. Israel’s ground offensive into Lebanon in July-August 2006 -- although the goal was to completely destroy Hezbollah’s leaders and fighters, the Israeli offensive failed and Hezbollah is 10 times stronger today as a result.

4. The United States invaded and occupied Iraq in 2003 with 150,000 troops -- which led to the largest suicide terrorist campaign in modern times, a major civil war in Iraq, and ultimately, the rise of ISIS. As you know, I was the only terrorism expert to predict, in fall 2002, that US occupation of Iraq would in 2003 touch off the massive suicide terrorist campaign in Iraq.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction: Will Hamas Win?
- Why the Surprise?
- Roots of the Conflict and the Threat of Suicide Terrorism Campaigns
- Risk of Escalation in Gaza
- Risk of Escalation in West Bank
- Risk of Escalation Beyond Gaza and West Bank
The Big Question:

Will Hamas Win?
**The Big Question:** **WILL HAMAS WIN?**

- **Terrorism is a political strategy:** violence against civilians to achieve political goals.

- **Hamas political goals:** stop a lasting peace and re-start Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- **Indeed, Hamas launched the massacre precisely when a serious peace deal with Saudi Arabia and Arab countries was on the horizon** – the first serious peace deal with Arab governments since the deal between Egypt and Israel nearly 50 years ago.

- **The timing shows that Hamas launched the attack to stop that deal in the short run and sow seeds of violence for years to come.**
Dr. Robert A. Pape
Professor of Political Science
Director of University of Chicago Project on Security and Threats

-- 20 years studying Suicide Terrorism
-- Predicted the 2003 US Invasion of Iraq Would Trigger the Largest Suicide Campaign in Modern Times
Sderot Bomb Shelter, December 2019
Gaza “Iron Wall” December 2019
West Bank “Triple Barrier” Fence, December 2019
HOW DO TERRORISTS LIKE HAMAS WIN?

- Terrorism is a strategy of the weak

- Terrorist groups like Hamas are always weak relative to their state rivals like Israel.

- So, they recognize that they have no chance to win in the short term.

- Rather, their short term, operational objective is to use violence to trigger a set of events that will vastly increase their popular support and number of active fighters, and so grow their movement in ways that will achieve their ultimate goals.

Terrorists #1 Operational Goal: Recruitment
HOW HAMAS MEASURES SUCCESS: PROTESTS ERUPT IN JORDAN, YEMEN AND ACROSS MIDDLE EAST SINCE OCTOBER 7

Sana, Yemen October 14, 2023

Aman, Jordan October 18, 2023
HOW HAMAS MEASURES SUCCESS: PROTESTS ERUPT IN LEBANON AND WEST BANK IN LAST 24 HOURS

Beirut, Lebanon October 17, 2023

Ramallah, West Bank October 17, 2023
TRAGIC REALITY: HAMAS IS NOW WINNING

- In the short run: The Hamas surprise attack has triggered a set of events that have now ended – certainly for many months, perhaps far longer – any chance of the once-in-a lifetime, historic peace deal.
  
  –Protests have erupted across the Middle East, Lebanon, and West Bank
  
  –Virtually impossible for Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan to side with Israel or even take Palestinian refugees without risking their own governments
The Big Question: Will Hamas Win?

Will Hamas win in the long run, and succeed in escalating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in ways that will ultimately reduce the security of Israel in major ways?
**KEY QUESTIONS**

- What Happened?
- Initial Israeli, US Response?
- Why Conflict is Happening?
- Strategic Options and Risks?
**What Happened?**

**Saturday to Monday Oct 7**

- **Hamas Attack from Gaza:**
  - 4,500+ rockets and missiles against Israeli towns/cities
  - 1,000+ fighters breakthrough Wall in 15 places, launch ground assault against 22 towns

- **Israeli Response:**
  - 500+ Air strikes targeting Hamas leaders and fighters in civilian buildings
  - IDF Ground operations to retake the 22 towns
  - Full blockade (water, food, electricity) of Gaza
  - 360k Mobilization for possible ground offensive into Gaza

- **Deaths:** 1400+ Israeli, 1078* Palestinians  (most on Oct 7, counts thru Oct 9: *3,500+ Oct 18)

- **Hostages:** 199 Israeli civilians/military in Gaza
USA moves Carrier Strike Group with USS Gerald R Ford to protect Israel, Lebanon...

USS Eisenhower carrier strike group also ordered to Eastern Mediterranean.

Particularly important vs Hezbollah
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Total Israeli Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948 War</td>
<td>6,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973 War</td>
<td>2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2023 Hamas Surprise Attack</strong></td>
<td>&gt; 1,400 (Oct 7-9, 2023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-70 War of Attrition</td>
<td>1,424</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Intifada, 2000-2005</td>
<td>1,010</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967 War</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon 1982-85</td>
<td>654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suez 1956</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon War 2006</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why the “Surprise”?  

Actually, multiple surprises
FIRST SURPRISE: MAJOR INTELLIGENCE FAILURE

Gaza-Israel Border Wall Breached Amid Ongoing Conflict

Chaos ensues after militants breach a border wall in Gaza
Once Wall Breached, Outpouring of Hamas fighters was not a major surprise

The purpose of the Wall was to stop exactly this scenario
AFTER BREACH: HAMAS ATTACKS TOWNS AND IDF BASES

Major Points of Hamas Infiltration
In a mass assault, Hamas forces penetrated deep into southern Israel and captured key Israeli military bases.
June 15, 2023 Hamas “top secret” document

Plan for infiltrating Mefalsim
-- 2 teams of 5 fighters
-- maps and aerial pictures of the town
-- warns IDF could arrive in 3-5 minutes

Other captured Hamas documents show planning back to October 2022
Detailed Attack Plans vs IDF Bases

An image taken from a video filmed by a Hamas commander who was killed on Saturday. The gunmen are seen inside an Israeli intelligence hub.

The Hamas commander reviewing a map of the base that includes the intelligence hub.
العنوان: خطاب قائد هيئة أركان القسام محمد الطيف (7 أكتوبر)
التصنيف: لقاءات ومؤتمرات
الناشر: دائرة الإعلام العسكري
التاريخ: 2023-10-07
ال المشاهدات: 16810

https://alqassam.ps/arabic/videos/index/2796

تحميل
A screenshot from the training video in preparation for the recent attacks.
HAMAS TRAINING IN PLAIN SIGHT FOR ASSAULT IN GAZA SINCE 2021

Hamas training with para-guilders

Hamas training against mock Israeli settlement
SECOND SURPRISE: IDF DOES NOT IMMEDIATELY RESPOND

Attacks on Israeli Civilians/IDF local bases by Hamas fighters is not a surprise

What is a surprise is that the IDF in general did not immediately respond

The IDF did not reach civilian areas for 5 to 12 hours

Major questions about why IDF did not respond rapidly – eg, with special forces in helicopters, ground reinforcements etc
SURPRISE RAISES DEEP QUESTIONS

- Why IDF failed to assess Hamas’ growing tactical effectiveness
  - Improving tactical effectiveness across many units requires detailed planning and practice
  - Similar to IDF problems in July-August 2006 Lebanon War vs. Hezbollah
    - Underestimated improvement in Hezbollah tactical effectiveness
    - *Winograd Commission Report*
      (Official Israeli government Assessment of 2006 Lebanon War)
      “All in all, the IDF failed...to provide an effective military response to the challenge posed to it by the war in Lebanon...Responsibility for this outcome lies mainly with the IDF...” (April 30, 2007)

- **Major Question Will Be Lack of IDF Responsiveness**
  - Due to major political and social fissures in Israel?
Roots of the Conflict:

Important for Understanding Where Things Are Heading
KEY HISTORY

- After WWI, Great Britain given mandate from League of Nations to Rule Palestine after breakup of Ottoman Empire
- 1947, Great Britain withdraws
- Early 1948 War between Israel vs Arabs establishes State of Israel
- Gaza controlled by Egypt, West Bank by Jordan until 1967 Arab-Israeli War
- 1967 on: Israel Controls West Bank and Gaza
LONG HISTORY OF OCCUPATION

- 1967: Israel fights on multiple fronts
- Post 1967 war: Israel Takes West Bank/Gaza
- Population Balances
  - Jews in Israel
    - 1967: 2.3 million (64%)
    - 2023: 7.2 million (57%)
  - West Bank/Gaza
    - 1967: 1.3 million
    - 2023: 5.4 million

Gaza population today = 2.2 million
Unemployment = 50%

Map of the Overview of the Six Day War (1967)
Growth in the Jewish Population in the Disputed Territories Explains Trajectory of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

S U I C I D E  A T T A C K S  I N  I S R A E L ,  1 9 9 3 - 2 0 2 2

Note: Only attacks taking place in Israel proper included. Excludes suicide attacks on Israeli forces and settlements in West Bank and Gaza.
Source: CPOST Database of Suicide Attacks, confirmed suicide attacks only. Data current as of June 2023.
**WHY SUICIDE TERRORISM MATTERS**

- Suicide Attacks Often Kill 10X more than ordinary terrorist attacks

- 9/11 was a suicide attack – this is what made it possible for 19 hijackers to kill nearly 3,000 innocent people that day

- Suicide Terrorism has a clear risk factor:
  - 95% of all suicide attacks are in response to military occupations

- This is why US military occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan led to major suicide terrorist campaigns in countries that had never experienced them before and why the withdrawal of US military forces has dramatically reduced suicide terrorism in those countries
WHAT CAUSES SUICIDE TERRORISM CAMPAIGNS?

95% of suicide terrorist attacks are in response to the presence of heavy ground forces on territory the terrorists’ prize
Trends in Iraq, 2002-2022

Note: Showing confirmed suicide attacks only. Data current through December 2022.

SUICIDE ATTACKS IN ISRAEL, 1993-2022

Heavy IDF Presence in West Bank/Gaza until 2006

94% prior to 2006

6% 2006 and after

Note: Only attacks taking place in Israel proper included. Excludes suicide attacks on Israeli forces and settlements in West Bank and Gaza.

Source: CPOST Database of Suicide Attacks, confirmed suicide attacks only. Data current as of June 2023.
RISKS OF ESCALATION IN GAZA
Implication for Gaza: Destroying Hamas in Northern Gaza Will be a Prolonged Ground Operation
Impact of IDF in Gaza on Popular support/recruitment for Hamas
ISRAEL’S OCCUPATION IS #1 PROBLEM FOR ALL PALESTINIANS

The most pressing problems: WB-GS agree on occupation; differ on most others

Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR), June 2023
**Gaza Support for Anti-Occupation Violence > Hamas**

- 38% Support Hamas
  - Fatah: 8%
- 79% Support formation of armed groups
- 53% Support a return to armed intifada
- 55% Support armed action as best way to end occupation and build independent state

**Key Implication:** Hamas Radical Support Can Easily Grow During War in Gaza

Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR), June 2023
IDF Operations Unlikely Confined to Northern Gaza

- Hamas can fire rockets from Southern Gaza at Israeli Forces in Northern Gaza
  - IDF is Unlikely to Forgo Attacking the Launch Sites

- Hamas Leaders/Fighters can reposition, in part or whole, to Southern Gaza
  - IDF is Unlikely to Forgo Attacking Hamas in Southern Gaza
  - Hence, Strong Pressure for Israeli ground offensive into Northern Gaza to escalate into Southern Gaza
All Gaza may become a war zone. 2.2 million people, over 300,000 fighting age males with no place to go.
Gaza’s Urban Geography is Ideal for Suicide Attack
Even with IDF Attrition, Hamas fighters could grow well beyond current size of 15,000 to 30,000 -- many as suicide attackers
RISKS OF ESCALATION IN WEST BANK
West Bank Support for Anti-Occupation Violence > Hamas

- 16% Support Hamas
  - Fatah: 10%
- 66% Support formation of armed groups
- 53% Support a return to armed intifada
- 49% Support armed action as best way to end occupation and build independent state

Key Implication: Hamas Radical Support Can Easily Grow During War in Gaza
West Bank Settlement Geography Creates Many Vulnerabilities
Arabic speaking localities in Israel

Green on Map

2.1 Million (2023)
80% Sunni, many w/ family ties to WB/G

Involved in assisting suicide attacks from West Bank into Israeli cities in second Intifada
Hamas Radical Support
Could Well Grow in West Bank, including Suicide Attacks
against Jewish Settlers and Israeli Cities
**Siege of Fallujah, Iraq (2004) is closest analogy**
Battle of Fallujah, Iraq  November-December 2004

U.S. Marines in battle: Fallujah, November-December 2004 / by Chief Warrant Officer-4 Timothy S. McWilliams, with Nicholas J. Schlosser.
BATTLE OF FALLUJAH, NOVEMBER TO DECEMBER 2004

- Goal: Kill/Capture all 4,000 insurgents
- US Marine Concept: Depopulate City to eliminate insurgents

Tactical Results:
- 70-90% of the 300,000 Civilians Left City
- 2000 insurgents killed/1500 captured (88%)
- 65/100 Mosques destroyed
- 60 schools destroyed
- Uncertain civilian casualties (b/c so many left city)
IRAQI INSURGENCY, AFTER JANUARY 2004

- **Size of the Insurgency in Iraq**
  - January 2004: 5,000 insurgents
  - December 2004: 20,000 insurgents

- **Massive rise of suicide attacks**
  - 2003: 35
  - 2004: 135
  - 2005: 304

- **Civil war in Iraq from 2006 to 2008**
  - Total US military deaths, 2003-2008: 4,222
  - Iraqi Civilian Deaths, 2006-2008: >150,000

2004 Battle of Fallujah added momentum to the insurgency
CONCLUSION:

IDF offensive in Gaza risks large-scale escalation in Gaza, West Bank and Israeli Cities
“DEFEATING” HAMAS MEANS...

- Important to attack Hamas leaders and fighters involved in the massacres of Israelis, but imperative to prevent the rise of a new, larger generation of anti-Israeli terrorists
  - Military Occupation of Gaza is not the best policy

- In near term, use selective military force against Hamas leaders/fighters
  - Best tools are air power, special forces and intelligence
  - Time works to Israel’s advantage

- Long term, crucial for Palestinians to have a voice in their own government
Risks Beyond Gaza/West Bank
Many Israeli Settlements Near Border with Hezbollah Controlled Territory
Hezbollah =

25,000 fighters
40k-150k Missiles/rockets
Both 10x 2006

Complex Defenses
Declassified Map 2016
IRAN: ISRAELI AIR STRIKE VS NUCLEAR FACILITIES?
Iran immediately restarted its nuclear program after Pres Trump withdrew from the Iranian nuclear deal.

As of August 20, sufficient material for several bombs within 6 weeks

Impossible to know whether Iran has assembled a nuclear bomb or has material for a radiological bomb OR WHERE THEY ARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>2018 May (Deal)*</th>
<th>Aug 2023</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natanz</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrifuges</td>
<td>5,060**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5-5% LEU</td>
<td>300kg+</td>
<td>2880kg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amt for bomb</td>
<td>1250kg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fordow (Qom)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Centrifuges</td>
<td>1,044**</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% LEU</td>
<td>0*** +</td>
<td>536kg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amt for bomb</td>
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<td>Bombs</td>
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<tr>
<td>60% LEU</td>
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<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td>0 bombs</td>
<td>9 bombs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*US withdraw May 2018</td>
<td>Time to bomb</td>
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</table>

> 1 yr (if cheat) | 1 bomb < 12 days | +5 < 1 more mon